Learner Satisfaction and Autonomy via Distance Education; A Study Conducted among Selected Advanced Level Students in Southern Province, Sri Lanka

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Abstract - Learner autonomy is when students take control and responsibility for their learning. It is an essential factor in academic achievement among the students who are learning English via online education. This study assessed the e-learning autonomy and learner satisfaction of Advanced Level (A/L) students who learn English via online education. A pre-tested, self-administered questionnaire about learner satisfaction on e-learning and an e-Learning Autonomy Scale (e-LAS) developed by Mehmet Firat was shared online among randomly selected 40 A/L students to collect data. Descriptive statistics and independent-sample t-test were performed with SPSS 23.0 to analyse data. The mean ($\pm$SD) age of the participants was 17.78 ($\pm$0.70) years, and the majority of them were females(65%). All the participants were using 'Zoom' software for distance education. Though most (87.5%) were satisfied with the teachers' support while learning English via distance education, 77.5% of the participants considered online education ineffective in learning English. Moreover, 72.5% stated that they do not have the opportunity to involve in group activities, and 52.5% noted that there is lesser interaction among the peers when learning English via distance education over onsite education. Further, the students had a high average (28.28 $\pm$ 2.53)on the e-LAS scale. There was no significant difference between male and female students' mean values of the e-LAS score ($p > 0.05$). Hence, it is essential to assess A/L students' satisfaction and autonomy to make necessary interventions and modifications in improving their academic performance when learning English via distance education.

Keywords: E- Learner autonomy, Learner satisfaction, Distance education

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