Pre-Service English Teachers' Attitude Towards Independent Work as One of the Components of Their University Studies

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Abstract. *At university level, students' independent work is seen as a powerful means of preparing them for autonomous life-long learning. The article analyses the data of the survey of students' attitude (N = 89) towards independent work carried out at the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (LEU) in January 2015. This study concerns the students' perception of independent work, skills needed for conducting the independent work assignments successfully, and ranking of the skills according to their importance, the necessity of independent work at university and satisfaction with the independent work results as indicated by the students themselves. The results of the survey revealed a generally positive attitude of students to this part of their academic workload in the context of the recently introduced changes to the study programme of English Philology. The acquired data may be used to improve the organisation and content of independent work in the initial teacher education at university.*

Key words: *independent work, autonomous learner, ability to learn, generic competences, teacher training, life-long education.*

Complex challenges emerging in the rapidly changing world impose on an individual the need to develop a wide range of competencies in order to successfully function in the social environment and the demanding labour market. The recent trends in social and educational life, such as globalisation and establishment of knowledge-based society and economy, call for new approaches to contemporary education, promote life-long learning and necessitate reforms in the content, methods, and process of higher education. In these contexts, the competencies that students need to meet their personal, academic, and career goals have become more complex and require more than just acquisition of pure knowledge or mastery of certain narrowly defined skills. A contemporary young individual needs to self-develop a whole set

of general competencies as well as transversal skills, which ensure not only the achievement of goals at certain periods of his/her life but also enable the learner "to create and use knowledge effectively and intelligently, on a continuously changing basis…" (European Commission, 2000, p. 7).

Independent work in contemporary higher education studies is grounded in the new learning paradigm and constructivist theory, which states that "rather than learning being a process of knowledge transfer from expert to learner, learners should construct knowledge themselves by interacting with the environment" (Kriz (2010) cited in Grayson, 2014, p. 16).

Independent work in higher education establishments is generally defined as a teaching/learning system, an integral interaction of interrelated elements, such as independent work assignments, study methods, assessment of independent work, etc., which enables students to develop necessary competencies in the study process (Rutkienė, Tandzegolskienė, 2014; Rupšienė, Mažionienė, 2011; Tandzegolskienė, Pileckaitė, 2010; Le Boterf, 2009; Nieto et al., 2008; Asanavičienė, 2007; Broad, 2006; Hendry et al., 2005).

The recent strategic documents of education in the EU have underlined a particular focus on the development of key competencies as necessary prerequisites for a successful independent learner. The initial understanding of key competencies refers to reading, writing, and numeracy skills (EURYDICE, Survey 5, 2002, p. 14). However, at times of profound economic, political, and social change, it is necessary to expand the scope of key competencies

and tailor it to emerging requirements. The European Reference Framework of Key Competencies was defined in the Recommendation on Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning adopted by the Council and the European Parliament in December 2006. The framework outlines eight key competencies – which combine knowledge, skills, and attitudes. They are all regarded as necessary for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion, and employment in the 21st century.

In recent years, there has also been a great deal of attention to "generic skills, also known as subject-independent or transversal competencies" (ibid p. 15). They exceed the limits of subject-based content and may be transferred and applied in other fields, especially in ones, where competencies, based purely on subject-related knowledge, live short. The most prominent and most frequently pointed generic skills or common (transferable) competencies comprise: communication, problem solving, reasoning, leadership, creativity, motivation, teamwork, and the ability to learn. (EURYDICE, Survey 5, 2002, p. 16; CEFRL, 2001, p. 12, 106), while Grayson et al. (2014, p. 18) refer to the following "transversal skills" identified by the European Commission: critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving, risk assessment, communication, and constructive management of feelings. Any transversal skill is relevant across the eight key competencies. The framework of the eight key competencies together with the seven transversal skills laying emphasis on the application of knowledge in real life and professional world situations create a favourable environment for depart-

ing from "traditional" content-based approaches to empowerment of the learners to construct own knowledge and become an active autonomous learner (Looney and Michel, 2014).

The study of scientific literature revealed a heated discussion among scholars concerning the term of autonomous learning/learner. By numerous authors the term "self-directed learning" introduced by Knowles is regarded as a starting point to define the process "in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes" (Knowles, 1975, p. 18). The aforesaid concept has also been referred to as independent study, autonomous learning, student-initiated learning, learning to learn, self-instruction, discovery and inquiry, teaching for thinking and life-long learning (Thomas, 2014; Mavodza, Sengati-Zimba, 2014; Balapumi, Aitken, 2012; Broad, 2006; Richards, 2002; Sinclair et al., 2000; Gardner, Miller, 1999). The authors of this article employ "autonomous learning" or "an autonomous learner" as key terms to define the phenomenon under discussion, while the other concepts are treated as synonyms.

The characteristics of an autonomous learner presented in scientific literature are varied; Chou and Chen (2008) provide a condensed framework of general features that are typical of an autonomous learner:

1. Independence. Self-directed learners are fully responsible people who can independently analyse, plan, execute, and evaluate their own learning activities.

2. Self-management. Self-directed learners can identify what they need during the learning process, set individualised learning goals, control their own time and effort for learning, and arrange feedbacks for their work.

3. Desire for learning. For the purpose of knowledge acquisition, self-directed learners' motivations for learning are extremely strong.

4. Problem-solving. In order to achieve the best learning outcomes, self-directed learners make use of existing learning resources and feasible learning strategies to overcome the difficulties that occur in the learning process.

The aforementioned features seem to construct a concept which distinguishes an autonomous learner from others because self-directed learners will control their own learning process in an independent way.

In line with Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications (CEPTCQ, 2005), autonomous learning in teacher education can be approached from at least two perspectives. On the one hand, the document sees teacher education as a multidisciplinary process and refers to this occupation as "a profession placed within the context of life-long learning" (ibid p. 3), which presupposes the necessity of a pre-service teacher to further develop own autonomous learning skills. On the other hand, "teachers should be equipped to respond to the evolving challenges of the knowledge society, participate actively in it and prepare learners to be autonomous life-long learners (ibid p. 2). This requirement for the teacher's profession necessitates the future teacher

to acquire and efficiently apply the ability to contribute to the process by which young people and adults become more autonomous learners. Such attitude towards teacher's functions and recent developments in education have introduced legal changes not only in education in general but also in teacher training. Despite active actions of the EU educational policy makers towards the creation of supportive medium for autonomous learning, legal frameworks regulating education in the EU member states vary from being in favour of competence-based approach to traditional subject-based one. According to Halasz and Michel (2011), who have classified country approaches into seven different categories, Lithuania is ascribed to the group of countries, where skills or competence-based approach prevails.

Following the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania (Article 95.2) adopted in 2009, ECTS credits were introduced to higher education 1 September 2011. According to the new system, study programmes were redesigned laying emphasis on learning outcomes and students' autonomous learning, which is realised through their independent work. In the renewed study programmes students' independent work was ascribed a certain number of ECTS credits, which find their expression in academic hours.

In the context of the Faculty of Philology of Lithuanian, University of Educational Sciences students' independent work is viewed as a form of educational process, the volume of which is indicated in the undergraduate programme of English Philology and regulated by national and internal legal documents. After *The Description of*

the General Requirements for First Cycle and Integrated Study Programmes Granting the Degree (9 April 2010) and *The Regulations of Teacher Training* (12 December 2012) were approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, the structure and content of pedagogical studies underwent considerable changes. It resulted in the revision and renewal of the study programme: 30 credits were allotted to Teaching Practice, 3 credits were allocated to the Final Paper of Pedagogical Studies and 12 to the Bachelor Degree Thesis (The Description of Study Procedure at Lithuanian University of Educational Science (The Resolution of the Senate No. 292 of 19 February 2014, supplemented by the Resolution of the Senate No. 381 of 8 April 2015)). Consequently, the hours ascribed to independent work comprise from 51% to 88% of the total workload in the study programme of English Philology. Due to the specifics of the study programme, practical study subjects prevail in the first two years and independent work ranges from 51% in Semesters 1 and 2 to 60% in Semester 3 and 67% in Semester 4. The volume of independent workload reaches its maximum of 88% in Semester 7 as students have their Independent Teaching Practice at school, conduct research and process the data for their Final Paper of Pedagogical Studies, complete and defend it, further work on their BA Thesis. Such ratio meets the requirements of the university study programmes underlined in the aforesaid legal documents. The forms of student independent studies range from practical task-based study situations and processing of information, collected either from the indicated or independently selected literature sources, to the in-

dividually chosen focus and treatment of different problems displayed by the students in written tasks of bigger volume, (i.e., comparative and course work essays, assignments on Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), reports, Final Paper of Pedagogical Studies, BA Thesis) which require creative application of knowledge and skills as well as independently chosen patterning of research elements. The greater prominence that is given to independent study and optional subjects in senior years of study gives the students relatively more freedom of choice in fostering their individual needs. The recent trends in education and society, the focus on key competencies and shift from knowledge-oriented teaching/learning to self-directed studying, enable the students not only to answer their current academic needs but also prepare them for life-long learning as well as for challenges encountered in their professional activities.

Appropriately organised and conducted independent work enables the students to consolidate the knowledge as it gives precision and depth as well as allows individual perception and processing of the information received; it also facilitates and enhances self-study, time planning and information mining skill formation and strategy development, thus, enabling the student to become an autonomous learner.

Object of the research: students' perception of their independent work in the study process and their attitude towards it.

Aim of the research: to clarify students' perception of the concept of independent work and to identify their attitude towards it during their studies at university.

Objectives of the research:
1. To identify how students perceive their independent work carried out pursuing the Bachelor's degree in English Philology (LEU);
2. To analyse the skills indicated by the students as essential for conducting their independent work assignments successfully;
3. To single out the qualities of an autonomous learner that the students develop most in the study process;
4. To identify degrees of students' satisfaction with the outcomes of their independent work and factors that condition successful academic achievements;
5. To examine the tendencies in dynamics of the students' attitude towards their independent work and the necessity of independent work assignments at university.

Research methods

Theoretical: a critical review of scholarly literature and analysis of national and EU educational documents to define the multidimensional concept of an autonomous learner/self-directed learning and to establish links between the features attributed to an autonomous learner and independent work assignments carried out in university studies.

Empirical: online questionnaire survey of students, quantitative analysis of empirical data.

The accumulated data were processed applying SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science. Version 21).

The **scale and scope** of the research is limited to the students of English Philology (1st to 4th year) of Lithuanian Uni-

versity of Educational Sciences. The findings reported in the article are based on the analysis of 89 questionnaires filled in during the online survey carried out at the Department of English Didactics in 2015. The questionnaire, which was designed following the notion of an autonomous learner suggested by Chou and Chen (2008) and the analysis of the prevailing types of independent work assignments provided for in the Descriptions of the Study Subjects of the Bachelor Study Programme of English Philology, consists of 3 sections:

1. The first part concerns the students' perception of independent work and skills needed for conducting the independent work assignments successfully.
2. The second part targets the students' evaluation of the current state of affairs (ability to plan the completion of independent work assignments, further developed features of an autonomous learner, degrees of students' satisfaction with the outcomes of their independent work and factors conditioning successful academic achievements).
3. The third part concerns the students' subjective evaluation of the necessity of independent work at university and dynamics of their attitude towards independent work assignments.

Analysis and results

The first section of the questionnaire aimed at identifying students' understanding of the phenomenon of independent work as well as the skills that are necessary for successful completion of independent work tasks. Attempts were made to determine the students' opinion regarding their possession of the aforesaid skills. The respondents were provided with five statements characterising the concept of independent work and requested to specify their perception of the notion in question using a four-point Likert scale (see: Figure 1).
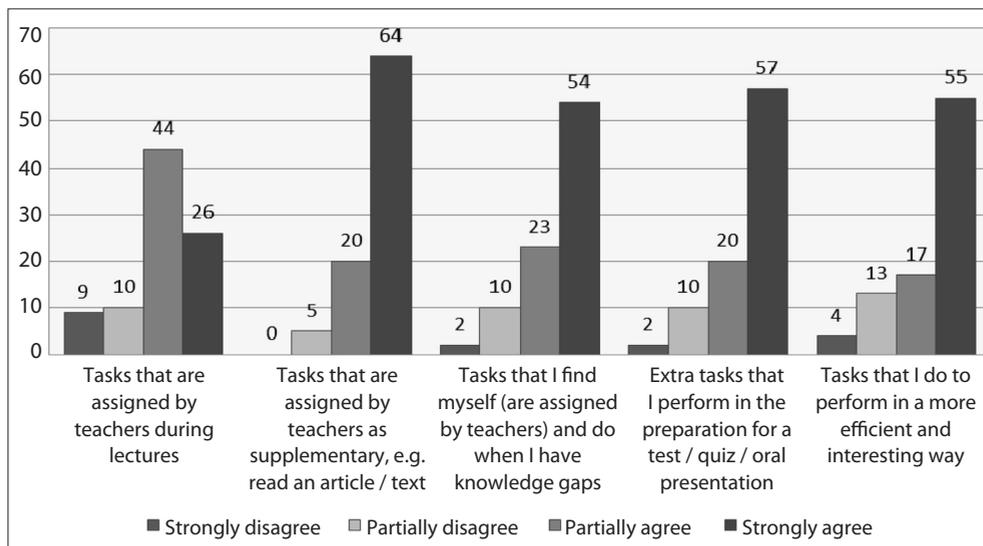

Fig. 1. ***The data on the respondents' understanding of the notion of independent work***

The research shows that the majority of students in all the four years of the Bachelor Study Programme of English Philology agree that independent work is a part of classwork when the teacher assigns some tasks for the students to perform during a seminar or lecture. 70 students state that they agree or strongly agree with the statement, while only 9 respondents of 89 strongly disagree with it. No obvious differences in the students' attitude towards the first proposition were observed respectively to the students' year of study. Still, only 15% of the first and second year learners object to this way of perception of the notion of independent work while the scope of those of the third and fourth year makes nearly 26%. Such a considerable change in the understanding of the phenomenon in question may presuppose that the change in the syllabus and the development of autonomous learner skills in the study years change the students' perception of independent learning.

The research findings concerning the second affirmation justify that almost all the students regard independent work as supplementary tasks assigned by teachers. 20 of the learners partially agree with and 63 totally confirm such a concept, what makes over 94% of the total sample of the respondents. Statements 3 and 4 are related to students' inclination to do extra tasks to bridge knowledge gaps or to prepare for an assignment better. The number of the students, who strongly or partially disagree with the two statements, is 12 in both cases. Approximately 61% totally support the concept of independent work being a task either found on own initiative or assigned by a teacher in order to fill in knowledge gaps and 64% of the learners strongly approve of the statement that autonomous learning concerns extra tasks while preparing for tests in order to achieve better results. Nevertheless, a deeper analysis of the findings of the research discloses a positive tendency that the students' understanding of independent work progresses in the study years towards perceiving the significance of own initiative in order to perform more successfully. About 70% of the first and second year students relate independent work with the tasks done in addition in the preparation for an assignment while nearly 91% of the third and fourth year students identify it so.

The last proposition concerns the students' willingness to perform in a more efficient or interesting way in the classroom. Only 4 of the respondents consider it absolutely unimportant while 55 believe it to be of the greatest significance. The latter ones together with those who partially agree with the statement make 81% of the total of the sample. The percentage of the students showing personal interest in the achievement of better results increasing from 31% in the first year to 45% in the fourth year reveals another positive tendency in students' attitude towards independent learning and studying in general.

Figure 2 presents the students' opinion about the skills necessary for the completion of individual work assignments.

The skill ranked the highest or indicated by the vast majority of the learners is time-management (79 students), the others marked by more than 70 respondents out of 89 were the following: motivation (76), patience (74), volition (72) and autonomy (71). If to consider the two options of the scale, i.e., strongly or partially agree, the figures concerning all the skills fluctuate
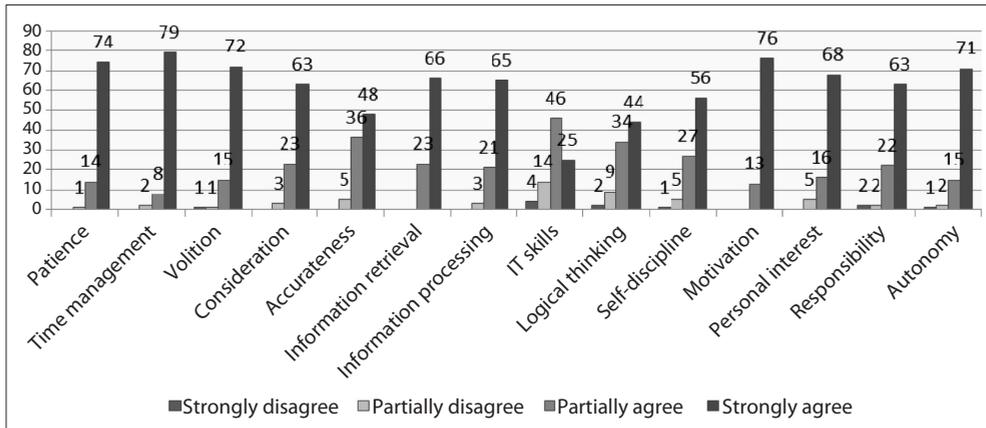
*Fig. 2. **The respondents' opinion about the skills necessary for the completion of individual work assignments***

from 78 to 89 persons. Two of the skills, i.e., information retrieval and motivation are considered to be of the greatest significance by the absolute majority of the respondents as nobody totally or partially disagrees with the need of such skills. The skills of accurateness and logical thinking as well as IT skills are marked as completely necessary by the lowest number of the students (48, 44 and 25 respondents respectively). Though the learners of English at LEU consider information retrieval and information processing skills of crucial importance, only 25 of them strongly agree and another 46 only partially agree that IT skills are necessary for the performance of independent work. Such discrepancy may imply that the students do not directly relate information retrieval and processing to IT skills.

A deeper analysis of the research findings depicts certain tendencies in the students' perception of the skills needed as regards the year of their study. Certain changes may be observed in their attitude towards the following skills: patience, accurateness, IT skills, logical thinking, re-

sponsibility and autonomy. The scope of those who strongly agree with the need for patience, logical thinking and responsibility increases by approximately 10% if taken the first two and the last two years of study. The percentage of the respondents considering the necessity of accurateness and IT skills rises by about 15% in the higher courses while the greatest change may be observed in the skill of autonomy with the rise of 26%. Therefore, the third and fourth year students better perceive that in order to become self-directed learners they are supposed to acquire and develop the skill of autonomy. Such a tendency may be conditioned by an increased volume of independent work assigned to the students in the second half of their studies due to changes in the framework of the study programme.

Since time management was presupposed to be a significant skill as the ability to plan is essential in becoming an autonomous learner (Chou and Chen (2008)) and, in fact, it was ranked by the respondents the highest among the skills needed for independent work, the students were also
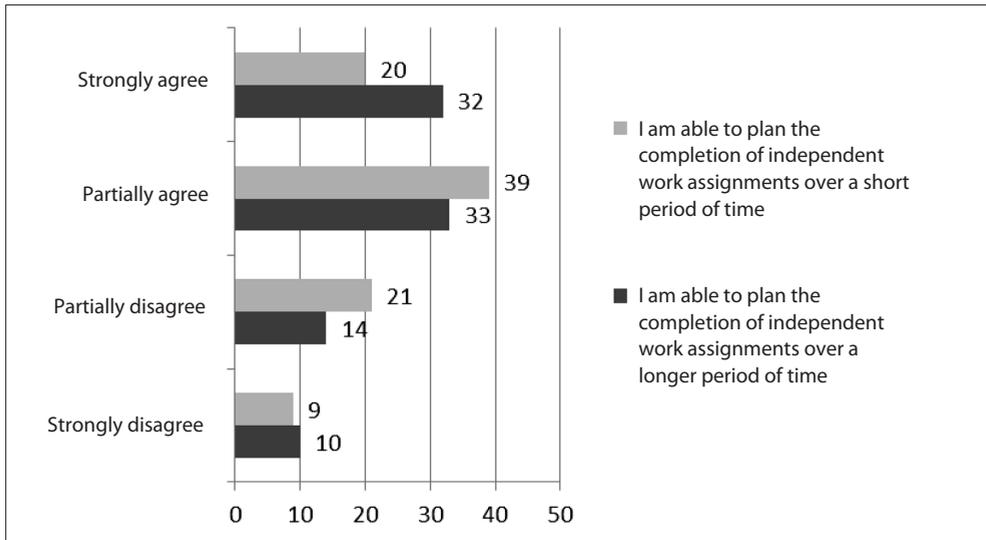
*Fig. 3. **The data on the students' abilities to plan their own work***

inquired about their own skill to plan and complete their independent work assignments both over a short and long period of time.

The findings of the research reveal that the students cope with the independent workload more successfully during a lengthy course of time. Only 10 respondents indicate that they are not able to plan their activities and 14 partially disagree with the statement that they manage to organise their time appropriately in a longer stretch of time. 65 students consider themselves being totally or partially able to dispose their time so that they meet the deadline and perform well. Working under time pressure or being able to coordinate own activities so that independent work assignments are completed in a shorter interval appears to be more challenging for the students of English Philology. 30 respondents mark that they either disagree or strongly disagree that they possess the skill to manage own time in a shorter term. Only 20 learners of all the years of studies strongly

approve of and 39 of the respondents partially agree with the statement that they are able to plan their independent work over a short period of time well. The comparison of the data of different study years depicts certain changes in the students' ability to plan their own work over a short or long period of time. About 54% of the first and second year students agree that they cope with the tasks in a short interval while the percentage of such students in the third and fourth year rises to 74%, while their ability to organise own independent work over a long period of time does not change much in the course of studies (about 25% of students lack this skill no matter what year of studies they are in).

The respondents were also inquired about the average number of hours spent for the completion of independent work assignments in a week. The findings of the research illustrate that the majority of the learners spend on average 3–4 hours a week (40% of the first two years and 35% of the last ones), nearly one third of all the
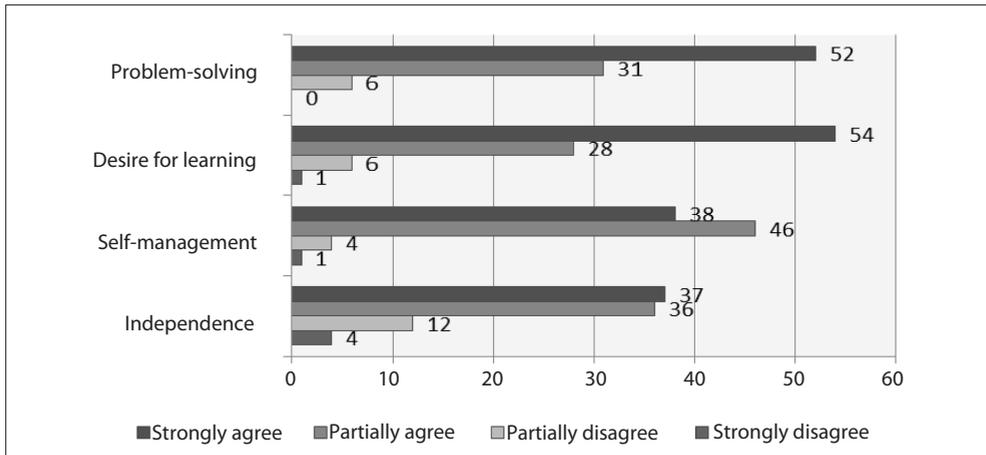
*Fig. 4. **The students' responses regarding their further developed features of an autonomous learner***

students (17 of the lower years and 24 of the higher ones) specify the number of 5–6 hours or more than 6 hours. Still, independent work is not considered to be of a great importance by every learner at university as 10 students indicate that they allocate less than an hour a week for the performance of this activity.

As has been mentioned before, according to P. Chou and W. Chen, (2008), there are four typical features of an autonomous learner thus, the respondents were asked to indicate which of the qualities in question they further developed in the course of their studies at university.

Generally, the findings of the research indicate that the students of all the four study years further develop the characteristics of a self-directed learner. The two qualities, i.e., problem-solving and desire for learning are marked as the most prominent ones. More than a half of the respondents totally agree that they further develop the desire for learning (54 students) and problem-solving skill (52 students) in the course of studies and nearly one third

(28 and 31 correspondingly) partially agree with the points. It amounts to approximately 92 percent of all the learners in the former case and 93 in the latter one. There are no distinct differences observed between the answers of the first and second year students and the third and fourth year ones. Nevertheless, there are no students in the lower study years pointing out that they do not advance in their desire for learning, while there appear 7 respondents who either strongly disagree or partially disagree with the aforesaid statement. About one third of the students in both cases partially agree that their willingness to learn increases in the course of the study years. On the other hand, the number of the respondents totally agreeing with the statement drops from 69% in the initial years of studies to 56% in the last two ones. It may be preconditioned by an extremely big volume of independent work assignments related to the preparation of BA Thesis, Final Paper of Pedagogical Studies, Portfolios of Teaching Practices and the students' inability to cope with the tasks successfully.

The quality of problem-solving may be defined as an exceptional one as there are no respondents indicating that they do not further develop it. A deeper analysis of the results reveals a positive trend towards the development of the feature in question. The scope of those who totally support the point in the first years of study rises from 51% to 62% in the third and fourth study years. The research results concerning the other two features of independence and self-management are very similar. 37 respondents strongly agree that they advance in the development of their feature of independence and 38 students totally consent to the improvement of the quality of self-management. The proportion of those who either partially or strongly agree that they further develop their independence and self-management skills amounts to approximately 82% and to 94% respectively. The tendencies of the further improvement of the two qualities are contrary if a more precise study is carried out. The results reveal an upward tendency in development of students' independence during their studies: from 37% of those who partially or strongly agree in the first two years of study to 43% or 45% respectively in year three and four. There is not a single respondent in the last year of Bachelor studies of English Philology indicating that he/she has not further developed the characteristic of independence. The improvement of the quality of self-management is more emphasized by the students of initial courses: all of them (100%) either partially agree (24 respondents) or strongly agree (11 respondents) that they develop the above mentioned feature while the percentage slightly drops to 89% of all the students in year three or four with the ap-

pearance of 1 negative answer and 4 ones marking partial disagreement.

The questionnaire also aimed at identifying degrees of students' satisfaction with the outcomes of their independent work and factors conditioning the achievement of good results. Therefore, the respondents were asked whether they are satisfied with the results of their independent work at university. 51 learners strongly or partially agree with the statement, though the number of those who strongly confirm the point makes up only 13 students. On the other hand, only 11 respondents strongly negate that independent work results meet their expectations. A deeper analysis of the research findings discloses certain tendencies in the students' level of satisfaction with their outcomes of independent work. The percentage of those who are totally dissatisfied decreases in the first two years from 17% of the total to 9% in the third and fourth years. The percentage of those who are partially satisfied remains stable – 43% in both cases, though the number of those who are fully content with the results drops from 17% in the initial years of study to 13% in the last two. The proportion of those who are partially dissatisfied rises by 12% in the same period of time. A growth in the number of the students who are partially satisfied and a fall in those who are totally satisfied may be accounted by the students' inability to cope with the switch from more task-based study situations and processing information in the first two years to written tasks of bigger volume in the further years of studies, i.e., BA Thesis, Final Paper of Pedagogical Studies, preparation of Portfolios of the Teaching Practice under the Supervision of Mentor and Independent Teaching Practice of bigger
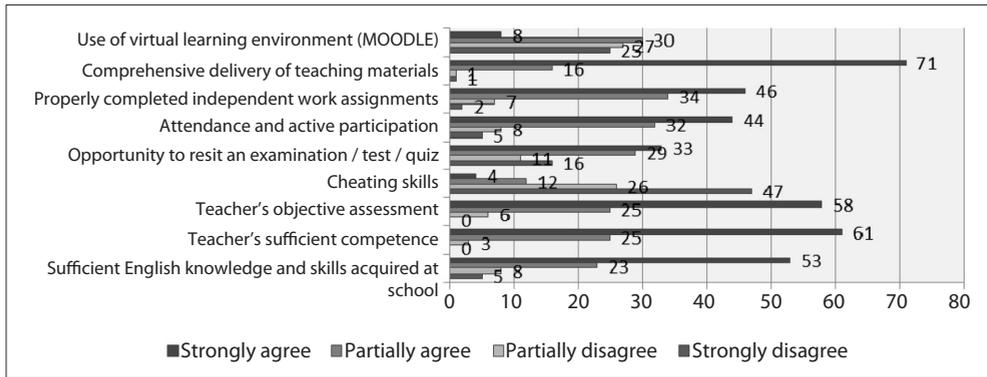
*Fig. 5. **The factors that, in the students' opinion, condition successful attainment of learning outcomes***

volume, which require creative application of knowledge and skills, critical thinking and research skills.

The respondents were also inquired about the factors conditioning successful outcomes of study process.

Nearly three fourths of the students (71 respondents) ranked the factor of comprehensive delivery of materials as the most important and almost all the students (nearly 98%) of all the English learners at university (LEU) either partially or strongly agree with it. Another two factors supported by the students' total agreement are related to teacher's sufficient competence (61 students) and teacher's objective assessment (58). Together with the partial support of the learners the two factors in question reach the consent of approximately 97% and 93% of the respondents correspondingly. More than a half of the respondents (53 students) identify sufficient English knowledge and skills acquired at school as important factors conditioning successful attainment of the learning outcomes. The distribution of the percentage does not vary among the years of studies. Two more factors are related to

the students' initiative either to attend and to actively participate in the classroom or properly complete independent work assignments. 44 respondents strongly agree with the significance of the former factor and 46 of them – with the latter one. The distribution of the answers mostly varies on the point of opportunity to resit an examination or a test. The number fluctuates from 16 respondents who totally disagree to 33 of those who strongly agree. A closer study of the research findings reveals a growing number of those seeing the opportunity of resitting a test as a favourable factor for success in the course of studies from approximately 30% in the first year to approximately 38% in the last year of studies. The two factors of cheating skills and the use of virtual learning environment (MOODLE) receive little support of the respondents. More than a half of them strongly disagree and 26 partially disagree that cheating may influence good results. Only 38 respondents consider the use of MOODLE to be a favourable factor for successful learning while about two thirds either totally or partially disagree with the point. The results may presup-

pose that though the students relate their own knowledge, skills, initiative and independent work with successfully achieved learning outcomes they still strongly associate good learning results with teacher's professional qualities.

Finally, in the third part of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked about the necessity of independent work as a means to develop characteristics of an autonomous learner, and their opinion regarding the dynamics of their attitude towards the completion of independent work tasks in the study process at university. The research shows that the vast majority of students in all the four years of Bachelor programme of English Philology agree that independent work is necessary at university. There is no single person strongly disagreeing with the point and there appears to be only one in the 4th year to partially oppose such a statement. As a result, 25 respondents partially agree and even 63 strongly agree with the necessity of individual completion of assignments at university. Judging the tendencies in the approach it is worth mentioning that the number of those who totally support the point rises from 14.6% in the first year to 18% in the second one. The volume of the students fully agreeing with the statement remains stable in year three and finally rises to over 20% in the last year of studies. As regards the respondents' attitude towards autonomous learning, only 8 students indicate no change while 59 of all the respondents either partially or strongly agree that their attitude has changed for the better. Therefore, the findings of the research may presuppose that the demand for a bigger scope of independent workload in the course of study years that is conditioned by the syllabus design is relevant to the students' apprehension and evaluation of the significance of such type of work at university.

Conclusions

1. The survey results reveal that the learners' perception of independent work changes along with the innovations in the syllabus design and the students' further development of typical features of an autonomous learner. The understanding of independent work as tasks assigned by teachers in the classroom or as supplementary homework progresses towards the perception that independent work is determined as tasks done on the student's own initiative in order to perform in a better or more efficient way.

2. Skills of time management, motivation, patience, volition, and autonomy are considered by the respondents as the most prominent abilities that are necessary for the completion of individual work assignments. Time management being the most significant skill for all the respondents is seen as a bigger challenge to cope with over a short period of time rather than over a longer one. Still the ability to organise own activities and meet the deadline over a longer period remains a challenge for one quarter of the students in all the study years. Though on average the vast majority of the students allocate 4-5 hours a week for the completion of independent work assignments, individual work is not considered to be of the greatest importance by every learner in the study programme of English Philology.

3. The number of the respondents indicating no further progress in the development of typical features of an autonomous learner in study years is very low. Problem-solving and desire for learning are more developed among the students compared to self-management and independence. Nevertheless, all the features in question are improved in the study process by three fourths of the students of English Philology.

4. The majority of the respondents are satisfied or partially satisfied with the outcomes of their academic achievements, though the number of the totally satisfied students decreases with years which may be accounted by the respondents' incapability to perform as well as before due to the changes in the syllabus design and the introduction of tasks much more based on independent work. The major factors conditioning successful learning outcomes in the students' opinion are comprehensive delivery of teaching materials, teacher's objective assessment and sufficient competence as well as the students' sufficient knowledge and skills acquired in school. Nevertheless, the vast majority of the respondents consider the factor of properly completed independent work assignments important or very important for the successful academic results.

5. The majority of the respondents state that their attitude towards their independent work changes with regard to their year of studies. The students' tendency to demonstrate a more positive attitude towards independent work assignments and consider them to be of a greater importance in the study years may presuppose that, on the one hand, the syllabus design makes the students perform more independently, on the other hand, the further development of qualities and skills of an autonomous learner enables the student to better assess the value and significance of independent work.

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BŪSIMŲJŲ ANGLŲ KALBOS MOKYTOJŲ POŽIŪRIS Į SAVARANKIŠKĄ DARBĄ KAIP VIENĄ IŠ UNIVERSITETINIŲ STUDIJŲ SUDEDAMŲJŲ DALIŲ

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S a n t r a u k a

Pastarųjų metų žinių visuomenės keliami iššūkiai ir mokymosi visą gyvenimą poreikis kelia vis naujų reikalavimų švietimo kokybei. Visais švietimo lygmenimis ir visose pakopose ypatingas dėmesys skiriamas pagrindinių gebėjimų, iš jų ir mokymosi mokytis, kompetencijų ugdymo(si) ir studentų savarankiško mokymosi, plėtojimui(si). Universitete studentų savarankiškas darbas laikomas veiksminga priemone rengiant juos savarankiškai mokytis studijų metu ir visą gyvenimą. Straipsnyje analizuojami Lietuvos edukologijos universitete 2015 metais atlikto tyrimo, kuriame dalyvavo 89 anglų filologijos bakalauro studijų programos studentai, rezultatai. Tyrimu buvo siekiama išsiaiškinti studentų požiūrį į savarankišką darbą, jų nuomonę apie savarankiškoms užduotims atlikti reikalingus gebėjimus, savarankiško darbo būtinybę universitetinėse studijose ir pasitenkinimą pasiektais savarankiško darbo rezultatais. Tyrimo metu respondentai nurodė daugybę gebėjimų, kurie būtini sėkmingai atlikti savarankiško darbo užduotis universitetinių studijų metu ir kurie kaip esminiai nurodomi ir dokumentuose, reguliuojančiuose švietimą Europos aukštojo mokslo erdvėje. Tyrimo rezultatai atskleidė iš esmės teigiamą studentų požiūrį į šią jų akademinio darbo dalį.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: savarankiškas darbas, autonomiškas besimokantysis, gebėjimas mokytis, bendrieji gebėjimai, mokytojų rengimas, mokymasis visą gyvenimą.