



**THE AUTONOMY APPROACH:
LANGUAGE LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM AND BEYOND BY
BRIAN MORRISON AND DIEGO NAVARRO -
BOOK REVIEW**

Ozlem Yagciogluⁱ

Full-time instructor, Dokuz Eylul University,
School of Foreign Languages, Izmir, Turkey

In this study, I would like to write the review of the book, entitled '**The Autonomy Approach**'. The authors of this book are Brian Morrison and Diego Navarro. It was published by the Delta Publishing in England in 2014. The International Standard Book Number of this book is 978-1-909783-05-8. It was edited by Mike Burghall and designed by Christine Cox. It was printed in Greece by Bakis Aebe. The introduction part of this book starts on page 3 and the title of that page is From the Authors.

This book has 160 pages. It has three parts and eight chapters. Contents of this book are listed between the pages of 4 and 6. The first part is Part A and it starts on page 7. In Part A, the autonomy is explained. The titles of the topics in Part A are as follows: 1- The Autonomy Approach 2- Approaching Autonomy 3- Approaching Self-Directed Language Learning 4- Adopting Self-Directed Language Learning 5- Activating Self-Directed Language Learning 6- Adopting Self-Directed Language Teaching 7- Activating Self-Directed Language Teaching 8- Accessing Metacognitive Knowledge 9- Applying Metacognitive Strategies 10- The Autonomy Approach in Language Learning 11- The Autonomy Approach in Language Teaching.

Morrison and Navarro (2014:18) denote that;

"Autonomy in language learning has been notoriously difficult to define and, while academics continue to disagree about the concept and refine the various definitions, teachers have interpreted it in different ways. As a result, it seems that, although there are some amazing practitioners doing inspirational work by handing control over to students, there are also many teachers who are still not quite sure what autonomy in

ⁱ Correspondence: email ozlemygcgl@gmail.com

language learning is all about. In fact, regardless of the definition used, no casual link has yet been established between learner autonomy and language development.

Nevertheless, by taking what is considered important in the field of autonomous language learning and using this as a way of approaching effective self-directed language learning rather than an away of developing autonomy, there can be a focus on self-directed language learning, target-language development and the empowerment of learners to make informed decisions about their own learning. The outcomes, for learners, revolve around language skills, language learning skills and their understanding of available resources and ways of using these to meet their language learning goals."

The four principles of the Autonomy Approach have been listed by Morrison and Navarro (2014:18) as: **1-** It is student-led **2-** It is guided **3-** It is focused **4-** It is collaborative.

Part B starts on page 25, finishes on page, and finishes on page 134. Chapter One starts on page 27 and finishes on page 42. The title of the first chapter of this book is **Starting with Expectations**. In this chapter, it has been mentioned by Morrison and Navarro (2014:27) that;

"Since one the most challenging aspects of individualized learning is coming to terms with new roles and responsibilities (both as teachers and learners), it is important to begin by clarifying what learners and teachers expect from each other and from the class. For teachers, when embarking on a course that may be quite different from learners' previous language learning experience, being very clear about the course expectations- amount of work, frequency of work, deadlines, assessment criteria-is essential for providing guidance for learners on how to succeed on the course.

There may be little learner autonomy when clarifying course expectations unless you intend to negotiate these, but there should be plenty of opportunities for learner autonomy within the expectations you stipulate : having clear rules can focus and support learners, particularly at the beginning of their journey into SDLL."

Chapter Two starts on page 43 and finishes on page 56. The title of chapter two is **Goal-setting and Diagnostics**. The subtitles of this chapter are as follows: **1-** I want to be able to --- **2-** I really want to be able to --- **3-** My future self **4-** Future situations **5-** Evaluating speaking **6-** Evaluating listening **7-** Evaluating reading **8-** Evaluating writing **9-** Evaluating exam performance **10-** Keeping records

In Chapter Two, Morrison and Navarro (2014:43) state that;

“Goal-setting is pivotal to self-directed language learning because, without clear goals, it is impossible to make informed decisions about whether resources and activities are relevant. Once they have the goals, the learners can do a diagnostic activity to highlight possible areas to work on.

To set goals, it is important for learners to consider what they hope to do with the target language. Knowing the destination makes it so much easier to map out the possible paths for getting there:

- *Do they want English to follow football results on the internet-or to write their end-of-term report?*
- *Will they need English to work at the airport-or as a lingua franca for their travels in South East Asia?”*

Chapter Three starts on page 58 and finishes on page 68. The title of the chapter three is Choosing and Using Resources. The following are the subtitles of this chapter: 1- Treasure hunt 2- Site search 3- Working with Others 4- Choosing then using 5- All change! 6- Collecting and sharing 7- It's not what you do 8- Time is of the essence 9- Resource appraisal 10- Lifestyles and learning spaces

As it has been mentioned by Morrison and Navarro (2014:58):

“When choosing resources, learners can go from one extreme-where they stick with the resources that they have always used throughout their school experience-to the other-where they latch on to anything new, regardless of how effective it might be.

With this range of attitudes to learning from new resources, it is clear that there are multiple challenges facing teachers when facilitating self-directed language learning and dealing with materials.

- *The first of the challenges is making learners aware that materials exist.*
- *They also need to know how they can use those resources.*
- *Finally, they should be able to reflect on the resources they use, and evaluate them in terms of their language learning goals and their lifestyle.”*

Chapter Four starts on page 69 and finishes on page 96. The title of the chapter four is **Spotlighting Strategies**. The subtitles of this chapter are as follows: 1- What's the difference? 2- Break it down! 3- To read or not to listen? 4- Getting ready to write 5- Getting ready to speak 6- Reading in action 7- Listening in action 8- Writing in action 9-

Speaking in action **10-** Post-reading strategies **11-** Post-listening strategies **12-** Post-writing strategies **13-** Post-speaking strategies **14-** Select, note and memorise.

Chapter Five starts on page 98 and finishes on page 110. The title of the chapter five is **Developing a Learning Plan**. The subtitles of this chapter are the following titles: **1-** Killing two birds **2-** Week by week **3-** Month by month **4-** PURE plans **5-** SMART targets **6-** Individual development plans **7-** Time well spent? **8-** Evaluating the experience.

Chapter Six starts on page 111. The title of the chapter six is **Tracking Learning**. The subtitles of the sixth chapter are as follows: **1-** Take note! **2-** Check out the chunks **3-** Weekly logging **4-** Daily logging **5-** Skills journals.

Chapter Seven starts on page 120. The title of the seventh chapter is Evaluating Progress. The following are the subtitles of this chapter: **1-** Let's see where we are **2-** How are we doing? **3-** Are you receiving me? **4-** Are we getting there? **5-** Am I on the right back? **6-** Did I hear you right? **7-** Reading digest.

Chapter Eight starts on page 131 and finishes on page 134. The title of the eighteenth chapter is **Measuring Development**. The subtitles of this chapter are as follows: **1-** PIME analysis I **2-** PIME analysis II

In this chapter, it has been mentioned by Morrison and Navarro (2014:131) that;

"In language learning contexts where learner autonomy and its various subsets (self-directed learning, self-access learning) are valued, there is marked difference in how assessment is perceived and carried out.

Within these contexts, self-evaluation of language skills exists as a central tenet of learner autonomy-incorporating learner perception and systematic evaluation of progress. The rationale being that if learners are going to be asked to take more responsibility and ownership for their learning-in the interest of benefiting their overall language learning-then they need to learn how to measure their own development."

Part C starts on page 137 and finishes on page 153. The title of this chapter is **The Autonomy Approach**. The subtitles of this chapter are as follows: **1-** Rethinking and reacting **2-** Researching and reacting **3-** Researching out and reacting.

In this chapter, Morrison and Navarro (2014: 137) state that;

"The autonomy approach contains a wide selection of activities that we have used with our own learners to encourage them to consider various fundamental factors connected to their language learning.

- *Many of the concepts-such as goal setting. SMART targets and reflection-originated in other fields and have been adapted to language learning in Part B of this book.*
- *Likewise, these concepts can just as easily be applied to teacher development-and they have been specifically used, whenever relevant, in Part C.*

This gives you an opportunity to use activities that mirror what you may already be doing with your learners-so you can be made more aware of how it feels to set goals, choose targets and reflect, while participating in authentic professional development activities."

Morrison and Navarro (2014: 139) also state that;

- *There are many ways to clarify your beliefs, and you can do this alone or with others; as an unstructured activity or with a framework to guide your thoughts. For example: Create a mindmap that you add to over a period of time.*
- *Write your beliefs down in one sitting, or keep a journal which you add to over time. Come up with a list of questions you think will cover what you want to talk about, on a list of elements you think are essential for teaching and a rationale for selecting these. Use (or adapt) one of the worksheets from Chapter One in Part B-such as What do you expect? or Believe me when I say ---- or from an alternative 'beliefs worksheet' you have access to.*
- *Work with a colleague. You can discuss your ideas together or take turns to be the interlocutor, whose task it is to encourage in depth thought around the responses given.*
- *In planning how you will clarify your beliefs, you should also consider how you will keep a record of your ideas, both during the awareness-raising stage and when creating a record of your philosophy."*

In conclusion, in this book, it can be said that the role of the autonomy approach in language learning in the classroom and beyond has been unearthed and how the autonomy approach can be gained in language learning has been explained with various kinds of classroom activities and games. Students who attend classes regularly and the ones who love learning languages will certainly like new and different approaches while learning new languages. The readers of this book will have the opportunity to find different kinds of classroom activities to gain learner autonomy in their classes. I can suggest this book to all of the language educators, professors and teacher trainers to use in their classrooms.

References

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