

IZABELA BATYRA

THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND
UPON THE PORTRAIT OF AN AUTONOMOUS
LANGUAGE LEARNER: THE STUDY OF HIGHER PRIMARY
FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Abstract. Recent ministerial requirements in the core curriculum of general education, demand of teachers, and particularly language teachers that they create such environment in and beyond the classroom in which learners have an opportunity to gain *the ability to plan, organize, evaluate* as well as *take responsibility for their own learning process*. This phenomenon, known as *learner autonomy*, is the key to successful language learning.

Success in foreign language learning evidently correlates with autonomous learning, as evidenced by numerous discussions in literature, Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012), Nunan (1991), Omaggio (1978), Rubin and Thompson (1983). What makes an autonomous and thus successful foreign language learner? This is a highly complex process which encompasses a variety of variable factors such as learner attitude towards a foreign language, learner motivation and organizational skills as well as individual characteristics devoted to age, gender, learner cognitive and learning styles, the choice of learning and communication strategies, intelligence, memory and various disorders which may hamper the development of autonomy. This paper aims at demonstrating how learner personality and social background influence learner autonomy in and off the classroom setting.

The paper is supported by the study, carried out in 2013/2014, of various forms of autonomous behaviours generated by four English teachers and 115 English learners at the age of 11, 12 and 13 from two school backgrounds who were intensively observed during English lessons for a period of nine months and interviewed on the basis of the questionnaires. Since the study is devoted to various aspects of autonomous learning, only the data concerning an autonomous language learner is presented in this paper.

Key words: autonomous learner; successful language learner; EFL classroom; social environment; personality factor; extroversion/introversion; motivation.

INTRODUCTION

This article demonstrates an outline of an autonomous language learner through an analysis of a few individual characteristics which influence learner autonomy. Apart from a variety of variable factors such as learner attitude towards a foreign language, learner motivation and organizational skills as well as individual characteristics related to age, gender, learner cognitive and learning styles, the choice of learning and communication strategies, intelligence, memory which may have a direct influence upon the development of autonomous behaviour and, following on from this success in language learning. Two individual factors, that is personality and social background in the context of autonomous learning will be examined with special care and attention.

The paper is supported by the study, carried out in 2013/2014, of various forms of autonomous behaviours generated by four English teachers and 115 English learners at the age of 11, 12 and 13 from two school backgrounds who were intensively observed during English lessons for a period of nine months and interviewed on the basis of the questionnaires. The questionnaire designed for the learners consists of 21 interview questions concerning learner strategic competence, organizational skills, motivation, attitude towards autonomous learning and language, their interests, language awareness, strengths and weaknesses, preferences, modes, course books etc. The questionnaire prepared for the teachers consists of three parts. Each measures the teachers' knowledge and experience of autonomous learning. Since the study is devoted to various aspects of autonomous learning, only the data concerning an autonomous language learner is presented in this paper.

1.1. AUTONOMOUS LEARNER AND SUCCESSFUL FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNER

Achieving success in the target language is the most desirable goal of all language educators as well as language learners who struggle with achieving linguistic and communicative competence in the target language. The concept of learner autonomy evidently correlates with success in the target language as well as the concept of a good, efficient language learner as evidenced by the study of Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012), Nunan (1991), Omaggio (1978) or Rubin and Thompson (1983).

In this section, an attempt has been made to demonstrate the characteristics of an autonomous and successful/good language learner. Dickinson

(1992) enumerates five essential characteristics of an autonomous learner which are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The characteristics of an autonomous learner (Dickinson 1992).

1. Autonomous learners understand what is being taught, they understand the essence of the learning and pedagogical process.
2. Autonomous learners can formulate their own learning aims.
3. Autonomous learners can use learning strategies.
4. Autonomous learners can monitor how the use of learning strategies affects their learning process.
5. Autonomous learners can evaluate as well monitor their learning process.

In the light of Dickinson's proposed characteristics, an autonomous learner is viewed as a conscious operator of the learning processes, responsible for the effectiveness and organisation of the process of learning.

Boud (1988), on the other hand, claims that an autonomous learner is a person who actively participates in the learning process, producing their own ideas and making the most of all possible learning opportunities not limiting themselves only to initiatives triggered by the teacher. Henceforth, in Boud's view, an autonomous learner is a creative agent taking advantage of learning opportunities which arise.

Holec (1981) regards an autonomous learner as someone who is willing to take responsibility for their learning process and whose learning decisions and actions are not teacher dependent and who constantly takes an active role in their learning process. Thus Holec's idea of an autonomous learner excludes cooperative character between a teacher and learners which was particularly promoted, in the context of autonomous learning, by Esch (1996, 1997), Kohonen (1992) and Little (1995).

It is assumed that learners take responsibility for their learning process when they recognise if their learning actions are effective or not, if their choices of learning strategies facilitate or slow down the learning process, and if the latter is the case, what it is that has to be done to improve their actions so that their tools work for them and not against them. This scenario appears to be an ideal portrait of an autonomous learner.

Most language learners will be always teacher dependent. However, autonomy, as Benson (2003, 2013) claims, is available to all, although it is displayed in different ways and to different degrees according to the unique characteristics of each learner and each learning situation. Learners who lack autonomy are capable of developing it given appropriate conditions and

preparation. Thus, the role of the language teacher, among others, is to teach learners how to become autonomous by scaffolding (Bruner, 1978) their learning so that they take more responsibility for their learning process, e.g. the teacher can gradually remove teacher-initiated tasks from the lesson and replace them with learner-initiated so that learners feel they are active participants in their learning process, decision makers and negotiators of their learning needs and preferences.

In the study of learner autonomy, Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) interviewed language teachers in a large university English language centre in Oman to find out if, among others, they can identify any characteristics of autonomous learners in their students based on their teaching experience. Figure 2 demonstrates a description made by three respondents who noticed some autonomous behaviour in their learners:

Figure 2. Autonomous acts identified in learners
by the teachers from Language Centre at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman
(Borg and Al-Busaidi, 2012: 17).

TEACHER 1

At least, they're aware of the ideas, whether it's 'Ok, I need to make my own schedule', or 'I need to plan', things like this. Or 'I need to be doing more outside of the classroom than just the required homework'. I see students that are at least aware of that, and at least they claim to be doing those things, even though maybe not all of them surely are.

TEACHER 2

Once you have introduced skills like skimming and scanning and getting the meanings of vocabulary and you give them certain approaches to the way you can do it, some like looking up the difficult vocabulary first, introducing them, others like just reading and guessing the vocabulary at the end. So I have given these possibilities to them and so what I do is, because different students have different ways of doing it, I would put them into groups and say, 'Ok who likes to study the vocabulary first and then read?' and, so I find that students are able to make decisions like that. It is because they have seen how best they can operate with certain abilities.

TEACHER 3

I would say, with Level 5 because that's the level of class that I have experience with, students do have [autonomy], because they're doing the presentations and they're doing some of the essay writing choosing the topic. They weren't able to choose the main topic, the main structure I chose that but then they had the freedom to choose within that something that interests them and so there's some structured autonomy there. And with the Moodle [an online learning environment] it's a lot heavier than the Level 2 so there's a lot of extra stuff that if they feel they want more practice with lectures or something else then they can get that. So there are a lot of services there.

In the first case, as Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) essentially point out, the teacher characterizes an autonomous learner as being aware of their needs. Teacher 2 sees autonomous behaviour through the learners' willingness and ability to decide upon the procedure of the tasks proposed by the teacher. Teacher 3 identifies decision making and seeking opportunities initiated by the teacher for making autonomous decisions which Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) do not consider as a guarantee to successful development of autonomy.

A study was carried out in 2013 whose aim was to examine the level of autonomy and isolate, if possible, any forms of autonomous actions and behaviours in six higher primary foreign language classrooms, in two random state schools in the countryside in Poland. Four English teachers with varied teaching experience of 5th and 6th grades (11, 12, 13-year old learners) were asked to fill in an extensive, three-part questionnaire and take part in the interviews. Since three teachers were Polish and one Russian, they had a choice of speaking either in Polish or English. For obvious linguistic reasons, they chose Polish, as presented in Table 1, which demonstrates the teachers' answers to question 2 of the interview.

Table 1. The teachers' responses to question 2 of the interview:
What are the characteristics of an autonomous learner?

Teacher A-School I, Teacher B-School I, Teacher C- School II, Teacher D- School II, Interviewer

What are the characteristics of an autonomous learner?
TA: He/she is active . . . , persistent, I mean he/she realizes their learning goals, which have been planned, she/she is responsible . . . , takes responsibility for what he/she does and is motivated to achieve better results.
TB: [laughter] An ideal learner . . . , the one who can plan things, prepare materials, can select resources and most of all is responsible for his learning, he/she is aware of the need to participate in and contribute to his work. I think, children find it difficult to achieve this. Learners' motivation to . . . , take responsibility lies within learners themselves and not only within school, teachers, parents or colleagues. Learners should decide about their effects, and this is motivation and persuading learners to this is . . . , responsibility.
TC: I think, he/she is more interested in the lesson than other learners because he/she wants to learn more, he/she is inquisitive, open to different forms of studying, he/she is clever, I think that he/she is sometimes . . . , how to put it? [laughter] I: Clever-clever? TC: Exactly! Clever-clever. They think they know and can do more and thus want to learn more . . . I: So, do you mean clever - more intelligent? Do you associate an autonomous learner with an intelligent learner? TC: I think so. I: So you trying to say that the level of intelligence of an autonomous learner is . . .

<p>TC: ... is a bit higher, let's say, than other learners, I don't mean to offend others [laughter] I: So, are you trying to say that the higher the level of intelligence, the more autonomous learner is? TC: Yes.</p>
<p>TD: An autonomous learner is independent, can evaluate their knowledge, can check their knowledge, what he/she is good or bad at, I think, is more willing to work. Hm... works individually or in groups, both possibilities. I think, it is important for him/her how he/she is assessed and what grades he/she receives.</p>

TA defines an autonomous learner as an active and determined person who realizes their learning goals, the person who is responsible for and motivated to achieve better results. TB claims that an autonomous learner is an ideal learner who knows how to plan and organize their work, the person who is responsible for and motivated to take responsibility for their learning process and aware of the importance of learning. TC associates autonomous learner with an intelligent and clever person who is more curious about and ready to accept different forms of learning and teaching. TD, on the other hand, suggests that an autonomous learner is independent, can assess their knowledge, knows their strengths and weaknesses, is willing to study individually or in collaboration and for whom the assessment forms are particularly important.

Given the characteristics of an autonomous learner, Omaggio (1978) enumerates seven characteristics of a successful learner in the context of educational setting which are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. The characteristics of a successful language learner (Omaggio 1978), adapted from *ERIC/CLL News Bulletin*, May, 2-3.

1. Successful learners have insight into their learning styles and strategies.
2. Successful learners take an active approach to the learning task at hand.
3. Successful learners are willing to take risk, i.e., to communicate in the target language at all costs.
4. Successful learners are good guessers.
5. Successful learners attend to form as well as to content (pay attention to language fluency as well as accuracy).
6. Successful learners develop the target language into a separate reference system and are willing to revise and reject hypothesis and rules that do not apply.
7. Successful learners have a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language.

The characteristics of an autonomous learner and Omaggio's ideal of a successful learner evidently overlap. However, point five from the list calls personality factor (extroversion/introversion) into question implying that an

autonomous or successful learner attends to both language fluency and accuracy. This characteristic blocks learners' natural modes of behaviour and cognition as evidenced by discussions in section 1.2.

Similarly, Rubin and Thompson (1983) cited in Nunan (2000), enumerate a few characteristics of a good/efficient language learner presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4. The characteristics of a good language learner (Rubin and Thompson 1983) cited in Nunan, D. (2000). *Language Teaching Methodology*. Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd. (pp. 171).

1. Good learners find their own way.
2. Good learners organize information about language.
3. Good learners are creative and experiment with language.
4. Good learners make their own opportunities, and find strategies for getting practice in using the language inside and outside the classroom.
5. Good learners learn to live with uncertainty and develop strategies for making sense of the target language without wanting to understand every word.
6. Good learners use mnemonics (rhymes, word associations, etc. to recall what has been learned).
7. Good learners make errors work.
8. Good learners use linguistic knowledge, including knowledge of their first language in mastering the target language.
9. Good learners let the context (extra-linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world) help them in comprehension.
10. Good learners learn to make intelligent guesses.
11. Good learners learn chunks of language as wholes and formalized routines to help them perform 'beyond their competence'.
12. Good learners learn production techniques (techniques for keeping a conversation going).
13. Good learners learn different styles of speech and writing and learn to vary their language according to the formality of the situation.

All of the data presented in this section exhibit a strong relation between autonomous forms of behaviour and achieving success in the target language. Active learning, willingness to plan, implement, evaluate, negotiate and make decisions about their learning process, organizational skills, creativity as well as cleverness lie at the bottom of an autonomous and successful language learning.

1.2. THE INFLUENCE OF LEARNER PERSONALITY (EXTROVERSION AND INTROVERSION) ON LEARNER AUTONOMY

A single foreign language classroom exhibits numerous personality types. According to Gas and Selinker (2008), a stereotypical introvert is someone who prefers to interact with objects, e.g. a book. Thus, a learner who potentially achieves better results at school. An extrovert, on the other hand, is a person who enjoys interacting with other people more than with objects. Henceforth, a person whose social spirit would involve them in communicative activities, socializing with others and develop their communicative skills as well as fluency in the target language. Gas and Selinker (2008) quote Skehan (1989), who adduced the research devoted to British undergraduates whose introverted personality type contributed in one fourth to the success in learning the target language.

It is generally accepted that extroverts are more prone to autonomous behaviours. It is all due to their natural need to direct their attention to the external world and people. This personality mode is reflected in, as Komorowska (2001) claims, learning living speech with a greater ease as extroverted learners are more willing to speak spontaneously and involve themselves in collaborative work. Komorowska (2001) implies that extroverts are characterized by a weak spelling or grammatical accuracy as well as reading skills and specifically reading for extracting detailed information. Komorowska (2001) explains that these receptive weaknesses result in their natural unwillingness to work individually, but this fact does not deprive them of becoming autonomous learners. Introverts, on the other hand, are better prepared receptively than productively, but their utterances are more accurate than fluent, as Komorowska (2001) essentially points out. However, Wilczyńska (1999), argues rightly that too much attention and success in a foreign language classroom is attributed to extroverts, stigmatising introverts whose natural modes of behaviour are inhibited by interactive techniques and methods focused on extroverts.

While extroverts are viewed as *gregarious, life of the party persons* and introverts as *quiet and reserved, with tendencies towards reclusiveness*, Brown (2007: 166) discerns a deeper meaning of extroversion and introversion:

Extroversion is the extent to which a person has a deep-seated need to receive ego enhancement, self-esteem, and a sense of wholeness *from other people* as opposed to receiving that affirmation within oneself. Extroverts actually need other people in order to feel “good.” But extroverts are not necessarily loudmouthed and talka-

tive. They may be relatively shy but still need the affirmation of others. **Introversion**, on the other hand, is the extent to which a person derives a sense of wholeness and fulfilment apart from a reflection of this self from other people. Contrary to our stereotypes, introverts can have an inner strength of character that extroverts do not have (Brown, 2007: 166-167).

Although Brown's definitions cast a shadow on the stereotypical understanding of these two personality types, language teachers favour those learners who talk a lot and actively participate in the class activities. Brown (2007) claims that language educators should judge carefully language learners' success in terms of extroversion mode since learners who are always heard and seen on the classroom arena and participate in all oral activities are not necessarily extroverts as they are stereotypically assumed.

While some studies of extroversion show no particular relation with a good language learner and success in foreign language learning, other studies by Busch (1982) which Brown (2007) cites, concerning extroversion and introversion in Japanese foreign language learners prove that introverts were more proficient in terms of pronunciation suggesting that introverts are more patient learners and pay more attention to the quality of the pronounced sound patterns. Initially, Busch (1982) assumed in her study that extroverts would be in fact more proficient than extroverts during oral interviews, but the results were not supported by the outcome of the study. In another study, Wakamoto (2000) demonstrated that extroverts who were junior college English majors living in Japan used more learning strategies than introverts. Brown (2007) suggests that extroverts may have gained a strategic advantage over introverts or there is a growing demand for extroverts to resort to strategic intervention.

Finally, in the study of autonomous learning (2013), four English teachers, in the second part of the questionnaire, were asked, among others, if the learners' personality contributes to the development of learner autonomy, whether intimidated learners are the ones who have problems studying a foreign language and if self-confident learners develop autonomy faster. Table 2 presents the teachers' responses to questions 57-59.

Table 2. The teachers' responses to questions 57, 58 and 59 of the questionnaire.

Does learners' personality contribute to the development of learner autonomy? (Q57)			
TA (School I): I agree	TB (School I): I'm not sure	TC (School II): I agree	TD (School II): I agree
Do intimidated learners are the ones who often have problems studying a foreign language? (Q58)			
TA (School I): I agree	TB (School I): I'm not sure	TC (School II): I'm not sure	TD (School II): I'm not sure
Does autonomy develop faster in self-confident learners? (Q59)			
TA (School I): I agree	TB (School I): I'm not sure	TC (School II): I agree	TD (School II): I agree

Though perception of these two personality modes seem paradoxical, both contribute to and facilitate the quality of the learning process but in a different way. Extroverts are characterised by a well developed language fluency, whereas introverts language accuracy.

1.3. THE EFFECT OF LEARNERS' SOCIAL BACKGROUND UPON AUTONOMOUS LEARNING

Learners within a single classroom may come from different social backgrounds, which may either hamper or facilitate their learning process. The environment language learners are raised in influences the development of learner autonomy and success in language learning. Komorowska (1978, 2001) claims that social background, in particular, affects the success in language learning than any other school subjects since the richness of the native language correlates with fluency in the native language and the success in a foreign language. It appears that learners' social background has a direct impact on the level of mastering the native language as well as the quality of the target language. Komorowska (1978, 2001) asserts that learners who come from poor linguistic backgrounds, i.e. whose parents or caretakers have limited vocabulary, poor language fluency are more likely to have problems mastering a foreign language. Learners, on the other hand, whose families are more accurate language speakers, well-educated families who pay attention to language appropriateness and dedicate their time to a good contact, dialogue and conversations with their children, learn a foreign language with greater ease.

In the study of learner autonomy (2013), four English teachers, during the interview session, expressed their opinions, based on their teaching experi-

ence, on how social background influences learner autonomy. In Table 3, all teachers, especially TA and TB see a clear relation between learner autonomy and their family background.

Table 3. The teachers' answers to question 17 of the interview:
How does learners' social background influence the development
of learner autonomy in 5th and 6th grades?

<p>TA: I think, social background and the learners' surrounding influence the development of learner autonomy, why? If a child, since early years, is told to take care of their learning, achieve better results and develop, then we can see these effects of this education. It's not only the case that the parent will buy or do something for a child and the teacher will show or explain, but the learner needs to be aware of their responsibilities, the learners' awareness need to grow so that they know 'It's for me, I need to do it because I want.' Yes, the parents' and the teacher's cooperation is important, then we see those effects at school.</p>
<p>TB: [silence] hm . . . , family, in some cases yes or learners' relations with their colleagues are bound to influence their motivation, orientation, and the ways they learn and take up more challenge, yes, yes, it influences this.</p> <p>I: Do you think that the parents' attitude towards English as a school subject can influence the way learners understand the importance of learning a language?</p> <p>TB: Generally, the parents' attitude towards a subject or the relation between the parents and their children influence their child's success in language learning [laughter]. It's not only in the case of English. The most often encountered response from the parents is: 'I don't know English, I won't help him.' I try to indicate some ways how to . . . , what they can do, how to help their children, but they say: 'I don't know how he studies, he locks himself in his room and says he studies.' [laughter]</p>
<p>TC: Parents, yes. . . , I'm sure that if a child is taken great care of, the child feels safe or the parents arrange for their children private English lessons, these kids are more autonomous, given more love and affection. If the parents do not take proper care of their children, they are neglected, left alone and thus studying is less important for a child.</p>
<p>TD: I mean, I have received a few signals from the parents that their children have poor grades and they would like them to do better at school, they say English is important and will be useful in the future. Well, I think, the parents are aware of the importance of studying English, but generally it happens that parents only say they support their children. They say one thing and do the other.</p>

Although family educational status or the language richness and appropriateness may have a strong impact on the learners' quality of the native language and as a result fluency and accuracy in the target language, there are instances of learners who are raised by their grandparents or other relatives of low or average educational status and who manage to master a for-

eign language better than learners from well-educated families. Komorowska (1978, 2001) argues that family educational status frequently correlates with their participation in the family social and cultural life, that is the number of books, newspapers and magazine they read, frequent or occasional visits in the theatre or cinema.

Another aspect of learners' environment that may contribute to the learners' success in the foreign language concerns their family financial situation. According to Komorowska (1978, 2001), those learners whose carers can afford to provide their child with access to modern multimedia dictionaries, new technologies, applications and appliances, e.g. laptops, tablets, Smartphones, mp3 players, the internet, cable television etc. master a foreign language with more enthusiasm and dedication.

Apart from the material well being of the learners' families, which plays a crucial role in the development of autonomous learning, the psychological aspect seems to be the most significant of all. This claim is strengthened by Komorowska (1978, 2001), who states that caretakers who encourage and support their children in the learning process, help their children receive better results at school. The parents' ambitions and aspirations and systematic emphasis on the utmost importance of learning in general and specifically language learning instill in learners willingness to take charge of their learning process and develop a positive attitude towards language.

The study of learner autonomy of 115 language learners at the age of 11, 12 and 13 who took part in a series of interviews and filled in a questionnaire consisting of 21 questions proves that family factor contributes considerably to the learners' motivation and stimulates their learning process. *English teacher* and *good marks* are other popular factors listed by the learners. Table 4 demonstrates the answers given by the learners. They were translated into English. Since most learners provided multiple answers, the numbers in the right column exceed the actual number of the interviewed learners.

Table 4. The learners' responses to question 10 of the questionnaire:
Who or what motivates you to study English?

the motivating factor	the number of learners who listed the factor
mom	29
dad	7
sister	5

brother	2
aunt	1
uncle	1
family/parents	17
friend	4
English teacher	16
myself	9
my pet	4
willingness to study English	2
English language popularity	1
willingness to be the best	1
trip to England	4
trip to other countries	1
better job	2
good marks	15
presents	3
easy tasks	1
time for after school activities	2
nothing/nobody	6

Figure 5 illustrates some of the learners' comments on how their mothers and parents stimulate their learning process.

Figure 5. Some of the learners' comments to question 10.

- L1: ...mom because when I go abroad, I can make (missing element in the original 'conversation') in English.
- L2: ...mom, she buys things for me or I get more pocket money.
- L3: ...mom, she says I can't use my cell phone any more.
- L4: ...mom, or an F in English at the end of the school year.

L5: *...mom and my future.*

L6: *...my parents say English will be useful in the future.*

L7: *...mom says that when I grow up, I can use English well.*

The question is what can be done to help language learners overcome environmental difficulties. Komorowska (1978, 2001) suggests that language teachers should be careful observers and be able to distinguish those learners who put little effort and involvement in studying a foreign language from the learners who do not demonstrate this type of disturbing linguistic behaviour. Komorowska (2001) further consolidates her claim that social background does not determine the success or failure in learning a foreign language. Yet, those language learners who are supported psychologically and financially by their carers do not need to put a lot of effort into studying a foreign language and learn languages with greater ease and are more likely to become autonomous.

CONCLUSION

Personality has a direct impact on various aspects of human life. It determines the relationship between family, friends and colleagues, affects our social and occupational status, correlates with our cognitive and learning styles, motivation, confidence, intuition, including linguistic intuition, it influences the choice between individual and cooperative learning, risk taking style as well as our verbal and nonverbal language. Wilczyńska (1999) states that human language is directly related to our personality as it is challenging to change our natural way of communicating during a conversation or a friendly chat. Learners with various cognitive, behavioural or personality-oriented disorders have problems constructing uniform concepts, use grammatical structures or transmit meaningful messages, which has its impact on autonomous learning and consequently success in language learning.

A foreign language classroom exhibits a number of various behavioural and linguistic patterns due to diversified learner characteristics. Komorowska (1978, 2001) claims that the differences among language learners correlate with or are the result of environmental differences that language learners are raised in, that is their family, relatives, friends and colleagues who influence the way learners behave in the classroom, interact with and treat their classroom mates and teachers, and affect the learners' attitude to-

wards educational system and language learning. Environmental factors, e.g. parents' educational status, children's and their carers' interest in the importance of education and particularly language education, parents' knowledge and level of proficiency of the target language and most importantly learners' living and domestic conditions may enhance or hamper the development of learner autonomy to a considerable degree.

Although language teachers are incapable of manipulating the majority of the learners' individual characteristics, Komorowska (2001) claims that they can put a lot of effort into learning about their learners. This process will always ease classroom work, interaction, communication and will help achieve better educational effects.

REFERENCES

- Benson, Phil. 2003. "Learner autonomy in the classroom." In David Nunan (ed.). *Practical English language teaching*, 289–308. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Benson, Phil. 2013. *Teaching and researching autonomy* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Borg, Simon, and Saleh Al-Busaidi (2012). *Learner autonomy: English language teachers' beliefs and practices*. ELT Research Paper 12–07. London: British Council.
- Boud, David. 1988. *Developing Student Autonomy in Learning* (2nd ed.). New York: Kogan Page.
- Brown, H. Douglas. 2007. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (5th ed.). New York: Longman. Pearson Education.
- Bruner, Jerome S. 1978. "The role of dialogue in language acquisition." In Anne Sinclair, Robert J. Jarvella, and Willem J.M. Levelt (eds.). *The Child's Concept of Language*, 241–256). New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Busch, Deborah. 1982. "Introversion-extraversion and the EFL proficiency of Japanese students." *Language learning. A journal of research in language studies* 32: 109–132).
- Dickinson, Leslie. 1992. *Learner autonomy 2: Learner training for language learning*. Dublin: Authentik.
- Esch, Emily. 1997. "Learner training for autonomous language learning." In Phil Benson and Peter Voller (eds.). *Autonomy and independence in language learning*, 164–176. London: Longman.
- Esch, Emily. 1996. "Promoting learner autonomy: criteria for the selection of appropriate methods." In Richard Pemberton (eds.). *Taking control: autonomy in language learning*, 35–48. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Gass, Susan M., and Larry Selinker. 2008. *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course* (3rd ed.). Great Britain, New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
- Holec, Henri. 1981. *Autonomy in foreign language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Kohonen, Viljo. 1992. "Experiential language learning: second language learning as cooperative learner education." In David Nunan (eds.). *Collaborative language learning and teaching*, 14–39. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Komorowska, Hanna. 1978. *Sukces i niepowodzenie w nauce języka obcego*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Szkolne i Pedagogiczne.

- Komorowska, Hanna. 2001. *Metodyka nauczania języków obcych*. Warszawa: Fraszka Edukacyjna.
- Little, David. 1995. "Learning as dialogue: the dependence of learner autonomy on teacher autonomy." *System*, 23(2): 175-181.
- Nunan, David. 1992. *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Omaggio, Alice (1978). "Successful language learners: What do we know about them?" *ERIC/CLL News Bulletin*, May, 2-3.
- Rubin, Joan, and Irene Thompson. 1983. *How to be a more successful language learner*. Boston: Heinle cited in Nunan, David. 2000. *Language Teaching Methodology*, 171. Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd.
- Skehan, Peter. 1989. *Individual differences in second language learning*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Wakamoto, Natsumi. 2009. *Extroversion/introversion in foreign language learning. Interactions with learner strategy use*. Bern: Peter Lang AG.
- Wilczyńska, Weronika. 1999. *Uczyć się by być nauczonym? O autonomii w przyswajaniu języka obcego*. Warszawa, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

WPLYW OSOBOWOŚCI I ŚRODOWISKA SPOŁECZNEGO NA OBRAZ AUTONOMICZNEGO UCZNIA JĘZYKA OBCEGO

Streszczenie

W ostatnich latach wymogi ministerialne dotyczące kształcenia ogólnego wymagają od nauczycieli, a w szczególności nauczycieli języków obcych, stworzenia takich warunków pracy w klasie oraz poza szkołą, w których uczeń ma okazję do zdobywania umiejętności planowania, organizowania, oceniania swojej pracy, a także wzięcia odpowiedzialności za proces uczenia się. Tym zjawiskiem jest pojęcie *autonomii ucznia*, która jest kluczem do osiągnięcia sukcesu w uczeniu się języków obcych.

Istnieje bowiem wyraźny związek między odnoszeniem sukcesu w uczeniu się języków obcych a autonomią ucznia, czego dowodzą liczne dyskusje w literaturze poświęconej nauczaniu języków obcych, np. Borg i Al-Busaidi (2012), Nunan (1991), Omaggio (1978), Rubin i Thompson (1983). Kim jest uczeń autonomiczny i jakie czynniki wpływają na jego sukces? Jest to niezwykle złożony proces, na który składają się zmienne czynniki, takie jak stosunek ucznia do języka obcego, motywacja, umiejętności organizacyjne, a także indywidualne cechy uczniów, takie jak wiek, płeć, style poznawcze oraz style uczenia się, wybór strategii językowych, inteligencja, pamięć, a także wszelkie zaburzenia wynikające z zachowania i rozwoju poznawczego, które w tym przypadku mogą utrudniać rozwój autonomii ucznia. Celem niniejszej pracy jest wykazanie wpływu osobowości oraz środowiska rodzinnego ucznia na kształtowanie i rozwój autonomii uczącego się języka obcego w klasie, a także poza nią.

Niniejszy artykuł oparty jest badaniami, przeprowadzonymi w dwóch szkołach wiejskich w roku szkolnym 2013/2014, a dotyczącymi autonomii ucznia. W badaniach wzięło udział czterech nauczycieli języka angielskiego oraz 115 uczniów w wieku 11, 12 i 13 lat, których współpraca na lekcji języka angielskiego była intensywnie obserwowana przez okres dziewięciu miesięcy. Po upływie tego czasu respondenci wzięli udział w wywiadach opartych na kwestionariuszach. Z uwagi na to, że badania dotyczą wielu aspektów autonomii ucznia, w niniejszej pracy zostały zaprezentowane dane dotyczące sylwetki ucznia autonomicznego.

Słowa kluczowe: uczeń autonomiczny; uczeń odnoszący sukces w uczeniu się języków obcych; nauczanie języka angielskiego jako języka obcego; osobowość; ekstrawersja/introwersja; środowisko domowe; motywacja.