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**“Promoting learner autonomy in the process of developing listening competence of the students”**

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**INTRODUCTION**

In the time of rapid development of education, science, and technologies, one of the main tasks of the education system is the development of a person's desire for self-education and the ability to learn independently, which is impossible without learner autonomy.

Recently, the problem of developing learner autonomy, particularly while learning a foreign language, is of great interest to Ukrainian and foreign researchers. Nowadays, it is not enough to teach a foreign language as a set of theoretical rules and the most important communication skills. It is necessary to teach students to use a foreign language as a tool for critical analysis, experimentation, cooperation, and joint solution of problems, necessary for achieving success in the modern world. In addition, the development of learner autonomy boosts the formation of foreign language competence, because it increases students' involvement, awareness, and responsibility for the learning process. Therefore, the chosen topic is especially relevant, because learner autonomy is considered to be a necessary component of professional competence of graduates, and the key to successful language learning.

**The object** of the research is the methods of promoting learning autonomy of the students.

**The subject** of the research is the promotion of learner autonomy in the process of developing listening competence of the students.

**The aim** of the research is theoretical substantiation, practical development and experimental verification of promoting learner autonomy in the process of developing listening competence.

The aim of the research requires solving the following **tasks**:

1. to determine the role of promoting learner autonomy in foreign language learners, to outline its features and content;
2. To study the methods and strategies of promoting learner autonomy, to analyze the possibility of their application in the process of developing listening competence;
3. to design the activities for promoting learner autonomy in the process of developing listening competence;
4. to check the effectiveness of the designed activities.

 The formulated tasks of the research require application of the following empirical and theoretical **methods**:

* reviewing the literature in order to formulate the content, the features and the strategies for developing learner autonomy;
* arranging pedagogical intervention, and using questionnaires for checking its effectiveness;
* analysis and systematization for interpreting the results.

**The scientific novelty** of the research is determined by further study of the problem of promoting learner autonomy, particularly in the process of developing listening competence.

**The practical significance** of the research lies in the possibility of applying its results and materials while developing the guidelines for promoting autonomy of the students during the classes of English.

The **stages** of the research:

* studying the related literature;
* organizing the pedagogical intervention;
* interpreting the results of the intervention.

**Publications**. The fundamental provisions of the research were published  in the key messages "The evolution of the concept of learner autonomy" (Lukianenko, 2020) to the conference “Modern Foreign Language Education: cognitive and discourse, linguodidactic research” («*Сучасна іншомовна освіта: когнітивно-дискурсивні та лінгво-дидактичні дослідження*») (September 2020), and in the article "Promoting learner autonomy in the classroom" (Lukianenko, 2020) for the conference “Ukrainian science at the turn of epochs: problems and prospects of development” («*Вітчизняна наука на зламі епох: проблеми та перспективи розвитку*») (November 2020).

**The structure** of the master's paper. The research consists in introduction, three parts with conclusions, general conclusions, and the list of references.

**PART 1**

**THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF PROMOTING AUTONOMY IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING LISTENING COMPETENCE**

**1.1. The concept of learner autonomy**

One of the goals of the educational system is teaching young people to manage their own learning process, in other words - to be autonomous. This ability is especially important for language learners, as it significantly boosts their progress.

There are three statements, that are equally important for the theory and practice of autonomy (Benson, 2001, p. 6):

* The concept of learner autonomy is based on a natural tendency of students to take control over their learning. Thus, it can be represented in different ways and to different degrees, depending on individual characteristics of each learner and on the particular learning situation.
* Learners who lack autonomy can develop it if they are put in proper conditions and get appropriate preparation. One of the most important conditions is access to opportunities for practicing control over learning.
* Autonomous learning is more effective than non-autonomous - the development of learner autonomy improves language learning.

The development of learner autonomy in language classroom began in the 1980s, along with the Council of Europe’s Modern Languages Project and the publications of important works on the subject, such as Holec’s seminal report in 1981, the articles in the early issues of the journal “Melanges Pedagogique”, and the works presented at the seminar at the University of Cambridge in 1976 (Benson, 2006).

The first practical applications of autonomy in language classrooms were based on self-directed learning. As a result, self-access centres and training programmes appeared and provided the ground for experimentation. A lot of early experiments concerned adult learners, who did not have time, desire of opportunity to attend classroom-based courses. At that time, the term “learner autonomy” had two meanings; it was used both as an attribute of the learner (Holec, 1981), and as a type of learning situation.  For example, Dickinson defined it as “the situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his learning and the implementation of those decisions” (Dickinson, 1987, p. 11). For a long time learner autonomy was “associated with a radical restructuring of language pedagogy” and “the rejection of the traditional classroom and the introduction of wholly new ways of working” (Brookes, 1988).

However, such researchers, as Allwright, Dickinson, Dam and others worked on rethinking the term “autonomy” for it to be applied in the classroom without self-access or formal learner training. As a result, the second wave of interest in learner autonomy, and its application in the classroom specifically, appeared in the 1990s. The theoretical works on the subject acknowledged the psychological attributes of autonomous learners, and shifted from “independence” to “interdependence”. Little (Little, 1991) stated that learner autonomy did not require any particular mode of practice; it depended mostly on the quality of the “pedagogical dialogue” between teachers and students (Benson, 2006).

Another important step in the study of learner autonomy is re-established interest in the assessment of autonomy, including self-assessment and portfolios. This signified its movement into mainstream language education. As a result, it was recognized in the contexts of different language education concepts, such as motivation, self-regulation, teacher development, etc.

In recent years, the interest in learner autonomy is caused by the deconstruction of the conventional language learning classrooms due to the development of computer-based modes of studying. However, there is a tendency towards integration of “classroom” and “out of class” applications, resulting in new complex understanding of learner autonomy and its role in language teaching (Benson, 2006).

The scholars who study learner autonomy have distinguished the reasons for its promoting (Finch, 2002):

1. Active participation in the learning process and independent completion of the learning tasks makes the learning process more effective (Dickinson, 1995, p. 165). Students who are involved in different aspects of their learning are more motivated and focused.
2. Setting personal learning goals makes the learning process more purposeful and distinct (Little, 1991, p. 8).
3. In autonomous classroom there are no barriers to learning and real life. This enables students to transfer their autonomous behavior to different out-of-class contexts (Little, 1991, p. 8).
4. Learning a language is a continuous process, which should not be restricted to a classroom (Dickinson, 1987, p. 12). Therefore autonomous learners are more likely to master a foreign language, as their learning is not restricted to the classroom.

There are many approaches to defining learner autonomy. The most common and widely used definition was suggested by Henri Holec, in his work "Autonomy and foreign language learning" (Holec, 1981). The author defines this phenomenon as the “ability to take charge of one’s own learning”, which means taking responsibility for all the decisions about different aspects of this learning. According to this, autonomous students acknowledge that their academic performance and general success depends only on themselves rather than on other people. They also know how to manage themselves and they can organize the process of studying properly according to their needs.

Holec adds that this ability is “not inborn but must be acquired either by “natural” means or by formal learning – in a systemic, deliberate way” (Holec, 1981). The second way is more common, and it requires the skills of reflection and analysis, which enable students to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning. Therefore, learner autonomy is closely connected with the intrinsic motivation of the students: intrinsic motivation is required for accepting responsibility for one’s own learning and dedicating time to develop the skills of reflective self-management; and vice versa – the awareness of one’s achievements promotes the intrinsic motivation. This makes the learning process more efficient and effective (Holec, 1981).

Holec's definition remains central in this research, as it suggests the most accurate and understandable explanation of the concept of learner autonomy.

While the suggested definition remains the most common, it has many variations. In some of them “capacity” is used instead of “ability”, and “take responsibility for” or “take control of” – instead of “take charge of”. The definitions of this kind are based on the idea that learner autonomy is a feature of learners, not learning situations (Dickinson, 1987, p. 11). This means that learners do not develop autonomy simply by being put into the conditions, where they have no other choice. The described view signifies the most important development in the definition of learner autonomy (Benson, 2006).

**1.2. Models and approaches to defining learner autonomy**

The interest and active study of learner autonomy resulted in its application to different spheres of language teaching and learning.

As the concept of autonomy appeared to be rather wide, the scholars suggested different approaches to defining it, in order to represent it in all complexity and diversity. This contributed greatly to general study of learner autonomy, as the specific fields for further research were defined.

Benson (Benson, 1997) introduced the theory of different ways of representing autonomy. According to it, in educational context autonomy has three main approaches, described through the terms "psychological", "technical", and "political".

Psychological autonomy concerns students' ability to take responsibility for their own learning. It is viewed as an internal state, which does not depend on situational autonomy.

Technical autonomy is related to the process of learning a language outside the classroom and without a teacher.

Political autonomy is described as control over all learning processes.

Many other scholars suggested their views on this subject. For example, Ribe (Palfreyman, 2003, p. 15) described "convergence", "divergence-convergence", and "convergence-divergence" versions. He related "convergence" versions of autonomy to accomplishing general shared curriculum goals, and "divergence" perspectives are associated with providing wider choices and more open curriculum, which enables students to modify the learning process according to their own goals and needs.

O'Rourke and Schwienhorst (Little, 2003) studied autonomy from "individual- cognitive", "social-interactive" and "exploratory-participatory" perspectives.

According to the individual-cognitive perspective, learners constantly enrich their system of knowledge, and any new information is primarily compared to that existing system. That is why, new knowledge should not bring significant changes or contradict the existing one, in order to be integrated easily. Only the learners themselves can influence that integration, which highlights the key role of autonomy for a successful learning.

The social-interactive perspective is based on the connection between independence and interdependence. According to that, social interaction is viewed as a tool for increasing consciousness (self-awareness), and particularly in language learning - linguistic awareness.

Learner autonomy can be also regarded from the exploratory-participatory perspective, according to which cognitive tools serve as means of raising awareness. They provide opportunities for reflection on the learning process, which is crucial for developing learner autonomy (Little, 2003).

Oxford (Palfreyman, 2003) developed Benson's model and distinguished "technical", "psychological", "sociocultural", and "political-critical" contexts. Smith (Palfreyman, 2003) suggested more distinct opposition between "weak" and "strong" pedagogies of autonomy. He linked "weak pedagogy" with the version of autonomy as a capacity which learners lack, and which, therefore, needs to be trained. "Strong pedagogies" are related to the idea that learners already have a certain degree of autonomy, so the focus is made on creating together with the learners appropriate conditions for exercising their autonomy.

Kumaravadivelu (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) came up with the opposition between "narrow" and "broad" versions of learner autonomy. The narrow view concerns "learning how to learn", as students are provided with the necessary knowledge and tools for managing their own learning process. The broad version treats learning how to learn a language as a tool for developing students' critical thinking and recognising their human potential.

The variety of models illustrates the movement of the concept of learner autonomy into mainstream education, as each model demonstrates both common and accepted perspectives and more radical options. Moreover, most of the scholars recognize the fact, that in some contexts all represented versions of autonomy they describe can be valid. For instance, Ribe (Palfreyman, 2003) states that a beneficial learning environment should contain a mixture of the three versions of autonomy suggested by him.

Many "mainstream" versions of learner autonomy, however, often face criticism for focusing on the "lower" levels of autonomy. This criticism is based on the opinion that students are more autonomous, especially when it comes to choosing the learning content, than many teachers assume. From this point of view, the gradual approach may hinder the students' progress in developing autonomy, as higher levels of autonomy may not be reached.

Besides the "mainstream" definitions of learner autonomy, there are some alternatives. For instance, Pennycook considers learner autonomy to be a mean of "finding a voice in English" and overcoming cultural barriers (Benson, 1997, p. 48). Holliday introduced the idea of "social autonomy", stating that autonomy comes from the "social worlds" of the learners, which influence their in-class behaviour. Schmenk (Schmenk, 2005, p. 112) noted that autonomy often involves specific contexts - social, cultural, or institutional, that is why it does not have any specific distinctive features. Language educators value this concept as they view it as "a critical awareness of one's own possibilities and limitations" within the given circumstances.

Developing learner autonomy is a gradual process. David Nunan describes it as a matter of degree in his model of five levels of “learner action”. These levels are: awareness, involvement, intervention, creation and transcendence. It is to be noted that Nunan’s model concerns only language learning (Benson, 2006).

The level of awareness concerns students’ understanding of the learning goals and the reasons for choosing particular materials for achieving those goals. Involvement means encouraging students to choose their own goals from a range of alternatives. Intervention implies that students participate in adapting and modifying the learning goals, materials and tasks. At the level of creation students set their own learning objectives, choose materials and tasks. Transcendence is the last level, as students transfer their knowledge on out-of-class contexts.

Littlewood’s model (Benson, 1997, p. 81) consists in three stages and concerns learning approach, as well as language acquisition and personal development. From the standpoint of organization of the learning process, autonomy entails students’ ability to take responsibility for their own learning and to choose appropriate and personalized strategies for achieving learning goals. Regarded from the dimension of language acquisition, autonomy includes the ability to use language independently and freely in authentic communicative situations. In the context of personal development, it is regarded as a higher-level goal of individuals (Benson, 2006).

Littlewood also suggested a distinction between proactive and reactive autonomy. According to him, proactive autonomy “affirms students’ individuality and sets up directions which they themselves have partially created”; and reactive autonomy “does not create its own directions but, once a direction has been initiated, enables learners to organize their resources autonomously in order to reach their goal” (Littlewood, 1999, p. 75). Littlewood noted that inspite the fact, that many scholars consider proactive autonomy to be worth greater attention, reactive autonomy plays an important role both providing the way to proactive autonomy and being a goal itself.

These models assume that the development of learner autonomy is a gradual process, progressing from "lower" to "higher" levels. At the lower levels autonomy can be developed without radical educational reforms. For instance, Nunan (Benson, 1997, p. 201) stated that his model demonstrates how autonomy can be "an everyday addition to regular instruction".

An important development in the studies of autonomy is an emphasis on its psychology – in other words, on the qualities of autonomous learners. Henri Holec points out planning, selection of materials, tracking the progress and self-assessment (Holec, 1981, p. 4) as the qualities, which describe regular learning management, and, therefore, describe the exercise of autonomy rather that autonomy itself. This work relies on Little’s psychological approach. He considered psychology to be central in autonomy and singled out capacities for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action (Little, 1991, p. 4). However, Little does not point out the most important features of learner autonomy. This can be explained by two generally agreed ideas:

1) there are degrees of learner autonomy (Benson, 1997, p. 192);

2) autonomous learners can behave differently depending on the number of factors, among them: age, immediate learning needs, progress with learning, etc. (Little, 1991, p. 4).

As a result, the idea of learner autonomy is considered to have a range of potential meanings and different ways of representing these meanings in research and practice (Benson, 2006).

**1.3. The process of listening in the context of language learning**

Listening is an important language skill, which was neglected in ESL methodology for years. It got recognition in the context of communicative language teaching, which is based on face-to-face communication, and, therefore, requires the ability of listening comprehension. In fact, this language skill was recognised as a key to comprehensive input and language acquisition (Long, 2009).

Such change in the attitude towards listening comprehension was boosted by theoretical insights from different fields of knowledge, among the most influential are psychology, linguistics, communication studies and education (Long, 2009).

Vandergrift defines listening comprehension as "a complex, active process in which the listener must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, retain what was gathered in all of the above, and interpret it within the immediate as well as the larger sociocultural context of the utterance" (Vandergrift, 1999, p. 168).

Graesser and Britton state that "text understanding is the dynamic process of constructing coherent representation and inferences at multiple levels of text and context, within the bottleneck of a limited-capacity working memory" (Graesser, 1996, p. 349). This means that text comprehension is not extracting the meaning from the text, but constructing the meaning according to the level of language, personal experience and the context of the text. Rost (Rost, 2002, p. 40) claims that "listening is an intention to complete a communication", which means that listeners not only construct the meaning of the input, but also make suppositions about the intentions of the speaker. This idea illustrates two views on listening: the bottom-up processing and top-down processing.

According to the bottom-up processing, listening is viewed as the linear process of decoding the linguistic code in the following order: phonemes, words, phrases, utterances, texts. The understanding of the meaning - is the last step in this process.

The top-down view represents listening as the process of constructing the meaning from sounds. The listeners take into consideration the context of listening, and use their existing knowledge to comprehend the information. The context consists of the topic, the speakers and their role in the situation and relationship to each other (Nunan, 1995, p. 52).

The following cognitive principles allow to understand the process of listening in a better way (Long, 2009, p. 4):

* In order to process the information a listener must pay attention to the input and involve decoding and analysis of the signals.
* The processing of information happens in the following way: listeners recognise the words in a stream of speech and simultaneously divide the information into meaningful units. According to this principle, the bottom-up and top-down processings happen simultaneously. Therefore, one of the goals of listening instruction is facilitating recognition of the words and meaningful units.Visual aids, such as facial expressions, gestures, pictures, videos, etc. carry a significant part of the message and enhance the processing.
* During the processing of new information, listeners relate it to their existing knowledge and experience.
* This process is called top-down processing, and it helps listeners to  fill in the gaps in comprehension, and interpret the information without a complete dependence on linguistic units. The implication of the existing knowledge enhances processing of information and optimizes listening comprehension.
* The successful processing depends on how much input is processed quickly.
* In listening, processing of information is restricted in time, so an ability of automatic processing is definitely beneficial. Such automatization can happen at the phonological and grammatical level, and it helps listeners recognise lexical units more quickly. Segalowitz (Long, 2009) distinguishes two types of automatic processing: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative automatization concerns the speed of processing (the amount of lexical units recognised during listening); qualitative automatization concerns the amount of meaningful units, constructed during listening.

According to the social dimension, there are two points of view on listening comprehension: pragmatic and psychological. The pragmatic perspective concerns the ability to presuppose the intention of a speaker in a definite communicative situation, “which goes beyond the literal meaning of an utterance” (Long, 2009, p. 6). The ability to comprehend both linguistic and contextual input is considered to be a function of language proficiency.

The psychological view on listening comprehension is related to motivation. Vandergrift (Vandergrift, 2004) states that listening proficiency and motivation are interrelated, and the listeners with low level of motivation use fewer listening strategies, and therefore, they are less successful (Long, 2009).

**Conclusions to Part 1**

To sum up, learner autonomy has gained recognition in the field of education and became one of its goals. In language learning, it is associated with enhancing the learning process and students' progress.

Learner autonomy is a broad concept, which can be studied from different perspectives and therefore, has many different definitions and models. The definitions of learner autonomy are based on different views and ideas; some of them address this concept as a feature of learners, other claim that it depends on learning situations. Moreover, scholars represent this concept from different perspectives and broaden its original meaning, suggesting many different contexts for its application. Numerous models represent autonomy as a matter of degree, and suggest definite levels and stages, which mark students' progress on their way to learner autonomy.

Nevertheless, most scholars agree that it optimizes the learning process making it more purposeful, and enables continuous learning and self-development, which is crucial for mastering a language. Besides, autonomy is closely connected with other important concepts, such as motivation, self-regulation, awareness, learner-centredness, etc., and it provides opportunities for further development of the learning process.

Many studies address the psychological aspect of autonomy and point out sets of qualities, which characterize autonomous learners. Among them are abilities for planning, decision-making, tracking the progress, self-assessment, and others.

Listening is one of the four language skills, which is considered to be a key to comprehensive input and language acquisition.

Listening comprehension is based on constructing the meaning of the text according to one's level of language and existing knowledge. This idea is represented in two types of processing - bottom-up and top-down, which happen simultaneously and define the effectiveness of comprehension.

The process of listening can be also viewed according to the cognitive principles and social dimension.

**PART 2**

**PROMOTING AUTONOMY OF STUDENTS IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING LISTENING COMPETENCE**

**2.1 Developing learner autonomy of language students at university**

As learning a language is an ongoing process, we believe that it should not be restricted only to the classroom context. Most scholars agree that high levels of foreign language proficiency are seldom achieved only by the classroom learning, as it does not provide the necessary amount of exposure to language (Ellis, 1995).

Although classroom learning makes a huge contribution to mastering a language, it is often not enough to develop such a level of language skills, which allows learners to communicate freely in different social and professional contexts.

Therefore, developing learning autonomy can be considered a mean of facilitating the learning process and providing the necessary compliment to classroom based learning (Nunan, 2015). According to Nunan's observations, successful language learners:

* are highly motivated,
* they set learning goals for themselves,
* they track and evaluate their own progress,
* they use the opportunities to learn language beyond the classroom.

We noticed that most of these characteristics overlap with the general description of autonomous learners, which allows to affirm that autonomous learners are more likely to be successful.

In order to promote learner autonomy successfully, it is important to know the fundamental principles of this process. According to Benson (Benson, 2001) these principles include:

1. Involving students in their own learning.

2.  Offering options and resources.

3. Providing choices and decision-making opportunities.

4.  Supporting and motivating learners.

5. Encouraging reflection and self-evaluation.

These principles imply that:

* the teacher's primary role is facilitator rather than instructor;
* students do not rely on the teacher as the main and the only source of information;
* the teacher encourages students to learn for themselves and to make decisions about what they learn;
* students are aware of their own learning styles and the learning strategies which work the best for them (Nunan, 2015).

We believe, that in order to become autonomous, a student should acquire the ability to determine learning objectives, to choose relevant learning resources and scenarios, and to evaluate their progress. These learning abilities require "knowledge" skills and "know-how" skills. Knowledge skills are related to language culture and language learning culture, and include answers to the questions: "what is a language?", "how is it used?", "how is verbal communication constrained by socio-cultural means?", "what are linguistic skills?" (language culture); "what sort of process is acquisition?", "what roles can a learner have?", "what learning techniques can be used in different learning situations?", "what is evaluation?", "how to evaluate one's progress?" (language learning culture) (Little D., 2006). Therefore, to acquire the learning ability means to upgrade the students’ idea of language and language learning, and to obtain self-direction skills - which are necessary for taking proper learning decisions - by practice.

In formal educational contexts, learner autonomy includes active involvement in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating of the learning process. This means, that in order to develop autonomy, teachers should provide the opportunities for learner involvement and learner reflection (Little, 2006).

Learner involvement entails encouraging learners to share responsibility for the learning process and its results, and to actively participate in all learning stages. For example, the teacher and the students can analyze, discuss and evaluate different learning activities (Little, 2006). Learner involvement is a fundamental step towards developing autonomy, as it enables students to raise their awareness of the learning process itself and to find out the ways of managing this process.

Learner reflection means the ability of the learners to think critically while planning, monitoring and evaluating their own learning. It is also important for the learners to set their own goals and to be able to meet those goals both working individually and through collaboration. Another important component of learner reflection is the ability to track one’s own progress, which can be done through keeping a written record or through reflective analysis of one’s own achievements (Little, 2006). Moreover, learner reflection enables students to individualize their learning, because if they can reflect critically on their ongoing performance and results, they will also be able to determine the strategies, which are particularly beneficial for them.

Besides, the development of learner autonomy is closely connected with the appropriate target language use. Therefore, the target language should dominate in the communicative environment of the class. In other words, teachers should use the target language and require the same of the learners (Little, 2006). As simple as it sounds, this principle is integral for both progress in learning the second language, and developing learner autonomy.

As for the practical steps of promoting learner autonomy in the classroom context, David Nunan suggests nine of them (Nunan, 2003). We think that the suggested steps address autonomy in all its complexity and can be easily applied in the language classroom:

1)    Make the goals of the lesson explicit to the learners.

Students should be aware of the “final destination” of the lesson, so that they can focus their attention on the main objective.

2)    Allow learners create their own goals.

It is important to personalize the learning experience of the students by setting their own goals. This can boost their motivation and encourage them to work autonomously in order to reach those goals.

3)    Get the learners using the second language outside the classroom.

When students use the language in out-of-class contexts, they become more conscious of their own language skills. As a result, students can evaluate their knowledge and set their own goals for improving it.

4)    Make the learning process clear to the students.

Besides being aware of the goals of the lesson, students should see how each particular learning goal is reached, so that they can use this knowledge in their personal learning experience.

5)    Train students to identify their learning styles and strategies.

Students should know their learning peculiarities and what learning strategies  work best for them, in order to make the learning process more effective.

6)    Encourage learners to make choices.

Making choices is a part of taking responsibility for one’s own learning. That is why students should be able to make choices according to their needs, preferences or particular situation.

7)    Give them opportunity to modify and adapt classroom tasks.

After students realise the goals of the lesson and know which way of reaching them is more effective and suitable, they can put this knowledge into practice during the class.

8)    Encourage students to become teachers.

Teaching provides opportunity for the freedom of choice and action, and requires responsibility.

9)    Encourage students to become researchers.

Research activity is the last step suggested by Nunan, as it is the matter of free will, independence and self-determination, which signifies the high level of autonomy (Nunan, 2003).

Nunan also suggested five levels of learner autonomy: awareness, involvement, intervention, creation, and transcendence (Benson, 1997). Each of them characterizes a specific feature of autonomous learners.

In order to reach the level of awareness, teachers should make pedagogical goals and content of the materials clear to their students. Students should be able to determine the implications of the learning tasks and identify their own learning styles and preferred strategies.

The level of involvement concerns encouraging students to select their own learning goals from a range of alternatives.

The level of intervention is reached through encouraging students to modify and adapt the goals and the content of the learning according to their needs and preferences.

The level of creation implies students’ ability to determine their own learning goals. This is a gradual process, as students move from reliance on the options provided by the teacher to creating objectives by themselves.

At the level of transcendence students are able to imply their knowledge in out-of-class contexts, and relate the content of learning to the real life.

Lindsay Miller claims in her article, that promoting learner autonomy is not as difficult as it is often considered. The question that the teacher should ask while developing autonomy is not «What can I do differently?», but «Do I understand what I am already doing?» (Pemberton, 2009, p. 110). For example such common activities as pair and group work, project work, peer help and others, enable independent work and self access and, therefore, contribute greatly to promoting learner autonomy.

Rather than complicated strategies and techniques, promoting autonomy requires reconsidering such aspects of learning as learning content, learning objectives, learning context, social forms of learning, learning strategies and evaluation (Little, 2003).

Learning content should include a variety of authentic materials. Learners construct new knowledge on the basis of their "subjective experiential knowledge" (Little, 2003, p.12), and traditional textbooks with predefined and simplified material do not let them relate the learning content to their personal experience. However using authentic materials help the students encounter "the real" language and assimilate it into their own knowledge. Besides, learners can participate in collecting and then choosing authentic materials.

The learning objectives should be introduced in an understandable and convincing way, so that the students can identify with them, realize their importance and formulate their own learning objectives.

The context of learning must be organized according to the idea, that both teachers and students participate in organizing the learning process and they are both responsible for its outcome. This means that the classroom should be learner-centered, and students should be active participants of the learning process.

As learning is socially mediated, it is important to use different forms of social cooperation, such as pair work and group work.

It is also important to promote different learning strategies in the classroom, in order to raise students' awareness of the learning process and enable them to use this knowledge in their personal learning experience.

Self-evaluation is an integral part of promoting learning autonomy in the classroom. Therefore, teachers should encourage students to evaluate their own learning processes and create such classroom environment, which will help to foster this capacity.

Though learner autonomy is developed through simple strategies, it requires thorough preparation from teachers. The promotion of learner autonomy should be considered on the stage of planning a lesson in order to choose or design the activities which will encourage learners to be autonomous within the classroom, to involve their personal experience, and to continue developing the learning strategies in out-of-class contexts (Pemberton, 2009).

It is impossible to single out some particular types of activities which are the most effective for developing learner autonomy. Just as the concept of autonomy entails a lot of definitions and perspectives, the process of its development requires a complex approach, consisting in providing circumstances and contexts for the learners, in which they will be more likely to take charge (at least temporarily) of the part of their learning (Pemberton, 2006).

We believe, that the best way of creating a supportive environment for developing learner autonomy is following the criteria, suggested by Edith Esch (Pemberton, 2006, p. 38). They include:

* Choice
* Flexibility
* Adaptability / Modifiability
* Reflectivity
* Shareability.

The first two criteria, Choice and Flexibility, concern the management of the learning process by teachers, and providing opportunities for choice and modification at the stage of lesson planning. Adaptability / Modifiability is related to the managing of learning materials by students, i.e. changing and playing around with them. Reflectivity implies encouraging students to look back on their learning experience in a negotiated way. The fifth criterion, Shareability, is related to providing the opportunities for students to share different activities or difficulties with others. It is based on the point of view that second language learners should be able to integrate their learning in social relations (this concerns both peer students and native speakers) (Pemberton, 2006).

However, it is possible to show, that even focusing on one component of this approach can contribute greatly to developing learning autonomy.

Decision-making is considered to be one of the central aspects in developing learning autonomy. Henry Holec (Holec, 1981) states that autonomous learners are engaged in making the following decisions: determining objectives, defining the content of the learning, selecting methods and techniques for achieving the objectives, monitoring and evaluating of acquisition.

Besides learners can participate in making more specific classroom decisions, such as:

* the language to be learned;
* the purpose, the topic, the content, and the learning tasks;
* the types of learning strategies;
* the frequency and the format of assessment;
* formal or informal style of learning;
* timing, etc (Hurd, 2008, p. 48).

This research focuses on providing the students with opportunity to choose learning materials from the suggested option. This is considered to be an integral part of promoting learning autonomy as it implies:

* figuring out the most beneficial type of materials by each student;
* self-evaluation;
* decision-making.

Judging from the theoretical background, the development of learner autonomy is a deliberate process, which consists in some stages. Autonomy is viewed nowadays as students' ability, which needs to be taught and trained in the classroom before learners are able to use it in out of class contexts (in their own learning).

The measurement and assessment of learner autonomy is problematic, because this is a wide multidimensional concept, which can be viewed from different perspectives. However, it is possible to identify the behaviours which characterize autonomous learners (Benson, 2001). This can be done with the help of observing the students' work, discussing and asking the students for feedback, and completing the questionnaires by the students.

**2.2 Developing listening competence of language students at university**

For a long time, the teaching of listening was based on the extraction of meaning from text, without proper attention to teaching learners how to listen. Nowadays teaching listening has acquired a wider and more complex meaning. In the context of promoting learning awareness and autonomy, listening instruction is viewed as a way of scaffolding learning experiences, in order to prepare the learners for listening processes (Long, 2009, p. 7).

One of the main goals of such scaffolding is activating the prior knowledge of the students. This idea is connected with the cognitive model of language processing, according to which we process the information during listening or reading both top-down and bottom-up. Therefore, students need both bottom up and top down processing skills in listening - they should hear and distinguish the sounds, connect them to each other, and interpret the information, and, at the same time, they should use their prior knowledge to determine the meaning (Long, 2009).

According to this model, listening comprehension is seen the same as reading comprehension. Therefore, pedagogical applications are very similar: there are pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities (Long, 2009).

Pre-listening activities are aimed at providing students with the background knowledge necessary for listening comprehension. In other words, at this stage the teacher's task is to prepare the students for the content of listening and the task. The students need to recollect their knowledge of the topic and the knowledge of the way in which information is going to be organized. Moreover, at this stage the students need to establish the aim for listening in order to know which information they need to focus on, and to establish the degree of detail necessary for accomplishing the aim (Vandergrift, 2008 ).  The information (both linguistic and cultural), which can be new for students, is also presented at this stage. The examples of pre-listening activities include: predicting the content of the listening text, working with pictures maps or diagrams, revising the relevant vocabulary or grammar, reading relevant information etc. Pre-listening activities allow students to set the overall goal for listening, and to focus their attention on meaning.

While-listening activities help learners concentrate on the listening task and focus their attention on important information. Besides, such activities can back up students' comprehension, as they often contain the vocabulary from the listening text, or suggest its general plan. The examples of while-listening activities are: filling in graphs and charts, checking off items in a list, searching for specific clues to meaning, completing fill-in exercises etc.

The main goals of post-listening activities are: checking comprehension, evaluating listening skills and strategies, and making use of the gained knowledge. They are usually designed in the form of tasks, which demonstrate the students' level of listening comprehension. Besides, it is also common to draw learners' attention to language at this stage, for example, the teacher may suggest students to infer the meaning of new vocabulary from the context (Richards, 2002).

As there is always a purpose for listening in real life, listening activities in the classroom should also be meaningful. The main types of listening are: listening for the main idea, listening for details, and listening and making inferences.

Listening for the main idea concerns extracting the most important information from the listening text and neglecting the specific details. Before the listening activity, the teacher may ask such question, as "what is the main thing they're talking about?" or "what is the most important idea?"

On the contrary, listening for details is aimed at pointing out the specific details from the listening text. This type of listening is often used in everyday life, when we need to find out a definite information. It anticipates such questions as "what are the speakers going to eat?" or "when will the speakers go to the cinema?"

The third type of listening is listening and making inferences. It implies the so-called "listening between the lines" in order to understand the real meaning. Speakers do not always say exactly what they mean, and some aspects of meaning are often indirect. That is why it is important to understand such cues and their effect on the overall meaning. The teacher may ask such question as, "does the speaker like this idea?", in order to address this type of listening (Brown, 2006).

We believe, that systematical practicing of these three types of listening will help learners develop better understanding of the purposes of listening and use appropriate listening strategies in a definite situation (Brown, 2006).

The successful listening is provided by the use of such strategies as problem solving, planning and elaboration, person knowledge, and directed attention. Problem solving concerns making guesses about the content of the listening text and monitoring those guesses. Planning and elaboration are important for preparing for the listening activity, and assessing it's success. Students can rely on their personal experience, imagination, background and academic knowledge while preparing. Person knowledge implies individual factors that influence the outcome of listening - confidence or anxiety. Directed attention concerns the choice of appropriate techniques for enhancing comprehension, and completing the listening task (Schmitt, 2010).

Learning to listen in a target language requires a lot of practice and time, which classroom learning does not always provide. In this case promoting learner autonomy and engaging students in listening activities beyond the classroom can boost their progress.

**2.3 Empirical research and pedagogical intervention**

After analyzing the literature on the topic, we have designed a set of listening activities for the second year students, aimed at developing learner autonomy.

The activities were to be done at home as a part of students’ preparation for the classes. The students received detailed instructions in oral (teacher's explanation) and written form (task instruction).

The activities are designed according to the topics of the lessons and provide several sources of listening materials, as well as two tasks: one of them gives the overall purpose for listening, the other directs the language focus.

The overall goal of the activities is promoting learner autonomy by the means of:

* decision-making;
* self-evaluation;
* figuring out the most beneficial type of materials by each student (learner awareness).

While doing the offered tasks, the students are expected to practice making conscious and advantageous decisions while choosing learning materials from the suggested options. These decision-making skills can be further applied in different contexts of classroom and individual learning, making the students more involved in the learning process, in other words - more autonomous.

Each activity provides different formats of listening materials (audio and video) from several sources. The materials also cover different aspects of the definite topic. This enables the students to reflect on their learning styles (auditory or visual), learning preferences and interests in order to choose the materials. As the students become more aware of their learning, they are more prepared to take responsibility and direct their own learning process.

Besides, the students were given the opportunities for self-evaluation. The materials were placed in ascending order of difficulty (from more simple to more difficult). The levels of difficulty of the listening texts were determined with the help of the websites "roadtogrammar.com" and "languageresearch.cambridge.org". The first website rates the approximate level of difficulty of a text according to the Common European framework. The second one provides the percentage of words which correspond to each level of proficiency (according to the Common European framework). Such organisation of materials allows the learners to evaluate their approximate level of language proficiency and choose the listening materials correspondingly.

Besides, the website"breakingnewsenglish.com" provides different levels of difficulty of each listening text. It categorizes the listening materials into 6 levels, according to the complexity of the vocabulary, the length of the texts and the speed of speech. The students are suggested to choose between the 5th and 6th level of listening texts on this website, as in such a way, catering for different levels of language proficiency does not bring great difference to the contents of the texts.

The activities designed for intervention are provided below.

In Activity 1 the students can choose between listening materials from two sources. As the titles of listening texts are very similar, the student's choice can be based on the format of the materials (audio and video), and the level of difficulty (1 - easier, 2 - more difficult).

 Activity 1

UNESCO Heritage Status of Japanese food

**Listen to the information from one of the sources and do the tasks:**

1) “Japanese cuisine added to UNESCO “intangible heritage” list”

Video

<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-asia-25223105>

2) “Japanese food to get UNESCO status”

Listening (level 2 - 3)

*New vocabulary:*

ramen – a Japanese noodle soup;

tempura – a traditional Japanese fried dish consisting of seafood, meat and vegetables;

sukiyaki – a traditional Japanese dish consisting of meat, vegetables and other ingredients, served in a hot pot.

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1310/131027-japanese-food-l.html>

**Tasks:**

·                   single out the peculiarities of **Washoku** - traditional Japanese food;

·                   choose 3 expressions which will be useful while talking about national cuisines.

Activity 2 provides three sources of listening materials. The students' choice can be based on their personal interests, as the texts cover different spheres of the topic (this can be seen from the titles of the texts), and on the level of difficulty of the listening texts (1 - the easiest, 3 - the most difficult).

Activity 2

Vegetarianism and Veganism: Pros and Cons

**Listen to the information from one of the sources and do the tasks:**

1) “Teens going veggie”

Listening

(Young people talk about the advantages and disadvantages of vegetarianism and veganism)

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/listening/advanced-c1-listening/teens-going-veggie>

2) “Vegetarian diet reduces cancer risk”

Listening (level 5 - 6)

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/0903/090317-vegetarians.mp3>

3) “Vegan fashion is becoming more popular”

Listening (level 5 – 6)

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1909/190904-vegan-fashion-5l.html>

**Tasks:**

·                   single out the advantages and disadvantages of veganism or vegetarianism;

·                   choose 3 useful constructions to talk on this topic.

In Activity 3 the students are expected to choose the listening materials from two sources, as it is necessary for completing the task. As the students are expected to listen to the information about both causes of obesity and ways of its reducing, the short outline of the content of each listening text is provided in the brackets. That level of difficulty of a listening text can be another criterion for decision-making.

Activity 3

Obesity

**Listen to the information from two sources and do the tasks:**

1) “Obesity”

*(the reasons for obesity)*

Listening

<https://www.listenaminute.com/o/obesity.html>

2) “Nearly 1 billion obese people in developing world”

*(the reasons for obesity, the actions of the governments)*

Listening

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1401/140105-developing-world-l.html>

3) “Smaller plates help reduce obesity”

(*the ways of reducing obesity*)

Listening  (level 5- 6)

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1509/150917-obesity-l.html>

**Tasks:**

·                   single out the causes of obesity and the ways of reducing obesity;

·                   choose 3 useful constructions to talk on this topic.

Activity 4 suggests four videos on different topics (all of them are related to the topic of the lesson), which enables the students to make a choice according to their personal interests, as well as to the level of difficulty of the texts.

Activity 4

Food of the future

**Listen to the information from one of the sources and do the tasks:**

1) “Will meatless meat be the future of food?”

Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lu0-v8A9rs>

2) “Are insects the food of the future? – BBC What’s New”

Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q23QDoQRkm4>

3) “Dinner is printed: is 3D technology the future of food?”

Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0Ty6wgM8KE>

4) “Future food. The menu of 2030”

Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnoCy0j7DNs>

**Tasks:**

·                   single out the products / technologies which people may use in the future;

·                   choose 3 useful constructions to talk on this topic.

In the Activity 5, there are three different listening materials to choose from: a regular listening text, a podcast and a video. The students' decision can be based on their learning styles (auditory or visual), and on the level of difficulty of the suggested materials.

Activity 5

Food and Mental Health

**Listen to the information from one of the sources and do the tasks:**

1) “You are what you eat, say scientists”

Listening (level 5 -6)

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1712/171220-food-l.html>

2) “How to manage your mood with food”

Video

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/food-and-mood/about-food-and-mood/>

3) “Food and Mood”

Podcast (6 Minute English)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/burmese/features/6-minute-english/ep-170406>

**Tasks:**

·                   find the answer to the question: How can food influence our mental health?;

·                   choose 3 expressions which will be useful while talking on the topic.

As learner autonomy is rather wide and complex concept, and is a matter of personal readiness and ability to direct one’s own learning, we decided to apply a qualitative approach to its assessment. The effectiveness of the designed activities for promoting learner autonomy of the second year students was checked with the help of the questionnaire (Appendix 1), which encourages the students to reflect on their learning in terms of the intervention. This questionnaire is aimed at pointing out the learning behaviours which are associated with learner autonomy. They are:

* the level of motivation the students had while doing the listening tasks;
* the students’ awareness of their learning (of their styles and preferences, and of the materials, which are suitable and beneficial personally for them);
* the ability and desire of the students to meet their personal learning needs;
* the degree of success of the students’ decision-making (while choosing the listening materials).

**Conclusions to Part 2**

In the second part of the research, the practical methods of promoting learner autonomy of the students in the process of developing listening competence are outlined.

We have singled out the general principles of promoting learner autonomy, which include: learner-involvement, offering options, providing choices and decision-making opportunities, motivating the learners, encouraging reflection and self-evaluation, using appropriate target language, as well as different forms of interaction.

Decision-making is viewed as an integral part of developing learner autonomy, and it can be applied on different stages of the learning process, such as determining learning goals and contents, choosing the methods and techniques, and evaluation of the learning process.

The suggested principles can be realized through nine practical steps, suggested by David Nunan, which allow learners to create their own learning goals, identify their styles and strategies, make learning choices and adapt classroom tasks.

Though learner autonomy can be developed through clear and understandable steps, its measurement and assessment are problematic, and they are based mainly on identifying the behaviors which characterize autonomous learners.

The features of autonomous classroom include learner-centrednes, learners’ decision-making and learner awareness. It needs to be organized according to 5 criteria: Choice, Flexibility, Adaptability, Reflectivity and Shareability, which means reconsidering the main aspects of learning, such as content, objectives, context, social forms, and evaluation.

After studying the literature on the topic, we have developed a set of listening activities, aimed at promoting such aspects of learner autonomy, as decision-making, learning awareness and self-assessment. The designed activities provide students with the opportunity to choose learning materials from the suggested options according to their learning styles (auditory or visual), the level of language proficiency (the suggested activities are organised in the ascending order of difficulty), and personal interests (the listening materials cover different aspects of the topic). The results of the intervention were outlined with the help of the questionnaire, which addresses such behaviors of autonomous learners as self-evaluation, the learning awareness (learning styles and preferences, suitable materials), the ability and desire to meet one’s learning needs and the degree of success of the students’ decision-making.

**PART 3**

**DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

**3.1 Results of the pedagogical intervention**

The purpose of the research is to explore how providing opportunities for decision making, raising awareness and self-evaluation during the listening activities, relate to the development of learning autonomy of the second year students.

The hypothesis of the research is: providing the learners with the opportunities for decision-making, raising learning awareness and self-evaluation during the listening activities will increase their level of learner autonomy.

In order to prove the hypothesis of this research we organized the pedagogical intervention and collected data for understanding the development of students’ autonomy with the help of the questionnaire. The suggested questionnaire addresses the characteristics inherent in autonomous learners, which may not be easily observable.

The pedagogical intervention was organized in Nizhyn Gogol State University, in the group of 10 students (female) of the second year of studying, who learn English as a second language. The participants are 17 – 18 years old; their level of English is B1 – B1+. The students' socio-cultural background is relatively homogeneous.

The main goal of the intervention is to promote learner autonomy of the students through conducting the listening activities.

The designed activities correspond to the curriculum, learner needs and the purpose of the research. The intervention was carried out during the classes of English as a part of students’ preparation for the lessons. The suggested activities were expected to create opportunities for decision-making, self-evaluation and raising awareness of the students about their own learning, which are regarded as ways of developing autonomy.

After the intervention, the students were offered a questionnaire, which encourages their reflection on the learning process. The questionnaire consists of 7 questions which address learner awareness, decision-making skills, self-assessment skills and general motivation of the students.

The answers to Question 1showed that the students were motivated to do the suggested activities, as they assessed their motivation levels from 7 to 10

(Figure 1).

**Fig. 1** Proportion correct of the students’ level of motivation according to their answers to the Question 1.

This means that decision-making is likely to increase students' intrinsic motivation and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning.

The students generally considered their decision-making to be successful (Question 2), as they assessed it from 8 to 10 (Figure 2), and they chose another source of materials, when the first choice was not satisfactory (Question 4). This shows the students' ability to choose the appropriate learning materials, and their desire to meet the personal learning needs, which is important for autonomous learning.

**Fig 2**. Proportion correct of the success of the students’ decision-making according to their answers to the Question 2.

As for the criteria for choosing the sources of materials (Question 3), 40 % students paid attention to the title of the listening text, 30 % of the students took into consideration the name of the source, and 20 % of the students based their choice on the level of difficulty of the texts. The suggested criteria satisfy either the learning needs and preferences or personal interests of the students, which requires self-awareness and self-reflection.

The choice of the preferred formats of listening materials was based on the learning styles (auditory, visual) of the students and personal preferences (Questions 5 and 6). 20 % of the students chose mainly audio materials, as the information there was more laconic and understandable for them, and 20 % of the students chose the listening materials from the website "breakingnewsenglish.com" due to the possibility of selecting the level of difficulty of the materials. 60 % of the students gave their preference to video materials, as the visual aid helped to understand the information. Such answers show that students are aware of their learning styles and needs, and they can choose the materials which satisfy these needs.

Based on the preferred types of listening materials, the students formulated the criteria for choosing the materials (Question 7). Some of them are:

* the length of listening text (some students preferred short audio materials); this criterion involves evaluation of one's level of attention and concentration;
* the type of listening materials (audio or video); this suggested criterion involves catering for different learning styles - auditory and visual; this shows that the students are aware of their styles and are able to choose the appropriate materials;
* the content of listening texts (choosing the listening materials to meet one's personal interests and preferences); this criterion is likely to increase students intrinsic motivation and involvement in the task.

After analyzing the results of the questionnaire, we made the following conclusions:

* the intervention has improved the student's decision making; though they were involved in deciding on the listening materials, this skill may be further transferred on all the aspects of learning, such as choosing other types of materials, choosing the purpose, the topic and the tasks of learning, choosing the learning strategies, etc;
* the intervention has allowed the students to evaluate their own skills and raise awareness of their own learning (styles, preferences);
* the intervention has helped the students to distinguish the sources and the types of listening materials, which are the most suitable and beneficial personally for them; this can be considered as the basis of their autonomous learning, as it provides the opportunity to apply this knowledge to different aspects of in- and out-of-class learning - now, as the students know which materials work best for them, they are more likely to use this knowledge in their learning.

Judging from the outlined interpretation of the results of the intervention, it is possible to state that the suggested activities promoted such aspects of learning autonomy as decision-making, self-evaluation and learning awareness, which contributes to the overall development of their autonomy. This proves the hypothesis of the research, as the intervention is effective for promoting learner autonomy of the students in the process of developing listening competence.

Despite the positive result of the research, some limitations should be noted. First, the study was conducted with female students of a definite age group and a definite level of language proficiency. Second, the study was conducted in one educational institution in Ukraine. Taking into consideration the mentioned issues, the results of the research cannot be applied to all language learners.

Future research recommendations include promoting learning autonomy in the process of developing other language competences, such as writing, speaking and reading. Moreover, future studies could explore other ways of developing autonomy, beside decision-making raising awareness and self evaluation.

**3.2 Implications of the research for university EFL classrooms**

The conducted research is beneficial for raising the level of students' autonomy, which is considered to be one of the overall goals of learning. This means that the teachers should include it to the objectives of their lessons, and apply different mechanisms for its development. Therefore, we have decided to provide the recommendations for organization and content of the process of developing learner autonomy.

First of all, the promotion of learner autonomy can be integrated in different stages of the lesson, in the forms of providing the students with the opportunity to make decisions, raising the students' awareness of their own learning styles and strategies, evaluating their own progress, and others.

The decision-making can imply defining the personal learning goals, choosing the learning materials, adapting or changing the tasks, etc. It can be organized both during the classes, and as a part of students preparation for the classes. In both cases it requires proper preparation and instruction, as all the options that the learners can choose, should correspond to the curriculum, the topic of the lesson, and learners needs. The decision making opportunities should be addressed at the stage of planning a lesson. For providing a choice of learning materials, the teacher needs to prepare a set of materials, which cater for different learning styles, strategies and preferences. In this way, the learners will not make the choice randomly, but will refer to their personal styles, strategies and preferences. Therefore, choosing the learning materials also raises learner awareness, which is an important condition for promoting a learning autonomy.

As for self-evaluation, it can be addressed in different ways. In the case of this research, the students were suggested the materials of different levels of difficulty; this boosts students self-reflection, stimulates them to formulate their own learning goals, and makes the overall process of learning more meaningful.

Raising learning awareness is another important issue, that teachers should pay attention to. Making students aware of their own styles, preferences and learning needs is an important step in promoting learner autonomy.

As for the content of developing learner autonomy, it should involve different principles of promoting autonomy and include authentic materials. As learner autonomy is wide and complex concept, the teachers should implement a set of principles for its development, among them: learner-involvement, offering options, encouraging reflection and using appropriate target language. The choice of the principles depends on the content and the topic of the lesson, the level and age of the students, and on the teachers themselves.

It is important to choose appropriate materials, which correspond to the students' level and needs. The students need to learn to rely on themselves and on their language in the learning process, therefore the choice of materials should be well considered at the stage of planning a lesson.

The suggested recommendations will help the teachers to create more opportunities for developing learner autonomy in their lessons and to make the learning process more effective.

**Conclusions to Part 3**

In order to check the hypothesis of this research, we organized the pedagogical intervention. The data for analyzing the development of students’ autonomy was collected with the help of the questionnaire, which addresses the behaviors inherent in autonomous learners: learner awareness, self-evaluation and decision-making skills.

The activities for pedagogical intervention were designed in order to promote learner autonomy of the students in the process of developing listening competence, by means of providing them with opportunities for decision making, raising learning awareness, and self-evaluation.

The analysis of the collected results proved that the suggested activities are effective for promoting learning autonomy of the students. The intervention provided students with the opportunities for: improving the decision-making skills by choosing the listening materials from the suggested options, evaluating the listening skills, raising awareness of their learning styles, and managing their own autonomous learning.

Based on the results of the research, the practical recommendations for promoting learner autonomy were developed. They concern such aspects of promoting autonomy as organization and content.

In order to promote learner autonomy in their classrooms, teachers should enable students to make learning decisions, to raise awareness of their own learning, and encourage self-evaluation. The decision making can take place at the stage of defining the learning goals, choosing the materials, adapting the tasks etc., and it can include both raising awareness and self-evaluation. The provided options for choice should cater for different learning styles, levels of language and preferences, in order to stimulate self-reflection and increase learner awareness.

The content of learning should include different principles of promoting autonomy, such as learner-involvement, offering options, encouraging reflection and using appropriate target language, as well as suitable learning materials.

**Conclusions**

Learner autonomy has gained recognition in the field of education and became one of its main goals. In language learning it is associated with enhancing the learning process and students progress.

As learner autonomy is a wide and complex concept, there are many different approaches to its definition, and different models of autonomy. The definitions of learner autonomy address different views, ideas and perspectives, which broadens its original meaning and suggests different contexts for its application. The models of learner autonomy represent this concept as a matter of degree and suggest definite stages, which characterize students' progress in developing learner autonomy.

Most scholars agree that promoting learning autonomy in the classroom enhances the learning process, makes it more purposeful, and leads to continuous learning and self-development. Besides, autonomy is closely related to other concepts, such as motivation, self-regulation, learning awareness, etc., which are important for effective language learning.

Many studies address learner autonomy from the psychological point of view, and point out such characteristics of autonomous learners, as ability for planning, decision-making, evaluating one's progress, self-assessment, and others.

Listening is one of the four language skills, which is conceited to be the key to comprehensive input and language acquisition. It is based on constructing the meaning of the text according to one's level of language proficiency and existing knowledge. This idea is represented in two types of processing (bottom-up and top-down), which happen simultaneously and define the effectiveness of listening comprehension.

After literature review, we outlined the practical methods of promoting learner autonomy of the students in the process of developing their listening competence. The general principles of promoting learner autonomy include: learner involvement, offering options, providing choices and decision making opportunities, raising the learners' motivation and awareness, encouraging reflection and self-evaluation, as well as using different forms of interaction. Decision-making is considered to be an integral part of promoting learning autonomy, and it can be applied on different stages of the learning process.

At the stage of preparing pedagogical intervention, we developed a set of listening activities, aimed at promoting learner autonomy by means of decision-making, raising learning awareness and self-assessment. The designed activities provide students with opportunities to choose listening materials from the suggested options according to their learning styles, the level of language proficiency, and personal interests. The results of the intervention were outlined with the help of the questionnaire, which addresses such behaviors of autonomous learners as decision-making, learning awareness and self-evaluation.

The data for analyzing the development of students autonomy was collected with the help of the questionnaire, which addresses the behaviors inherent in autonomous learners: learning awareness, self-evaluation and decision-making skills. The analysis of the collected results proved that the suggested activities are effective for promoting learning autonomy of the students.

Based on the results of the research, the practical recommendations for promoting learner autonomy of the students were developed. They include providing the students with opportunities for making learning decisions, raising awareness of their own learning, and encouraging self-evaluation. The content of learning should include different principles of promoting autonomy, such as learner involvement, offering options, encouraging reflection, using appropriate target language and suitable learning materials.

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**APPENDIX 1**

**Questionnaire**

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| --- |
| 1. On a scale from 1 (not motivated at all) to 10 (highly motivated) – how motivated were you to do the suggested listening activities? |
| 2. On a scale from 1 (not satisfied at all) to 10 (very satisfied) – how satisfied were you with the materials of your choice? |
| 3. How did you choose the listening text? |
| 4. Did you choose another listening text when you were not satisfied with the first choice? |
| 5. Which format/source of listening texts do you like the most? |
| 6. Why do you like this source the most? |
| 7. Can you formulate your own criteria for choosing a listening text? |

**SUMMARY**

The master thesis addresses the problem of promoting learner autonomy of the students in the process of developing their listening competence by means of providing the opportunities for decision-making, self-assessment and raising learner awareness. The research deals with designing a set of tasks aimed at enhancing learner autonomy for pedagogical intervention, and collecting data with the help of a questionnaire, aimed at pointing out the behaviours inherent to autonomous learners.

The first part contains the analysis of scientific literature on the topic, and provides the description of the concept “learner autonomy” and different approaches to defining it, as well as characterized the process of listening in the context of language learning.

The second part contains a set of tasks, designed for promoting learner autonomy of the students.

The third part of the paper includes the analysis and interpretation of the results of the research, and implications of these results for university EFL classrooms.

**Key words:** learner autonomy, autonomous learner, language learner, university students, foreign language teaching.

**АНОТАЦІЯ**

У кваліфікаційній роботі розглянуто проблему розвитку навчальної автономії студентів університету під час оволодіння компетентністю в аудіюванні, шляхом надання можливостей для прийняття рішень, самооцінювання та підвищення рівня навчальної обізнаності. Суть дослідження полягає у розробці комплексу завдань для пробного навчання, спрямованих на розвиток навчальної автономії, та збору даних за допомогою анкети, спрямованої на виявлення рис, характерних для автономних студентів.

У першій частині представлено аналіз наукової літератури з теми, а саме - опис поняття “навчальна автономія” та різні підходи до його визначення, окреслення його особливостей та змісту, теоретичне обґрунтування процесу розвитку автономії студентів, а також характеристика процесу аудіювання у контексті вивчення іноземної мови.

Друга частина містить комплекс завдань, розроблених на основі проаналізованих методів та стратегій, з метою розвитку навчальної автономії студентів у процесі оволодіння компетентністю в аудіюванні. Запропоновані завдання надавали студентам можливості для вибору навчальних матеріалів, для здійснення самооцінювання та для визначення їх стилів навчання.

У третій частині подано аналіз та інтерпретацію отриманих результатів, та сформульовано на їх основі методичні рекомендації для викладання іноземної мови в університеті. Для збору даних була розроблена анкета, спрямована на визначення рівня мотивації студентів, успішність прийняття рішень та рівень їх навчальної обізнаності. Методичні рекомендації являють собою поради щодо розвитку навчальної автономії студентів шляхом прийняття ними рішень, які можуть стосуватися різних аспектів навчального процесу: вибору навчальних матеріалів, визначення цілей та змісту навчання, адаптування завдань тощо.

**Ключові слова**: навчальна автономія, автономний студент, студент університету, викладання іноземної мови, студент, який вивчає іноземну мову.