
ASSESSMENT OF, FOR, AND AS LEARNER AUTONOMY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

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Learner Autonomy (LA), which came into the field of language teaching and learning at least two decades ago, has been widely defined as the capacity to control a person's own learning (Benson, 2011). It has been seen as an important educational goal (Ciekanski, 2007; Dang, 2010; Hurd, 2005; Raya & Vieira, 2015; Reich, 2002; Sinclair, 2000; Winch, 2002); therefore, the evolution in understanding LA is paralleled by an evolution in our understanding of assessments that are suitable for assuring and describing LA. Although it is really challenging for researchers to assess LA because it is a complex or multidimensional construct (Benson, 2010); probably assessing, measuring, or testing LA is regarded as unreasonable referring to the nature of LA (Benson, 2001); and students may have on a mask of autonomous learning when being assessed (Benson, 2010), researchers have been making efforts to formulate the models or develop various methods. Their aim is to assess LA in the belief that they will have more evidence of LA's educational strengths, and will be able to judge whether LA has been successfully implemented or not, to modify the procedures, and to promote LA more if necessary. As a result, benefits will be gained from assessing it for better learning, better teaching, and better society. The primary purpose of the present paper is to provide a comprehensive overview of the assessment of LA, assessment for LA, and assessment as LA, which can be compared to assessment of learning, assessment for learning, and assessment as learning. Firstly, the paper discusses how LA in language learning is assessed in the scholarly world. After a brief introduction of the construct of LA, the paper will critically argue for the need for assessing LA and take difficulties in assessing LA into account. Then, both quantitative and qualitative assessment methods of LA will be systematically reviewed. Secondly, the paper analyzes how assessment can improve LA, for example, the ways assessment may enhance learning. This refers to assessment for LA, or formative assessment. Thirdly, the paper examines how assessment can become an important part of LA. It is analogous to assessment as learning being a part of learning. This prioritizes the role of self assessment and peer assessment.