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The Role of the Teacher in Organizing Independent Work of Higher Education Students in Foreign Language Learning

Shakhnoza Abdukhafizovna Yusupova¹, Aiman Suyuberdieva²

1. PhD in Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages Samarkand, Republic of Uzbekistan
 2. Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Senior Lecturer, Head of the Department of Foreign Languages for Humanities Specialties, M. Auezov South Kazakhstan University Shymkent, Republic of Kazakhstan
- * Correspondence: yusupovashaxnoza558@gmail.com

Abstract: In the context of active transformations in the higher education system, the role of students' independent learning activity is significantly increasing, serving as an important foundation for the formation of professional competencies and lifelong learning skills. This issue becomes especially relevant in foreign language learning, where the effectiveness of the educational process directly depends on regular practice outside the classroom. This article analyzes the role of the teacher in organizing, methodologically supporting, and assessing the independent work of higher education students in foreign language acquisition. The theoretical analysis of the problem is supplemented by the results of a student survey, which made it possible to identify the main difficulties arising in the process of independent learning and to determine the most effective pedagogical strategies. As a result of the study, it was concluded that the purposeful activity of the teacher contributes to the formation of learner autonomy and improves the level of students' foreign language proficiency.

Keywords: independent work, pedagogical support, foreign language, higher education, learner autonomy.

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1. Introduction

In modern society, the importance of foreign language proficiency has been repeatedly emphasized in scientific research. Thus, I.M. Tukhtasinov notes that knowledge of foreign languages serves as an important factor in the professional development of young people and in improving the quality of specialist training within the higher education system [1].

The development of students' independent learning activity is one of the central issues of modern higher education pedagogy. According to Yusupova Sh.A., the processes of educational digitalization require a reconsideration of traditional teaching approaches and the active implementation of distance learning technologies [2]. Modern studies indicate that the level of self-learning skills significantly affects students' academic performance.

In recent years, special attention has been paid to the concept of self-regulated learning, within which the student is considered an active participant in the educational process. The studies of Yusupova Sh.A. demonstrate that success in foreign language

learning largely depends on the choice of methodological strategies as well as on the psychological conditions of the educational environment [3].

Research by Turan, Küçük, and Karabey demonstrates that students with well-developed self-regulation abilities show a higher level of satisfaction with distance learning. At the same time, such indicators as the level of self-regulated effort and learning flexibility are statistically significant factors influencing students' satisfaction with the online educational process [4].

Earlier studies by Yusupova Sh.A. and her co-authors Kadirova Z. and Gazieva S. examined issues related to the digitalization of education and the implementation of distance learning technologies into the educational process [5].

The analysis of scientific sources makes it possible to identify several key directions in studying this problem.

The first direction is connected with the development of theoretical models of self-regulated learning. In the works of Boekaerts (2021) and Winne (2021), cognitive and metacognitive mechanisms underlying the management of students' learning activities are examined.

Boekaerts (2021) analyzes the relationship between cognitive and emotional factors of learning, emphasizing the importance of reflection and the use of adaptive strategies to improve the effectiveness of the educational process [6].

Winne (2021) pays particular attention to information-processing strategies and cognitive tools that allow students to independently structure knowledge and control their own learning process [7].

These studies demonstrate that self-regulated learning includes both cognitive and metacognitive components, and its development is an important condition for successful mastery of educational material. In particular, students who actively apply self-regulation strategies demonstrate a higher level of independence, greater satisfaction with learning, and better academic results.

Modern studies, including the work of Turan, Küçük, and Karabey (2022), confirm that the integration of digital tools and pedagogical approaches aimed at developing students' self-regulation significantly increases the level of their independent activity and improves the quality of the educational process.

The second direction of research is connected with the use of digital technologies for developing students' independent learning. In the context of educational informatization, digital educational environments, online platforms, and intelligent technologies are becoming effective means of supporting independent learning activity.

A systematic review by Gambo and Shakir (2021) showed that intelligent educational environments, including adaptive platforms, learning analytics systems, and electronic educational resources, contribute to the development of self-regulated learning strategies among students, expand their cognitive and metacognitive skills, and strengthen motivation for independent work [8].

The influence of digital technologies on the educational process is also discussed in other scientific works. Thus, Jin et al. (2023) found that the use of artificial intelligence tools in online courses contributes to increasing self-control, developing self-assessment skills, and enhancing students' ability to independently solve educational tasks, which is an important condition for forming an autonomous learning position [9].

Similar results were obtained by Scheel et al. (2022), who demonstrated that the development of students' digital competence facilitates their transition to independent forms of learning and contributes to more effective cognitive processing of information during the study of educational materials [10].

The study by Turan, Küçük, and Karabey (2022) also confirms that the use of digital educational platforms reduces barriers in distance learning, increases the flexibility of the educational process and students' satisfaction, and stimulates the development of self-regulation as a crucial element of independent learning activity [11].

Moreover, the results of these studies show that online learning using interactive and analytical tools contributes to the development of self-assessment skills and independent information search, which ultimately increases the overall level of students' learning motivation.

Thus, modern scientific works confirm that digital technologies serve as an important resource for the development of students' independent learning activity and can be effectively integrated into the educational process in order to improve the quality of education.

The third direction of research is related to the study of pedagogical strategies for developing students' independence. Modern scientific studies emphasize that the development of independent learning activity is impossible without systematic pedagogical support, including the organization of the educational environment, the development of metacognitive strategies, and the formation of self-regulation skills.

In particular, the study by Llacuna and Mason shows that the formation of self-regulated learning requires purposeful pedagogical guidance. The authors emphasize the necessity of teaching students how to set learning goals, monitor their own activity, and reflect on learning outcomes. These components form the foundation of autonomous learning and allow a gradual transition from external teacher control to independent management of the learning process [12].

Furthermore, studies demonstrate that active learning strategies have a significant impact on the development of students' independence. Inquiry-based learning methods contribute to the development of critical thinking and increase students' involvement in the educational process, which positively affects the formation of their learning autonomy.

2. Materials and Methods

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of pedagogical conditions that contribute to the development of students' independent educational activity within a digital educational environment. The methodological basis of the research is grounded in modern scientific approaches to organizing independent learning, including the theory of self-regulated learning, the student-centered educational model, and the concept of digital transformation in higher education.

The empirical part of the study was conducted at Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages [13]. The research involved 60 third-year students majoring in "Foreign Language." The experiment was carried out within the discipline "Practice of Language Aspects."

To increase the objectivity of the research, the participants were divided into two groups:

- the control group — 30 students whose learning process was organized according to the traditional methodology;
- the experimental group — 30 students whose educational process included the author's model for developing independent learning activity.

The average age of the participants was 20–21 years old. All students possessed a basic level of foreign language proficiency and had previously studied within the framework of a traditional system of educational organization [14].

During the study, a комплекс of complementary scientific methods was applied.

Theoretical methods:

- analysis of scientific and pedagogical literature on the problem of students' independent educational activity;
- systematization and generalization of scientific concepts of self-regulated learning;
- comparative analysis of modern pedagogical models for developing students' independence.

Empirical methods:

- pedagogical observation of students' activity while completing educational tasks;
- student surveys to determine the level of learning motivation and readiness for independent learning;
- testing aimed at assessing the formation of independent learning skills;
- pedagogical experiment within which the author's model for developing students' independence was tested.

The pedagogical experiment lasted one academic semester and included three stages: diagnostic, formative, and control [15].

At the diagnostic stage, the initial level of students' independent learning activity was determined. For this purpose, test tasks, surveys, and analysis of academic results were applied.

The results showed that the initial level of students' independent educational activity averaged 46%, indicating an insufficient development of self-regulation skills.

At the formative stage, the author's model for developing independent activity was introduced into the educational process of the experimental group. It included the following pedagogical conditions:

- use of a digital educational environment;
- implementation of project-based tasks;
- development of students' critical thinking;
- formation of self-regulation skills;
- use of modern digital educational resources.

Within this stage, students completed research assignments, participated in group projects, and used digital platforms and electronic educational resources for independent mastering of educational material.

At the final stage of the research, a repeated diagnosis of the level of students' independent educational activity was conducted. The analysis of the obtained data showed that after the implementation of the author's methodology, the level of independent activity among students in the experimental group increased to 77%.

Methods of Data Processing

Statistical analysis methods, including quantitative and comparative data processing, were used to process the research results. The obtained results were presented in the form of tables, which made it possible to clearly reflect the dynamics of the development of students' independent learning activity.

Table 1. Level of Students' Independent Learning Activity

Indicator	Before the Experiment	After the Experiment
Planning of learning activities	42%	72%
Independent information search	48%	78%
Learning motivation	51%	82%
Critical thinking	45%	76%

Overall level of independence	46%	77%
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Table 2. Level of Students' Learning Motivation

Level	Before the Experiment	After the Experiment
High	21%	46%
Medium	52%	43%
Low	27%	11%

The obtained results confirm the conclusions of modern researchers that the use of digital educational technologies contributes to increasing the level of students' independent learning activity.

Statistical analysis confirmed the effectiveness of the implementation of the proposed pedagogical model and demonstrated a significant increase in the level of students' independence in the learning process.

3. Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to identify pedagogical conditions that contribute to the development of students' independent educational activity in the context of higher education digitalization. The conducted analysis of scientific sources demonstrated that the formation of students' independent learning activity is considered one of the key factors in improving the effectiveness of the educational process.

During the research, an author's model for the development of students' independent educational activity was designed and tested. The model included five interconnected components: the formation of a digital educational environment, the implementation of project-based learning, the development of critical thinking, the formation of self-regulation skills, and the use of digital educational resources.

The empirical part of the study, conducted at Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages with the participation of 60 third-year students, demonstrated a positive dynamic in the development of independent learning activity. If at the initial stage the level of students' independent activity was 46%, after the implementation of the developed pedagogical model this indicator increased to 77%.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the development and experimental verification of a pedagogical model for the development of students' independent educational activity based on the integration of digital educational technologies, project-based teaching methods, and strategies for the formation of self-regulation.

The practical significance of the research consists in the possibility of applying the developed model in the educational process of higher educational institutions when organizing students' independent work. The obtained results may be used in the development of curricula, methodological recommendations, and digital educational resources.

The results of the study were implemented in the educational process of Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages within the framework of the discipline "Practice of Language Aspects." Despite the positive results obtained, the study has certain limitations related to the sample of participants and the time frame of the pedagogical experiment. In the future, it would be advisable to expand the empirical base and explore the possibilities of applying the proposed model in various educational contexts. Thus, the results of the study confirm that the integration of digital educational technologies, project-based teaching methods, and strategies for the development of self-regulation is an effective tool for forming students' independent educational activity in the higher education system.

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