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# Investigating the True Colours of Autonomy in Language Learning

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### **Abstract**

In spite of the amount of time and effort devoted by researchers in applied linguistics to examining both the theory and practice of language learner autonomy, it is an area which still appears to be beset by contradictions, paradoxes, enigmaticity and even controversy, which cloud its nature or ‘true colours’.

Through the use of colour continua, it will be suggested that there is much more consensus among researchers about the nature of autonomy and about the factors inductive or conducive to learner autonomy than has been apparent until now. There are also many useful resources and guides for its promotion which remain less than fully explored and therefore relatively untapped.

This chapter will explore what seem to be 5 key constituents in the promotion of autonomy, which are 1) identity, 2) reflection, 3) ownership, 4) self-determination and 5) authenticity and will

suggest that in the presence of these 5 elements the uptake of autonomy on the part of learners is likely to be maximised, permitting the learners to take more control of their learning and show their own ‘true colours’.

Keywords: language learner autonomy; identity; reflection; ownership; self-determination; authenticity

### **Introduction**

Despite what seems like an explosive growth of interest in autonomy in language learning during the past decade, surprisingly, as yet, there seems to be little cause for celebration among its adherents and proponents. One explanation for this could be that as Benson and Voller (1997: 2) have suggested, we perhaps moved too quickly from theory to practice, and Vieira (1999: 14) could also be right in suggesting that the concept still requires further ‘deconstruction’ in order for it to become ‘*a central notion in all educational contexts*’ (author’s emphasis), and not just those related to language education. Perhaps the task that language educators have set themselves in promoting autonomy is just too immense and has to be part of a much larger concerted effort? Is it really possible to enable our learners to be autonomous when a large number of instructors in our institutions may actually be leading our learners in a different direction in their particular subject areas, towards greater dependence on knowledgeable others? If we remain convinced that autonomy is still the right direction in which to go, what can we as language educators do?

In this chapter, I will suggest that if we are to have any success at all in promoting autonomy, then we must first understand its true nature or its ‘true colours’ (Steinberg & Kelly, 1986). Taking as my starting point, Breen and Mann’s (1997) definition of autonomy as a ‘way of being’ in the world, I complement this with Dufeu’s (1994) suggestion that we need to move away from a ‘pedagogy of having’ to a ‘pedagogy of being’. I will begin by briefly outlining what may have been impediments to the uptake of autonomy and

I will then suggest that although it may not always be clear, we do have the means available to us which can enable us to move forward with autonomy.

By (re)conceptualising autonomy in terms of degrees, in terms of a colour continuum, in relation to its constituent qualities and always with reference to heteronomy, I propose that we will be better placed to reach an understanding of what autonomy is and how it can best be promoted in our learners. By forming a 'partnership where our students' personalities are involved as much as our own' (Dufeu, 1994: 166), we can enable our learners, not only to embark on a process of autonomisation, but help them, in the process, to discover their own 'true colours' and their 'own position from which to engage with the world' (Breen & Mann, 1997: 134).

### **Impediments and Affordances to Understanding and Promoting Autonomy**

It could be argued that the ever-expanding literature in the field of autonomy, while offering many fresh and interesting insights, at the same time may be compounding the existing problems and be adding to our doubts and confusion, instead of relieving them. In this section, I will outline some of the impediments to our understanding of autonomy and suggest possible ways of turning these into affordances.

#### ***Conceptualising autonomy***

There is no doubt that one of the hindrances to our understanding autonomy or endeavouring to explore its possibilities is the multiplicity of terms which exist, which may often seem to be describing much the same thing, such as self-directed learning, learner-centredness, self-managed learning etc. Added to this is the problem that when the word 'autonomy' is being used, there is no guarantee that each person referring to it is using it to mean the same thing. It is important therefore not to become distracted or frustrated by all this confusion and to have a very clear *conceptualisation* in our minds of what it is and ensure

that it is this conceptualisation that we are promoting. One such conceptualisation that we might choose to adopt is that of Moore (n.d.) of Sheffield Hallam University:

*An autonomous learner has developed the **capacity** to take at least some control over their learning; and the learning environment provides **opportunities** for the learner to take control of their learning.*

*Developing capacity requires a **set of personal qualities**: confidence, motivation, taking and accepting responsibility, and ability to take initiative. It also involves a **set of skills**: academic, intellectual, personal and interpersonal. (Emphasis added.)*

This is not to say that other conceptualisations are not clear and valid. Moore's conceptualisation simply brings together everything we need to be aware of, in promoting autonomy, in a very neat way.

### ***Defining autonomy***

When it comes to *defining autonomy*, there is, again, a bewildering array of definitions from which to choose. Holec (1981) and Macaro (1997) describe autonomy as an 'ability', but Holec (ibid) also describes it as a 'capacity', as does Little (1995). Allwright (1990) sees it as a 'state' of 'optimal equilibrium', while Noels (2009) regards it as a 'propensity'. Jiménez Raya, Lamb and Vieira (2007) describe autonomy in terms of 'competences', whereas Benson (2009) suggests it is advisable to try and define it in terms of a combination of 'abilities and dispositions'. This myriad of descriptions is confusing for the most seasoned of researchers, let alone novices in the field. Each definition is useful and illuminating, but clearly autonomy is not something that we can switch on and switch off at will. It will enable our learners to function more effectively within a learning community, but it should also enable them to function more effectively in the

community beyond. It is perhaps for this reason that the definition I find myself gravitating towards most is that of Breen and Mann (1997: 134): “a way of *being* in the world; a *position from which to engage* with the world” (authors’ emphasis).

It could be that because most teachers have passed through learning communities which expounded a ‘pedagogy of having’ (Dufeu, 1994: 3), rather than a ‘pedagogy of being’ (ibid.: 4) that this approach to language education might, at first, seem quite alien. We can understand that by a ‘pedagogy of having’, Dufeu means a fixed body of knowledge which has to be imbibed and regurgitated by supposed empty vessels, through a ‘transmission’ approach, with learning from the ‘outside in’. His ‘pedagogy of being’, on the other hand, comes closer to Kohonen’s ‘experiential’ view of education, where learners are not just ‘pawns’ (deCharms, 1968, cited in Stefanou et al., 2004), but ‘agents’ in the learning process (Kohonen, 2001). Learning is through doing, through discovery, play, meaning-making and creativity. It is ‘transformative’ in the sense that it is from the ‘inside out’ and, according to Little (1990: 12), learners ‘can integrate what they learn with the rest of what they are.’

### ***Approaches to autonomy***

For the practitioner who has decided to promote autonomy with her classes, again there seem to be many approaches and possible routes to take, each one of them ‘bumpy’ (Auerbach, 2007: 87) and seemingly hazardous. Here we will consider some of the approaches which have enjoyed popularity during the past few decades. I will suggest some ways in which we could take a fresh approach to these.

### ***Self-access as access-to-self***

During the 1980s and 1990s there was a marked proliferation of *self-access* or resource centres, which could be exploited in a number of ways, with the aim of fostering autonomy, but with the emphasis very much on the organisation of the materials and the equipment required to use them. With recent advancements in technology, it has become clear that self-access language learning

need no longer be confined within four walls (Reinders, 2012) and emphasis has shifted more to advising learners and enabling them, by various means, to achieve greater ‘access to self’ (Everhard, 2012; 2013; Tassinari & Ciekanski, 2013). As promoters of autonomy, one of our key focuses should be on encouraging self-access, or access-to-self and all the ‘internal’ resources which that self has to offer, to be used in conjunction with all possible ‘external’ resources, human, electronic and/or material, in order to achieve progress with language learning and language use (Allwright, 1990).

### *Learner training and strategy instruction as strategic learning*

During the same time that self-access came to the fore, there was a strong movement concerned with *learner training and strategy instruction*, led by Oxford (1989), Cohen (1998), O’Malley and Chamot (1990) in the U.S. and Ellis and Sinclair (1989), in the U.K. Although this seemed like a possible way to promote autonomy, the idea of training learners to employ particular strategies in some ways seems inimical to the idea of autonomy, and teachers nowadays seem to prefer to find more subtle ways of encouraging what can be referred to as ‘strategic learning’ in their learners, which comes from within the learners and through their cooperation with peers. Elsewhere (Everhard, 2012), I have suggested combining Chamot’s (2012) and Tseng, Dörnyei and Schmitt’s (2006: 81) ideas, so that we can arrive at a more accurate definition of strategic learning, as *the creative efforts made by students to improve their own learning*. Strategic learning, in this self-motivated and creative sense, is therefore a goal worth aiming for.

### *Portfolio learning as ELP use*

*Portfolio learning* has also become very popular, allowing learners to showcase and take ownership and pride in their learning, not only through its personalisation of their efforts, but by highlighting the ‘process’ of their learning in addition to its ‘products’. Within Europe, the European Language Portfolio (ELP) was trialled widely in a large number of countries (Little &

Perclová, 2001). Despite the money and effort invested in the ELP, and its apparent success, gradual withdrawal of funding seems to have resulted in a parallel withdrawal of interest. Given its potential to promote autonomy (Little, 1999, 2009), encourage reflection and self-assessment and thus maximise learning, and given its reasonable popularity, this outcome could be considered rather tragic. Little (2005) explains that in order to be successful, essentially teachers have to 'buy into' the whole portfolio 'package'. Although designed to be used in a number of different contexts and with a range of language abilities, perhaps its sophistication is overpowering for first-time users and without a great deal of input, support and feedback, which was provided in the pilot programmes, teachers feel at a loss when it comes to using it and adapting it to suit their own immediate needs. Still, there is much to be learned from the trust, cooperation and responsibility expected of learners through use of the ELP and its usefulness in promoting self-evaluation of progress extends beyond the simple check-lists. Hopefully, to ensure its continued implementation there will be more feedback provided by teachers at the chalkface about its effects and its usefulness which can be fed forward to the relevant authorities, who can take action to ensure its use in the future.

#### *Logbooks, journals and diaries as accessories for autonomy*

*Logbooks, journals and diaries* have been used extensively in order to promote reflection, encourage peer- and self-evaluation of progress, and as a means of communication and cooperation amongst peers and between learners and their teachers. While Lacey (2008, 2011), a protégé of Leni Dam, testifies to the usefulness of logbooks in the context of Danish high schools, and successful use has also been reported by Burkert (2012) in an Austrian higher education context, disappointingly, their use does not seem to have been widely implemented elsewhere. Also, journals and diaries (Oxbrow, 2011; Wright, 2014) have been used rather sporadically and experimentally in many different contexts, with varying degrees of success. Perhaps these should all be regarded as very useful accessories for the promotion of autonomy,

which can be used for as long as they do not become another routine or mindless ritual and, rather, permit the learners to find their voice and develop their awareness and ‘sense of self’.

*New technologies as offering learning pathways*

As mentioned previously, *new technologies* have made tremendous inroads in learners’ lives and many teachers have recognised the opportunities available to capitalise on learners’ eagerness and willingness to use the software and applications available, in order to promote learners’ autonomy. Von Joo (2014) suggests that the variability and incompatibility of learner-owned devices can still be exploited to advantage in the classroom, while Lamb (2013) suggests that mobile technology can be put to good language learning use in the forests of Indonesia. According to Mitra (2013; 2014), whether in the streets of impoverished urban India or in remote provincial districts, by placing a computer work-station at a height which young people can access, they will overcome the social barriers brought by poverty and deprivation, and even the educational barriers one would expect to be created by complex subject-matter in the medium of English, a language of which they are initially ignorant. Somehow their natural curiosity and their thirst for knowledge manage to transcend all difficulties.

Crawley (2014), in her UK primary school classroom in Newcastle, discovered that less was more, in terms of technology provision, and that the answer lay in implementing Mitra’s ideas of reducing the number of available computer terminals in her classroom, and thus obliging students to work in groups, and by providing them with challenging questions to answer. She witnessed her learners and classroom transform to a hive of lucrative activity before her eyes, with learning, again, driven by curiosity and cooperation. It seems certain that technologies can provide a spur for autonomous learning, but the technologies have to be handled in the right way and must be used in tandem with an approach which offers an impetus or stimulus for learning, which is then carried forward by the learners, without the restrictions or confines of a pre-determined, fixed curriculum. Instead, the amount of exploration, the depth of knowledge and the degree of

expertise pursued by learners in particular topic areas is driven and determined by their need and desire to find satisfactory answers to questions.

### ***Classroom procedures for autonomy***

Previously, in considering a possible conceptualisation of autonomy, words such as *capacity*, *opportunities*, *personal qualities* and *skills* were highlighted. If we are concerned about how these might be developed in the language classroom, then we need look no further than Dam (1995: 31, 1999: 116), who outlines for us in a diagram what *classroom procedures* she believes are conducive to autonomy (see Figure 1).

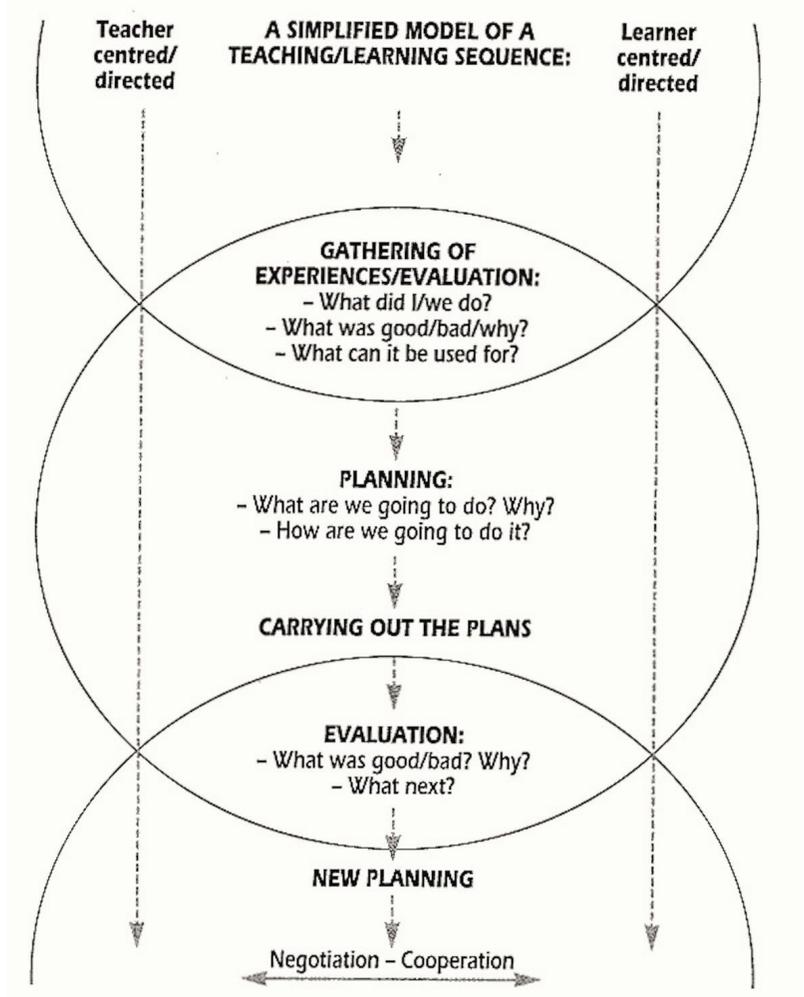


Figure 1. Dam's Model of a Teaching/Learning Sequence

It is important to notice that there is a continuum of sorts here between teacher-directed and learner-directed activity, allowing oscillation between the two. It is also important to note the movement on the circumference of the circles and the interrelation between them, so that there is constant movement and interaction and swirling, around the circles and between them. The interaction between the teacher and learners and the processes of negotiation

and cooperation are also very important. It seems to me that such an approach would work well in most language-learning situations and would not cause boredom, through repetition, as topics and groupings would alter each time according to the preferences of the learners, in a way similar to the group learning activities in Crawley's (2014) classroom.

The series of questions which are posed at each stage of the learning process, as shown in the model, provoke reflection and self/group evaluation, which are necessary for progress and planning for the next course of action. The sequence outlined in Figure 1 has formed the basis of Dam's and her protégés' success in promoting autonomy and could equally well be used in other teaching/ learning contexts.



Figure 2. Reinders' (2010) Model of the Autonomous Learning Process

There is also another encapsulation of this process provided by Reinders (2010) (see Figure 2), which bears many resemblances to Dam's.

Reinders (2010) elaborates at length on these various stages within this framework and in what manner each will be both teacher-directed and learner-directed, and what each stage involves in this cyclical process. Thus, both Reinders’ and Dam’s frameworks could provide a useful approach either in a lesson, series of lessons or a whole course.

*Classroom behaviours as ways of being*

If we adopt Breen and Mann’s (1997) definition of autonomy as ‘a way of being’ and if Dufeu’s (1994) calls for a ‘pedagogy of being’ appeal, we next need to know what kind of stance or behaviour is necessary on the part of both learners and teachers in bids to promote autonomy. Dufeu (ibid) sees the teacher as playing the role of ‘animator’ and the learners as ‘the creator and therefore the author’ of their own speech. Helpful in this respect are Breen and Mann’s (1997) guidelines as to the behaviours that teachers and learners might assume. These behaviours are listed in Figure 3.

<b><i>Being a teacher of autonomous learners</i></b>		<b><i>Being autonomous as a language learner</i></b>	
1	Acting as a resource	1	The learner’s stance ( <i>way of being</i> )
2	Permitting learners to help with decision-making	2	The desire to learn
3	Promoting collaborative assessment	3	A robust sense of self
4	Coping with risk-taking	4	Metacognitive capacity
5	Exploiting opportunities as they present themselves	5	Management of change
6	Accepting support	6	Independence
		7	A strategic engagement with learning
		8	A capacity to negotiate

Figure 3. Breen and Mann’s (1997) ‘Ways of Being’ for the Teacher and Learner

With these lists, Breen and Mann (1997) provide us with a useful starting-point for discussions concerning teacher and learner behaviours and ‘ways of being’ which promote and support

autonomy in language learning. These behaviours would be essential to the success of a pedagogy for autonomy.

### *A pedagogy for autonomy*

An approach to autonomy is not the same as a *pedagogy* for autonomy and the lack of such a pedagogy has been of concern to some linguists. The ‘framework for learner and teacher development’ outlined by Jiménez Raya, Lamb and Vieira (2007) is the product of the labours of a collaborative EuroPAL project which involved 8 European Union countries – Spain, UK, Cyprus, Italy, Portugal, Bulgaria, Sweden and Norway – which continues to be promoted in Portugal through the Grupo de Trabalho/ Working Group – *Pedagogia para a Autonomia/ Pedagogy for Autonomy* and also in Spain, through regular collaborative meetings between experts in the two countries.

Their model for a pedagogy of autonomy is reproduced in Figure 4. Both their definition of autonomy (see Jiménez Raya, Lamb & Vieira, 2007: 1-2), and the pedagogy they propose, bring us much closer to not only intellectually being able to grasp all the implications and repercussions of autonomy in language education, but enable us to grasp the much bigger picture of how its application could change not only the way that languages are taught in the language learning community, but how our learners think and function within the wider community and, in turn, contribute to society, which is surely something worth striving for.

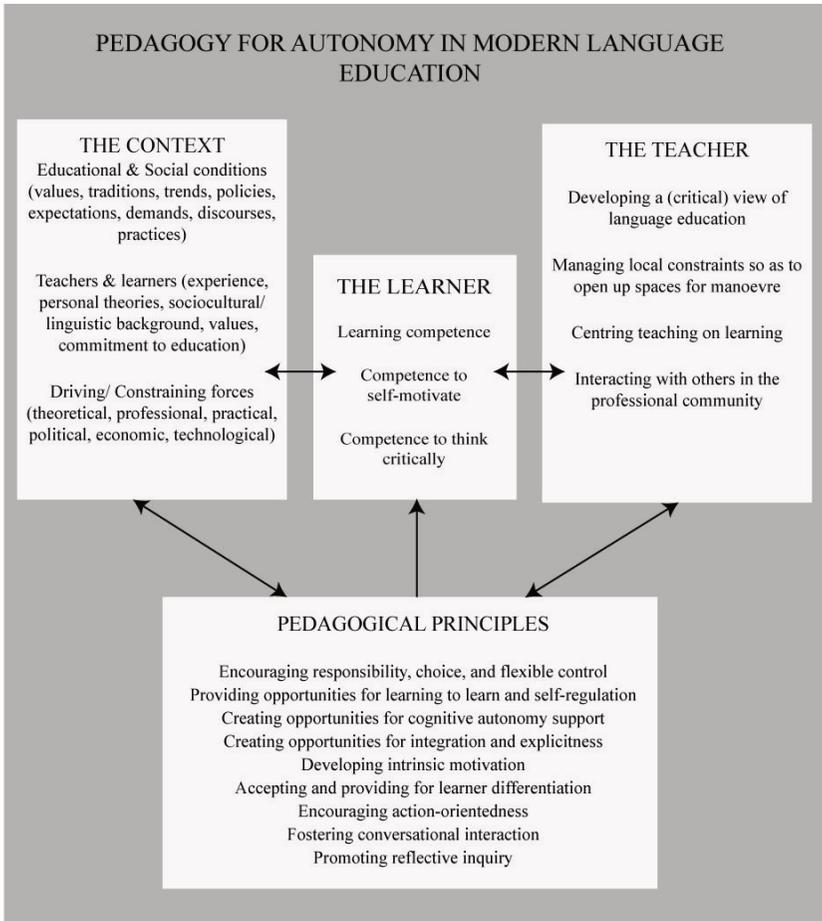


Figure 4: Jiménez Raya, Lamb and Vieira’s (2007) Pedagogy for Autonomy

*Dissonant voices as inspiration*

The final matter we will turn our attention to in this section is that of the more strident or dissonant voices in the autonomy literature. Some of their doubts are concerned with whether autonomy is a principle which can be applied universally or whether it is essentially a western construct which should not be enforced elsewhere (Holliday, 2003; Littlewood, 1999; Pennycook, 1997; Schmenk, 2005). There are fears that autonomy and the regulation of the self, which it implies, may come into

conflict with collective loyalty to the group or family, which is so strong in some cultures. However, even in Western societies, learners may be reluctant to take on the responsibility demanded of them and may prefer the more traditional system of spoon-feeding (Kohonen, 1999) and teacher assessment. Also, not all teachers are willing to share their power and control with learners and not all learners are ready to take on the challenge which such sharing implies. In the next section, one of the dissonant voices mentioned may actually inspire us to examine autonomy and its constituent qualities more closely.

### **Exploring Continua of Autonomy and Continua of its Constituent Elements**

While a great deal has been written about autonomy in relation to Second Language Acquisition (SLA), very few references can be found in the autonomy literature to its opposite, heteronomy. This is unfortunate, because Schmenk (2006: 81) reminds us that '[w]herever and whenever there is autonomy, there is also heteronomy'. She argues that if we are to succeed in pursuing autonomy as an aim in language education, then we must first reach a true understanding of heteronomy. She sees this as 'the prerequisite to explore actual potentials for personal autonomy' (ibid.: 87). Indeed, she stresses the dialectic nature of their relationship, which is undeniable; nevertheless, Everhard (2014: 32) believes we should be alert to the dangers posed by educational systems which promote heteronomy, to the detriment of autonomy. Some of these dangers are listed in Figure 5.

1.	Learners are treated as homogeneous entities with similar needs.
2.	There is a focus on testing rather than learning.
3.	It generates unhealthy competition where learners are interested mainly in grades and doing better than their peers.
4.	Critical thinking is stifled.
5.	There is little cooperation, negotiation or interdependence.
6.	The emphasis is on bonuses and rewards, rather than satisfaction with learning.
7.	Learning tends to be superficial rather than deep, with the emphasis being on passing the test or exam rather than ownership of knowledge or learning.
8.	Focus on covering the syllabus or curriculum means there is no time for foraging, creative play, improvisation and/ or experimentation with the language.
9.	Teaching tends to be purely test-oriented and textbook-bound.
10.	Learners are not involved in the assessment process and depend on authoritative others to inform them about their progress.

Figure 5. The Dangers of Heteronomy-driven Education

Given the qualities that heteronomy tends to promote in learners, it is useful to think of heteronomy as being on a continuum with autonomy. Such a continuum, however, would not have fixed degrees or stages, nor would it move only in one direction, as visualised by Schmenk (2006). Rather it would allow for progression, regression, undulation and oscillation in either direction (see Figure 6).

Beyond the SLA literature, the autonomy-heteronomy relationship has been discussed by the educationalists Kamii et al. (1994), Nolen (1995) and Waite-Stupiansky (1997), all of whom view the promotion of autonomy as imperative for the good of the learners and the societies in which they live and function. A continuum showing their understanding of the autonomy-heteronomy relationship has been configured in Figure 6.



Figure 6. The Autonomy-Heteronomy Relationship

Although, with just a few exceptions (Namenwirth, 1996; Rujiketgumjorn, 2000; Schmenk, 2006), not many linguists discuss the matter of heteronomy, it is clear that many do accept the idea of a continuum and of degrees and that they also have a clear idea of what might lie at the extremes of such a continuum (see Figure 7).

<b>HETERONOMY</b>		<b>AUTONOMY</b>	Kamii et al., 1994; Nolen, 1995; Namenwirth, 1996; Waite-Stupiansky, 1997; Rujiketgumjorn, 2000
<b>OTHER-DIRECTED</b>		<b>SELF-DIRECTED</b>	Holec, 1981; 1985 Kohonen, 1992
<b>TEACHER-DIRECTED</b>		<b>STUDENT-DIRECTED</b>	Huttunen, 1986; 1990
<b>COMPLETE LACK OF AUTONOMY (VEGETATIVE)</b>		<b>COMPLETE AUTONOMY (IDEALISTIC)</b>	Sinclair, 2000
<b>TOTAL DEPENDENCE</b>		<b>AUTONOMY</b>	Nunan, 2003

Figure 7. Linguists’ and Educationalists’ Views of Autonomy

Having accepted the existence of heteronomy, it might now be appropriate to consider what I have suggested to be the five constituent characteristics of autonomy. Since four of these – identity, ownership, self-determination and reflection have been discussed in more detail elsewhere (Everhard, 2012), here these four constituents, and the fifth constituent of authenticity, will be discussed purely in relation to the heteronomy-autonomy continuum.

***Constituent quality 1: Identity***

Linguists such as Imhoof (1991) have suggested that language learning involves not only ‘reshaping our lives’ but requires that we ‘take on a new identity’, which also implies the need to learn to be ‘*another* social person’ (my emphasis) (Crookall & Oxford, 1988, cited in Williams & Burden, 1997). Hamachek (1977, cited in Williams & Burden, 1997) suggests that the aim of education should be to enable our learners ‘to become more like themselves and less like each other’. Clearly, this would not be possible in a heteronomy-driven syllabus. de Charms (1968, cited in Stefanou et al., 2004), for example, can envisage the progression of learners from a condition where they are purely ‘pawns’ driven by the instructions and guidance of others, to a condition where learners are ‘origins’, but this can happen only if they are allowed to take more responsibility and initiative. Nunan (2000) sees the forming of identity resulting from a progression through stages as Apprentice, Competent Practitioner, and Master Practitioner. Janne (1977, cited in Holec, 1981), welcomes progress from man as ‘product’ of society, to man as ‘producer’ of society, while Pennycook (1997) sees the possibility for learners to become ‘authors of their own worlds’. In a similar vein, Little (1990, citing Ignatieff) relishes the idea of learners becoming ‘artists of their own lives’, while Macaro (1997) believes that learners may move from being ‘recipients of knowledge’ to being ‘co-constructors of knowledge’. Clearly, a ‘robust sense of self’ (Breen & Mann, 1997) and the sense of identity this brings is an important outcome of autonomy (see Figure 8).

HETERONOMY		AUTONOMY		Kamii et al., 1985; Nolen, 1995; Namenwirth, 1996; Waite-Stupiansky, 1997; Rujiketgumjorn, 2000
PAWN		ORIGIN		
		ARTISTS OF THEIR OWN LIVES/ AUTHORS OF THEIR OWN WORLD		Little, 1990; Pennycook, 1997
PRODUCTS OF SOCIETY		PRODUCERS OF SOCIETY/ ROBUST SENSE OF SELF		Janne, 1977; Breen & Mann, 1997
RECIPIENTS OF KNOWLEDGE		CO-CONSTRUCTORS OF KNOWLEDGE		Macaro, 1997
APPRENTICE	COMPETENT PRACTITIONER	MASTER PRACTITIONER		Nunan, 2000

Figure 8. Identity Continuum

**Constituent quality 2: Reflection**

Reflection lies at the heart of any attempt to develop learner autonomy (see Figure 2). Without the fostering of higher order thinking, individuals will remain forever heteronomous, depending on others to decide for them. Huttunen (2003), with her ideas based on Habermas, sees reflection as moving through three stages of progressive development, from purely Mechanical, to Pragmatic, and finally Emancipatory, where deeper levels of thinking, meaning-making and connection-making are in operation (see Figure 9). Cranton and Carusetta (2004: 8) believe that reflection is ‘central to transformative learning’, while Little (2007: 153) sees it as essential in ‘planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating learning’.

HETERONOMY		AUTONOMY		Kamii, 1985; Nolen, 1995; Namenwirth, 1996; Waite-Stupiansky, 1997; Rujiketgumjorn, 2000
MECHANICAL REFLECTION		EMANCIPATORY REFLECTION		
PRAGMATIC REFLECTION				Huttunen, 2003

Figure 9. Reflection Continuum

**Constituent quality 3: Ownership**

Dufeu (1994: 7) believes learners must ‘take possession of a language and integrate it so well that it becomes their own’. In addition, Peñafiora (2002: 348) sees autonomy as developing when learners ‘take responsibility for their learning and their lives’, which can only be achieved through ‘ownership of their choices and actions’.

Similarly to Huttunen’s three levels of reflection, Brody (1991) sees teaching and learning as functioning on three levels of Transmission (behaviourist), Transaction (cooperative) and Transformation (experiential/ constructivist). At the highest level, learners select their own learning pathway and cooperatively make decisions on the best course of action. They combine new knowledge with what they already know (Little, 1990), thus transforming it and making it their own.

HETERONOMY		AUTONOMY		Kamii et al., 1985; Nolen, 1995; Namenwirth, 1996; Waite-Stupiansky, 1997; Rujiketgumjorn, 2000
BEHAVIORISM/ TEACHER OWNERSHIP		CONSTRUCTIVISM/ LEARNER OWNERSHIP		
SHARED OWNERSHIP				Kohonen, 1992; Kohonen, 2001
TRANSMISSION		TRANSFORMATION		Brody, 1991
SCHOOL KNOWLEDGE, INERT KNOWLEDGE		TRANSFERABLE KNOWLEDGE		Barnes, 1976; Schelfout et al., 2004
SURFACE LEARNING/ PEDAGOGY OF HAVING		DEEP LEARNING/ PEDAGOGY OF BEING		Black and Plowright, 2008; Dufeu, 1994

Figure 10. Ownership Continuum

For a very useful overview of ownership, see Kohonen (2001: 35).

**Constituent quality 4: Self-determination**

Jiménez Raya, Lamb and Vieira (2007: 31) regard self-determination as one of the underlying assumptions behind autonomy and that ‘[t]o be self-determined entails endorsing one’s actions at the highest level of reflection’, with Macaro (2008: 47) regarding it as a ‘right...of the individual’. Deci and Ryan (1996) and Ryan and Deci (2000, 2002) see autonomy as being on a continuum, with non-self-determination at one end and self-determination at the other (see Figure 11). Izzo and Lamb (n.d.) believe that self-determination and locus of control are ‘highly correlated’ and view those lacking this locus of control as lacking self-determination. Internal locus of control develops when people ‘have the opportunity to choose, make decisions and act on their environment’, are able to determine both internal and external restraints which might inhibit goals, and are able to take action ‘to minimize or eliminate them’ (2002: 13).



Figure 11. Self-determination Continuum

**Constituent quality 5: Authenticity**

During the 1980s when Communicative Language Teaching was very much in vogue, authenticity became a catchword in relation to materials. Since then, it has taken on a much broader and more significant meaning in relation to Second Language Acquisition.

Newby (2000: 19) clarifies for us that ‘authenticity is not a property of a text, nor a design feature of an activity, but is a mental construct or an attitude held and developed by the student’. This view is supported by Taylor (1994: 6), who states that the

‘[p]articipants in the language classroom create their own authenticity there as they do elsewhere’. Zembylas and Lamb (2008: 28) believe it is the duty of teachers to help their learners to ‘become relationally autonomous and authentic learners by constructing a personal relation with the world in which they live’, while Cranton and Carusetta (2004: 8) are of the opinion that ‘it is only through relationships with others’ that authenticity can be promoted.

Nunan (1988) believes that only learners can authenticate the activities in the language classroom, while Kohonen (2012: 25) also feels that such authentication can be achieved when as a learner, one can be ‘seen, listened to and understood as one’s own self, being encouraged to find one’s individual voice as a language user and a responsible social actor’. It has to be realised that ‘the work of pupils is authentic when they feel that they have originated something important and accomplished something meaningful through a participatory role, being authors of their learning’. This will result in what Nunan (ibid) refers to as ‘learner authenticity’ (see Figure 12).

<b>HETERONOMY</b>		<b>AUTONOMY</b>	Kamii et al., 1985; Nolen, 1995; Namenwirth, 1996; Waite-Stupiansky, 1997; Rujiketgumjorn, 2000
<b>PEDAGOGICAL DISREGARD FOR AUTHENTICITY</b>	<b>ELEMENTS OF AUTHENTICITY OF TEXT, BEHAVIOUR &amp; PERSON</b>	<b>LEARNER AUTHENTICITY/ PERSONAL AUTHENTICITY/ AUTHENTICATION BY LEARNERS</b>	Kohonen, 2006; 2012; Newby, 2000; Nunan, 1988

Figure 12. Authenticity Continuum

Clearly, authenticity and authentication play a crucial role in the development of autonomous learners.

### Conclusion

The aim in this chapter has been to demonstrate that in order to develop and promote autonomy there must first be a very clear understanding of the concept, its relationship with heteronomy,

as well as its constituent qualities. Despite all the apparent difficulties, theorists and practitioners have shown the way or ways in which the promotion of autonomy is possible. It remains in the hands of teachers to take up the challenge, choosing informed practices which might take them and their learners initially beyond their usual comfort zone, but will provide benefits on both sides.

By arriving at a real understanding of the ‘true colours’ of autonomy, as FL professionals we will be better equipped to promote autonomy in the language learning environment and this, in the long-run, should enable our learners to understand and reveal their own ‘true colours’.

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### **Note**

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