

**Katja Komljanec**  
katja.komljanec@gmail.com

UDK [81'243:373.3]:37.018.43  
DOI: 10.4312/vestnik.12.277-294

**Lara Šebalj**  
larasebalj@gmail.com



## **ENCOURAGING LEARNER AUTONOMY DEVELOPMENT IN DISTANCE TEACHING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

This article, based on the MA thesis of the same title, explores learner autonomy and distance learning and treats them separately but also proves that they relate to each other in many aspects. The article also observes what the teacher's role is in the development of learner autonomy as well as in effective distance learning.

The first part deals with the definition of learner autonomy and its application to the classroom environment. It also introduces concepts that are connected to it, such as the psychology of the learner, learner strategies, motivation, and a discussion on the teacher's role in the encouragement of learner autonomy.

The second part focuses on distance learning by first discussing the incorporation of technology into teaching EFL, and then delves into distant teaching and learning. This part was largely influenced by the context of this year's pandemic and discusses the importance of the development of learner autonomy for successful distance learning.

As we were able to observe this year, it is not impossible for the entire world to change the school system in a matter of days. With the speed at which the coronavirus or COVID-19 was spreading, countries were forced to drastically adjust the ways of teaching we were accustomed to prior to the pandemic. In a matter of a couple of weeks or even days, schools were forced to move their teaching processes online, most having no experience of distance teaching. An even bigger obstacle was distance learning – how the students would adjust, and not only work on school matters at home, but learn new materials on their own. For that reason, we decided to research how teachers encouraged the development of learner autonomy in these circumstances in order to help them develop as much as possible, and how the students performed under such conditions.

## 2 DEFINITION AND KEY CONCEPTS

Learner autonomy was first defined by Holec in 1981 in a seminal report published in the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project. He defined the term as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Benson 2007: 22). Holec (1981, in Little 1991: 7) delineates the term further by stating it means:

[...] to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, i.e.:

- determining the objectives;
- defining the contents and progressions;
- selecting methods and techniques to be used;
- monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking (rhythm, time, place etc.);
- evaluating what has been acquired.

(Little 1991: 7)

Although the definition later varied from one author to another, Benson (2007: 22) stated that it is important to note that learner autonomy is "an attribute of learners", and that they cannot become more autonomous by simply having to be, but must be guided in the freedom they are given. He therefore stresses the importance of the role of the teacher and that learners should be guided towards autonomy. Little (1991: 4), on the other hand, after taking into consideration the psychology of the learner, suggests learner autonomy is a *capacity* which the learner can achieve by focusing on their own learning process and relating it to their experience. Little in this way implies learner autonomy is a quality the learners should acquire on their own. Legenhausen (2011: 387) defines learner autonomy by describing an autonomous learner as being intrinsically motivated, taking charge of their own learning, having developed a metacognitive awareness of what the learning undertaking implies, being active in their learning process, having developed a strategic learning competence, and practicing self-evaluation. Kumaravadivelu (2003: 131) points out that learner autonomy does not only benefit the learning process but has other far-reaching implications, namely an overall better understanding of the self and the predisposition to become a more independent individual. Depending on how involved the teacher is in the learning process, Kumaravadivelu (2003: 132) distinguishes between self-instruction (no direct control of the teacher), self-direction (learners accept responsibility for all decisions concerning the learning process, but not for its implementation), self-access learning (learners use self-access teaching materials) and individualised instruction (the learning process is adapted to each individual learner).

Considering all the major researchers, we summarise the key elements of an autonomous learner as (i) being able to take control of their own learning, (ii) having awareness

of their learning process, (iii) being intrinsically motivated, (iv) having developed personal learning strategies and (v) practicing self-evaluation.

Scharle and Szabo (2000: 7–9) propose some important concepts connected to encouraging the development of learner autonomy, namely: motivation and self-confidence, monitoring and evaluation, learning strategies, cooperation, and group cohesion, sharing information with the learner, consistent control and delegating tasks and decisions. These aspects adopted by the teacher ensure the better development of learner autonomy and a successful learning process.

Legenhausen (2011: 380) introduces three principles for implementing autonomous language learning, ordered hierarchically as underlying, guiding, and procedural. He states that teachers should be aware that “language learning is a ‘creative construction process’” (*ibid.*), and that the basis for this construction should be the authentic communicative interaction, as studies show that communication is the principal language acquisition method. He states that awareness-raising, authenticity, and autonomy together form “the essential properties of the educational enterprise” (*ibid.*: 381). He also suggests group work as an effective method with which students acquire communicative competence and allows them to reflect on the learning process.

## 2.1 Collaborative learning

As collaborative learning is one of the key aspects of the development of learner autonomy, we researched the topic and found it can lead to great results “on a wide range of cognitive and affective variables, including achievement, thinking skills, interethnic relations, liking for school, and self-esteem” (Jacobs and Hui Shan 2015: 4). The authors of this earlier study present four principles which can guide teachers towards successful implementation of group work: maximum peer interaction (frequent group discussions lead to active involvement usage of higher-order thinking skills, and also suggest working in pairs and smaller groups maximises peer interactions), equal opportunity to participate (turn-taking and effective delegation of tasks), individual accountability (encouraging responsibility, monitoring, peer assessment) and positive interdependence (setting a clear goal helps with students being motivated) (*ibid.*: 5–8).

Learner autonomy, according to Reinders (2010: 46–51), develops through stages. He discusses these in two different classroom settings, teacher-directed and learner-directed. Both types of classrooms follow the same stages but differ in their implementation. The stages are as follows: identifying needs, setting goals, planning learning, selecting resources, selecting learning strategies, practice, monitoring progress, and assessment and revision. He also stresses that reflection, motivation, and interaction are the core of autonomy development (*ibid.*: 49).

## 2.2 Learner-centred approach

To ensure learner autonomy development, a learner-centred approach to teaching should be used. In order to apply it, a teacher needs to consider many aspects related to the learners and learning process itself, and develop strategies and methods which help the learning process become as successful as possible. The first notion connected to this is the psychology of the learner. Little (1991: 17–18) studied George Kelly's personal constructs and discussed how learners constantly reshape their personal constructs by learning. Another concept connected to learner autonomy is language learning strategies. It is crucial for learners to learn about learning strategies and how to use them. Nunan et al. (1999: 70) discuss how in order for learners to be able to decide on what and how they want to learn, and thus become more autonomous, teachers must systematically educate them in the skills and knowledge they need. The classification of language learning strategies was researched by Cohen (2011: 682). He provides a classification in terms of function and the categories are cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Cohen (1999) introduces the term 'strategies-based instruction' and defines the concept as "a learner-centered approach to teaching that focuses on explicit and implicit inclusion of language learning and language use strategies in the L2 classroom" (*ibid.*: 62). He emphasises the importance of integrating strategies instruction in the teaching process as it encourages its development and usage.

Another key concept of language learning is motivation. Harmer (2007: 100–103) explains that teachers have a powerful effect on students' motivation throughout the teaching process, and although that is not their sole responsibility, they can encourage and even create it. He introduces five stages of building motivation, which are: affect (students will be more motivated when they feel that their teachers have their best interest at heart, care about them and respect them), achievement (teachers should create a learning environment that is challenging for the students, and also builds on their confidence), attitude (students need and want teachers who know what they are doing, can prove they are capable of teaching them and have a deep understanding of the subject and of what students should do), activities (teachers should know their students' needs, what types of activities they enjoy and feel engaged with) and agency (students should be involved in some of the decision-making and thus can take responsibility for their learning).

The teacher's role in the development of learner autonomy is vital, as they are the ones who plan and carry out the teaching process and shape the knowledge of their students. By teachers encouraging autonomy, students can learn how to solve problems on their own, come up with more creative solutions to tackle different issues, and become more self-aware and confident, because they have to trust their own knowledge and abilities in order to complete tasks (Little, 1991).

Self-assessment is another concept related to the learner-centred approach to teaching. McMillan and Hearn define it as "a process by which students 1) monitor and evaluate the quality of their thinking and behavior when learning and 2) identify strategies that

improve their understanding and skills” (McMillan and Hearn 2008: 40). The authors also provide several positive effects of self-evaluation, noting that it promotes intrinsic motivation, internally controlled effort, a mastery goal orientation, and meaningful learning (McMillan and Hearn 2008: 40).

### 2.3 Technology and distance teaching

Technology plays a major role in all aspects of life, including pedagogy. The incorporation of technology into the teaching and learning process was inevitable as the progression of computer technologies accelerated, and the nature of pedagogy is such that it is always advancing. This has helped teachers of English modernise the process of teaching, which consequently made the lessons more motivating for students. Mutlu and Eroz-Tuga (2013) conducted a research study that would answer their questions about computer-assisted language learning in connection with developing learner autonomy. They discovered (2013: 218) that the students involved in the research improved their language learning strategies, were more motivated, became more independent throughout the process, and found their own learning methods. With the help of their teacher, they went through strategy training, where they used computers and were given materials that encouraged autonomy.

Distance teaching has recently become a widespread form of education due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced schools to move their teaching and learning processes online in a matter of days. The drastic change required teachers as well as students to adjust to the new situation without prior experience or planning. Not only is it difficult for teachers to create a universal timeline of the course on its own, but it is even harder to do so when they are not in direct contact with students, since they must first know and understand them to then design quality materials and course plans. Students in primary schools, especially younger students, do not yet have the knowledge and experience that could result in effective and successful individual learning, which is why the quality of their learning process depends on the instructions they receive. It is important to acknowledge that the learning process involves much more than just the content or the materials, but also the questions of ‘how’ and ‘why’. Although individual learning should not be confused with autonomous learning, in the context of this year’s issues they are closely connected.

Jacobs and Hui Shan (2015: 2–4) suggest that when the learning process is student-centred, learners can actively help create their own learning environments, take responsibility for their learning, and develop autonomy. The teacher should merely be a facilitator that guides the learner towards knowledge. In the context of foreign language classes this not only raises learners’ motivation and confidence in the focal language, but it also helps students become more aware of the language and learning process, and more independent from the teacher.

White points out the importance of self-awareness in the learning context by saying; “the ability of each learner to identify, participate in and manage learning experiences, which match their individual learning needs, is essential to fully benefit from the opportunities available in distance learning.” (White 2004: 1). Another important discovery was made by Collins (2008: 535), that the development of autonomy is closely connected to online communication, which should be relevant and useful, as well as to social interactions, which help with the development of cognitive complexity, and to collaboration rather than independent studying. Not only should teachers often interact with their learners about their progress and materials, but they should also provide them with tasks that encourage teamwork.

### 3 RESEARCH

The purpose of the research was to explore how learner autonomy was manifested during the time of the pandemic, where the learning process had to be moved online. The aim of the research was to prove that autonomous learning plays a major role in the effectiveness of the learning process. Another aim was to establish how the teachers in primary schools encourage the development of learner autonomy and how this benefitted the students’ learning process during the pandemic.

#### 3.1 Hypotheses

With our research we examined five hypotheses. The basis for the research was the interviews conducted with nine primary school teachers. We also designed a questionnaire which 132 students completed.<sup>1</sup>

The following hypotheses were confirmed or partially confirmed:

1. Teachers in primary schools use many ‘tools’ for the encouragement of learner autonomy (i.e., motivation, self-evaluation, decision-making, collaborative learning, etc.)

Based on the interviews we concluded that the teachers have a clear idea of what learner autonomy is and how to encourage it. Most of them mentioned independent learning, which is the key aspect of autonomous learning. All teachers also agreed that they play a vital role in the development of learner autonomy, and that it does not develop on its own. They suggested a broad range of activities and tools they use on a daily basis which help students take control of their learning. Especially important are the motivational tools and learning strategies on which they spent the most time during the lessons, and are integrated into the lessons themselves. According to

---

1 The interview and the questionnaire are in the appendices in the language they were conducted in, i.e., Slovene.

their answers, we can conclude that the interviewed teachers often let their students decide on the content of their learning material, especially for various projects or presentations. Although not all teachers are in favour of collaborative learning, those who do practice it say it is very successful and efficient.

2. During the pandemic, students acquired new learning strategies, motivational tools, and other competencies which made them more autonomous learners.

Although the teachers were not very optimistic about students being successful in distance learning, the students nevertheless did learn on their own. They were forced to discover new strategies and organise their schedules. Many had to find alternative resources for explanations, which is a key aspect of learner autonomy. Even though not all succeeded, the ones who did benefitted greatly from distance learning, as reported by the teachers as well as the students in the questionnaires. The results of the questionnaire also showed that students are aware of their learning styles and learning strategies which helped them towards a more successful learning process.

3. Teachers in primary schools are confident that their students acquired enough learner autonomy during the school year (as well as in previous years), and thus that the distance learning process during the pandemic is effective.

This hypothesis was partially confirmed, as the opinions of the interviewed teachers were split on this issue. The teachers said that students differ in how autonomous they are and that, in general, those who had established good learning habits beforehand were more successful. However, there are still exceptions to this rule. Some students who struggled at school were now more organised and learned better this way. Others who were considered 'good' students before, now lost motivation or interest in learning. Teachers said some students benefitted from distance learning, while others were lost. We conclude that each student is different and that we cannot generalise with regard to this hypothesis.

4. Students feel more confident in their learning abilities after experiencing distance learning and are more aware of their learning strategies, the importance of self-evaluation, etc.

This hypothesis was also only partially confirmed. The results of the questionnaire showed that distance learning was a challenge for the majority of students. Fifty percent of students answered that distance learning was harder than normal school, which suggests they face some challenges in this new context. The main reason for this was the lack of explanations, which forced students to find other resources for these and use them for independent study. We were not able to obtain enough information to decide whether students know the importance of self-evaluation, only that 77% of students practice it on a regular basis. This is a positive result, as the majority of students were able to provide a strategy of how they self-evaluated.



The results of the interviews were, however, less positive, as the teachers reported that only about half of students thrived while distance learning and discovered new learning styles and strategies, and the rest were not as successful.

The following hypothesis was rejected:

1. The activities (that the teachers provided during the pandemic) work positively towards the development of learner autonomy.

Teachers reported that due to the change to distance learning being so sudden and the lack of preparation for it, the scope of the normal workload was reduced by a third. They had to change their teaching style in a matter of days and make several adjustments. The primary focus was not to encourage learner autonomy, but to reach as many students as possible and make the learning process attainable. There are, however, some exceptions; several teachers reported that as they were able to continue the lessons either via videoconferences or other mediums, they of course tried to provide quality materials as well as explanations, motivational tools, and self-assessment options to ensure the development of successful autonomous learning. The most important aspects were explanations and materials. The teachers reported that technology played a major role in distance learning because students generally enjoy working with computers and were, in some cases, even more motivated to learn when using them.

An interesting aspect to observe was also how the instructions changed during distance teaching. More specifically, most teachers reported that they had to present very clear and detailed instructions to ensure that all students could understand and execute the learning process.

### **3.2 Comparison and discussion**

A comparison of the results of the interviews and questionnaires showed they share one important aspect; both the teachers and students expressed that the quality of explanation is the key to successful learning, as it ensures an understanding of the materials. Learning without understanding translates to rote learning, which is not conducive to autonomous learning. In addition, the teachers pointed out that understanding the materials leads to higher levels of intrinsic motivation. The first step towards encouraging learner autonomy is therefore to combine quality and engaging materials with a good explanation. This leads to students being more motivated and learning successfully on their own.

The second major point to be considered was the answers to the questions about the factors contributing to successful distance learning, in which the teachers all agreed that home environment was the most important aspect. The term home environment primarily entails the attitude the parents have towards school, i.e., how important it is to them and



why, the amount of attention they pay to it, and their opinion of the teachers and subjects studied. In most cases, students take similar positions towards school as their parents. It is therefore of great importance to present a positive attitude towards school to students from the beginning. This can be achieved through encouragement that students get from parents, the amount of help with schoolwork, and general interest in their learning process.

Teachers reported that working habits contributed greatly to successful and unsuccessful distance learning. The analysis of the results from the questionnaire shows that the students use numerous learning strategies and self-evaluation options, and many even said they developed new ones during their time distance learning. The results also show that the students enjoy working with computers and that distance learning presented an opportunity to develop new learning styles and strategies, which helped them become more autonomous. Moreover, the analysis confirmed that distant teaching took many forms. Students reported using several mediums and channels, such as e-classrooms, videoconferences, project work, interactive games, interactive coursebooks, emails, and various applications. Many of these are not standard classroom tools, and by incorporating them into their lessons the teachers introduced new elements that forced the students to adjust and learn in a different way. This change affected the learning process in a positive way, as it offered variety and options for the students to choose from, and thus they could find what fits them best.

The main problem of distance teaching and learning was the lack of contact between teachers and students. The teachers stated that the main difficulty they experienced was the fact that they were not prepared and that they could not monitor all of their students appropriately. This lack of contact was also reflected in the answers of the students, as the main problem for them was the lack of explanations. Of course, explanations were still there, but took on different forms – the students often had to use the coursebook or other resources to find explanations, which posed a challenge due to the fact they were not prepared to use them effectively. The pandemic created a unique situation where the whole teaching and learning process was moved online very quickly and without preparation. Teachers struggled because they had no proper feedback and students were suddenly alone, forced to work independently. The change was so abrupt that teachers focussed on reaching as many students as possible, and not whether they were promoting the development of learner autonomy. We need to consider, however, that the students were autonomous in their learning as they had no other option. They had to be responsible for their own schedules and time allocation, they needed to decide on how they are going to organise their work, they had to be resourceful when it came to finding alternative explanations or additional materials online, and they often had to work on their own, whereas in the classroom they normally worked in pairs or groups.

What would benefit students in primary schools who had to engage in distance learning is the systematic incorporation of learner development strategies into the lessons in order for them to acquire skills which would allow them to learn more efficiently. These

skills are beneficial in any learning context, but were much needed in distance learning and teaching. In this context, teachers should generally focus more on aspects of the lessons which encourage the development of learner autonomy, such as collaborative learning, self-evaluation, motivation, learning styles and strategies, as well as the incorporation of technology into the learning process. On this last point, technology is an important part of today's society, and being able to use it to find resources is an essential skill every student needs to acquire. Not only are students now more than capable of learning and understating the online world and how it works, they usually already know the basics at this age. Knowing how to use it to learn and advance in their knowledge would thus be extremely useful. Especially when it comes to learning English, the internet serves as a very valuable resource that can be exploited in numerous ways and can be highly motivating for students, since they usually enjoy using this technology.

Since we do not know what the future holds, it is impossible to determine the best course of action. Nonetheless, seeing how quickly the world can change and how necessary technology is, now even more so than before, we can safely say that teachers should learn about and regularly include technology in their teaching. The pandemic changed the way we view distance teaching and learning, which will now become more widespread – due to its convenience, if for no other reason. However, knowing how to use technology is not enough for students to learn and advance in English as a foreign language. They need to have a better understanding of what technology can offer and the various elements that encourage the development of autonomy, so that distance learning can help them, instead of slowing their learning down.

As a suggestion for further research, we would like to present the idea that parents are a major factor influencing the development of learner autonomy. Not only do parents present the biggest authority in their children's lives, and therefore have the most impact on how they view school and learning, but they are also the main source for creating an environment that can benefit learners outside of school, which in turn has an effect on how they perform in school.

#### **4 CONCLUSION**

This article discusses the term learner autonomy, which was introduced by Henry Holec in 1981 (Benson 2007: 22), and defines it by taking into consideration several major researchers and authors who worked on the topic. The paper summarises the main points of learner autonomy as students (i) being able to take control of one's own learning, (ii) having awareness of their learning process, (iii) being intrinsically motivated, (iv) having developed personal learning strategies, and (v) practicing self-evaluation.

The theoretical overview suggests that in order to encourage learner autonomy teachers should pay attention to certain key concepts such as collaborative learning, the

psychology of the learner, how to develop intrinsic motivation, the development of language learning strategies, and self-evaluation. Moreover, teachers need to understand the role they play in their students' learning process. It also touches on distance teaching and learning, with the added element of technology. Teaching with technology has become a standard in EFL/ESL. However, this year's pandemic forced teachers and students to move the whole teaching and learning process online, revealing that the teacher's role is crucial for a successful learning process.

The purpose of the empirical part of this study was to determine whether teachers in primary schools in Slovenia encourage learner autonomy and in what ways. The aim was also to explore how the teaching and learning process adapted to the situation caused by the pandemic, and whether students became more autonomous in their learning as they were forced to be more independent. Although our expectations with regard to the hypotheses were not fully met, it turned out that encouraging the development of learner autonomy is important to teachers, albeit it was not a priority in distance education this year. In addition, the teachers reported seeing an overall progress in the majority of their students' independence and use of learning strategies.

By analysing the results, we came to the following conclusions regarding learning autonomy and distance learning: (i) quality and engaging materials and well-executed explanations are key for successful learning, as they ensure understanding and intrinsic motivation; (ii) parents play a major role, as their attitudes towards school tend to be adopted by their children, and therefore a positive home environment is needed in order to advance in the learning process; and (iii) learner autonomy should be encouraged systematically throughout the teaching process, as it is crucial for successful learning in the case of another pandemic.

## REFERENCES

- BENSON, Phil. (2007) Autonomy in Language Teaching and Learning. *Language Teaching* 40 (1), 21–40.
- COHEN, Andrew D (1999) Language Learning Strategies Instruction and Research. S. Cottrell/D. Crabbe. (eds.), *Learner Autonomy in Language Learning: Defining the Field and Effecting Change*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999–61.
- COHEN, Andrew D (2011) Second Language Learner Strategies. E. Hinkel. (ed.), *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning: Volume 2*. New York: Routledge, 2011–681.
- COLLINS, Heloisa (2008) Distance Learning, Autonomy Development and Language: Discussing Possible Connections. *D.E.L.T.A.* 24, 529–550.
- HARMER, Jeremy (2007) *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Harlow: Pearson Education.

- JACOBS, George/Hui Shan TAN (2015) Advancing Learner Autonomy in EFL via Collaborative Learning. H. Puji Widodo (ed.), *Proceedings from the 7th International Conference on Teaching English as a Foreign Language (COTEFL)*. Purwokerto: University of Muhammadiyah, 2015.
- KUMARAVADIVELU, B. (2003) *Beyond Methods: Macrostrategies for Language Teaching*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- LEGENHAUSEN, L (2011) Autonomous Language Learning. Knapp, K./B. Seidlhofer/H. G. Widdowson (eds.), *Handbook of Foreign Language Communication and Learning*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011-373.
- LITTLE, David (1991) *Learner Autonomy. 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems*. Dublin: Authentik.
- MCMILLAN, James H./Jessica HEARN (2008) Student Self-Assessment: The Key to Stronger Student Motivation and Higher Achievement. *Educational Horizons* 87 (1), 40–49.
- MUTLU, Arzu/Betil EROZ-TUGA (2013) The Role of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in Promoting Learner Autonomy. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research* 51, 107–122.
- REINDERS, Hayo (2010) Towards a Classroom Pedagogy for Learner Autonomy: A Framework of Independent Language Learning Skills. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* 35 (5), 40–55.
- SCHARLE, Agota/Anita SZABO (2000) *Learner Autonomy: A Guide to Developing Learner Responsibility*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- WHITE, Cynthia J. (2004) Independent Language Learning in Distance Education: Current Issues. *Proceedings of the Independent Learning Conference 2003*. 20 September 2004. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.111.1074&rep=rep1&type=pdf> (Retrieved: 20 October 2020)

## POVZETEK

### VZPODBUJANJE RAZVOJA AVTONOMIJE UČENJA PRI POUČEVANJU NA DALJAVO V OSNOVNI ŠOLI

Osrednja tema članka je avtonomija učenja in kako učitelji v slovenskih osnovnih šolah spodbujajo njen razvoj.

Prvi del članka obravnava avtonomijo učenja, dejavnike, ki so pomembni za njen razvoj in druge koncepte, povezane s pojmom avtonomije učenja. Ključni vidiki avtonomije učenja so notranja motivacija, učne strategije, sodelovalno učenje in samoevalvacija. Teorija avtonomije učenja je v nadaljevanju povezana s kontekstom učenja na daljavo, ki smo mu bili letos priča ob svetovni pandemiji zaradi virusa COVID-19. Članek obravnava tudi uporabo tehnologije v poučevanju angleščine kot tujega/druega jezika in predstavi kako le ta pomaga k razvoju avtonomije učenja.

Drugi del članka predstavlja analizo in razlago odgovorov učiteljev v osnovnih šolah, s katerimi so bili opravljeni intervjuji, in učencev osnovnih šol, ki so izpolnili vprašalnik. Namen raziskave je bil preučiti kako se je avtonomija učenja pokazala pri učenju na daljavo, ko se je celoten učni proces zaradi epidemije prestavil na splet. Z analizo rezultatov sva potrdili oz. zavrnili pet hipotez.

Rezultati raziskave kažejo, da veliko učiteljev v poučevanje vključuje dejavnosti, ki vzpodbujajo razvoj avtonomije učenja. Glavna dejavnika, ki vplivajo na razvoj avtonomije učenja pri poučevanju na daljavo pa so kakovostna, privlačna in zanimiva gradiva in dobra razlaga. Učitelji so poročali tudi, da je domače okolje eden izmed glavnih elementov, ki pripomorejo k uspešnemu ali neuspešnemu učenju.

**Ključne besede:** avtonomija učenja, osnovna šola, učenje na daljavo, motivacija, tehnologija

## ABSTRACT

The central topic of the article is the development of learner autonomy and how teachers in Slovenian primary schools encourage it.

The first part of the article presents and explains what learner autonomy is, the factors important for its development, and other significant concepts connected to it. The key aspects of learner autonomy are intrinsic motivation, learning strategies, collaborative learning, and self-evaluation. The theory of learner autonomy is then related to the context of distance learning that we were able to observe this year, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The article also discusses the use of technology in teaching EFL/ESL and suggests it helps in the development of learner autonomy.

The second part presents an analysis and discussion based on the results of interviews conducted with primary school English teachers and questionnaires that were given to primary school students. The purpose of the research was to explore how learner autonomy was manifested during the time of the pandemic, when the learning process had to be moved online. By analysing the results, we were able to confirm or reject five hypotheses.

The results show that teachers use many activities that promote the development of learner autonomy. The research shows that in distance teaching the main factors that influence the development of learner autonomy are quality, attractive, and engaging materials, as well as good explanations. Teachers also reported that the home environment was one of the key aspects contributing to a successful or unsuccessful learning process.

**Keywords:** learner autonomy, primary school, distance learning, motivation, technology

## APPENDIX 1: INTERVJU ZA UČITELJE

1. Kaj si predstavljate pod pojmom avtonomno učenje?
2. Ali menite, da je avtonomno učenje pomembno za uspešno učenje? Koliko časa posvečate temu, da ga spodbujate? Ali menite, da se razvije samo od sebe?
3. Ali med poukom namenite čas temu, da učencem predstavite različne učne strategije? Na kakšen način? Kako pogosto? + primer (npr. učenje učenja)
4. Kakšne aktivnosti uporabljate, da svoje učence motivirate? Primer + kako jih motivirate za delo doma? (v smislu, da imajo učenci notranjo motivacijo, npr. V učbeniku, kaj že znam')
5. Kako se odločate o vsebini pouka? (npr., samo na podlagi učnega načrta in učbenika, gradiva s spleta, itd.) Kakšen vpliv imajo na to učenci? Na kakšen način (ali kdaj skupaj določite vsebino ali jim pustite, da si vsebino sami prilagodijo? Ali se o tem pogovarjate, kako pogosto?
6. Kako pogosto izvajate aktivnosti, kjer morajo učenci sodelovati med sabo (skupinsko, projektno delo)? Ali je to odvisno od starostne skupine?
7. Ali menite, da so vaši učenci odgovorni za svoje učenje? Kolikšen je vpliv staršev? Ali je to odvisno od starostne skupine? Kako to spodbujate?
8. Kako spodbujate samoocenjevanje? (učbenik, domače naloge)
9. Kako ste zgoraj omenjene aktivnosti prilagodili pouku na daljavo?
10. Ali ste z učenci imeli videokonference? Če da, kako pogosto?
11. Kako so se spremenila navodila, ki jih dajete učencem pri pouku na daljavo? Kako pogosto ste bili v stiku z njimi? (kako ste pošiljali gradiva, e-učilnica, e-mail ...?)
12. Ste imeli individualne ure z učenci? Koliko, zakaj?
13. Kako so potekali določeni deli pouka, kot so
  - a) Interakcija
  - b) Povratne informacije
  - c) Učenje 4 jezikovnih spretnosti (govor, poslušanje, branje, pisanje)
  - d) Preverjanje in ocenjevanje (tudi samopreverjanje)
14. Ali opazite spremembe v motivaciji pri pouku na daljavo? Ali uporabljate več aktivnosti za izboljšanje motivacije?
15. Ali opazite spremembe v uspehu pri pouku na daljavo? (ne nujno ocene, na splošno pri oddajanju nalog, sodelovanje pri video konferencah. Ali menite, da so bili učenci pripravljeni na uspešno učenje na daljavo že od prej, ali opazate večje težave?
16. Po vaših opažanjih, kateri dejavniki še vplivajo na (ne)uspešno učenje na daljavo? (starši, pomanjkanje socializacije, osamljenost, stres, tehnologija, starostna skupina..)

## APPENDIX 2: VPRAŠALNIK ZA UČENCE

### Q1 – Razred, ki ga obiskuješ.

- 5  
 6  
 7  
 8  
 9

### Q2 – Pri vsaki trditvi obkroži, kar najbolj velja zate.

	1. sploh ne velja zame	2. večinoma ne velja zame	3. delno velja zame	4. večinoma velja zame	5. popolnoma velja zame
Rad/a se učim angleščino.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Angleščina se mi zdi uporaben predmet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Za učenje si vedno pripravim urejen prostor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Za učenje si vzamem dovolj časa.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pomembno je kdaj in kje se učim.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pomembno mi je, da razumem snov.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pred učenjem si vedno zadam cilj (kaj vse se moram naučiti).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mislim, da se iz domačih nalog veliko naučim.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Če se učenja lotim na pravi način, se lahko naučim vsega.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**Q3 – Če mi je kakšna naloga težka (obkroži kar najbolj velja zate)**

Možnih je več odgovorov

- Poskusim sam/a najti rešitev
- Vprašam starše
- Vprašam učitelja/ico
- Vprašam sošolce
- Drugo:

**Q4 – V šoli najraje delam**

- Samostojno
- V paru
- V skupini

**Q5 – Najlažje se učim**

Možnih je več odgovorov

- Iz svojih zapiskov
- Iz učbenika
- Z reševanjem vaj
- Drugo:

**Q6 – Za učenje uporabljam različne učne strategije (npr. podčrtovanje, ponavljanje na glas, itd).**

- DA
- NE

**Q7 – Če DA, katere?**

**Q8 – Pred testom (ali spraševanjem) vedno najprej sam/a preverim svoje znanje.**

DA

NE

**Q9 – Če DA, kako?**

**Q10 – Naslednja vprašanja se nanašajo na učenje na daljavo.**

**Q11 – Obkroži, kar najbolj velja zate.**

	1. sploh ne velja zame	2. večinoma ne velja zame	3. delno velja zame	4. večinoma velja zame	5. popolnoma velja zame
Tehnologija mi ne predstavlja težav pri učenju na daljavo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Učenje na daljavo je bolj zanimivo, ker poteka prek računalnika.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Odkar se šolam na daljavo, bolj poznam svoje učne stile (tj. kakšen učenec/ kakšna učenka sem).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Odkar se šolam na daljavo, sem razvil/a nove učne strategije (tj. načine, kako se učiti).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Odkar se šolam na daljavo, večkrat sam/a preverim svoje znanje.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q12 – Ali je bilo učenje na daljavo lažje ali težje kot delo v šoli?**

- Lažje
- Težje
- Enako po težavnosti

**Q13 – Zakaj? (Npr. težje ker: ni bilo razlage, sodelovanja, preverjanje nalog, časovno organizirano... ali lažje ker: lahko sem si sam/a organiziral/a delo, več samostojnega dela, ....)**

**Q14 – Na daljavo smo se učili prek različnih medijev. (obkroži, kar velja zate)**

Možnih je več odgovorov

- Spletne učilnice
- Spletne klepetalnice
- Video posnetki razlag
- Interaktivne igre
- Video klici
- Projektno delo
- Drugo:

**Q15 – Kakšna je bila razlaga snovi pri šolanju na daljavo? (npr. samo učbenik, video razlage, napisane razlage itd.)**