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Investigating Students' Readiness to Autonomous Learning in EFL

Classes: Students' and Teachers' Perceptions.

The Case of First Year License Students

University of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel

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Language Sciences

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Dedications

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, and the Most Merciful, All the Praise is due to God alone, the sustainer of the Worlds.

The memory of my beloved mother I wish that you were with me now. I am proud to be your daughter, you taught me to trust myself and to rely on it so that I achieve what I wish.

*This work is dedicated to my dearest person, whose presence brought life to everything and whose absence brought pain. The person who had always been proud of my continuous success . . . who had always supported me . . . and who would have been the happiest person to see this work accomplished
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To the light of my eyes, my dear FATHER, for his love and support.

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To everyone who loves me

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Dedications

This work is dedicated to:

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my beloved Prophet who guided me

my dear mother who strengthens my will and who raised me

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nourished me*

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Abstract

Learner autonomy has gradually played a fundamental role in the field of language teaching and learning in the last few decades. For the development of learners autonomy in English as a Foreign Language classes, learners need to become more active, critical, reflective and aware about what they are acquiring. Thus, the focus of this work was to investigate EFL learners' readiness to autonomous learning. This dissertation contains two chapters; a theoretical chapter dealing with the literature review in which the theory of learner autonomy was presented, and a practical chapter for the analysis of the results obtained. Two questionnaires were administered for both first year License students (70 students from 229) and 10 teachers who are teaching first year to gather information about learners' readiness to autonomous learning. The analysis of the questionnaires confirmed the research hypothesis which stated that first year License learners of English are not ready yet to take charge of their own learning. The findings revealed also that EFL students have negative attitudes towards learner autonomy. Moreover, learners are not aware of language learning strategies and lack the language skills that enable them to learn independently. On the other hand, the results showed that some teachers are not familiar with the notion of learner autonomy and still need training in order to be able to involve their learners in the learning process.

List of Abbreviations

%: Percentage.

CA: Communicative Approach

CBA: Competency-Based Approach

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

FL: Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

GTM: Grammar Translation Method

LLS: Language Learning Strategies

LMD : License-Master-Doctorate

L2: Second Language

MKO: More Knowledgeable Other.

SL: Second Language

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

Vs: Versus

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Investigating Students' Readiness to Autonomous Learning in EFL Classes: The Case of
First Year License Students-University of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia

For a long time teaching English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) throughout the world has been dominated by teacher-centered approaches where the teacher is the authority in the classroom, and almost all English textbooks are designed to teach grammar, reading, and writing with little or no emphasis on oral skills, such as the Grammar Translation Method (GTM). In such a teacher-centered classroom students rely much more on the teacher in the process of English learning. However, research in the field of language learning has proved that this passive way of learning inhibits most learners from learning English effectively.

Later on, new methods have been introduced like the Communicative Approach (CA) and the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) mainly because the traditional ones have proved to be inadequate to meet the demands of modern society which does not require only being able to use language communicatively but also understanding that learning is a life-long process, especially with the rapid technological development. This change results in the introduction of 'learner autonomy' in the field of language teaching and learning that seeks to develop learners who are able to take charge of their own learning.

1. Statement of the Problem

Many educational movements have been introduced to the teaching/learning process in the 21st century. One major aim of these movements is to make learners more involved in their own learning and more aware about what they are acquiring. One of the key principles of learner autonomy is moving the spotlight from teaching to learning. Promoting autonomous learning in the classroom context is very important because it

creates a learner-centered environment where students can learn by themselves with little or no reliance on the teacher. Unfortunately, it has been noticed that the development of autonomous learning in EFL classes is somehow difficult due to various problems students face inside and outside the educational context related to learners' inability to learn independently. The present study tends to answer four main questions:

- Are 1st year LMD students of English ready to take responsibility for their own learning?
- What are the learners' attitudes towards learner autonomy?
- How do learners perceive their roles and their teacher's role in the promotion of autonomous learning?
- Are EFL learners aware of language learning strategies required for the development of learner autonomy in EFL classrooms?

2. Aims of the Study

One of the major aims of learning a foreign language is to be able to learn autonomously. This dissertation aims at:

- Highlighting the concept of learner autonomy and its significance in foreign language classrooms.
- Investigating whether EFL learners are ready to autonomous learning.
- Having an idea about various difficulties that face students while trying to be autonomous.

3. Hypothesis

First year License students of English are not ready yet to be autonomous.

4. Means of Research

This study is a descriptive one. In order to test the validity of the research hypothesis, two questionnaires are distributed: One is given to first year LMD students of English in order to get a clear idea about the learners' perceptions of their ability to learn English independently. The second one is directed to teachers to gather information about their views concerning the learners' readiness to autonomous learning as well as their attitudes towards it. The questionnaire is chosen as an instrument of research because it saves time and efforts, and a huge number of information can be collected in a short time.

5. Structure of the Study

This work is divided into two chapters, the first one deals with the literature review on learner autonomy, and its various aspects. The second chapter is concerned with the analysis of the questionnaires and the interpretation of the results obtained.

Chapter one speaks about different definitions of learner autonomy and the different aspects related to it. It also speaks about types, versions and levels of autonomy as well as its rise in the field of language education. Moreover, it highlights the dominant theories underlying the notion of learner autonomy, and important conditions for the promotion of autonomous learning. In addition, the steps to learner autonomy and the activities applied in the autonomous class are discussed. Then, mentioning the teacher's and learners' role, characteristics of autonomous learners, successes and problems encountered in the process of developing autonomous learning in EFL contexts, and the significance of fostering autonomy in ELT. Concluding with the relationship between teacher and learner autonomy as well as learner-centeredness and learner autonomy.

The second chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of both students' and teachers' questionnaires to test the validity of the research hypothesis.

Chapter one: Learner Autonomy- The Literature Review-

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Chapter One

Learner Autonomy- The Literature Review-

Introduction

More emphasis nowadays is put on the role of the learner rather than of the teacher in the learning process. Students are now viewed as active interpreters and processors of knowledge and not as passive recipients of grammatical structures and vocabulary items in the EFL classroom as was the case in traditional methods and approaches. Such interest in the learners' role puts learners at the centre of attention in the classroom and gives the rise to the concept of learner autonomy, or autonomous learning that reflects students' ability to take responsibility for their own learning.

Due to the fact that autonomy is a key factor for successful learning, learner autonomy has received much more attention in the field of language education. Holec (1981, p. 3) identified two main objectives of language instruction: to help students achieve their linguistic and communicative goals on the one hand and to be autonomous in their learning on the other. So, effective language learning does not include only being fluent speakers of that language but also being responsible for learning.

1.1. Definitions of Learner Autonomy

Research on the literature has proved that it is difficult to arrive at a single definition of autonomy because it has been described differently by many scholars and researchers from different perspectives (Dickinson, 1987; Holec, 1981; Little, 1991) (as cited in Benson, 2006, p. 22). The word autonomy comes from the Greek word 'autonomus' which refers to someone or something which lives by his/her own rule, thus

autonomous learning is related to self-directed and self-governing studies (Hadi, Kh. 2012, p. 5).

Researcher on the literature has proved that Holec's (1981, p. 1; cited in Benson, 2006, p. 22) definition is the most cited one in the field. Holec (1981) stated that autonomy is the "ability to take charge of one's own learning". According to Holec (1981), "this ability is not inborn but must acquired either by natural means (subconsciously) or by formal instruction, this means in a deliberate way ..." (as cited in Benson, 2006, p. 22). Holec also argued that in order for learners to be involved in their own learning, they have to be able to: determine the learning objectives, define the content, select the methods and techniques to be used, monitor the learning process and evaluate what they have learnt.

Building autonomy in language learning requires learners to take part in all aspects related to their learning involving: planning, selecting materials, monitoring learning progress and so on (Benson, 2006). Moreover, Holec (1981) "treated autonomy as an attribute of learners" (Benson, 2006, p. 22), that is to say, his description of autonomous learning provides a clear idea about *what* students are able to do rather *how* they are able to do it (ibid). This means that Holec (1981) tried to explain or mention *what* activities autonomous learners should perform without saying in *what* ways they will do those activities. Further, autonomy here is considered to be an attribute of learners rather than learning situation (Dickinson, 1987, p. 11).

On the other hand, Dickinson (1987) defined autonomy as "the situation in which the learner is responsible for all the decisions concerned with his or her learning and the implementation of those decisions" (p. 11). Thus, to be autonomous, students should not only make decisions about their learning but they also have to make decisions about how to implement them by themselves. Dickinson (1987) viewed learner autonomy as a

decision making in learning context. For Little (1991) the concept refers to “the learners’ psychological relation with the learning process and context”, he argued that the capacity to manage one’s own learning depends upon certain underlying psychological capacities.

Benson (2001) (as cited in Tham & Sirinthorn 2014) stated the following:

It is not enough to view learner autonomy as self-management of learning, or learner responsibility as he asserts that the nature of autonomy consists of three clearly interdependent aspects: learning management, cognitive process, and learning content. (p. 130)

This means that autonomy is not limited to only one process; however, it needs a combination or a link among all those processes. In addition, Benson (2001) “explains learners cannot become autonomous unless they are able to negotiate for the right to make decisions about and take responsibility for their learning.” (as cited in Tham and Sirinthorn, 2014, p. 130). Hence, in order for learners to be autonomous they need first of all to be able to make decisions about and to hold responsibility for their learning.

All the above mentioned definitions of autonomy describe it as the individual characteristic; whereas, the learning process is not something that students experience in isolation, but they are also practicing it in natural environments where they are communicating with other individuals (Can, 2012). The different situations and contexts that learners are exposed to, require them to possess different qualities and attributes. So to say, this is not being independent of others in making choices but as Little (1991) put is being ‘interdependent’. Moreover, Little (2009, pp. 224-226; cited in Can, 2012, p. 3) noted that “learners should be given the right to freely choose the learning aims, methods, materials, tasks by negotiating and agreeing with others”. Thus, autonomy will

be developed when an individual is engaged in a state of cooperation with other individuals.

To conclude, although many researchers defined the notion of learner autonomy differently, it is clear that autonomy refers to learners' self-management, self-evaluation, and self-monitoring of all aspects related to their learning both individually and cooperatively in different situations, through making use of various capacities, rights, and skills students have.

➤ **Related Terms to Learner Autonomy**

According to Benson (2006), there are a number of terms related to autonomy that can be distinguished from it in various ways. Many researchers and writers believed that 'self-instruction', 'self-education', 'out-of-class learning', 'distance learning' and 'self-study', which explain the different ways and degrees of learning by oneself, are not synonyms of autonomous learning that reflects learners' abilities and attitudes. Thus, they cannot be used interchangeably or as synonyms (Benson, 2006, p.1). In other words, "learning by one self is not the same thing as having the capacity to learn by oneself" (ibid). Also, "autonomous learners may be better than others at learning by themselves but they do not necessarily have to learn by themselves" (ibid). That is to say, autonomous learners are more capable to learn independently than those who are not; however, this does not mean they really learn by themselves. Benson (2006) stated that "Autonomy involves abilities and attributes that people possess, and can develop to various degrees" (p. 1), that is to say, there are degrees of autonomy.

On the other hand, 'independent learning', 'self-directed learning' are also ways of learning by oneself but they are used as synonyms of autonomy. That is to say, the key

concern of autonomy is not much whether learning is carried out by the learner, however, whether it is controlled by the learner (Benson, 2006).

1.2. Interrelated Aspects to Learner Autonomy

The concept of learner autonomy has become important in educational discussion, especially with the new reforms in the educational programs. Many educators and researchers, in the field of language teaching and learning, gave different interpretations to the notion of learner autonomy. Holec (1981, p. 3; cited in Benson, 2006) argued:

Autonomy in language learning depends on the development and exercise of a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action[...]; autonomous learners assume responsibility for determining the purpose, content, rhythm and method of their learning, monitoring its progress and evaluating its outcomes. (p.23)

This definition indicates that developing autonomous learners, require students to develop a sense of decision-making, independence and responsibility for different aspects related to their learning. So, there are essential elements central and related to the development of learner autonomy such as reflection, awareness, self-confidence and self-evaluation which take place together.

Hozayen (as cited in Gardner, 2011, p.130) assumed that reflection on learning can help learners to become more active and critical in the sense that “they learn to analyze their learning strategies and, thus, start making decisions”. That is to say, when learners control and monitor the progress of the learning process, their logical thinking and the ability to make sensible decisions about their learning would be developed.

Scharle and Szabó (2000) said that “raising awareness is the starting point ... to ... encourage [learners] to bring their inner process of their own learning to the conscious level of their thinking.” (p.9). Similarly Alle-Corliss,L. and Alle-Corliss,R. (2009) claimed that self-awareness is fundamental to individual’s growth and development. Alle-Corliss (2009) added that “developing self-awareness is a vital element in learning to work effectively.” (p.55). Hence, raising students’ awareness is considered as the point of departure to achieve successful and autonomous learning.

Another significant element which is related to autonomy is self-confidence. According to Brown (2000) learners belief that they are fully capable of accomplishing a task is at least partially a factor in their evaluation success in attaining the task.”(p.62). Therefore, self-confidence has a crucial role in the development of learning, thus learners have to trust themselves when doing a task or solving a problem. Later on those learners would be self-reliant and they can get rid of the dependence on the teacher.

Self-evaluation is also related to autonomy. Learners can evaluate their learning and the outcome they come to. Scharle and Szabó (2000) claim that “... [learners] have to step into the shoes of the teacher and judge their own work as objectively as they can.” (p.8). By evaluating themselves, learners can identify their strengths and weaknesses which enable them to improve future actions.

To conclude, reflection, self-confidence, awareness and self-evaluation are interrelated aspects to autonomy and they have a substantial role in developing autonomous learning, facilitating learning and making it more effective and enjoyable.

1.3. Communicative vs. Pedagogical Autonomy

Building autonomous learners becomes a central goal of language teaching and learning, since independent language learners are said to be more able to achieve the learning goals, aims, and objectives and, according to Little (1995) “if [learners] achieve the learning targets, they are more likely to maintain positive attitudes to learning in the future.” (p. 176). As it has been earlier mentioned, learners who have positive attitudes towards themselves, others, and the target language, and who are motivated are autonomous. Little (1995) added: “in the case of language learning the whole point of developing learner autonomy is to enable learners to become autonomous users of their target language.” (p. 176). In other words, individuals can be either ‘autonomous users of language, ‘autonomous learners’, or even both.

Little (1995, p. 176) stated that “learner autonomy has two distinct dimensions, one pedagogical and the other communicative”. Moreover, although “pedagogical autonomy clearly proceeds communicative autonomy”, language learning and use are not separable processes (ibid). That is to say, students may be autonomous language learners from an early stage; whereas, they may take a long time in order to be autonomous language users of the target language (Little, 1995), but this does not mean that being an autonomous learner excludes individuals from being competent and independent users of language. Because “it is impossible to learn a language without at the same time using whatever knowledge of it we already possess.” (Little, 1995, p. 176). In other words, as much as students are involved in the process of communication, they will go on in their formal learning.

Additionally, Little (1995, p. 176) argued that ‘pedagogical’ and ‘communicative’ autonomy are interdependent, hence each one supports and completes the other. Further, Little (1995) claimed “the successful practice of autonomy logically entails the interaction of these two dimensions from the earliest stages of learning.”(p. 176). Thus

reaching effective and independent language learning requires a combination of both 'pedagogical' and 'communicative' autonomy on the part of the learner. So, students who are valued and competent members in their social group are more likely to be autonomous learners.

1.4. The Rise of Autonomy in Language Education

Since the 1970s the notion of learner autonomy has become a central issue for research, analysis and debate among many educators and researchers in the field of language teaching and learning. The emergence of self-directed learning in educational discussion has mainly started with the implementation of communicative approaches in the language classrooms. At that time, educationalists, philosophers, and Linguists like Paolo Freire (1972); Ivan Illich (1970, 1973); Henri Holec (1979) and Carl Rogers (1941, 1972) (as cited in Gremmo & Riley, 1995, p. 152) acknowledged that language is primarily "a tool for communication" and emphasized the importance of the learner's active engagement in the learning process. Moreover, they agreed upon the idea that "language was essentially pragmatic and social" (Gremmo & Riley, 1995, p. 152). In other words, learners have to be active and competent individuals who are able to use language interactively to express different needs, views, and intentions.

More support for autonomous learning is found in the field of psychology; both humanistic psychology and cognitive psychology (Ausubel, 1968, Bruner et al. 1966; Donaldson, 1978) claimed that learning is "something learners do, rather than being done to them" (as cited in Gremmo and Riley, 1995, p. 153). This does not mean that learners only need to know *what* to learn but also *how* to learn depending on themselves, and this idea has been mentioned earlier by Galileo Galilei (1564-1642; cited in Lowry,

2008, p.1) who claimed that “you cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him find it within himself”. In other words, language learners should be active participants in the process of learning; controlling, organizing and planning their own learning with little or no dependence on the teacher.

In the domain of foreign language learning, it was the work of the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project that has been established in (1971) (Trim 1978, cited in Gremmo & Riley, 1995, p. 153) and concentrated at the beginning on the language needs of migrant workers (Gremmo & Riley, 1995, p. 153). Autonomy was regarded as an essential component of foreign language teaching and learning, which is manifested in Holec's (1981) seminal work *Autonomy in Foreign Language Learning* that has been considered as the basis of many studies and researches in investigating autonomy and autonomous learning and its importance for achieving effective and successful teaching and learning (Benson, 2006; Can, 2012; Deng, 2007).

Many other factors contributing to the emergence of self-directed learning which have been highlighted by Gremmo and Riley (1995, p. 151), involving monitoring rights movements, shift in educational philosophy, linguistic pragmatism, and wider access to education, increased internationalism and easier availability of educational technology. Nowadays, autonomy has become an interesting issue in the foreign language learning, thus many researchers try to provide a comprehensive overview about autonomous learning (Dam, 1995; Dickinson, 1987; Holec, 1981; Little, 1991) and how it leads to successful language learning..

1.5. Levels of Autonomy

In the late 1990s a number of writers claimed that the concept of autonomy is a matter of degree (Benson, 2006, p. 23). This has been expressed in two assumptions;

that there are degrees of autonomy (Nunan,1997, p.192) “and the behavior of autonomous learners ‘can take numerous different forms, depending on their age, how far they have progressed with their learning, what they perceive their immediate learning needs to be, and so on’ ” (Little, 1994,p. 4) (cited in Benson, 2006, p.23). This indicates that rather than attempting to precisely explain what learner autonomy is, researchers try to shed some light on the different levels of autonomy and the various ways of representing autonomy, as a result many models have been developed.

To start with Nunan’s (1997) model involves five levels of ‘learner action’- ‘awareness’, ‘involvement’, ‘intervention’, ‘creation’, and ‘transcendence’; these different levels involve components of both content and process; that is to say, as Benson (2006, p. 23) argued:

At the awareness level, for example, learners would be ‘made aware of the pedagogical goals and content of the materials’ and ‘identify their own preferred learning styles/strategies’. At the transcendence level, learners would ‘make links between the content of classroom learning and the world beyond’ and ‘become teachers and researchers’.

This model is restricted to the field of language instruction (classroom setting).

Littlewood (1997,p. 81) (as cited in Benson, 2006); however, suggested a three-stage model that involves dimensions and aspects of language acquisition, learning approach and personal development. Benson (2006) explains:

In the context of language acquisition autonomy is “an ability to operate independently with the language and use it to communicate, personal meanings in real, unpredictable situations (autonomy as a communicator). In the learning approach context, autonomy involves learners’ ‘ability to take responsibility of their own learning and apply active, personally relevant

strategies'(autonomy as a learner).And in a broader context, it contains 'a higher level goal of ... greater generalized autonomy as individuals'(autonomy as a person). (p. 23)

Littlewood's (1997; as cited, Benson, 2006, p. 23) model tried to make a link among different contexts where degrees of autonomy differ either by acting independently subconsciously through the use of language to interact and convey personal ideas in a natural location, or by taking responsibility over learning actively and autonomously in an instructional context.

Another three-stage model is the one proposed by Macaro (1997, pp. 170-172). It involves, 'autonomy of language competence', 'autonomy of language learning competence' 'autonomy of choice and action'. That is to say, autonomy is not only restricted to educational context but also to natural situations where individuals act independently by using language communicatively. Moreover, Scharle and Szabo's (2000, p. 1) suggested also a three-stage model: 'raising awareness', 'changing attitudes' and 'transferring roles'.

For Nunan (1997, p. 201) how far one wants to go in encouraging autonomy will be dictated by the contexts, and environments in which teaching and learning takes place. Thus, creating enjoyable and motivating environment will enhance the promotion of learner autonomy and vice versa.

1.6. The Main Versions of Learner Autonomy in EFL Context

It has been claimed that Benson paper (1997) was the first to introduce the idea of different versions, or ways of representing the notion of autonomy. For Benson (1997; as cited in Benson, p. 24) three main versions of autonomy exist in language education: 'technical', 'psychological', and 'political'. The subsequent researchers and writers in

the field, however, have introduced different versions. For instance, Ribé (2003) (cited in Benson, 2006) argued that 'divergence-convergence', 'convergence-divergence', and 'convergence' positions are the major ones. Furthermore, Oxford (2003) expanded Benson's model as 'technical', 'psychological', 'sociocultural', and 'political-critical'. Smith (2003) (cited in Benson, 2006, p. 24) suggested a more general model involving two main views: 'narrow' and 'broad'.

Smith (2003; cited in Benson, 2006, p. 24) made a distinction between 'weak' and 'strong' pedagogies for autonomy, Smith (2003) associated 'weak pedagogies' with the idea of autonomy as 'a capacity which students currently lack'. Strong pedagogies, on the other hand, are based on the assumption that students are 'already autonomous' to some degree and focus on 'co-creating' with students optimal conditions for the exercise of their own autonomy' (Benson, 2006, p. 24). This entails that autonomy is something people are born with and would be enhanced through their learning both individually and co-operatively with paying attention to the different factors students are exercising in their own learning.

Oxford (2003, pp. 76-80) offered a comprehensive model that represents the main versions of learner autonomy which are:

- Technical perspective: focuses on the physical situation.
- Psychological perspective: focuses on the characteristics of students.
- Sociocultural perspective: focuses on mediated learning.
- Political perspective: focuses on ideologies, access, power structures.

Although each model differs from the other, no one is perfect. Every model, however, is said to be more powerful than others when it is put and applied in a suitable context. Ribé (2003) (as cited in Benson, 2006, p. 24) stated that "an optimal learning

environment probably requires a mixture of the three perspectives he had described”.

Also, Oxford (2003) claimed that research on autonomy should combine as many perspectives as possible and “no single perspective should be considered antithetical to any other” (p. 30). But the stronger versions are, in fact, more legitimate and valid than the weaker ones (Benson, 2006, p. 24).

So, for creating a healthy atmosphere in the foreign language classroom in order to develop learners' independent or self-directed learning, there should be a kind of combination of different perspectives that best suit students' needs, interests, differences as well as course objectives and goals.

On the contrary, Little (n.d) distinguished only two main versions of autonomy. The first is the one that Henri Holec (1981) expanded in a report published by the Council of Europe in 1979. This version contains three distinguishing characteristics that have been mentioned in Holec's universal definition of autonomy ('the ability to take charge of one's own learning'):

- Moving responsibility and organizational control from the teacher to learner.
- Learning is essentially individual and cognitive.
- The evolution of learner autonomy is seen as a separate element from the growth of proficiency in the target language.

Holec (1981) (as cited in Little, n.d.) concerned more with autonomy as an individual trait which can be developed in isolation of the other aspects of language learning such as learners' proficiency in the foreign or second language (FL/SL).

The second version is the one proposed by Dam (1995), it is more closely related or associated with language learning at school than with adult or higher education. In

Dam's version control over his/her own learning is accomplished through language use, it has three interacting pedagogical beliefs which are:

-Most effective outcomes are achieved when they arise from the exercise of learner agency.

-The most effective language learning outcomes are achieved when that agency is channeled from the beginning through the target language.

-Language learning is necessarily a social-interactive as well as an individual-cognitive process.

Thus as opposed to Holec's (1981) version where the development of learner autonomy and the growth of the target language proficiency are said to be separable, Dam's version emphasizes interactive and collaborative nature of language learning draws support from models of dialogue pedagogy influenced by the work of Vygotsky (1978-1987). So to say, language learning and language use are closely interrelated because learning the target language in a cooperative way enhances learners' perceptions of their learning as well as improving their communicative skills which in turn will make them more self-confident and then become independent or autonomous learners.

1.7. Dominant Philosophies Underlying Learner Autonomy

1.7.1. Humanism

Researchers have recently recognized the importance of 'affective' and emotional aspects learners are endowed with and affected by when they are engaged in any kind of learning particularly foreign and second language (FL/SL) learning. They believe that successful learning will take place when students bring up or "encouraged to adopt the right attitudes, interests, and motivation in the target language and cultures, as well as in

the learning environment in which they find themselves, and then successful learning will occur." (Nunan, 1991, p. 234).

Implementing humanistic principles in the field of language teaching and learning has been taken into consideration by many educators as Curran (1972-1976), Gattegno (1972), and Lozanov (1978), whilst, the most well-known proponents of humanism is 'Earl Sterick' (1982) (cited in Nunan, 1991, p. 234). He was not convinced with the 'audio-lingual habit theory' and 'cognitive-code learning' tenets, that is why he was interested in implementing humanistic psychology principles to language teaching and learning by extending the work of the above mentioned educators (Nunan, 1991).

Robert et al., (1994) (as cited in Hadi, 2012, p. 18) claimed that "the affective aspects of language learning are as important as the cognitive aspects [and therefore] the learner should be treated in some sense as a whole person."(p.10). In other words, students should not be only treated in terms of their cognitive abilities and processes but also in terms of various 'affective' factors that might influence their own learning involving, aptitude, fear, motivation, anxiety, and their needs and interests as well.

According to Moskowitz (1988) (as cited in Candy, 1991, p.12), students being taught following humanistic theory principles have the following characteristics :

- Are natural and spontaneous.
- Accept themselves and others.
- Have a sense of responsibility.
- Are independent and look to themselves for their own growth.
- Have a mission in life.

So, humanism theory encourages learners "to take charge of their own learning" (Holec, 1981, p. 3; cited in Nunan, 1991, p. 235). The introduction of 'the silent way',

'suggestopedia' and 'Community Language Learning' into foreign language teaching and learning, provides opportunities for students to say more and teachers to say less which in turn helps in improving students' abilities and encouraging learners to learn by themselves. Besides, such approaches emphasize interactive nature-whether it is teacher-to-student-to-student, or student-to-materials interaction-in which learners are exposed to different situations where they use the target language communicatively. Through this engagement the learners' fear and anxiety will be reduced; whereas, the other right attitudes like motivation and positive attitudes are going to be increased.

To conclude, the learners' motivation, anxiety, emotions, and attitudes towards the teacher, other learners, the target language and even to themselves as students should be taken into consideration in the process of conducting tasks and activities as well as selecting materials and content of learning. In addition to that, these methods share the idea that "teaching should be made subservient to learning, in this learner-centered view of language development". (Nunan,1991, p.235). Thus, such way of learning requires that much more emphasis should be directed to learners rather than the teacher, what the teacher should do is only to create and establish pleasant conditions in which learners are able to learn by their own and learn independently.

1.7.2. Constructivism

Constructivism is another philosophy that contributed to the emergence of autonomous learning in educational discussion. Benson and Voller (1997) defined it "as the process of learning helping learners to construct their own version of the target language; therefore, learners need to be responsible for their own learning." (p.1). In this approach, learners have to learn by themselves, construct knowledge about the different aspects related to learning because knowledge is something "built up by the learner." (Candy, 1991, p. 920). Learners do not internalize a set of rules, forms and later retrieve

them, instead they can also act depending on their own previous experiences and 'world knowledge' in order to deal with the target language tasks and activities (Wang, 2008, p.115). Hence, knowledge is something learners construct and build up by themselves.

Thanasoulas (2000, p.12) argued that "by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our understanding of the world we live in". Cognitive constructivism highlights the role of mind and mental processes in dealing with the different experiences in both the learners' process of learning and personal life. Accordingly, students must actively organize new information with existing knowledge for succeeding in the exploration of the surrounding environment.

Two different theories can be distinguished: cognitive constructivism (Piaget's theory), and social constructivism (Vygotsky's theory).

1.7.2.1. Cognitive Constructivism

The Swiss psychologist and biologist 'Jean Piaget' (1896-1980) developed a theory of cognitive development that describes and explains changes in logical thinking of children and adolescents. For Piaget (1896-1980), cognitive development is naturally, orderly, adaptive change that takes place in human beings over time. Piaget believed that the child proceeds through four stages based on maturation and experience: Sensorimotor stage (birth to age two), preoperational stage (age two to seven), concrete operational stage (age seven to 11), and formal operational stage (age 11 on). In his stage-theory, Piaget put much more emphasis on how learners interact with their environment and how they integrate new knowledge and information into existing knowledge. Piaget considers children as active learners who construct knowledge from their environment. Development (cognitive, social, and emotional) is enhanced by: having experience, social interaction, learning, and language as a tool of thought.

1.7.2.2- Social Constructivism

Lev vygotsky's (1978) cultural-Historical theory of cognitive development focuses mainly on the role of culture and social interaction. Vygotsky (1896-1934) maintained that speech is a major psychological tool in child's development of thinking. As the child ages and develops his or her basic speech becomes more complex. Vygotsky agreed that conversations with adults are of crucial importance for the development of children's thinking. Also, the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) which refers to anyone who knows more or has a higher ability level than the learner (a teacher, a coach, adults, or even other peers) is very important to developing children's thinking. Additionally, social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development.

Even though 'cognitive constructivism' and 'social constructivism' have different views regarding the child's cognitive development and how it occurs, both theories share some basic ideas. Piaget and Vygotsky agreed on the following:

- 1- The child actively organizes new information and development occurs because the child is an active learner. Thus, the child is actively involved in the learning and development processes because they provide feedback to the adult or teacher about their level of understanding.
- 2-Development may be initiated by cognitive conflicts ; when the child realizes that a new idea does not align with his/her current thinking or prior knowledge, they will seek to the correct answers in order to align his/her thinking.
- 3-The child is actively involved in his or her learning.

Accordingly, constructivism emphasizes the learner-centered approach to learning in which learners are actively engaged in their learning process. On the one hand,

'cognitive constructivism' focuses on the learners' ability to learn independently where the source of their cognition comes solely from themselves. On the other, 'social constructivism' highlights the idea that development and learning is driven by the child's enjoyment from learning and being around others.

1.7.3. Experiential learning

Another very important theory that has contributed to the emergence of learner autonomy is experiential learning. Eyring (1991, p. 347) (as cited in Brown, 2000, p. 238) pointed out that:

What experiential learning highlights for us is giving students concrete experiences through which they "discover" language principles (even if subconsciously) by trial and error, by processing feedback, by building hypotheses about language, and by revising these assumptions in order to become fluent.

Experiential learning, thus, puts more emphasis on the idea that individuals should be active learners who are engaged in authentic and real-world experiences in which they have the right to monitor, plan, and organize learning and building principles for their own learning. Morris Keeton and Pamela Tate (1978, p. 2) (as cited in Brown, 2000, p.239) claimed that in experiential learning:

The learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied. It is contrasted with learning in which the learner only reads about, hears about, talks about , or writes about these realities but never comes in contact with them as part of the learning process...It involves direct encounter with the phenomenon being studied rather than merely thinking about the encounter or only considering the

possibility of doing something with it.

Dewey (as cited in Brown, 2000, p. 239) proposed two main principles that experiential learning puts emphasis on : "(a) one learns best by "doing", by active experimentation, and (b) inductive learning by discovery activates strategies that enable students to "take charge" of their own learning process". It means that experiential learning focuses on the learners' effective participation in which they learn better when they discover their own learning.

It is clear that experiential learning techniques reflect a learner-centered approach to learning. Examples of learner-centered experiential techniques include:

- hands-on projects (such as nature projects)
- Computer activities (especially in small groups)
- Research project.
- Cross-cultural experiences (camps, dinner groups, etc.)
- Field trips and other "on-site" visits (such as grocery store)
- Role-plays and simulations.

(Brown, 2000, p.239)

The implementation of experiential learning into the teaching and learning process supports the idea of autonomous learning. Experiential learning is 'learning-by-doing', it highlights the importance of making learners 'producers' rather than 'consumers' of knowledge. So, the idea of promoting self-directed learning existed earlier in Experiential learning philosophy.

1.8. Conditions for Learner Autonomy

Building autonomy does not take place overnight. Learner autonomy is not a product but it is a gradual process that needs the presence of certain conditions

involving, responsibility, attitudes and motivation, learning strategies, styles and materials. For being autonomous learners, teachers have to show their students the way through which autonomy is attained and different factors needed for their independence in learning.

1.8.1. Responsibility

Autonomy and responsibility are closely interrelated. Responsibility has been mentioned in Holec's (1981, p. 3; cited in Benson, 2006, p. 21) definition of autonomy as an "ability to take charge of one's own learning", 'take charge of' is often replaced by 'take responsibility for' one's own learning (ibid.). Such responsibility involves taking control over all aspects of learning; planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating learning.

Dam (1995) argued that learners will not develop autonomy unless they are willing to take responsibility for their learning, thus without having the will and eagerness to act independently and cooperatively with others, students are not going to be autonomous. Similarly, Sinclair (2000; cited in Benson, 2006, p.) claimed that: "autonomy involves a willingness to the part of the learner to take responsibility for their own learning". Being able to take and hold responsibility in the process of learning is the first step towards developing self-confidence and then towards autonomy.

1.8.2. Learners' Attitudes and Motivation

Positive attitudes is a powerful tool that fosters enthusiasm, and creates an atmosphere conducive to learning. Wenden (1998: 52) (as cited in Thanasoulas, 2000, p. 7) defined attitudes as "learned motivations, valued beliefs, evaluations, what one believes is acceptable, or responses oriented towards approaching or avoiding".

According to Wenden, “two kinds of attitudes are crucial: attitudes learners hold about their role in the learning process, and their capability as learners” (ibid). Attitudes are part of one’s perception of self, of other people, and of the culture in which they live. Motivation, on the other hand, which is drawn from the verb ‘movere’ meaning to move (Ushioda 1995; cited in Griffiths, 2008, p. 19). Thus, according to Ushioda (1995) “we may say that motivation concerns what moves a person to make certain choices, to engage in action, and to persist in action”. Two types of motivation were distinguished. Ryan and Deci (2000); (as cited in Ushioda, 1996) mentioned the following:

The optimal kind of motivation from within is identified as *intrinsic motivation*- that is, doing something as an end in itself, for its own self-sustaining pleasurable rewards of enjoyment, interest, challenge, or skill and knowledge development (...), *extrinsic motivation* (however) is doing something as a means to some separable outcome, such as gaining a qualification, getting a job, pleasing the teacher, or avoiding punishment.
(p.21)

Studies and experiments prove that ‘intrinsic motivation’ leads to more successful and effective learning than ‘extrinsic motivation’ does. Since “intrinsically motivated learning is not simply ‘learning for the sake of learning’.” (Ushioda, 1996), and that the reinforcement of learning is naturally endowed in the process of learning itself which in turn results in good instruction. Furthermore, Deci and Ryan (1980) argued that “intrinsically motivated learners are deeply concerned to learn things well, in a manner that is intrinsically satisfying and that arouses a sense of optimal challenge appropriate to their current level of skill and competence”.(Ushioda, 1996)

Gardner and Lambert (1972) (as cited in Griffiths, 2008, p. 20) tried to investigate the effects of learner attitudes towards the target language cultures and people on

language learning through conducting extensive studies. They defined motivation as “a construct made of certain attitudes” (Ushioda, 1996). The results of their studies showed that positive attitudes to the target language culture and people are conducive to increase motivation. Besides, other studies such as that of John Oller and his colleagues (Oller, Hudson, and Liu, 1977; Chihara & Oller, 1978) (ascited in Griffiths, 2008, p. 21), directed towards examining the relationship between attitudes toward self, the native language group, and the target language group enhanced learners' proficiency.

Moreover, research in the field asserts that positive attitudes promote motivation, and motivation leads to successful learning (Dörnyei, 1998) because “success in any task is due to simply the fact that someone is motivated” (Brown, 2000, p. 160). In addition to that, getting students involved and motivated in their learning is very important for developing learners' responsibility for their own learning. Also, motivated learners with positive attitudes are more capable of taking control of, plan, and evaluate the learning process with much reliance on themselves. As it has been acknowledged, motivated students are ambitious and willing to risk-taking and decision-making processes which are inevitable aspects of self-directed learning.

1.8.3. Language Learning Strategies

Research in the field of second and foreign language teaching and learning proved that what makes a good or bad language learner is their ability to appreciate capacities and efforts they have as well as applying techniques and tools for approaching various tasks and activities (Dörnyei, 2005). These techniques, actions, and tools are now referred to as ‘Language Learning Strategies’ (LLS). Chamot and Rubin (1994) stated: “the good language learner cannot be described in terms of a single set of strategies but rather through the ability to understand and develop a personal set of effective strategies” (p. 372). That is to say, successful students are the ones who are aware of

what they know, want, and believe at the same time they have the capacity to develop strategies that best suit their needs and goals.

Researchers gave different interpretations to the concept of LLS. For example, Cohen (1998; cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p. 164) defined learning strategies as “learning processes which are consciously selected by the learner”. Other definitions of the notion as that of (Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1987; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990) consider language learning strategies as actions, behaviours, thoughts, steps, and operations that individuals may use consciously or subconsciously to help them learn successfully and in an easy manner. A comprehensive definition in the field has been provided by Oxford (1999) as follows:

Specific actions, behaviours, steps or techniques that students use to improve their own progress in developing skills in a second or foreign language. These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language. (p. 518)

The above mentioned interpretations of learning strategies are related to learners themselves; their personal thoughts, emotions, beliefs considering their own learning in addition to the techniques, tools, and steps they implement to facilitate and enhance the process of learning.

At the beginning, research on language strategies (LLS) focused primarily on what ‘good language learners’ can do and learn (Naiman et al., 1978; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975). The findings show that “not only high degree of aptitude and motivation help learners to succeed in their learning but also the students own active and creative participation in the learning process through the application of individualized learning techniques” (Dörnyei, 2005, p.).Such active contribution reflects the learners’ ability to

implement different strategies that help them holding responsibility for and taking control over their learning. So, LLS are also an essential factor for building autonomous students.

1.8.3.1. Taxonomies of Language Learning Strategies

Different classifications of LLS have been proposed by many educators and experts in the field of language learning and teaching (Oxford, 1990; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Stern, 1992). Oxford's taxonomy includes six strategy categories: metacognitive, memory, cognitive, compensation, affective, and social strategies. In this division 'compensation' means 'communication' strategies that are one aspect of language use and not language learning, thus these strategies do not enhance L2 learning. According to Cohen (1998), Ellis (1994), Tarone (1981), language use and learning differ "in terms of their function and their psycholinguistic representation that they are best kept separate" (Dörnyei, 2005, p.168). Hsiao and Oxford (2002); however, argued that although such distinction is worthy, language learning and use are interrelated processes that cannot be divided since using the target language inside and outside the instructional context would facilitate learning that language.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 4) suggested a three-classes classification which involves; cognitive strategies (resourcing, deduction, keyword, note taking, translation and transfer); metacognitive strategies (self-management, self-monitoring, self-evaluation, self reinforcement). Finally, social/affective strategies (cooperation, questioning for clarification and so on). According to Dörnyei (2005), these two models are 'highly compatible' that is why, he introduced a four main classification which encompasses the both:

1. Cognitive strategies, involving the manipulation and transformation of learning materials/input involving, repetition, summarizing, and using images.
2. Metacognitive strategies, involving higher-order strategies aimed at analyzing, monitoring, evaluating, planning, and organizing one's own learning process.
3. Social strategies, involving interpersonal behaviours, aimed at increasing the amount of L2 communication and practice the learner undertakes(e.g., initiating interaction with native speakers and cooperating with peers).
4. Affective strategies, involving taking control of the emotional affective conditions and experiences that shape one's subjective involvement in learning.

(p. 169)

1.8.3.2. Learning Strategies for Learner Autonomy

The discussion above reveals that 'metacognitive' strategies are directly related to the investigation at hand due to the fact that they reflect all the aspects of learning that students need to take control over in order to be autonomous and which have been mentioned in Holec's (1981) definition of learner autonomy. In other words, to determine whether individuals are ready to 'take charge of' their own learning, it is very important to determine if they are aware of and apply 'metacognitive' strategies which are crucial for building independent language learners.

For a long time, learner autonomy has become one of the major goals of any educational system, in particular teaching and learning second or foreign languages. Also, learners need to have the opportunities to use learning strategies as much as they can since it helps them to know and try out strategies they know and discover the strategies they lack. For Wenden (1991), planning strategies concerned with realizing the nature of language learning, organizing to learn, establishing aims, planning tasks and so on, by applying these strategies, students will make sensible decisions for

enhancing learning (decision-making ability). Additionally, self-monitoring strategy gives learners the chance to check and verify how their learning goes or progresses and implement appropriate strategies to achieve goals and objectives that themselves set (control over learning). Besides, self-evaluation involving, the ability to determine whether learning was effective or not, if they use strategies required for doing activities and to what extent objectives have been achieved (evaluation).

In short, the degree of autonomy learners reach depends on their ability to be engaged in the processes mentioned above, since each strategy or every category represents one part of self-directed learning. Moreover, using language learning strategies (metacognitive strategies) by students either consciously or subconsciously makes them more motivated. So, LLS are a fundamental component of successful language learning.

1.8.3.3. Strategy Training for Learners

It has been claimed that learning will be facilitated through making students more aware of the range of strategies from which they can choose during their learning process. Raising learners' awareness, however, is achieved when strategy training is provided. Various terms have been used as synonyms to 'strategy training' like 'learning to learn', 'learner development', and 'promoting autonomy'. The idea of 'learning to learn', according to Dörnyei (2005) has been existed in L2 research for more than 25 years.

This concern started with the work of Ellis and Sinclair (1989) entitled "learning to learn English: A course in Learner Training". Randi and Corno (2000) stated:

Encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning is a loud refrain in current thinking on schooling. To help all students become "self-

regulated”, theory suggests the need for a better understanding of the strategies that successful students use to maintain effort and protect commitments in school. (p. 651)

That is to say that, learners should not only know *what* they are supposed to learn, but they have to be aware of *how* to learn. Learners need also to recognize which strategies to be regularly adopted and used to develop their learning and to achieve course goals. For Dörnyei (2005) Different strategy training frameworks share a set of goals which are the following:

1. Raising the learners' awareness about learning strategies and model strategies overtly along with the task.
2. Encouraging strategy use and giving a rationale for it.
3. Offering a wide menu of relevant strategies for learners to choose from.
4. Offering controlled practice in the use of some strategies.
5. Providing some sort of a post-task analysis which allows students to reflect on their strategy use. (p. 174)

Strategy training based primarily on two main notions: the first is that learners need to learn how to learn and teachers need learn how to facilitate the learning process (MRs. Naghiz, S, 2014, May 10). Secondly, strategy training should not be abstract and theoretical but should be practical and useful for students (ibid). These principles are the same as those which the development of learner autonomy is based on. Thus 'learning to learn' strategy is an important factor for developing autonomous learning.

1.8.4. Cognitive Styles and Learning Styles

A considerable amount of research discussing the role of 'learning' and 'cognitive' styles in second language acquisition (SLA) has been conducted. Most of these studies

proved that both concepts are important parts of any kind of learning. Learning strategies refer to “an individual’s natural, habitual, and preferred way (s) of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills” (Reid, 1995; cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p.); thus there are “broad preferences for going about the business of learning” (Ehrman, 1996, p.49) (cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p. 121). As Dörnyei (2005) explained , “the concept represents a profile of the individuals perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment” (p.122)

The notion of learning styles becomes interesting for educationalists because “unlike abilities and aptitudes-they do not reflect innate endowment that automatically leads to success” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 122); however, according to Dörnyei, they refer to ‘personal preferences’. Kinsella (1995) argued that the concept of learning styles offers “a value-mental approach for understanding individual differences among linguistically and actually diverse students” (p. 171). But before going on investigating the significance of learning styles in building autonomous learners and identifying the students’ readiness and willingness to take responsibility for their own learning, two major distinctions are to be indicated.

The first distinction is the one that exists between ‘learning styles’ and ‘learning strategies’; “the two concepts are thematically related since they both denote specific ways learners go about carrying out learning tasks” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 122). That is to say, they refer to techniques, or means used and applied by students to perform the learning activities and progress in their learning. However, the main difference between ‘learning styles’ and ‘learning strategies’, according to Snow et al., lies in their breadth and stability, with a style being a “strategy used consistently across a class of tasks” (p. 281). Furthermore, Riding (2000a) (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p. 122) believed that styles probably have a physiological basis and are fairly fixed for the individual,

whereas, strategies may be learned and developed in order to cope with situations and tasks.

Strenberg and Grigorenko (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p.122) acknowledged: "the difference between the degree of consciousness involved in applying styles and strategies: styles operate without individual awareness; whereas, strategies involve a conscious choice of alternatives". In other words, learning styles are naturally endowed in learners; are inborn capacities students apply subconsciously and without choice, but learning strategies require students' awareness in selecting and implementing appropriate ones, learners can also develop and learn other strategies they actually lack.

The second distinction is the one that has been made between 'learning styles' and 'cognitive styles'. Ehrman et al. (2003) argued that " the literature on learning styles uses the terms learning style, cognitive style, personality type, sensory preference, modality, and others rather closely and often interchangeably" (p .134) . Thus, 'cognitive styles' and 'learning styles' can be used interchangeably but " these terms often been used in the literature in an interchangeable manner, they are not the same " (Dörnyei , 2005 , p . 124) Moreover, Rayner (2000a, as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p.) stated :

If learning style is represented as a profile of the individual's approach to learning, this profile can be seen to comprise two fundamental levels of functioning: The first is cognitive, referring to stable and internalized dimension related to the way a person thinks or processes information; The second is the level of the learning activity, which is more external and embraces less stable functions that relate to the learners' continuing and adaptation to the environment.

Accordingly, cognitive style is "the core of learning style (Brown, 2000; cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p. 124), and cognitive styles are a "partially biologically determined and persuasive way of responding to information and situation" (ibid.). Brown (2000) adds that the implementation of such cognitive styles in an educational context and when they are interacted with different 'affective, physiological, and behavioural factors', "They are usually more generally referred to as learning styles " (ibid.). Besides, Dörnyei (2005) stated that: "cognitive styles are usually defined as an individual's preferred and habitual modes of perceiving, remembering, organizing, processing, and representing information". (p. 124).

Two major types of cognitive styles can be differentiated; field dependence and field independence. Qualities of the former kind are:

- Depending on the outside frame of reference to deal with information.
- Tending to understand a thing as a whole.
- Lacking the ability to make one's own view.
- Being socially sensible and prone to communication with others.

Whereas, field independence is based on the following characteristics:

- Depending on oneself as the frame of reference.
- Tending to analyze.
- Being independent.
- Having weaker abilities in socializing and communication.

(Wang, 2008, p.118)

As mentioned by Wang (2008) : "studies indicate that learners of field dependent cognitive style are more likely to succeed in a natural learning environment while in

class study, learners of field independent cognitive style have more advantages" (p . 118). In other words, field-independent students are privileged in formal language learning and have a high level of accuracy while field-dependent learners are privileged in informal contexts (natural learning) and they have a high level of fluency. However, many studies (Hansen & Stansfield, 1981; Day, 1984; Chapelle & Roberts, 1986; Abraham & vann, 1987) (as cited in Ellis, 1992, pp. 175-176) have been conducted to test this hypothesis. The findings show, in general, that "field-independents appear to outperform field-dependents in both formal and communicative tests." (Ellis, 1992, p.176). This means that field-independent learners do better than other field-dependents in both formal and informal tasks or situations.

Although not much is known about how do learning styles affect L2 learning, learners' ability to identify their own preferred styles will help them to succeed in learning and reaching a high level of achievement (Ellis, 1992), Wesche (1981) and Hartnett (1985) propose that learners perform better "when their learning styles matches the instruction" (Ellis, 1992, p. 177). It may be that learners will do best if trained to adopt the learning style of good language learners (Brickbicker & Ommagio, 1978) (cited in Ellis, 1992, p. 177). Besides, field-independent learners are more likely to achieve the learning targets depending on themselves to organize, plan, and monitor the process of learning and hence being autonomous.

1.8.5. Materials of Learning

The development of self-directed learning requires the presence of a variety of tools and techniques:

1. Dictionaries: by using dictionaries, learners can check the meaning of difficult words without asking the teacher. They can also find synonyms, antonyms, transcription of words and so on.
2. Vocabulary and grammar books: these books give students the chance to revise their lessons and prepare the next ones. They can also do activities in order to check their understanding and enhance their capacities.
3. The Internet: learners can get whatever information they like whenever they want (books, articles, journals, videos and so on). It also helps them to develop extensive reading strategy.
5. Homework assignments: by doing exercises and activities at home learners would be able to learn depending only on themselves where the teacher is absent.
6. Other materials involve: the tape-recorder, video-recorder, magazines, newspapers, and TV. , they would improve students' listening and reading skills. They also provide authentic data to learners.

In short, those materials are the major ones; however, the teacher can adopt others depending on the nature of tasks, lessons and objectives. What is important is that such tools and techniques would help students to be autonomous.

1.9. Fostering Learner Autonomy in the EFL Classroom

The promotion of autonomous learning is a gradual process that needs to be developed through following certain steps. Moreover, the kind of activities to be implemented in the classroom should be directed to involving learners in a life-long process.

1.9.1. Steps to Learner Autonomy

Nunan (2003) proposed a nine-step model for fostering learner autonomy.

According to Nunan (2003) by incorporating these steps into the learning process, teachers can move their students from total dependence on the teacher to autonomous learning. The steps are the following:

➤ **Step One: Make instructional goals clear to learners.**

The first step for helping learners to be autonomous is making the learning goals, aims, and objectives clear for them. Through making instructional goals explicit, learners can be actively involved in the process of learning. Moreover, they can set their own goals and select content.

Dam and Gabrielson (1998; as cited in Nunan, 20003, p.) found that:

Even relatively young learners were capable of making decisions about the content and processes of their own learning. Learners, regardless of their aptitude or ability, were capable of a positive involvement in selecting their own content and learning procedures. Furthermore, learners are also positive in accepting responsibility for their own learning. (p. 197)

➤ **Step two: Allow learners to create their own goals.**

Another step for building active and independent language learners is giving them the opportunity to set their own goals and content. Involving students at this level makes them more aware of what is actually taking place in their process of learning. In addition to that, they would be able to identify what they want to achieve after they finish.

➤ **Step three: Encourage learners to use their second language outside the classroom.**

The teacher has to encourage his/her learners to use the target language outside the instructional context, where they experience different situations, events, and meet many people. For Nunan (2003), one way that the teacher may use in order to encourage

students to think about activating their language in out-of-class environment is 'lucky dip type activity' which might help learners in improving their pronunciation, vocabulary and so on.

➤ **Step four: Raise awareness of learning processes.**

The fourth step to learner to learner autonomy is for learners to have the ability to speak about and decide how they learn. According to Nunan (2003),

➤ **Step five: Help learners identify their own preferred styles and strategies.**

Another step for developing a learner-centered classroom is helping learners to identify their own preferred learning styles and strategies that best suit them. Learners who are able to recognize different strategies and styles they have, are more likely to be autonomous.

➤ **Step six: Encourage learner choice.**

Although the notion of 'choice' has been suggested to be a western one and does not work in Eastern educational contexts, Nunan (2003) found that it works in Hong Kong and Thailand. Moreover, Widdows and Voller (1991; cited in Nunan, 2003, p. 200) found that Japanese University students are able to make choices. Engaging learners in a decision –making is effective for developing learner autonomy. For example, the teacher may ask his/her students to decide which activities to be done first (reading, speaking, writing, or listening), identifying the major skills to be focused on (writing or reading tasks).

➤ **Step seven: Allow learners to generate their own tasks.**

After encouraging learners to make choices, teachers will provide them with the opportunity to modify and choose tasks and activities to work on in their classes. Later

on, those students are going to create their own tasks and activities. This creativity in turn would encourage learners to learn independently.

➤ **Step eight: Encourage learners to become teachers.**

At a high level the teacher can stimulate his or her learners to teach something in the classroom. The teacher, for example, may ask three students to prepare a given lesson and then present it to other students, answer questions when the teacher or other learners ask them, and explain difficult items. According to Assinder (1991) (as cited in Nunan, 2003, p. 198), developing video-based materials to teach other students in the class, gives learners the opportunity to become teachers:

I believe that the goal of 'teaching each other' was a factor of paramount importance. Being asked to present something to another group gave a clear reason for the work, called for greater responsibility to one's own group, and led to increased motivation and greatly improved accuracy. (p. 228)

➤ **Step nine: Encourage learners to become researchers.**

Finally, learners can be encouraged to become researchers. The teacher may ask his or her learners to do researches and project works outside the classroom. As Heath (1992; as cited in Nunan, 2003, p. 202) did:

Students were asked ... to work together as a community of ethnographers, collecting, interpreting, and building a data bank of information about language in their worlds. (...). The collected field notes, wrote interpretations of patterns they discover as they discussed their field notes, and they answered the questions I raised about their data collection and interpretations. (p. 42)

Such way of learning will make learners more than only receivers of knowledge learners will also discover knowledge by themselves. Later on, these students are going to be more critical, active, and responsible for their own learning. Nunan (2003) stated:

“students learned through the process of becoming ethnographic researchers that communication is negotiation, and they got to reflect on the important relationships between socialization, language, and thought.” (p. 203)

1.9.2. Activities in the Autonomous Class

Creating appropriate and meaningful classroom activities is a necessity for developing self-directed learning. It is the teacher's responsibility to involve his/her learners in situations in which they find themselves able to express their thoughts, interests, beliefs, and to speak about their experiences. Such engagement will in turn help learners to be more reflective, critical, and autonomous. Autonomous learning has two main sides: personal side and social side; however, in order for both sides to be fostered many different activities can be implemented. In this study, two major classes are described:

1.9.2.1. Personal Activities

a- Learning logs: are individual students' records of what happened in the learning process. Learners can write about or record what they have learnt, their various experiences, what was difficult, easy, or interesting, the main idea of a lesson as well as their thoughts, feelings, and reflections. Through doing this, students will be able to identify their strengths, weaknesses, skills, and abilities. Also while writing a learning log students can observe, evaluate, and criticize their own learning. As a result, learners are going to be aware of how their learning progresses.

O' Rouke (1998)(as cited inKovista and Jokinen) argued that learning logs enable learners to:

Better understand and remember the topic, and that articulating connections between new information or ideas and existing knowledge secures and extends learning (...) when the learning journal (or log) is an active, experiential self study aid, it can help students move from surface to deep learning both within and across modules. (p. 404)

Accordingly, learning logs give learners the chance to be aware about what actually takes place in the process of learning. They can also make connections between what they have already learnt and what is new. What is more, is that learners will be more aware and critical.

b- Portfolios: “a portfolio is a collection of items organizing in a notebook, file or a similar format” (Kovista & Jokinen, n.d.), everything which is crucial for learners and learning development can be put in a portfolio. A portfolio may include the following points:

- Questions raised while some theories, reading articles, discussing with peers and teachers.
- Individual comments on texts, lectures and any kind of class activities.
- Your own reflection on how you are changing and why you find this particular direction the most suitable for you (as a learner off course).

According to the Quality of Assurance Agency of UK (as cited in Kovista and Jokinen, n.d.) a portfolio is intended to help students to:

- Become more reflective, independent, and confident self-directed learners.
- Understand how they are learning and relate their learning to a wider context.
- Improve their general skills for study and career management.
- Articulate their personal goals and evaluate progress towards their achievement.

-Encourage a positive attitude to learning throughout life.

-Improve and encourage dialogue between learners and teachers.

Encouraging learners to make portfolios is a key for making them eager and motivated to create their own ways for learning.

c- Personal plans: Refer to one's own schedules that list all what he or she has to do and when they must do each thing, thus organizing their learning easily. Harmer (2007, p. 408; cited in Lowry, 2008) provided an example of a personal plan:

Aim: to improve my vocabulary.

Task:

3-Do at least 3 magazines articles from newweek everyweek. For each article note down 3 words that I want to know the meaning of. Look up the words. Find the words again in next week's article and check to see that they mean the same thing in the new article

4-Do 1 unit from English vocabulary in use every week

d- Telling/ Writing a Story: when learners tell their stories-either formally or informally- to other people in the same context (peers, teachers, parents, friends and so on), their problems and experiences will be shared with others and their dreams, plans will be developed and enhanced by others' plans and dreams. This means that other people affect the students' plans by suggesting new ideas, thus a state of cooperation will be created. (Kovista & Jokinen)

By telling their own stories, learners would provide other individuals with an image about how they are and how they think. Those people in turn will help learners to develop a sense of 'self-image', 'self-esteem' and 'self-worth'

You are an autonomous individual, however, you experience this particular autonomy if you confront with the autonomous experience of others. "*Learning difference*" makes you accept difference and, at the same time, also accept yourself as a learner. You are an important person among others. Telling your story gives you the feeling: that is true. (p. 32)

On the other hand, writing about their own life; about different experiences, the problems they have found, people they have lost, is an important part of students learning process (it is like diaries). By writing and speaking about themselves, students will be able to know who they are, what they want "we are lifelong learners it is good to know not precisely *what* but *why* we have learnt" (Kovista & Jokinen)

1.9.2.2. Group Activities

a- Group and Pair Work

Group and pair work activities are useful in developing learners' autonomy. Students are expected to cooperate with each other to do a task or solve a given problem. In group and pair work activities students can learn better via dialogues, conversations and debates which are introduced by the teacher. Jokinen and Koivista stated that "group work is an activity that benefits non-traditional students, not only because it is a more dynamic and entertaining way of learning, but also because they acquire more knowledge and skills, and their learning process becomes more useful" (p.23). Thus, working in groups and pairs would make the learning process more enjoyable and effective, then learners ownership will be built. Also, students can express what they want to their classmates freely and make decisions without being asked by the teacher.

b- Case Studies

Case studies are those activities which, according to Barkley (2010, p. 272) “involve an in-depth analysis of a single situation or set of circumstances over time. Among the most popular and educating methods for getting students involved in problem-solving and team work ...” According to Barkley (2010) students need to be engaged in a case study due to its emphasis on active learning. It also implies real-world application and provides learners with chance to take decisions and positions for problems they may encounter (ibid). Frey et al (1999) define case studies (as used in higher education) as “complex example which gives an insight into the context of a problem as well as topics that demonstrate situation.” (as cited in Jokinen and Koivista, p.27). So, it is very helpful in making students autonomous and able to decide on what is suitable or not for solving problems and as Croft (1999) (as cited in Koivista and Jokinen) claims “the use of case studies in teaching increases the motivation and interest of students”. So, implementing case studies activities in the EFL classroom would raise the learners' level of motivation and their interests as well.

c- Role Plays. Role plays are useful in learning and teaching situations. In role plays students are given a Situation plus a problem or task, but they are also given individual roles ; so they act as doctor, nurse and so on. Jokinen and Koivista (p.27) assert that the use of role plays stimulates natural environments where students can experience many situations which in turn would encourage them to make use of their skills and knowledge to reach the learning objectives. Moreover, learners would be able to make sensible decisions and appropriate choices.

1.9.3. Teacher's Role and Learners' Role in the Autonomous Classroom

1.9.3.1. Teacher's Role

Moving the spotlight from teaching to learning results in a shift from teacher-centeredness towards learner-centeredness, thus changing both teacher's and learner's role in the learning process. The need for building autonomous learners capable of taking responsibility and control over their own learning has been acknowledged. However, such movement does not exclude the teacher's role in promoting independent learning since "fostering autonomy in the classroom is done by providing learners with opportunities to make significant choices and decisions about their learning" (Nunan, 2003, p. 290) and this does not take place without the intervention of the teacher. According to Ganza (2008), "learner autonomy is an achievement, attained interrelationally between the learner and the teacher" (p. 65)(as cited in Tham and Sirinthorn (2014, p. 130). This means that without teacher's help and guide, the whole process will result in low efficiency or even fall into disorder (Yan, 2012, p. 559).

Camilleri (1997) identifies three main roles for teachers working on autonomous learning:

- Firstly, the teacher has to provide necessary information and manage learning opportunities where students are participating in making decisions about their learning (teacher as a manager).
- Raising students' awareness of their learning styles and strategies in order for them to apply appropriate tools and techniques inside and outside the classroom (teacher as a resource)
- Providing recommendations and monitoring learners' learning to help them monitor and control their own learning (teacher as a counselor). (pp. 36-38)

That is to say, the teacher is not only a source of information but he/she is a manager, a facilitator, and an adviser. The teacher's help is necessary in assisting

autonomous learners to learn by themselves through exposing them to language and providing opportunities for learners to practice new language in class as well as at home (Lowes and Target, 1999). In addition, the teacher needs to be aware of his/her students' styles, needs, preferences, backgrounds, abilities that will help them design and conduct good lessons and activities and provide useful materials that would encourage learners' involvement in the learning process and thus being autonomous.

According to Voller (1997), the teacher's roles in promoting autonomous learning are the following:

- 1- The teacher as a counselor: the teacher gives required advice whenever it is needed for helping students approaching different tasks and coping with difficulties facing them when learning. The students' learning, thus, will be easier and efficient.
- 2- The teacher as a facilitator: this includes setting objectives, selecting materials, evaluating the students' learning, encouraging and helping them acquire skills and knowledge crucial for developing self-directed learning.
- 3- The teacher as a resource: this involves giving necessary information in order to enrich the learners' repertoire about their learning

To conclude, without the teacher's guidance and support it would be impossible for learner autonomy to be developed. Little (2000) stated:

I believe that all truly effective learning entails the growth of autonomy in the learner, as regards both the process and the content of learning; but I also believe that for most learners the growth of autonomy requires the stimulus insight and guidance of a good teacher. (p.

In other words, even the development of autonomous learning requires making students in the centre of attention, this does not mean that the teacher's role is not important.

1.9.3.2. Learner's Role

It has been argued recently that learners become successful when they are able to hold responsibility for their own learning. According to Little(2000) (as cited in Stefànsdottir,) "autonomous learners are those who understand why they are learning specific topics, accept responsibility for their learning, take the initiative in planning and executing learning activities and are willing to assess their own learning" (p. 10).

Further, Holec (1981; cited in Stefanou, 2004, p. 99) argued that:

To say of a learner that he is autonomous is to say that he is capable of taking charge of his own learning and nothing more ... to take charge of one's learning is to bear responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning.

In addition, Holec (1981; cited in, Stefanou, et al., 2004, p. 99) suggested a set of roles that autonomous learners are supposed to play. These are:

- Defining the content and progression.
- Selecting the method and the techniques to be used.
- Monitoring the procedure of acquisition.
- Evaluating what has been acquired.

In a learner-centered approach, students are seen as being more active and valued individuals who are able to hold responsibility of their own learning involving, planning, the selection of materials, and evaluating language learning and monitoring the progress of learning (Holec, 1981, p. 4) (as cited in Benson, 2006). Thus, students' role is more than only receiving and later retrieving information that the teacher gives them, their role also entails their ability to identify their own styles, needs, and preferences as well as

building up the appropriate strategies and techniques to deal with different learning difficulties and approaching classroom activities and tasks.

1.10. Implementing Learner Autonomy in EFL Contexts

The implementation of learner autonomy in EFL classes is not only the teacher's responsibility. Both teachers and learners have to be capable of dealing with the different situations they are involved in while they are trying to achieve the teaching and learning targets. On the one hand, the teacher should be smart in creating environments where learners find themselves able to assume responsibility for their own learning; whereas, learners have to be active and aware of what they are acquiring.

1.10.1. Characteristics of Autonomous Learners

Rousseau (as cited in Candy, 1991, p. 102) regards autonomous learner as someone who "is obedient to a law that he prescribes to himself". In a language learning context, there are seven main attributes characterizing autonomous learners:

1. Autonomous learners have insights into their learning styles and strategies.
2. Take an active approach to the learning task at hand.
3. Are willing to take risks, thus to communicate in the target language at all costs
(risk takers).
4. Are good guessers.
5. Attend to form as well as to content, that is, place importance on accuracy as well as appropriacy.
6. Develop the target language into separate reference system and are willing to revise and reject hypotheses and rules that do not apply.
7. Have tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language.

The above mentioned attributes indicate that to be autonomous, learners need to be able to take risks and have insights into their own styles, needs, and strategies.

1.10.2. Successes and Problems in Implementing Learner Autonomy

Promoting autonomous learning in the foreign language classroom becomes an educational goal that many teachers try hard to achieve. Dam (1995) and Reinders (2001) (as cited in Al-Saadi, n.d., p. 10) claimed that the development of learner autonomy is often a difficult process and hard to achieve. Little et al. (1989) stated that Hanne Thomsen has encountered the problem of passive learners in the classroom who rely on their teacher to be the initiative. That is to say, learners rely on their teacher in doing everything without any trial to work independently, they just wait for him to start teaching in the classroom.

Seeman and Tavares (2000) (cited in Little et al., 1998, p.67) stated that there are a lot of teachers who know about the great value of learner autonomy and at the same time they are hesitating about bringing it to the classroom. Because, they believe that they will lose control in the classroom, and their students are unable to take charge of their learning. This means that teachers lack sufficient confidence in their students' abilities to be responsible for their learning and dealing with a given task. Besides, Teachers are limited to the textbooks and they are confused about the way they put learner autonomy into practice and the types of activities that should be used in order to foster learner autonomy. The new role that the teacher plays; being an advisor rather than a controller, may lead to chaos in the classroom.

Furthermore, teachers may feel scared of the appropriate materials that should substitute the textbook.

Dam (1995) (as cited in wang, 2011, p. 267) acknowledged that :

It might be difficult to bring learners to make decisions and accept responsibility for these decisions. And it might not be easy to respect the students' right to make wrong decisions... you may not find enough ready-made activities in the course book that are suitable for autonomous learning and have to spend some time designing new ones [,] [also] it may relinquish or rely on new or modified methods of decisions... . (p. 276)

In adopting learner autonomy approach, teachers find it difficult to accept the wrong choices or decisions students make in the classroom. In addition, the lack of activities that suit the learning situation are not available and this push teachers to look for and prepare some kinds of activities that are useful and the learning process.

Additionally, Reinders and Lazarro (2011; as cited in Abdulkader, 2013, p. 175) highlight a range of challenges which teachers may encounter to help learners to become autonomous. One problem is the insufficient number of resources for teachers and students, such as internet facilities, books and contact with native speakers. Another difficulty is that teachers find that students focus more on passing their examination rather than developing their communicative skills.

Little (1995, p. 176) (as cited in Al-Saadi, n.d., p. 12) points out that "learners do not automatically accept responsibility in formal context and do not necessary find it easy to reflect on the learning process. Teachers must, therefore, provide them with the appropriate tools and opportunities to practice using them".

On the other hand, many advantages for the implementation of learner autonomy which are:

-Learners will become able to express their feelings, enhance their memory, their writing skills and so on, especially by using journals, diaries and personal plans.

-They will be able to take decisions concerning the content, the objectives and the materials to be used and they share responsibility with their teacher and classmates in the learning process.

-Learners will have the ability to evaluate their learning through identifying their own strengths and weaknesses. Also, they will be more motivated and this would lead to successful and efficient learning.

Seeman and Tavares (2000, as cited in Timmer et al. 2010) argued on the following:

-Learners work well in groups when they are given the chance to make decisions.

-The mistakes which are made by students can help them to learn more and benefit from them in improving their learning.

- When learners are involved in their own learning from the very beginning, they will take more responsibility and make plans about what they are going to do inside and outside the class.

In short, students need to learn in a healthy atmosphere in order to develop their autonomy and they should take into consideration that the role of the teacher in fostering their autonomy is of a crucial importance. Teachers also have to be equipped with the useful tools and materials for teaching and encouraging autonomous learning in his/her class.

1.10.3. The Significance of Learner Autonomy in the English Language Teaching

Promoting autonomous learning has a lot of advantages, particularly in developing successful language learning. Because many researchers have advocated the significance of building autonomous learners due to three main reasons: philosophical, practical, and pedagogical.

The philosophical rationale for promoting learner autonomy entails, as Cotterall (1995) argued “the belief that learners have the right to make choices with regard to their learning.” (p. 219). This means that, learners can make choices concerning their own learning without being forced by institutional choices. Furthermore, Knowless (1975) (as cited in Cotterall, 1995) highlights the necessity of making choices, because it helps learners to function as active members in society and such preparation will increase their ability to make choices concerning their personal lives.

b) Pedagogically speaking, adults are learning more effectively when they are counseled with their teacher about dimensions such as the space, sequence, mode of instruction and content of what they are studying (Candy, 1988, p. 75, cited in Cotterall, 1995, p. 210). In other words, learners learn better when they are in charge of their own learning, highly motivated and secure while making choices about to the content. Thus, learning becomes more successful and meaningful.

c) The practical reason for promoting learner autonomy is “quite simply that a teachers may not always be available to assist” (Cotterall, 1995, p. 220). This means that learners have to learn on their owns and try to benefit from the situations and chances that they are not given in the traditional classrooms where there are a lot of students to assist and every student waits for the teacher’s instructions in order to learn.

Umeda (2000, pp.61-69) claimed that autonomy is important for three main reasons:

- 1- It fosters a survival ability to cope with the rapid changes in society
- 2- Develops the learner's individuality.
- 3- Improving the learners cultural and educational background.

(cited in Onozawa, 2010, p. 128).

Furthermore, Dam (1995, p. 2) (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p. 101) argues that:

giving the learners a share of responsibility for planning and conducting teaching-learning activities caused them to be actively involved and led to better learning. It is also increased their capacity to evaluate the learning process... awareness of how to learn, facilitates and influences what is being learned and gives an improved insight into how to learn.

This means that when students hold responsibility for their own learning, they will be more aware, active in the learning process and more able to evaluate what has been learnt.

Little (n.d.) on the other hand, advocates that learner autonomy is “a basic need [which] ...is nourished by, and in turn nourishes, our intrinsic motivation, our proactive interest in the world around us.”. He said that the problem of motivation is solved by learner autonomy through the development of reflective skills, and the effectiveness of autonomous learners is the starting point for applying those skills outside the classroom.

In short, learning autonomy is important and beneficial for both teachers and students and it plays a crucial role not only in educational contexts but also in daily life and natural situations.

1.11. Teacher's Autonomy vs. Learner's Autonomy

According to Little (1995), learner and teacher autonomy are closely interrelated, thus “the promotion of learner autonomy depends on the promotion of teacher autonomy” (Little, 1995, p. 179). That is to say, teacher’s autonomy is a condition for the development of learner autonomy, such autonomy includes the teacher’s ability to “decide on the areas in which she/he will seek to promote learner autonomy” (ibid). Besides, Allwright (as cited in Little, 1995, p. 178) observed that fostering autonomous learning is a result of the teacher and learner ‘co-production’ of language learning courses.

Little (1995, p. 178) supports the idea that truly successful language learners as well as successful teachers are autonomous. The teacher’s ability to manage and control the process of learning, providing necessary materials, conducting appropriate tasks and activities, setting goals and objectives, as well as, creating a healthy atmosphere in their class all indicate that the teacher is capable of directing students towards independent and successful learning. Little (1995) mentioned that teachers who want to foster learner autonomy need to: “start with themselves, reflecting on their own beliefs, practices, experiences and expectations of the teaching/learning situation.”(p. 47). This means that fostering learner autonomy which is considered as the second step towards successful learning, requires the promotion of teacher autonomy which is the first step.

Teacher autonomy reflects the teacher’s ability to control and organize their own teaching. Little (1995, p.) argued that the learning process should be carried out through a process of negotiation which is a requirement factor for building autonomous learners. He also added: “the basis of this negotiation must be a recognition that in the pedagogical process teachers as well as students can learn, and students as well as teachers can teach”(Little, 1995, p.179) Then such way of teaching and learning is

going to be more enjoyable and effective for both teachers and learners; teachers will teach their students better and learners will learn better.

In brief, building autonomous learners depends primarily on promoting teacher autonomy and providing trainee teachers. Because, as Little (1995) stated, learner and teacher autonomy are 'interdependent', the attention that has been given recently to autonomous learning has to be also given to teacher autonomy.

1.12. Learner-centeredness and Learner Autonomy

Dissatisfaction with the traditional methods in teaching/learning contexts and the great interest for creating more autonomous learners leads to the emergence of learner-centered approaches. These approaches imply moving the focus from teacher to students in the foreign language classrooms where learners play more active role in the process of learning. Learners are no more viewed as passive recipients of information, but rather as processors of information. Autonomy is an important issue in learner-centeredness and they are closely related. According to Benson (2001) (as cited in Mohamadpour, 2013):

The development of Applied linguistics and language learning pedagogy, enriches with research in 2nd language learning, made an increasing demand on "learner-centeredness" and this shift of interest to learners as resource of information for the learning process led to research body being drawn to autonomy in language learning and teaching. (p. 1187)

Roger (1983, cited in CETEAL CS, P. 1) argued that learner-centeredness is an approach to learning where learners select what they are going to learn, as well as how and why they choose a given topic and what makes it interesting to them. This approach which is related to autonomy has its origins in humanism and experiential psychology where their learners' needs and experiences are considered as the starting point in the

process of learning. Therefore, the learner-centered environment encourages students to be in charge of their own learning. Learners are enabled to choose the subjects to be learned, the number of hours and so on.

In contrast to traditional approaches, in learner-centered classrooms, students are involved in the learning process; the focus is on the student learning not what the teacher is doing. Jones (2000) claimed that in a learner-centered class, students do not rely each time on their instructor, waiting for instruction, advice or praise. Learners are communicating, cooperating and helping each other. Learners also may ask for help from the teacher, but only after they fail to solve a certain problem. He adds that the main focus is on working together, in pairs in groups as well as with a whole class.

Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the literature review of learner autonomy and the different aspects related to it. Many theories highlighted the importance of promoting learner autonomy in foreign language classrooms and a lot of studies emphasized the development of learner-centered approaches to language learning where students assume more responsibility for their own learning. Increasing learners' motivation, changing students' negative attitudes towards autonomous learning and applying effective learning strategies as well as providing strategy training for learners are all very important conditions to fostering autonomous learning. Additionally, the promotion of teacher autonomy is necessary to the promotion of learner autonomy. Raising students' awareness, and encouraging them to make sensible choices help also in building autonomous learners. Besides, fostering independent language learning in EFL classes requires the use of appropriate and useful techniques, materials and activities. Finally, autonomous learning is a gradual process that needs students not only to know what they are acquiring, but also learning how to learn.

Chapter Two

Research Design and Data Analysis

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Chapter Two

Research Design and Data Analysis

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the field work of this research. For collecting data, two questionnaires have been used: One is for students and the other is for teachers. Both students' and teachers' questionnaires were administered to evaluate the students' readiness to autonomous learning. So, the method that seems to be suitable for the analysis of the results in this research is qualitative.

First of all, the sample population on which this research is conducted is introduced. Then both students' questionnaire and teachers' questionnaire are described, analyzed, and interpreted. The results help us to confirm the research hypothesis. Finally, research findings are presented to meet the objectives of this dissertation that is investigating EFL learners' readiness to autonomous learning in the University of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia.

2.1. The Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered to first year LMD students at "Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia University of Jijel" in the department of English, in the second semester of the academic year 2015. A representative sample of 70 students had been chosen from the target population which includes all the first year License students (229 learners), since it is impossible to deal with all students. We handed 70 copies of the questionnaires and we received the same number because all the students answered the questionnaire, and we were present in order to provide necessary explanation for them.

2.1.1. Aims of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to explore the readiness of EFL learners to autonomous learning, their attitudes towards autonomous learning and its role in helping learners to achieve effective learning. Moreover, it aims to investigate the students' awareness about different aspects related to learner autonomy.

2.1.2. Description of the questionnaire

The students' questionnaire is a mixture of closed questions that require students to answer by 'yes' or 'no' or to choose from a number of choices. And open-ended questions where students are requested to give other alternative answers when necessary. The questionnaire consists of 27 questions; it is divided into five sections. The first section that is entitled "Responsibility and Learner Autonomy" is composed of six questions which are meant for exploring students' responsibility for their own learning. Question (1) is asked for the purpose of investigating students' participation in their classes, questions (2) (3) (4), (5) aim to find out whether learners are given the opportunity to take part in the learning process or is it the teacher who does everything involving, setting the learning objectives choosing the learning materials and activities, and evaluating learning. Question (6) concerns with students' perceptions of their abilities to learn independently. In the second part of the question, learners who say that they are unable to learn with themselves are asked to justify their answers by choosing an option from the given ones.

The second section is devoted to students' abilities; students are requested to rank their abilities rating from "very poor" to "very good" concerning different aspects of the

learning process that autonomous learners are supposed to be good at. Namely setting the learning objectives(1), monitoring the learning process(2), selecting the content(3), methods and techniques to be used(4), identifying their own weaknesses and strengths(5), evaluating their own learning(5). It can be claimed that this kind of questions is somehow subjective; however, such questions aim also to examine the students' awareness and confidence in their own learning.

Section three involves five questions about motivation, they are asked to explore the learners' enjoyment in learning English and what they think about the role of motivation in the process of learning. Question (1) aims to find out whether EFL learners take pleasure in studying English or not. Questions (2) and (3) tend to evoke the students' views about the role of motivation in promoting successful learning, their motivational level, and how motivation helps them in their studies. In question (4), students are asked to select the activities they find more motivating to them and to suggest others if they have. The last question (5) is asked for the purpose of knowing whether the teacher helps his or her learners to find what motivates them when learning or not.

Choice is what section number four speaks about. It is also composed of five questions devoted to learner choice in his/her process of learning and whether the teacher gives them the chance to choose different types of activities that best suit them (Q1). Students who answered 'yes' are asked to say how often the teacher allows them to do so. The second question is concerned with setting personal goals and working according to them. Then, selecting the course content (Q3), and planning schedules (Q4). Question (5) is addressed to know if the teacher allows his or her learners to modify and adapt the classroom tasks.

The last section entitled 'learners attitudes' consists of five questions are addressed to identify whether EFL learners have positive or negative attitudes towards autonomous learning. Question (1) is asked to explore the students' satisfaction when they are given the opportunity to make their own choices in their learning. After that, they are asked to express their agreement or disagreement about the statement "confidence is a key element for successful learning" (Q2). The next question aims to know if EFL learners consider their confidence as a necessity to take responsibility for their own learning (Q3). Questions (4) and (5) concern with students' preferences about how to learn; individually, in pairs, or in groups, and when making mistakes if they prefer to correct themselves, to be corrected by the teacher or by their classmates.

2.1.3. The Analysis and Interpretation of the Questionnaire

After collecting data from the administered questionnaire, the second step is the analysis of the data collected. We have intended not to include the questions about the background information since they seem to be meaningless and are not needed in our discussion. What we focus on in this questionnaire is getting a clear idea about the students' ability to assume responsibility for their learning.

-Section one: Responsibility and Learner Autonomy.

Q1. Who does most of the talking in your classroom?

Table 1

Students' Talk in the Classroom

Options	Subjects	Percentage (%)
Teacher	69	98.57%
Learner	1	1.42%
Total	70	100%

This question was designed to determine whether EFL learners participate in the classroom and take part in their learning. It is noted that the vast majority of the students representing the percentage 98.57 % argued that they do not speak a lot during classroom sessions and is the teacher who speaks more, only 1.42% of participants said that it is the students who do most of the talking in their classes. That is to say, EFL learners are passive rather than active which reflects maybe their inability to ask and answer questions when they are studying and they wait for the teacher to do everything. This is perhaps a result of the learners' total reliance on their teacher; they just receive information from the teacher internalize, and retrieve them when they are in need for.

Q2: Who sets the objectives of your English course?

Table 2

Setting the Objectives of English Course

Options	Subjects	%
Students	8	11.42%
Teacher	30	42.85%
Both	32	45.71%
Total	70	100%

Students in this question were requested to define who sets the objectives of their English courses. So, the aim behind asking this question is to find out if EFL students are able to establish what they want to achieve after completing a given lesson or not. The results above show that only 11.42% of respondents said that they are capable of setting the learning objectives, 42.85% of participants answered that the learning objectives are set by the teacher; whereas, 45.71% argued that both students and the teacher contribute in such process. Coming to the conclusion that there are only few learners who are aware about what they need to reach and achieve whenever they finish

their learning. This perhaps is due to the fact that learners are not given the opportunity to set the learning objectives since many teachers are afraid of giving their students freedom to learn on their own. Because, according to them, this may lead to chaos and losing control in their classes. Most of students declared that they sometimes set the learning and other times the teacher does. This indicates that there is a kind of collaboration inside EFL contexts where the teacher enables his/her learners to develop a sense of responsibility by engaging them in the process of learning by giving their learners the chance to be more aware of their different needs, and interests which in turn enable them to be autonomous.

Q3: Who chooses the learning materials?

Table 3

Learners Engagement in Choosing the Learning Materials

Options	Subjects	Percentage
Students	3	4.28%
Teacher	48	68.57%
Both	19	27.14%
Total	70	100%

The question was asked to identify the involvement of EFL students in the selection of the learning materials. The table above reveals that most of the time it is the teacher who chooses the required materials; about 68.57 % of subjects think that it is the teacher who selects whatever materials are needed. On the other hand, 27.14% claimed that both the teacher and learners do that; whereas, 4.28 % said that learners choose the learning materials. Hence, we can notice that the teacher takes more responsibility to decide on what techniques, tools and so on to be used in his/her class. Thus, learners only follow what their teacher does and decide on concerning what they are learning. This does not mean that students cannot choose the materials they need to approach

different tasks and activities, but possibly they are not aware of what kind of tools which are more suitable to their styles and preferences and are still in need for the teacher's help and guidance.

Q4: Who decides on the activities to be used in the English lessons?

Table 4

Learners' Involvement in the Decision-making Process

Options	Subjects	%
Student	1	1.42%
Teacher	56	80%
Both	11	15.71%
No answer	2	2.85%
Total	70	100%

This question was addressed to know who decides on the activities the EFL learners are engaged in during their learning. It is obvious from the table that most of the time it is the teacher who does since 80 % of the informants agreed that it is the teacher who chooses the appropriate tasks. 15.71 % of students said that choosing the learning activities is shared between students and the teacher. However, 1.42 % see themselves taking part in this process which may be a sign of confidence they possess (self-confident learners), while those who said that it is the teacher who decides on the activities to be applied in the EFL class, are perhaps passive students who just wait the teacher to do everything without making any efforts to suggest some activities to be implemented.

Q5: Do you evaluate your own learning?

Table 5

Learners' Ability to Evaluate their Own Learning

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	48	68.57%
No	17	24.28%
No answer	5	7.14%
Total	70	100%

The autonomous learner is the one who is able to assess his/her own learning. Thus the question mentioned above was addressed to students to identify the capacity to self-evaluation process. Fortunately, it seems to be the case for most first year English learners for the reason that 68.57% of participants answered 'yes'; whereas, 24.28% of the subjects said 'no' which might reflect their inability to evaluate what they have already learnt. However, the rest (7.14 % from the whole population) did not respond. We can assume that learners who are able to evaluate their own learning are aware of the importance of judging their performance which may be considered as the first step to autonomous learning. But others may lack the ability to evaluate what they have learnt. Those who did not answer are perhaps not knowledgeable and not interested.

Q6: Do you learn independently?

Table 6

Learners' Perceptions of their Ability to Learn Independently

Options	Frequency	(%)
Yes	53	75.71%
No	17	24.28%
Total	70	100%

By asking this question we intended to identify the learners' perceptions of their ability to study by themselves. 75.71 % of informants think of themselves capable to learn by their own without being dependent on the teacher. This can be explained by their understanding for their needs, interests and their ability to make use of the efforts they have. However, 24.28% are unable to learn independently. In the second part of the question, students who answered by 'no' were asked to justify their answers by choosing from a given list of options.

If not, why? Is it because:

- a-Lacking the strategies for studying independently
- b- There are no necessary aids, techniques and materials.
- c- The teacher is more knowledgeable and you have to rely on him/her
- d- The teacher does not give you the chance to learn by yourself.

Table 7

Learners' justifications

Options	Subjects	%
a	1	5.88%
b	2	11.76%
c	8	47.05%
a+b	1	5.88%
a+c	3	17.64%
Others	1	5.88%
None of them	1	5.88%
Total	17	100%

This table shows the different reasons behind the students' inability to learn independently. It is noted that the majority of students representing the percentage of 47.05% justified their answers by saying that "the teacher is more knowledgeable and they have to rely on him or her". 11.76% of participants said that there are no necessary aids, techniques, and materials that enable them to learn by themselves, 5.88% explained by "lacking the strategies for learning independently"; however, no one said that the teacher does not give them the chance to study by themselves. 5.88 % suggested another reason which is "because language is something taught by the teacher". Learners who did not justify their answers maybe are not aware about the factors which prevent them from studying independently, because they do not care and do not want to be good language learners.

Section two: Learners and the Different Aspects of Learner Autonomy.

Table 8

Learners' Perceptions of their Abilities to be Involved in the Learning Process.

-How good you are at:

Options	very poor	poor	ok	good	very good	no answer
a-Setting learning objectives	4.28%	11.42%	58.57%	21.42%	1.42%	1.42%
b-Monitoring the learning process	1.42%	11.42%	54.25%	24.25%	2.85%	2.85%
c-Selecting the content	0%	8.57	41.42%	28.75%	5%	5.71%
d-Selecting the methods and techniques	0%	11.42%	38.75%	34.28%	8.57%	7.14%
e-Identifying your own strengths and weaknesses	0%	14.28%	31.42%	38.57%	11.42%	4.28%
f-Evaluating your own learning	2.85%	4.28%	50%	22.85%	14%	5.71%

In this question students were asked to say how they feel about their abilities in the processes mentioned in this table. As the table reveals that the majority of informants

said that they are able to conduct these processes, they answered by claiming that their level is 'ok'. But in identifying their own weaknesses and strengths, they consider that they are 'good' (38.57%). The rest of their answers are varied between 'very poor', 'poor', and 'very good'. Fortunately, in the third, fourth, and fifth options no one thinks that he/she is unable to carry out those processes. However, many learners did not answer such question, maybe because they are not aware of those processes that have a lot of advantages in building their autonomy.

Section three: Motivation and good language learners.

Q1: Do you enjoy learning English?

Table 9

Learners' Feelings when they Learn English

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	70	100%
No	0	0%
Total	70	100%

Surprisingly, the table shows that all the participants enjoy learning English. Because all the respondents (100%) said that they enjoy studying this language. So, we can assume that those learners like the English language and have positive attitudes towards it, its culture, native speakers and so on.

Q2: Is Motivation a key factor for successful language learning?

Table 10

Learners' Opinions About the Role of Motivation in the Learning Process

Options	Subjects	%
a-Strongly agree	46	65.71%
b- Agree	22	31.42%
c- Neutral	1	1.42%
d- Disagree	1	1.42%
e- Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	70	100%

This question was asked to identify how EFL students consider the role of motivation in promoting effective learning. 65.71% of respondents strongly agree, 31.42% of them agree. However, 1.42% have no opinion; whereas, the same percentage of respondents think that motivation is not important in developing successful learning. We may conclude that those learners are not motivated at all to learn English. While, those who consider motivation as a necessity in learning are highly motivated, and this motivation helps them a lot in their own learning that is why they are conscious of its significance in learning. Motivated and highly motivated learners convinced that motivation helps them a lot in their learning. Some of them said that it is the building stone for self-confidence and it pushes them to success, others believe that it make them active participants in the class and more aware of their learning. Moreover, the rest view that motivation helps them to have a strong personality, because they always look for new ways to learn and search for information.

Q3. How would you describe yourself in learning?

Table 11

Students Motivational Level

Options	Subjects	%
a-Highly motivated to learn English	20	28.57%
b-Motivated to learn English	46	65.71%
c-Not motivated at all to learn English	4	5.71
Total	70	100%

The results revealed above confirm our interpretation of the findings mentioned in the previous question. This question was intended to know if EFL students consider themselves motivated in their learning or not. Because, the majority of learners' answers vary between 'highly motivated' and 'motivated' to their studies. 28.57% of informants are highly motivated, and 65.71 % are motivated; whereas, only 5.71%are not motivated at all. From these findings we can assume that learners who are 'highly motivated' or 'motivated' to learn the English language are eager to know about its culture, native speakers and other aspects of that language such as, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and so on.

Q4. What Types of activities do you find more motivating?

Table 12

The Students Preferred Motivating Activities

Options	Subjects	%
a-Keeping diaries	2	2.85
b-Role plays	8	11.42
c-Telling/Writing a story	9	12.85
d-Making personal plans	8	11.42
e-Engaging in group work discussions	21	30
a+b+c+d	2	2.85
a+c+e	3	4.28
a+b+c+e	2	2.85
a+c+d	2	2.85
b+d+e	5	7.14
c+d+e	7	10
Others	1	1.42
Total	70	100

This question was asked to get an understanding of the type of activities that the students find themselves more motivated in. The above table shows that 30% of the participants asserted that they find themselves more motivated when they are engaged in group discussions, 12.85 % believed that telling/writing a story is more motivated, 11.42% choose role plays, about 10% had the will to use stories, personal plans and group discussions. Then, 7.14 % of the whole population find themselves more motivated when they are engaged in: role plays, personal plans and group work discussions. Furthermore, 4.28% of respondents prefer to use diaries, writing stories and group discussions as the most motivating activities. Then, 2.85 % of learners varied their answers between keeping diaries, role plays, making personal plans, telling/writing a story and using group discussions, whereas, only one respondent claimed that he found himself motivated in other types of activities by specifying that “listening to podcasts

and native speakers' conversations are more motivating for learning". These results may justify the fact that learners when engaging in group discussions, they will have more freedom to say something about their learning, to identify and solve problems which are considered as challenging ways for learning. It is revealed that, by giving those students opportunities to work together and exchange ideas with each other, teachers will create an autonomous environment which will lead students to be positively engaged in the learning process.

Q5. Does the teacher help you to find what motivate you in the learning process?

Table 13

Teachers' Roles in Motivating their Students to Learn

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	51	72.85%
No	19	27.14%
Total	70	100%

This question was asked to know whether teachers play a crucial role in motivating students or not. The results gained from the table above revealed that about 72.85 % of the participants were supported by their teachers to be motivated in the English language classroom, however, 27.14 % believe that they were not supported by their teacher to find what motivates them. The students' answers illustrate that they consider the teacher's behaviours as having a strong impact on their learning. The teacher, for example, may ask learners about the problems they encounter or the skills which are more interesting for them. This way of learning would help them to become more motivated in their own learning and to express themselves freely without being forced. Thus, they will continue to try until they improve the rate and success of the learning process.

Section four: Choice and Learner Autonomy

Q1. Does your teacher allow you to choose types of activities that suit you?

Table 14

Students' Involvement in Choosing Classroom Activities

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	36	51.42%
No	34	48.85%
Total	70	100%

This question tends to find out whether first year LMD students of English are given the chance to choose classroom activities that best suit their capacities and levels or not. It is noted that more than half of the subjects (51.42%) said that they take part in the selection of the activities needed in the classroom; however, 48.85% claimed the opposite. Hence, we may conclude that the students who said that they are engaged in selecting the classroom activities are the ones who participate in the learning process and give suggestions about the types of activities they like to work on, the topics to speak about and so on, and which the teacher will take into consideration in order to implement them in his/her teaching next time. On the other hand, those students who said the opposite are perhaps waiting for their teacher to design and suggest whatever tasks and activities he or she thinks appropriate and useful for the process of learning.

-If yes how often?

Table 15

The Frequency of Students' Engagement in Selecting Classroom Activities

Options	Subjects	%
a-Always	3	8.33%
b-Often	3	8.33%
c-Sometimes	27	75%
d-Rarely	2	5.55%
e-Never	0	0%
No answer	1	2.77%
Total	36	100%

Students who answered "Yes" are asked to indicate, in the second part of this item, the frequency of the participation in selecting the type of classroom activities. 75% of informants chose sometimes, 8.33% recorded for "always" and "often", then, 5.55% opted rarely and 2.77% of the participants did not answer. From the results obtained from the above table, students are likely to choose the types of activities that are workable for their learning situations as much as they are provided with opportunities.

Q2. Does the teacher allow you to set personal goals and work according to them?

Table 16

Setting Personal Objectives

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	43	61.42%
NO	23	32.85%
No answer	4	5.71%
Total	70	100 %

The aim behind asking this question was to investigate whether the teacher allows students to set personal goals or not. The results shown in the table above indicate that 61.42% of the respondents opted "yes", 32.85% of subjects opted "no" as an answer, about 5.71% of the students did not answer at all. The results can be justified by teachers' readiness to put some decisions in learners' hands because they find their students willing to choose what goals they want to achieve.

Q3. Does the teacher offer you the possibility to select the course content?

Table17

The Selection of the Course Content

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	41	58.57%
No	26	37.14%
No answer	3	4.28%
Total	70	100%

This question was designed to know if students were given the chance to select the course content. 58.57 % of the whole population showed their participation in selecting the course content, about 37.14% of the students stated that they are not involved in the selection of topics to be studied, 4.28% of learners did not answer. The answers obtained from the previous table reflect the teacher awareness of the learners' role in selecting what to learn and how to learn. Hence, they tend to learn what motivate them as being the target.

Q4. Does the teacher allow you to take part in the planning of schedules?

Table 18

Learners' Engagement in the Planning of Schedules

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	16	22.85%
No	50	71.42%
No answer	4	5.71%
Total	70	100%

In this item students were asked if they are involved in the planning of schedules. 22.85% of the participants opted "Yes", about 71.42% of them said that they are not taking part in this process, and 5.71% did not give an answer. It is obvious that students do not play a crucial role in planning their schedule. A possible reason for this is that every teacher has a schedule to follow and he has to make sure that everything in the syllabus is covered in the given period of time; if he allows their students to make their personal schedules they may fail to decide how much time should be given for each lesson and each activity.

Q5. Does the teacher give you the opportunity to modify and adapt classroom tasks?

Table 19

Students Involvement in the adaptation and modification of Classroom Tasks

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	16	22.85%
No	50	71.42%
No answer	4	5.71%
Total	70	100%

In this question, the subjects are asked to say whether they are given the chance to modify and adapt the EFL classroom tasks or not. As have been noted, only 22.85 % of the subjects said that the teacher gives them the opportunity to design the classroom tasks, 71.42% agreed that they do not take part in the modification and adaptation of the classroom tasks; Whereas, 5.71% of the respondents did not answer. These answers make it clear that learners cannot be totally independent from the teacher, because such modification requires learners to be knowledgeable enough and at the same time acquainted with different skills (writing, speaking, reading, listening) which 1st year LMD students may lack.

Section 5: Learners Attitudes

Q1. When the teacher gives you the chance to make your own choices, how do you feel?

Table 20

Students Attitudes About their Feelings

Options	Subjects	%
a-Completely unsatisfied	3	4.28%
b-Somewhat unsatisfied	3	4.28%
c-Somewhat satisfied	39	55.71%
d-Completely satisfied	2	35.71%
Total	70	100%

The question was asked to discover whether students were satisfied when making their choices in the learning process or not. The results in the above table showed that 55.71 % of the participants were somewhat satisfied with their choices, 35.71 % were completely satisfied with their choices, and only 4.28 % were somewhat unsatisfied; whereas, 4.28% of students are completely unsatisfied. So these results reflect the students' high level of self-esteem and self-confidence.

Q2. Is confidence a key element for successful learning?

Table 21

Students views About the Role of Confidence in Developing Successful Learning

Options	Subjects	%
a-Agree	68	97.14%
b-Disagree	2	2.85
c-Total	70	100%

The results in the above table show that the majority of participants (97.14 %) agreed that confidence is very important to achieve successful language learning; whereas,

2.85% of subjects said the opposite. Learners seem to give a great importance for 'self-confidence' as a key element for successful learning, since They claimed that it is necessary for learning a language. So, we can say that those students are aware of the importance confidence has in developing the learning process and achieving the learning targets

Q3. Is your confidence necessary to take responsibility for your learning?

Table 22

The Importance of Self-Confidence in Learners' Learning

Options	Subjects	%
a-Agree	68	97.14%
b-Disagree	1	1.42%
No answer	1	1.42%
Total	70	100%

The question sought to investigate the students' awareness of the importance of self-confidence to take responsibility for learning. The results mentioned in the table above reveal that 97.14 % of the participants agreed on the importance of self-confidence for taking responsibility for learning. 1.42 % of the respondents think that learners' self-confidence is not necessary to take charge of their own learning, however, 1.42 % did not respond. The results illustrate the students' awareness of the importance of self-confidence to learning independently and they know also that lacking this attribute leads to negative attitude towards themselves as learners. Moreover, the results reveal that learners feel secure even if the teacher is absent to support them.

Q4. Do you prefer to learn?

Table 23

Learners' Preferences of Class Work Type

Options	Subjects	%
a-Individually	31	44.28%
b-In pairs	12	17.14%
c-In groups	27	38.57%
Total	70	100%

This question was addressed to know which types of class work students most like to engage in. 44.28 % of students prefer to work individually 38.57 % prefer to learn in groups and 17.14 % of the whole population find learning in pairs more enjoyable. The results indicate that most students prefer to learn individually. Maybe because, the types of tasks and activities the teacher applies in his/her class have an individual work nature such as, extensive reading, making presentations and listening to news in English. Moreover, working individually may allow them to identify what confuse them and to ask their teacher for help. On the other hand, those who like to learn in pairs or groups are said to be collaborative individuals who like to be engaged in natural situations in which they share their interests, ideas and opinions with others. This way of learning would make them restful and their anxiety would be reduced.

Q5. When you make mistakes, do you prefer?

Table 24

Students' Attitudes towards Error Correction

Options	Subjects	%
a-To correct yourself	28	40%
b-The teacher corrects you	38	55%
c-To be corrected by other classmates	3	4%
No answer	1	1.42%
Total	70	100%

From the data illustrated above, it can be noticed that a large number of students representing the percentage of 55% express their preferences to be corrected by their teacher, followed by 40% of them who prefer to take the responsibility for correcting their mistakes. 4% of respondents said that they favor to be corrected by their classmates, and only 1.42% of them did not answer. Most of the answers (55 %) are given to teacher's correction; it is, then, obvious that it is the teacher who corrects them. This in turn may indicate that students are not totally independent from their teacher in the learning process. Also, the results show that students are interested in the teacher's correction; they prefer the teacher presence to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to provide them with hints to improve their learning. Additionally, they may consider him as the only one who can show them how to deal with a given problem. Moreover, the results may justify the fact that students may not pay attention to certain mistakes. Hence, it is the teacher's role to draw their attention to such mistakes.

Discussion

The analysis of students' questionnaire reveals the followings:

1. EFL learners are motivated to learn the English language.
2. It is true that they are self-confident learners and satisfied with their engagement in the process of learning. However, they are still passive and not active learners because they do not participate and the teacher does most of the talking in their classes.
3. Students still consider the teacher's role as it was the case in the traditional approaches. Since they prefer that the teacher corrects their mistakes rather than correcting themselves, they also see the teacher as the more knowledgeable and they have to rely on him or her.
4. Learners cannot be totally independent from the teacher.
5. EFL learners are good in carrying out some aspects related to their learning, but they are still unable to conduct others. This is due to the fact that they are not aware of different language learning strategies and how they are learning.
6. They lack language skills which enable them to study by themselves. That is why; EFL students cannot be autonomous.

2.2. Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire was submitted to 10 University teachers; novices and experienced, who are teaching first year License students of English; 9 teachers were collaborative and accepted to answer the questionnaire, whereas, 1 teacher has not handed the questionnaire back. Teachers' questionnaires are not administered all together in the same day since each teacher took the questionnaire with him/her and asked to come back later on to hand it over.

2.2.1. Aims of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was conducted to explore the teachers' perceptions of their learners' readiness to autonomous learning. Furthermore, it was designed to investigate the challenges both teachers and students face in the learning process, and which would prevent them from building a learner-centered classroom.

2.2.2. Description of the questionnaire:

The teachers' questionnaire is a mixture of closed questions that require the teacher to answer by 'yes' or 'no' or to choose from a number of choices. And open ended questions where teachers are requested to give other alternative answers when necessary. The questionnaire consists of 20 questions. The first two questions are concerned with the teachers' views about the place of autonomy in the learning process and its effects on students' success in learning. Questions (3) and (4) are about teachers' perceptions of their learners' readiness and ability to learn English independently. Question number five is asked to get an idea about teachers' views concerning their learners' attitudes towards autonomous learning.

Question (6) demands the teacher to say what characteristics of autonomous learners are supposed to be endowed with. Then, item (7) is designed to identify the teachers' opinions about the importance of developing learner autonomy in EFL classrooms. The next question (Q8) is about teachers' views about their learners' motivational level. Question number (9) tends to investigate the teachers' beliefs of their roles in motivating students. After that, the tenth question is asked to know if learners prepare their lessons in advance or not. Question (11) seeks to elicit information about students' ability to find out the meaning of new words by themselves. Questions (12) and (13) are designed to explore whether teachers help learners to identify their own strategies and apply them while learning or not.

Question (14) tends to know the teachers' perceptions of their students ability to discover their own styles, needs, and preferences. Later on, teachers are requested to mention the difficulties faced by learners whenever they try to become autonomous (Q15). Question (16) is designed to know if teachers allow their learners to conduct and carry out various processes related to learning and how often. Question (17) is directed to gather information about students' preferences of how to learn. In the question (18), teachers are asked to say what kind of the relationship exists between learner autonomy and teacher autonomy. Next, question (19) tends to discover whether project works learners are carrying out helpful in the promotion of autonomous learning. Finally, question (20) aims to investigate to what extent technological materials are useful to encourage learners to learn independently.

2.1..3. Analysis and Interpretation of the Questionnaire

Q1: Do you think that learner autonomy is a crucial component of the learning process?

Table 25

Teachers' Views about the Role of Learner Autonomy in Learning

Options	Subjects	Percentage (%)
Yes	9	100%
No	0	0%
Total	9	100%

This question aimed to identify to what extent learner autonomy is important in the process of learning. The table above reveals that all teachers representing the percentage of 100% think of learner autonomy as an important aspect of learning; whereas, no one said that autonomy is not important. Teachers who think that developing learner autonomy is a necessity in the learning process gave different reasons to justify their answers. 22.22% of them said that autonomy makes learning more effective, 33.33% agreed that it raises students' motivation and responsibility for their own learning. Further, 11.11% justified their answers as "Autonomy makes learners self-made and strengthens their volition", but the rest of participants (33.33%) claimed that autonomy helps learners to discover themselves, and creates a learner-centered approach. From the above interpretations, we may conclude that encouraging students to be autonomous leads them to successful learning. That is to say, being autonomous give learners more power and energy to improve their abilities to achieve effective language learning through raising their awareness about and motivation to learning.

Q2: Is students' success related to their ability to be responsible for their own learning?

Table 26

The Relationship between Students' Success and Responsibility in Learning

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	9	100%
No	0	0%
Total	9	100%

The purpose from asking such question was to know if there is a relationship between learners' success and their ability to be responsible for their own learning. The results obtained show that all the respondents (100%) claimed that students' success in learning is directly related to the degree of responsibility they take in the learning process. In the second part of the question teachers were requested to say how this occurs. Their interpretations are mentioned in the table below:

Table 27

Teachers' Justifications

Options	Subjects	%
a-Responsibility pushes students to study willingly.	2	22.22%
b-Learners will have insights into their styles, strategies and take risks	3	33.33%
c-Responsibility makes learners understand that learning is a life-long process, then they can achieve success	2	22.22%
d-It helps them to fill the gaps they have in knowledge	2	22.22%
No answer	1	11.11%
Total	9	100%

It is obvious from this table that all teachers' explanations reveal that as much as learners be responsible for their learning, their self-awareness would be raised and they will be more active and knowledgeable.

Q3: Do you think that learners are ready enough to learn English independently?

Table 28

Learners' Readiness to Autonomous Learning

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	2	22.22%
No	7	77.77%
Total	9	100%

This question was directed to identify the teachers' perceptions of their learners' readiness to learn English independently. The table shows that the majority of informants (77.77%) agreed that EFL learners are not ready yet to learn by themselves, but only 22.22% of them think that they are ready to be independent from their teachers while studying English. In both cases, teachers were asked to explain their answers. The respondents who consider their students to be unable to learn English independently supported their argument by saying that students still need guidance, instructions and orientation. Further, students lack the will to work and make additional efforts to develop their skills. In addition, the role of the teacher is still imperative in assisting their learners in the process of learning. On the contrary, teachers who think the opposite claimed that students are advanced learners of English and they have a lot of learning resources that they can rely on while learning such as, Internet and e-books. From these justifications we may assume that first year LMD learners are not ready yet to learn English independently since they do not try to find new ways to prove themselves as good learners.

Q4: Do you think that students have the potential to be autonomous?

Table 29

Students Acceptance for Independent Learning

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	6	66.66%
No	3	33.33%
Total	9	100%

Teachers in this question were asked to give their opinions about their students acceptance to be autonomous. The table above reveals that 66.66% of the subjects agreed that EFL students have the potential to be independent, 33.33% said that they are not. Those teachers explained their answers by saying that students always depend on the teacher to give them maximum information and they lack the knowledge of study skills. However those who consider their learners having the potential to be autonomous perhaps find them motivated and eager to take responsibility for their own learning.

Q5: What do you think about your students' attitudes towards autonomous learning?

Table 30

Teachers' Perceptions of their Learners' Attitudes towards Autonomous Learning

Options	Subjects	%
a-Positive	0	0%
b-Negative	8	88.88%
No answer	1	11.11%
Total	9	100%

We have intended from asking this question to find out what are the learners' attitudes toward independent language learning. Unfortunately, no one considers his/her learners as having positive attitudes, 88.88% think that learners' attitudes are negative, 11.11% did not give their opinion. In both cases, the participants were demanded to 'say why'. Because, there are only teachers who think of their students as being negative. Some of them said that this is due to the fact that the majority of students are passive and careless (40%), 20% said that learners have no idea about autonomous learning. Besides, 10% agreed upon the idea that there are some learning habits students came with from their secondary schools which spoilt their learning habits at University that is why their attitudes are negative. Finally, 10% of respondents claimed that being successful learners takes place only within the traditional classroom contexts. We may assume that EFL students have negative attitudes towards autonomous learning.

Q6: What are the key characteristics of autonomous learners?

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a-Learning independently | d-cooperative learners |
| b-Self-evaluating learners | e-Take notes |
| c-Taking responsibility | f-Guess the meaning of new words |
| g-Prepare lessons in advance | |

Table 31

Characteristics of Autonomous Learners

Options	Subjects	%
b+c+e	1	11.11%
a+c+g	1	11.11%
a+e+f+g	1	11.11%
a+c+e+g	1	11.11%
All of them	5	55.55%
Total	9	100%

Autonomous learners have some attributes which make them look different from others. The teachers were asked to choose from a given list of options about the characteristics of autonomous learners. More than half of the subjects (55.55%) agreed that autonomous learners are the ones who have all the mentioned attributes. 11.11% said that autonomous students are 'self-evaluating', 'taking responsibility', and 'take notes', 11.11% of them added that they 'learn independently' and 'prepare lessons in advance'. 22.22% selected the following: learning independently, taking responsibility, taking notes, guessing the meaning of new words, and preparing lessons in advance.

Q7: Do you think that developing learner autonomy is:

Table 32

Teachers' Attitudes towards Autonomous Learning in EFL contexts

Options	Subjects	%
a-Very important	7	77.77%
b-Important	2	22.22%
c-Less important	0	0%
d-Not important	0	0%
Total	9	100%

A vast majority of teachers (77.77%) think that promoting learner autonomy in EFL classes is 'very important', 22.22% believed that it is 'important'. However no one considered it to be 'less important' or 'not important'. Coming to the conclusion that encouraging learners to be autonomous in learning English as a foreign language is a necessity and highly recommended. This may refer to the good effects autonomous learning has on learners' performances. Moreover, teachers perhaps find that independent learners are more successful than those who rely on their teachers while learning.

Q8: Do you think that your students are:

Table 33

Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Motivation Level

Options	Subjects	%
a-Highly motivated to learn English	0	0%
b-Motivated to learn English	8	88.88%
c-Not motivated to learn English	1	11.11%
Total	9	100%

This item tended to explore teachers' perceptions of their learners' motivational level in learning English. 88.88% of teachers assumed that their students are motivated, and 11.11 % said that they are not motivated. This is perhaps a result of good instruction students receive from their teachers, or the ambition that learners are endowed with from an early stage.

Q9: To what extent is your role as a teacher is crucial for motivating learners?

Table 34

Teachers' Roles in Motivating students

Options	Subjects	%
a-So much	4	44.44%
b-Much	5	55.55%
c-Little	0	0%
d-Not at all	0	0%
Total		100%

This question was directed to know to what extent the teachers' role is important for making learners more motivated in the learning process. It is noted that 55.55% claimed that their role is 'much important', and 44.44% thought that their role is 'important'; whereas, no one said that the teacher's role has little or no importance in making learners motivated. This is maybe due to the fact that teachers find their students more motivated in the classroom when the teacher provides them with the required materials, aids, and various activities in which they enjoy engaging in. In addition, it is the teacher who creates a healthy atmosphere where students feel restful and satisfied with what they are doing.

Q10: Do your students prepare their lessons before coming to the classroom?

Table 35

Students' Preparation of their Lessons

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	2	22.22%
No	7	77.77%
Total	9	100%

One major characteristic of an autonomous learner is preparing lessons before coming to the classroom. Thus, by asking teachers such question we, we aimed to find out if EFL students prepare what they are going to learn in advance or not. This table shows that 77.77% of the informants said that their learners did not try to know anything about what they are going to do in class and just came with no idea about the given lesson. According to 22.22% of them, students prepare their lessons in advance. Hence, we may conclude that these learners are not self-reliant and independent because they rely on the teacher to give them all what they are in need for. However, this passive way of learning is not going to be useful all the time since the teacher is a human being, and it is impossible for him to know and give his/her learners all the data required. Additionally, learners' creativity would be executed. Teachers who have answered with 'yes' were requested to say how often learners did. Their answers were as follows:

Table 36

The Frequency of Learners Preparation of their Lessons

Options	Subjects	%
Always	0	0
Often	1	50%
Sometimes	1	50%
Rarely	0	0%
Never	0	0%
Total	2	100%

The table reveals that even those learners who prepare their lessons before coming to the classroom, do so either 'sometimes' or 'often' and not all the time (always).

Coming to the conclusion that EFL learners do not care a lot about their learning and do not try to prove themselves as good learners. They also do not have the will to learn autonomously.

Q11: Do your students discover the meaning of new words on their own rather than waiting for your help?

Table 37

Teachers' views about students' ability to discover the meaning of new words

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	2	22.22%
No	7	77.77%
Total	9	100%

This item aimed to know whether EFL learners discover the meaning of new words by themselves without waiting for the teacher to explain and make it clear for them. The results in the above table show that the majority of teachers (77.77%) replied by 'no',

however, only 22.22% of them said 'yes'. It is noted that students did not try even to find explanations for difficult words and they do not make any efforts to enhance their capacities.

Q12: Are your students aware of metacognitive strategies?

Table 38

Learners' Awareness of Metacognitive Strategies

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	1	11.11%
No	8	88.88%
Total	9	100%

Because metacognitive strategies are one condition for promoting learners autonomy in EFL classes, teachers were asked to give an idea about their learners' awareness about various metacognitive strategies they have. Unfortunately, 88.88% of respondents agreed that their students have no idea about metacognitive strategies, and just 11.11% said that they are conscious of the strategies they have, since maybe these teachers have noticed that learners use some metacognitive strategies while studying subconsciously. On the other hand, teachers who taught the opposite may find that EFL learners do not apply those strategies, thus they assume their learners to be unaware about the existence of those strategies.

Q13: Do learners use self-monitoring and self-assessment strategies?

Table 39

Students' Use for Self-monitoring and Self-assessment Strategies

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	0	0%
No	9	100%
Total	9	100%

Being aware about metacognitive strategies someone has as a learner is not enough because students need to be able to apply them when necessary. Hence, we have asked teachers this question for the sake of knowing whether first year LMD students use self-monitoring and self-assessment strategies during their learning or not. The table above reveals that all teachers who answered (100%) agreed that their learners do not use these strategies. For identifying the reasons behind the learners' inability to use the above mentioned strategies in their learning, teachers were requested to justify their answers by choosing from a given list of options.

Table 40

Teachers' Justifications

Options	Subjects	%
a-They are not aware of the strategies they have	4	44.44%
b-They do not have the opportunity to apply them	1	11.11%
c-They have not been taught them yet	1	11.11%
a+c	2	22.22%
b+c	1	11.11%
Total	9	100%

The table reveals that 44.44% of subjects claimed that their learners are not aware of the strategies they have, 22.22% agreed that in addition to learners' unawareness about the strategies they have, they have not been taught them yet. 11.11% of them said that their learners did not learn those strategies and they do not have the opportunity to use them. The rest of teachers' justifications vary between b and c.

Q14: Are learners able to identify their own styles, preferences and needs?

Table 41

Students' Ability to Identify their Own Styles and Preferences

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	6	66.66%
No	2	22.22%
No answer	1	11.11%
Total	9	100%

In this question, teachers were requested to say if EFL learners can identify the different styles, needs and preferences they are endowed with. This table shows that more than half of the informants (66.66%) think that students can discover their own styles, needs and preferences, 22.22% of them agreed that their students are not able to do so; whereas, 11.11% did not answer. We may conclude that EFL learners are passive since if they are unable to know at least what they are in a need for, they are not going to find out what fit them to approach various tasks and activities. Such inability is perhaps a result of the teachers' carelessness with raising learners' knowledge about themselves and their different wants and abilities.

Q15: What do you think the difficulties faced by your learners to become autonomous?

Table 42

The Challenges Students Face to be Autonomous

Options	Subjects	%
a-Learners do not have the will and rely on their teacher	2	22.22%
b- Students are not critical and not able to be responsible.	1	11.11%
c- Students' negative attitudes and lack of confidence, motivation and self-reliance	3	33.33%
d- Learners do not use language communicatively outside classrooms.	1	11.11%
e- They are not able to discover and use learning strategies	1	11.11%
No answer	1	11.11%
Total	9	100%

This question intends to find out what might prevent EFL learners from being autonomous. Teachers as it is mentioned above gave different reasons, 33.33% of them agreed upon the idea that students have negative attitudes towards autonomous learning, lack of confidence, motivation and self-reliance, 22.22% said that learners do not have the will and rely on the teacher to learn. But the rest interpretations reveal that learners lack the will and learning strategies, are not critical and do not use language communicatively. Coming to the conclusion that students.

Q16: How often do you give your learners the opportunity to conduct these processes?

Table 43

The Frequency of Giving Learners the Chance to Take Part in their Learning

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a-Choose what type of activities they want to do.	0%	0%	44.44%	11.11%	44.44%
b-Select the materials to be used in learning	0%	22.22%	22.22%	0%	55.55%
c-Set the learning objectives	22.22%	11.11%	33.33%	11.11%	22.22%
d-Identify their own strengths and weaknesses	22.22%	33.33%	22.22%	11.11%	0%
e-Practice English inside the classroom	66.66%	22.22%	0%	0%	0%
f-Discuss the learning problems with classmates	22.22%	33.33%	22.22%	11.11%	11.11%
g-Control their learning	22.22%	33.33%	11.11%	22.22%	11.11%

The purpose from asking such question was to know whether teachers give their learners the opportunity to carry out the above processes or not, and how many times. It is noted that in most cases teachers allow students to conduct approximately all processes either 'sometimes', 'often', or 'always'; however, in choosing types of activities (44.44% of teachers) and selecting the learning materials (55.55%) of informants did not offer learners the chance to be involved in. We may conclude that teachers are aware of the fact that learners need to be more active and self-directed in their learning. Because this allows them to hold more responsibility for their own learning. However, those who claimed that they never give learners the chance to take charge of those processes are afraid of giving students the freedom because according to them this perhaps leads them to lose control in their classrooms. Moreover, they know that learners are not capable to do that even if they allow them.

Q17: Do you think that first year License students prefer to learn:

Table 44

Teachers' Perceptions of their Learners' Preferences to Learn.

Options	Subjects	%
a-Individually	0	0%
b-With their classmates	1	11.11%
c-Depending on the teacher in everything	8	88.88%
Total	9	100%

In this item, teachers were asked to give their opinions about their students' preferences regarding the nature of learning they prefer to engage in. The results in this table reveal that approximately all respondents (88.88%) replied by saying that students depend on the teacher in everything concerning their learning. 11.11% agreed that they prefer to learn with their classmates; whereas, no one said they like to learn individually. That is to say, first year LMD learners perhaps see the teacher as the authority in the class who is more knowledgeable and they have only to rely on him or her. In addition, maybe those students are shy and afraid of working individually. Also EFL students enjoy studying in a cooperative manner which would give them more support and help them to discover their own strengths and weaknesses on their own. Additionally, working individually may make more pressure and anxiety on students. This in turn would results in poor performance on the part of the learners.

Q18: Does learner autonomy depend on teacher autonomy?

Table 45

The Relationship between Learner Autonomy and Teacher Autonomy

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	3	33.33%
No	5	55.55%
No answer	1	11.11%
Total	9	100%

Autonomy is not related only to learners but also to teachers. Thus, the aim behind asking teachers this question was to know whether there is a relationship between learner autonomy and teacher autonomy. The findings show that half of the participants (55.55%) agreed that learner autonomy does not depend on teacher autonomy. 33.33% said the opposite, while 11.11% gave no opinion. It is noted that most teachers consider learner autonomy and teacher autonomy as being independent from each other. This means that even though the teacher is not autonomous, he/she can guide learners to be independent. On the contrary, those who said that learner autonomy relies on teacher autonomy are conscious about the importance of being autonomous for them as teachers. Autonomous teachers are said to be able to direct their students to achieve successful learning and can select the necessary aids and materials that best suit learners' capacities and needs. This in turn would lead them to develop a sense of responsibility inside themselves. Furthermore, autonomy gives teachers more power and ability to control the classroom.

Q19: Are project works really done in a way that help learners to be autonomous?

Table 46

The Role of Project works in Promoting Learner Autonomy

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	6	66.66%
No	2	22,22%
No answer	1	11,11%
Total	9	100%

We intend by asking this question to find out the teachers' views about the nature of project works students are doing; whether exposée are really done in a way that promotes

learners autonomy or not. 66.66% of subjects said that the manner in which project works are developed is helpful for building autonomous learners, 22.22% of them agreed that it is not , 11.11% did not reply. So, project works encourage learners to be independent / autonomous in their learning.

In the second part of the question, teachers were requested to say how exposées help students to be autonomous, or how they do not. They gave the following justifications.

Teachers Justifications

No:

-Learners do not know how to write exposées and usually plagiarize (two teachers)

Yes:

-It depends on the nature of the topic (interesting or not) (one teacher)

-Exposées give students the chance to take responsibility to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses (one teacher)

-They raise the learners' awareness and enable them to activate metacognitive strategies (two teachers)

Q20 : Is the availability of technological materials (Internet, e-books, video-tape) necessary for encouraging students to learn independently?

Table 47

The Role of Technological Materials in Building Autonomous Learners

Options	Subjects	%
Yes	9	100%
No	0	0%
Total	9	100%

This question was directed to know if technological materials help learners to learn by themselves or not. Teachers here were requested to say whether the development in technology which has affected the educational system contribute in the promotion of learner autonomy or not. All respondents (100%) agreed that technological materials are necessary to encourage students to be autonomous. This can be explained by the fact that the availability of Internet, e-books, video-tape, TV and many other tools help a lot in stimulating students to find whatever information they need depending on themselves. Also, learners can develop their capacities and enhance their knowledge in any domain without asking the teacher what they need, they just go to the internet and search. Of course, students would learn how to discover /find out whatever information required concerning their learning by themselves and thus be autonomous.

Discussion

The analysis of teachers' questionnaire reveals the followings:

- 1- Teachers have positive attitudes towards learner autonomy, and view it as an important aspect in the teaching/learning process.
- 2- Students' success in learning is directly related to the degree of responsibility they assume to their learning; learner autonomy leads to successful and effective learning.
- 3- Learners are not ready enough to learn English independently since they lack the will to work and make use of the efforts they have in order to prove themselves.
- 4- EFL learners have negative attitudes towards autonomous learning due simply to the fact that they have no idea about it.
- 5- First year LMD students of English do not know what learning strategies are and they are unable to use them when necessary.
- 6- The teachers' role is very important for the promotion of learner autonomy, because learners still need guidance, orientation and support from their teacher.
- 7- Most teachers have no idea about what is known as 'teacher autonomy' and its significance in the development of their learners' autonomy.
- 8- Even though teachers agree that learners are motivated to learn English, have the potential to autonomous learning, able to identify their own styles, needs, preferences and they give them the opportunity to be involved in the process of learning most of the time, students face various problems and challenges which would prevent them from being autonomous as: (a) their inability to be critical, (b) lack of will to study by themselves, and (c) Unawareness concerning how they are learning.

Conclusion

The analysis of the data obtained from both teachers' and students' questionnaires confirmed the research hypothesis and revealed that learners are not familiar with the notion of learner autonomy and its significance in the learning process. Moreover, students are passive and unable to take charge of their own learning, since they lack the will and have no idea about language learning strategies, and how to apply them.

Learners are also unable to be critical and have negative attitudes towards autonomous learning. Further, some teachers are not familiar with learner autonomy and consider their autonomy as teachers as being not important to developing autonomous learning.

Finally, learner autonomy is very important and the teacher plays a crucial role especially in encouraging and supporting students to learn autonomously.

General Conclusion

This research has dealt with learner autonomy as a necessity for effective language teaching and learning as well as building autonomous individuals capable to cope with different changes and demands of modern society. The main concern of this study was the investigation of EFL learners' readiness to take charge of their own learning in Mohamed Essedik Ben Yahia University. It is very important to know whether first year LMD students of English are ready to be autonomous or not.

For this reason, the first chapter of this dissertation was concerned with the notion of learner autonomy and its theoretical basis; whereas, chapter two was devoted to data analysis. The main question that was asked is: "Are first year LMD students of English ready to hold responsibility for their own learning?". The research hypothesis was as the following: EFL learners at Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia University are not ready to be involved in autonomous learning. The results obtained confirmed our hypothesis and revealed that approximately first year students of English are not familiar with the notion of learner autonomy and not ready to implement it.

This research is interested with the implementation of autonomous learning in EFL classes since promoting learner autonomy has become a fundamental goal of any educational system particularly in teaching and learning foreign languages. Although autonomy is newly adapted to the field of language education, its significance in developing successful language learning and learners has been widely acknowledged and recognized.

Recommendations

Promoting learner autonomy is very important and highly advisable in the field of language teaching because of its various positive effects on developing students' ability to manage and control their learning which would help them to be independent and successful individuals in their society afterward. On the basis of the results obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire which affirmed that EFL learners are not ready yet to take charge of their own learning due to many reasons, the following recommendations are suggested for further improvement:

- 1-Autonomy is a skill that learners need to learn in an early stage of their instruction. That is why educational authorities have to provide necessary requirements for making sure that students are really experiencing autonomous learning in their classrooms from the beginning of their studies.
- 2- Providing teachers with adequate training is another important thing has to be taken into consideration. For building independent language learners and raising the students' awareness, teachers themselves need to be more knowledgeable and aware about the nature of autonomous learning.
- 3- Promoting teacher autonomy. Surprisingly, the findings of our research showed that some teachers are unaware of the importance of teacher autonomy in fostering learner autonomy. The interest that has been given to developing learner autonomy has also to be directed to promoting teacher autonomy since not only students need to be able to take charge of their own learning, however, it seems that teachers still need training and have to be responsible for their teaching.
- 4-Teachers should not be slaves of the textbook. They should find their own effective ways to direct their student to autonomous and successful language learning, and for them to achieve successful teaching as well.

5-Learners need to work more on themselves and exploit their efforts in order to be independent in their learning. The development of learner autonomy is not only the teachers' responsibility, but students are also responsible for it.

6-Learners have to change their negative attitudes toward autonomous learning and this would be achieved only if they recognize that learner autonomy is a gradual process that they have to enjoy being involved in.

7- Finally, Giving students more freedom in the classroom to decide on their own learning which in turn would make them more motivated.

Limitations of the study

The first limitation of this study is time constraints, research on learner autonomy requires much more time, efforts and information to be included. It is impossible to conduct the study on a large number of subjects. In our investigation of students' readiness to autonomous learning, the sample population is restricted to only 70 students and 10 teachers. In addition to that, the data are collected by questionnaires as a means of research, however, more reliable data would be obtained if classroom observation is also used, longer time would also give us as much information and facts as possible.

On the other hand, many students were not collaborative with us because they did not answer some questions, and refused to justify their responses where necessary. One teacher also did not hand the questionnaire back and others gave no explanations for their answers. Another important limitation is that relevant resources are unavailable in libraries and we rely only on e-books, articles, journals and so on from websites which cannot provide us with enough and necessary information needed in our research.

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Appendices :

Appendix A : Students' Questionnaire

Appendix B : Teachers' Questionnaire

Appendix A

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

We are conducting this research to determine your readiness for autonomous learning. Please fill in the questionnaire below with necessary information by putting a tick (✓) next the answer you find most appropriate and make comments where necessary. Your answers are very important for the completion of our work, please do it seriously and sincerely.

Thank you in advance for your collaboration

-Section one: Responsibility and learner autonomy.

1-Who does most of the talking in your classroom?

Teacher

Learner

2-Who sets the objectives of your English course?

You

Your teacher

Both

3-Who chooses the learning materials?

You

Your teacher

Both

4-Who decides on the activities to be used in the English lessons?

You

Your teacher

Both

5-Do you evaluate your own learning?

Yes

No

6-Are you capable to study by yourself?

Yes

No

-If not, why? Is it because:

- a- You lack the strategies for studying independently
- b- There are no necessary aids, techniques and materials
- c- The teacher is more knowledgeable and you have to rely on him
- d- The teacher does not give you the chance to learn by yourself

-Section two: Abilities.

-How good you are at:

	very poor	poor	ok	good	very good
1- Setting learning objectives					
2- Monitoring the learning process					
3- Selecting the content					
4- Selecting methods and techniques to be used					
5- Identifying your own weaknesses and strengths					
6- Evaluating your own learning					

-Section three: Motivation and good language learners.

1- Do you enjoy learning English?

Yes

No

2- Motivation is a key factor for successful language learning.

a-Strongly agree

b-Agree

c-neutral

d-disagree

e-strongly disagree

3-How would you describe yourself in learning?

a- Highly motivated to learn English

b- Motivated to learn English

c- Not motivated at all to learn English

-If you are motivated, how does motivation help you in your learning?

.....

.....

 4- What types of activities do you find more motivated?

a- Keeping diaries

b- Role plays

c- Telling/writing a story

d- Making personal plans

e- Engaging in group discussions

Others.....

5- Does the teacher help you to find what motivates you in the learning process?

Yes

No

-Section four: Choice and learner autonomy.

1- Does your teacher allow you to choose types of activities that suit you?

Yes

No

-If yes, how often?

Always

Often

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

2- Does the teacher allow you to set personal goals and to work according to them?

Yes

No

3- Does the teacher offer you the possibility to select the course contents (which topics/ book chapters/ grammar items discussed in the course).

Yes

No

4- Does the teacher allow you to take part in the planning of schedules?

Yes

No

5- Does the teacher give you the opportunity to modify and adapt classroom tasks?

Yes

No

-Section five: Learners attitudes.

1- When the teacher gives you the chance to make your own choices concerning the process of learning, how do you feel?

a- Completely unsatisfied

b- Somewhat unsatisfied

c- Somewhat satisfied

d- Completely satisfied

2- Confidence is a key element for successful learning.

-Agree

-Disagree

3- Your confidence is necessary to take responsibility for your learning.

- Agree

-Disagree

4- Do you prefer to learn:

-Individually

-In pairs

-In groups

5- When you make mistakes, do you prefer:

a- To Correct yourself

b- The teacher corrects you

c- To be corrected by other classmates

Appendix B
Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

The following questionnaire was designed to determine whether your learners are ready to be autonomous learners. You are therefore kindly requested to answer the following questions by putting a tick in the appropriate box and making your comments when necessary.

-Many thanks for giving your time to complete this questionnaire. Your cooperation is much appreciated.

1- Do you think that learner autonomy is a crucial component of the learning process?

Yes No

-Please give some reasons to justify your answer.

.....

2- Is students' success related to their ability to be responsible for their own learning?

Yes No

How?.....

.....

3- Do you think that learners are ready enough to learn English independently?

Yes No

-Why/ Why not?

.....

4-Do you think that students have the potential to be autonomous learners?

Yes No

-If not, Why?.....

.....

5-What do you think about your students attitudes towards autonomous learning?

Positive Negative

Why ?.....

.....

6- What are the key characteristics of autonomous learners?

a- Learning independently

b- Self-evaluating learners

c- Taking responsibility

d- Cooperative learners

e- Take notes

f- Guess the meaning of new words

g- Prepare lessons in advance

-All of them

7- Do you think about that developing learner autonomy is:

a- Very important.

b- Important

c- Less important

d- Not important

8-Do you think that your students are:

a- Highly motivated to learn English.

b- Motivated to learn English.

c- Not motivated at all to learn English.

9-To what extent your role as a teacher is crucial for motivating learners?

a- So much

b- Much

c- Little

d- Not at all

10-Do your students prepare their lessons before coming to the classroom?

Yes No

-If yes, how often?

-Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

11- Do your students discover the meaning of new words on their own rather than waiting for your help?

Yes No

12- Are your students aware of metacognitive strategies?

Yes No

13- Do learners use self-monitoring and self-assessment strategies?

Yes No

-If not, is it because:

a-They are not aware of the strategies they have.

b-They do not have the opportunity to apply them.

c-They have not been taught them yet.

14- Are learners able to identify their own styles, preferences and needs?

Yes No

15- What do you think the challenges faced by your students to become Autonomous?

.....

16-How often do you give your learners the opportunity to:

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a- Choose what type of activities they want to do.					
b- Select the materials to be used in learning.					
c- Set the learning objectives.					
d- Identify their own strengths and weaknesses.					
e- Practise English inside the classroom.					
f- Discuss the learning problems with their classmates.					
g- Control their own learning.					

17-Do you think that first year LMD students prefer to learn:

-Individually.

-With their classmates.

-Depending on the teacher in everything.

18- Does learner autonomy depend on teacher autonomy?

Yes No

19- Are project works (exposée) really done in a way that helps learners to be autonomous?

Yes

No

-How?.....

.....

.....

20- Is the availability of technological materials (Internet, e-books, and video-tape) necessary for encouraging students to learn independently?

Yes

No

STUDENTS' READINESS TO AUTONOMOUS LEARNING

Résumé

Le concept de l'autonomie de l'apprentissage est devenu récemment très fondamental dans le domaine de l'enseignement afin de le renforcer dans les classes de la langue Anglaise (comme étant une langue étrangère, il faut que les apprenants deviennent de plus en plus efficaces et consciencieux concernant leur apprentissage. Raison pour laquelle cette étude s'intéresse à identifier le degré d'aptitude des étudiants de la première année License anglais pour l'autodidacte. Cette dissertation contient deux chapitres ; un chapitre théorique qui discute la théorie de l'autonomie d'apprentissage, et un chapitre pratique pour l'analyse des résultats obtenus. Deux questionnaires seront destinés aux étudiants de première année Anglais system LMD (70 étudiants) et à dix professeurs qui enseignent ces étudiants pour obtenir des informations sur l'aptitude de ces étudiants et leur autonomie. Les résultats obtenus ont confirmé l'hypothèse de cette recherche qui consiste à dire que les étudiants ne sont pas encore capables d'assumer la responsabilité de leur autonomie d'apprentissage. Ils ont aussi montré que leur position envers cette autonomie d'apprentissage était négative. De plus, il s'est avéré que ces étudiants n'ont aucune idée sur le concept de la stratégie de l'apprentissage et ils n'ont pas non plus les habilités qui leur permettent d'être autonomes. Les résultats ont aussi relevé que les professeurs ne sont pas renseignés en le concept de l'autonomie de l'apprentissage et ont besoin de l'entraînement pour intégrer leur étudiants dans leur études.

ملخص

لقد أصبح مفهوم استقلالية التعلم مؤخرًا ذو أهمية كبيرة في مجال التعليم؛ لأجل تعزيز هذا المفهوم في أقسام تعليم اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية يجب على الطلبة أن يكونوا أكثر فاعلية ووعي فيما يخص عملية التعلم، لذلك تهتم هذه الدراسة بمعرفة مدى جاهزية طلبة السنة الأولى انجليزية لاستقلالية التعلم. تتضمن هذه المذكرة فصلين؛ فصل يتناول الجانب النظري لمفهوم استقلالية التعلم، في حين يتطرق الفصل الثاني إلى تحليل و مناقشة النتائج المتحصل عليها من خلال تحليل الاستبيانين اللذان تم توجيههما لكل من طلبة السنة الأولى انجليزية ل م د (70 طالب) و عشر أستاذة يدرسون السنة الأولى لجمع معلومات تتعلق بفاعلية هؤلاء الطلبة لاستقلالية التعلم. و قد أكدت النتائج المحصل عليها فرضية هذا البحث و التي تنص على أن طلبة السنة الأولى انجليزية غير جاهزين بعد لتحمل مسؤولية تعلمهم. كما كشفت النتائج أن موقفهم نحو مفهوم استقلالية التعلم هو موقف سلبي. إضافة إلى ذلك تبين أن هؤلاء الطلبة ليس لديهم أي فكرة عن مصطلح استراتيجيات التعلم كما أنهم يفتقدون المهارات التي تمكنهم من التعلم بأنفسهم. من جهة أخرى كشفت النتائج أن بعض الأساتذة ليسوا على اطلاع تام بمفهوم استقلالية التعلم كما أنهم في أمس الحاجة للتدريب من اجل دمج طلبتهم في عملية التعلم.

STUDENTS' READINESS TO AUTONOMOUS LEARNING