Promoting learner autonomy through a “5-i” show project in large EFL classes: Perceptions, practice & challenges

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Outline

1. Background to this study
2. Literature review & research questions
3. Research setting, participants & methods
4. Findings
5. Discussion and implications
Background to this study
TASK 2
LEARners’ RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Determining the objectives
- Defining the pace of learning
- Selecting methods and techniques
- Choosing learning materials
- Evaluating what has been learnt

To what extent can your students do these things?
- By yourself; indicate your opinion
  1 = not at all  2 = a little  3 = to some extent  4 = quite well  5 = very well
- Share your views with your group

TASK 5: INVOLVING LEARNERS

The teachers were asked to say how desirable it was to involve students in certain course decisions. Desirable Undesirable

- Classroom management  61%  39%
- Teaching methods  63%  37%
- Assessment  57%  43%
- Topics  84%  16%
- Activities  81%  19%
- Materials  63%  37%
- Objectives  43%  57%
- How desirable is it for your learners to be involved in such decisions?
Learner autonomy (LA)

- “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (Holec, 1981, p. 3)
- “the capacity to take control of one’s own learning” (Benson, 2001, p. 47)
- Constructing learner autonomy through control shift (Wang, 2016)
Project-based learning (PBL)

● Project-based learning (PBL) is based on the use of authentic, significant (i.e. substantial and requiring some time) projects which require students to work through an inquiry process, often across courses, cohorts and even programmes.

● Project-based learning aims to tap into students’ decision-making abilities, curiosity and interests in ‘real world’ experiences that align with their own interests and vocational aims.

*(Thinglink, 2015)*
PBL & LA *(Thinglink, 2015)*

- a powerful way to help learners develop skills of research, **autonomy** and collaboration.
- can **take many forms** and can be completed internally or in partnership with external stakeholders.
- applicable to a **diversity of cultural contexts**.
The project

5-i Show

- to intrigue
- to inform
- to inspire
- to interact
- to involve

W O

SHOW

Ai

LOVE
From sage on the stage to guide on the side

Research Questions

**RQ 1:** How did the students perceive the concept of learner autonomy and receive the “5-i” Show?

**RQ 2:** What effect did the project have on the development of learner autonomy?

**RQ 3:** What challenges were encountered in the project implementation and how were they met?
Research setting, participants & methods

Six large classes (80 +/- ss in each) of non-English major ss

- Photos & recordings
- Observation notes
- Interviews
- Questionnaires

A Chinese university
Project implementation

- Prepare to show
  - Choose **what** to show
  - Decide on **how** to show it

- Show it
  - Peer teaching show
  - Talent show

- Evaluate it
  - Teacher evaluation
  - Peer evaluation

- Reflect on it
  - Benefits
  - Challenges
RQ 1: How did the students perceive the concept of LA and receive the “5-i” Show?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>5</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Learner autonomy requires the learner to be totally independent of the teacher.</td>
<td>38(15.7%)</td>
<td>47(19.42%)</td>
<td>101(41.74%)</td>
<td>43(17.77%)</td>
<td>13(5.37%)</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Autonomy means that learners can make choices about what to learn and how to learn.</td>
<td>13(5.37%)</td>
<td>18(7.44%)</td>
<td>73(30.17%)</td>
<td>81(33.47%)</td>
<td>57(23.55%)</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Learner autonomy is promoted through regular opportunities for learners to complete tasks alone.</td>
<td>8(3.31%)</td>
<td>27(11.16%)</td>
<td>63(26.03%)</td>
<td>90(37.19%)</td>
<td>54(22.31%)</td>
<td>3.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Individuals who lack autonomy are not likely to be effective language learners.</td>
<td>116(49.98%)</td>
<td>21(8.68%)</td>
<td>58(23.97%)</td>
<td>80(33.06%)</td>
<td>72(29.75%)</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It is earlier to promote learner autonomy with beginners.</td>
<td>65(26.86%)</td>
<td>88(36.36%)</td>
<td>59(24.38%)</td>
<td>72(30.17%)</td>
<td>91(37.60%)</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Motivated language learners are more likely to be successful than learners who are not motivated.</td>
<td>56(23.14%)</td>
<td>66(27.27%)</td>
<td>102(42.15%)</td>
<td>62(25.62%)</td>
<td>62(25.62%)</td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Confident language learners are more likely to have high self-confidence.</td>
<td>57(23.53%)</td>
<td>73(30.17%)</td>
<td>91(37.60%)</td>
<td>72(29.75%)</td>
<td>62(25.62%)</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Learner autonomy allows language learners to work otherwise.</td>
<td>64(26.45%)</td>
<td>85(35.12%)</td>
<td>62(25.62%)</td>
<td>62(25.62%)</td>
<td>62(25.62%)</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Learner autonomy is promoted when learners are given activities they do.</td>
<td>78(32.23%)</td>
<td>92(38.02%)</td>
<td>49(20.25%)</td>
<td>49(20.25%)</td>
<td>49(20.25%)</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Learner autonomy cannot be promoted in teacher-centred classrooms.</td>
<td>26(10.71%)</td>
<td>30(12.65%)</td>
<td>105(43.39%)</td>
<td>46(19.01%)</td>
<td>17(7.02%)</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Learner autonomy is promoted by activities that encourage learners to work outside the classroom.</td>
<td>5(2.07%)</td>
<td>20(8.26%)</td>
<td>72(29.69%)</td>
<td>94(38.84%)</td>
<td>51(21.07%)</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. To become autonomous, learners need to develop the ability to evaluate their own learning.</td>
<td>6(2.48%)</td>
<td>15(6.32%)</td>
<td>67(27.69%)</td>
<td>104(42.98%)</td>
<td>72(30.17%)</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The ability to monitor one’s learning is central to learner autonomy.</td>
<td>6(2.48%)</td>
<td>13(5.37%)</td>
<td>57(23.55%)</td>
<td>99(40.91%)</td>
<td>67(27.69%)</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Co-operative group work activities support the development of learner autonomy.</td>
<td>6(2.48%)</td>
<td>20(8.26%)</td>
<td>75(30.99%)</td>
<td>86(35.54%)</td>
<td>55(22.73%)</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Learner autonomy is promoted through activities which give learners opportunities to learn from each other.</td>
<td>7(2.89%)</td>
<td>11(4.55%)</td>
<td>58(23.97%)</td>
<td>102(42.15%)</td>
<td>64(26.45%)</td>
<td>3.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likert Scale: Perceptions of LA
13 / 15    3.62 to 4.01
RQ 1: How did the students perceive the concept of LA and receive the “5-i” Show?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>5</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The 5i-Show Project arouses interests in learners by encouraging learners to learn by finishing their task or activity independently.</td>
<td>5(2.07%)</td>
<td>15(6.2%)</td>
<td>62(25.62%)</td>
<td>94(38.84%)</td>
<td>66(27.27%)</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The 5i-Show Project promotes learner autonomy by involving learners in decisions about what and how to learn promotes learner autonomy.</td>
<td>3(1.24%)</td>
<td>16(6.61%)</td>
<td>69(28.51%)</td>
<td>92(38.02%)</td>
<td>62(25.62%)</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The 5i-Show Project promotes learner autonomy through regular opportunities for learners to complete tasks alone.</td>
<td>3(1.24%)</td>
<td>11(4.55%)</td>
<td>73(30.17%)</td>
<td>86(35.54%)</td>
<td>69(28.51%)</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Learners who are not likely to be effectively involved in the 5i-Show Project are individuals who lack of autonomy.</td>
<td>15(6.2%)</td>
<td>26(10.47%)</td>
<td>87(35.95%)</td>
<td>65(26.86%)</td>
<td>41(16.94%)</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The 5i-Show Project is more suitable to proficient language learners than it is with those who lack confidence in the 5i-Show Project.</td>
<td>84(34.71%)</td>
<td>84(34.71%)</td>
<td>48(19.83%)</td>
<td>84(34.71%)</td>
<td>48(19.83%)</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Motivated language learners are more likely to get involved in the 5i-Show Project.</td>
<td>95(39.26%)</td>
<td>69(28.51%)</td>
<td>95(39.26%)</td>
<td>69(28.51%)</td>
<td>95(39.26%)</td>
<td>3.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Confident language learners are more likely to get involved in the 5i-Show Project.</td>
<td>86(35.54%)</td>
<td>70(28.93%)</td>
<td>86(35.54%)</td>
<td>70(28.93%)</td>
<td>86(35.54%)</td>
<td>3.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The 5i-Show Project helps learners develop learner autonomy through pair work.</td>
<td>103(42.56%)</td>
<td>59(23.48%)</td>
<td>103(42.56%)</td>
<td>59(23.48%)</td>
<td>103(42.56%)</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Study tasks which require learners to make project presentations in public promote learner autonomy in the 5i-Show Project.</td>
<td>5(2.07%)</td>
<td>10(4.13%)</td>
<td>56(23.41%)</td>
<td>97(40.08%)</td>
<td>58(23.97%)</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The 5i-Show Project changes the teacher-centred classroom to student-centred classroom.</td>
<td>4(1.65%)</td>
<td>11(4.55%)</td>
<td>91(37.68%)</td>
<td>62(25.62%)</td>
<td>91(37.68%)</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The 5i-Show Project can promote learner autonomy of learners through encouraging independent learning outside the classroom, such as surfing the internet for information and making PPT, etc.</td>
<td>5(2.07%)</td>
<td>15(6.61%)</td>
<td>73(30.17%)</td>
<td>66(27.27%)</td>
<td>66(27.27%)</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The peer assessment system of 5i-Show Project could help learners develop learner autonomy by peer-evaluating their own learning.</td>
<td>6(2.48%)</td>
<td>10(4.13%)</td>
<td>81(33.47%)</td>
<td>87(35.95%)</td>
<td>87(35.95%)</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The implementation of the 5i-Show Project, especially in a large-sized classroom, is helpful to develop learner autonomy since it requires the individuals to monitor their own learning.</td>
<td>7(2.89%)</td>
<td>11(4.55%)</td>
<td>76(31.4%)</td>
<td>95(39.26%)</td>
<td>95(39.26%)</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The 5i-Show Project could promote the development of learner autonomy more effectively if more group work or collaborative work is involved.</td>
<td>7(2.89%)</td>
<td>14(5.79%)</td>
<td>77(31.82%)</td>
<td>87(35.95%)</td>
<td>87(35.95%)</td>
<td>3.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. The teacher should intervene as little as possible as so to promote the development of students’ learner autonomy through the 5i-Show Project.</td>
<td>9(3.72%)</td>
<td>21(8.68%)</td>
<td>101(41.74%)</td>
<td>80(33.06%)</td>
<td>31(12.81%)</td>
<td>3.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Receptiveness of the Show: 13/15, 3.33 to 3.89
S1: It's interesting. It's different from the way I learnt English before. I think it's good. Everyone can practice. I learned a lot.

S2: This project gave everyone an opportunity to present. We learned how to make a good presentation. We now understand how hard our teacher works. I will study harder.

S3: Although I spent a lot of time preparing, I still felt nervous. However, I'm more confident than before. I think I can do better next time.

S4: Learning this way is more fun. It's kind of autonomous learning and we had to do a lot by ourselves, but it pushed me to learn more.
RQ 2: What effect did the project have on the development of learner autonomy?

- Allowed students’ decision making / individual choices on the ‘what’ and ‘how’ about learning
- Made learning more interesting
- Provided opportunities for students’ active ‘learning by doing’
- Empowered students by letting them be ‘the sage on the stage’
- Allowed students to evaluate their own work (self or peer)
- Enhanced students’ willingness to learn (more and harder)
- Built up students’ confidence (esp. in public speaking & presenting)
S5: It improves all kinds of skills. It’s good for our future employment. Through participating in the project, I learn how to make plans, how to monitor and assess my learning. I enjoy this kind of autonomous learning.
Christmas
- exchanging gifts
- decorating the home with evergreens and colorful lights
- going to the church
- singing Christmas carols
- sending Christmas cards
- Father Christmas (Santa Claus)

Qingming Festival
清明

Spring Festival
family gathering; fire crackers; put up red couplets and Fu on gates; eat Jiaozi or dumplings; watch Spring Festival Gala; greeting each other; give children red envelopes...
Cultural expansion:
Should colleges and universities set up special courses in career planning? Why?

- Rugby is a symbol of vitality and health.
- The friendship is fast and reliable.
- The rugbyman is simple and persistent.
- The process of fighting with friends is the most meaningful.
RQ 3: What challenges were encountered in the project implementation and how were they met?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge 1</th>
<th>Strategy taken to cope with it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Getting everyone involved and keeping a balance between individual work and collaborative work in a large class</td>
<td>• Dividing a big job into small learning tasks (the number approximately equal to the number of students), some for individual completion, some for group/team work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge 2</td>
<td>Strategies taken to cope with it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Managing the large number of ‘audience’ students and keeping them engaged while only a few were presenting / showing</td>
<td>• Helping presenters to make engaging PowerPoint slides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Occupying the audience with peer-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Allowing students to record the presentation / show using various self-selected APPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge 3</td>
<td>Strategies taken to cope with it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Insufficient time, support and flexibility to apply PBL under the current educational system</td>
<td>• Requiring students to do a combination of tasks with an item of their own choice and a ‘must-do’ topic from the textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Keeping out-of-class learning support ‘on’ via QQ &amp; WeChat group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion and implications

• Interest and motivation is the key to PBL and LA, therefore allowing students’ choices is essential.

• Appropriate teacher support is crucial to effective use of PBL and genuine improvement of learner autonomy.

• No context is flawless for any project. Teachers’ understanding of contextual factors (esp. challenges) and willingness to positively cope with them PBL plays an important part in the project implementation and its effect on the development of LA.


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Thank You

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口头展示评价表
Oral Presentation Evaluation（2017-2018 Term2）

一、要求与说明事项：
1. 目的：鼓励大家积极参与，提高课堂参与度和课堂学习效果，促进相互学习和交流。
2. 形式：自愿参与，教师客观评价；参与一次获得0.5次平时成绩荣誉。
3. 任务：对同学进行的Project展示进行记录和评价；当天展示结束后选定最佳展示者一名。
4. 评估标准：满分10分，每项1分，最后打出最低分即可（可保留小数点后一位）。
   1) 材料组织准确合理（无严重错误）
   2) 语言组织准确
   3) 逻辑清晰明白，声音洪亮
   4) 课件制作认真（详见原文件或反面附录）
   5) 展示效果好（仪态大方，讲解突出重难点，有目光交流，适当提问等互动，听众能听明白并学到东西）

二、评价表

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>时间</th>
<th>展示主题</th>
<th>展示者</th>
<th>展示内容</th>
<th>优点与不足</th>
<th>成绩</th>
<th>收获</th>
<th>评价者</th>
<th>备注</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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</table>
口述显示评价表

Oral Presentation Evaluation (2017-2018 Term2)

1. 口述与讲解：
   1.1 口述内容是否清晰、准确，是否能够清楚地表达自己的观点和想法。
   1.2 口述内容是否能够引人入胜，是否有吸引力。
   1.3 口述内容是否符合逻辑，是否有连贯性。
   1.4 口述内容是否能够引起听众的共鸣，是否有感染力。

2. 讲解：
   2.1 讲解是否清晰，是否有条理性。
   2.2 讲解是否能够吸引听众的注意力，是否有吸引力。
   2.3 讲解是否能够引起听众的思考，是否有启发性。
   2.4 讲解是否能够准确地传达出演讲者的意图，是否有理解性。

3. 演讲主题：
   3.1 演讲主题是否鲜明，是否有针对性。
   3.2 演讲主题是否能够引起听众的兴趣，是否有吸引力。
   3.3 演讲主题是否能够引起听众的思考，是否有启发性。
   3.4 演讲主题是否能够准确地传达出演讲者的意图，是否有理解性。

4. 演讲者的语言：
   4.1 语言是否自然，是否有流畅性。
   4.2 语言是否能够引起听众的兴趣，是否有吸引力。
   4.3 语言是否能够引起听众的思考，是否有启发性。
   4.4 语言是否能够准确地传达出演讲者的意图，是否有理解性。

5. 演讲者的仪态：
   5.1 仪态是否自然，是否有自信。
   5.2 仪态是否能够引起听众的兴趣，是否有吸引力。
   5.3 仪态是否能够引起听众的思考，是否有启发性。
   5.4 仪态是否能够准确地传达出演讲者的意图，是否有理解性。

6. 演讲者的表情：
   6.1 表情是否自然，是否有感染力。
   6.2 表情是否能够引起听众的兴趣，是否有吸引力。
   6.3 表情是否能够引起听众的思考，是否有启发性。
   6.4 表情是否能够准确地传达出演讲者的意图，是否有理解性。

7. 演讲者的手势：
   7.1 手势是否自然，是否有连贯性。
   7.2 手势是否能够引起听众的兴趣，是否有吸引力。
   7.3 手势是否能够引起听众的思考，是否有启发性。
   7.4 手势是否能够准确地传达出演讲者的意图，是否有理解性。

8. 演讲者的整体表现：
   8.1 整体表现是否自然，是否有协调性。
   8.2 整体表现是否能够引起听众的兴趣，是否有吸引力。
   8.3 整体表现是否能够引起听众的思考，是否有启发性。
   8.4 整体表现是否能够准确地传达出演讲者的意图，是否有理解性。