

An Investigation of Learner Autonomy: A Case Study of Iranian English Language Institute Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

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The present research intended to examine the teachers' beliefs and practices of learner autonomy in language learning. In so doing, a five-point Likert questionnaire of learner autonomy was conducted with 38 teachers, and a follow-up interview was used with 8 teachers, practicing teaching in English language institutes in Rasht, Iran. In the first phase, the questionnaire comprising 37 items already validated was adapted and modified in terms of its content items. The questionnaire was piloted to a representative number (8) of teachers. The expert opinion on the instructions and layout of the questionnaire and the reliability analysis were achieved. A descriptive analysis was run on the respondents' responses to questionnaire. The questionnaire also underwent a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to see whether there was a significant difference between the respondents' personal and professional backgrounds, such as age, field of study, university degree, and years of teaching experience and their belief of learner autonomy. The Cohen's Kappa was conducted to calculate the ratio of coding agreements so that it could give a quantitative measure of the magnitude of agreement between raters of the interview. The results of the analysis indicated that there was not a major effect of gender factor, teachers' university degree and fields of study on their perception of learner autonomy. The multivariate analysis on age, however, indicated that there was a significant difference between teachers' perception of learner autonomy and their age differences. In addition, the analysis of the teachers' teaching experience revealed that it was significantly different their perception of learner autonomy. Teachers and the education administration should provide various kinds of support measures to assist the process of materializing learner autonomy to develop learners' abilities to work more effectively in a self-directed fashion.

Keywords : Learner Autonomy - English Language Institutes - Teachers' Beliefs - Rasht

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