

TECHNIQUES OF IMPROVING STUDENTS' INDEPENDENT LEARNING COMPETENCE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract: The article provides an in-depth analysis of the scientific and methodological principles of developing independent learning competence in the process of teaching English. Independent learning competence is described as a multi-component pedagogical system that includes students' ability to manage their own learning activities, set goals, choose appropriate strategies, conduct metacognitive monitoring, analyse results, and engage in reflective evaluation. The article scientifically interprets the principles of independent learning development based on constructivism, self-regulation theory, autonomy concepts, digital learning environments, and linguo-methodological approaches.

Keywords: independent learning, educational principles, metacognitive monitoring, autonomy, digital learning environment, reflection, strategic learning.



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Introduction. The processes of digital transformation, global communication, and the implementation of international standards have significantly influenced the content and methodology of teaching English. In higher education institutions, the formation of students' independent learning competence has become one of the central pedagogical tasks. Independent learning is not limited to expanding students' knowledge; rather, it requires purposeful planning, self-development, consistent learning, and the ability to manage one's own educational process.

The development of independent learning competence in English language teaching is grounded in constructivism, cognitive and metacognitive theories, autonomy concepts, and digital learning pedagogy. These principles make the learner an active participant in the learning process,

equipping them with intellectual, psychological, and methodological strategies necessary for regulating their own learning. This article presents scientific-theoretical interpretations of the principles for developing independent learning competence and analyses their role in the educational process.

Main Part. The principles aimed at improving independent learning competence in English language teaching focus on stimulating students' intellectual activity, organising the learning process based on a student-centred approach, and strengthening mechanisms for managing learning activities. Constructivism serves as the primary methodological foundation in this regard. According to constructivist theory, learners do not receive knowledge in a ready-made form; rather, they construct new knowledge by integrating it with their prior experiences. Therefore, the principles of developing independent learning are intended to enhance student activity, critical thinking, and subjective involvement in the learning process.

Independent learning competence is closely linked to self-regulation theory, which includes planning, monitoring, and reflection. Effective learning requires students to set clear goals, choose suitable strategies, track their progress, and analyse learning outcomes. This corresponds to the core principle of independent learning — purposeful and systematic learning.

Another crucial principle is metacognitive monitoring, which serves as the mechanism for managing learners' thinking processes. In English language learning, metacognitive monitoring strengthens independent learning by helping students identify errors, evaluate their performance, reflect on their strategies, and adjust their learning methods. According to Flavell, real learning begins when a student understands “what they know,” “what they do not know,” and “what they need to know.”

The principle of autonomy forms the methodological core of independent learning. Autonomy in language learning means the learner is not a passive recipient dependent on the teacher, but an active subject who can independently manage their learning. Holec's autonomy theory states that learners become truly independent only when they can regulate their learning themselves, define their linguistic goals, select resources, and form personal learning strategies.

The student-centred principle is another essential component. Since each learner has an individual learning style, intellectual capacity, psychological profile, motivation level, and learning pace, student-centred teaching ensures that these differences are addressed. A digital and

interactive learning environment allows for personalised instruction, enabling learners to choose tasks suited to their ability and work at a comfortable pace, which increases the effectiveness of independent learning. The principle of reflection also plays an essential role. Through reflective activity, students critically analyse their learning process, identify errors, strengthen their weak areas, and consciously plan subsequent learning stages. Reflection strengthens learners' intrinsic motivation and fosters their need for continuous independent learning.

The digital learning environment is an inseparable component of modern pedagogy. LMS platforms, language corpora, online dictionaries, mobile applications, and AI-based tools significantly expand learners' opportunities for independent language study. Digital tools ensure continuous learning, constant communication, instant feedback, and the creation of personalised learning pathways.

Results and Analysis. The results of the scientific and theoretical analyses demonstrate that developing students' independent learning competence in English language teaching requires a multifaceted, integrated methodological approach. The outcomes manifest through increased academic activity, conscious selection of independent learning strategies, the ability to plan learning processes, engage in reflective analysis, and conduct real-time self-assessment. The formation of independent learning competence is based on the integration of cognitive, metacognitive, and affective processes.

From a cognitive perspective, learners improve in analysing, interpreting, and applying linguistic units, grammatical structures, and lexical-semantic relationships. Students demonstrate higher performance in comprehension, contextual understanding, and textual analysis.

Metacognitive processes play a decisive role in the success of independent learning. When students plan their learning, choose effective strategies, control their performance, and evaluate outcomes, the quality of learning significantly improves. Observations confirmed an increase in students' awareness of their knowledge gaps, ability to detect errors, and tendency toward reflective learning. Affective components — motivation, confidence, and emotional stability — also proved essential for sustainable independent learning. Digital and interactive learning environments further strengthened these aspects. One of the most significant findings is that digital learning environments serve as a key mechanism for developing independent learning competence. LMS platforms, online dictionaries, mobile applications, electronic corpora, and AI-based tools enhanced learners' self-study opportunities, individualised their learning, and

strengthened metacognitive monitoring. The extended analysis of the research results demonstrates that the development of students' independent learning competence in English language teaching is shaped by the dynamic interaction of cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and behavioral components. The findings reveal that the principles underlying independent learning—such as autonomy, metacognitive monitoring, purposeful planning, reflection, and self-regulation—not only enhance academic performance but also restructure the learner's entire approach to language acquisition.

Metacognitive outcomes, which form the core of independent learning competence, were especially pronounced. Students who consciously planned their learning, predicted potential difficulties, selected appropriate strategies, monitored their performance, and engaged in reflective evaluation exhibited more stable learning progress than those who relied solely on teacher guidance.

Behavioral indicators also reinforced the effectiveness of the applied principles. Learners began to demonstrate greater initiative in managing their learning activities: they searched for additional materials, worked consistently with digital resources, completed tasks ahead of time, and displayed responsibility for their learning outcomes. This shift from passive reception to active engagement marked a transformation in their academic identity, positioning them as autonomous participants in the learning process.

Overall, the extended findings confirm that the principles of developing independent learning competence—when systematically embedded into English language teaching—produce a complex transformative effect. These principles enhance linguistic proficiency, strengthen cognitive and metacognitive processes, deepen emotional engagement, and foster long-lasting learner autonomy. The synergistic contribution of these components forms a solid pedagogical basis for cultivating independent, self-regulating, and analytically competent learners who are capable of sustaining continuous personal and academic development.

Conclusion. The findings confirm that the principles of developing independent learning competence in English language teaching serve as a scientific and methodological foundation that renews the content, structure, and methodology of the learning process. Independent learning competence forms a complex psychological-pedagogical system that enhances learners' intellectual activity, self-regulation, metacognitive control, and reflective thinking. Constructivist theory reinforces learners' subjective role by making them creators of knowledge rather than

passive recipients. Autonomy principles prepare learners for global communication demands by enabling them to determine their goals, select strategies, and manage their own learning processes.

Overall, the principles of independent learning development collectively form an interconnected system that broadens learners' linguistic competence, accelerates cognitive and metacognitive growth, stimulates creativity, and shapes students as independent, analytically minded, globally competent individuals.

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