People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Djillali Liabès University of Sidi-Bel-Abbés

Faculty of Letters, Languages and Arts

Department of English

Autonomy in Advanced Language Education: Considerations of the Socio-cultural Dimensions and their Impact on EFL Algerian Students' Learning Expectations and Attitudes

Dissertation Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of PhD in English Discourse Studies and Applied Linguistics

Submitted by: **Supervised by:**

Mr. Benchaa LAKEHAL   **Prof. Fawzia BOUHASS BENAISSI**

Examination Panel:

- **President:**   **Prof.** Fewzia BEDJAOUI   University of Sidi Bel Abbes

- **Supervisor:** **Prof.** Fawzia BOUHASS BENAISSI   University of Sidi Bel Abbes

- **Examiner:**   **Prof.** Mohamed Yamine BOULENOUAR   University of Sidi Bel Abbes

- **Examiner:**   **Dr.** Mohamed GRAZIB   University of Saida

- **Examiner:**   **Dr.** Nariman LARBI   University of Mostaganem

Academic Year: 2019/2020

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is free of any plagiarized contents and it does not include any previously published material written by other authors except for those cited. I also certify that the present research work has not been submitted or published in any institution or university. Thus, this represents the result of my own research.

Name of the candidate: Mr Lakehal Benchaa

Date: 10/02/2021

Signature:

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my beloved

mother and

my late father

Acknowledgements

For her fruitful guidance, time and sense of teamwork, first and foremost, a special gratitude is conveyed to my supervisor **Prof. Bouhass Benaissi Fawzia**. This research work would not have been possible without her help and support throughout the journey of this research. Her commitment, responsibility and constructive feedback have effectively resulted in the completion of this work.

Special thanks are due to the members of the jury namely; **Prof.** Fewzia. Bedjaoui; University of Sidi-Bel-Abbes, **Prof**. Mohamed Yamine. Boulenouar; University of Sidi-Bel-Abbes; **Dr**. Mohamed. Grazib, University of Saida and **Dr**. Nariman. Larbi; University of Mostaganem for the time devoted to reading and evaluating this research work and for providing insightful feedback and observations. This work would not have been completed their comments and constructive criticism.

Sincere acknowledgements go to my fellow postgraduates students **Mr.** Abdelkader Chetouane**;** Manchester Metropolitan University, UK and **Mrs.** Slimani Fouzia; York University, UK for their constant provision of resources relevant to the issue at stake. Words are certainly not enough to thank also them for their encouragement and support.

I would also like to thank the University of Ahmed Zabana of Relizane for offering me the opportunity to undertake my research there. I'm greatly indebted to the Head of the Department of English and its teachers for helping me in the process of collecting data.

Last but not least, my expression of gratitude and appreciation go to the students who agreed to be part of and implement this research, I am deeply grateful for their effective contributions. Their assistance and cooperation are really appreciated.

Abstract

In the last few years, researchers, as Holec in 1979, have drawn their attention to autonomy in language learning and teaching. The latter has emerged due to the massive changes and reforms in education and the tendency to cope with the modern forms of teaching and learning. Accordingly, the Algerian educational policy-makers set up a way to move towards lifelong learning and autonomy to better prepare learners for world job requirements, leadership and citizenship. Across history learner autonomy is largely associated with Western educational contexts and is claimed to be a "Western cultural construct". This belief stems from the fact that Western education was the first to introduce learner autonomy; therefore it fits within the Western context and is perceived as an inappropriate educational goal in non-Western educational systems. Based on this idea, the current doctoral research has been given a ground. Yet, what is worth asking is the relevance and suitability of such a goal in the Algerian higher educational EFL context. To better comprehend the influences of the Algerian socio-cultural ethos on students' learning expectations and attitudes with reference to autonomy, an ethnographic research has been applied, in which four research data collection instruments were used. A classroom observation to describe the current EFL classroom practices was undertaken and a questionnaire was administered to 100 third year EFL students at Ahmed Zabana University of Relizane, Algeria, beside another questionnaire which was handed to 22 teachers within the same setting. The last tool includes a group interview with third year students. The results have revealed that EFL classrooms are still teacher-centered led in slightly moderated ways and characterized by three cultural dimensions, namely collectivism, strong uncertainty avoidance and higher power distance. Both local and educational cultural beliefs are standing as hindering obstacles limiting the development of learner autonomy. Following the obtained results, the researcher suggests "revisiting" misunderstood cultural and educational beliefs and raising learners' awareness of their new expected roles and responsibilities through learner training, the policy-makers would consider the socio-cultural backgrounds in which learning is taking place for it must be in line with the specificities of the Algerian educational context. More importantly, the need is to put an end to importing teaching methodologies and subordination to other educational systems and work for innovation as creation has become more than a necessity.

Key words: learner autonomy, attitudes and expectations, socio-cultural dimensions, higher education, Algerian context.

Résumé

Au cours des dernières années, des chercheurs, tels que Holec en 1979, ont attiré leur attention sur l'autonomie dans l'apprentissage et l'enseignement des langues. Bien que ce soit le cas, les responsables Algériens des reformes de l'éducation ont mis en place un moyen d'évoluer vers l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie et l'autonomie. L'autonomie des apprenants à travers l'histoire est largement associée aux contextes éducatifs occidentaux et prétend être une « construction culturelle occidentale ». Cette position provient du fait que l'éducation occidentale a été la première à introduire l'autonomie de l'apprenant, elle s'inscrit donc dans le contexte occidental et est considérée comme un objectif éducatif inapproprié dans les systèmes éducatifs non occidentaux. En se basant sur cette idée, la recherche actuelle en cours a trouvé un terrain fertile. Pourtant, ce qui mérite d'être examiné, c'est la pertinence et l'adéquation d'un tel objectif dans le contexte de l'enseignement supérieur de l'Algérie, de l'anglais langue étrangère. Pour mieux comprendre les influences socio-culturelles Algériennes sur la promotion des apprenants de langue, une recherche ethnographique a été entreprise et dans laquelle quatre instruments de collecte de données de recherche ont été utilisés. Pour décrire les pratiques actuelles en classe d'anglais langue étrangère, un questionnaire a été administré à 100 étudiants de troisième année d'anglais langue étrangère, à l'Université Ahmed Zabana de Relizane, Algérie et un autre questionnaire à 20 enseignants dans le même cadre et un entretien de groupe a eu lieu avec des étudiants de troisième année. Les résultats ont révélé que les salles de classe d'anglais langue étrangère, sont toujours centrées sur l'enseignant et dirigées de manière légèrement modérée et caractérisées par trois dimensions culturelles : le collectivisme, éviter l'incertitude et la distance. À cette fin, les bases ainsi que les contextes culturelles locaux et éducatifs se dressent comme un obstacle entravant le développement de l'autonomie de l'apprenant. A partir des résultats obtenus, le chercheur suggère de revoir les fausses pensées culturelles et éducatives, en sensibilisant les apprenants à leurs nouveaux rôles et responsabilités attendus grâce à la formation des apprenants. Les responsables politiques prendraient en considération le contexte socio-culturel dans lequel se déroule l'apprentissage afin de correspondre aux spécificités du contexte éducatif Algérien. Pour résumer, mettre un terme à l'importation de méthodologies d'enseignement / d'apprentissage et se débarrasser de la subordination et de l'imitation et opter pour l'innovation et la création deviennent plus qu'une nécessité.

Mots clés: autonomie de l'apprenant, attitudes et attentes des étudiants, dimensions socioculturelles, enseignement supérieur, contexte algérien

ملخص

في السنوات القليلة الماضية ، لفت الباحثون انتباههم إلى الاستقلالية في تعلم اللغة وتدريسها، مثل هولك في 1979 التعليم. وقد ظهر هذا الأخير بسبب التغييرات والإصلاحات الهائلة في التعليم والميل إلى مواكبة للتعليم والتعلم الحديث. وبناءً على ذلك ، أنشأ صناع السياسة التربوية الجزائريون طريقة للتوجه نحو التعلم مدى الحياة والاستقلالية لإعداد المتعلمين بشكل أفضل لمتطلبات العمل العالمية والقيادة والمواطنة. ترتبط استقلالية المتعلم على مر التاريخ و إلى حد كبير بالسياقات التعليمية الغربية ويُزعم أنه "بناء ثقافي غربي". ينبع هذا الاعتقاد من حقيقة أن التعليم الغربي كان أول من أدخل استقلالية المتعلم. لذلك فهو يتناسب مع السياق الغربي ويُنظر إليه على أنه هدف تعليمي غير مناسب في الأنظمة التعليمية غير الغربية. بناءً على هذه الفكرة ، تم القيام ببحث الدكتوراه الحالي. ومع ذلك ، فإن ما يستحق السؤال هو مدى ملاءمة مثل هذا الهدف في سياق التعليم العالي الجزائري بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. لفهم افضل لتأثيرات التوجهات الاجتماعية والثقافية الجزائرية على توقعات تعلم الطلاب ومواقفهم فيما يتعلق بالاستقلالية ، تم تطبيق بحث إثنوغرافي ، حيث تم استخدام أربع أدوات لجمع البيانات البحثية. تم إجراء ملاحظة في القسم لوصف ممارسات الفصل الدراسي الحالية لتعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وتم إجراء استبيان على 100 طالب في السنة الثالثة من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة أحمد زبانة في غليزان ، الجزائر ، إلى جانب استبيان آخر تم تسليمه إلى 22 استاذا. تتضمن الأداة الأخيرة مقابلة جماعية مع طلاب السنة الثالثة. أظهرت النتائج أن الاقسام الدراسية للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لا تزال تتمحور حول المعلم ويتم قيادتها بطرق معدلة نوعا ما وتتميز بثلاثة أبعاد ثقافية ، وهي الجماعية وتجنب القوي لعدم اليقين ومسافة أعلى للسلطة. كل من المعتقدات الثقافية المحلية والتعليمية تقف كعقبات تعوق تطوير استقلالية المتعلم. بعد النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها ، يقترح الباحث "إعادة النظر" في المعتقدات الثقافية والتعليمية التي أُسيء فهمها وتوعية المتعلمين بأدوارهم ومسؤولياتهم الجديدة من خلال تدريب المتعلم ، وعلى صانعوا السياسات الاخذ بعين الاعتبار الخلفيات الاجتماعية والثقافية بما يتماشى و خصوصيات السياق التربوي الجزائري. والأهم من ذلك ضرورة وضع حد لاستيراد منهجيات التدريس والتبعية للأنظمة التعليمية الأخرى والعمل من أجل الابتكار والإبداع اصبح أكثر من ضرورة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استقلالية المتعلم ، المواقف والتوقعات ، الأبعاد الاجتماعية والثقافية ، التعليم العالي ، السياق الجزائري.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

A   Agree

CRAPL   Center de Recherches et D'applications Pédagogique en Langues

D   Disagree

EFL   English as a Foreign Language

ESP   English for Specific Purposes

ICTs   Information and Communication Technologies

IRL   Interagency Language Roudntable

LA   Learner Autonomy

LCA   Learner Centered Approach

LLI   Learner-Learner Interaction

LMD   License, Master, Doctorate

LTI   Learner-Teacher Interaction

LTT   Learner Talking Time

Q   Question

SA   Strongly Agree

SD   Strongly Disagree

TCA   Teacher Centered Approach

TLI   Teacher-Learner Interaction

TTT   Teacher Talking Time

General Introduction

Due to the spread of research and globalization, the world of education has witnessed a dynamic expansion. Education undergoes revolutionary reforms and changes its directions and objectives to follow up the demands of today's society and to meet the world-jobs requirements.

A great deal of attention, therefore, has been given to the human capital to better develop the essence of students' well-being and contribute efficiently in directing the affairs of their societies. So to make the latter possible, higher education policy-makers and curriculum designers in many parts of the world have made a shift from teacher to learner centeredness, i.e. from "spoon feeding" to self-learning and responsibility. This transitional movement has given birth to learner autonomy as an international educational goal.

Llaven-Nucamendi argues that autonomy has attracted the attention of scholars in many fields such as, politics, science, sociology, psychology and education. She further explains that "this expansion of studies on autonomy has led to a better understanding of the term" (Llaven-Nucamendi 20). In language education, Henri Holec has been the first to theorize upon LA in 1981. It has rapidly become a desirable goal in many parts of the world. Since then, learner autonomy has become an area of interest for many scholars and it has drawn the attention of many researchers such as Little David, Benson Phil, Dickinson Lestie, Dam Leni, Sinclair Barabara, Cotterall Sara and others. Consequently, it influences the educational policies and teaching philosophies of many systems. This fact has resulted in the recognition of the importance of the learner as an agent of change and an active element in constructing knowledge, ruling and directing oneself in the process of learning not only as a learner but also as an individual and a citizen who is, lately, expected to be a leader in his/her society. This shift has entirely changed the role of the learner from a passive recipient of information to a builder of information.

As a result of the influence of this shift, in the last few years, the Algerian educational system has also witnessed important changes and reforms at all levels, primary, middle, secondary and higher education as well. This has happened after having realized that it is worthwhile to move towards effective teaching and learning to cope with modern education and meet both the requirements of the work market and the needs of both teachers and learners. In the same line of thinking, the educational system in Algeria has adopted and adapted new teaching approaches and philosophies.

The new reforms have touched many aspects among which the adaptation of learner-centeredness. One of the remarkable principles revealed by this approach is the promotion of learner autonomy. The latter has gained attention among educators and researchers due to its prominent importance in shaping the learners' self-reliance, lifelong learning and self-learning. However, autonomy has also become a hotly debatable controversial concept among scholars due to its complex nature and multi-dimensional meanings. It is such a complicated concept whose definition is looked up from many perspectives and spheres.

Despite the desirability and appreciation of autonomy in non-western educational contexts, it is still associated with the Western Culture. Many scholars seem to agree with the idea that Westerners were the first to tackle the notion learner autonomy, thus it is a concept that only fits within the western educational context. In this view, Jones believes that "Learner autonomy remains a Western idea and may conflict with the national culture at a deep level" (Jones 228). In the same way, Sonaiya believes that autonomy is inappropriate in the African educational setting since it is attributed to individualism (113). By the same token, Ertürk asserts that learner autonomy is a concept unsuited in non-western education (652). The idea of the relevance of autonomy in a particular cultural context has recently gained considerable attention in the literature as it carries different interpretations and understandings across cultures.

The researcher's interest in the appropriateness of autonomous learning as an educational goal in the Algerian higher education grows out of the literature on learner autonomy and its manifestations across cultures. It is certainly unfair to accept the idea that learner autonomy does not fit for the non-western educational culture of learning because it diminishes the importance of human capital, rights and universality and puts differences between individuals in terms of learning capacities and skills.

Thus, this research attempts to shed light on the concept of learner autonomy and its appropriateness in the Algerian educational context. It also aims to identify the influence of the Algerian socio-cultural dimensions on EFL learners' learning attitudes and expectations with regard to the promotion of learner autonomy. This research is set to raise the teachers' awareness about the importance of considering the students' socio-cultural assumptions in fostering learner autonomy and meeting their expectations. Examining the role of the social and the cultural environment in the learning process and learner autonomy is another objective the researcher intends to reach. Finally, providing valuable insights and strategies to successfully make students aware and to be accountable for their own learning.

Learner autonomy as explained in the second chapter has been examined in different educational contexts to figure out its appropriateness. By analogy, the researcher uses the same way of reasoning to explore the suitability of learner autonomy in the Algerian higher educational setting. Thus, the following research questions have been raised:

1. How do the socio-cultural dimensions influence Algerian EFL learners' attitudes and expectations with reference to learner autonomy?
2. What are the attitudes of EFL learners towards learning in the Algerian higher educational context?
3. Are the socio-cultural specificities of the Algerian learners considered in the promotion of learner autonomy?
4. Is learner autonomy a suitable educational goal in the Algerian higher education?

The main research questions and others presented in the third chapter aim to investigate whether or not learner autonomy could be implemented in the Algerian educational context by examining the influences of its socio-cultural dimensions on learners' learning attitudes and expectations. To guide, frame and control the current research, it is hypothesized that:

a. The Algerian socio-cultural dimensions may stand as a barrier limiting EFL learners' ability to act autonomously.
b. EFL learners may hold a negative attitude towards learning at the level of higher education.
c. The socio-cultural dimensions of the Algerian EFL learners could not be taken into account in fostering learner autonomy.
d. Learner autonomy may possibly be a realistic educational goal if the socio-cultural backgrounds of the students are considered.

The population of the current research is EFL learners at Ahmed Zabana University, the participants of the present research are third year EFL students who belong to the department of English. The selection of this sample is based on their mastery of English language, (advanced English language learners), their experience as university students as well as their familiarity with the subjects being taught.

To fill in the research gap, collect the necessary information and answer the research questions, four research data collection tools are used in this research to examine the issue from different perspectives: classroom observation in which four teachers are observed, a

questionnaire is handed to 20 teachers and another one to 100 students. And group interviews with five groups of third year students, seven students in each group. The practical part of the present research has taken place at Ahmed Zabana University of Relizane, during the academic year of 2018/2019.

The covert participant classroom observation aims to observe and describe both of teachers' and students' roles, classroom interaction, learning environment, teachers' feedback and talking time. It attempts to collect live data, to provide a closer look at what is happening in the EFL classroom and to identify the ways in which autonomy principles and practices are met in reality.

The Students' questionnaire is a semi-structured questionnaire consisting of two main sections. The first section is entitled learner autonomy in language learning and teaching. The second section is about learner autonomy and culture which seeks to describe the existing relations between the socio-cultural dimensions of educational setting and learners' attitudes and expectations in relatedness with learner autonomy promotion.

The teachers' questionnaire is considered as a supportive complementary data collection tool to confirm and cross-check the data gathered from the students' questionnaire and slightly examine the issue of autonomy from the teachers' perspectives. It includes three sections: a) Participants' personal and professional information, b) Teachers perceptions about LA, b) Cultural and social perspective of learner autonomy. The questionnaire is designed to figure out teachers' familiarity with the notion of learner autonomy and to examine their attitudes and beliefs towards its implementation.

A Group interview is a subsequent tool used in this research to explain the ways in which learner autonomy is affected by the Algerian EFL learners' socio-cultural dimensions. It is set mainly to discuss the influence of the role of the family (social interaction), the teacher (classroom culture) and local culture in the growth of learner autonomy.

Understanding the existing relations and links between the socio-cultural dimensions of the Algerian educational and local context and learner autonomy happens to be a unique opportunity. Its importance lies in making higher educational researchers and policy-makers aware of the significance of considering such issues in the development of the curriculum. It is also regarded as one of the fewest contributions as little is known in the literature about the relevance of learner autonomy in the Algerian educational setting. Thus, this research has a

special contribution in providing a new theoretical and empirical content to the literature of learner autonomy in the Arab world.

The whole thesis consists of five chapters. It contains two theoretical chapters. Chapter one discusses the gradual changes in education in terms of teaching approaches. It explains the history of autonomy in language education; it presents some key concepts and definitions of learner autonomy, misconceptions and its importance in language classroom. The first chapter also sheds light on the main layers of learner autonomy (educational, cultural, and social) and enumerates the major conditions required to make autonomy a desirable realistic goal.

Chapter two is devoted to understanding of the complexity of the concept of learner autonomy as a socio-cultural construct. It attempts to examine the existing relationship between learner autonomy and culture. It also discusses how autonomy is manifested in different cultural contexts (autonomy across cultures). By the end, the chapter deals with dimensionalizing the Algerian culture using Hofstede cultural model namely collectivism/individualism, uncertainty avoidance and power distance dimensions.

The third chapter is about research design and methodology; it is dedicated to the preliminary phase of the practical side of the present research. It explains the analysis method, the research design in terms of the sample selection and the data collection tools, it describes in detail each tool, the main objectives of each and how they are planned to be used.

The fourth chapter revolves around data analysis and interpretations. It starts with analysis the collected data through classroom observation, both of teachers' and students' questionnaires and then group interviews. Besides, it interprets and discusses the findings of each instrument. The data in this research is analyzed and interpreted both qualitatively and quantitatively through tabulation, categorizing and statistics. This chapter ends with listing some limitations of the research.

The final chapter deals with recommendations and pedagogical implications. It suggests some strategies and practical activities to render autonomy a tangible goal. It spotlights on the social-cultural and psychological considerations of LA. Since learner autonomy is socio-culturally based, this chapter proposes that being aware of ones' own culture's strengths and weaknesses, its advantages and disadvantages are seen as a priority in the promotion of LA.

Chapter One: Autonomy in Language Learning and Teaching

1.1. Introduction

Like other disciplines, the field of language teaching and learning has witnessed many changes. Among these changes is the promotion of autonomy in language classroom which has become an influential universal educational goal in many parts of the world. The transition of responsibility from the teacher as the only knowledge provider, the decision maker and the dominator of the class, to the learner as an independent and active member in the classroom in which he/she determines objectives, makes decisions about his/her own learning, constructs knowledge and shares responsibility with the teacher, was the backbone of the modern classroom. Today's society is in need of those learners who can contribute effectively and appropriately to the development of their country in all fields as future citizens. Giving the chance to the learner to hold responsibility and independence were the main issues, some educational reforms have been brought accordingly.

To better comprehend learner autonomy, it is necessary to start by examining how it has come to existence. This chapter therefore is a detailed description of the shift of control from the teacher to the learner centered approach. It discusses the concept of learner autonomy as a multidimensional term and its rise in language learning. Then, it displays the characteristics of autonomous learning, both of teachers' and learners' roles, its dimensions and the rationale behind its promotion. The main factors influencing the development of learner autonomy are also presented by the end of this chapter.

1.2 Teacher Centered Approach (TCA): Roles and Characteristics

It is worth noting that full understanding of modern classroom practices requires sufficient comprehension of what the teacher-centered style of teaching means. The traditional paradigm has given more emphasis to what to teach, rather than what learners need to learn. The focus was much dedicated to the teacher, whereas the learner was somehow marginalized and often seen as a passive member in the classroom. In this light, the teacher centered approach is defined as "a style of instruction that is formal, controlled, and autocratic in which the instructor directs how, what, and when students learn." (Dupin-Bryant, qtd. in Ahmed 23). In other words, such a style of teaching considers the teacher as the only decision maker regarding the learning content, management as well as assessing the learning outcomes. However, learners are expected to follow the classroom instructions set

by their teachers. This approach seems to belittle the learners' role and ability to be responsible about their own learning.

Furthermore, according to Cristillo, as mentioned in Mpho the teacher-centered approach is characterized by lecturing, top down teaching, and passive learning reinforcement, it is also based on memorization and rote learning in which the learner learns everything by heart, The latter stands as an a hindering point in the development of a higher level of cognitive skills (13). He alludes that the teacher centered pedagogy is also shaped by authoritarian and ant-democratic learning environment in which control over education aims to produce obedient and passive citizens. The teacher centeredness gives limited opportunities to the learner to experience and immerse him/her in the learning process; it rather places the teacher at the heart of the classroom which in return results in a poor learning atmosphere and an inefficient classroom interaction.

Moreover, the teacher centeredness is also associated with subordination and dominance where learners are dependent upon their teachers' instruction and classroom input. Huba and Freed further describe the teacher-centered style as a process where students passively receive information and acquire knowledge, whereas the teacher has the primary priority as an information provider and an evaluator. (qtd. in Ahmed 24). One of the main drawbacks of this approach is its negligence of the learner personal and social development, self-reliance and autonomy, but rather it focuses on the teachers' roles in disseminating knowledge and evaluating learners' strengths and weaknesses.

Zohrabi et al, argue that the main purpose of a teacher-centered approach is not to meet learners' needs but rather to prepare them to perform well during tests and formal assessments. (qtd. in Emaliana 60). This implies that the teacher-centeredness is an exam-based because it gives much importance to scoring and assessing learners, which means that it does not view assessment as a way for/as learning but assessment of learning. Nevertheless, there is no ideal model to teaching and learning which operates better in all educational settings; it is a matter of relevance due to the cultural and the social differences.

Teacher centered approach lasted for a long time to be replaced by learner centeredness. Regardless of its effectiveness in some aspects, the shortcomings of this teaching model are undeniable at the present time; and its influences are still affecting language learning in different ways. This is why; the need to change it has later been become urgent and necessary.

1.3 Constructivism Theory

As a reaction to behaviorism[1], constructivism was founded. It was first introduced by Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget. He is one of the leading figures of cognitive psychology and constructivism theory of learning. Andang and Purwarno argue that constructivism takes its roots and origins from the contributions of both Piaget and Vygotsky in which they claim that "Constructivism was born on the basis of Piaget's cognitive development and Vygotsky's structural theory" (87).

By definition, constructivism is a learning theory based on the idea that a new knowledge is constructed not taught. In the same line of thought, Candy illustrates that constructivism "Leads directly to the proposition that knowledge cannot be taught but only learnt (that is, constructed)" (Candy 270). It means that this theory focuses on making learners create knowledge rather than teaching it to them; it believes that the learner is supposed to experience learning rather than waiting to be spoon-fed.

Based on the contributions of Dewey; Piaget; Vygotskey ; Koohang et al state that "Constructivism learning theory is defined as active construction of new knowledge, based on learner's prior experience."(92) Generating a new knowledge is based on what learners already know (Schemata knowledge[2]). Constructivism aims to produce learners who can use and relate what they have already learnt to build new ideas and thoughts. It is simply about incorporating pre-existing knowledge with new information.

More importantly, its main principle is that personal understandings and meanings are built through active engagement in the learning environment and with the world outside the educational institution. Woolfolk illustrates that:

> ...The key idea is that students actively construct their own knowledge: the mind of the student mediates input from the outside world to determine what the student will learn. Learning is active mental work, not passive reception of teaching. (Woolfolk, qtd. in Koohng et al 92)

Loynes et al mention four features characterizing constructivism which are knowledge construction, cooperative learning, self-regulated learning and real life problems (qtd. in Schreurs and Dumbraveanu (2). It encourages learning through experience and doing,

---

[1] See Zhou and Brown 6-10, especially chapter 1; Bacanli 19-29, especially chapter 2.
[2] Basic concepts about schema theory see Pankin

learning from one another (collaborative work), lifelong learning, self-reliance and problem solving skills so that one will be able to deal with real life problems.

In Thanasoulas' words, "constructivism supports, and extends to cover, psychological versions of autonomy that appertain to learners' behaviors, attitudes, motivation and self-concept" (Benson and Voller, qtd.in Thanasoulas 4). Constructivism theory of learning gives more emphasis to the learners' psychological trait as a key factor in the promotion of learner autonomy. Its primary goal is to train students how to learn, enhance critical thinking and increase learners' motivation and independent. In an attempt to relate constructivism with learner autonomy, Thanasoulas notes that "constructivist approaches encourage and promote self-directed learning as a necessary condition for learner autonomy." This indicates that one of the principles revealed by constructivism theory is the promotion of learner autonomy.

1.4 Learner Centered Approach (LCA)

The rapid advancement of education coupled with the need to move towards self-learning has resulted in replacing the teacher centered approach by the learner centered approach. The latter has been rooted in the philosophy of constructivism theory as opposed to teacher centeredness. "In Educational Psychology … learner-centeredness derived overwhelmingly from constructivist epistemologies."(Little "Language learner autonomy: some fundamental considerations revisited" 18). Unlike TCA, the learner centeredness focuses on empowering the learner with the skills needed to be an active agent in the classroom. The overall objective of the learner centered model is to facilitate the knowledge construction process, boost students' critical thinking[3] and collaboration and encourage learner autonomy.

Leni Dam associates the learner-centered learning with teacher's knowledge about language learning and learner's self-knowledge. This means that the learning content and process are aligned with how learners learn better, what their language learning interests are and what they need language for. In this environment, learners are:

- Given the possibility of being consciously involved in their own learning; (Dam, "Why Focus on Learning rather than Teaching? From Theory to Practice" 29)

---

[3] Critical thinking encompasses the ability of learners to analyse evidences, reflect, make decisions, solve problems and evaluate facts. For more information about the concept, see Critical Thinking: A Literature Review Research Repport, Emily R. Lai

Nunan describes similarities and differences between TCA and LCA as follows:

> …will contain similar elements to those contained in traditional curriculum development, that is, planning (including needs analysis, goal and objective setting), implementation (including methodology and materials development) and evaluation. However, the key difference between learner-centered and traditional curriculum development is that, in the former, the curriculum is a collaborative effort between teachers and learners, since learners are closely involved in the decision-making process regarding the content of the curriculum and how it is taught. (Nunan, qtd. in Nunan "Nine Steps to Learner Autonomy" 193)

LCA is somehow similar to TCA in terms of learning management, process and evaluation; however, the main distinction between the two concepts is that within the modern teaching/learning paradigm, the teachers design the curriculum[4] in cooperation with the learners in which they are expected to play an active role and contribute appropriately to both learning content and process. Additionally, the learning environment in LCA is less formal and more flexible compared to TCA which is quiet and routine.

The promotion of learner autonomy is of the fundamental principles of the learner centered approach. In this sense, Little claims that the aim behind the emergence of the learner-centered approach is to allow learners take charge of their own learning in terms of learning management, content construction and self-assessment. (qtd. in Boyno 57).

1.6 Learner Autonomy (LA) in Language Education

Learner autonomy has become a desirable goal in many educational systems thanks to the seminal report of Henri Holec in 1979. Since then, a growing interest in learner autonomy in the field of foreign language education has increasingly influenced the ways in which pedagogical educational systems are shaped and designed. In this respect, Little says that in y the last twenty years onwards, "the concept of autonomy … has become increasingly important in the educational literature" it has become both an appreciated educational goal and a defining attribute to successful teaching and learning (Little "Learner Autonomy: Definitions, Issues and Problems" (4)

---

[4] By curriculum in this context, Nunan means "classroom practices and knowledge to be learnt"

1.6.1 Historical Background of Autonomy

It is worth mentioning that the historical background of the notion of autonomy in education is debatable, controversial and requires careful interpretations due to the different views and contributions of many scholars. The idea is not new, but rather it emerged years ago as its roots go further back. According to Lu the concept of learner autonomy originated from the field of politics and Eastern philosophies. Pierson has demonstrated that the term autonomy goes back to the Sung Dynasty in China (56). Similarly, Chu Hsi is a 12th-century Sung Dynasty scholar states that:

> If you are in doubt, think it out by yourself. Do not depend on others for explanations. Suppose there was no one you could ask, should you stop learning? If you could get rid of the habit of being dependent on others, you will make your advancement in your study. (Little "Learner Autonomy is more than a Western Cultural Construct"12)

Chu Hsi assumes that doubt and uncertainty leads to thinking by oneself rather than relying on others; and if one could change his/her attitudes and beliefs as a dependent person, he/she will probably make a progressive shift in learning, this is what is now commonly refers to as "autonomous learning". Consequently, for him its origins are rooted in the Eastern Continent.

Some scholars believe that the history of learner autonomy is related in a way or another to personal autonomy, thus the idea of learner autonomy is derived from personal autonomy. According to Benson the concept of personal autonomy constitutes the fundamental ground of autonomy in learning and that personal autonomy is rooted in the western political philosophy ("Teachers' and Learners' Perspectives on Autonomy" 16). For the liberal thinkers, the fact that we are able to act for a reason, and be able to reflect upon the reasons for our actions therefore we are aware of the value of "the free choice of goals and relations as an essential ingredient of individual well-being" (Raz, qtd. in Benson *Teaching and Researching: Autonomy in Language Learning* 51). As a result of this, the term autonomy is rooted in the Western continent.

Another outlook regarding the history of autonomy which links autonomy with the Greek word, autonomia, from the term autocephaly, after the collapse of the Ottmane Empire, the Orthodox Churches were considered to be autocephalous (Britannica). This reveals that autonomy is etymologically occurs in Greek. In addition to that, the most common view

shared by many researchers in the literature is that the idea of autonomy in language learning is rooted in the European Continent, and that it was tackled by the "Centre de Recherches et D'applications Pédagogique en Langues (CRAPL)" , that is the "Centre of Research and Pedagogical Implications in Languages" at Nancy university in France, the CRAPL was founded by Yves Chalon in 1970, and he was considered to be the founder of autonomy in language learning, then two years after, in the 1972 Chalon passed away and Henri Holec become the director of the CRAPL. In this context, Benson declares that "The idea of autonomy first appeared in language learning along with the establishment of Centre de Recherches et d'Applications en Langage (CRAL), which was aimed at adult education." (Benson, *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning* 8).

In 1979, Holec's seminal report to the Council of Europe about self-directed learning and autonomy has become the leading figure on autonomy in language learning. The aim of this report was to develop the sense of lifelong learning and to maximize adult learners' opportunities to direct their own learning. As a result, the issue of autonomy in language education has gained more popularity and has entered within the agenda of language teachers and researchers since then.

1.6.2 Conceptualizing Learner Autonomy

In the modern classroom, the ability to make learners responsible of all the decisions of the learning process and to prepare them to be leaders of the future and contribute effectively in their society has become at the central core of language learning and teaching. Within this regard, Holec asserts that developing "…the individual's freedom" is by "developing those abilities which will enable him to act more responsibly in running the affairs of the society in which he lives" (qtd. in Anderw & Stephen 4). This understanding of autonomy endeavors to merge between the classroom and the society where active citizenship is a focal objective.

Due to the complex abstract nature of autonomy, researchers have not yet agreed upon one definition, probably because it means different things to different people from different social, cultural, ideological, and educational settings. At this point, it is argued that "Learner autonomy is a difficult concept to define as it carries multiple meanings with different interpretations of the autonomous self" (Chan "Fostering Learner Autonomy in an ESL Classroom" 75). To cover its layers and branches, autonomy has been discussed from a number of perspectives and spheres as a multi-dimensional notion.

Historically speaking, Henri Holec is one of the leading pioneers of autonomy in language education and the first to promote learner autonomy in Europe in 1981which had later become a prominent goal in many other countries in the world. In his commonly cited renowned oldest definition in the literature, defines learner autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (3). Holec views learner autonomy as an ability to determine the learning objectives (why learners need to learn), to define learning contents (what learners need to learn), to select learning activities and methods to be used (how learners want to learn), to monitor and assess the learning process and outcomes (how learners will be assessed). In other words, being autonomous lies in the learners' ability to be responsible over all aspects of learning in terms of taking decisions, learning materials, activities and strategies, setting goals, and evaluating progress (the technical perspective of autonomy[5]). In this point, Holec sees learner autonomy not merely as a way of learning but the ability of:

a. Determining the objectives
b. Defining contents and progressions
c. Selecting methods and techniques to be used
d. Monitoring the procedures of the learning process
e. Assessing the learning outcomes (Holec 3)

This implies that an autonomous learner is characterized by the freedom of choosing what, when and how to learn in accordance to his/her preferences, interests and needs. Though many scholars seem to agree upon Holec's definition, it is still obscure and vague in the sense that it only covers the technical aspect of autonomy; what autonomous learners are able/supposed to do? rather than how to be autonomous? Therefore it requires careful interpretations and considerations from other perspectives.

Another valuable contribution to learner autonomy is made by Little who defines it as "a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action" ("Learner Autonomy: Definitions, Issues and Problems" 4). For him it is the capacity learners have in setting learning goals, monitoring their own learning, and critically evaluating the learning activities and outcomes. In other terms, it is the capacity of self-management in terms of both learning content and process.

However, it is not enough to view learner autonomy only as a capacity of self-management of learning or learner responsibility. Benson asserts that autonomy consists of

---

[5] This concept is explained in this chapter page 32.

three distinguishing complementary aspects: learning management, cognitive process, and learning content. According to him learner autonomy is "the capacity to take control of one's own learning" (*Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning* 47). This means that an autonomous learner is assumed to take control over the learning management, cognitive process, and learning content. a) Control over learning management involves self-management of learning in which learners are supposed to plan, organize, and evaluate their learning with learning strategies. b) Control over cognitive processes consists of attention or awareness, reflection, and metacognitive knowledge. c) Learning content means learning situations in which learners have the right to make the right decisions about their learning. It is included in the definition as a third aspect of learner autonomy because as Benson explains that the learners cannot become fully autonomous unless they are able to negotiate for the right to make decisions and take responsibility for their learning.

Paiva also criticized both definitions of Holec and Little saying that although they both stress the core of autonomy, educational and social contexts are not taken into account which are central aspects in the learning process. For Paiva in both definitions, learners are considered to be free from the influences of cognitive and social factors[6]. (qtd. in Paiva *Identity, Motivation and Autonomy in Second Language Acquisition* 442). In addition, both definitions neglect the degrees of autonomy and the gradual stages learners need to develop to have complete detachment; this ideal goal cannot be achieved without guidance from already experience person (the teacher).

Recently, Benson slightly modified Holec's definition replacing "ability" and "take charge" by "capacity" and "take control" respectively, saying that learner autonomy is "the capacity to take control of one's own learning" (qtd. in Marry 321). He argued that the term "control" is more accessible to empirical study than "take charge". In this respect, Huang and Benson argue that understanding learner autonomy requires identifying not only its components important though it is, but also its dimensions. They view the "capacity to control learning" as being comprised of three components. First, ability, which refers to knowledge and skills needed to plan, monitor and evaluate learning; Second, desire, which implies motivation and passion of doing learning, and third, freedom which means "the degree to which learners are 'permitted' to control their learning, either by specific agents in the learning process" (Huang & Benson, qtd in Marry 324)

---

[6] They include both external and internal factors such as the influences of individuals and cultural beliefs.

Many scholars such as (Dickinson 27; Dam et al 102; Little 45; Cotterall 195; Rieire 332) conceptualize learner autonomy using different terms such as: "ability, mode of learning, capacity, willingness, attitudes, learner's demonstration and freedom of learning" as follows:

Dickinson defines it as "a mode of learning" in which the responsibility concerning the decisions made about learning is put in the hands of the learner and he/she is able to put these decisions into practice. Dickinson views an autonomous learner as a decision-maker and as someone who is capable of attaining the set decisions (27).

In a slightly different way, Both Dam et al and Little refer to autonomous learning as a capacity respectively. According to Dam et al autonomy entails both "a capacity" and "willingness" to work alone and with others as "a social responsible person" (102). According to Dam autonomy as is a social construct in which learners are expected to connect knowledge gained in schools with the world outside. This can be achieved when learning individually and cooperative learning are both encouraged and exercised.

Moreover, Little considers the psychological aspect of learner autonomy as important as the technical and social ones. The decision over learning process and content is conditioned by the learners' psychological abilities be it cognitive or metacognitive, this includes "a capacity of detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action" (Little, *Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems* 45).

In the same way, Cotterall shares the same conception with Little and Benson in the view that autonomy in learning is "the extent to which learners demonstrate the ability to use a set of tactics for taking control of their learning" (195). Autonomy, in Cotteral words, consists of a range of techniques learners use to act and behave autonomously regarding the learning management.

Rieire asserts that learning autonomously is about "the learners' capacity and freedom to construct and reconstruct the taught knowledge" (332). Rieire claims that autonomous learners are expected to contribute effectively in the construction of the knowledge to be taught rather than being passive receivers of information. Rieire's definition of learner autonomy is somehow similar to the definition of constructivism theory, sharing the same view concerning the learners' capacity to hold responsibility in constructing knowledge. However, this definition seems to ignore the role of the teacher in helping their learners in constructing knowledge because unconditioned freedom may result in

unorganized learning and random decisions concerning some aspects of the learning operation especially at the preliminary stage of autonomy.

Due to its divergence, Smith, R claims that "The autonomy movement is by no means over, but it seems to have entered a new phase, one of wider diffusion" (qtd. in Bouhass 413). Based on the different definitions formerly stated, it is still debatable and difficult to come up with a single precise definition which covers all the dimensions of autonomy. Yet, it requires careful considerations of educational, economic, political, psychological, social and cultural contexts to give it full meaning. One may say that all definitions about learner autonomy do touch the focal point of autonomy; however, they all refer to the highest degree of autonomy ignoring the fact that "there are degrees of autonomy" (Sinclair, qtd. in Borg and Al-Busaidi 5). It might be reasonable to view autonomy as an umbrella term and a complex psycho-socio-cultural capacity which differs from one learner to another and from culture to culture.

1.6.3 Learner Autonomy: False Assumptions

In language education, It has been widely acknowledged that learner autonomy has been misinterpreted in different various ways and confused with other terms in the literature such as self-instruction, individuality, isolation, and freedom. However, these concepts have their own meanings and they are not synonyms to learner autonomy.

1.6.3.1 Learner Autonomy is not a Synonym of Self-Instruction

According to Little learner autonomy does not have the same meaning as self-instruction which is considered to be one the most common misconceptions in the literature. Little states that "Learner autonomy is a problematic term because it is widely confused with self-instruction. It is also a slippery concept because it is notoriously difficult to define precisely" (Little, "Learner autonomy: problems, issues and misconceptions" 54).This quotation denotes that first, the problem lies in the challenge of defining autonomy as a concept, second, it could be understood as doing learning without guidance and supervision. Little puts it clear that self-instruction is "a matter of deciding to learn without a teacher" (3). Learners may assume responsibility without their teachers in certain tasks and learning situations but ensuring a successful accomplishment of the main objectives of the tasks is said to be confirmed by the teacher.

Furthermore, learner autonomy is by no means a "teacher less learning" (Thanasoulas 4). Sheerin shares the same outlook with Little on the point that learner autonomy is not

learning without the help of their teachers saying that "teachers…have crucial role to play in launching learners into self-access and in lending them a regular hand to stay afloat" (qtd. in Thanasoulas 4). In other terms, Sheerin stresses that without the teachers' assistance, learning would not been possible to be functional and fruitful. In addition to that, Little claims that learners cannot reach higher degrees of autonomy if they are not effectively directed by their teachers. In most cases, the presence of the teachers in the process of learning is undeniable and prerequisite to learners' self-learning (54).

1.6.3.2 Learner Autonomy is not Learning Individually

Many language teachers, and even learners may think that learner autonomy is a matter of learning alone without the teachers' / peers' initiatives and involvement, this, however, is a mistake, since learners as individuals live among people and their need for the help of others is inescapable. The role of individuals (teachers, classmates, parents…) to stimulate and motivate learners to learn is necessarily and their crucial roles in fostering autonomous learning is no exception. Also, the nature of the classroom requires the presence of both elements, teachers and learner in which they can share ideas, negotiate meanings and collaborate together to construct knowledge and make sense of purposeful learning and supportive learning environment. As Barbot points out that autonomy does not mean to work individually:

> Autonomy is not synonymous with individualism, according to which the 'me' is superior to the other 'me', in relation to which it must assert itself in competitiveness, but working cooperatively. It involves taking into account the environment and society and to build through interactions. Autonomy does not mean loneliness: working in pairs, in groups, accelerates the empowerment of learners.

> L'autonomie n'est pas synonyme d'individualisme, selon lequel le 'moi' est supérieur aux autres 'moi', par rapport auxquels il doit s'affirmer dans la compétitivité, mais de travail en coopérativité. Elle implique de prendre en compte l'environnement et la société et de se construire par des interactions. L'autonomie ne signifie pas la solitude : le travail en binômes, en groupes, accélère l'autonomisation des apprenants (; my trans ; 24).

To put it in another way, autonomous learning is not a matter of expecting learners working individually, but also in groups. Hence, collaboration and cooperative learning are integral components and conditions to make autonomy a true practical goal. Learning from one another and sharing opinions and learning experiences with other members of the classroom ensures the success of the achievement of the learning outcomes. Thus, autonomous learners are those who can both work individually and with others in a social setting (interdependence); mutual dependence should be seen a complementary task where the teachers consult students and students seek their teachers' help to realize the objectives set.

1.6.3.3 Learner Autonomy is not Unconditional Freedom of Learning

Being free from teachers' control is one of the most common misconceptions of learner autonomy. In the words of André (68), "it [autonomy] is therefore a question of supervised freedom". In other terms, it is by no means doing what the learner wants to do. Benson goes beyond the freedom from self in which he argues that freedom in learner autonomy is controlled by the learners' social relations and requirements. (Benson; *Teaching and Researching Autonomy*)Learning is not free from the influences of internal and external factors in which the learner performs daily life activities. Being a member of a given community influences one's choices and decisions about her/his life in general and learning in particular. Freedom in learning is conditioned by the social, cultural, ideological, and educational aspects where the learner lives and studies.

1.6.3.4 Learner Autonomy is not a Teaching Method

Another widely spread misconception is that learner autonomy is a method; in fact it is neither a method nor an approach to teaching or learning but rather an attitude. In this respect, Benson claims: "…autonomy is not a method of learning, but an attribute of the learner's approach to the learning process." (Benson, *Teaching and Researching Autonomy* 2) Similarly, Sinclair highlights that "promoting autonomy is not simply a matter of teaching strategies" (qtd, in Borg and Al-Busiadi 5). It is not something teachers do/teach to students but rather it is belief to be imparted in the students and a goal to be attained with the help of teachers.

In brief, as explained before, Esch follows Little perspectives on what learner autonomy is NOT, in which he states that:

It is not self-instruction/learning without a teacher;… it does not mean that intervention or initiative on the part of a teacher is banned; … it is not something teachers do to learners; i.e. a new methodology; it is not a single easily identifiable behavior; …it is not a steady state achieved by learners once and for all. (37)

Based on the above mentioned contributions of different authors, what learner autonomy is not, its misconceptions and false assumptions can be summarized as follows:

a. learning without the teacher
b. Elimination of all initiatives and interventions of the teacher
c. A new teaching method
d. A shared behavior by all learners[7]
e. A stable state which occurs similarly in all learning situations

1.6.4 Teacher's Roles in Promoting Learner Autonomy

By the coming of the learner centered approach which encourages the promotion of autonomy in language classrooms, teachers' roles and responsibilities have changed where new functions have been introduced. Little asserts that:

"The teacher's role is to initiate, support and direct the processes of negotiation that help learners at every stage to identify new learning goals, new learning activities and materials, and thus new areas of responsibility."(Little, "Constructing a Theory of LA" 22)

The traditional paradigm of teaching views the teacher merely as a knowledge provider, the one who decides what to learn, designs activities and other related tasks inside and outside the classroom. These roles have shaped his/her dominance and authority in the classroom. To cope with modern education and reach the set educational goal (autonomy), a shift has been made from a teacher with the above qualities to a facilitator, guide and counselor. In this respect, Little views "teachers as managers, facilitators, counselors, and a resource". Each role is clarified below:

---

[7] This means that not all leaners have the same behaviors to show their autonomy

a) The Teacher as a Manager

In order to lead learners to reach the set learning objectives and maintain a supportive , safe and trusting classroom environment, teachers often play the role of organizers and managers. Being a teacher manager means to be able to direct and control the learning activities and classroom practices. Time and interaction are other important elements the teacher is supposed to pay a special attention to. This is through controlling his/her talk compared with that of learners, as well as managing classroom interaction through giving learners equal chances of talk and encouraging them to interact with each other.

b) The Teacher as a Facilitator

The teacher in learner autonomy is seen as a facilitator in the sense that he/she helps learners in setting objectives; selecting materials and evaluating learning outcomes. In this role, the teacher guides learners in the process of making a link between their needs, wants and necessities and their pre-determined learning objectives. On the basis of these objectives, learners with the help of their teachers will decide what learning materials and activities to be used and how the learning outcomes will be evaluated. The main tasks for teachers are; to direct learners towards achieving their goals, meeting their needs, motivate them and support them with guidance and encouragement to take control over the learning process.

c) The Teacher as a Counselor

At the primary level, the teacher as a counselor is supposed to make an advantageous use of the first contact with learners in terms of knowing learners' needs, styles and preferences and discussing the learning content and process to better foster learner autonomy. Furthermore, teachers are strongly required to raise learners' awareness with regard to the learning styles, strategies, and their expected roles and responsibilities. As put forward, Dickinson teachers are strongly invited to highly support and encourage learners to be independent autonomous learners by raising their awareness (qtd. in Cakici 91). Lately, in the same context, Dam says:

> Let me first of all mention the fact that learners do not necessarily learn what we believe ourselves to be teaching… What we can do is give our learners an awareness of how they think and how they learn – an

22

awareness which hopefully will help them come to an understanding of themselves and thus increase their self-esteem. (18)

Not limited to the above mentioned roles, the teacher in an autonomous classroom is expected to do others missions and hold other responsibilities. Glikman throughout a survey about learners' needs and teacher practices provides the following roles:

- Helps learners to determine the learning content.
- Suggests working techniques and provides alternatives and choices regarding the learning paradigm.
- Develops certain personal and social skills, i.e., how to deal with practical problems and real life challenges.
- Boots motivational and moral support and encourages learners to act and react actively in the class.
- Provides feedback to evaluate the outcomes.
- Manages learner-teacher interaction.
- Helps self-assess production or understanding. (Glikman 58)

d) The Teacher as a Source

Despite the differences in views, the teacher remains at the foreground of modern classrooms. The teacher's role as a source of knowledge will never be diminished. Learners at a given point in time and at a certain level will always be in dire need of their teachers to lunch them with fruitful resources to better get insights on what needs to be read. This simply means that the teacher is one of the main sources of knowledge in which he/she suggests resources (books, articles, websites, dictionaries…etc) to consult inside and outside the classroom and provide the needed information.

To illustrate, Camilleri considers that the teacher "realize[s] that his/her essential mission is no longer to transmit knowledge, but to set up tasks and ensure a role of advisor and resource person"; ("prendre conscience que sa mission essentielle n'est plus de transmettre des savoirs, mais de mettre en place des tâches et d'assurer un rôle de conseiller et de personne-ressource''; my trans;) Being a teacher as source of knowledge is one of the traditional roles but still valid. Nevertheless, the teacher is certainly not the only knowledge provider.

As cited in AL-Asmari, Tudor mentions that being a source of knowledge is the main role of the teacher in the traditional modes of teaching; teachers promoting learner autonomy play other roles to help students to take this responsibility by setting their own goals, planning practice, or assessing their progress. (Tudor qtd.in Al-Asmari 1)

According to Ganza "[L]earner autonomy is an achievement, attained interrelationality between the learner and the teacher". It is undeniable that both teachers and learners should share responsibility and work together to achieve the intended learning objectives. On the one hand, teachers should help learners to be independent and hold responsibility. On the other hand, learners should accept to take charge of learning and act and react in accordance to what is expected from them.

Different researchers and scholars looked at teachers' roles from different perspectives and angles, however, it is worth noting that regardless of what roles a teacher plays to develop autonomous learning, it is undoubtedly that the teacher's role is unstable; it varies according to learning situations and learners' level of autonomy.

1.6.5 Learners' Roles in the Autonomous Environment

None of us would neglect the role and the power of learners in modern education; they have the potentials and the capacities which enable them to rely on themselves, bear responsibility and contribute in controlling their own learning, Smith in this context argues that "learners have the power and right to learn for themselves" (2). Unlike the traditional model of teaching which views learners merely as passive receivers of information, the modern teaching considers them as partners in constructing knowledge and a fount of knowledge and places them at the foreground of the teaching/learning processes.

More importantly, Dam believes that active participation in the classroom and responsibility for learning are two major roles autonomous learners have to play inside and outside the classroom in the field of foreign language learning (qtd.in Lumturie 425-426). Participation is shaped by their active roles in constructing knowledge, answering questions, debating and challenging ideas, negotiating meanings and sharing experiences and information with their teachers and classmates. Responsibility over learning occurs in engaging themselves in defining the learning content, selecting learning methods and activities and assessing their progress as well as identifying their strengths and weaknesses.

Self-assessment[8] is another important role in the autonomous learning environment. Autonomous learners evaluate their own learning progress. The latter will enable them to decide what to do next as to remedy their weak points and develop their skills and competencies. Learners' roles should start with being aware of their expected roles and responsibilities, accept to take responsibility and develop their stance towards learner autonomy.

1.6.6 Characteristics of Autonomous Learners

Autonomous learners are characterized by a number of features which make them different from other learners; these features shape their profile as responsible learners who effectively take charge of their own learning, share responsibility with their teachers, therefore, contribute actively to their societies. In one of the earliest contributions on characterizing autonomous learners, Little states that:

> "Autonomous learners can understand the purpose of their learning program, unequivocally recognize the conscientiousness for their learning; divide the set of learning objectives, take initiatives in planning and implementing learning activities, and regularly review their learning and evaluate its effectiveness." (Little, "Learner Autonomy: Definitions, Issues and Problems" 11)

For Little autonomous learners have the ability of setting learning objectives, self-awareness of themselves as learners, and self-evaluation to determine what works well and what works less in relatedness to the learning activities being performed and to assess its adequacy.

Learner autonomy movement has reshaped the role of learners to become responsible not only as students but also as individual citizens. In this vein, Dam notes that autonomous learners have the will to "act independently and in cooperation with other, as a socially responsible person" (Dam "Developing Learner autonomy: Teachers' Responsibility" 1) Being an autonomous independent learner lies in learner's willingness and desire to work individually and in collaboration with other peers. This willingness to exchange ideas of common interests with the students and teachers is conditioned by the teacher-learner

---

[8] For more information about self-assessment and learner autonomy, see Gardner 29-60.

relationship and the classroom environment. The feeling of being secured, safe and trusted broadens the students' horizons, thinking capacities and reflections.

The autonomous learners are, first, characterized by their readiness to be responsible of their learning and their understanding regarding the purposes of studying a particular content to meet their needs[9]. In this respect, Dam (ibid) views that learner autonomy is shaped by "a readiness to take charge of one's own learning in the service of one's needs and purposes". Readiness includes awareness of roles; accept to change the traditional beliefs, and being convinced that their engagement is an essential constituent in learning autonomously.

Omaggio states there are seven main features characterizing autonomous learners:

a. Are aware of their learning styles and strategies;
b. Take an active approach to the learning at hand;
c. Are willing to take risk, i.e., to communicate in the target language at all costs;
d. Are good guessers
e. Attend to both form as well as to content, that is, place importance on accuracy as well as appropriacy;
f. Develop the target language into a separate reference system and are willing to revise and reject hypotheses and rules that do not apply.
g. Have a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language. (qtd.in Thanasoulas "Learner Autonomy" 2)

The characteristics mentioned in Omaggio's words seem to be insufficient for efficient growth of learner autonomy, other factors such as motivation, self-esteem; collaboration should be taken into account too. In this view, Scharle and Szbso state that the autonomous learners "accept that their own efforts are crucial to progress in learning" And also "are willing to cooperate with the teacher and others in the learning group for everyone's benefit" (3). In other words, an autonomous learner is first aware of the prominence of his/her efforts in the learning process, has the sense of teamwork, the ability to collaborate with others, and benefits from different learning opportunities available to them.

Additionally, Chan points to other critical features in which she argues that autonomous learners are motivated, goal-oriented, well-organized and systematic, take initiatives, flexible, eager to learn and enthusiastic, have the desire to ask questions, hard-

---

[9] Why students are learning and what for.

working, and make effective use of chances to enhance learning and participate in the learning process. (qtd. in Al-Asmari 2). These characteristics are not applicable to all types of learners; different learners have distinct attitudes towards autonomy and possess different qualities to assume responsibility. For example, students who prefer listening are often seen as passive learners, in fact, they are also developing some autonomous skills (cognitive skills, critical thinking and reflections).

1.6.7 The Autonomous Classroom

There are certain essential conditions for autonomous classrooms; these conditions include willingness, comprehension of both teaching and learning process, experience and effective environment where trust, respect and security are met. In this regard, the following figure is designed (Dam, *Why Focus on Learning rather than Teaching? From Theory to Practice* 22)
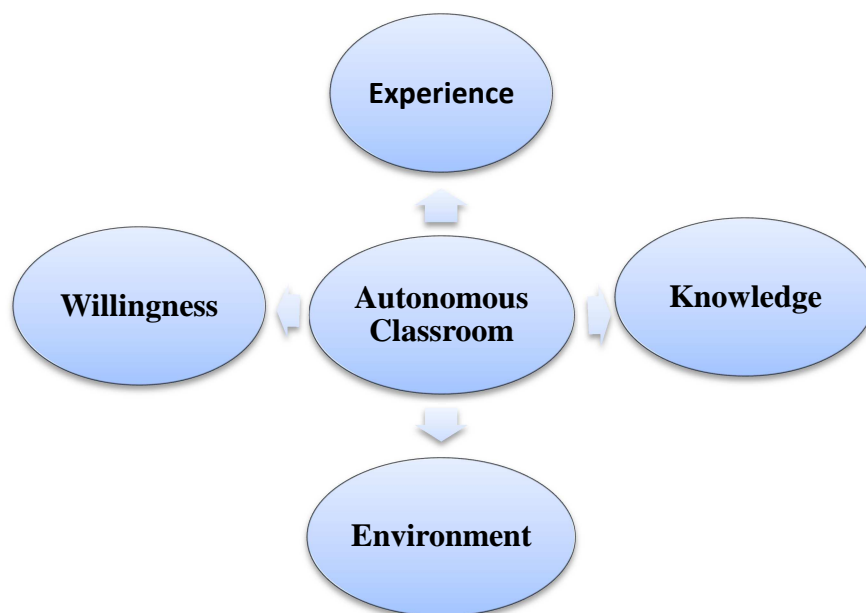
Fig. 1. Conditions of Autonomous Classroom (Dam 22)

For Dam to say that this classroom is autonomous means first, both teachers are willing to relinquish responsibility and learners should be ready to hold it, this requires teachers to "let go"[10] and learners to "stand on their feet"[11]. This means shifting from "spoon

---

[10] Teachers willingness to let their students experience some sort of freedom in learning

[11] A phrase refers to students' ability to rely on themselves and be responsible for their learning.

feeding"[12] to independence and collaboration where both teachers and students view teaching and learning as a shared responsibility. Second, another important condition is that teachers and learners should be well informed and aware of their roles and responsibilities and have a good command of knowledge about both learning and teaching content and process. Third, in an autonomous classroom, teachers and learners should also have "experience" about the nature of learning in terms of knowing how to learn (learning strategies). Finally, creating an environment where the availability of mutual respect and trust, and security is a crucial ingredient in fostering autonomous learning. A classroom might not be as autonomous as expected if teachers do not trust their students' ability to act autonomously and vise-versa. If students, for instance, feel threatened they may not develop an autonomous attitude towards learning. As a result, the teacher-learner relationship is a key factor in the growth of learner autonomy.

Nunan makes a clear distinction between an autonomous classroom and non-autonomous classroom. The following diagram summarises the main differences.

Autonomous Classroom

1. Students make almost all decisions

2. Students 'needs and interests are considered when designing classroom activities.

3. Assessment and evaluation of learning are driven by the students.

Non-autonomous Classroom

1. Decisions about learning content and process are made by the teacher.

2. Students have no role in the selection of learning activities.

3. The assessment and evaluation are done through tests and exams.

Fig.2. Autonomous versus Non-autonomous Classroom (Nunan 21)

An autonomous classroom differs from a non-autonomous classroom in the sense that in the former, students are part of decision making process concerning all aspects of learning

---

[12] Spoon feeding means that students are being given all information by their teachers without thinking or efforts. To understand more, consult "Spoon-feed." *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/spoon-feed.

objectives, content, process, evaluation. However, in the latter teachers are the only decision-makers, and students are passive members in the classroom where they are supposed to do what they are told to do.

Furthermore, in the autonomous classrooms, learners' voice and interest are given a higher their day-to day agenda to create a challenging and productive climates. In similar way, what to teach is always in line with students' preferences and needs. Whereas, this feature not not paid a great deal of attention in non-autonomous classrooms which are based on direct instructions and rigid teaching procedures.

The non-autonomous classrooms does not view learners as assessors, assessment is generally done through formal tests and exams where the mark is the top priority of both teachers and learners, i.e, teaching and learning are exam-based. While in the autonomous classrooms self-monitoring and peer-evaluation are encouraged. Learners assess their own progress and learn from their mistakes and lacks and fortify their performance in different aspects of language learning

1.6.8 The Rationale of Learner Autonomy in EFL Education

None of us would deny how important it is autonomy for language learners in preparing for future challenges and teaching them critical thinking and problem solving skills which may apply them in their lives as individuals. This has led many researchers to give special attention to the incorporation of learner autonomy as a step towards efficient and purposeful learning. Many scholars such as Cotterall, Camilleri and Palfreyman, have made effective contributions to learner autonomy in terms of definitions and the rationale behind its promotion in the field of foreign language teaching/.learning. They claim that it develops the quality of learning, prepares learners for lifelong learning and future encounters, as well as promotes democratic societies; and permits students to make best utilization of learning opportunities both inside and outside the classroom (qtd. in Borg and Al-Busaidi (1). Based on some researchers' viewpoints, the rationale of learner autonomy can be categorized as follows:

a. Pedagogical Rationale

Despite the fact that learner autonomy did not come to belittle the role of the teacher as many people may think; it aims at making learners learn even when the teacher is no longer in the classroom. For this reason, Cotterall asserts that "autonomy has to be promoted

to enable learners to learn even when they do not have access to teacher' instruction and that they will learn more effectively if they do not depend on teachers' help" (220). Effective promotion of autonomy enables learners to develop self-reliance and independence in the physical absence of their teachers as it is the case of pandemics and educational crisis or when the teacher is interested in enhancing outside class autonomy. When learning takes place outside the educational institution, autonomous learners are confronted with fewer obstacles because they already have the required skills and qualities.

b. Psychological Rationale

Successful learning is determined by the learners' involvement in their own learning. Thus, learners learn better and feel highly motivated when they are given a certain degree of freedom in deciding what and how to learn. In this context, Candy claims that "When learners are involved in making choices and decisions about the content and the mode of what they are studying, learning is more meaningful, and thus, effective" (24). In the same way, a clear illustration is made by Dickinson in which he says that:

> There is convincing evidence that people who take the initiative in learning (proactive learners) learn more things and learn better than do people who sit at the feet of teachers, passively waiting to be taught (reactive learners)...they enter into learning more purposefully and with greater motivation (74)

Motivation is of a prime focus in the domain of educational psychology. Autonomy and motivation are two inseparable entities. Their relationships predict that the more motivated the students, the autonomous they become. Thus, motivation is a conditional factor when students are taking control over their own learning.

c. Social Rationale

Another important rationale behind implementing autonomy in the EFL classroom is its social orientation. In others words, the aim is to not only to make learners learn within the educational frame, but also to make learners active producers in their societies. In this light, Jane says that preparing learners for independent and autonomous learning is a shift in roles from "man as product of his society" to "man as the producer of his society" (qtd. in Holec 3). Autonomy prepares learners to take an active role in their societies and contribute appropriately creating new forms of culture when autonomy is everyone's' goal.

d. Political Rationale

As far as the political rationale is concerned, promoting learner autonomy paves the way for learners to be more and more conscious and aware about their rights in making decisions and choosing among available options not only in the learning process but also as individuals in their political life.

From the political perspective, autonomy can be defined as a "human right" which encompasses the freedom of speech and freedom of thinking and the ability to direct one's own life. In the classroom, students should be introduced to certain learning situations and tasks where these skills are experienced and exercised. Today's autonomous learners are future leaders who are expected to rule their country and make great contributions in its political development.

1.6.9 Developmental Stages of Learner Autonomy

As cited in Borg and Al-Busaidi, Sinclair asserts that "there are degrees of autonomy". (5), for him autonomy learning goes through different stages to reach what he labeled as "complete autonomy" which is, for him, considered to be "an idealistic goal". Sinclair adds that these "degrees of autonomy are unstable and variable" (Sinclair. qtd. in Borg and Al-Busaidi 5). This means that there are variables by which the degree of autonomy is affected and controlled. Similar to that, Nunan divides learner autonomy into five levels of development, (Nunan, *Designing and Adapting Materials* 195) as illustrated in the following figure:
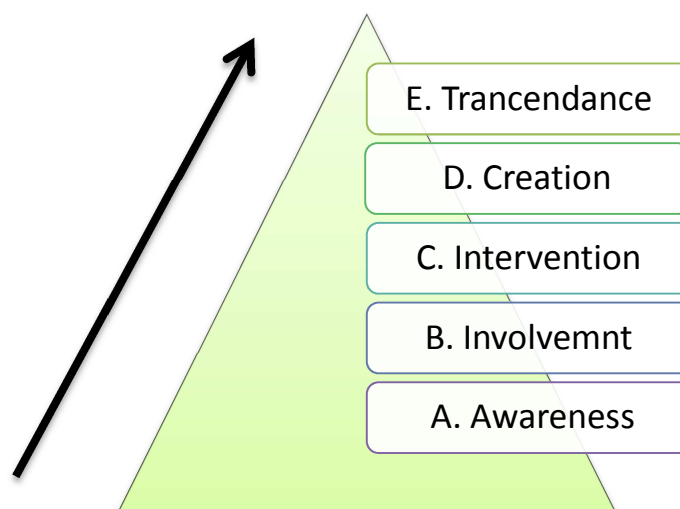
Fig. 3. Levels of Learner Autonomy Development (Nunan 195)

As shown in Fig.3. above, complete sense of learner autonomy does not happen overnight but rather goes through several steps and stages. In order for learners to develop higher levels of autonomy and reach what Sinclair called "complete autonomy", the first step to consider is awareness. In this preliminary stage, learners' awareness regarding how to learn (learning strategies) is raised. In this stage, teachers have crucial roles in helping them identifying their own learning styles and strategies. Besides, teachers should make their students aware of learning goals and content.

Second, in involvement stage, engaging learners in the selection of objectives and learning content has proved its effectiveness in increasing students' interests on what are learning. In this stage, teachers are supposed to provide learners with a range of options in relatedness to the learning objectives. On the other hand, learners at this level select among the available choices. By this students will feel the value of their voices and roles.

Third, modifications of objectives are at the heart of the intervention level. This means that learners should be involved in modifying the learning objectives and content of the syllabus in which they will adapt their objectives in accordance to their preferences and wants. Through this stage, learners will develop the skills of adaptation and adjustment, choose what suit their needs and eliminate what may work less with them.

Fourth, as far as the creation stage is concerned, as the name suggests, learners will not be given options to choose but rather create their own goals and objectives. Being aware and familiar with their needs, lacks and learning styles will enable learners to create their own learning objectives.

And fifth, the last level of autonomy expects learners to make a link between what is being learned in the classroom and the "the world beyond" this by "becoming teachers and researchers". (Nunan 195). According to him, learners' roles are not restricted only to what they do in the classroom, but also how they will contribute in developing their societies as future citizens. Hence, this level of autonomy is socially-oriented.

1.6.10 Versions of Learner Autonomy

Based on the fact that learner autonomy is such a complex multi-layer concept, researchers have investigated the issue from various aspects to better comprehend the way it works. It is widely argued that Benson was the first to talk about versions of autonomy in

language education by dividing it into three main ways: technical, political and psychological (Benson, "Autonomy in Language Teaching and Learning" 24).

1.6.9.1 Political Version

For Benson, the political version of autonomy involves the learner's ability to take control over the learning content and process. The learner could take decisions with regard to the content, pace, mode and sequence of the organization and instruction phase of the lesson. This indicates that the learner has a great and adequate role in the selections of what is to be learnt and how will it be learnt.

1.6.9.2 Technical Version

Learning a language that takes place outside its institutional context (outside the classroom) and in the absence of the teachers' interference, is known as a technical version of autonomy; Benson explains this as "the act of learning a language outside the framework of an educational institution and without the intervention of a teacher". (Benson, *The Philosophy and Politics* 9). The main concern of the technical version is to make learners take charge of learning without the teacher's initiatives and help; this is what Sinclair labeled it as "complete autonomy" which is for him "an idealistic goal". (qtd, in Borg and Al-Busaidi 5).

1.6.9.3 Psychological Version

Based on Benson's view of the psychological version, development of Learner autonomy is related to the cognitive and the affective capacities of the learner. In the light of this, Benson (19) autonomy is "a construct of attitudes and abilities which allow learners to take responsibility for their own learning. For Benson autonomy is not always a visible concept but rather an abstract mental capacity which requisites attention and cognition.

1.6.9.4 Sociocultural version

What seems lacking in Benson's versions of autonomy is the socio-cultural aspect in which learning occurs; the fact that led Oxford to spread the notion of versions of autonomy by adding the socio-cultural perspectives, for her Benson's view of learner autonomy is incomplete since it does not take the socio-cultural dimensions into account. (qtd. in Benson 24). The latter is the focal point around which the current research revolves. It is certainly true that society and culture are integral parts in developing or hampering the learners' sense of autonomy.

The socio-cultural relationships and interactions of the learners can never be neglected because they are part in the learning process. Harmer also shares Bensons' view by saying "Attitudes to self-directed learning are frequently conditioned by the educational culture in which students have studied or are studying…autonomy of action is not always considered a desirable characteristic in such contexts" (qtd. in Bouhass 411). In the domain of education, autonomy and culture have a reciprocal influence; the students come to the classroom with certain socio-cultural beliefs which may lead either positively or negatively to autonomy enhancement. Also, the students can acquire a new educational culture based on the way they have been taught[13]. Additionally, the autonomous students can produce new cultural beliefs to be applied in the society.

Following Benson's assumptions of 'versions of autonomy', other scholars such as Ribé ; Holliday ; Smith; O'Rourke & Schwienhorst's ; Kumaravadivelu have also made other representations using different concepts to describe more and more autonomy movement, they expanded Benson's idea and break it down into many layers (mentioned in Benson 24). For instance, Ribé talked about 'convergence', 'divergence-convergence' and 'convergence-divergence' perspectives; Holliday's added 'native-speakerist', 'cultural relativist' and 'social' approaches; Smith made another contribution presented in 'weak' and 'strong' pedagogies; For him, weak pedagogies represent "as a capacity which students currently lack…" and strong pedagogies' which mean that students are "already autonomous to some degree". Similarly, O'Rourke & Schwienhorst's introduced 'individual-cognitive', 'social interactive' and 'exploratory-participatory' perspectives. (qtd. in Benson "Autonomy in language Teaching and Learning." 24)

As mentioned above, learner autonomy is not an easy concept to define; as it tends to lend itself a difficult complex position in the field of language education. Despite the use of different concepts about versions of autonomy in the literature, they share to some extent the same meaning and serve the same purpose which is providing a full description to learner autonomy.

1.6.11 Conditions for Learner Autonomy

It is unreasonable to expect learners who have been under their teachers' authority for several years to become suddenly autonomous learners; however, learner autonomy is still

---

[13] Such as traditional classroom culture. This educational culture has emerged through experiences

possible to be developed and achieved when certain prerequisites and conditions are accessible to them. In this context, "…it should be reiterated that autonomy is not an article of faith, a product ready made for use or merely a personal quality or trait. Rather, it should be clarified that autonomous learning is achieved when certain conditions obtain." (Thanasoulas "What is Learner Autonomy" 6). Some of these conditions are presented below:

1.6.11.1 Teacher autonomy

Few research studies have investigated the issue of teacher autonomy and its effectiveness in the development of learner autonomy. Teacher autonomy as well has been defined in different ways. Its meaning is derived from learner autonomy. It is considered to be a multidimensional concept.

Teacher autonomy can be defined as personal responsibility and self-critical reflection ability of teachers over the teaching profession. According to Little:

> Successful teachers have always been autonomous in the sense of having a strong sense of personal responsibility for their teaching, exercising via continuous reflection and analysis the highest possible degree of affective and cognitive control of the teaching process, and exploiting the freedom that this confers (179)

Recently, Benson claims that "Much of the language teaching literature treats teacher autonomy as a professional attribute, involving a capacity for self-directed professional development" (Benson, *Autonomy in Language Teaching and Learning.* 30).This indicates that teacher autonomy is one of the main characteristics of professional teachers, and that the ways in which teachers direct themselves and use effective self-management skills are essential in the autonomous teaching environment. Being an autonomous teacher requires certain skills and capacities in making decisions about classroom tasks and activities.

Teacher autonomy is considered to be an important factor in the growth of learner autonomy. To better develop autonomous learning, it is indispensable to have an autonomous teacher who has the ability to guide learners to enhance their sense of responsibility for the learning process. In this light, "autonomous learners deserve autonomous teachers." (Kumaravadivelu 548). Moreover, Little stresses that learner autonomy and teacher autonomy are interrelated in the sense that that teachers aiming to foster learner autonomy have to "start with themselves", reflecting on their own beliefs, practices, experiences and expectations of the teaching and learning situations. (Little, *Learner autonomy: Definitions*).

Little adds that Learner autonomy depends on teacher autonomy in two ways: First, "it is unreasonable to expect teachers to foster the growth of autonomy in their learners if they themselves do not know what it is to be an autonomous learner."(175). If teachers did not have the chance to experience autonomous learning as learners, they are likely to find difficulties in promoting autonomy in their classes. Thus, awareness with regard to what learner autonomy means to teachers should be ranked at the first place in learner autonomy movement, this is because full understanding of the principles of learner autonomy paves the way for successful learner autonomy enhancement.

Second, "in determining the initiatives they take in their classrooms, teachers must be able to apply to their teaching those same reflective and self-managing processes that they apply to their learning."(175) For him it is unreasonable to expect learners to develop a higher degree of autonomy if their teachers are not autonomous in their teaching profession and classroom practices.

1.6.11.1.1 Qualities of the Autonomous Teacher

Just like the autonomous learners, autonomous teachers also have a certain profile. Teachers aiming to foster learner autonomy have to start by themselves. According to Yu Autonomous teachers are expected to be: aware of pedagogical goals, content and strategies, involved actively in learning, intervene while modifying and adapting personal goals, learning style, aware of their responsibilities as monitors and evaluate learning (qtd. in Soulimane- Benhabib 24-25)

The autonomous teacher possesses skills and competencies that allow him/her to act positively and efficiently in creating an interactive and supportive autonomous classroom. Below, are some of the requirements identified by Camilleri:

a. "The teacher must measure the influence he exerts on the learning process. He must be aware of his convictions, attitudes, skills and practices […] He must know the affective and cognitive traits of his students, as well as their attitudes and skills in terms of autonomy.

b. He must have the necessary pedagogical knowledge and understand the principles of the underlying theory of learner autonomy.

c. He must have management qualities. He has to be able to drive a class in which students actively participate in decision-making.

d. The teacher will have to perform one of the most difficult tasks, namely self-assessment procedures".

a) L'enseignant doit mesurer l'influence qu'il exerce sur le processus d'apprentissage. Il doit être conscient de ses convictions, attitudes, compétences et pratiques […] Il doit connaître les traits affectifs et cognitifs de ses élèves, ainsi que leurs attitudes et compétences sur le plan de l'autonomie.

b) "Il devra disposer des connaissances pédagogiques nécessaires et comprendre les principes de la théorie sous-jacente de l'autonomie.

c) Il devra posséder des qualités de gestionnaire. Il devra être capable de conduire une classe dans laquelle les élèves participent activement à la prise de décisions.

d) L'enseignant devra réaliser l'une des tâches les plus difficiles, à savoir la mise en oeuvre de procédures d'auto-évaluation " (Camilleri, qtd. in Nancy ; my trans ; 44).

Being an autonomous teacher is preeminent to the development of learner autonomy. It must be seen as a top priority in the curriculum design and educational policy. Creating an autonomous classroom is especially challenging and a demanding task. Despite the special importance given to the learner in being in charge of his/her learning, without the teacher's presence, guidance and supervision things become harder especially at the initial stages of autonomy development.

1.6.11.2 Learning Strategies

One of the most important ways to engage learners in self-dependent learning is by developing those mental capacities used for understanding, learning and storing information known as learning strategies, In this sense, O'Malley and Chamot define them as "the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (qtd. in Thanasoulas 5). Learning strategies are divided into three categories: cognitive strategies, meta-cognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies.

a) Cognitive Strategies

O'Malley and Chamot highlight that cognitive strategies involve the ways in which information is operated and manipulated to enhance learning. Cognitive strategies include the following but not limited to; repetition, resourcing, translation, note-taking, deduction, contextualization, transfer, inferencing, questioning. They define cognitive strategies as the

process of "operating directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning." (44) This includes interacting cognitively with the information being stored.

b) Meta-cognitive Strategies

Broadly speaking, metacognition is about being aware of what to learn, Sinclair views metacognition as "conscious awareness of the learning process" (Sinclair, "Learner Autonomy: the Next Phase" 10). Metacognition is divided into two main categories: metacognitive knowledge and skills. Flavell sees the former consisting of three components: *Person knowledge*[14], *task knowledge*[15] and *strategic knowledge*[16]. (qtd. in Murry, "Imagination and Metacognition" 3). Based on Flavell's assumption, Wenden made another contribution to what metacognitive skills refer to in which he defines them as those skills required in learning management, direction, regulation and guidance (Wenden "Metacognitive Knowledge" 519).

In the same line, McDonough states that metacognitive strategies consist of those skills used to control learning through planning, monitoring and evaluating. (qtd. in Lakhal-Ayet 70) Being meta-cognitively developed paves the way for learners to plan, monitor and assess the learning outcomes and therefore being independent autonomous learners.

Catterall argues that the development of autonomy strongly lies in the learners' metacognitive abilities. This involves their knowledge about their strength and weaknesses of the learning task, their understanding of it as well as their awareness of the strategies used to solve the task (Catteral 87-88). As mentioned above, this knowledge is known as task knowledge. The absence of such metacognitive awareness of the learning strategies can stand as an obstacle for the learners to use the available learning materials and sources (Chan "Readiness for Learner Autonomy 509).

On the other hand, the presence of metacognitive knowledge and awareness is likely to make learners control their own learning. Lamb in 2009 conducted a research paper about metacognition in high school education to examine the effectiveness of metacognitive awareness in making learners able to manage and control learning. He mentions learners who were able to get involved in controlling what they were doing, have higher levels of

---

[14] knowledge learners have about themselves as learners.

[15] knowledge learner have about learning task, its purpose and the ways in which it will meet the learners' needs.

[16] knowledge learners have about strategies required to carried out the task and how to be used.

metacognitive awareness (84). It seems that is a general agreement in the literature about the importance of metacognitive knowledge in enhancing learner autonomy but it may not be sufficient as autonomy requires other skills and conditions.

c) Socio-affective Strategies

Socio-affective strategies involve the skills and techniques learners use to interact with other users of the second language L2. They are defined by Tamim as "the different mental and behavioral mechanisms learners use either to come to grips with emotional and socio-cultural challenges they encounter in their learning process or to improve their learning capacities" (170) As the name suggests, it is composed of two words "social" and "affective". The former is concerned with the existing cooperation between the learners and the teacher; whereas the latter refers to emotions, motivation, confidence and attitudes as affective factors facilitating or hindering the learning process.

The socio-affective strategies give more importance to classroom interaction as a social community. This interaction is made between two important members in the classroom, the teacher and the learners or among learners themselves. If this interaction is effectively directed and managed, learners will apparently be free and independent in sharing their viewpoints and ideas. Successful learning is shaped by the use of a wide range of learning strategies. Particularly, autonomous learning occurs when learners have the ability to merge between cognitive strategies, meta-cognitive strategies and socio-affective strategies.

1.6.11.3 Motivation

Developing learner autonomy is not solely mediated by the development of cognitive and meta-cognitive skills. It is not only a matter of being able to monitor, plan and reflect in ones' own learning, but also having the desire of getting involved in the learning process. Motivation and autonomy are closely related in the sense that motivation is a key factor towards successful learning, and that autonomy leads to motivation.

The relation between the two aspects: motivation and autonomy is rather an interactive process in the view of the fact that motivation develops learner autonomy, and the latter enhances motivation, as mentioned by Dang argues that the development of learner autonomy increases learners' motivation (58). On the other hand, Hozayen argues that motivation can strengthen learner autonomy (123). Ushioda goes to say that we cannot even decide which one of them is prior as opposed to the other, "we can never say which comes

first, autonomy or motivation" (qtd. in Murry 43). There are two way of being motivated: intrinsic or extrinsic.

Intrinsic motivation is one of the most important key features and conditions to actively engage learners in autonomous learning. Intrinsic motivation or what is, also, known as internal motivation (self-motivation). Ushioda in this respect confirms that "autonomous learners are by definition motivated learners" (02). To be an autonomous learner requires the presence of the inner desires and willingness and a tremendous help form those individuals with which one is learning or living. Thus, the ability to manage and control the learning process is determined the external reward and the support of the environment. In this respect, Ushioda argues that the secret behind achieving these skills is "a social environment that supports learners' sense of autonomy and intrinsic motivation …" (qtd. in Benson, *Teaching and Researching* 85) Students who are neither extrinsically nor intrinsically motivated may not develop an autonomous behaviour as those who are motivated by special factors be them internal or external.

1.6.11.4 Language Proficiency

One of the main objectives of foreign language learning is to achieve a higher proficiency level; such ability allows language learners to communicate in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural settings. The term "competence" has been defined by The Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) in 2011 as a "person's ability to function in the target language…" This is to say that a good command of language enhances the speakers' ability to interact in diverse language situations.

Language proficiency is an integral condition in the success of autonomous learning. Learners who master the language appropriately, are likely to develop certain skills required for autonomous learning such as self-learning, self-esteem and motivation. These are some defining characteristics of an autonomous learner. Cotterall admits that learners' language proficiency is one of the components in the language course design; therefore its development leads learners to have control over their own learning process. (Cotteral, qtd.in Boyno 64). Learners who lack such proficiency are unexpected to develop a higher level of autonomy as those with a good level of competence in the target language.

1.6.11.5 Age and Learner Autonomy

Age is another factor influencing autonomous learning, it can be either a key towards being more autonomous or a hindrance standing as an obstacle for learners working to develop their autonomous learning. Yoshimoto et al believe that maturation is in a positive relation to the level of independence in learning while being young may be seen as a constraint (qtd.in Boyno 66). Learners of different ages do possess different cognitive skills and psychological abilities to assume responsibility.

Learning needs, abilities and opportunities differ according to the learners' age and maturation. Tzotzou believes that "For older people, learning opportunities may help more growth of autonomy, and in addition, the learning mode adopted is likely to be the more successful if it recognizes and respects the adult as a self-directing individual" Thus, for her, "adults are more likely to adopt self-instruction in their foreign language learning…" (Tzotzou 5) The more matured the students, the more responsible they become. Adult learners are more aware of the importance of self-learning than learners of younger age due to their experience as learners and their learning strategies which are quite developed compared to young learners.

1.7. Conclusion

This chapter attempts to provide clear understanding to the concept of learner autonomy; however, it seems that there is no clear cut-answer to what learner autonomy really means? Learner autonomy is a very complex term needed to be carefully explored and thoroughly understood. It is insufficient to look at it from one perspective, but rather one has to dimensionally examine it to better make sense of it, therefore efficiently promote it.

The fact that learner autonomy is a universal desirable goal in many educational systems has paved the way for curriculum designers in many countries to adapt it. Algerian educational policy makers have recently shown an interest in developing self-dependent learning and responsibility with an intention to make learners be at center of the classroom, but, what seems unexplored yet in the literature is the relationship between learner autonomy and the Algerian socio-cultural backgrounds of EFL learners, this issue is further explored in the next chapter.

Chapter Two: Learner Autonomy: From Socio-cultural Perspectives...... 42

2.1 Introduction

Over the last thirty years, learner autonomy was largely associated with technical as well as individual perspectives; quick recently, scholars' attention has been shifted to the suitability and relevance of autonomy across cultures and societies and the ways in which autonomy is manifested and viewed by different educationalists in different learning contexts and environments. Culture has always been at the heart of EFL classrooms. It is an integral component of education in general that one apparently cannot ignore its importance and influence on students' learning process. So, culture has also gained such uniqueness in terms of complexity and ambiguity just like autonomy. This chapter therefore aims to answer the question of how do the socio-cultural dimensions impact learner autonomy and students' learning attitudes and expectations.

This chapter aims to delve into the complexity of both concepts (autonomy and culture) to better examine the existing relationship between them. It starts by defining the sociology of education to displays how society is related to education, it conceptualizes anthropology of education for the sake of understanding the relationship between culture and education, and then it explains the socio-cultural theory and the ways in which learning is socially mediated.

The chapter also provides a definition of culture, its place in language education. It sheds light on the appropriateness of learner autonomy in different educational settings around the world in which it debates, compares and contrasts learner autonomy across cultures[17] with some links to the Algerian education. By the end of this chapter, the researcher endeavours to apply Hofstede's cultural dimensions model on the Algerian culture namely collectivism, individualism, uncertainty avoidance and power distance.

2.2 The Sociology of Education

Understanding the nature of the environment in which one lives, works and studies is seen as a prerequisite to the development of education. This means that the social community and interaction play crucial roles in shaping the individuals' attitudes, expectations and perceptions about of themselves and others as well as their environment.

As the term implies, Sociology of education studies the relation between education and society. "Sociology of Education … may be explained as the scientific analysis of the

---

[17] Namely Arab , Asian and European cultures and educational beliefs and practices.

social processes and social patterns involved in the educational system" (Satapathy 4) In others terms, it focuses on the existing connection between where students learn and where they live, between what is learned in the classroom and what is acquired in society and the ways in which one influences the other. Sociologists always look at education from the social perspective, linking learning to the social environment.

Generally, the sociology of education is gaining a great significance across disciplines, particularly in educational studies. "the sociology of education has become a vital and expanding field within sociology and has made a significant contribution to our understanding to the social structures and processes that affects students' learning and social development" (Hallinan 1). The field represents the social aspects of education and puts education in its social contexts. Its interests include education and society and culture. It seeks to investigate the influence of socio-cultural factors such as beliefs, traditions, attitudes on the educational outcomes. In this sense, education is considered as a bridge through which socio-cultural aspects are transmitted from generation to generation in an institutional setting.

Socializing its members and producing effective citizens who believe in their efficient roles as active participants and contributors are the main roles of education (Durkheim, qtd.in Lakehal-Aya 52). From the social point of view, education plays an important function in determining the well-being of the society; its primary role is to teach students how to relate what they have learnt in school to the society.

2.3 The Anthropology of Education

Having a certain command of knowledge about how things are done (practices), and perceived (perceptions) and produced (products) helps in understanding the human nature and its underlying features. This understanding gives an idea the inherited cultural aspects of a given speech community and the way in which one learns and acquires things.

Generally speaking, anthropology studies the human behaviors and culture. In the same way, it is defined by Cambridge Dictionary as "the study of the human race, its culture and society, and its physical development" Anthropology refers to the examination and analysis of the cultural and social aspects of human being. Relating these aspects to education has given birth to "the anthropology of education". Thanks to this field, researchers are now capable of studying the learning process from the cultural perspective; it contributes to the understanding of how education works in different cultural contexts. In broad sense,

anthropology of education is primarily concerned with the relationship between culture and education. From the anthropological stance, Little views that:

> Classrooms are communities with cultural characteristics that derive from the larger environment in which they are embedded, the traditions and beliefs of the educational institution of which they are a part, and the culture-creating interaction of their members (Strategies, Counselling and Cultural Differences 25).

For Little, the classroom is a meeting point of factors mainly social, cultural and educational. The quotation above states that learners possess certain educational qualities, social beliefs, and cultural attitudes and behaviors which are deeply rooted in where these learners live and study. In other words, classrooms are small societies with different range of cultural and social backgrounds and upbringings thereby social interaction is created. The teachers and the students are the main elements leading this interaction inside the classroom by exchanging, sharing and communicating their ideas, expectations and experiences about different educational and social topics. This implies that the society creates and shapes the classroom environment and communities; however, this process can create new ways of critical thinking, reflections and social understandings where the classroom becomes a creator of a new society.

2.4 The Socio-cultural Theory of Learning

In an attempt to broaden an understanding of how learning is socio-culturally oriented, the Russian Lev.S Vygotsky is the founding leader of the socio-cultural theory of learning. Vygotsky emphasizes on the social context of learning, in this fragment of text, He writes that the social interaction plays a crucial role in acquiring the abilities, skills and knowledge (vygotsky,qtd. in Murray 7) It means that through interaction, discussion and communication with other members of the classroom, learners possess the required skills to learn and that learning is mediated by social and cultural influences.

For Vygotsky learning cannot take place in isolation but rather within groups and communities. These groupings do influence the ways learners learn and interact in their daily life and in educational settings. In this view, Vygotsky further explains that:

Humans do not act directly on the physical world without intermediary of tools, whether symbolic of signs, tools are artifacts created by humans under specific cultural and historical conditions, and as such, they carry with them the characteristics of the culture in question.

There are mediating factors such as culture (including signs, symbols, tools…) which has an unavoidable impact on individuals' actions and reactions in a given environment. In educational setting, there is a strong relationship between the way students behave in the classroom and their cultural and social backdrops in the sense that culture determines the behavior of learning to learn i.e, learners' cultural background brought from the outside interferes in learning management and decision-making processes because no learning takes place out of its sociocultural setting.

Within the frame of the present research, one may assume that autonomy is an attribute shaping individuals in a social context. What to learn (learning content), how to learn (learning process) are influenced by where they study (educational setting) and their socio-cultural beliefs and practices. This impact contributes and determines learners' attitudes regarding their own learning. In similar way, Murray indicates that:

…learners' response to social and cultural influences and how they choose to personalize their language learning will be dependent on their individual sense of self and their understanding of who they are as a person and their identity as a language learner (7).

Murray means that there is a harmony between the socio-cultural dimensions and learners' sense of individualism[18]. One cannot neglect that autonomy has to a larger extent been associated to individuals' ability of being accountable for learning; at the same time, these individuals live within a social context of groups in which they acquire and inherit some cultural and social beliefs and conceptions of who they are as language learners. It might also be understood that developing learners' sense of autonomy requires both being able to direct their own learning and in collaboration with others simply because learning in general and autonomy in particular does not take place in isolation but rather in groups.

Within the language classroom context, social interaction is presented in teacher-learner interaction, relationships and the ways in which communication in the classroom is

---

[18] This concept is further explained in this chapter page 66

held. On the other hand, cultural practices represent the classroom educational culture of learning, what roles, for example, learners think are expected to perform, what beliefs they hold about themselves and about learning , how do they view the teacher position? do they still preserve some traditional classroom practices inherited in teacher-centeredness?.

All these cultural and social differentiations regarding the way learners view learning have a clear impact on the ways they interact and communicate with their teachers and classmates and with the learning environment. This in turn may result in either encouraging autonomous learning or discouraging it.

2.5 Defining Culture

In the field of language education, just like autonomy, several definitions of culture are stated in the literature; despite the different attempts of authors to define it, there is still no precise prevailing definition of what is culture due to its dynamic and complex nature, it is not such a straightforward concept to be defined and understood because it does not lend itself to an easy definition.

In one of the earliest contributions, Kneller defines culture as the way people live, think, act and feel. These different ways of doing things are presented in peoples' beliefs, assumptions and perceptions (religion), verbal and non-verbal communication (language and paralinguistic features[19]), the rules that governed them (law), music, drama and literature (art) as well as their productions and practices.

> The total shared way of life of a given people, comprising their modes of thinking, acting, and feeling, which are expressed, for instance, in religion, law, language, art, and custom, as well as in material products such as houses, clothes, and tools. (Kneller 4 qtd. in Palfreyman and Smith 5)

In recent attempts, Spencer-Oatey views culture as being a slippery concept which does not have clear edges, culture for Spencer-Oatey is both shared and influential, it is shared in the sense that in a given speech community, a group of people who live regularly together have the same perceptions, actions and practices in common, and influential because culture has the power to change the individuals' ways of viewing others and perceiving the world. Spencer-Oatey believes that:

---

[19] Means of communication without using words, the speaker may use facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, signs and other non-verbal features

Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behavior (3)

In broad sense, one of widest definitions which covers almost all previous attempts to state the exact meaning of culture, is provided by Cambridge Advanced Learners' Dictionary (3rd edition) which refers to it as "a way of life" including customs, beliefs shared by a group of people at a given point in time. This means that culture may change through time according to place and under circumstances

Moreover, culture is a shared set of social practices, attitudes and beliefs. In the same way, it is defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary "the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization." ("culture") Regardless of different attempts and contributions of scholars to conceptualize culture; there is still no clear-cut answer to such questions of what is culture or what is it not? The reason is that culture does not mean the same thing to all researchers and anthropologists. It certainly takes different forms and meanings that one cannot group in one definition.

2.5.1 The Place of Culture in Foreign Language Education

Many educational events (conferences and workshops) have been organized, and several books and articles have been written to stress the significance of teaching culture in language education to the point that culture has become an axiomatic topic to deal with as it is well-cited in the literature. The study of culture has been looked at from different dimensions such as sociology, anthropology, psychology and others.

In spite of the hotly debatable decision over which culture to teach as there are many cultures, there is still a general consensus among scholars that being able to master the language efficiently does not only require the knowledge of grammar, phonetics, reading, writing etc, but also a certain account of background information about the social and cultural elements in which the language in question is used. In other words, culture and language are two inseparable items. In the view of that, Kramsch mentions that Risager suggests the term "languaculture" to demonstrate that learning a language is not a "culture-free language", but they are rather highly connected (Kramsch 2). This simply means that the presence of culture works in parallel with the language and vise-versa.

There is a further, more persuasive reason given why culture is an integral component in language learning, namely that raising awareness about the target culture of the language being learnt/taught leads its learners to successfully act and interact with other people from different range of socio-cultural settings, therefore developing intercultural communication. In the same line of reasoning, Arabski and Wojtaszek believe that "…increasing role of intercultural communication inevitably enforces the inclusion of such issues (sociocultural elements) as important contributors to the processes of L2 learning and acquisition" (2). In other words, second language learning requires the integration of both social and cultural aspects of the language in question so as to enhance intercultural communication.

Another important reason why the place of culture in the foreign language education is necessary is that it prepares learners for future encounters and prevents them from communication breakdown and cultural misunderstandings. Though learning or acquiring culture is a challenging task due to its multidimensional nature as there are many cultures, teaching it remains fundamental for successful communication and avoiding getting attached to wrong meanings.

Additionally, being aware of the fact that people view, do and perceive things differently will certainly teach learners how to adapt and adjust their beliefs, practices, and behaviors to the place where they live, work and study. In fact, it is cultural and intercultural awareness so one will be able to decode explicit or implicit meanings in a given multi-cultural conversation.

It is quite reasonable at that level to view culture as an important factor in language learning, however, attention should be drawn to the idea that it is not only about teaching foreign culture in terms of practices, products and perceptions to communicate well in the target situation, but also teaching the culture of learning (the ways others learn). To put it in the context of this research, one may say that if autonomy is still considered to be a western-based goal, teaching western culture of learning is demanding and advisable.

2.6 Learner Autonomy, Culture and Society

Different cultures and societies have different educational cultures and philosophies of learning. Learner autonomy, in particular, is shaped by some influencing factors as stated in the previous chapter such as age, language proficiency, motivation…etc. More importantly, autonomous learning is also linked to cultural backgrounds, social practices

(interaction with family, friends and others) as well as learning experiences and traditional educational beliefs (interaction with learning environment, teachers and classmates).

Learner involvement is seen as an important social aspect for the development of independence of autonomy. Ackermann in this regard, declares that "without connection people cannot grow, yet without separation they cannot relate" (32). It is our human connection; interaction and relationship which make us develop our sense of autonomy and self-determination. At some points, detachment is also needed for people to make their own identities and build their experiences.

Learner autonomy is not only a psychological matter, but rather also a social-cultural construct. None of us would neglect the crucial role culture plays in learning, and its influential power on the learning attitudes and practices of learners. While that this the case, Candy states that "adults are powerfully affected by aspects of their backgrounds -including family and prior education - in ways that limit and constrain their ability to be self-directing in certain learning situations" (qtd.in Badli Esham and Faizah 255).

Candy's vision on the impact of both local culture (family) and educational culture (prior education) is limited to the negative influence which will , for him, result in preventing learners from being self-directed and autonomous in their own learning, however that it should not always be the case, culture can also have a positive impact in certain learning situations. Not really far, Palfreyman and Smith "…important for language learning and education because these take place *within* a culture" (5). Kneller argues that since autonomy is related to one's "modes of thinking, acting, and feeling", its degree is determined by the learners' culture. (qtd, in Palfreyman and Smith 5). For them culture plays a great role in the identification of the level of learner autonomy and the determination of learners' attitudes towards learning.

One of the earliest works on learner autonomy and culture was carried out by Riley in 1988; or what is named as "Ethnography of autonomy". It sheds light on the cultural aspect of autonomy, raising the issue of the influence of culture on autonomy and the ways in which autonomy is culturally-mediated. Riley claims that "ethnography of autonomy" is part of "ethnography of education". Riley adds that "Its main focus would be the representations (i.e. descriptions plus interpretations) of learning in a given society" (18). Riley then explains that "representations of learning" represents "the way in which the learning process is conceived of in a society: how to learn, attitudes to learning" (19).

Learning to learn is mediated by certain social and cultural beliefs and dimensions. In fact, the process of learning differs from one society to another due to the difference of "the nature of society in question". The cultural imprints and the society in which learners have been raised and learnt are such important aspects in learner autonomy studies; Holliday argues that "autonomy resides in the social worlds of the students, which they bring with them from their lives outside the classroom" (117) In other words, the environment where students live plays an important role in shaping students' sense of responsibility, and their state of being autonomous. As a result, for him autonomous learning is socially based process. Palfreyman shares the same view with Holliday regarding the sociability of learner autonomy in which he claims that "Autonomy has sometimes been associated with a focus on the individual learner ... and yet sociocultural context and collaboration with others are important features of education and of our lives" (Palfreyman 2).

Parents, friends and the different members of the society (classmates, teachers and others) have a great role in either pushing learners towards efficient learning or negatively influencing their expectations and attitudes towards learning. Since birth, human beings tend to do things on his/her own, babies start making decisions independently (crying to express hunger, pain… crawling to show the need for walking, smiling to express empathy, happiness and joy…) All these things are done autonomously without the parents intervention. They are born full of energy and power to do things by themselves, and they can barely be controlled and guided, they are born with the will and motivation to experience things without showing them the way things are done. Salmon notes that babies are born with the capacity at act freely,

> To parents, even babies seem to have a will of their own; they are hardly passive creatures to be easily moulded by the actions of others. From their earliest years, boys and girls make their active presence, their wilful agency, their demands and protests, very vividly felt. In every household that has children, negotiations must be made with young family members: their personal agendas have somehow to be accommodated. (Salmon 24)

Babies are born with certain features such as motivation, willingness, the desire of discovering new things and self-ruling. These characteristics are among the required skills of autonomy. To this end, babies are innately autonomous creatures. It also implies that the family, which is the smallest unit in the society, is the foundation of autonomy; its contributions can be either positive or negative in developing self-dependent actions. Parents,

just like teachers, can be effective agents in making autonomy a reality rather than an illusion in both formal and informal education. Autonomy takes its roots in the family; therefore it is not only the teachers' role to make students autonomous. It is actually a shared responsibility of both parents and teachers.

From the above quotation, one may also raise the issue of the innateness of autonomy as an inborn capacity of doing things on ones' own. Is it innate or acquired and learnt? Do all babies share the same profile if parents do not interfere in their lives? Despite the fact that babies do things at an unconscious level, they possess some characteristics and skills of autonomy. It is worth mentioning that learners before joining the schools have experienced autonomy in their daily life. The only difference is that in a formal learning community, autonomy is a conscious matter; it is processed based on awareness and learners act based on prior plans. As a result, autonomy should further be discussed from its biological perspective to be redefined and reconstructed.

2.6.1 Learner Autonomy and Local Culture

It is common that culture impinges the way learners learn (learning styles) and their ability to direct and rely on themselves in given learning situations. It also shapes their learning expectations, attitudes and perceptions about themselves as learners and individuals.

Cultural elements can be either related to the beliefs learners acquire from their societies or those traditional assumptions and practices they get from the school in which they used to study[20] . In this line of thought, Candy believes that such backgrounds, in a way or another, that they prevent learners from being able to self-direct themselves. He argues that "adults are powerfully affected by aspects of their backgrounds - including family and prior education - in ways that limit and constrain their ability to be self-directing in certain learning situations" (qtd. in Badli and Faizah 255). By the same way of reasoning, it is inescapable to profoundly ignore the impact of culture on learning in general and language learning in particular. In this particular point, Riley assumes that "the ways in which knowledge is distributed in a given culture will influence the way its members learn to learn" (20). Riley claims that learning is under influence of the ways in which the members of any society make sense of things around. The way learners learn and interact with their classmates and teachers, and participate in the classroom is related to the beliefs they hold about themselves as learners and their perceptions about the notion of "learning". To this end, learners' local

---

[20] Generally presented as classroom culture which includes ways of learning/teaching, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors …ect.

and educational culture may prevent them from being autonomous or push them towards self-reliance and independence.

Based on the above stated inclination, it is worth drawing the attention to the fact that there is still no clear explanation to what kind of influence culture has on learning, does it positively or negatively entirely impact on the ways students learn. Consequently, this influence undoubtedly differs from one society to society. What is considered as being a constraint in one culture could be a reinforcement in another culture.

2.6.2 Learner Autonomy and Educational Culture

Harmer believes that "Attitudes to self-directed learning are frequently conditioned by the educational culture in which students have studied or are studying…autonomy of action is not always considered a desirable characteristics in such context" (qtd. in Bouhass "EFT University Teachers' Autonomy" 201). The desirability of autonomy differs from culture to culture. By Educational culture is meant the beliefs and practices learners and teachers hold about education. These beliefs have been acquired through learning and teaching experiences.

Similarly, Borg and Al-busaidi claim that the Omani educational system has a "fixed curriculum" which is considered a constraint making learner autonomy difficult to be implemented. They argue that "Institutional factors such as a fixed curriculum were also seen to limit learner autonomy" (2). Educational policy is the starting point towards achieving the set learning/teaching outcomes. Its role is of paramount importance in the development of learner autonomy. For instance, the Malaysian educational philosophy is more "exam-oriented" this has influenced learners' perceptions about learning in the sense that they "learn just for the sake of getting good grades without understanding their learning purposes and goals" (Yunus and Arshad 45). If this truly is the case, Malaysian educational culture seems to hinder the growth of autonomous learning since awareness of learning goals is a key ingredient of learner autonomy.

Similar view is stated in the Bulgarian educational system. According to Boyadzhieva "Bulgarian culture indicating that values are placed in the past and the society as a whole shows respect for traditions, including the traditions in the educational system". Traditional educational beliefs and practices inherited in the past still play a crucial role in shaping the Bulgarian educational philosophy. For Boyadzhieva, this is why learner autonomy is "slow and scarce" because any "abrupt break up with traditional education will reinforce the fears of the unknown" (39).

On the other hand, Learners, for example, through time learn and acquire a set of perceptions about their roles and responsibilities, duties and rights in the classroom which in turn may shape them as being either autonomous or less autonomous depending on which kind of influence do these perceptions left in the learners. In this respect, Aoki states that "Learners' attitude towards, or affect associated with, autonomy may also have its root in the institutional environment that surrounds the place where learning actually takes place..." (qtd. in Missoum "Culture and Learner autonomy" 67).

Learner autonomy is a shared responsibility between both teachers and learners; this view does not congruent with the Vietnamese educational culture where "every single action of students is under strict management of teachers" (Nguyen 7). This culture of classrooms that is based on a strict relationship is likely to restrict the learners' initiatives and contributions. Another important component of an autonomous environment is critical thinking and interaction between students and learners; however it is not the case with Vietnamese educational environment. For Nguyen "students are not allowed to criticise teachers even when they do not totally agree with the teachers". All these indicators show that cultural philosophy of education is prerequisite in the advancement of learner autonomy.

Teachers are also important members in the educational process; their beliefs are extremely significant in making learners able to take some control over their own learning. Teachers who strongly believe in their students' ability to act autonomously are probably helping them raise their self-esteem and self-learning.

2.6.3 Learners' Beliefs and Attitudes towards Learner Autonomy

Learners' beliefs and attitudes are integral components of the learning process and outcomes, more particularly in learner autonomy development. They either positively or negatively influence the learners' ability to take initiatives in deciding their own and sharing responsibility with their teachers.

Recently, attention has been given to beliefs and their roles in constructing students' view of learning and education. To begin, there is a need to define what is meant by a belief? Loucks-Horsely et al., "beliefs are more than opinions: they may be less than truth, but we are committed to them" (27). Beliefs are not an easy to define due to their misconception with opinions, they are what people think is true. According to Alanen these beliefs are rooted in the society because they "are constructed in social interactions in specific contexts of activity" (Alanen qtd.in Jiang Xiaoli 90). On the other hand, Attitudes are considered as

"part of one's perception of self, of others, and of the culture in which one is living." (Brown 126)

Learners' socio-cultural beliefs determine their attitudes, expectations and practices in formal educational settings. In other words, the ways students' perceive their roles as learners, the educational setting in which they study and the cultural beliefs they possess are all based on the beliefs they held through their learning experiences and the learning situations they were part of. This, in turn, may result in active participation in the learning process or poor engagement. The nature of beliefs and the attitudes is likely to define the essence of the influence on students' ability to act independently.

If Learners are raised in a culture that supports and pushes individuals to rely on themselves, they construct and acquire positive attitudes and beliefs about themselves, about the others and about their environment, therefore they are expected to have higher level of autonomy. By contrast, learners who still preserve traditional educational and cultural perceptions about learning are less autonomous and reluctant towards self-reliance and independence. What is more, these attitudes towards autonomy vary from one learner to another and from culture to culture.

2.7 Learner Autonomy across Cultures

Historically speaking, many researchers have agreed with the idea that learner autonomy is Western educational construct which solely fits for the Western contextual specificities. However, other scholars have recently given more emphasis to the promotion of learner autonomy in different educational settings and the difficulties faced in promoting autonomy in Non-western contexts due cultural and social influences.

One of the main questions one may raise is that, can learner autonomy be implemented across cultures? Is it an appropriate goal in all cultures? On the face of this, Harmer explains that "attitudes to self-directed learning are frequently conditioned by the educational culture in which students have studied or are studying…autonomy of action is not always considered a desirable characteristic in such contexts" (qtd. in Bouhass "Learner Autonomy in Language Teaching and Learning"411). Features such as learners' backgrounds, habits, and beliefs are all important components influencing learner sense of autonomy. Harmer does not make a clear-cut distinction on which cultural contexts support learner autonomy and which one of them may prevent it. He rather emphases on the educational culture rather than national culture, this means that the educational environment

plays a crucial role in shaping the learners' attitudes and perceptions about themselves as learners and their ability to act autonomously in various learning situations.

2.7.1 Learner Autonomy in the European Context

Based on the foregoing assumption, throughout history, autonomous learning has been considered as more suitable in Western educational contexts. However, for example Macedonia is a South East European country that shows the reverse of this claim. Study conducted in 2011 by Xhaferi and Xhaferi indicated that the majority of students in Macedonia believe that "autonomy is a prominent goal but they still rely on the teacher in many occasions" (153). They also noted that learner autonomy is still difficult to be promoted in the Macedonian educational setting because learners still preserve traditional ways of learning.

Turkey is a half European and half Asian country, could be also another example showing the discrepancy of the idea stated above. Cakici concluded that both teachers and students showed positive attitudes towards learner autonomy and that they consider themselves ready to take control over the learning/teaching process. Another interesting result revealed is that female learners are still dependent upon their teachers' help and guidance (89). For Cakici this result goes in parallel with Aoki and Smith claim, in which they state that autonomy does not mean total independence from the teachers' intervention. (96)

In the same way, Le mentions that "similar to studies on Asian students, those on European students carried out in Spain and Turkey yielded contradictory results."(75), In the words of Le, Breeze claims that the Spanish students are more dependent on their teachers. As a result, classrooms are teacher-centered. On the other hand, Yildirim argues that Turkish students show more readiness to take charge of their learning. Turkish and Spanish education systems are western-oriented, results have shown that in both contexts students seems to have "some sense of responsibility for their own learning"; However, Turkish students seem more autonomous than the Spanish ones. (78)

Though autonomy was first introduced in the western continent, is it difficult to say that all western educational systems and cultures can promote autonomy successfully. Regardless of the similarities Western and European countries share in common, cultural diversity and social pluralism vary from one country to another which eventually make learning takes different forms. This is why; learner autonomy cannot be seen as an

incontrovertible concept to all western cultures. Particularities and specificities make a huge difference across and within culture.

2.7.2 Learner Autonomy in the Asian Context

In some contexts, culture is seen as an obstacle in fostering learner autonomy. To test the reliability of this view, a research conducted by Nguyen in 2011on "Impacts of Socio-culture on the Development of Autonomous Learning: A Lens of Vietnamese Context" .The outcomes have revealed that Vietnamese learners still preserve traditional beliefs and are influenced by conventional assumptions of classrooms. The results have also indicated that students tend to be inactive participants and dependent upon their teachers for learning. In these classrooms, direct face-to-face contact with the teachers is seen as rude and disrespectful and leads the teacher to lose face, this is due to the beliefs they have about the teacher (6). He further explained that if Vietnamese students are effectively guided, they are capable of getting rid of their passivism and dependence on their teachers (7).

A common Vietnamese proverb says "Khong thay do may lam nen" that is to say "Without the teacher, you cannot do anything". For them the teacher is even considered to have priority compared to the father, and he/she has more value than parents, this is clearly shown in a proverb which says: 'Vua-Thay-Cha' translated as "King-Teacher-Father". As a result of this system, learners are less encouraged to develop learner autonomy during their educational process. (Nguyen 6-7) In this regard, it seems that Vietnamese learners misinterpret politeness, respect and hold misconceptions about the teachers' responsibility and roles.

As mentioned by Tamer, Dore and Sako view Japanese university students as being "receptacle into which knowledge and ideas have to be poured" (26) This means that they are more dependent on their teachers because they are used to spoon feeding. At the same time, they also noticed that Japanese students study by themselves at home which is for them a sign for autonomous learning. As a result, Japanese students are capable of assuming responsibility if they are well-informed of their expected roles and their beliefs are corrected.

Ho and Crookall consider the Chinese cultural frame as a preventing factor for developing autonomous learning, they view "[Chinese] cultural traits […] which may be an obstacle to the promotion of autonomy" (235). They state that Chinese students are unwilling to challenge the authority of teachers. However, this view seems to be superficial, and it is unfair to end up saying that autonomy is inappropriate concept in Asian educational settings.

In the same context, Littlewood argues that Ho and Crookall "describe in their article how enthusiastically their students engaged in a project where much of the work was conducted in groups working independently of the teacher" (Littlewood 72).

Within the same context, in 1999, Littlewood argues that Asian students have the same capacity for autonomy as students in Western countries and some teachers have reported that they have succeeded to promote learner autonomy among Asain students. One year later, a study was carried out by Littlewood in 2000 in which he discusses students' beliefs about learning, results obtained seem to object and go against common stereotypic generalizations of East Asian students as passive members in the classroom and dependent on their teachers. This discrepancy in terms of concluding thoughts about the impact of culture on learner autonomy within the Asian settings seem to differ from one country to another. The cultural backgrounds are not always a hindrance in the development of autonomy in language learning and teaching, these generalizations about the socio-cultural beliefs are misleading and do not really reflect the real attitudes of learners towards autonomy (Stereotypes about learning).

To say that all Asian learners have the same attitudes towards learning in general and learner autonomy in particular is quite unreasonable. Differences in terms of individual culture, beliefs and styles of learning make a huge distinction among learners and educational systems. Adamson and Sert believe that "…Learner autonomy appears to have been labeled as a western concept." they add that "This concept rejects styles of all non-western learners" (Adamson and Sert 23) such as Asian learners, this view is considered as a form of racism and considers the Asian learners having an unequal position with their peers in western contexts.

2.7.3 Learner Autonomy in the Arab World

Driven by the belief that autonomy is a Western-concept, Arab researchers have attempted to examine the extent to which learner autonomy suits their learning context. The aim is to eliminate doubt and avoid stereotypes and put all learners at the same scale having the same opportunity of being self-dependent.

In 2011, Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi conducted a research paper on the perceptions of 141 freshmen at Sultan Qaboos University-Oman, about the teaching and learning at the Basic Education System. Findings have shown that the classroom is characterized by teacher-led, test-based teaching and 'Spoon-feeding' where students remain passive recipients of

information. Another concluding remark is that motivation, for Omani students, is associated with grades and examinations (170). In this learning community, where more emphasis is given to marks and exams more than learning how to learn, autonomy is still far to be a reality.

Thus, Omani learners have been raised in reference to teacher-centered instruction, they come to higher education with the beliefs held by the teacher-led teaching approach and that both learning and teaching are part of the teachers' responsibility. Such educational beliefs limit Omani learners' capacity to be involved in the learning process.

Being in similar line with (Borg and Al-Busaidi 20; Alsmari 7) Khalil and Ali in their research work on learner autonomy in Egyptian technical schools, they found out that both students and teachers at technical Egyptian schools are aware of the concept of autonomy and familiar with the characteristics of the autonomous learner. They also have positive attitudes towards its benefits and usefulness in the field of EFL learning and teaching (18). However, "teachers and students express their uncertainty of the effect of culture on learning autonomy." (Mostafa and Desouky 19). Furthermore, they think that learner autonomy is Western-based concept unsuitable for Non-western education.

A comparative study on the influence of the learning environment on learner autonomy between the Polish and the Yemeni students, Al-Khawlani found out that there are many differences between Polish and Yemeni students regarding their beliefs and attitudes towards autonomy. The results revealed that Polish students are more autonomous, self-reliant, and less dependent upon their teachers than Yemeni students, however there are also some similarities among both groups in terms of planning and learning management.

Another important finding indicated that Yemeni students seem to be more autonomous inside the classroom in determining learning goals, selecting activities and discussing topics, however Polish students appear to be more autonomous outside the classroom (Al-Khawlani 120). Al-Khawlani concluded that Polish students are more autonomous than Yemeni students due to cultural differences and educational culture.

These findings and those mentioned above coincide with most of the literature in language learner autonomy in the Arab world, and Saudi Arabia is no exception. A research paper conducted by Tamer in 2013 which clearly sum up that Saudi Arabian students are still far to be autonomous since the current classroom practices are shaped by lecturing, rote

learning, and spoon feeding which are all indicators of traditional style of learning and teaching (72).

Out of his experience as an EFL teacher in Saudi Arabia, Althaqafi, declared that there are remarkable obstacles and difficulties in supporting learners to take charge of learning and be independent. He added that the Saudi Arabian society is a conservative speech community and religion is an integral part of life and education, it encourages them to wonder, challenge and question things to enrich knowledge and enlighten their path. Within the Saudi Arabian context learner autonomy is a new concept, yet most teachers and learners are not really familiar with its dimensions and required skills. As far as the classroom interaction is concerned, students are only passive recipients of information through listening to their teachers. As a result of this, Saudi classrooms are teachers centered and learning is exam-based. (43) Consequently, all indicators seem to limit the promotion of autonomy in the Saudi Arabian context.

As it is mentioned above, several research works in the literature documented that almost all Arab countries share the same beliefs and attitudes regarding learner autonomy. Despite the fact that they consider autonomy as a desirable, appreciated goal in language learning and teaching, Arab students are still dependent upon their teachers and possess traditional classroom practices, roles and assumptions. It is still insufficient and quite unfair to conclude that Arab culture does not support learner autonomy. Further research is still needed to elaborate more the issue of learner autonomy as a cultural concept in the Arab world.

2.7.4 Learner Autonomy in the Algerian Context

The shift from the teacher-centered approach to the learner-centered approach aims to meet learners' needs and follow up the demands of modern time and society. The developed countries were the first to adopt this pedagogical approach in their educational systems some years ago to develop a certain study, social, economic and political skills. At this juncture, Algeria has followed the same path. Making radical changes, reforms and designing new curricula was more than a necessity. In this regard, the previous Minister of National Education Aboubaker Benbouzid asserts that:

> "Education must be in perpetual renewal since the world today undergoes several changes in all domains: social, political, cultural, scientific and technical field. As a consequence we must do our best so that our

60

educational systems can meet the needs of the development and take up the technological challenge which is the only way to have access to the twenty first century. (6)

The Minister of National Education shed light on the fact that the world is going through several changes in all disciplines therefore we are in dire need to look at our educational systems from other perspectives so that to meet the needs of modern time, to cope with the changes happening in the world and integrate into the world community.

Just like the ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research undergoes many reforms due to the needs to respond to the global needs and modernism. Metatla Oussama in his article entitled "Higher education reforms in Algeria: reading between the lines" argues that since its independence, the Algerian higher education sector has witnessed two main policy reforms. "The adoption of the three-cycle degree higher-education framework known as the LMD system" is one of these reforms which "has been in place since 2004/2005" to fill in for the classical system. It was issued in the executive decree 04-371 of November, 21st 2004 (Lakehal-Ayat 123).

After series a of reforms and changes, the Algerian educational system set up a way towards more learner centeredness by giving critical and crucial roles to learners to rely on themselves and develop a sense of responsibility. Moving from total focus on teaching to learning is at the heart of the educational reforms. As a result, promoting learner autonomy was one of the keys to better enhance learners' academic achievement and self-dependence.

Algeria is a large country situated in the north of Africa. It is considered as a melting pot country due to its diverse socio-cultural heritage. It consists of many regions and each one is shaped by specific cultural and social values, norms and behaviors. The impact of both educational and local culture is inevitably undeniable and researchers in Algeria have not yet really explored the impact of these socio-cultural dimensions on students' learning attitudes and expectations with particular reference to learner autonomy.

Hadi found out that the Algerian pupils (future university students) are not yet ready to be self-directed nor are willing to take responsibility over their own learning. She also concluded that both EFL teachers and learners in Algeria seem to be unaware of the concept of learner autonomy and that the EFL classrooms in Algeria are far to be autonomous (60).

Hadi goes further saying that "…in the Algerian educational context, this concept is somehow new and hard to be achieved for both teachers and learners" (125). In other words, learner autonomy is relatively a new concept which is not yet clearly understood among teachers and students. She then states the following reasons why students and teachers are facing difficulties to reach learner autonomy:

- The influence of traditional beliefs and practices
- Lack of teachers' knowledge about autonomy
- Teachers' are not aware of the shift of responsibility from traditional to new teaching methods
- Lack of "in-service training" and "education development" (125).

Miliani believes that Algerian learners feel more secure on the present of their teachers and are not yet able to be in charge of learning because they cannot identify their needs and adapt their roles to the new experiences and learning styles. The students are used to be poured with knowledge by their teachers rather than taking the initiatives to develop their own understanding and learning (70). This may mean that the students still believe that their teachers are responsible about all decisions concerning both learning and teaching processes. These traditional convictions are hard to be changed overnight and students are not expected to be autonomous without being progressively introduced to autonomous learning and trained to be autonomous.

In Her research work on learner autonomy and culture, Bouhass stated that Algerian EFL students have been raised in "an Arabo-Islamic community" which has impacted their learning and sense of autonomy in many ways. They are shaped as citizens by sense of collaboration, and dependency on their parents in making decisions, and as learners, they are characterized by total dependency on their teachers, learning with their classmates both inside and outside the classrooms, and they often take decisions with their teachers this due to the fact they consider the teacher as important element in learning. She then sum up that all learners can develop autonomy if they are directed and guided towards it (Bouhass "Learner Autonomy" 412).

Having that view about the teacher, in fact, holds two connotations, it is quite good to consult the teacher before any decision since the teacher is the most experienced member in the classroom; however, it may also prevent them from acquiring some study skills of responsibility, reflections and critical thinking.

Missoum in his research on learner autonomy and culture in which survey a questionnaire was used as the main data collection tool, it was administered to 35 teachers and 135 students, His research took place in English department at the University of Blida 2, Algeria. The findings indicated that both teachers and students showed positive stances towards learner autonomy. Yet, they were not sure about the role of the educational culture and the wider Algerian culture in developing Algerian learners' autonomy.

Whether or not cultures influence the learners' sense of autonomy, be it positive or negative impact, Missoum concludes that both the general culture and the educational culture must be given considerations before any attempt to implement or make any educational reforms (Missoum "Culture and Learner Autonomy" 57).

Within the Algerian context, researchers seem to have a consensus agreement about autonomy in language learning and teaching, in which they sum up that Algerian EFL learners' learning attitudes and practices are influenced by traditional experiences and conventional beliefs and that they are still unready for autonomous learning. Learner autonomy in Algerian context is still not clearly defined, understood and implemented since teachers are not really aware of the strategies used to introduce learner autonomy in their classrooms and learners, on the other hand, are not effectively directed towards such a goal.

It is unfair to rate Algerian students as non-autonomous and that learner autonomy is not a suitable goal in the Algerian educational context. Based on the aforesaid, taking into account that Algerian learners have the culture of groups (sense of collectivism) where they share opinions and experiences with others (parents, teachers and friends…), this external interventions are reflected in students' learning styles and decisions, which means that they do not create their own objectives but they make efforts and consult resources to meet their learning objectives. This latter, for Littlewood is known as reactive autonomy which is considered to be one of the earliest stages of autonomy. According to Littlewood, this stage can be developed to reach the co-called proactive autonomy .i.e. the type of autonomy that is usually attributed to the western education (qtd.in Fedj and Bouhass 454).

2.7.5   Western, Algerian and Asian Educational Cultures: Differences and Similarities

Based on the previous research works on learner autonomy in the European, the Asian and the Algerian educational contexts as shown above, general conclusions have been drawn about the differences between them in terms of learning attitudes, styles, and environments.

The following table was adapted from Nguyen (4) to summarize the socio-cultural differences between the Western and Asian cultures. He also mentioned that many researchers such as Hofstede, Biggs, Littlewood, Balard and Clanchy, and Bochner have shown interest in comparing different cultural settings and what characterizes both educational cultures. The table below illustrates the main points they share in common and the ways in which they are different.

Table 1

Learning and teaching across cultures

	Western Culture	Algerian Culture	Asian Culture
Learning Environment	-Learning is supportive, interactive and encouraging where students are involved in critical thinking therefore learning is student-centered.	-The dominant approach to learning is a teacher-centered approach. -Learning environment is less interactive. It tends to be formal.	-Teachers are more responsible about both teaching and learning. -learning is teacher-centered.
Learning Attitudes and beliefs	-Generally speaking western students are characterized by their ability to take the initiative to start a conversation. -Learning is much more based on the students' ability to think critically to create and construct new ideas. -Teachers believe and trust their learners' ability to take charge of learning .	-Students are dependent on their teachers and their roles are restricted to listening and asking questions. -Students believe that working hard and memorization are important factors to effective learning. -Teachers think that their students are not yet ready to be responsible about their own learning.	-Students rely on their teachers and are still influenced by traditional classroom practices. -Students seem to be passive and dependent.
Learning Styles	-Students learn individually,	-Students prefer to learn in groups	-collaboration is more appreciated
Teacher-Learner relationship	-The relationship between teachers and learners is shaped by informal ways of interacting in which students can question and challenge their teachers and classmates. Teachers are not automatically respected but they earn it.	-Formal relationship exists between the teacher and the students where students show higher respect to their teachers.	-The relationship between teachers and students is based on formal ways of treating each other, where students show much respect and gratitude to teachers.

At first, it is worth noting that not all cultures are the same and not all individuals share the same ways of doing things. What is appropriate in a given educational culture is frequently not suitable in the other; therefore learning and teaching across cultures take different forms and practices. As shown above, a parallel can be drawn between Algerian culture of learning and the Asian culture, in which both approximately share the same beliefs and attitudes concerning learning and education. Both cultures of learning have been shaped by traditional styles of teaching and are still influencing the current classroom situations. In such contexts of learning, teachers are considered to be at the centre of the classroom, i.e. teacher-led teaching is dominant and mostly adapted.

On the other side, Algerian educational culture is quite different from that of the Western culture. As opposed to the Algerian culture of learning, the Western culture gives more interests to how learners learn rather how teachers teach. More emphasis is targeted to learner autonomy and responsibility. Both teachers and learners are flexible and open-minded to differences and debate. In such environments, the learning process tends to be more creative, supportive and interactive. It might be a stereotype to say that autonomy is rooted in Western culture, thus it only works in the Western educational settings. Besides, having considered autonomy in language learning as a Western concept means only that it was first appeared in the Western continent.[21]

Generally speaking, the suitability of learner autonomy is a controversial multidimensional issue. The decision over whether it is accepted in one culture and entirely rejected in the other is still difficult; can learner autonomy be a universal goal? Clear cut-answer to such questions still requires further exploration and explanation in more educational environments in different parts of the world.

In spite of the differences in cultural and social practices and changes, some researchers believe in the universals of human capacity to be able to hold responsibility for their own learning. Little, in this particular view, believes that autonomous learning can be developed in any educational setting regardless of its culture. (Little *Learner autonomy – definitions* 13) For him, learner autonomy can be implemented in all learning contexts because it is primarily concerned with individual's capacity which is manageable to be changed and developed.

---

[21] The origin of learner autonomy is further explained in the first chapter p13.

Viewing autonomy as a concept basically associated with the learners' desire, mood and capacity of being responsible over the learning process. This standpoint seems to be reasonable since it puts learners at the same level of having equal chances to experience and develop autonomous learning. It is worthwhile to note, at this level, that first, not all literature about learner autonomy should be generalized as there is a huge discrepancy in terms of beliefs, attitudes and perceptions. Second, learner autonomy should not be considered as a geographical stance which means that the relevance of autonomy is not based on the location where individuals live.

Based on the literature, the world seems to be divided into two parts, the West is autonomous, though some studies have shown the contrary as it is the case of Macedonia as mentioned above; and the East is less autonomous or that autonomy is not suitable in the Eastern world neglecting completely the human universals. That is why we cannot entirely view geography as an influencing factor in autonomy development. Be it west or east, north or south, it is about willing, understanding and accepting to be responsible about learning.

2.8 Hofstede Cultural Dimensions and the Algerian Culture

Hofstede's study on organizations and cultures gives more interest to the cultural differences between nations and regions. The following dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, long-term orientation, and individualism are the main distinguishing factors among national cultures. To make such a distinction Hofstede surveyed more than 70 countries around the globe but Algeria was not one of them. The aim was to characterize people from different cultures, among the Afro-Islamic-Arab countries examined in this survey Morocco and Libya. Based on the idea that Algeria is also an Afro-Islamic-Arab country sharing the same location, language, religion and other qualities, the following analysis is made.

2.8.1 Individualism versus Collectivism

Hofstede defines individualism and collectivism as a dimension showing the existing relationships between individuals in a particular community. He defines individualism as a dimension in which members of a given society do things on their own by themselves. Such a society is characterized by the "I" as being superior to the "we". On the other hand, Hofstede conceptualizes collectivism as an opposite to individualism "Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for

66

unquestioning loyalty"(51). In the same way, Hofstede refers to individualism as "…the degree to which people in a society are integrated into groups" (Hofstede "Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context 11).

Riley mentioned that Hofstede considers the Moroccan society as being a more collectivist society. The relationship between its individuals is too closely because they have, since birth, been educated and raised in big families and groups who tend to take care of one another's interest and take decisions with the family (22).

Moroccans, according to Hofstede, are characterized by larger power distance, collectivism and strong uncertainty avoidance. Being in a similar position with Moroccan people, Algerians do share somehow the same cultural components. Apparently by way of deduction, the Algerian society has relatively low individualism and strong sense of collectivism. This means that the Algerian culture gives also more emphasis to the family and groups where the "we" is always superior to the "I". Within this context, Bouhass confirms that the Algerian individuals have been educated in an Arabic-Muslim society which shaped their attitudes as members who rely on their families in taking decisions and seeking their opinions and help concerning some aspect of their lives (411). This shows that the Algerian culture tends to be more collectivist. The same view was illustrated by Alesina and Paola, "the Scandinavian countries exhibit the lowest measure of family ties while the measures for *African*, Latin American, and some Asian countries are among the highest" (20).

In the same way, being an African country, Algeria is also characterized as exhibiting a higher level of family ties. This attitude towards the value of the family as the decision maker in ones' life has influenced the ways in which students' learn (learning styles and approaches). As a result, students rely heavily on their teachers and show a reluctant attitude towards taking the initiatives to determine the learning content and process. The teachers, in the collectivist societies, control and dominate the classroom and the students do not get into a discussion with their teachers to avoid confrontation therefore keeping "face".

Such a learning environment makes the promotion of autonomy quite difficult. The learners who still find it difficult to face, question and ask teachers are, of course, at the very preliminary stages of autonomy. In this case, classroom communication and interaction as a socio-educational phenomenon is characterized by higher respect, fear and shyness, which are barriers hampering the growth of learner autonomy.

2.8.2 Power Distance

Power distance refers to the power distribution in the society, and how this power is perceived by the individuals of a certain community, is it equally or unequally divided? In this view, Hofstede claims that power distance cultural dimension is "the extent to which less powerful members of institutions expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (28).

Hefstede et al state that "Power Distance Index scores are listed for 76 countries; they tend to be higher for East European, Latin, Asian and African countries and lower for Germanic and English-speaking Western countries" (qtd.in Hofstede, "Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context" 10). For Hofstede African countries are characterized by higher power distance in which individuals accept that power is not fairly distributed.

Large power distance is featured by a power hierarchy among the members of the society. This means that some individuals' power and status cannot be questioned or negotiated. More powerful individuals are always expected to guide and protect their followers. In such societies, loyalty and respect are appreciated for superiors and elders.

This view is reflected in the educational setting where the teacher is viewed as the most powerful, authoritative and dominant member in the class. Therefore, in such societies with higher power distance, the teacher is seen as the decision-maker and responsible about learning. The teacher is supposed to do more than teaching, he/she is expected to design learning content, objectives, select learning material, evaluate, instruct and guide learners towards achieving the set objectives whereas learners listen and do. This hierarchy, of course, limits classroom interaction and critical thinking that are key components of learner autonomy.

In such a learning environment, all initiatives to open a discussion come from the part of teachers. Another important result is that failure is mostly attributed to the learners' less efforts while success is often due to the teacher. Large power distance cultures education is more teacher-centered where learners are expected to be told what to do in their classroom and teachers have higher position and authority than their students .(Hofstede 9)

Algeria is an African country, thus, for Hofstede it has the same qualities and features. The notion of power is the Algerian society is not equally distributed and power holders are more superior to other citizens. Holding this view, in fact, has affected the Algerian

educational system where the teacher is the owner of power and knowledge whereas the learners seem to take a passive role in the classroom thereby being as such makes learners less autonomous.

2.8.3 Uncertainty Avoidance

'Uncertainty avoidance' as a cultural dimension refers to the ways in which people in a given culture deal with situations of uncertainty and ambiguity. It is defined as "the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations" (Hofstede, "Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind" 113). This dimension was also defined by the same scholar as "related to the level of stress in a society in the face of an unknown future" (Hofstede). It is a state of being worried, afraid, and stressed about what would happen in the future.

Countries with strong uncertainty avoidance such as Morocco and Libya are considered to be less risk taking which may result in being less innovative and creative in their lives. Such societies are characterized by higher stress and anxiety, and abnormal, disruptive behaviors are seen an offensive and intolerant. They also tend to obey rules and respect regulations.

This in turn reflects the teacher-learner relationship in the classroom which tends to be formal, strict and less flexible. The teacher is someone who should be highly respected, behaviors should be highly minded and words should be selected. Addressing the teacher in that way is a sign of politeness and respect to maintain harmony. It may result in poor learner-teacher interaction, and the learners may even avoid facing their teachers and questioning them. The classrooms are rule-oriented where rules and regulations are said to be respected to avoid any uncertain, unexpected or threatening situations.

As already stated, Algeria was not among the countries examined in Hofstede's Model, however to better confirm the aforementioned details, a similar research was carried out by Mercure et al in which the Algerian culture was studied. Results indicated that the Algerian society is a collectivist society with a score of (7.12/10), it tends to have large power distance (5.36/10) with strong uncertainty avoidance (8.6/10). (qtd. in Yahia-berroouiguet 147).

If one refers to Algeria as an Arab country, it is still shaped by the same dimensions. In the context of this, Obeidat et al claim that "…Hofstede (1991) studied the national culture

of seven Arab countries. He referred to them as the "Arab Group". Hofstede characterized Arab countries by having a large power distance, relatively strong uncertainty avoidance and high collectivism…" (517). In both cases, be it classified as an African or an Arab country, Algeria still possesses the culture of in-groups and families (collectivism), acceptance that power is distributed inequality (large power distance) and avoiding all what is uncertain (Strong uncertainty avoidance).

As mentioned earlier, in countries with large power distance, strong uncertainty avoidance and high collectivism, education tends to be teacher-centered, the teacher is the owner of knowledge and the teacher-learner relationship is formal and less flexible. By having all these beliefs and convictions in mind, the learners seem to have little freedom (or maybe no freedom) to determine what, why and how to learn. To this end, the learners in such societies are less autonomous compared with those in the Western culture.

Based on the above analysis and previous studies in Algerian context (Bouhass Benaissi Fawzia, Miliani Mohamed, Hadi Khiera, Misoum Mamaar), the following table is drawn to sum up the main characteristics of the Algerian classroom practices compared with the Hofstede Cultural Dimensions Model.

Table 2

Hofstede cultural dimensions and the Algerian classroom practices

Hofstede Cultural Dimensions	Algerian Classroom practices
Individualism • Purpose of education is learning how to learn • "I" is consciousness (Hofstede 11)	• More importance is given to what to teach • Learners participate in groups • Learners take decisions with teachers

Small Power Distance:	In the EFL Algerian classrooms:
• Subordinates expect to be consulted • Student-centered education • Hierarchy means inequality of roles, established for convenience (Hofstede 9)	• Learners only speak when they are invited • Teacher-centered education • The teacher is the knowledge supplier, dominator of class and the decision maker.
Weak Uncertainty Avoidance:	In EFL Algerian Classroom:
• Teachers may say 'I don't know' • Tolerance of deviant persons and ideas: what is different is curious (Hofsted "Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context"10)	• Teachers are expected to know everything • Learners are less risk takers and what is different is threatening • Showing respect to maintain face prerequisite for effective classroom atmosphere.

Despite the differences in views, it is worth noting that full understanding of a given culture and society requires sufficient knowledge about it which is not the case in Hofstede cultural dimension model. Consequently, Hofstede is not a native Arabic citizen and his model seems to be more western subjective. In addition to that, all researchers participating in Hofstede model are either Western European (Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede and Michael Minkov); or from USA as mentioned by Hofstede et al "The term uncertainty avoidance has been borrowed from American organization sociology, in particular from the work of James G. March" (189).

In such an ethnographic research[22], researchers must live with the intended group or community and experience their lifestyle, cultural beliefs and social aspects: Bryman explains that:

> ethnographic researchers immerse themselves in the group or society which they are studying in order to collect field data which may comprise descriptive notes and analytical comments about the culture of the members of the society or group which they are studying, including the

---

[22] This type of research is further explained in this work in chapter three, page 80-81

views and definitions of the situation of the members themselves, which are then written up in way that is amenable and accessible to the target audience or readership. (Bryman, qtd in Cohen et al 293).

At this point, one may wonder, do Hofstede and his fellow researchers have enough knowledge about the Arab culture? More importantly, culture is changeable which means that it is not stable; it changes its components over time. This is why Hofstede's model is, at the present time, somehow invalid since the founding pillars of the many societies are constantly changing due to the rapid technological invasion and socio- cultural changes. In order for Hofstede to better examine national Arab cultures, Arab Scholars must be involved in studying and examining Arab culture (Anthropologist and Sociologist).

Hofstede analysis also includes some exceptions and generalizations at the same time. For example, Hofstede et al state that "anxious cultures tend to be more expressive cultures" this means that people in such cultures use their body language and voice to express their emotions. They add that "Japan may seem to be an exception in this respect; as with other Asians, the Japanese generally behave unemotionally in Western eyes. In Japan and to some extent also in Korea and Taiwan" (Hofstede et al 196). " *In western eyes*" this perception does not reflect the reality of the Japanese culture but rather a viewpoint (it might be a stereotype). In addition to that, the use of *"to some extent"* in this context refers to uncertainty and lack of rigor and exactness in their research which is an underlying feature of research in human sciences.

Consequently, understanding cultures is a challenging task for a native who lives regularly in the target culture, it is certainly more challenging for non-natives trying to examine and analyze other cultures. Better analysis of national cultures is joint efforts of all scholars and researchers mainly psychologists, educationalists, anthropologists and sociologists from different parts of the world.

2.9 Conclusion

It is still unfair to see learner autonomy as a western concept in such a rapidly changing world. It is rather becoming a stereotype taken for granted. It is certainly true that culture is an important influencing factor in the development in learner autonomy; it may not completely prevent learners from being autonomous but rather limit the growth of learner autonomy. It is also worth mentioning that an individual's state of mind and cultures can be changed at any given point in time, at any place and under any situation. Thus, if learners are

appropriately directed towards changing their beliefs and correcting their conventional assumptions, they will undoubtedly develop some degrees of autonomy no matter what culture they possess.

In the light of the above analysis, the researcher intends to dimensionalize the Algerian culture using Hofstede cultural model and examines its impact on education in general and learner autonomy in particular. Initially, one may say that all indicators show that the Algerian national culture is shaped by collectivism where learning in groups is preferred, the teacher-centered system is dominant and the teachers are superiors to knowledge. In such a socio-cultural context, the learning environment seems to restrict or reduce the learners' ability to be responsible for their learning as it limits their freedom in making decisions about some aspects of the learning process

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have discussed the theoretical framework of learner autonomy and all what shapes its ground and the way it is manifested in different educational settings. This chapter is devoted to the practical side of the present study and the presentation of the data collection tools. It first, explains the research design and methodology in which the researcher aims to address issues related to the selection of the research methods.

To have a clear answer to whether the socio-cultural dimensions of the Algerian EFL learners facilitate the promotion learner autonomy or prevent them from being so, and to examine whether learner autonomy is a reality or an illusion in the Algerian educational settings, four data collection methods are used. This chapter aims to describe the current classroom practices through classroom observation, and provides a detailed description of teachers' questionnaire, students' questionnaire and group interviews in terms of purpose, design, ethical issues and the procedures followed to conduct each instrument.

3.2 The Gap in the Current Research

As mentioned in the previous chapters, Henri Holec is one of the leading pioneers of autonomy in language education and the first to deal with learner autonomy in Europe in the 1981. Since then, autonomy has become an influential universal goal in many other countries all over the world (qtd. in David and Richard 1). As a result, there is a general belief that autonomy is a "Western-culture based" idea because it was first introduced in the Western education, and it is believed to be unsuitable to non-western educational culture (Jones 228; Sonaiya 113; Erturk 652). Questioning the appropriateness of autonomy across cultures especially in non-western education has recently gained considerable attention in the literature.

According to Harmer, the way learners perceive self-learning is determined by the influence of the "educational culture" He illustrates that "…autonomy of action is not always considered a desirable characteristic in such contexts" (qtd. in Bouhass 411). In other words, learner autonomy is mediated by the cultural aspects where learning takes place and therefore it might not be accepted in all educational contexts. Moreover, none of us would entirely neglect that the socio-cultural beliefs, assumptions and thoughts have shaped, symbolized and influenced learning styles, preferences and practices in various different ways. This means that learner autonomy is not a straightforward issue and it needs to consider the social, cultural, political, and educational context in which it is introduced. So what is worth wondering and not yet discussed in various theoretical and practical investigations in the

literature especially in the Algerian context is the considerations of the socio-cultural backgrounds of the EFL students and their impact on students' learning attitudes and expectations in relation to learner autonomy in higher education in the Algerian context.

In this context, though learner autonomy is highly desired and appreciated in language classroom, it seems clearly that what suits a particular educational system in a given country is frequently inappropriate in the other. Consequently, in this research, a great deal of attention is given to learner autonomy as a socio-cultural concept.

3.3 The Purposes of the Current Research

The present research aims to explore and understand learner autonomy from socio-cultural perspectives. It analyses the ways in which these factors influence the Algerian students' learning attitudes and expectations. It also provides a critical reflection on whether or not learner autonomy is a reality in the Algerian educational setting. Since autonomy has been always seen as a Western cultural construct, this research attempts to examine its relevance and appropriateness in the Algerian context of learning and to identify the way autonomy is manifested in the Algerian culture.

This research also endeavours to dimensionalise the Algerian national culture using Hofstede cultural dimensions mainly collectivism and individualism, uncertainty avoidance and power distance to better understand their influences on learning in general and the ability of learners to learn on their own in particular. At a larger level, it intends to consider the socio-cultural dimensions of the setting where learning is taking place and raising awareness of educational policy makers, teachers and students about the importance of taking into account learners' cultural and social beliefs and attitudes before fostering learner autonomy.

Broadly speaking, this research studies the relationship between: 1) the social beliefs and the educational environment (sociology of education). 2) The cultural realities and the educational context of learning (anthropology of education) and 3) educational beliefs and the learning process (Educational culture). The main objective of the current research can be summarized as follows.

- Analysing the impact of the socio-cultural dimensions on EFL students' learning attitudes and expectations with particular reference to learner autonomy in higher education.

- Exploring the Appropriateness and the relevance of learner autonomy in the Algerian EFL context.

- Raising teachers' awareness about the importance of considering the students' socio-cultural assumptions in fostering learner autonomy

- Examining three major sources of influence (collectivism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance) on the learning process and learner autonomy.

- Providing valuable insights and strategies to successfully make students develop some degrees of autonomy.

3.4 Research Questions and Hypotheses

A. Research Questions

The debate in the previous chapters regarding the relevance of learner autonomy in different cultural contexts has led the researcher to wonder and question in similar ways the appropriateness of autonomy in the Algerian culture thus raising the following research questions:

a. How do the socio-cultural dimensions influence Algerian EFL learners' attitudes and expectations with reference to learner autonomy?
b. What are the attitudes of EFL learners towards learning in the Algerian higher educational context?
c. Are the Socio-cultural specificities of the Algerian learners considered in the promotion of learner autonomy?
d. Is Learner autonomy a suitable educational goal in the Algerian higher education?

B. Hypotheses

In an attempt to answer the research questions and limit the scope of the current research, the research formulates the following hypotheses.

- ✓ The Algerian socio-cultural dimensions may stand as a barrier limiting EFL students' ability to act autonomously.
- ✓ The socio-cultural dimensions of the Algerian EFL learners could not be taken into account in fostering learner autonomy.
- ✓ EFL learners may hold a negative attitude towards learning in the university level.
- ✓ Learner autonomy can possibly be a realistic educational goal if the socio-cultural backgrounds of the students are considered.

3.5 Research Design

To fill in the research gap, collect the necessary information and answer the research questions, four research data collection tools were used: classroom observation, questionnaires for both teachers and students and group interviews. Four teachers were observed and 20 teachers were handed a questionnaire to reply on. And group interviews with third year students. The practical part of the present research took place at Ahmed Zabana University of Relizane, during the academic year 2018/2019.

3.5.1 Nature of Research

To identify the impact of the Algerian socio-cultural beliefs on the learners ability to behave autonomously, the present research has adapted an ethnographic inquiry in order to: a) describe and analyse the Algerian local and educational culture and b) identify their impact on the learners' learning attitudes, expectations and the beliefs they hold about themselves as individuals and as students in the classroom, and c) explain the ways in which their perceptions about learning influence their ability to act autonomously

The nature of the current research can be classified from three different perspectives, Mode of inquiry, objectives and discipline. From the point of view of objectives, this research is descriptive. It is descriptive in the sense that it attempts to describe the Algerian learning situation and cultural reality as well as students' beliefs and attitudes towards learning practices and behaviours in the classroom.

Cohen et al state that most of research studies in the field of education are descriptive, in that they are done to "describe, compare, contrast, classify, analyse and interpret the entities and the events that constitute their various fields of enquiry" ("Research Methods in Education, 8th edition" 334). As a result, this research is a descriptive study since it is part of an educational research. The descriptive research aims to describe a situation or a phenomenon as it occurs in the real world. In this view, Cothari explains that the fundamental purpose of descriptive research is to portray "the state of affairs as it exists at present" (2). He further claims that not only the situation which should be described but also subjects and communities, in this sense, He illustrates that "Descriptive research studies are those studies which are concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual, or of a group" (Cothari 37). The researcher in this study describes the learning/teaching actual practices in terms of teaching methods, teacher-learner relationships and interactions and learning environments…etc through a classroom observation.

In terms of inquiry mode, this research tends to be a mixed approach research i.e. it is characterized by both quantitative and qualitative mode. Creswell and Plano Clark assert that mixed method "…combines various elements of both quantitative and qualitative approaches" which means that it a mixture of both qualified data (attitudes, opinions) and quantified items (numerical data); the main aim is "…to give a richer and more reliable understanding of a phenomenon than a single approach would yield" (qtd.in Cohen 32). Unlike single method, mixed method enables the research to gain more understanding of the issue being investigated.

It is quantitative in the view of the fact that it statistically analyses the items of both teachers' and students' questionnaire. This approach to research is mainly concerned with quantifying data, transforming it into numbers, statistics and classifications, "Quantitative research can be construed as a research strategy that emphasizes quantification in the collection and analysis of data" (Bryman 35). One of the drawbacks of quantitative method is that it does not cover all aspects of researched phenomenon. Quantitative approach alone may not dig out deeper and cover in detail all aspects intended to be explored. In addition to that For Riley the most appropriate method for learner autonomy research is mixed method, For him it is insufficient to make pure qualitative or quantitative research, but rather to mix the two (Riley 264). This is why the researcher has also adapted a qualitative research to better explain the cultural constraints and facilities. It is used to understand how Algerian students interpret the sociocultural ethos and how these beliefs influence their attitudes and perceptions regarding learner autonomy.

Thus, it is qualitative because it analyses and interprets the effect of the socio-cultural dimensions on the subjects' autonomous attitudes and that it combines both narrative descriptive classroom observation (participant observation) and groups interviews (semi-structured interviews). At this juncture, Bryman claims that interviews are the one of the main tools to be used in qualitative research (212).

As far as discipline is concerned, this research employs an ethnographic approach to research. This is due to the fact that the major aim of this study is to understand the sociology the Algerian education (social interactions and relationships), cultures and beliefs in relatedness to learner autonomy in advanced language education.

Ethnography as an approach to research has recently become popular in educational settings. It is defined as "a research strategy that allows researchers to explore and examine

the cultures and societies that are a fundamental part of the human experience" (Murchison 4). This approach investigates the role of real life contexts and learning environments for the sake of understanding and identifying their impact and influences. In the same way, Brewer views ethnography as an approach which studies "people in naturally occurring settings or 'fields' by methods of data collection which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities…" (6).

Similarly, O'Reilly argues that ethnographers have recently drawn their focus on "people's opinions, feelings and cultures" (16). He further expands that the main purpose of ethnographic approach is to make sense of "social life" as a result of "interaction of structure" (objects) and "agency" (individuals actions) through "the practice of everyday life" (17). Ethnographic approach therefore aims to describe cultural backgrounds, social interactions, and practices and activities of groups as they happen in everyday context.

Additionally, this research is ethnographic in the sense that it is characterized by the use of several data collection sources such as participant observation and interviews (group interview, usually small number to get detailed information. Robson and McCartan point out that "Participant observation is a widely used method in flexible designs particularly those which follow an ethnographic approach" (320). He also asserts that participant observation is a qualitative style that takes its origins in anthropology namely *Chicago School of Sociology* (319).

3.5.2 Research Setting and Population

The context of the present research is the department of English at Ahmed Zabana University of Relizane in Algeria. This department was opened until the academic year 2012/2013. It offers three years course degree (Licence) and two years to obtain the Master degree. This study program has recently been added (2019/2020) with one major speciality called "Language and Communication'.

To better make generalization of the results of the current study, full description of the target population and participants is helpful to have an idea about who are the individuals involved in this research. Population is as the whole number of subjects over which the results will be generalized. The target population of the present research encompasses EFL students at the same context.

As mentioned earlier, there are mainly three license levels in the department of English, L1, L2, and L3. 140 students enrolled as first students, second year level includes 167 students and 142 third year students, their total number consists of 439 students of different levels. It also has 25 teachers with different qualifications namely Doctorate, Master and Magister. They either teach as part-time or full time teachers with varying teaching experiences.

3.5.3 The Sample

Since it is neither helpful nor possible to work with the whole number of the students of the entire population, sampling is the best strategy to make effective use of time, money and energy. Cohen et al define a sample as a sub-group representing the target population (100). The sample of the current research is third year LMD students at the same university.

The sample is a random sampling or what is known as probability sampling, Kothari (60). Random sample aims to avoid the effect of the researchers' bias and subjectivity and give students equal chances of being selected (Hatch and Ann 42).

3.5.3.1 Students

The participants of the present research are third year LMD students. Their age ranges between 20 years and 37 years old. The total number is 142. They are mainly divided into 4 groups; each group consists of from 35 to 37 students. All students are Algerians studying in the department of English at Ahmed Zabana University of Relizane-Algeria.

They have been asked to voluntarily participate in the development of the practical side of this research. Learning experience, knowledge about what to learn, and language competence are other constraints limiting the development of learner autonomy (Sinclair, qtd.in Llaen Nucamendi et al 5) Consequently, the researcher opted for third year students as a sample because of their mastery of English, their experience as university students as well as their familiarity with the subjects matter being taught, this to maintain rigorous data, to enhance reliability and to avoid the interference of some indicators such as level, knowledge about the subjects taught, and language proficiency.

3.5.3.2 Teachers

Due to the small number of teachers at the department of English, Ahmed Zabana University of Relizane, all teachers have been invited to participate in the current research.

The department of English consists of 22 teachers, 12 of them are full-time and 10 part-time teachers, with different academic qualifications (PhD, Magister and Master Degree holders). Their experience in teaching varies from 3 years to 28 years at different educational levels (middle, secondary and university level).

3.6 Data Collection Methods

Knowing how research is done is placed at the heart of effective research methodology, and knowing how to plan to gather appropriate data guarantees the truthfulness and trustfulness of research findings. Research methods are data collection instruments used to put research into practice and dig deeper into the problem being investigated to draw persuasive conclusions and approach insightful recommendations and solutions.

Varying the data collection tools helps the researcher in enhancing research objectivity and data reliability. This is why; the researcher used four data gathering methods: a classroom observation, questionnaire for both students and teachers and group interviews with students. Triangulation[23] is employed to get valuable and valid data, compare and contrast data and cross-check the results.

Human behavior is not an easy feature to investigate, observe or assess, for this reason looking at the issue from a different standpoints is more preferable and even advisable to get in-depth information. Using multiple sources of data strengthens the research validity and enriches its reliability. The figure below illustrates the different tools used in the present research. Detailed description of each instrument is further explained in this chapter.

---

[23] See Cohen et al, Research methods 6edition 141.
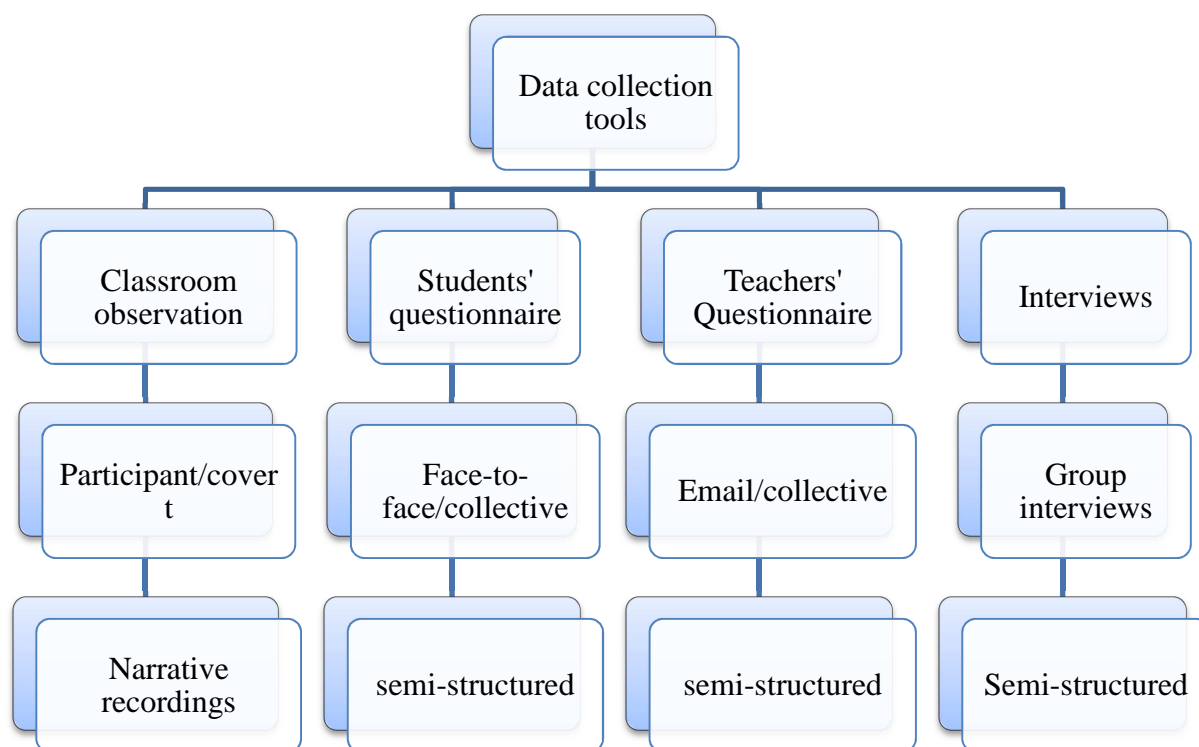
Fig. 4. Data collection methods

3.6.1 Classroom observation

In attempting to examine the impact of the Algerian socio-cultural dimensions on learners' attitudes and expectations, there is been a need to describe the current classroom practices and learning situations. Consequently, the researcher decided to set up a classroom observation to have a clear image about what is happening in the real classroom context and find out the extent to which the principles modern classroom are met of[24]. The classroom observation attempts to gather valuable information about both learning content and classroom practices and the ways in which both are learning and teaching are carried out in the real context.

Unlike the questionnaire, Observation allows the researcher to collect "live data" and closely watch what learners do rather than what they say or think they do (Denscombe qtd.in Hoadjli 47). One of the positive features of classroom observation is that "subjective bias is eliminated, if observation is done accurately" (Kothari 96). Meaning that having clear objectives and items to be observed, a sharp view to observe details, being careful, having full attention and concentration are all what shape an effective observation, so if the

---

[24] Among which learner autonomy as a goal.

researcher has succeeded in doing it appropriately, a higher degree of objectivity is maintained and subjectivity is minimized.

Observations aim at gathering data related to different aspects of the learning/teaching environment such as classroom interaction, activities and practices and teaching methods…etc In line with this view, Morrison states that observations attempt to fully describe the following classroom elements:

- the *physical setting* (e.g. the physical environment and its organization)
- the *human setting* (e.g. the organization of people, the characteristics and make-up of the groups or individuals being observed, for instance, gender, class)
- the *interactional setting* (e.g. the interactions that are taking place, formal, informal, planned, unplanned, verbal, non-verbal etc.)
- the *programme setting* (e.g. the resources and their organization, pedagogic styles, curricula and their organization). (Morrison qtd.in Cohen et al 397)

Being a part-time teacher at Ahmed Zabana University of Relizane has facilitated the task of undertaking a classroom observation. In the present research, a structured observation was undertaken; it is structured in the sense that the items observed were pre-planned beforehand[25].

The researcher adapted a direct participant observation to gather information about the current classroom situations. Participant observation is defined by Ranjit as "strategy for gathering information about a social interaction or a phenomenon in qualitative studies" (125). In a participant observation "…the observer seeks to become some kind of member of the observed group" (Robson and McCartan 323). The researcher played the role of a participant observer in the sense that he participated through giving feedback on the students' performance and providing his viewpoints when being invited by the teacher to say something about the issues being discussed.

Participant observation can be covert or overt. The former means that participants are not aware that they are being observed. On the contrary, the latter is done when the subjects know that they are being observed. In this research, the classroom observation was covert in the sense that both teachers and students were not informed that they are being observed. It is

---

[25] For more details, see "Appendix I" about classroom observation checklists where items being observed are defined. .

worth mentioning that teachers knew in advance that the students' will be observed however the researcher did not tell the teachers that they will be observed too in order for both participants to keep their natural behaviours. If participants know that they are being observed they may create an effective classroom environment to make the researcher appreciates their efforts or they may feel stressed, uncomfortable and anxious which will give an unusual picture about the natural classroom setting. To make research more ethical, participants were told that they have been observed by the end of the observation period.

To attain rich and instructive data, the researcher used descriptive narrative recordings to thoroughly note and scrupulously describe the learners' attitudes, behaviors and their roles in the classroom, the learning atmosphere, interaction, and teaching methods, classrooms practices and teachers' roles. The researcher has also used a tape recorder to register some of the observed sessions to transcribe both classroom discourse and interaction to figure out which type of interaction is dominating EFL classrooms as well as the rate of talking time. More importantly, since recordings were not filmed, non-verbal gestures were described through notes such as the teacher's body language and eye contact.

3.6.1.1 Description of the Classroom Observation Checklist

After having a precise image about learner autonomy and its main layers as mentioned in the first chapter, the elements described in the current classroom observation items has been developed by the researcher based on the objectives of research**.** Each item was designed to answer a set of questions as stated below:

a) **The classroom environment:** It focuses on classroom interaction and discussion, learning atmosphere, and teacher-learner relationships. It considers the following questions:
- Which type of classroom interaction is most dominant?
- Does the teacher encourage discussion among learners?
- Is the learning atmosphere challenging, supportive and motivational?
- What kind of relationship exists between the teacher and the learner?
- Do learners take the initiative to start a discussion?

b) **Classroom Activities:** It involves both the content and the procedure of classroom activities and practices.
- What activities are mostly performed in the classroom?

- Are there opportunities for learners to select classroom activities to do?
- Do the activities foster learner autonomy?
- Do they meet the learners' needs, goals and objectives?

c) Learners' Roles

- What roles do students often play in the classroom?
- Do the students take the initiative to ask questions and give responses?
- Do students actively participate in the learning content and process?

d) Teachers' roles

- What roles do teachers often play in the classroom?
- Do teachers really play the role of facilitators, counselors, managers, guiders?
- Do they involve learners in discussions?
- Do they invite their learners to critically ask questions?

e) **Classroom Management:** it focuses on three essential elements which are talk, time and interaction.

- Do teachers encourage the different types of interaction?
- Do they give equal chances of talking?
- Which talking time is more dominant, teacher or learner?
- Do teachers wisely control time?

f) Teacher's Feedback/ Students' feedback:

- What kind of feedback teachers give to their learners?
- Do they use politeness formulas to praise learners?
- Do they encourage participation through their feedback?
- How do teachers correct their learners' mistakes?
- Do teachers encourage peer-evaluation?

3.6.1.2 Classroom Observation Notes

Table 3

Classroom observation notes

The observer	The researcher
Time	2018/2019
Setting	Ahmed Zabana University of Relizane
Classes being observed	Third year students
Number of groups	4 groups

Number of students in each class	35 to 37 students
Number of teacher being observed	4 teachers
Modules	Research methodology, Oral expression, Sociolinguistics, ESP
Duration	Two months
Number of session with each module	✓ ESP and oral expressions 4 sessions ✓ Methodology and sociolinguistics 8 sessions)
Durations of each session	1 hour and 30 minutes
The nature of class	Tutorials
Context of observation	A lesson
Role of the researcher	Observer as a participant

3.6.1.3 Describing the Classroom

The observation took place at Ahmed Zabana University of Relizane at the Department of English. The classrooms at the department of English are rectangular designed where the seats are arranged in rows, each row consists of two tables fixed on the ground, and each table has three chairs. Each class has the capacity of nearly about 50 fifty students (chairs). The desk of the teacher is always fixed in the front position of the classroom. On the wall, there is only a whiteboard. The classrooms are not equipped with technological devices such as computers, data show or a loud speaker as shown in the picture below:
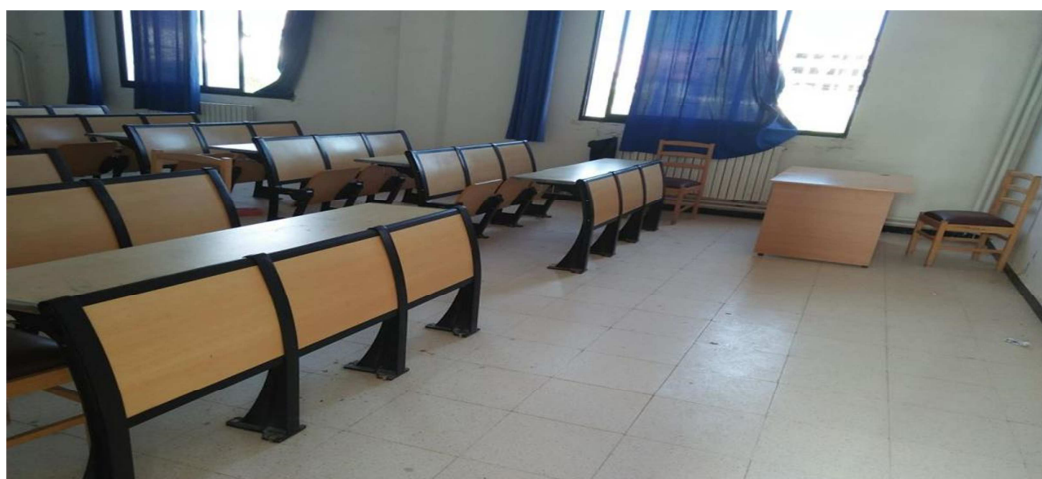
Fig.5. A classroom in Ahmed Zabana University (by the researcher)

The classes being observed include approximately thirty five (35) to thirty six (36) students (males and females); in most classes the number of females is more than the number

of males. Usually, students took seats at the front; however, most seats at the back remained empty.

3.6.1.4 Validity and Reliability of Observation

To verify that items observed where objectively described, the observation conducted in more than two months. To cross-check whether the observer has observed what it is supposed to be observed and covers the items of the checklist, the researcher has set other observations with different levels (first and second year students). To make the observation reliable and valid, the researcher played the role of the participant in which the research was taking notes and participating where necessary.

As to ascertain whether or not the observer bias affected the results, the researcher debated the current classroom practices with other colleagues at the same setting. All the teachers have agreed that the classroom practices and environment is still teacher-led which goes in parallel what the researcher has observed.

Moreover, the use of triangulation of data collection is another way to test and confirm the information gathered through the classroom observation; the author has used three other data collection tools as subsequent methods: students' questionnaire, teachers' questionnaire and group interviews.

3.6.2 Questionnaires

In this study, the researcher has used a questionnaire for both teachers and students to cover a range of germane issues to learner autonomy and its appropriateness in the Algerian educational context. The main purpose behind such a choice is that because questionnaire can be used with large number of sample in a short period of time. In the same view, Cohen et al consider questionnaires as one of the most useful data collection tools in the sense that they are less time consuming, less expensive and easy to fill in and analyse (Cohen et al, "Research methods in Education" 8ed 471). Below is a detailed description of both teachers' and students' questionnaire.

3.6.2.1 The Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire is divided into two main sections: 1) understanding learner autonomy and learners' perceptions and attitudes towards autonomous learning, and then 2) learners' beliefs about learning. The first section is entitled learner autonomy in

language learning and teaching, it was developed on the basis of Holec's definitions of learner autonomy. Twelve questions (12) were formulated; all questions are closed-ended questions. Questions revolve around learners' perceptions about themselves, characteristics of autonomous learners, factors behind learners' inability to take charge of their own learning, activities most practised in the classrooms, self-evaluation, and learners' involvement in designing the course syllabus.

The second section, on the other hand, is about learner autonomy and culture. This part consists of four (4) questions, three (3) closed-ended questions and one (1) open-ended question. It aims to inspect some cultural beliefs and stereotypes about learning, and to identify the main distinguishing factors of the Algerian learners' beliefs and assumptions. The items raised in this section are: decision-makers concerning studies, family intervention, teachers' opinion regarding studies, learners' perceptions about teachers' mistakes and lack of knowledge, and learners' beliefs about some cultural Algerian proverbs.

This questionnaire is aiming to identify:

- The extent to which learners view themselves as autonomous learners
- Their beliefs and attitudes towards learning and learner autonomy
- Their readiness for learner autonomy
- Their willingness to be responsible for their learning
- The degree to which students think it is not acceptable to criticize their teachers ideas and take the initiatives to correct their mistakes
- The way students view the teachers' position and roles
- The degree to which learners prefer to work in groups
- Their involvement in making decisions concerning learning content and process
- Their views about teachers' and parents intervention
- Their opinions regarding some Algerian cultural proverbs and beliefs about learning

3.6.2.1.1 The Students' Questionnaire Development

Considerable time was devoted to draw the final version of the questionnaire. On the other hand, significant literature (sources) was also reviewed to develop the students' questionnaire in terms of form and content. The content is related to learner autonomy and its layers and the form is pertinent to methodological procedures. Thus, the students' questionnaire has evolved through several steps as shown in the following figure.

```
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   Setting the questionnaire  │
│         objectives           │
└─────────────────────────────┘
               ↓
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   The questionnaire items    │
│         formulation          │
└─────────────────────────────┘
               ↓
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ The division of questionnaire into │
│           sections           │
└─────────────────────────────┘
               ↓
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│      Sample selection        │
└─────────────────────────────┘
               ↓
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  Writing the first version of the │
│        questionnaire         │
└─────────────────────────────┘
               ↓
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  Revising the questionnaire with  │
│        the supervisor        │
└─────────────────────────────┘
               ↓
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│    Modifying questions and   │
│      correcting mistakes     │
└─────────────────────────────┘
               ↓
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  Writing the final version of the │
│        questionnaire         │
└─────────────────────────────┘
               ↓
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Collective Administration of the │
│        Questionnaire         │
└─────────────────────────────┘
```

Fig. 6: Steps of students' questionnaire

As shown above, the first step is concerned with defining the objectives of the questionnaire which were grown out of both the research questions and objectives as stated above. After the determination of the questionnaire objectives; the items were constructed in form of questions. All items formulated are related to learner autonomy and how it is manifested in the Algerian educational cultural settings.

In the next step; the researcher divided the questionnaire items into two sections; one is entitled learners' beliefs and perceptions about learner autonomy and the second section is about examination of learner autonomy from the socio-cultural perspectives. The former aims

to describe the current practices and situation of learner autonomy. Whereas the latter's aim is to examine the relevance of autonomy in the Algerian cultural environment.

Before writing the questionnaire's first draft, the researcher selected the targeted sample as stated previously (Third EFL students of English language). After that, the first was written and draft shared with the supervisor to be revised where it was proposed to modify the form of the questions, eliminate irrelevant items and reduce the number of questions.

All feedback and comments were taken into account to write the final version of the questionnaire as shown in appendix III. The final version kept the same number of sections (Two sections) to make the questionnaire more focused and organized.

3.6.2.1.2 Type of Questionnaire

Based on the structure, the questions and their answers of some questions were pre-determined including dichotomous and likert scale questions whereas, some questions do not have predetermined set of responses. This is why students' questionnaire is a semi-structured questionnaire.

Based on the method of administration, the students' questionnaire was administered face-to-face. The researcher handed the questionnaire to the participants himself. It is also a collective questionnaire in terms of administration because students were collectively given the questionnaire to be completed.

3.6.2.1.3 Ethical Consideration

Before submitting the questionnaire to the students, the researcher consulted their teachers in advance to be allowed to distribute questionnaire collectively. After having the agreement from their teachers, the students were provided with a brief explanation regarding the main aim of the current research and that they are acting as a sample, in the meantime, they were asked to participate in completing the questionnaire. They also have the right to withdraw at any stage they want. All participants accepted to fill in the questionnaire apart from one male student who refused to take part in the study.

In the introduction phase of the questionnaire, it is noted that the answers received will be used for academic purposes; the researcher explained that filling the questionnaire is of great help in developing the practical part of the present research. This makes participants

feel at ease and confirm that their answers will not be used for other purposes other than to collect data and to improve the situation under study (learner autonomy). Besides, anonymity was also given part in the introduction so as to ensure trust and confidentiality.

3.6.2.1.4 Revising the Questionnaire

Revising the students' questionnaire is a crucial step in research; it increases objectivity and ensures its success. It allows reconsideration of items in terms of clarity, order and structure; consequently, before submitting the questionnaire to the selected sample, the researcher shared it with the supervisor. The arranged meeting with the supervisor has resulted in:

- Reducing the number of questions raised from 14 questions in section one, to 12 questions.
- Concerning the follow-up question of the first question, which was an open-ended question "If yes, according to you what characterizes an autonomous learner?" it was suggested to make it a closed-ended question with multiple options. The same thing with the third question which says "what roles do you often play in the classroom?" in which eight options were proposed.
- The last question of the first section says "How often do you work in the classroom?" students were given options about the type of work (individual, in groups or in pairs). However the supervisor suggested that each type should consist of multiple choices. So it was also modified and likert scale options were added (Always, often, sometimes, rarely, never) next to each type to make the question more understandable[26]
- As far as the second section is concerned, most of the questions were structurally modified, however the content and the purpose remained the same.

Feedback on clarity of questions, wordings, types of questions, number of questions (neither too long nor too short), format, content and purposes of each question were all at the core of this phase.

---

[26] See Appendix III of students' questionnaire

3.6.2.1.5 Questionnaire Administration Procedure

The students' questionnaire was a self-administered questionnaire in the presence of the researcher. The presence of the researcher is quite interesting because it allows respondents to consult the researcher where necessary. It also enables the researcher to calculate 1) the number of the students in each group (students' in their regular classes are divided into groups) and 2) the number of the students who did not accept to be subjects in this study.

The students' questionnaire was administered by the beginning of the academic year of 2018/2019. With the help of their teachers (the researchers' colleagues) the questionnaire was distributed during their regular classes. The teachers accepted to dedicate some time to filling the questionnaire. Students were allowed to seek the researchers' help in case of any unclear questions as it was the case of the last the second section. Once the questionnaire was completed, the researcher expressed his gratefulness and appreciation to both participants and the teachers for accepting to take part in this study and for their precious time and tremendous help.

3.6.2.2 The Teachers' Questionnaire

Some of the questionnaire items are rooted in the work of Borg and Al-Busaidi with some modifications. Unlike the students' questionnaire; the teachers' questionnaire was administered using ICT tools like Facebook and e-mail. 22 teachers were sent the questionnaire via email. 20 teachers have filled in it and sent it back in due course either via E-mail, Facebook or face-to face.

Teachers' questionnaire consists of three parts. The first section is about the bio-data of the informants in terms of gender, teaching experience, level taught, and their educational qualification in addition to whether or not they have been trained.

The second section is entitled teachers' perceptions about learner autonomy. This is to scrutinize teachers' knowledge with regard to learner autonomy and what does it entail. The third section deals with the social and cultural perspective of learner autonomy. As the title of the section proposes, it seeks to study the issue of learner autonomy as a sociocultural concept from teachers' perspective.

3.6.2.2.1 Teachers' Bio-data

Table 4

Teachers' bio-data

Number of teachers	22
Number of responses received	20
Academic qualification	//////
Master	10 teachers
Magister	6 teachers
PhD	4 teacher
Years of teaching experience	///////
1-5 years	8 teachers
5-10 years	3 teachers
10-20 years	7 teachers
20-30 years	2 teachers
Gender	///////
Males	4
Females	16

3.6.2.2.2 The Aim of Teachers' Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire has been addressed for the sake of understanding the issue of learner autonomy from teachers' perspectives. It also gives a clear comprehensive explanation about the ways in which the learning/teaching process is managed in the era of learner-centered approach.

More importantly, the questionnaire seeks to identify the teachers' attitudes and perceptions about learner autonomy and their familiarity regarding autonomous learning. It is also considered as an additional tool to ensure the quality and reliability of the data gathered from classroom observation and the students' questionnaire.

3.6.2.2.3 Types of the Questions

In this questionnaire, the researcher has formulated different types of questions; some are open-ended questions, rating scales, closed ended questions. The latter for Nunan is "An open item is one in which the subject can decide what to say and how to say it" (143). This

means that open questions have free space given to the respondents to express their thoughts, opinions and experiences as a way to answer the questions. Teachers' questionnaire includes four (04) open ended questions[27].

It also includes closed-ended questions which consist of "range of possible responses" (Nunan 143). In other words, closed questions take the form of multiple options where the informants are asked to choose one or more among the available choices which represent or reflect their views and knowledge. In this questionnaire there are (5) closed ended question.

Two dichotomous questions were formulated in teachers' questionnaire. For Cohen et al, "*Dichotomous* questions have a 'yes'/'no' response". Other questions are rating scales questions, this type of questions according to Cohen et al are related to degrees, frequency and intensity of response or what is known as likert scales. In addition, the first question in section two was adapted from Borg and Al-Busaidi questionnaire. The latter consist of 37 items; however the researcher has only adapted seven statements (statements 3, 13, 16, 19, 23, 25, 30). The choice of statements related to social and cultural perspective of learner autonomy is based on the set objectives of the current research.

3.6.3 Group Interviews

Generally speaking, a research interview is a discussion between the researcher and participants either individually or in groups. In this sense, DeMarrais defines it as "a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study" (DeMarrais 54). Group interview is a form of an interview in which there are several participants debating a defined topic. In the same way of reasoning, Robson and McKartan explain "Interviewing as a research method typically involves you, as researcher, asking questions and, hopefully, receiving answers from the people you are interviewing. It is very widely used in social research."(284)

Group Interview is a type of a research interview and data collection tool in which the researcher discusses and asks questions about a given issue in relatedness to his/her research topic with the participants. The aim of this strategy is to get closer to the respondents and get information about their beliefs, attitudes, expectations, and assumptions with regard to the issue at stake. In this respect, Ranjit Kumar defines group interview as "a form of strategy in qualitative research in which attitudes, opinions or perceptions towards an issue, product,

---

[27] Including questions 1, 2, 4 and 7 in section one, as shown in Appendix IV.

service or programme are explored through a free and open discussion between members of a group and the researcher."(124) Kumar further adds that "A group interview is both a method of data collection and a qualitative study design." It aims at gathering data from the interviewees in a collective way rather than individually (Kumar 336).

Similarly, Krishna Kumar explains that:

> group interviews involve the use of direct probing techniques to gather information from several individuals in a group setting. Such interviews can be conducted by one or more interviewers, with or without an interview guide, and with groups of varying sizes and composition (7)

Group interviews are not easy to conduct. Its difficulty lies in the variety of opinions and experiences shared by the interviewees. Besides, the size of the group should be well selected to be easily controlled and managed. As mentioned in the definition of Kumur, it may include two interviewers to facilitate the process of gathering, taking note and managing the group interview.

3.6.3.1 Types of Interviews

Types of interviews are different and vary in terms of purposes, type of data to be obtained and the way in which it is conducted. Types of interviews can be classified in terms of structure, discipline and procedure.

In terms of structure, in the present research, the researcher used a semi-structured one-to-one interview, it is semi-structured in the view of that fact that issues to be addressed are prepared in a form of "interview guide", and the guide consists of a number of the questions. In this type of interview, the researcher is flexible and has some freedom to modify, explain and change both content and structure of questions especially when participants raise unplanned important issues (Richards 186). Interviewees are interviewed one by one though they are allowed to exchange ideas and share their opinions. Not only content can be modified but also the sequence of questions. Bryman explains that "It typically refers to a context in which the interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of an interview schedule but is able to vary the sequence of questions"(212).

As far as the procedure is concerned, this interview is a group interview, in which the researcher (interviewer) has arranged a group discussion with the interviewees to debate the issue under investigation. The students were divided into five groups, seven students in each

group. The size of the group should be reasonable to maintain an effective debate and control. Groups should be "small enough for everyone to have opportunity to share insights and yet large enough to provide diversity of perceptions" (Krueger & Casey 6). Large groups may create an atmosphere where participants do not feel at ease sharing and debating their ideas and opinions freely.

From the disciplinary perspective, the focal point of the current research revolves around the notion of learner autonomy and its relatedness to culture and society; this is why the interview's questions touch some cultural and social issues such as family as a social interaction and students' inherited socio-cultural beliefs about learning. As a result, this group interview is an ethnographic interview. Sharan and Elizabeth state that ethnographic interview "from anthropology focuses on culture…" (113) The purpose of this type of interview is to "understand the shared experiences, practices, and beliefs that arise from shared cultural perspectives" (Brenner 358).

3.6.3.2 The Purpose of Using Group Interviews

According to Cohen et al an interview has three main purposes. First, interviews are used to collect data from participants collectively. Second, it is undertaken to test hypotheses and examine the relationship between variables. And third, to further explore and explain what respondents in other research methods have said and to validate and confirm what the researcher has found in the previous data collection instruments (351).

The major aim behind choosing group interview as another data collection instrument is to further explain, explore and comprehend the students' answers in the questionnaire, because some questions were superficially answered particularly the questions of the second section where informants were asked to explain some cultural proverbs. In addition to that, varying the source of information makes the data more reliable and persuasive.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, since autonomy is always associated to Western-culture, the Algerian educational system is characterized by certain traditions and practices that make it different from that of the Western education. Hence, this interview attempts to: 1) identify learners' attitudes towards learning. 2) Examine the relationship between learners' expectations and learner autonomy 3) figure out the influence of three main cultural dimensions, namely collectivism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance on students' learning attitudes and learner autonomy.

3.6.3.3 Participants Selection and Group Size

The researcher selected the members of the group randomly. The students were invited to voluntarily participate in the group interviews. Another important aspect to consider in conducting a group interview is the size. The latter should be quite reasonable in terms of quantity in the sense that it should neither be large nor too small.

Though researchers agree with the idea that group size should be reasonable to be easily managed, they suggest different sizes, ranging from 6 participants to ten or twelve. According to Kumar (124) it is ranged between eight (8) and ten (10) members to make the discussion manageable and easy to control. The larger the size of the group is, the harder it becomes for the researcher to control the group. As a consequence, less qualified reliable data is gathered. In this research, five (5) groups were selected, seven (7) students in each group.

3.6.3.4 Homogeneity of the Groups

Equality in participants determines the degree to which the data gathered is reliable. This homogeneity is likely to minimize the effect of many variables. For this reason, all the groups participating in the group interview share in common the following features:

a) All interviewees are third year students.(the same level)
b) All participants are Algerian students (the same culture)
c) They all have the same learning experiences (Three years at university)
d) They are being taught by the same teachers (at university)
e) They have been studying at the same university.(the same educational setting)
f) They Approximately have the same age
g) They live in the same city (Relizane[28])

When students share the same educational background and age, they first feel at ease expressing themselves   and sharing their opinions. Besides, homogeneity reduces disagreements and increases agreement among participants because they share the same cultural beliefs, learning experiences and belong to the same learning environment.

3.6.3.5 The Piloting Phase

Effective interview takes into account the size, the time, the place and the quality of questions. Being an effective interviewer requires skills and certain roles to perform to obtain

---

[28] An Algerian city located in northwest of Algeria.

the desired results. While this is the case, after designing the interview items, they have been piloted through a group discussion with first year students. The aim of piloting is to pre-test the interview questions. The pilot phase attempts to answer the following questions:

- What size each group should contain?
- What time is sufficient to undertake the group interview?
- Are the questions simple and clear?
- Do interviewees find the questions easier to understand?
- How to manage the discussion?

In this phase, the researcher used an audio-tape to record the discussion to highlight its shortcomings and drawbacks. One disadvantage drawn is the size of the groups, 10 students are quite difficult to manage and control. Another important point to note is the time devoted to accomplish the interview. After completing the piloting phase, the researcher took a set of decisions:

- Reducing the size of students in each group into 7 students.
- The time devoted is 45 minutes or more with each group.
- Have the students discuss their opinions with each other to better enrich the debate[29].
- Adding the project information sheet to the consent form to make learners well aware of the issue being investigated.

Table 5

Procedures of conducting group interviews

Step	Place	Participants	Number of participants
1. **Pilot phase**		First year	2 groups (10 students in each group)
	Ahmed Zabana		
2. **Actual research**	University of Relizane	Third year	5 groups (7 students in each group)

---

[29] In the pilot phase interviewees showed a general consensus about almost the main points of the interview, having them communicating the issue would help in understanding their beliefs and opinions.

3.6.3.6 Steps of Conducting Group Interviews

Since the last question of the second section in the students' questionnaire was not informative, the researcher decided to undertake group interviews to get in-depth specific information about the researched issue in which sequential procedures were followed:

A. Before

Before starting the discussion, the students were given the project information sheet to have an idea about the following points:

- What is the research about?
- Who can participate?
- What are the benefits of participating?
- Trust and confidentiality

After that, the interviewees were given a consent form to be completed and signed as an agreement to participate in this study. Concerning the language to be used, the main language of communication is English, but students were informed that they are allowed to use Algerian dialect in case they feel blocked and unable to carry on the discussion in English. This is due to the fact that the main purpose of the discussion is not to test their language proficiency and skills but rather to inspect their beliefs, perceptions and expectations and learning experiences. Besides, some Algerian dialectic proverbs were written in standard Arabic and the Algerian dialect which requires shifting from English to Algerian Arabic.

B. During

To build a rapport and create a flexible atmosphere, the researcher did not start directly debating the topic with the interviewees but rather asking about their moods and their studies. In order to keep the meeting natural, students were not asked to be recorded so that the students will not feel shy and uncomfortable due to their unusual habit to have recordings. The time devoted was 45 minutes for each group and sometimes more due to flow of the discussion. The language used was mainly English; however, the informants were using some Arabic words to express their beliefs and opinions.

C. After

After the discussion was closed, the students were given the chance to add anything in relatedness to the main element of the topic being debated. To enhance objectivity and research ethics, after closing the debate, the students were informed that they have been recorded. The interviewer explained for the interviewees why they have not been informed in the beginning, the students appreciated the idea and agreed with the fact that being told to be recorded will certainly cause them shyness and stress therefore being unable to elaborate ideas and share experiences at ease. The students were also reminded to get in touch with the researchers using the contacts provided in the project information sheet to be provided with the report of the data or resources pertinent to the learner autonomy. Finally, the researcher expressed his appreciation and gratefulness to the participants for their collaboration and participation.

3.6.3.7 The Researcher' Roles as an Interviewer

The researcher in the group interviews has played a crucial role to gather reliable and valid data, shifting from being an interviewer to a manager, and controller is a challenging task as listed below:

a. Building rapport: To make students feel comfortable, the researcher attempts to build a friendly relationship and atmosphere with the participants.

b. Asking questions: one of the common roles of the researcher in a semi-structured group interviews is to ask, re-ask, explain and add questions depending on the flow of the discussion.

c. Listening carefully: showing interest in what the participants are saying through effective listening is likely to help the researcher getting the desired required data and make participants elaborate and express their ideas.

d. Taking notes: the researcher did not only rely on the audiotape recordings, but also taking notes when necessary.

e. Keeping the discussion on track: to maintain a good discussion, participants should keep on the same track debating the focal points of the research under study. It was not that easy to limit the participants' ways of thinking, however the researcher was from time to time reminding the participants to stick to the main issue.

f. Managing the group: though the number of the participants was not that larger (7 students), managing the group was somehow difficult. Participants showed an interest on the topic especially when debating cultural beliefs and social elements; this has resulted in unexpected overlapping and interferences.

g. Motivating participants to debate their ideas and share experiences: the researcher also encouraged interviewees to negotiate ideas, exchange real life experiences and share opinions to enrich the discussion.

h. Avoiding making judgments or agreements: in order to avoid bias and subjectivity, the researcher did not make any judgmental feedback or any agreements with the participants.

Though the number of the group size was reasonable, the researcher encountered some difficulties in managing the groups due to overlapping and both students' lack of experience as interviewees. After gathering data from the aforementioned data collection instrument, the data was transcribed and analysed both qualitatively.

3.6.3.8 Ethical Considerations in Interviewing

There two main documents used to enhance objectivity and ethics in research: the project information sheet and the consent form. The former provides detailed information about the researcher, his affiliation and the issue being investigated. The latter is a written document where interviewees have to fill in and sign as a proof that they accept to participate in this group interview. Another interesting ethical issue is anonymity; interviewees were also informed that their speeches will be transcribed anonymously to prevent any harm especially when discussing family issues and its influence in learning.

3.7 Conclusion

The third chapter is primarily concerned with the research methods and methodology. Its main focus is to explain the research plan and the tools to be used to collect data. It thoroughly describes the different instruments and explains the procedures in which each one is carried out to gather reliable, valuable and in-depth information about the issue at stake.

To identify the relevance of learner autonomy in the Algerian cultural context, four data collections tools are used: a) classroom observation to describe the actual classroom practices, b) A questionnaire for teacher to examine learner autonomy from teachers' perspectives and c) another questionnaire for students to identify students' attitudes and perceptions towards LA, d) and a group interview to have a deep understanding of how

learner autonomy is influenced by the social and cultural practices and backgrounds. These issues and others are further elaborated, analysed and discussed in the next chapter.

4.1 Introduction

After gathering the required data using the research tools described in the third chapter, this phase is mainly concerned with presenting the participants' voices and contributions. It analyses and interprets data by comparing and contrasting it to other similar results. In this chapter the researcher tries to delve into the complexity of the learner autonomy and the nature of the Algerian social and cultural realities and the ways in which they are related and how they influence students' learning attitudes and expectations.

The chapter starts by analyzing the data collected through classroom observation where the different aspects of the Algerian classroom layers are presented and described. Then it discusses the main findings of this tool. In this chapter, both teachers' and students' questionnaires and group interviews are analyzed, interpreted and discussed. The data in this research is analyzed and both qualitatively and quantitatively through descriptions, categorization and statistics. It is then followed by a general interpretation of findings in which the data gathered from different research instruments are displayed.

4.2 Analysis Methods

After gathering the required data, the researcher is in a good position to start analyzing and interpreting it. As mentioned previously, qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed method) of analysis are used in this study. It systematically analyses and interprets students' cultural and educational beliefs, their social assumptions and learning attitudes and expectations. This analysis is done through describing, narrating, (observation) and editing and transcribing (interview) and using charts, diagrams and tables (questionnaires).

It is noteworthy to mention that qualitative data analysis and interpretation methods are not universal among researchers. Different scholars may use different ways to do their qualitative research. There is no one rule that fits for all qualitative data. Robson and McMartan explain that "there is no single or correct way to analyse and interpret qualitative data". In this research, there are two main sources of qualitative data (participant observation and group interviews), in both tools the researcher started by organizing data, describing, interpreting and then drawing findings. This kind of analysis is effective because it gives details, in-depth information about the issue in question.

Also, qualitative data analysis involves analyzing observational actions, meanings, words, beliefs, opinions, concepts, definitions…etc. In this view, Bryman puts that

"Qualitative research is a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data" (380). This type of analysis gives interests to the description of data in form of words more than numbers and frequencies. This research analyses qualitatively mainly the data gathered from classroom observation and group interviews where the following items are described:

a. The Algerian classroom practices through narrative description,
b. Students' and teachers views and attitudes towards learner autonomy,
c. Students' understandings and interpretations of their social and cultural aspects in relation to learning and learner autonomy.
d. Classroom as a social interaction and the role of the family;
e. And students' expectations.

On the other hand, quantitative data analysis involves using statistical and numerical information. Unlike qualitative analysis, the main emphasis of quantitative analysis is the use of numbers. In this research, a simple way of calculating was used. It is worth mentioning that we have used tabulation and other statistical tools such as pie-chart and graphs to analyze the data gathered. The quantitative analysis of this work revolves around the following points:

a. Students' opinions about their roles expected roles
b. Students' opinions about their teachers' roles
c. Students' involvement in the learning content
d. Classroom activities
e. Type of classroom work
f. Reasons behind students inability of act autonomously

4.3 Classroom Observation Analysis

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the classroom observation aims to describe the classroom reality and context and the participants' actions, practices and roles to examine the extent to which learner autonomy is promoted in EFL classes ,i.e. does the current teaching/learning practices contribute to the achievement of the former objective. The main items observed were closely related to classroom environment, interaction and practices, teachers' and students' roles as well as feedback and talking time.

The current research study has developed its own observation protocol based on researcher's readings of the different relevant documents in the literature of learner autonomy. It was both an audiotape recorded observation using a smartphone in order to analyse teacher talking time (TTT) and learner talking time (LTT), verbal communication signs and classroom interaction types. Though the quality of recordings was not as good as it should be; it did not affect the examination of the main elements (TTT vs LTT; types of classroom interaction).

The first contact with the teachers was to ask for permission to attend and observe some classes and to introduce the topic and its main objectives. The classroom observation took place by the beginning of the new academic year 2018/2019 (By the end of October) due the simple reason that the first sessions are usually dedicated to getting to know each other (self-introduction to both teachers and students) and to discuss the yearly syllabus of the course being taught where the teachers are required to involve students in deciding what to learn through identifying their needs and lacks .i.e., what they have learnt in the previous year and what is still lacking. In other words, learners' involvement in negotiating the learning content which is one of the defining characteristics of autonomous learning. This stems from Holec's commonly cited definition in the literature that autonomy is the ability of learners' to be responsible about all aspects of their learning, and that this ability involves determining both learning objectives, content and process, evaluation and progress (Holec 3)[30]

4.3.1 Physical Seating and Classroom Design

The first thing that has attracted the attention of the observer was the physical aspect of the classroom and the way it is designed. To give a clear image about the physical position of both teachers and students and design of the classroom, the researcher took a picture of an empty classroom as shown in the previous chapter[31].

The design of the classroom is still the same as it used to be in the traditional era, the teacher's desk is always in the front position of the classroom and the students directly face the teacher. In all classes observed, the teacher always kept moving in the front position of the class or sometimes staying in his/her desk. It is noteworthy that the classroom is only provided with a white board fixed on the wall.

---

[30] Holec's definition of autonomy and its main layers are explained in the first chapter.

[31] See Fig.5. in chapter three page 88

4.3.2 Classroom Interaction

One of the indicators characterizing autonomous classrooms is interaction and communication between its members, the extent to which there is a balance between the different types of interactions is likely to determine the extent to which the classroom is autonomous and manageable.

In all classes without any exception, the main dominating type of classroom interaction is teacher-learner interaction as it is shown in the verbatim transcripts below. It is always the teacher who takes the initiatives to invite students to ask questions, to get engaged into the discussion and debate the topic being proposed. Most of the teachers interact only with active members of the classroom though they always invite others to participate too saying "*what about the others*". However, the majority of learners seem to be unwilling to positively react with their teachers.

Learner-teacher interaction is ranked at the second place; it is only limited to students' questions about the clarity of the content being explained by the teacher saying for example "*I have not understood*" or asking for repetition saying "*can you repeat please*". Few students (mainly those having seats at the front position of the classroom) were interacting positively with the teacher, but sometimes overlapping from both sides (the teacher and students) resulted in poor unorganized interaction.

Learner-learner interaction was rarely observed. Students seem reluctant to debate and negotiate one another's ideas and opinions. Finally, learner-material type of interaction was also among the items observed by the researcher. This type of classroom interaction was used only by one teacher (ESP teacher). The material used was handouts.

4.3.3 Talking Time Distribution

A closer look at the dichotomy teacher-talking time (TTT) and learner talking time (LTT) was also given a special emphasis, the aim is to identify which type of talking time is mostly dominant in EFL classrooms and whether or not there is a balance in turn taking. To two samples of extracts verbatim transcripts of two teachers are considered below:

Teacher1:

A male teacher of research methodology, he has been teaching at university for 7 years. He has been observed for more than 8 sessions (One hour and half in each session)

Extract 1:

Teacher1: ( ) ↑ how to make   [a questionnaire]

Some students: [yes]

Teacher1: there are many researchers who wrote books about <u>conducting reviews</u> (.) interviews (.) conducting research (.) <u>making observation</u> (.) <u>making focus group</u> (.) library (.) ↑how to use the library(.) ↑ how to review a book (.) ↑ how to review a journal this is concerning <u>literature review</u> (.) now the summary

Student: (   ) ((a student seating in the front position of the classroom speaks about the summary))

Student*:* what he means by the summary (.) is what we call the indication of (   )

Teacher1: ↓ there are some forms of review of literature which may conclusion of research (0.8) for example (.) there are some people who summarise all the research on writing (.) in (.) in one research (.) it means they start they read all the other research and = make a summary of research for you (0.9) to help you

Some Student: yes

Teacher1*:* you will find (0.7) a <u>review of literature</u> concerning writing =you will find all the literature that spoke about writing (.) you will find literature concerning motivation you will find all (   ) they start it starts in 1952 (.) then it developed in 1960 (.) like we did with ( ) we start from (.) Aristotle (.) ah from (.) Plato and Aristotle and David and so we made a (0.5)

Students: A SUMMARY

Teacher1: a <u>summary</u> .when we write (.) this this called a summary so it is a sum of what all research that it is made on (.) [on]

Students: [on a topic]

Teacher1:   [a topic]

Teacher 2

Sociolinguistics is the second module being observed. The teacher is a female teacher; she has three years of teaching experience at university. Below is an extract taken at the middle of the session.

Teacher2*:* yes <u>fatima</u> what is the difference between <u>social variation</u> and <u>regional variation</u>

Student: (   )

Teacher: mmhm study which dialect?

Student: <there two> (   )

Teacher: → we have <u>social variations</u> and we have <u>regional variation</u> so dialectology is ↑mainly linked with ↑related to [regions] to geography yes

Many students: [regions]

Teacher: yes

Student: sociolinguistics studies language [(   )]

Teacher: [Yes]

Student; and dialectology studies dialects in (.) some [regions]

Teacher: [yes]

Another student: a kind of [(   )]

Teacher: [yes]

Teacher: → (.) They said that Scholars ((students are making noise)) said that before the coming of <u>WILLIAM LABOV</u> (.) <u>in dialectology</u> was mainly related to the study of dialect and the differences between regions (.) at the level of geography only (.) and they try to look for other classes and draw borders and [yes]

Students (some students):   [(   )]

The teacher: but by the coming of William Labov (.) said that the <u>variation between dialects</u> is not (   ) but (.) only there is another social variable that affect the way (   ) and this paved the way to develop sociolinguistics (0.8) we can say that dialectology is (   )

Students: (some students)   YES

The teacher*:* write please →Language is the powerful medium of communication in any speech community (.) full stop (0.9) This is the way how to start an introduction okay (.) It has attracted the attention of many linguists (0.8) who [adapted]

Students (the majority):   [not yet]

The teacher: (the teacher repeated the above sentence) who adapted different methods of investigating the complexity of this phenomenon (.) full stop (0.9) there is no doubt that language varies from one country to another and even within a single country…

As shown in the above transcription of recordings, it is clear that the rate of TTT is higher compared to LTT. In other words, turn talking is not fairly distributed among the members of the classroom (teacher and students); it was clearly noticed that the teacher is dominating the classroom discourse and that few chances are given to the learners. The learners only talk when they are either victimized to talk or when answering by yes/no. While this is the case, it seems that teachers unconsciously cannot control their talking time because they are used to being the most talkative element in the classroom and learners are habitually used to listen to their teachers. In addition to that, most of the students seem to be unwilling to speak in the classroom.

Both teachers' talk and learners' talk is characterized by Overlapping, unclear speeches, and pusses. This may show that turn taking is not well organized which, of course, affects the classroom interaction and learning atmosphere. Overlapping is an indication that students prefer to talk all together (speaking at the same time with their teacher). This may mean that the classes being observed are characterized by a collectivist dimension of learning where group discussion is desirable. Unclear speeches are due to bad quality of recordings and some noise of students seating in the back position of the classroom.

4.3.4 Learning Environment

Classroom is a place where teachers and students create a supportive environment to reach the learning objectives and develop self-learning. The environment where students learn affects largely their academic achievement and roles in the classroom. After attending several sessions with different teachers in charge of different modules, the researcher noticed that the classes being observed tend to be less formal in the sense that it seems that there is a good relationship between teachers and students; this relationship was characterized by some sort of humor, flexibility and tolerance. Besides, teachers are familiar with their students' names, and most of the time, they call them individually by their first names.

Nevertheless, the learning environment seems less competitive and less challenging because classrooms observed were marked by poor discussion and interaction. Though they

are encouraged to participate in the construction of knowledge, students do not critically reflect on/and analyse the learning content provided. In all modules observed, the teachers did neither negotiate with their students what is to be learnt (learning content), but rather provided them with pre-determined syllabus. Some teachers dictated the elements of the syllabus and others wrote them down on the board. As far as the learning process (how to learn), students were informed that they will be asked to work in groups in written projects and oral presentations as a formative assessment[32].

4.3.5 Classroom Activities and Practices

One of the most important features that link theory to practice is the classroom activity. The selection of the activity, its design and instruction are of paramount importance in its success or failure. The most frequently used activities are oral presentations, written projects and group work.

As far as oral presentations are concerned, mainly in sociolinguistics, research methodology and ESP, teachers share the same instructions to prepare and present oral tasks as summarized in the following table:

Table 6

Oral presentation protocol

Teachers' instructions **And task procedures**	• The teacher explains that the oral presentation is part of their assessment (Tutorial mark) • The teacher asks the students to choose one of the elements in their yearly syllabus. • Students are given one week to prepare their works at home. • One week before, the teacher informs two or three groups to get ready to orally present their work. • Students are asked to write a small report about the chosen topic to be handed to the teacher

---

[32] This type of assessment is an in-process evaluation that takes place during the learning process.

Type of work	Pair or Group work
Materials	Pen and board
Time	No time indicated

While presenting, it was noted that most of the students read the content of the report rather than presenting it orally. Some students could succeed to do the task properly; however, many of them found themselves always in need to refer to their written report. Memorization of the content was also clearly shown through the learners' facial expression, (moving their heads and eyes ups and downs, looking at the ground, long pauses and hesitations) their avoidance to face classmates and lack of explanations. Once the presentation ended, the teacher appreciated the members of the groups' efforts and then invited the next group to go to the floor.

By the end of each session, the researcher asked for the teacher's permission to have a quick look at the written projects of the works being presented (only in sociolinguistics). The aim was to check out the form (organization) and the bibliography. Concerning the former, most of the writings are long blocks and too intensive. As for the latter, in most projects, it was missing. No bibliography means that the students get ready- made for use information from the internet.

It was remarkable that the classroom is not equipped with a data-projector so that students present effectively using the "PowerPoint Microsoft" and make the content looks interesting to easily attract the other students' attention. In this technological era, all classrooms observed were not equipped with ICT tools such as a computer, data-show or any other digital devices.

Written projects are another classroom task proposed by some of teachers either as part of the oral presentation task as explained earlier or as a distant home-assignment. In this task learners are asked to work in groups to do a project.

. In the classroom, group discussion was repeatedly observed where the teacher usually asks questions and learners answer. However, it was always the teachers, who encouraged the students to share their opinions, express their ideas and exchange experiences through asking questions. Most of the students' answers were limited to small talk. Very few

students took the initiative to talk without being told. Whereas, most of the students do not participate out of their will, this has made some teachers called their students' names.

The classroom activities mentioned so far are used to foster autonomy and to make learners responsible about their own learning. At first glance, it seems that this classroom has the intention to move towards self-learning and autonomy. However, the way in which learners do these projects and interact with the given tasks is somehow far to contribute in the accomplishment of the former objective i.e. projects, classroom activities, tasks, and practices are still done in a traditional manner.

Students' feedback in oral presentation was among the elements to be observed, but its absence was clearly noticed. This may make the classroom less interactive and competitive. It is worth mentioning that these activities and practices are part of their formative assessment which means that the activities are exam-based but not to foster autonomy. It seems that the main purpose of all classroom activities is not to make students autonomous but rather to give them grades (marks) on their performance.

4.3.6 Learners' Roles

The learner-centered approach has placed the learner at the centre of the classroom in which much responsibility is held. Learners' role is one of the indicators the researcher gave more emphasis to during the classroom observation to see how students' act in the classrooms. As mentioned before, the students' presentations and written projects are used as part of their continuous assessment; very few students were taking notes on their own either using their notebooks or their mobiles. In all classes observed, the dominant role of students is listening to their teachers. Other students' roles can be limited to the followings:

- Asking for clarity
- Asking for repetition
- Asking questions (rarely)
- Answering questions (small talk)

4.3.7 Teachers' Roles

Learner autonomy did not come to belittle or diminish the role of the teacher, but on the contrary, the teacher is expected to perform other roles which are quite different from

those played in the traditional approach to teaching. It was noticed that the teachers use different techniques to present their lessons. During the researcher's attendance, by the beginning of the session most of the teachers did as follows:

- Greet their students and ask about their moods.
- Inform students about the title of the lesson
- Ask students about the previous lesson
- Ask the students who are meant to present to go to the floor and start presenting.

Sometimes the teacher first starts introducing the topic being discussed, explaining using the board or handouts and then dictating the lesson (only one teacher who dictates the lesson).In case of using the handout as a type of learner-material interaction, the teacher gives some time to the students to read silently. Once the students finish their silent reading, a volunteer is invited to read the text out loud and the rest of the students are asked to follow and reflect on it so that to discuss its meaning collectively.

It is also important to note that the voice of the teacher was clearly heard, the language used was clear, simple and understandable and words were pronounced clearly. In addition to that, Body language was somehow used effectively and eye contact was unfairly maintained (more emphasis was given to students in the front position of the classroom).

During the presence of the researcher, it was observed that some roles have been repeatedly played by the teachers observed. These roles can be summarized in the following points:

- Explaining the lesson
- Being the knowledge provider and main source
- Asking questions
- Inviting students to ask questions
- Checking students' understanding
- Giving instructions
- Dictating the lessons (not all teachers)
- Giving feedback (praising correct answers and good performances)

4.3.8 Teachers'/ Students' Feedback

Getting feedback from the teachers is one of the ways to make students engaged in the learning process, motivate them and show how worth their participation is which in turn makes them develop some degrees of autonomy.

In the classes being observed, teachers were praising good performances and correct answers only saying for example, "*very good*", "*good*", "*nice*" and other positive formulas. Sometimes teachers even repeat or reformulate what the students said as a way to show that their answers were to the point and extremely helpful in clarifying the issue the teacher is trying to explain. However, not all students' answers were correct; some answers are slightly correct or completely wrong. Students who did not perform well or answered correctly did not receive any feedback or comments.

It was also noticeable that peer-evaluation was absent. Students do not reflect, comment or evaluate one another's work without being invited by their teachers. In a few cases when their teachers invite them to give their feedback, very few students positively give their comments saying for example "*thank you for your clear presentation*", "*I appreciate your work, thank you*" or "*you did well*". However, there was not critical reflection on the content being presented but rather praising their classmates on the performance only.

4.3.9 Organization of the Classroom

The classroom organization is generally marked by the following features:

- The class time is not wisely used
- Classes do not start on time (late by 5 to 10 minutes for both teachers and students)
- The title of the lesson is written on the board; however, its main sub-headings are not clearly stated.

Before closing the session, teachers either summarize the main themes being discussed. Finally, teachers thank students for their attention and hope to see them again in the next session saying for example "*thanks for your attention, see you next week*".

After two months of observation, a distinction between the actual practices of an Algerian EFL classroom and the characteristics of an autonomous classroom is made. The following table summarizes the main differences between both contexts.

Table 7

The difference between an autonomous classroom and an Algerian EFL classroom

Classroom Observation items	An autonomous classroom	Actual classroom practices in the Algerian context
Teachers' roles	- Facilitator - Source of knowledge - Counselor - Controller (Little 4)	- Transmitter of information - The only source of knowledge - Dominator of class - Dictating, explaining, and giving feedback
Talking time **Teacher** **Feedback**	- Learners talk more than teachers do. - Encourage participation - Provide corrective constructive feedback	- Teachers talk more than learners do - Praising correct answers only - Correct wrong answers
Learners' Roles	- Setting learning goals - Selecting learning materials - Planning activities - Active participants - Taking notes - Evaluating learning progress (Holec 3)	- Listening to the teacher - Asking questions (rarely) - Receiver of information - Passive participants - No self-/ peer-evaluation - Writing what is written on the board.
Classroom nteraction	All types of classroom interaction are encouraged: - Teacher-learner - Learner-teacher - Learner-learner - Learner-material	Most of the time: - Teacher-learner Rarely: - Learner-teacher - Learner-material - Learner-learner
Classroom activities	- Varies the activities: group work, pair work, discussions, presentations, role play, portfolios, diaries…	- Oral presentations - Written projects
Learning Environment	- Flexible - Challenging - Competitive	- Formal - Calm - Routine

4.4 Discussions and Interpretations of the Classroom Observation

Despite the massive reforms in the last decade, all indicators stated above show that it is actually a teacher-centered approach to language teaching dominating the Algerian EFL

classroom at university. Similarly, the Saudi Arabian classroom is driven by the same approach in which it is found that "the educational institutions in Saudi Arabia are mostly maintaining the traditional teacher-student-classroom setting where the roles of teachers and students remain basically the same: teachers lecture and students listen" (Tamer 12) .Classroom practices and activities are still done in a traditional manner. Consequently, the Algerian EFL classrooms are still non-autonomous in the sense that it is still the teacher who dominates the talking time, interaction, takes initiatives in the classroom and explains the lessons.

Moreover, EFL students still possess the roles they hold from the traditional mode of teaching and learning. Listening to the teacher, receiving information and taking notes are among the main roles students play inside the classroom. As a result, The students seem still reluctant to take the initiatives in the classrooms and rely heavily on their teachers.

On the other hand, the dominance and teacher authority over the class is also another aspect which was clearly observed. This dominance is shaped by the rate of talking time; teachers talk more than learners do, this is due to the learners' traditional beliefs and their reliance on classroom input and instructions. Despite the fact that teachers know that their roles are not limited to lecturing, giving information and being the main source of knowledge as shown in their responses to a questionnaire, they still find it difficult to put it into practice.

As far as the teaching/learning activities are concerned, oral presentations and written projects are the main classroom activities used by EFL teachers; at first glance, it seems that teachers have the intention to use some activities to foster learner autonomy in their classes despite the lack of materials and knowledge about how to promote autonomy. The further teachers can lead their students towards autonomous learning is up to the level of giving written projects, oral presentations and asking learners to work in groups; however, these practices are done and presented in a traditional way. This may create an inactive learning environment and limit the classroom interaction.

Autonomy places feedback, self-evaluation and peer-evaluation at the foreground of the learning/teaching processes and its development as Holec mentions in his definition of learner autonomy that the ability of learners to take charge of learning includes evaluating progress and outcomes (3). The teacher is not the only one who evaluates the learning outcomes but learners too. Harmer states that"…we can also encourage students to give feedback to each other. Such peer review has an extremely positive effect on group cohesion"

(150). The teacher is not only expected to praise good answers and correct wrong ones but rather to encourage participation. Students' feedback in oral presentations was among the elements to be observed, but, its absence was clearly missing. This may make the classroom less interactive and competitive which in turn results in poor learning environment.

Almost all teachers do not negotiate the learning content and process with their learners but rather in most cases they give them ready for use syllabi to be taught along the year. Teachers' lack of trust and belief in their learners' ability to take decisions concerning their learning has made it difficult to create an effective atmosphere where autonomous learning is a prominent goal. Being in such a learning environment where the teacher is the decision-maker and the one responsible about both teaching and learning is in itself constraining the development of learner autonomy.

The majority of the learners do not take the initiatives to reflect on the knowledge provided by their teachers. In the same way, Hozayen believes that "Reflection makes learners more active and critical in the sense that they learn to analyse their learning strategies and, thus, start making their own learning decisions about whether to improve them and in which way" (123) On the other hand, teachers are still unable to control themselves when they talk and to give their learners more opportunities to debate, expand and explain their ideas and opinions.

It is also worth mentioning that the nature of the module being taught, the teaching methods and the content of learning are essential elements in making students engaged and having effective participation in constructing knowledge. For example, in Oral Expression classroom, most of the students feel somehow comfortable and take an active role in the classroom which is not the case with the rest of the courses being attended.

Concerning the classroom interaction, it is actually still teacher-learner interaction (TLI) dominating the classroom. Learner-teacher interaction (LTI) is only limited to asking questions for repetition or re-explaining in case of lack of understanding whereas thez learner-learner interaction (LLI) is rarely employed. As a result, students either lack critical thinking and communication skills, self-confidence or are not used to peer-evaluation. Both learners and teachers are still in subordination to traditional beliefs and practices concerning classroom interaction.

Meeting the 21st century requirements requires the integration of tech tools not only in developing language skills but also self-learning skills and digital literacy. The use of ICT

tools has proved its efficiency in enhancing students' responsibility and independent attitudes inside and outside the classroom; unfortunately, all classes being observed are marked by lack of materials and technological facilities which has made both teachers and students rely on traditional methods to present the learning content using only the white boards and handouts.

The results have also shown that teachers' roles are still the same as those played in a teacher-centered approach such as knowledge provider, correcting mistakes and whole class teaching. On the other hand, students are still passive recipients of information. Both teachers' and students' roles are conventionally mediated by traditional educational beliefs.

To say that autonomy is a shared responsibility between teachers and students (partners), it is appreciated to arrange the classroom using a circle or U-shape to show that this is no superiority and hierarchy and ensure genuine face-to-face interaction, which means that the teacher is an important element in the classroom but still a member of a group. However, in this study, in all classes the chairs are fixed on the ground therefore the classroom seating cannot be changed. This is why it is impossible to have different arrangements and positions.

To conclude, learner autonomy in the Algerian EFL classrooms is an appreciated striving goal. Both teachers and students are under the influence of traditional beliefs of learning and teaching practices. The teachers seem to have the will to foster autonomy in their classrooms but they still lack practical knowledge about it not to mention the unavailability of facilities. The students, on the other hand, are not yet well informed about their new roles and responsibilities.

4.5 Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

Table 8

Students' bio-data

Number of students	Distributions	Return
132	100	99
100%	75.58%	99%

4.5.1 Section one: Students' Perceptions about LA

This section seeks to address a number of relevant issues to autonomy from the learners' perspectives. The overall aim is to examine students' familiarity with the notion of LA; their understanding of their roles and their attitudes towards its effectiveness and implementation is EFL classrooms.

Question1: Are you a learner who depends on him/herself for learning?
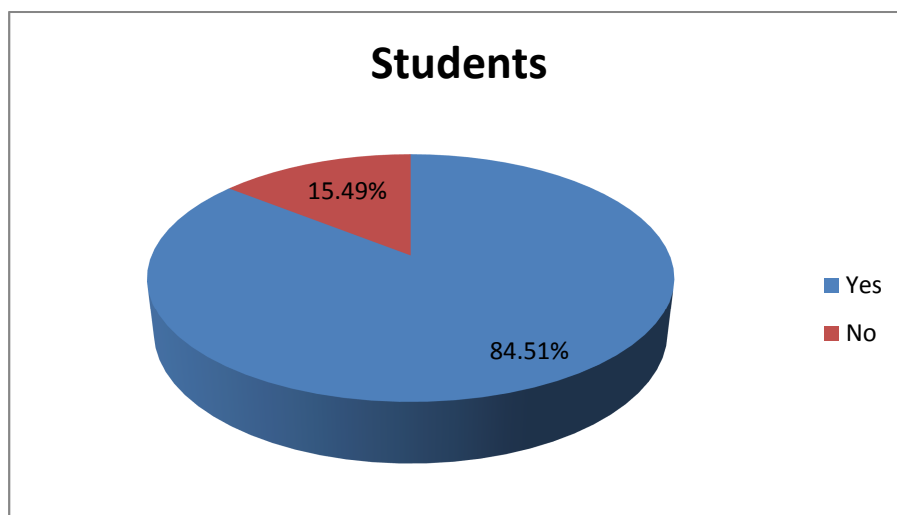
Fig. 7. Students' self-evaluation in relation to autonomy

It is quite important to know how students perceive themselves, i.e., whether students think they are autonomous or not. Thus, this dichotomous question aims to check students' perceptions of themselves as autonomous learners. The diagram below illustrates the case. As shown above, the majority of students (84.51%) consider themselves as being self-independent for their own learning. And only 15.49% do not rate themselves as learners who have the ability to be in charge of their own learning.

Question 1 (follow up): If yes, according to you, what characterizes an autonomous learner?
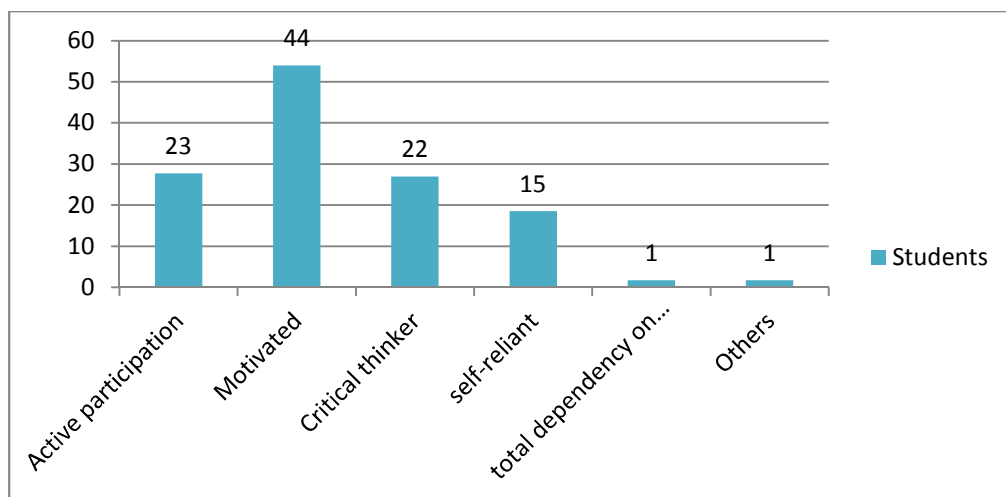
Fig. 8. Students' opinions about the characteristics of the autonomous learner

In this multiple choice question, the researcher aims to check-cross the reliability of students' answers regarding the first question .i.e. whether or not students are autonomous. As displayed in Fig.8. Higher percentage (44.84%) is given to the second option "Motivated" indicating that autonomous learners are motivated. Active participation is the second most chosen option by 23.55% of participants, followed by Critical thinker option (22.92%). Just one student opted for "total dependency on the teacher" as a feature characterizing an autonomous learner. Students were also given space to add other relevant features, however only one student who added "searching for knowledge" as another indicator for autonomous learners.

Follow-up of question 1: If no, it is due to what?

Table 9

Students' opinion about the reasons behind their inability to act autonomously

Option	Number of responses
1. Lack of motivation to learn	7
2. Teacher authority	4
3. Bad learning conditions	7
4. Not knowing how to learn autonomously	10
5. Impact of traditional beliefs	2
6. Others	1

The table above shows the reasons behind students' inability to be autonomous, the highest percentage (66.67) is given to the forth statement "Not knowing how to learn autonomously" which means lack knowledge regarding how to learn autonomously is the main reason why students are not autonomous. The students also claim that both "lack of motivation" and "bad learning conditions" are the main obstacles facing learners in taking some control over their own learning with a percentage of 46.67%. About (26.67%) of students declare that teacher authority is also one of the barriers in learner autonomy implementation. 13.33% of respondents state that the impact of traditional learning beliefs is another constraint behind this issue. And Only 6.67% add that dependency on technology made learners unable to behave autonomously.

Question 2: what does autonomous learning mean to you?

Table 10

Coding options concerning students' opinions about the definition of autonomous learning

Options	Code
1. Learning without the teachers' supervision	Statement 1
2. Being totally free in doing things	Statement 2
3. Being responsible about learning	Statement 3
4. Learning individually	Statement 4
5. Learning in collaboration with others	Statement 5
6. Others	others
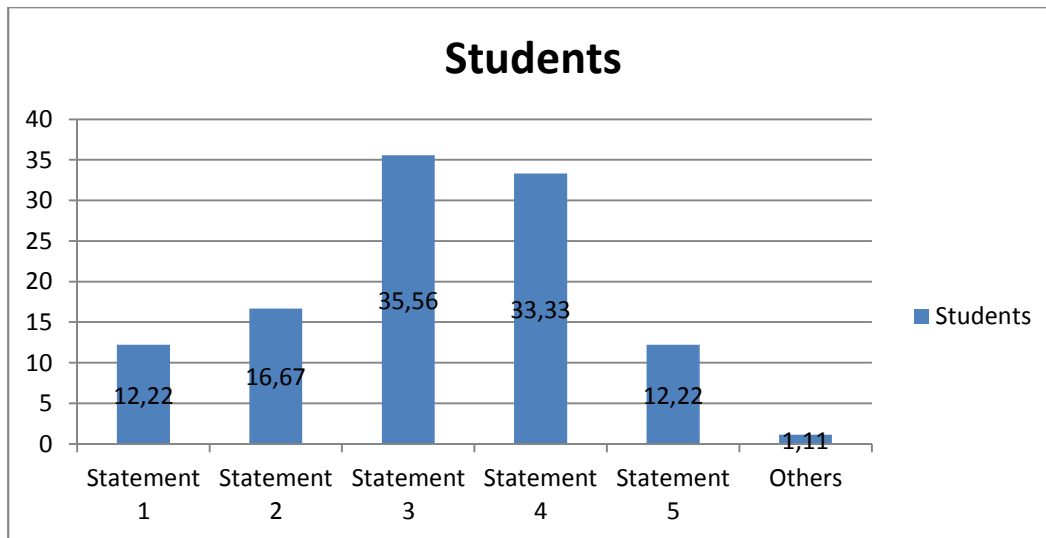
Fig. 9. Students' opinions about the definition of autonomous learning

Fig.9. shows that 32 of participants believe that autonomous learning is being responsible about learning, 30 of them defined it as learning individually, Around 15 of students participating in this study suggest that learner autonomy is a freedom of learning. 11 subjects think that autonomy is associated with learning without the teachers' supervision and the same number of respondents argues that learning in collaboration with others is what constitutes autonomous learning. 1 student only points out that autonomous learning is *"learning with a teacher who is merely a guide"*. It is also worth mentioning that 6 students did not answer this question.

Question3: What roles do you often play in the classroom?
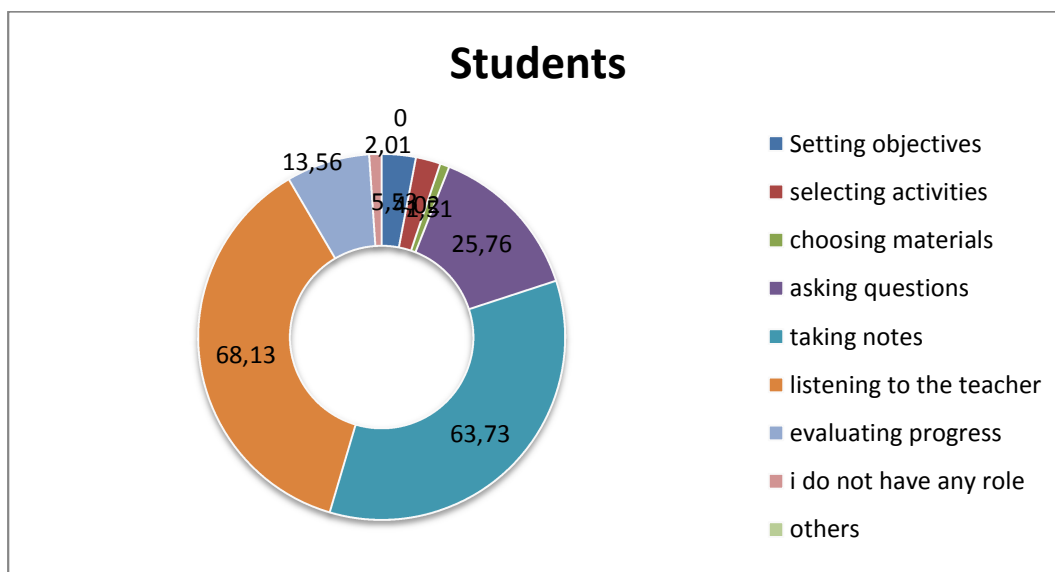
Fig. 10. Students' roles in the classroom

The main objective of this multiple choice question is to figure out whether or not students are aware of their expected roles and responsibilities as autonomous learners. Thus the majority of informants view their roles as either listeners to their teachers (68.13%) or note-takers (63.73%). Asking questions is the third most chosen option by 25.76% of informants. On the other hand, the minority of students participating in this questionnaire believe that their role is to evaluate progress 13.56%. Only a few students (5.52%) think that setting learning objectives is among the main roles they are supposed to play in the classroom. 1.51%of them opt for "choosing learning materials" and lastly 2.01% of respondents think that they have no role to play in the classroom. It is to be noted that only one student did not reply to this question.

Question4: Do you self-evaluate your progress?

Table 11

Students' role as a self-evaluator

Options	Responses
Yes	75
No	14

In this question the researcher aims to identify whether students are aware of the fact that their role in autonomous learning involves self-evaluation and to check the results of the previous question particularly "evaluating progress" option. As presented in table 11 above, 84.26% of participants reply by "yes" claiming that they self-evaluate their progress and only 15.73% answer by "no" asserting that they do not evaluate themselves. In this question the rate of response is 90.81% in which 9 students did not answer the question above.

Question5: Do your classmates evaluate your work in the classroom**?**
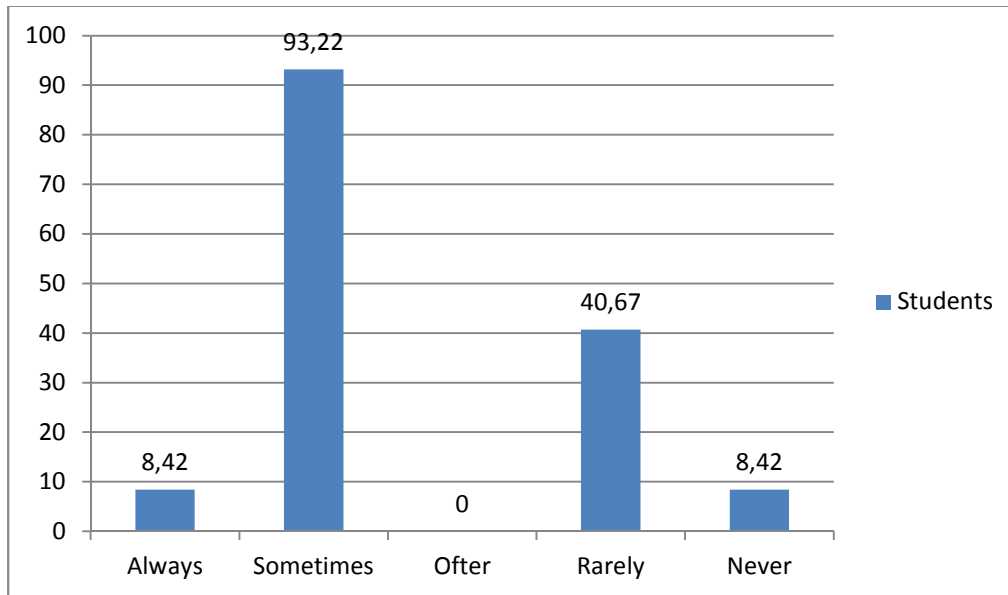
Fig.11. Students' peer evaluation

Furthermore, question five (5) is asked to find out whether students work in collaboration to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. Fig.11. above represents that the majority of students (93.22%) claim that they "sometimes" evaluate their classmates' work. About 40.67% say that they "rarely" do so, and 8.42% of the students assert that they "always" have peer evaluation and the same percentage of participants argue that they "never" assess progress of their classmates in the classroom.

Question6: Do you consider the teacher as the only knowledge provider?
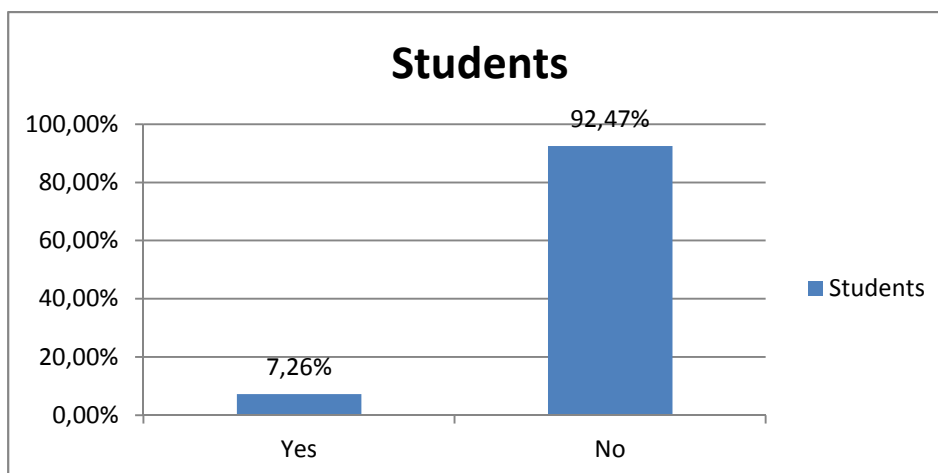
Fig. 12. Students' opinion about their teachers' role as knowledge providers

This question aims to demonstrate students' opinions about their teachers' role as the only knowledge providers. As shown in Fig. 12, most of the students (92.47%) answer by "no" assuming that the teacher is not the only knowledge provider and only about 7.26% of students answer by "yes" believing that their teachers are the only source of information answering by "yes".

Question 7: Do your teachers involve you in deciding what and how to learn?
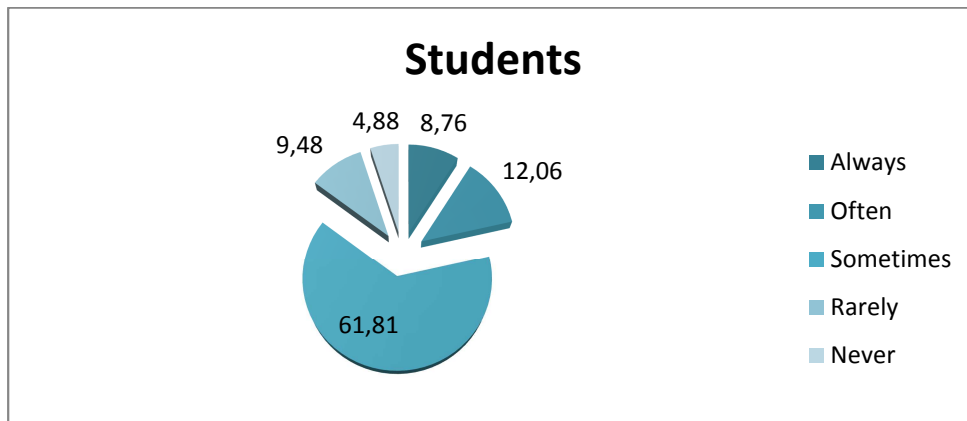
Fig. 13. Students' involvement in deciding the content and process of learning

Learner involvement in deciding the content and process of learning is the main important feature of autonomous learning. As displayed in Fig.13, 57 students answer that their teachers "sometimes" involve them in deciding what and how to learn, 12 of informants affirm that they are often involved by their teachers to make such a decision. 9 participants answer by "rarely" and 8 "by always" and only 4 students answer by "never" indicating that their teachers do not involve them in the learning content and process.

Question8: If your language skills are limited, whose responsibility is it?
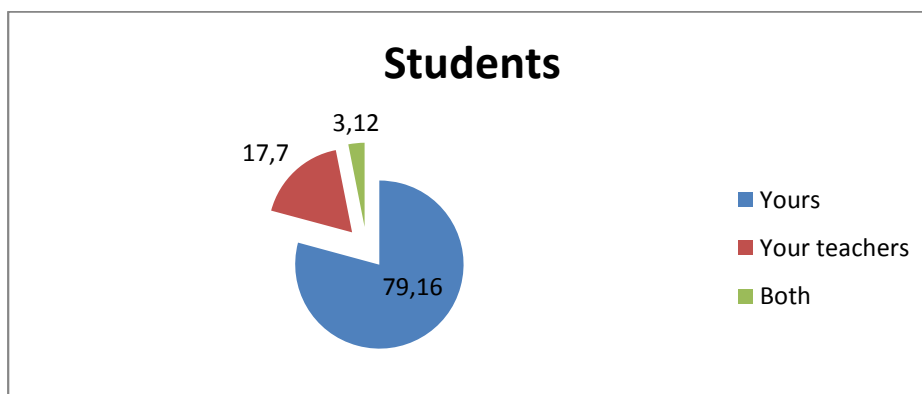
Fig. 14. Students' opinions about the responsibility of learning

The pie chart indicates that 79.16% of students think that it is their responsibility if they are limited in terms of language skills. About 17.7% subjects answer that if their language proficiency is poor; it is the responsibility of their teachers. And 3.12% students only have a neutral opinion in which they assert that it is a shared responsibility replying by "both". The rate of response in this question is 97.95% which reveals that only two participants did not reply to this question.

Question9: Which kind of classroom activities do you do most in the classroom?
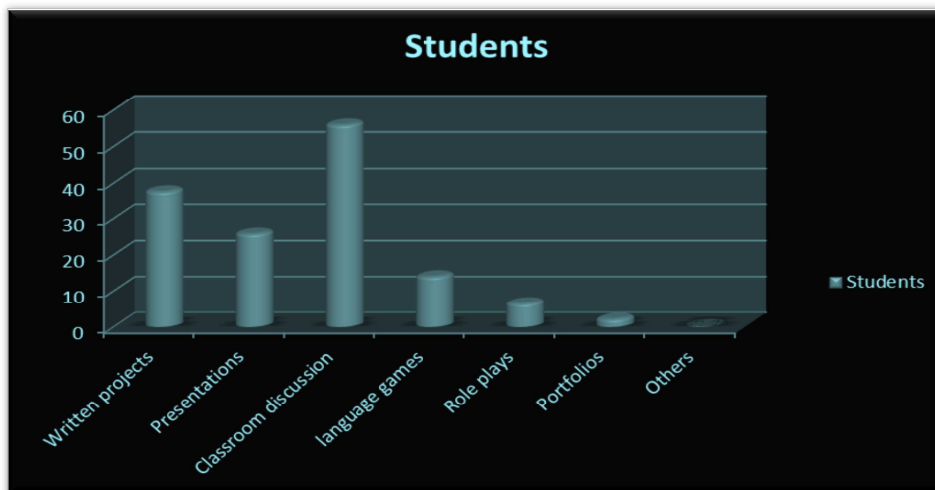
Fig. 15. Classroom activities

By asking this question the researcher wants to have an idea about the types of activities mostly used in EFL classrooms. 52 of respondents state that classroom discussion is the most dominating activity as it is shown in the above figure. Written projects are ranked on the second place which is chosen by 35 students, followed by presentations (25 respondents), 13 of participants choose language games, and the minority of students (6- 2) opt for role plays and portfolios respectively, none- of the students add other classroom activities. This question was answered by 93 of participants therefore the rate of response is 94.89 with mainly five missing respondents.

Question 10: How often do you work in the classroom?
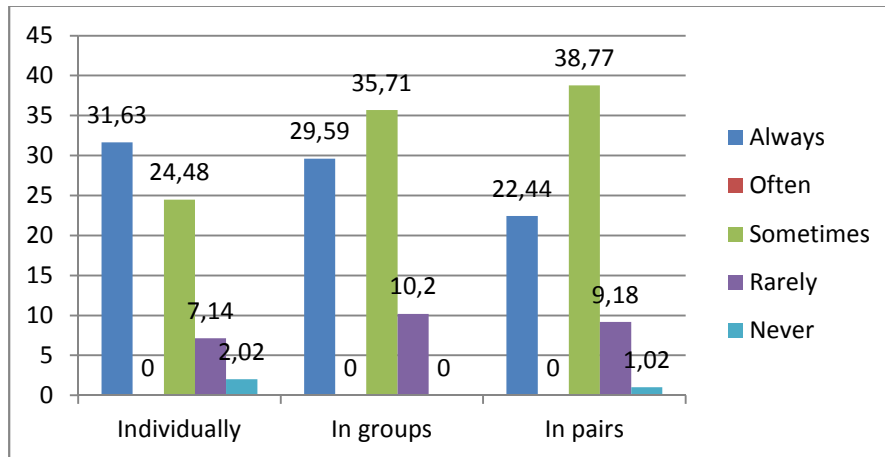
Fig. 16. The most dominant type of classroom work

Question ten is asked to have an idea about the way students work in the classroom, data gathered reveal that students point out that working in groups is the most frequently used type of classroom activity (Always, 29.59% - Sometimes 35.71%). The second rate is working In-pairs (Always, 22. 44% - Sometimes, 38.77%) as shown in "Fig.16." above.

4.5.2 Section Two: Examination of LA from the Socio-cultural Perspectives

In this section, the researcher aims to clarify the role of family, society and culture in shaping EFL learners' learning attitudes and how these attitudes influence whether the socio-cultural beliefs of students limit, prevent or support learner autonomy.

I.   **The Role of the Family**

Q1: I often take decision concerning my studies

Table 12

Students' decision-making choice

Options	Frequency
Alone	60
Parents	18
Friends	15
Teachers	4

The major objective of this question is to determine the role of surroundings (parents, teachers and friends) in students' decisions concerning their studies. Most of the students report that they take decisions alone (61.86%), 18.56% of them assert that parents are also involved in such decisions. 15.46% often take decisions with their friends and only 4.12% of participants claim that their teachers are involved in making decisions concerning their studies. One student did not reply to this question.

Q2: How do you perceive your parents' opinions in your studies?
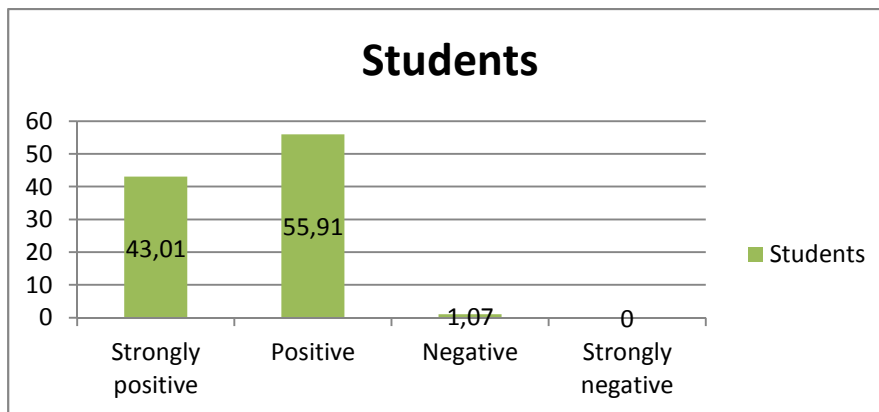
Fig. 17. Students' perceptions concerning their parents' opinion in their studies

Parents' opinions in students' life is unavoidable, thus, the above is raised to determine the way students perceive their parents' opinions in their studies. According to 43.01% of students confirm that their parents' intervention is strongly positive, 55.91% of them see this interference as being positive, however only 1.07% of students consider their parents' opinions "negative" and none of the participants view this intervention as being strongly negative.

Q3: I take my parents' advice into account
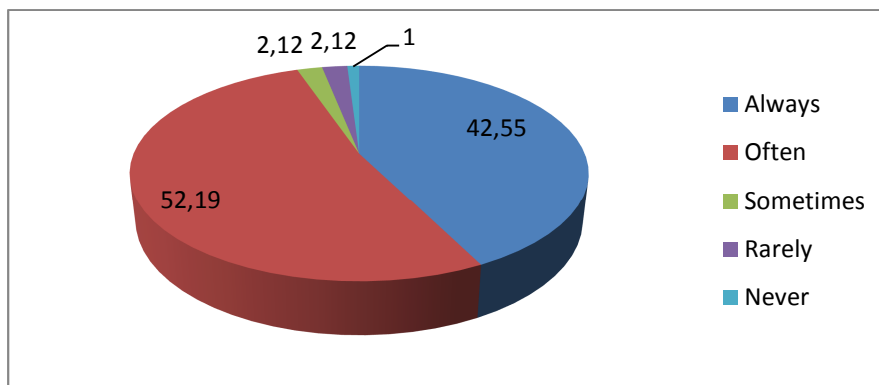
Fig. 18. The extent to which students' take their parents advice into consideration

Moreover, this question aims to further explore parents' role in students' school life. Fig.18 displays that the majority of informants (52.19%) answer that they "often" take their parents advice into consideration, 42.55% of them reply by "always", 2.12% answer by "sometimes" and the same percentage of students answer by "rarely", and only 1% of the participants never consider the advice of their parents as important.

2. Socio-cultural Beliefs and Assumptions

Q1: What is your opinion about the following poetic verse and Algerian proverbs?

In this question, students are provided with some cultural (educational and local) proverbs and are asked to give their opinions and understanding about them. The aim is to explore the influence of the cultural beliefs on the students' learning attitudes and expectations.

1.   كاد المعلم ان يكون رسولا   و قم للمعلم و فيه التبجيلا (by Ahmed Chawqi)

/W kom lil mo'alimi w fihi tabjila/… /Kada al mo'alimo an yakon rasola/
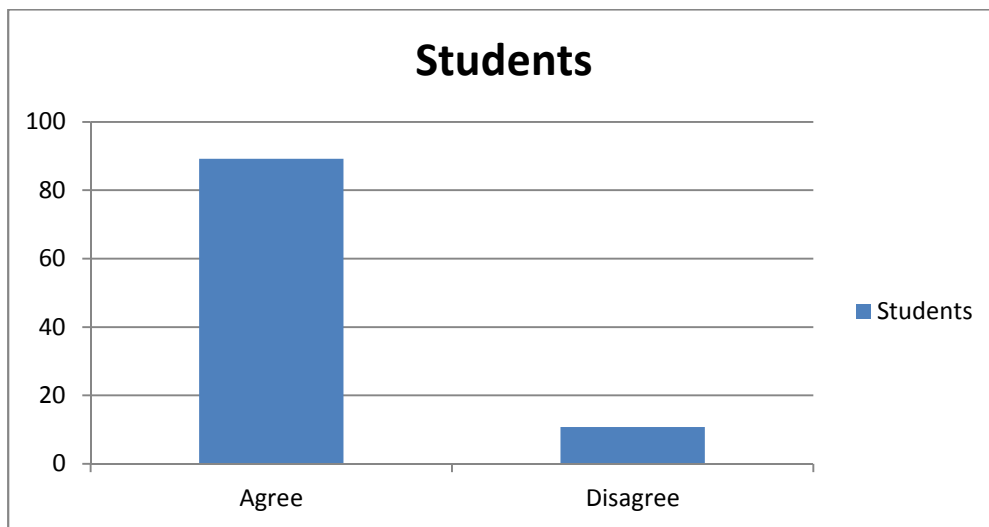
Fig. 19. Students' opinions about the Arabic poetic verse.

Though this question is an open-ended question, students' opinions about the teacher position and status are divided into two main answers, statements such as "I agree", "that's' right", "true" to show agreement with the above poetic verse or "no", "I don't agree" to express disagreement. As displayed above, the majority of the students' (89.22%) agree with the above statement, however about 10.78% disagree with it. Unfortunately, students' did not provide any further explanations.

2. لي قرا قرا بكري / Li Kra kra Bakri/ "Who studied, studied in the past".

In this dialectic proverb the researcher wants to know the extent to which such beliefs influences students' attitudes towards learning. The students show different inclinations and opinions concerning this proverb. Most of the students seem to disagree with the above statement (most of them are females). The most repeatedly statements stated by the majority of participants are:

- ➢ *"This statement is wrong"*
- ➢ *"I disagree"*
- ➢ *"Illiterates, ignorants favor it" as a way to justify their failure"*
- ➢ *"I don't agree or believe that"*
- ➢ *"I totally disagree, knowledge is always a sacred case of society"*
- ➢ *"That's not true, learning is a huge process without no end"*
- ➢ *"No!!!"*
- ➢ *"I do not think so"*

To enhance the truthfulness of our research, the minority is also given place, with regard to the above stated proverb, some students highlight that:

- ➢ *"It is true because we are in Algeria"*
- ➢ *"true considering education today"*
- ➢ *"right"*
- ➢ *"Yes"*

4.6 Interpretations of the Students' Questionnaire

The first two questions aim to check students' familiarity with the notion of learner autonomy and the extent to which they think they are autonomous. Most of the students think that they are autonomous; however, their knowledge about what characterizes an autonomous learner is only limited to being "motivated". The analysis showed that the majority of students view themselves as being autonomous but, the result of this question contradicts the analysis of question number two and its follow up. This indicates that students are not certain about their sense of autonomy therefore being able to rate themselves. This uncertainty may mean that students are not familiar with the theoretical aspects of LA.

The majority of participants seem to be less autonomous because they do not know how to learn autonomously and that the learning conditions are not suitable to make

autonomy a realistic goal. Lack of knowledge with regard to the strategies of learning autonomously has resulted in poor engagement in the learning process and maximizes their reliance on their teachers' instructions and classroom practices.

It is worth noting that students hold some misconceptions about what autonomy means. Students think that autonomy means the same as freedom of learning and learning individually. Freedom of learning and individualism are among the wrong beliefs of learner autonomy as mentioned in the first chapter in the words of Barbot (24) and Benson(*Teaching and Researching Autonomy*) respectively.

Questions three, four and five are designed to examine students' awareness about their expected roles. The vast majority of students seem to be unaware of their expected roles and responsibilities as autonomous learners. This is by no means their fault since they do not even know how to be an autonomous learner. As a result, students are not well-informed of the roles they are expected to play in a learner-centered paradigm.

The majority of respondents opted for the following options "listening to the teacher", "asking questions", and "taking notes" this confirms that the students still possess some traditional roles and practices. As a consequence, the impact of traditional beliefs is among the key constraints in the development of autonomy in EFL classrooms.

The literature of learner autonomy suggests that autonomous learners are able to set learning objectives, both content and process, as well as evaluation and progress (Holec 3). In this study, participants are not even aware of their roles includes determining learning objectives, selecting learning activities, choosing learning materials, evaluating their progress and identifying their weaknesses and strengths.

In question number seven, students argue that their teachers sometimes involve them in deciding what and how to learn. This result contradicts what the researcher found through the classroom observation, this latter was set by beginning of the academic year to see the extent to which the teachers and students negotiate the syllabus to be taught and how it is going to be presented; however, it was not the case. To this end, the teachers do not involve their students in selecting the learning content and process but they rather provide them with ready-made syllabi to be taught.

Section two is devoted to examining some cultural and social beliefs students hold about learning, the teacher status and their views towards the group, family and society.

Results have shown that students value the importance of collaboration among family members and that they usually take their advice into account because they consider that elderly people (parents/teachers) are more experienced and competent than them therefore they are more knowledgeable.

This indicates that our society is a collectivist society where the group is more important than individuals. Collaboration among students and with their teachers is preferred. As a result, learner autonomy in the Algerian educational context is not a matter of expecting learners working in isolation but rather in groups (interdependence). This is not to say that learner autonomy is not associated with individualism, but it entails the ability to work both with groups and alone. In this sense, Dam highlights that LA involves both "capacity and willingness to act independently and in cooperation with others." (Dam, *Developing Learner Autonomy: The Teacher's Responsibility* 1)

Students assume a general consensus about the Arabic poem that puts the teacher and the prophet (peace be upon him) somehow in the same position in terms of gratitude and respect. If students hold the same conception about the status of the teacher, they undoubtedly will not be able to effectively negotiate their teachers' ideas, correct mistakes or criticized the content being presented in the classroom. This respect is an appreciated norm in the classroom, but it may limit the students' participation and classroom interaction if it is misunderstood.

Be it grown out of fear; or earned due to their knowledge, students have a special respect for their teachers. Students think that teachers are the knowledge providers and that they should not be questioned or criticized. This has in turn resulted in a poor discussion in the classroom. Holding these features means that the Algerian society is characterized by large power distance in which power is accepted to be unequally distributed between the dichotomies parents- children, teachers-students, boss-workers…ect. This means that students view their teachers as the authority, have the power and are the first decision-makers.

The second section also aims to dimensionalise uncertainty avoidance dimension in the Algerian culture, the findings indicate that our society is characterized by higher uncertainty avoidance. This means that students, as mentioned earlier, avoid getting face-to-face interaction with their teachers and have reluctant attitudes towards correcting their teachers' mistakes. This is due to their state of being uncertain of the result of their discussion

and their teachers' reactions (fear of being in an unexpected situation of embarrassment in front of others).

It must be noted that gender is another influencing variable in the development of autonomy. In this study, results have shown that females hold positive beliefs about autonomy more than males do. In females' answers, there is always an excuse to explain realities and neglect the influence of culture on their ability to learn, believing that culture should not be taken for granted. This finding is in line with what Al-Khawlani found in his study on the comparison between Yemeni and Polish students (118).

Driven by a deductive analysis of the questionnaire items, one may conclude that regardless of the differences in the teaching styles and strategies, the results illustrated that it is actually the teacher-centered approach which is mostly dominating EFL classes in slightly moderated ways. Both learning content and process are still in subordination to the traditional classroom practices and beliefs.

It might be surprising, however, to say that teachers are certainly not blamed for being influenced by the traditional paradigm of teaching since they have been, as learners, educated in parallel to its principles. Teachers then find themselves teaching in a new era of education where they are supposed to act as autonomous teachers and lead their students towards self-independent learning. A shift from being totally a dominator of class to a facilitator, guide, and manager cannot suddenly be achieved. It is then an ongoing progressive process which should start by training teachers and developing autonomous learning from primary education.

4.7 Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

Based on the literature review of learner autonomy, the current teachers' questionnaire was developed. It takes into account the different technical perspectives of learner autonomy such as learning management and language course decisions: setting goals, selecting learning materials, monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes (Derived from Holec's definition of learner autonomy 3). The researcher has also reviewed Borg and Al-Busiadi's study on "teachers' beliefs and practices regarding learner autonomy" from which the researcher has also adopted six statements (statements number 3, 13, 16, 19, 23, 25 and 30 as shown in appendix IV) from Borg and Al-Busiadi questionnaire; the statements are related to the relevance of autonomy in different cultural context. The data gathered from teachers' questionnaire was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively as shown below.

4.7.1 Section Two: Teachers' Beliefs about LA

Question1: What does learner autonomy mean to you?

This question aims to find out the extent to which teachers are familiar with the notion of learner autonomy in language teaching. Below are some definitions provided by some participants of the current research study.

"To make learners feel responsible for their own learning, teachers are no more a guider and an adviser"

"Learner autonomy means a learner who rely on him/herself in his studies, learners who have capacities to study by themselves"

"The learners can use the four skills without recurring to his/her instructor only in situations of integration"

As it is shown above, teachers defined learner autonomy in different ways. Despite the differences in views, understandings and definitions about learner autonomy; teachers seem to have some knowledge about learner autonomy, however they also hold some misconceptions and misinterpretations such as self-reliance as follows *"Learner autonomy means that any leaner can depend on himself/ herself to acquire or expand knowledge without anyone's help"* (self-instructed learning) and freedom of learning in which one teacher says that autonomy means that *"The student studies by himself and has got more freedom in learning"*. By this teachers have put the burden on the learners and teachers seem to be excluded. It is also noted that teachers' conceptions of learner autonomy were not well-explained.

Wrong assumptions teachers hold about learner autonomy, their different understandings as well as the complexity of the notion make it quite difficult to find a general consensus to what autonomy means for teachers. It actually means different things to different teachers according to their knowledge, beliefs and teaching experiences.

Question2: According to you, what characterizes an autonomous learner?

In this question, the researcher aims to pinpoint the autonomous learner profile from the eyes of teachers. Some teachers attributed autonomy to being a knowledge seeker, and being able to share it with others. They comment:

> *"I think that an autonomous learner is characterized by being skillful, he/she does research"*

> *"The search for knowledge by himself"*

> *"Takes the initiative to speak, write and share knowledge...etc."*

Motivation is another feature which was repeatedly stated by some informants in which they give the following defining characteristics to the autonomous learner:

> *"Being smart, motivational"*

> *"The main characteristics of an autonomous learner are: eagerness, perseverance and cleverness"*

Another teacher associates learner autonomy with different characteristics and groups them as follows:

> *"1-His creativity, 2- loving the language, 3- ability to undergo difficulties to acquire properly the language, 4- Some innate abilities to master the language, 5- perseverance."*

As it is transcribed above, teachers associated autonomy to different features, abilities and skills, such as motivation, eagerness and perseverance. It can be understood that teachers have stated the characteristics of autonomous learners based on their experiences and what they have observed in their classes.

Question 3: My learners are able to be in charge of their own learning:

This question seeks to identify teachers' opinions about their students' ability to be in charge of their own learning (being autonomous). The answers of teachers are displayed in the following figure.
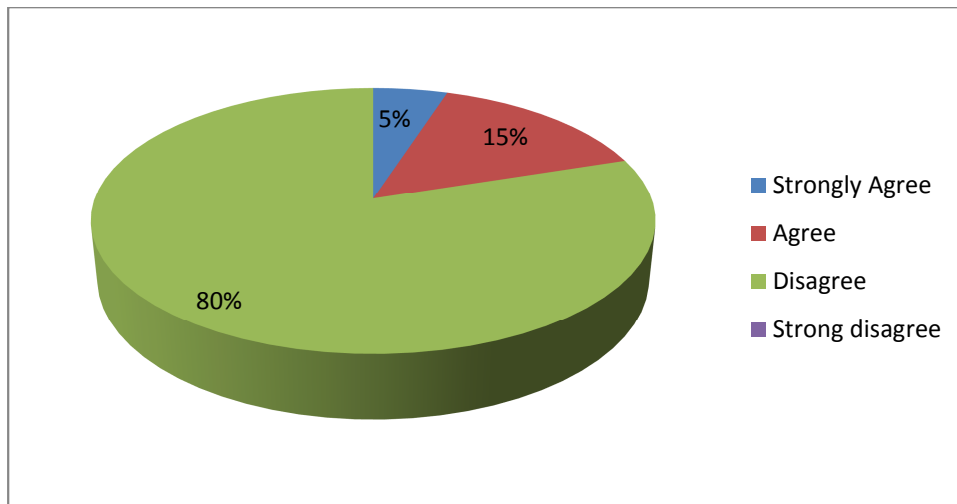
Fig. 20. Teachers' opinions about their students' ability to take charge of learning

As presented in the pie-chart 20, 80% of teachers disagree with the ability of their students in taking charge of their own learning. About 15% of them agree that their students have the profile of autonomous learners. Few teachers (5%) only strongly agree with this view, and none of the teachers participating in this research opt for "strongly disagree" option indicating complete inability of learners in assuming responsibility for their own learning.

Question4: What roles do you play in the classroom?

All teachers participating in the current research describe their roles as being a facilitator and a guide or a moderator; these roles are the most repeated by our informants. Below are some roles stated by some teachers:

➢ *"My role as a teacher is to facilitate the learning process and guiding them to reach their own needs"*

➢ *"motivator, moderator"*

➢ *"a guide and an advisor"*

➢ *"I encourage students to work trying not to be the source of knowledge; I guide them to stick to the topic discussed too. I give them advice on how to work."*

➢ *"a guider"*

➢ *"I am a guide, a facilitator"*

➢ *"classroom manager, a guider, a designer of syllabus"*

Question5: Do you negotiate the learning content and process with your learners?
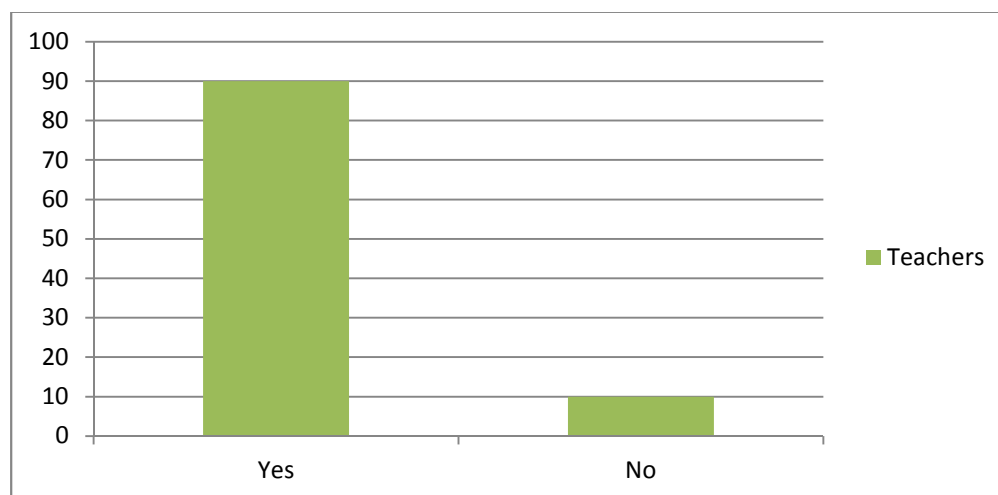
Fig.21. Students' involvement in the learning content and process

   The aim of this question is to find out whether teachers' implement autonomous learning through syllabus negotiation and collaboration. In other words, if teachers take into account their students' voices and opinions regarding the learning content (syllabus) and process (activities and evaluation). The vast majority of teachers (90%) claim that they negotiate both learning content and process with their learners. Only 10% of them do not involve their students in taking decisions concerning the learning process.

Question6: Have you ever talked about learner autonomy in the classroom?

Table 13

The extent to which teachers talk about learner autonomy in the classroom

Options	Number of teachers	Percentage
Yes	17	75%
No	3	15%

   The table reveals that (75%) of the teachers participating in this research work talk about learner autonomy in their classes. Only (15%) of them do not speak about autonomous learning with their students to raise their awareness concerning their roles and responsibilities as autonomous learners.

Question7: What challenges do you face when promoting learner autonomy?

In this question, participants stated many challenges and difficulties which stand as obstacles on their way to promote autonomous learning in their classrooms. Different teachers present different points based on their experiences. However, Lack of motivation is one of the main challenges facing most teachers. Below are some quotes describing teachers' opinions:

*"Students' laziness, Their total dependence on the teacher, **Lack of motivation**"*

*"Many students are **not motivated** enough to work on their own, others are not good enough to take control of their own learning. Besides, most students do not do further works unless the papers are graded"*

*"Weak English language proficiency, **Lack of motivation**"*

"...being confronted with students with different learning styles and personalities does not facilitate the task"

*"**Lack of motivation**"*

"lack of materials and over-crowded classes"

"lack of means in teaching"

*"laziness of students, **disinterest**"*

4.7.2 Section Three: Social and Cultural Perspectives of LA

This section is targeted to the social and cultural perspectives of learner autonomy; it aims to examine teachers' perceptions towards promoting learner autonomy and whether or not it is relevant to non-western learners. The following table is adapted from Borg and Al-busiadi (12)

Table 14

Teachers' attitudes towards the social and cultural perspectives of learner autonomy

Statements	SA	A	Unsure	D	SD
3. Learner autonomy is promoted through regular opportunities to complete tasks alone	30%	60%	10%	0%	0%
13. Learner autonomy can be achieved by learners of all cultural backgrounds	30%	50%	0%	20%	0%
16. Learner autonomy is promoted through activities which give learners opportunities to learn from each other	40%	50%	10%	0%	0%
19. Learner autonomy is promoted by activities that encourage learners to work together.	40%	50%	10%	0%	0%
23. Learner autonomy is a concept which is not suited to non-western learners.	10%	10%	30%	0%	50%
25. Co-operative group work activities support the development of learner autonomy.	30%	50%	10%	10%	0%
30. Learning to work alone is central to the development of learner autonomy.	50%	30%	10%	0%	10%

Table 14 displays that 60% of teachers agree that LA is promoted when learners work on activities alone, and about 30% strong agree with that, and just 10% who are not sure of that. The same attitude has been marked with statement 30 in which 50% of teachers strongly agree that the development of LA requires students to work alone, and 30% agree with that and only 10% of teachers who strongly disagree with the idea that working alone is prerequisite to the LA development. At the same time, 30% and 50% of them respectively strongly agree/agree that cooperation is central to autonomy enhancement. Being in a similar situation, 40% of teachers agree that to develop autonomy students need to work together and learn from each other and 50% strongly agree with that. Concerning the relevance of LA autonomy in a particular cultural context, the majority of teachers (80%) agree/strongly agree that LA is suited in all cultural contexts. Teachers showed the same attitudes regarding the non-suitability of LA in non-western context, in which 50% of them strongly agree that LA is not only relevant in western education, but also in non-western culture.

4.8 Interpretations of Teachers' Questionnaire

The analysis of teachers' questionnaire indicates that teachers have some knowledge about learner autonomy but still unable to differentiate its main misconceptions and lack the practice of LA. They still hold some misconceptions and wrong beliefs about LA such as self-study (individualism), unconditioned freedom of learning and self-instruction. However, Little states that "the most widespread misconception is that autonomy is synonymous with self-instruction" (p3).This latter for him is "a matter of deciding to learn without a teacher" (p3).

On the contrary, learner autonomy did not come to lower the crucial role of the teacher in guiding learners towards efficient and effective learning and to be a self-directed learner. All teachers focused on the technical as well the individualistic dimensions of autonomy and neglected the role of the socio-cultural aspects of it. Consequently, being a teacher in the Algerian context which tends to be a collectivist community requires certain knowledge about learner autonomy as a social and a cultural construct.

Lack of knowledge and uncertainty with regard to what is it not? What characterizes an autonomous learner and how to foster it in their students is the key obstacle in making autonomy a reality in their classrooms. In the meantime, it is one of the reasons justifying why students' still rely on their teachers. This result is in line with many research findings such as (Sinclair, Borg and Al-Busiadi, Al-Asmari)**.** At the theoretical level, teachers seem to be somehow aware of their roles as guider and facilitators, however, in practice, it is not the case (as shown in the analysis of classroom observation). This is due to a lack of training regarding how to promote autonomy.

Although teachers claim that they talk about the main layers of learner autonomy to raise their students' awareness about their expected roles and responsibilities, their students are still unable to take charge of their own learning due to lack of motivation and total dependence on their teachers.

According to teachers, learner autonomy is not a western construct but rather an international universal goal. For them, despite the cultural differences, all learners without any exception can develop an autonomous attitude towards learning if they are well-directed to reach such a goal. This finding is in parallel with Little's concluding thought in which he mentions that "learner autonomy is an appropriate pedagogical goal in all cultural settings" (Strategies, counseling and cultural difference 15). This implies that the achievability of

learner autonomy is possible no matter where learning is taking place and regardless of the social and the cultural background. It seems fair to rate all learners as being able to assume responsibility over their own learning, but the socio-cultural impact is inescapable and remains at the foreground of language learning.

Furthermore, teachers claim that collaboration is prerequisite in making autonomy a reality in the classroom, which means that the ability of learners to act autonomous lies in their ability to work together and learn from one another. To this end, learner autonomy in the Algerian educational context is shaped by collectivism attitudes towards learning.

4.9 Students' Group Interviews: Analysis and Interpretations

Due to the fact that the second section of students' questionnaire was not informative as expected, in the group interviews with the students, the researcher has raised the same Algerian cultural proverbs and others to better understand their effectiveness in either supporting or limiting the student autonomy.

4.9.1 Students' Expectations

Q1: Before joining the university, you had set many learning expectations[33]; what were they?

This question aims to figure out the influence of students' expectations on their ability to be in charge of their learning process. Throughout this question, the interviewees were invited to share their learning expectations and if these expectations were met in the real life.

The interviewees indicated that their expectations were higher; they stated different pre-determined expectations are shown in the following list:

- *Committed and responsible classmates*
- *Good learning conditions*
- *Good quality of education*
- *Independence in learning*
- *Availability of learning materials*
- *Much emphasis on practice more than theory*
- *Qualified teachers*

---

[33] In this context, expectations are predetermined beliefs about what might happen in the future.

The participants also mentioned that the numbers of unemployed graduates are increasing which in turn influences their motivation to learn. Motivation is one of the key factors in the development of learner autonomy (this situation of lack of motivation is labeled as dispositional barrier). (Cross qtd.in Musarat and Ayesha 2).

Q2: Do you think that your expectations were met?

All the learners participating in this research claimed that the majority of expectations were not met namely higher quality of education, equipped classrooms and more freedom in learning. They expressed their sense of being enthusiastic, motivated and eager to experience learning in the university as they were preparing for their Baccalaureate exam and then as first year students at university. Unfortunately, through time this sense of being highly energetic was gradually decreased. Consequently, the absence of motivation, willingness, desire, and enthusiasm as important factors contributing effectively in the development of autonomy were not effectively invested and exploited.

The students went further in explaining the notions of "lack of time" and "bad accommodation" as other influencing factors on students' learning process. The majority of students who took part in the current research reside at the university campus, for them living there is catastrophic. Once they finish their day-to day courses, they go to the campus to take some rest. The living conditions cause psychological instability, tiredness and do not help them to learn efficiently.

Q3: What is your opinion about the following proverb? (How would you explain them?)

1-   الباك نشوة و الجامعة حشوة

To understand more students' expectations, they were also asked to give their opinions with regard to one of the widely spread Algerian dialectic proverb which says " الباك نشوة و الجامعة حشوة" This explains "Bac[34] is an academic qualification obtained after the completion of three years at secondary school, in the context of this proverb, it is a source of euphoria (extreme sense of happiness) and University is described as a deceptive fact or an illusion".

In this question, the interviewers were given just the first phrase "الباك حشوة' and let the interviewees complete the proverb to confirm that students are already familiar with it.

---

[34] An acronym stands for Baccalaureate exam

The great majority of students successfully completed the proverb with laugher whereas the rest of students said "**: : :** AAA YES (h)".

There are certain reasons behind the emergence of such an idea. On the one hand, what makes the baccalaureate diploma a great achievement is its reputation in the society, it is a new opportunity to achieve their goals and that the effort made to fulfill this achievement is unique and special. Within this framework, the students claim that

"What makes it "nachwa", The reputation that it has in our society. It is the gate for someone to realise their dreams. The beginning of "a new educational life"

"Bac "nachwa" because the feeling of winning it so unique and special "

"because many students count it as a dream so when you got your "Bac" exam you feel that reach your dream ..."

"Bac is the key to achieve goals it's like a big step to realize big goals"

On the other hand, what makes the university disappointing and source of demotivation and anxiety is the absence of their expectations, being uncertain about their future, the increased number of jobless graduate students. In this sense, the students explained that:

"What makes it "hachwa", in many cases; university doesn't meet students' expectations and hopes..."

"because in our country when you finish your studies u find many difficulties in having a job , so mentally you gonna be lost"

"After entering university you'll get bored especially when you hear your friends did not get jobs this is "hachwa" its self"

In fact, the interviewees provided that there is a huge gap between their expectations and the actual learning context. The university in their minds is a place where all learning conditions, facilities and mechanisms are available and put at the disposal of students and teachers. Once they put their feet in the university, they discover another context where they struggle at the residency campus, timetable and overcrowded classes. For Smith these factors (time, administrative problems such as management, organization, exams…) are among the constraints limiting the LA development (Smith, cited in Djoub 303).

All these beliefs are grown out of their experiences and the difficulties they have been through, what is positive is that students have also pointed out to the idea that despite the difficulties and obstacles, learners should keep doing their best to find ways to make their expectations true. For them this should not be taken for granted or an excuse to justify failure.

4.9.2 Students' Attitudes towards Learning at University

In this section, the students were asked a set of questions to examine their attitudes towards learning at university and see the ways in which these attitudes and beliefs have affected the way their behaviors, roles, practices and interaction with their teachers inside and outside the classroom.

Q4: How would you describe learning at University?

In this question, the students were asked to describe learning at university and state the reasons behind their description. The majority of students have shown negative attitudes towards learning at university. They describe it using different adjectives such as "*misery*", "*worthless*", "*boring*", "*bad*" Other students went further saying:

✓ *"we were just talking about this, we need rooms, a library of English department"*
✓ *"cannot be described, it is a waste of time"*
✓ *"in literature when the teacher asks you to read a book and you do not have it ...(*facial expression of being speechless*)*
✓ *"...we don't have materials, no motivation,"*

The students described learning at university as such due to the different problems they face such as lack of materials, transportation, accommodation (no internet, rooms are not well-cleaned, no library) More importantly, administrative problems (changing the timetable and lack of teachers). In addition to lack of places where they can utilize their potentials, and practise their hobbies and talents in their free times. For them all these problems have changed their attitudes and beliefs about learning at university which in turn have affected their motivation, academic achievement and their ability to be fully engaged in the learning process.

Few students positively replied to this question, describing university as being "*good*", "*not too bad*", "*interesting*" and "*equals searching*". These students think that it is a matter of being responsible and able to face problems regardless of how difficult it seems to adapt with the learning situations at university.

Despite the different wordings and expressions used to describe learning at university, the majority of interviewees seem to have almost a shared attitude. This attitude is originated in the same learning experiences and situations they have been going through. Lack of motivation, administrative problems and lack of facilities are among the main reasons behind having a negative attitude towards learning at higher education; this is what constitutes "bad learning conditions". These features and attributes go against the characteristics and conditions of efficient promotion of LA; this result is in line with the analysis of first question in the students' questionnaire.

Q5: Explain the following dialectic proverb?

1- لي قرا قرا بكري / Li kra, kra bakri/[35]

To confirm their expectations, the researcher has also asked them to explain this dialectic Algerian proverb " لي قرا قرا بكري '' translated word by word to English as 'who studied, studied in the past' this dialectic proverb has been inherited among students and society members overtime due to the existing differences between learning in the past and that of modern time.

For the interviewees, this cultural indoctrination has been given birth and become popular among the Algerian students due to "*the actual situation in which many diplomas holders are facing troubles to find a job or they are just unemployed*". This is to say that some years ago, being able to find a job after graduation was possible compared with the present time, and this is why education was worthwhile and valued. This belief is a result of educational reforms, poor learning environment and students' social and financial problems.

With reference to learning, students further explain that this creates some sort of disinterest and lack motivation in their studies and influences their independent attitudes in the classroom. For them, such educational realities and social situations distract their attention and their concentration and negatively impinge their active engagement in the learning process inside and outside the classroom. It also indicates that being motivated and involved in learning lies strongly in students' ability to find a job after graduation. To this end, motivation can be viewed differently by different learners across cultures. Consequently, in the Algerian context, priority is given to work more than knowledge.

---

[35] An Algerian dialectic proverb widely used by the Algerian students.

It is worth mentioning that a lot of students participating in group interviews believe that though there is a huge difference between the past and the present in terms of learning conditions and the opportunities available to find a job; it should not be considered as an excuse to justify their poor engagement in the learning process.

4.9.3 Students' Perceptions about the Teacher Status

Q 6: According to you, what roles do your teachers often play in the classroom?

Knowing about students' opinions regarding their teachers' role is likely to determine whether or not they are informed about their expected roles as well as their teachers' missions. It also clarifies the beliefs students' hold about their teachers' roles. In answering this question, the students listed several roles played their teachers such as:

- Explaining the lesson
- Giving instructions
- Correcting mistakes
- Knowledge provider

The teachers seem to have the same roles they used to play in the traditional approach to teaching. As a result, EFL classrooms are teacher-led where more responsibility is held by the teacher. This result is in line with the analysis of the classroom observation as shown earlier.

Q7: How would you explain the following proverbs?

a-   من علمني حرفا صرت له عبدا

Another important proverb says " من علمني حرفا صرت له عبدا'' it is literally translated to English as "whoever teaches me a letter, i become a slave of him". The interviewees were asked to give their opinions about this proverb and how they interpret it with reference to learning.

Many students explained that this proverb means being grateful to teachers. But for them; the literary meaning seems to be misinterpreted since early education. Being obedient to teachers is kind of an exaggeration. For this reason, students may prefer to avoid discussing or criticizing their teachers' thoughts and ideas. This goes in line with the Vietnamese proverb, "Nhat tu vi su, ban tu vi su" (translated into English "You must respect

the person who teaches you only a word, even half a word and call him your teacher" (Thu, qtd.in Nguyen 6). In this context, Nguyen argues that Vietnamese "students may appear to stay away from debating bluntly and straightforwardly and may incur the misperceptions of their approach as rudeness, discourteousness, impoliteness or disrespectfulness." (Nguyen 6)

b- لي فايتك بليلة فايتك بحيلة[36]

"لي فايتك بليلة فايتك بحيلة" "whoever borns a night before you, is wiser than you".

The interviewees stated that this is true and showed a positive attitude towards this proverb believing that more experienced people are expected to know more. Putting it in the context of this research, students were asked to relate this to the teachers as being knowledgeable and wise than their students. The students' answers were positive providing that it is true that teachers are old therefore are expected to know more but for them this is not always true.

The teachers are generally older than their students; this is why they are considered as a source of knowledge and someone who is competent enough to take decisions therefore being responsible about all aspects of teaching and learning. With this in mind, the students find it difficult to judge, criticize or correct their teacher' mistakes, for this reason they only follow their teachers' instructions and order. This also shows that our culture possesses a larger power distance feature because teachers are seen as knowledgeable, wise and hold authority.

Q8: In case of any mistake made by your teacher, do you take the initiative to correct it?

In the Algerian educational culture, the teacher is considered as the most knowledgeable member in the classroom. The aim of this question is to identify students' attitudes towards their teachers' mistakes and status. The vast majority of interviewees affirm that they only correct their teachers' spelling mistakes in the board. In a way to justify their answers, they claim that it largely depends on the teachers' personality since they cannot predict their reaction (expecting a negative reaction) they avoid correcting their teachers' mistakes especially grammar or pronunciation mistakes or.

For the students correcting teachers' mistakes is embarrassing and may cause loosing face from the part of the teacher. In addition to that, since students are not certain about their

---

[36] A popular Algerian quote

teachers' reaction, they do not prefer to be part of a situation in which its consequences is unpredictable.

Being in such a learning environment, students become reluctant to take initiatives to reflect critically on the learning content provided by their teachers. For them the teachers are expected to be the knowledge provider and the ones who know more. For them, questioning their ideas may be regarded as being inappropriate. The students focused more on the teachers' personality and their tolerance towards differences and critiques. Since they cannot predict their teachers' reaction, they avoid correcting mistakes (Uncertainty avoidance attitude .i.e. avoiding all what is uncertain).

4.9.4 Teacher-Learner Relationships and Learner Autonomy

Q9: How would you describe your relationship with your teachers?

Developing teacher-learner relationships is a prerequisite in creating a positive classroom culture and learning environment. Besides, it contributes in upgrading the quality of teaching and encouraging students to learn and assume responsibility. A friendly and flexible environment where the teachers and the students work together and support one another boosts the development of learner autonomy. In this context, the students were asked to describe their relationships with their teachers and how they view its importance in shaping an autonomous attitude in the classroom.

Almost all interviewees describe their relationship with their teachers as being good, and is based on respect and interest. Some quotes are transcribed below:

- ✓ *"...my relationship with my teachers is based on respect; I do consider my teachers as the guider who has the most important information"*
- ✓ *"My relationship with teachers is almost good"*
- ✓ *"My relationship with my teachers is not too close and not too far. There is always respect for them since they are older than me and they know much better than me."*
- ✓ *"My relationship with teachers is nearly to friendship, of course not all of them but the most, but always there are limits that i cannot cross them"*

The vast majority of interviewees believe that as long as the teacher- learner relationship is friendly, approachable and flexible, the learning atmosphere becomes interactive where students feel more secure and relaxed when sharing, debating and

negotiating their thoughts. However, strict teachers make learning boring and less interesting, this is why students are reluctant and unwilling to take an active role in the classroom.

Q10. How does your relationship with your teachers influence your role in the classroom?

The more the contact between the teacher and their student is based on reciprocal trust, flexibility, mutual understanding and kindness, the more learning opportunities are increased, ideas are shared and exchanged and confidence and competencies are developed. In this view, some of the students' opinions are quoted below:

"I believe that whenever there is a kind of mutual respect, kindness between students and their teachers, they will do better. Thanks to this kind of relationship we have, I think I play an active role in our classroom"

"…due to my teachers' treatment, I mean they are not too strict, they always give me the opportunity to express myself during the class. This later helps me a lot to be confident"

"I do strongly believe that relationships between teachers and students can help the students to be comfortable in class, especially in presenting their subjects"

Some of the students participating in this group interview raise the issue of the impact of teachers' age in the teacher-learner relationship. Generation gap has influenced the nature of the relationship between teachers and their students which in turn impacts the learning environment. For them, age and personality matter in creating a positive classroom environment and a good relationship.

Students claim that young teachers are approachable to their students and understand them more than old teachers who treat them strictly. On the one hand, the interviewees describe their relationship with their old teachers using the following words: *"formal, strict, limited, not too bad.* On the other hand, young teachers are tolerant and friendly. They used some adjectives such as *"friendly, approachable, lovely, flexible…"* In spite of the age, it seems that the students have a general consensus towards the value and importance of the connection and relationships between the teachers and their students. Building a good relationship is fundamental in the promotion of autonomous learning, if students' feel secure, trusted, and unthreatened; they will express some degrees of autonomy in the classroom.

4.9.5 Learners' Attitudes towards the Role of the Family

Q11: Do you share your studies and future plans with your parents?

One of the central questions asked during the discussion with the interviewees was whether or not they discuss and share their future interests and studies with their parents. Most of the students claimed that they rarely discuss their studies with their parents; their negation was shown through facial expressions (students were moving their heads left and right). Other students used words and phrases such as "*no", "never", "not really", "I don't speak with my parents about my studies*". One student said *"I will have a make-up exam next week, my mother knows but my father does not"*. She further explained that her mother is well-understanding but her father may think that she was not doing her best to study well. Though students were asked about their parents' role (father and mother) in their private and educational life; many students gave emphasis to the father's role and authority. In such families and learning communities, fathers are the first decision-makers. The students claim that fathers are rarely judged or criticized.

This authoritative attitude of the parents (especially the father) has shaped students' attitudes towards their teachers' position. The students brought the same behavior to the classroom which has resulted in a poor classroom discussion (as shown in the classroom observation analysis) therefore having non-autonomous attitudes and roles. few students' only mentioned that their parents are open-minded, accept their opinions and share with them their interests and preferences.

It is undeniable that the family plays a great role in the well-being of the family members as future citizens (parents, workers) but also as learners. The Algerian family still dominates some aspects of life decision-making aspects be them related to studies, or even personal life (marriage, work…etc). Consequently, they (students) are left no/little freedom to decide on their own, this is why they are seen as less autonomous than their peers in Western Educational Culture. This result also justifies students' tendency to take decisions alone as shown in "table 12" in students' questionnaire analysis. Students may be afraid of being imposed to choose to learn something they are unwilling to learn in their respective field of study.

Despite the negative impact parents' attitudes towards the ability of their sons (adult learners) to be accountable for their learning may cause to the development of LA in the classroom, it is considered as an appreciated prevailing social norm that has a great function

at the academic level .By this is meant that, parents are the most knowledgeable and experienced members in the family (just as teachers in the classroom) who are trusted to make effective decisions and contributions concerning their studies.

4.9.6 Analysis of some Social and Educational Beliefs

Q12: How would you explain the following proverbs in relatedness to learning?

1. Proverb One: يد وحدا ما تسفق

The students have also debated a proverb which says "يد وحدا ما تسفق" that is to say "one hand does not clap". Without any exception, all the students participating in the group interview have agreed with the point that together they can do a lot of things stressing the importance of collaboration but each one alone may not be able to do as much as expected.

As far as learning is concerned, a large number of students have a common belief that in the classroom students must collaborate with each other and with teachers to reach the target learning outcomes. More illustrations are quoted below:

"well for learning, students can't learn alone without the help of the teachers…teachers need students and students need teachers "

"…if there is no support from others, this person [the learner] ends up doing nothing"

"Actually I believe in it because there are goals can't be achieved without helping and making serious collective decisions"

"Collaboration is absolutely needed in learning, in my case, I always need someone to help me in my studies" the student adds that *"this gives us the ability to bear all the information in our minds easily"*

"According to my experience, whenever there is a kind of collaboration between students and their teacher, learning is successful"

Some of the interviewees have also stressed the role of self-reliance in solving some activities and tasks inside and outside the classroom. Working in collaboration or individually depends largely on the learning task being performed in the classroom. Students are well aware of the importance of the group and its role to reach their shared learning goals and intended objectives. The students have shown a collectivist attitude towards daily life

practices in general and learning activities in particular. To this end, the students' cultural dimensions are characterized by some features of collectivism rather than individualism.

2. LMD: (License, Master, Doctorate) is also translated in French by the vast majority of Algerian students as (Liquider, Maximum, D'étudiant). The interviewees were asked to explain the reasons why students have reconstructed the concept this way.

The interviewees have approximately stated the same reasons. The students think that the main role of the university in the light of the LMD system is to distribute degrees; this view has taken its origins from the increasing number of university degrees holders especially License and Master degrees. For them these certificates are not as important as they used to be some years ago (as in the classical system). Some of the interviewees stated that:

"They [students] find it too easy to get license master [degrees] … and without any suffering. they say "liquider maximum des étudiants" perhaps they make are that they will not find jobs after getting diploma"

"Students think that University just want to get them out, without care if they'll get job or not"

For some students, it is impossible for the great majority of students to graduate each year especially less qualified students. As a result, university degrees are getting less valued in our society. The students are certain that they will get their degrees and will not find a job. This result confirms that the main purpose of learning is to be employed, i.e., the students view work as being more important than knowledge. If students do not put knowledge their first priority, they will not play their roles effectively. Driven by this belief, learner autonomy becomes difficult even when teachers attempt to promote it.

4.9.7 Hofstede Cultural dimensions and the Algerian Culture

The following table sums up the main points concerning the three dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance and collectivism vs individualism) the researcher intends to relate with education in general and learner autonomy in particular. It is to be minded that the points in the left column are directly quoted from Hefstede work on dimensionalising culture: the Hofstede Model in Context and the ones in the right column are mostly extrapolated from the students' group interviews and other research tools (namely students' questionnaire)

Table 15

Hofstede Cultural dimensions and the Algerian Culture

Dimensions	The Algerian local/educational culture
1. **Large power distance** • Parents teach children obedience • Older people are both respected and feared • Teacher-centered education • Subordinates expect to be told what to do (Hofstede 9 ")	**The Algerian culture is characterized by:** • Students are expected to obey their parents • Students respect and fear older people • The teacher is expected to be responsible about both teaching and learning • Learners are expected follow their teachers instructions
2. **Higher Uncertainty Avoidance** • The uncertainty inherent in life is felt as a continuous threat that must be fought • Higher stress, emotionality and anxiety • Intolerance of deviant persons and ideas: what is different is dangerous • Teachers supposed to have all answers (Hofstede 10)	**In the Algerian culture:** • All what is uncertain is preferable to be avoided to keep face • Students have higher stress to face unknown future • Rules are meant to be respected not violated. • Students feel more secure in case of agreement to maintain harmony • Teachers are important element in the classroom, thus are expected to be the most knowledgeable
3. **Collectivism** • People are born into extended families or clans which protect them in exchange for loyalty • Purpose of education is learning how to do • Opinions and votes predetermined by in-group (Hofstede 11)	**In the case of the Algerian culture,** • Algerians prefer to be part of big families and groups • Much importance to learning doing in groups • Teachers/parents are the decision-makers

1.10Interpretations and Discussion of Results: Impediments of LA

As demonstrated earlier, learner autonomy in the Algerian educational context is still difficult to be implemented due to many factors and constraints as explained below:

1.10.1 The Teacher as a Constraint

Teachers are the founding pillars of education. Success or failure of any teaching approach is judged solely by the ability of teachers to play their roles efficiently. Teachers' roles can either positively reinforce the development of LA or stand as a barrier limiting students' capacity to behave autonomously in certain learning tasks and situations.

The results of this study indicate that teachers' roles are still the same as those used to play in the traditional paradigm of teaching. Feeling of being responsible about both teaching and learning, authority and the fear of losing control are the main features characterizing teachers in the EFL Algerian context. This educational culture of teaching and learning limits students' engagement in learning, critical thinking skills and their analytical abilities. Being in such learning environment, Algerian students possess the following qualities:

- Less-risk takers
- Reluctant to reflect critically on the learning content provided by the teacher
- Unconfident with disagreements and differentiations in opinions
- Prefer to be part of the group
- Reliance on the teacher
- Shyness and anxiety
- Reticence and introversion

To be an autonomous learner, one has to be responsible, and able to learn both individually and in collaboration with others (Dam et al 102). In the Algerian culture of learning, students prefer to learn collectively rather than individually. Therefore, autonomy is associated with collaboration and interdependence, the latter is defined as "the ability of learners to work together for mutual benefit, and to take shared responsibility for their learning" (Palfreyman and Smith 4).

Algerian EFL learners consider the presence of the teacher as an inseparable component in the process of learning; this may appear to limit students' autonomy. It could

be a misconception to say that reliance and autonomy do not co-exist, reliance with reference to support and guidance is appreciated in certain situations where students are exposed to new skills to develop or a new learning activity. In this context, Blidi affirms that "Autonomy and reliance on teachers are not contradictory or mutually exclusive."(5). In the same view, "Vygotsky identifies autonomy ("independent problem solving") as the goal of learning, but insists that it grows out of dependence on others ("under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers")" (qtn in Little 18 "Why focus on Learning rather than Teaching?"). Fotiadou further explains that "Autonomous students are not necessarily loners. No matter how autonomous learners might be, they are proved to be in need of interacting both with their fellow students and their tutors."(107)

4.10.2 Socio-cultural Constraints

The previously mentioned attributes are originally brought from the families and the communities in which students live and practice the social and daily life activities as citizens. The family is a place where the child receives education, it is considered as the first place of learning and acquiring things under the supervision of their parents. The Algerian students come to the classroom with certain beliefs, attitudes and behaviors learnt from their parents and relatives. Dependency on parents, parents are the holders of power, the decision-makers, and obedience even in case of disagreement is a sign of respect are among the inherited social beliefs limiting learner autonomy and making it difficult to be achieved. Similar finding was revealed by Djoub in which she mentions that "one should admit that fostering an autonomous learning discourse appears to be a challenging task within Algerian Higher Education institutions" (300). This dominance of the family (parents) is reflected in students' dependency on their teachers in the classroom because teachers are seen as a source of knowledge and someone who is expected to know the most/or everything.

Respecting elderly people is another belief learnt in the Algerian families, this respect is earned due to their age, experience and knowledge. Similarly, students show higher order of respect to the teacher, but this may harm the learning process because students are unwilling to correct mistakes, question learning content and avoid disagreement with their teachers. In this context where respect seems to be misunderstood among students, learner autonomy is hard to be fostered. According to Pierson (qtd in Palfreyman and Smith 9), respecting the elderly (be them parents or teachers) in some cultures is seen as hindrance to autonomy development which for him leads to "passivity". Respect as a social and

educational norm is internationally desirable but if it is misinterpreted; it certainly becomes a social barrier.

4.10.3 Educational Culture Constraints

In the Algerian classrooms; the issue of learner autonomy is related to motivation and reward. Students are autonomous when they are motivated. In the meantime, their motivation is determined by the reward they receive. Students are rewarded by marks or an opportunity to get a job after graduation. This means that students fear the unknown future. This indicates that having an unclear future contributes to a higher extent in hampering students' sense of autonomy and feeling of responsibility. More importantly, in this cultural context, marks are more important than knowledge. Students are undoubtedly not blamed for such an attitude because this is the result of the teacher-centered approach which was exam-based oriented.

Motivation is also based on the relationship they build with their teachers. Being friendly with learners creates a flexible atmosphere where learners increase their motivation, confidence and freedom of expression. This social connection makes learners feel secure in the presence of their teachers, therefore sharing freely their problems and difficulties in language learning which eventually helps them become autonomous.

Analysis have shown that the Algerian community and classrooms are characterized by: 1) maintaining face which is important to avoid embarrassment or any unexpected reaction from the speaker (the teacher) 2) showing higher order of respect is preferred to maintain harmony and keep relationships, 3) debating with elder people especially in case of disagreement (teachers and parents) is preferably avoided. In the classroom, teachers are expected to know more due to their experience and students often avoid discussing and debating their teachers' ideas and thoughts. Students have also mentioned that the possibility of acting freely especially when correcting mistakes or judging the content of learning depends strongly on the teachers' personality, their sense of openness and attitudes towards differences and disagreements.

Furthermore, the Algerian culture is shaped by collectivism where groups and families are important elements in the present and the future of the students. The students in collectivist classrooms prefer to be among the groups to feel secure and confortable. They always seek help from elderly people (parents/teachers), and decide with their parents. This attitude is reflected in their dependency on their teachers in the classroom. This result goes in parallel wirh Bouhass's research findings in which she mentions that the Algerian student is

an individual who "progresses in culture of the group, the family, the community" where he/she " takes decisions with the parents (family)" (412). In the same vein, Blidi in Omani context observes that learning styles and strategies are shaped by collectivism and interdependence. (Blidi 5)

It is also characterized by strong power distance in which less powerful individuals (students) accept and manifest the inequality of power distribution, and that more powerful people (teacher due to their status) are said to be followed and highly respected. This result is in line with Smith words "In cultures with a high power index, such as Arab countries and India there is an emphasis on hierarchical structure, with respect and deference paid to those at the high end of the scale" (164). Indeed, there is a hierarchy in terms of positions and priority between teachers and students. Teachers' power, authority and knowledge is rarely questioned or doubted. The same result was also found in the Vietnamese context in a study conducted by Le (15).This belief of unquestioning teachers' knowledge and authority is reflected in teacher-learner relationships and even classroom interaction and communication. This makes teachers hold the power, responsibility and are often the authority and decision-makers.

The Algerian educational culture is shaped by strong uncertainty avoidance. The students tend to avoid acting differently from the group to keep their face and maintain harmony and escape entirely from situations where they feel threatened or expect embracement. Like the Algerian students, Bulgarian students do have the same qualities since the Bulgarian culture is characterized by higher uncertainty avoidance (39). In EFL Algerian classrooms, all that is unusual is threatening and dangerous, this is why students are less risk-takers, they talk less than due to the students' tendency towards avoiding to act in an uncertain situations. More importantly, EFL Algerian students have a higher degree of stress to face an unknown future due to the increasing number of jobless graduated university students.

Another important finding revealed by this research study is that females interpret things differently than males do. In this research, both males and females seem to agree with negative influences of the constraints referred to earlier such as: bad learning conditions, financial difficulties, administrative problems and an obscure future; However, females students do always justify these realities and refuse excuses. They believe that these obstacles and beliefs and should not be taken for granted. It is worth mentioning that gender is beyond

the scope of the current. This may open doors for future research on learner autonomy and gender differences.

4.10.4 Socio-economic Constraints

Surprisingly, an unexpected constraint of learner autonomy was stated by the majority of the students participating in the present research (especially in group interviews). It was found that the financial side plays a crucial role in the learning process. Poor students are often confronted with social obstacles that limit their ability to focus on their studies and play an active role in the classroom. This constraint of lack of participation and concentration harms the development of learner autonomy. Learners' lack of money is a situational aspect hampering learners' participation in the process of learning.

The socio-economic situations are one of the influencing factors on their attitudes and practices in the classroom. As stated by some interviewees, most students belong to poor families, the fact that led the students to think to work to help their families and study at the same time. This in turn has resulted in a poor contribution in learning, increased students' frustration and decreased their motivation, willingness and concentrations. All these factors have limited their ability to be autonomous learners; however, they develop a higher level of personal autonomy (ability to rely on themselves outside the educational context as individuals or citizens). Consequently, students can develop a higher level of autonomy in situations where they are *convinced* that they are required to act independently and where certain conditions are met.

To better illustrate the point, an example was provided by some interviewees where they have compared themselves with students of Normal Superior Schools[37]. Students claim that superior school students are expected to be future teachers at primary, middle or secondary schools right after graduation. Being in such a situation changes students' false assumptions and creates positive mindsets and beliefs about education and helps them to focus more on their studies to develop their teaching skills. Hence, psychological stability, motivation and sense of responsibility are increased.

The financial situation of learners has greatly affected their sense of being autonomous in the classroom. On the other hand, it encourages them to look after themselves

---

[37] Normal Superior schools are higher education and research institutions create to train secondary school graduates to be teachers. Teachers are directly employed after graduation.

outside the classroom by searching for jobs to sponsor themselves and help their families. The latter shows that these learners are autonomous in their lives and they possess higher degrees of personal autonomy. This means that Algerian learners have the abilities and skills to be autonomous if appropriate learning conditions available and financial stability is maintained.

Regardless of the aforementioned influencing features, autonomy in the Algerian socio-cultural setting is still possible if and only if the educational policy makers take it in charge to enhance the working/ learning conditions of both teachers and students, and take into account the socio-cultural backgrounds of the place where learning is actually happening.

The Algerian socio-cultural dimensions restrict students' ability to act autonomously and stand as a barrier in their way to develop higher degrees of autonomy. It is noteworthy that students have the ability to assume the responsibility of learning if all the required conditions are available such as: well-equipped classrooms with technological devices, informing students about their roles and duties, financial stability and a well-defined future to focus on their studies.

4.11 Key Findings

The analysis of the classroom observation, both questionnaires, and students' group interviews indicate that both educational and local cultures are standing as obstacles limiting the pace of the enhancement of learner autonomy. These educational practices and socio-cultural beliefs and assumptions can be summarized in the following concluding remarks and key findings.

1. **Teachers:**

- Teachers are somehow familiar with autonomy but still find difficulties on how to foster it
- Teacher autonomy is a prerequisite to the development of learner autonomy
- Teachers still possess some traditional educational beliefs and practices such as being a provider of knowledge and the decision-maker
- Learners' expectations and attitudes towards learning are not taken into account by teachers
- Teachers seem to be responsible about both learning and teaching

2. **Students:**

- Students are still reliant on their teachers and classroom instructions
- Students' prefer to work in groups
- Students' give more importance to mark than knowledge
- Work is more important than knowledge
- Students' are not fully aware of their new roles and responsibilities
- Students' are not involved in deciding the learning content and process

3. **The classroom**
- Overcrowded classes is an obstacle for teachers to develop students' autonomy
- The design of classrooms do not help teachers to foster autonomy
- EFL Algerian classes are still teacher-centered led
- EFL classrooms are not equipped with the necessary materials to promote autonomy

4. **Algerian Educational and Local Culture**

- Students' educational culture is the main constraint in the promotion of learner autonomy
- The socio-cultural aspect of the EFL Algerian learners is a hindrance in the development of autonomy
- Teachers' authority and dominance are the key educational culture components restricting learner autonomy
- Collectivism, large power distance and strong uncertainty avoidance are the major cultural dimensions characterizing the Algerian EFL classrooms.

5. **The Algerian Educational Policy**

- Importing teaching methodologies and approaches to language teaching and learning without prior examination to its effectiveness in the Algerian socio-cultural context is widening the gap
- The socio-cultural dimensions of the EFL Algerian learners' profile and specifications are not considered in the promotion of LA and their impact on the students' learning practices and attitudes are not examined

- The Algerian educational policy is still in subordination to other educational systems
- Autonomy is somehow a new educational concept in the Algerian university
- Learner autonomy in the Algerian educational context is still a striving goal
- Autonomy in the Algerian context is associated to collaboration more than working individually
- There is a gap between theory of autonomy and its practice

4.12 Limitations and Delimitations

Any research is limited by a number of constraints which may partially influence the reliability of data and generalizability of findings. In this research, the researcher has faced a number of problems and obstacles.

Due to the complex nature of autonomy in terms of meanings and understanding as it lends itself to a difficult definition. The researcher finds it difficult to deal with learner autonomy since it is not yet precisely defined. This is why the current study has only focused on its socio-cultural dimensions and their impact on students' learning attitudes and expectations.

Just like autonomy, culture is as complex as autonomy in terms of meaning. What culture really means is not yet answered. In this research some aspects of both local and educational culture were addressed with particular focus on proverbs due to its power of influence.

Generalizability is another limitation to consider. The findings of the current research cannot be generalized because of two reasons:

- First, this research took place in one educational institution only (Ahmed Zabana University of Relizane),
- Second, due to the limited number of participants (100).

Algeria is a large country with diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, and it is characterized by its cultural pluralism and social diversity due to many reasons such as colonization. In this sense, Bouherar , "Algeria witnessed many invasions throughout history among which Romans, Turks, and French colonization were the most influential over the current cultural heritage" (2). However, the participants of this research live and study in one

city, therefore its findings are only limited to the place where it is conducted (the city of Relizane). In Algeria, the beliefs and perceptions are different even within culture.

Another limitation is this research is linked to the examination of the cultural and social traditions and habits from students' perspectives; however, very little attention was given to this issue from teachers' perspectives. This may result in limited evidence from the part of teachers.

4.13 Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher attempts to answer the research questions and test his hypotheses through a qualitative and quantitative analysis and interpretations of the main research tools. It aims to understand the Algerian classroom and its socio-cultural backgrounds and their impact on the students' autonomy.

The Algerian classroom is a collectivist educational setting with a higher power distance and strong uncertainty avoidance. It is collectivist in view of the fact that learning in-groups is preferred. Students feel more secure and comfortable in the presence of their teachers and have a tendency to work with other members of the classroom. Power distance is another cultural dimension which examines the distribution of power, this latter is owned by the one who leads the class (teacher) and it is accepted for granted (by learners). This explains students' reliance on their teacher; they think that they are ruled and they should follow their leader. Strong uncertainty avoidance is clearly driven by the beliefs learners hold about the one who makes mistakes or does not have all answers. This person (a learner) is likely to lose face in certain learning situations where he/she is not sure about the result of his/her intervention, will it be correct and then being praised or wrong and then being ignored (embarrassment). This will eventually prevent him/her from taking risks, and doing something different from the group (limiting innovation and creation from both sides).

Autonomous learning in such learning environments and societies is not impossible but rather difficult to be a realistic goal. It is important also to note that its implementation is quite different from individualist countries with lower power distance and weak uncertainty avoidance. Learner autonomy is manifested differently across cultures, its promotion in EFL context lies strongly in considering the specificity of the Algerian classroom.

It is to be understood that what suits a given culture is frequently inappropriate in another culture; this is by no means to say that autonomy is not a suitable concept in the

Algerian educational system but it has to be implemented and modified in parallel to the nature and the specificity of the Algerian culture. Yet, this should go through gradual stages and steps as shown in the next chapter.

5.1 Introduction

As mentioned earlier, learner autonomy is certainly not a straightforward concept to deal with; it is especially complicated as it contains many layers and proportions. In the previous chapter, results have shown that the EFL Algerian classroom is still a learner-centered approach and that learner autonomy is still a striving goal due to socio-cultural constraints. It is true that LA is originally introduced in the Western culture; however, to say that it is unsuited in non-western education is a stereotypic and false assumption taken for granted.

One may say that autonomy is a matter of readiness and priority in terms of implementation. It is high time to be aware of ones' own culture's strengths and weaknesses, its advantages and disadvantages for the sake of changing roles and attitudes and correcting wrong beliefs and cultural assumptions. Thus, this chapter aims to provide valuable and useful tips and strategies about how to make learner autonomy a prominent goal. Practical classrooms activities, cultural, social and psychological considerations are the main points suggested in this chapter.

5.2 Learner Autonomy Development in the Algerian Context: A Matter of Priority

It is unreasonable to say that learner autonomy is not a suitable concept in the Algerian culture. Learner autonomy development is by no means a matter of expecting learners to be responsible about their own learning overnight but rather is joint efforts. Its promotion is not a straightforward task to do as it requires awareness, readiness, and priority in terms of implementation. To this point, one may raise the following questions: Do Algerian policy makers possess the required skills and practices of autonomy? Are they autonomous in making the educational policy? Can teachers promote autonomy in their classrooms if themselves are not autonomous?[38] The central question is: With whom to Start First, students, teachers or policy-makers?

5.2.1 The Family: The First School of Education

Education starts in the family and so self-reliance and autonomy. As it is explained in the fourth chapter, the Algerian family possesses a collectivist attitude where "we" is more preferred than "I", this is marked by their groupings in big families. In the Algerian family,

---

[38] There is an attempt to answer this question pages178-182).

parents are the decision-makers and the first responsible for many aspects of their children's life from early childhood to adulthood.

Parents are the first educators before children are sent to schools. Thus, they are the first responsible for the attitudes and behaviors their children bring to schools. From early ages, parents should give their children some freedom to experience doing things on their own even if they may fail to achieve the desired goals. It should be understood that their failure in doing something is the starting point to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and then start looking for other ways to reach the same goals.

It might be seen as trial things, but they certainly bring about the desired change. If children are raised in a family where they are considered as partners and effective members in the family, they will develop some degrees of autonomy when they are sent to schools. It is all about the parents' trust and beliefs about their children's ability to act autonomously in certain situations and the crucial roles they (future university students) have in their society and educational community in the future.

Empowering parents-school relationships is another important aspect to consider in fostering autonomy in the Algerian educational context. Schools would constantly be in contact with parents to inform them about their children's ways of behaving, their beliefs and attitudes and make parents aware of their roles in helping children to become independent and responsible.

5.2.2 Institution Autonomy

Successful education is largely dependent on teacher autonomy and learner autonomy, more importantly, on institution autonomy. Having a certain pedagogical freedom is likely to determine the essence of teaching and learning (its failure or success). In this sense, Eduard Spranger claims that "Learning and education will only be successful if teachers and students come together in freedom and the schools themselves are free." (Spranger 273). Being free in terms of creating innovative teaching and learning approaches, methods and techniques makes learning more effective and beneficial. As a result, it encourages creativity, sense of critical thinking and innovation.

It might be contradicting to encourage the promotion of autonomy in higher education while the decision-makers themselves do not create their own teaching methodologies that suit their educational specificity. This makes autonomy in the Algerian context a matter of

priority and readiness more than a question of relevance. Can students' be autonomous if their teachers are not? Can policy makers call for autonomy if they do not create their own educational philosophy? Are they policy makers or policy adopters?

It might be good to learn from others, but it is certainly not when blindly imitating others and neglecting our own specificities and needs. Camilleri further suggests that "Learner autonomy in the classroom in fact should exert a wash back effect on the entire system by creating pressure on the school authorities to gain more autonomy."(33). It remains only a dream to make autonomy happen in the Algerian context, if schools and institutions are still in subordination to other educational systems. In fact, it is about autonomous educational policy as an institution.

Better promotion of autonomy in the Algerian university requires viewing it as a shared responsibility of all stakeholders, teachers and learners. This shift of responsibility from the teacher to the learner is a promising decision if it is to be applied gradually and in collaboration with educational community members. This means that policy-makers have to reconsider their roles in developing both student and teacher autonomy and develop the required skills to create their own teaching methods, approaches and curriculum.

5.2.2.1 Teaching/ Learning Methodologies in Algeria: From Imitation to Innovation

Due to the differences in socio-cultural, political, ideological and educational backgrounds, adopting Western teaching and learning approaches should not be blindly imitated and applied but rather modified and changed according to the unique African nature of learning and its specificities. This is why, adopting such reforms and trends requires to "take into account the specificity of Africa and not be a mere imitation of what is happening in Europe" (Goolam 30). By analogy, Algerian policy makers and university rectors could also take into consideration the backgrounds and the dimensions of the Algerian students' and teachers' learning and teaching styles, preferences, needs and expectations.

After about 15 years since its implementation, it is high time to evaluate the Algerian educational system and learner-centered approach in the light of the LMD system and examine its effectiveness, i.e, whether or not the set objectives have been met. It is worth noting that developing the quality of education lies in being aware of the current situations, requirements and needs of the Algerian higher education and society and makes it free from external dominance, power and subordination.

Moving from imitation to creation and innovation has become a necessity. To better make learners autonomous, it is urgent now, more than any time before, for the Algerian higher education decision-makers to start by themselves developing their sense of autonomy and designing teaching methodologies which suit better their current status, political aspects and the socio-cultural specificity.

In case of adoption, it is desirable to test and examine the suitability of any pedagogical approach before implementing it; it could constantly be evaluated and modified taking into account all pillars shaping the Algerian nature of educational setting, its characteristics and attributes. It is not only about testing its appropriateness and feasibility but also providing the necessary materials and devices to ensure its success and practicality.

5.2.3 Teachers' Readiness for Autonomous Learning

As stated in the first chapter of this research, teachers are particularly required to incorporate autonomous skills into their teaching. It is illogical to expect students' to be autonomous if their teachers are not autonomous and did not experience autonomy as students.

None of us would entirely neglect the fact that autonomous learners need autonomous teachers who are likely to guide them towards autonomous learning. But the question is; are teachers autonomous? Do they have sufficient knowledge about how to foster autonomy? Are they aware of its layers? To this end, teacher autonomy is prerequisite to the development of learner autonomy. In this sense, "autonomous learners deserve autonomous teachers." (Kumaravadivelu 548). In the same line of thought, Camilleri believes that "Autonomous learning should be supported by autonomous teaching" (32). There is an inseparable relationship between teacher autonomy and learner autonomy promotion in the sense that success of the latter is largely dependent on the presence of the former.

5.2.3.1 Autonomy Training for EFL Teachers

Ramos believes that "Many of us [teachers] did not experience the opportunity to learn autonomously and, consequently, find it hard to promote autonomy because it is difficult for us to be "true believers" in something we were not given to taste."(190). It is certainly not straightforward for teachers to promote autonomy if they did not have a chance to experience it as learners. For this reason, teachers should first be autonomous in their teaching practices before promoting autonomy in their students.

Training teachers to be autonomous and be capable of fostering learner autonomy in their classrooms should be placed at the heart of teacher education and successful development of learner autonomy. Little suggests that "we must provide trainee teachers with the skills to develop autonomy in the learners who will be given into their charge, but we must also give them a firsthand experience of learner autonomy in their training" ("Freedom to Learn and Compulsion to Interact" 179-180). Little emphases on the importance of making teachers experience autonomy first before fostering it in their learners. In other words, teachers have to start with themselves developing the required skills to be autonomous teachers through teacher training.

To put it in the current research, Missoum claims that "Algerian higher education is undergoing profound changes. But there seems to be little discussion of teaching quality and much less of teacher development and training." ("Autonomous Continuing Professional Development"175). Teacher training in the Algerian higher education is not paid full attention as it deserves. Hence, policy makers are invited to give much importance to teacher professional development and self-education to assure the quality of teaching at university and to produce autonomous learners who are likely to contribute to their societies.

Teachers throughout this training will start by themselves, changing their beliefs regarding the traditional teaching and learning styles, redefine their expected roles and understand their new responsibilities in parallel with modern classroom principles. Teachers will also be informed about both theory and practice of learner autonomy promotion. In teacher training course, it is suggested to tackle topics include but not limited to the following:

a. Education across cultures

b. The anthropology of education

c. The sociology of Education

d. Language teaching approaches in the light of LMD system

e. Assessment and evaluation of teaching methodologies in higher education

f. Learner autonomy: From theory to practice

g. Learner autonomy across cultures

h. Teacher autonomy: a prerequisite to learner autonomy development

i. Learner autonomy in higher education: Socio-cultural considerations

5.2.3.1.1 Understanding Concepts and Responsibilities

Generally speaking, the first steppingstone towards effective promotion of any educational approach, method or techniques is to know the extent to which teachers view teaching and learning. In the view of that, Smith sees that "When discussing the implementation of an educational development programme, it is important to consider teachers' conceptions of and attitudes towards teaching and learning" (163). Similarly, it is argued that "Teachers are the ones who ultimately decide about the fate of any reform when implementing it". This is why "Their attitudes, feelings and perceptions should never be diminished before launching innovations." (Gherzouli 15). Neglecting teachers' beliefs about any pedagogical implication, teaching method or educational goals (autonomy) is likely to determine its failure. To ensure the validity of success of any new concept introduced in the classroom and to avoid possible discrepancies, teachers should be considered as partners not followers and implementers of instructions.

Being aware of the theoretical aspects of autonomous learning is the starting point towards efficient promotion of teacher and learner autonomy. What does it mean? What LA is not? Why is it important? And how does it contribute to 2L learning. In the same line of reasoning, Alhousayni believes that "…in order for teachers to promote learner autonomy, they should first be aware of the importance of learner autonomy so that they can help students gradually become independent learners."(57) To put in another way, teachers' beliefs about autonomy in language classroom should be defined, examined and understood. In this respect, Borg and Al-Busaidi teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy are preeminent in "understanding and promoting changes in the extent to which teachers' promote learner autonomy in their work" (7).

Once teachers get some knowledge about the effectiveness of autonomy in their teaching profession and life as well, they will be convinced. This conviction includes that teachers will not be marginalized, their roles will be diminished, and that they will not lose authority over their students. More importantly, teachers should also be convinced that autonomy can be achieved among their learners.

5.2.3.1.2 Accepting Responsibility

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 (Little qtd. in Lumturie 426).

In the same vein, Powel believes that "also the teacher needs to accept the change and be willing to share responsibility." (Powell 118). If teachers are not convinced about the importance of fostering autonomy in the classroom, their contribution in making it a prominent goal remains less effective. Besides, teachers need to understand that their roles are crucial in the development of learner autonomy.

5.2.3.2 Reflective Teaching

Reflection is the process of continuous assessment about the teaching practices and attitudes. "Reflective approach" by Richards and Lockhard focuses on "a number of important dimensions of teaching, including teachers' and learners' beliefs, teachers' decision making, and teachers' and learners' roles". Reflective teaching can be defined as a process of evaluating ones' own teaching in terms of content, objectives and methods of teaching. In the same line of thought, Xu explains that "Reflective teaching means looking at what you do in the classroom, thinking about why you do it, and thinking about if it works" (Xu 19)

Reflecting constantly on teaching would not only help teachers evaluating their teaching practices but also develop teacher autonomy. Being aware of what works well and what works less would certainly provide the teacher with insightful information about their teaching strengths and weaknesses as well as their students' needs, wants and preferences, therefore, taking appropriate decisions to meet the students' needs and evaluate and correct different teaching aspects.

Reflective teaching can be done through many activities such as observation, recording lessons or questionnaires. Richards and Lockhard point out that "Some aspects of teaching and learning can be investigated through carrying out a survey or administering a questionnaire."(10). A questionnaire can be a good tool to gather information about the different aspects of the teaching profession, methods, techniques, activities, environment, interaction and even assessment and relationships.

EFL teachers are requested to reflect on their teaching methods, techniques and strategies to self-evaluate their teaching practices. To do so, Vieira proposes a set of questions to help teachers reflecting on their teaching process:

- Did I achieve my aims?
- What did my students learn?
- Were the materials helpful?
- Did the activities motivate the class?
- Did students learn autonomously?
- Was my classroom a really learner-centered.?
- Did my students enjoy the lesson?
- How do I know my lesson was successful?
- What did I learn from my students?
- What changes will I make if I teach this lesson again? (qtd.in Hadi, Investigating Learner Autonomy among EFL Students 166)

Through reflection, EFL teachers will be able to identify strengths and weaknesses, what works well and what works less in the lesson, and to determine whether or not the teaching objectives are met. Teachers can use observations or recordings as tools to self-evaluate their progress. By doing this, teachers will certainly develop some degrees of teacher autonomy and being able to make their learners autonomous.

5.2.4 Learners' Readiness for Autonomy

The central questions to ask before any attempts to foster autonomy in language classrooms are: Are language learners ready for autonomous learning? Do they have sufficient knowledge about learner autonomy? Do they have the profile of autonomous learners? Learners' readiness to assume responsibility over their own learning guarantees to some extent the success of the promotion of learner autonomy in EFL Classrooms. The more ready the students are, the more successful the shift is.

Introducing any new educational goal revealed by a shift from one approach to another requires some sort of preparation to ensure the smoothness of this transition. In the content of LA promotion, Dickinson proposes a preliminary phase to prepare learners for long-life learning and autonomy known as "semi-autonomy" which is "the stage at which learners are being prepared for autonomy." (Dickinson 11).

Becoming responsible about learning cannot happen suddenly. The shift of responsibility from teacher to learner takes time and often follows certain sequential steps. In this context, Scharle and Szabo state that "People do not normally wake up a fine day and find that they have become responsible overnight. More likely, they go through a slow gradual process as they are approaching adulthood." (Scharle and Szabo 9).

5.2.4.1 Gradual Stages of LA Development

In the Algerian setting, EFL learners have been guided along their learning process; thereby they cannot be expected to assume responsibility in a blink of an eye. Time, planning, patience and trust are all key components in the development of autonomy. Both teachers and students should be patient and have mutual trust in their capacities to act autonomously. To make this happen Scharle and Szabo suggest the following phases:

5.2.4.1.1 Raising Awareness

Awareness is the starting point in the LA promotion. The more aware the students are about their roles and responsibilities, the more autonomous they become. Awareness concerning what does autonomy mean in language education? (Definitions) What is not? (Misconceptions), why is it important? awareness of learning strategies and styles, their needs, objectives and preferences.

Students are in dire need to be aware of themselves as learners and what is expected from them. According to Dam "What we [teachers] can do is give our learners an awareness of how they think and how they learn – an awareness which hopefully will help them come to an understanding of themselves and thus increase their self-esteem" (Dam 18). Awareness should be viewed as the first steppingstones towards efficient learning and learner autonomy development. Dem further suggests that this awareness includes:

- Awareness of the learners' role as well as the role of others in the learning process;
- Readiness to cooperate,
- Willingness to make choices and accept responsibilities for them." (Dam 9)

5.2.4.1.2 Changing Beliefs

The traditional paradigm has, for a long time, put the teacher at the center of the classroom in which learners are "spoon fed" with information. With this latter in mind, learners find it difficult to cope with the new teaching/ learning methods and principles since they suddenly find themselves in a new learning environment where they should be autonomous.

Changing beliefs is the most challenging task for both teachers and students. Thanasoulas states that "Perhaps one of the principal goals of education is to alter learners' beliefs about themselves by showing them that their putative failures or shortcomings can be ascribed to a lack of effective strategies rather than to a lack of potential" (Thanasoulas "Autonomy and Learning: An Epistemological Approach" 126)

It is quite difficult for students who have been accustomed to perform certain roles, to change them overnight. In practice, beliefs can be changed when they are proved to be wrong or ineffective. Teachers have to discuss the traditional beliefs with their students and show them that they did not bring any effective results.

5.2.4.1.3 Transferring Roles

At this level, students are ready to play their expected roles to develop some sort of autonomy. Once students correct their traditional beliefs, attitudes and convictions, they are in a good position to be familiarized with the desired roles to be autonomous learners. Students in autonomous learning need to act more responsible, this latter cannot happen overnight too, but rather demands time and patience. To this end, learner training could be the best proposed solution to prepare learners for such responsibility.

5.2.4.2 Learner Training and Learner Autonomy

The term autonomy training has, for a long time, been associated with the teacher. However, little interest is paid to learner training. Learners are also concerned with autonomy training, In order for learners to be able to act autonomously inside and outside the classroom, Kumaravadivelu proposes that: "learners' ability to take charge of their own learning can be made possible only if they are trained to identify and use appropriate strategies." (137) to be an autonomous learner lies strongly in the learners' encouragement and preparation for such a change in their roles, behaviors and attitudes and their awareness of learning strategies that can best achieve the former goal.

So, to better prepare learners for autonomous learning, it is dispensable for them to sit for a training course known as "learner training". Sinclair claims that the aim of learner training is "…to help learners consider the factors that affect their learning and discover the learning strategies that suit them best and which are appropriate to their learning context, so that they may become more effective learners and take on more responsibility for their own learning." (66). this training aims to make learners understand the learning process, being aware of themselves as learners, and the context in which they learn.

Similarly, Wenden believes that "Its [learner training] aim is to help the learner learn how to learn." (1). For Wenden, learner training should focus on familiarizing learners with learning strategies (how to learn) as a key component in developing students' self-awareness and learner autonomy. Wenden adds that "By far the greater majority of practitioners explicitly stress the importance of learner training for learner autonomy."(2)

Learner training should also make learners understand the concept of learner autonomy (different meanings and definitions), their expected roles and responsibilities. It also provides them with the necessary theoretical as well as practical considerations to gradually develop certain degrees of autonomy. More importantly, it explains the transitional shift from teacher-centeredness to learner centered approach.

The teacher plays a great role in learner training. The autonomous teacher is expected to train learners how to learn. In this context, Ellis and Sinclair propose some insightful tips and advice to help learners 'learning to learn':

- discussing with learners and taking their opinions and views on the learning content and the methodology;
- negotiating with learners information about language and language learning and making this information available to learners;
- listening to learners and helping them reflect on language and language learning;
- raising learners' awareness of different learning strategies;
- enabling learners to practise language learning by creating an appropriate environment;
- helping learners express their opinions and perspectives and make conclusions about learning;
- guiding and providing advice to individual learners. (Ellis and Sinclair 10)

To this end, learner autonomy training should give importance to the influence of cultural and social beliefs on language learning, self-awareness as learners, and knowledge about learning strategies (cognitive, metacognitive and socio-affective factors). Under the supervision of the teacher, learner training may consider but not only the following topics:

- From teacher- to learner centered approach: a shift of responsibility
- Readiness for Learner autonomy: Changing beliefs and Transferring New Roles
- Learner autonomy: Definitions and false assumptions
- Students' and teachers' Roles in the Autonomous Learning
- Learner autonomy in the Algerian Educational Context
- Practical Activities to Foster Autonomy
- Culture Influences and Learner Autonomy Development.

5.2.5 Approaches to Fostering Learner Autonomy

Benson proposes six approaches to foster learner autonomy. These approaches are resource-based, learner-based, technology-based, classroom-based, curriculum-based and teacher-based. Each approach contributes to develop certain skills and attributes in EFL learners and each one particularly uses certain strategies and techniques to enhance some degrees of autonomy. It seems that the function of one approach completes the other. In this view, Benson sees that "it seems likely that it [learner autonomy] will be fostered most effectively through a combination of approaches." (Benson *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning* 178)

a. Resource Based Approach

This approach is mainly concerned with preparing students to assume responsibility over their learning by using resources provided by their teachers or their own. It aims to make students experience how to plan to learn and select the learning materials. In this approach "learners have access to a variety of sources like videos, software, and other printed materials such as books. Learners can choose the best learning materials to meet their needs,

b. Learner Based Approach

The central interest of a learner based approach is on learner training. It gives much importance to empowering learners with the necessary skills and capacities to assume responsibility and be aware of how to learn. This approach aims to make learners change

their traditional behavior and roles and direct them towards self-dependent learning through learner training.

c. Technology Based Approach

The rapid advancement of technology has imposed itself to be a necessity rather than a choice. Many workplaces such as airports, hotels, and hospitals…ect are using technology to facilitate the working conditions. Similarly, educational systems and institutions have directed their attention towards the use of technology in teaching and learning to cope with the needs of modern education and meet the requirements of the 21st century competencies and skills such as: collaboration, responsibility, lifelong learning, and critical thinking.

The focus of technology based approach is on using digital devices and technological tools to develop some degrees of autonomy in language classrooms. Making students able to use the computing skills and ICTs is seen as a focal factor in the growth of learner autonomy.

Distance learning[39] and online education is becoming more and more compulsory in this rapid changing world. Distance learning would not only make students enhance their language competencies but also give the opportunity to experience autonomous learning in the physical absence of their teachers.

d. Classroom Based Approach

The primary concern of classroom approach to learner autonomy is to create and maximize learning opportunities where learners are given freedom to decide what and how to learn (learning content and process) in a supportive classroom environment. Besides, in such an environment, learners are involved in assessing the classroom learning.

e. Curriculum Based Approach

Curriculum based approach gives more importance to syllabus design and the students' involvement in the curriculum design. This approach "extend[s] the idea of learner control over the planning and evaluation of learning to the curriculum as a whole" (Benson 111). This means that developing learner autonomy does not lie in the learners' involvement of the learning content and evaluation but also in making decisions concerning the curriculum.

---

[39] A method of learning conveyed outside the educational institutions by using technological tools.

f. Teacher Based Approach

The main emphasis of the teacher based approach is teacher autonomy and professional development. It considers the teacher as the main element in the process of making learners responsible about their own learning. It is the teacher who is expected to assume responsibility to be able to foster autonomy in his/her learners. Teachers' readiness and willingness to change their roles to meet their students' needs are the main aspects of teacher-based approach.

5.2.6 Learner Autonomy: Psychological and Social Considerations

There are certainly many conditions to consider in LA promotion as explained in the first chapter. The focus of this phase is on two important components, psychological (motivation) and social aspects of LA (teacher-learner relationship). Being psychologically well-prepared to assume responsibility is a key factor towards enhancing learner autonomy. Psychological and social considerations mean to support students to change their current attitudes and beliefs about themselves and education. Most importantly, it shows the importance of education as a social trait in students' lives as learners and citizens.

To alter students' beliefs about education is a long term objective; it is both time consuming and effort demanding. For the present time, educational cultural adjustment and adaptation is becoming a necessity. In other terms, raising teachers' awareness concerning the importance of coping with students' educational habits and traditions remains a possible alternative.

5.2.6.1 Motivation

Motivation in education has widely been discussed. Its importance in the endorsement of learner autonomy is undeniable. Motivation is a key condition in flourishing education and investing in the human capital. Unfortunately, "Motivation to learn is one of the problems faced by educators…" (Llaven-Nucamendi 117). Teaching unmotivated students is a real challenge for teachers aiming to foster autonomy in their classrooms.

Motivation is seen as a psychological factor influencing the degree of autonomy. The more learners are motivated the more autonomous they become. In this light, Scharle and Szebo believe that "motivation is a prerequisite for learning and responsibility development alike" (7). This motivation is not only related to autonomy but also conditioned by culture. Palfreyman and Smith "motivation in general is framed by culture, since what is motivating

for an individual learner is partly a function of what is valued in his/her society"(9). Motivation is culturally mediated, this means that it is interpreted and understood differently by different students in different cultural and educational contexts. Students can be motivated in different ways, what motivates a learner in a particular learning context does not frequently motivate another learner in another learning context.

In the Algerian setting, it is noticed that students are highly motivated when they are well-graded, since the mark maximizes students' involvement in the learning process, why not to use it as a positive educational culture to motivate learners and develop their autonomy. This is certainly not to say that students are being rewarded without making efforts or they are engaged and motivated only when they are rewarded.

In the Algerian culture, education is valued, but students often give importance to work more than knowledge. This attitude is part of their social and educational ethos that has largely affected their psychological stability, concentration and their ability to behave responsibly in the classroom. In other words, their motivation is determined by their belief about education as shown in the previous chapter.

Psychological stability and emotional well-being are integral parts of motivation. Students need to feel at ease about their future to be motivated. Algerian students are less comfortable with ambiguities and uncertainties. This is to say that if their future is clearly determined and defined, they may assume a higher level of responsibility and full engagement in their own learning. Thus, it is hoped that policy makers consider motivation as a priority to instigate learner autonomy. This can be done through looking for alternatives to reduce uncertainties and fear of unknown future among learners.

5.2.6.2 Teacher-Learner Relationships

Human connection and relationships are somehow neglected in education. A classroom is a small society where teachers and learners are seen as future citizens who are expected to work together to develop the quality education and the prosperity of the country. Students generally remember two kinds of teachers, those who have been strict to them and those who have been flexible, tolerant and friendly with them.

The importance of teacher-learner relationship lies in the teacher's role in creating a friendly atmosphere where students are considered as partners not followers. Gurbanov and Mirzayeva mention that "The relationship between peers [learners] and teacher plays a

significant role in the process of learning" (23-24). None of us would entirely ignore the teacher-learner relationship and its prominent influence in autonomous learning in particular. The way teachers treat their students determines students' sense of security and motivation therefore enhancing responsibility and self-learning.

Based on the analysis of students' group interviews, it was shown that face and shyness are among the barriers of learner autonomy development in the Algerian EFL context. To this end, teachers are expected to develop a positive relationship with their learners where respect, security and trust are fundamental aspects. In such a positive atmosphere, students are encouraged to collaborate with their teachers, develop some degrees of self-confidence, and autonomy.

Teachers can use many ways to create a positive relationship with their learners. This can be done through showing interest in their students' participation, praising and rewarding them. Using positive expressions to praise them and show that their efforts are worth in constructing knowledge inside the classroom.

Teaching with passion, using humor, showing positive attitudes towards teaching strengthens teacher-learner relationships. Being in such a context maximizes learning opportunities, classroom interaction and successful communication. Teachers' roles in developing their relationship with their students may go beyond the classroom; teachers may also show interest in their students' lives and ask them about their future plans, problems and intended goals.

It might be easier said than done since building a positive relationship is a challenging task. It takes time and requires much patience. Not only the teachers who have a crucial role in creating such an atmosphere but also the learners have to see their teachers as partners not responsible for both teaching and learning.

Just like motivation, relationship is a sociocultural concept. What constitutes a good relationship is often conditioned by the place where teachers and students live and also based on understanding what does this relationship entail? And how should it be? .It must be understood that the relationship between teachers and learners serves academic purposes where limits are respected.

5.2.7 Cultural Considerations in LA Promotion

5.2.7.1 Cultural Awareness: Strengths and Weaknesses

It is certainly not a straightforward task to make learner autonomy an educational goal in the Algerian higher educational context if wrong beliefs, mindsets, and attitudes are similar to those students used to have in the traditional paradigm of teaching and learning. Being aware of one's culture advantages and holdbacks, changing and correcting false assumptions about learning, and supporting positive classroom culture are essential elements to be discussed in EFL classrooms to bring about the desired change.

Cultural awareness[40] is somehow neglected in the literature of LA especially in FL context. Much attention is paid to intercultural awareness where students are made aware of "the otherness", the ways of doing things in terms of practices, perceptions and productions. Students should know what is appropriate and what is not appropriate in their own culture so that to be able to interact positively in the classroom. This awareness is based on the ability of both teachers and students to understand what works good and what works less in their own culture.

As a matter of fact, the need to create a positive classroom culture has become a necessity. Becoming aware of our own culture of learning (educational culture) and doing things outside the educational context (local culture) is prerequisite to learner autonomy development. In this respect, the teacher has a great role to play in such a process; his/her roles can be classified as follows:

  a. Discussing cultural beliefs and behaviors in relation to LA
  b. Making students' aware of cultural stereotypes and wrong assumptions about learning
  c. Explaining how LA can be achieved by learners of different cultures
  d. Explaining how culture influence their learning attitudes and expectations

5.2.7.2 Changing and Correcting Educational and Local Beliefs

Any culture of learning has its strengths and weakness. Assessing the educational culture is often ignored in our institutions. Being aware of one's own culture is often seen as a prerequisite to fostering learner autonomy. Awareness includes both being familiar with its

---

[40] For better understanding of the concept, see Shemshadsara 95-96
https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1078919.

stereotypes, false assumptions and negative beliefs and correcting and changing them. By this is meant to correct and change practices not values.

In a similar line, Hofstede et al believe that "Culture change can be fast for the outer layers of the onion diagram, labeled *practices*. Practices are the visible part of cultures. New practices can be learned throughout one's lifetime."(19) Culture is dynamic and changeable, practices are part of culture; as a result, practices also can be changed overtime. They add that values represent "the onion's core" therefore; they can gradually and slowly be changed because they are facts. Practices are the form of culture, and values are the substance.

To put it in the context of current research, if showing higher order of respect is becoming a hindrance in the enhancement of learner autonomy, it is the teachers' role to explain the notion of respect in the classroom. Teachers are supposed to explain to their learners that respect is still maintained when they debate their teachers' ideas and knowledge. In case of ambiguity or mistakes, students should take the initiatives to correct mistakes, be it a spelling, grammar mistake or a gap in knowledge being taught. Mistakes should be seen as part of assessment and learning. Having this attitude and mindset will not only boost their autonomy but also critical thinking. The researcher is certainly not assuming that respect should be changed as a value but the way students perceive and interpret respecting the teacher should be revised and corrected.

EFL Teachers should also understand the fact that giving learners some degree of freedom to judge the content of learning, criticize it, wonder and question it will not cause any harm for them or losing face or respect. They still can manage their classrooms and their authority will not be lost. It is to be understood that the classroom is a small society where learning should be viewed as a shared responsibility. This responsibility is based on collaboration between all members of the classroom (students and teachers).

Teachers must also bear in mind that classroom management has nothing to do with authority. If students feel more secure in the presence of their teachers; they will manage their behavior accordingly. It is all about distance, empathy and trust, effective teachers are not those who strictly put the classroom under their control but those who understand better the value of relationships and human connections and still can control their classrooms.

5.2.7.3 Supporting Positive Educational Culture

As mentioned above, culture of learning and beliefs should be corrected if they harm learning in general and make learner autonomy difficult to be achieved. Other cultural beliefs and attitudes should be supported and encouraged.

Since we are a collectivist society believing strongly in the idea that "one hand does not clap" we have to make effective use of this belief in language classroom. This can be done through supporting learners to work together and learn from one another. Collaboration and group work are ways to make students engaged in learning therefore developing their autonomy. In other words, it means moving from independence to interdependence.

Teachers are ought to discuss cultural aspects in the EFL classroom to stress the diversity of our cultural heritage and its significance in supporting learners to learn autonomously. If learners are raised in a culture where knowledge is valued, they grow up knowledge seekers no matter how hard the circumstances they live and learn in.

5.2.7.4 Teaching Western Educational Culture of Learning

In the EFL context, a lot of interest has been directed to teaching a foreign culture to non-native speakers of English to better communicate in the target language where students are introduced to how native English language users do things. However the focus should be on both teaching how they do things and how do they learn (culture of learning).

Since its promotion autonomy has always been associated with the Western Educational Culture whereas non-westerns are regarded as less/non-autonomous individuals and learners. To this end, teaching western educational culture of learning to non-western learners is an appreciated step towards developing some degrees of autonomy. The aim is to better understand how they foster autonomy in their classrooms and motivate students to reach the same level of autonomy. Supporting what is positive in our educational culture such as the sense of collectivism (group work) coupled with teaching Western culture of learning which associates autonomy to individualism will make a huge shift towards learner autonomy development.

5.2.8 Readiness for Learner Autonomy: Physical Settings

Making students ready to assume responsibility is not enough if the physical settings where they learn are still traditional and lacking in terms of materials and facilities needed to foster autonomy in EFL classrooms. Thus, it is suggested to look upon the fact that the physical settings are as important as learner training and teacher autonomy training in the preparation of learners to have greater control over the learning process.

5.2.8.1 Classroom Design

Across-history, inventions and productions have been developed and changed in its content and shape constantly except for the classroom. The change took into account peoples' desires and expectations as a way to cope with the needs of modern time. On the contrary, the first thing to be noticed in the Algerian classroom is that the design of the classroom has not yet been changed. Despite the massive reforms in terms of content and the call for being in touch with the world, modernism and globalization, the class design remains the same.

Basically, autonomy promotion has emphasized on the teaching methods, learning strategies, motivation, classroom equipment and many more, however the classroom layout and the ways in which it is arranged is somehow neglected. It might be unnecessary to focus on the design of the classroom, but it is believed that small things can make a huge difference and bring about the desired change. The physical setting is an important element to consider in promoting autonomous learning. Designing classrooms in a way where students feel more comfortable and relaxed are likely to help them be engaged in the learning process and influence the way they learn.

As noticed during the classroom observation, the teacher physical setting represents ownership and authority. These two features seem to hamper and limit students' involvement thereby being less autonomous. In the setting where the current research took place; all tables are fixed on the ground which makes working in groups difficult. To this end, it would be helpful if the classroom arrangement is flexible depending on the task being exercised.

It is worth mentioning that there is no way to lay out the classroom; it largely depends on the nature of the course, the task and the learning objectives and also on students' preference, attitudes and beliefs, As proved earlier in the previous chapters (namely two and four), the Algerian community is a collectivism society where individuals feel more secure

when they are part of the group. Consequently, teachers are invited to change the classroom layout time to time to break the routine of the traditional seating.

Classroom arrangement is an influencing factor in the development of learner autonomy. It influences the way students learn, their engagement and sense of being at ease. Ultimately, this results in an effective communication, interaction and learning inside the classroom. Consequently, instructors should mind the classroom layout and change it accordingly.

5.2.8.2 Classroom Size

Classroom size is somehow ignored in the literature and its effectiveness in providing an effective supportive atmosphere where students are involved in the learning process and have equal chances of participation, therefore enhancing learner autonomy. Algerian classrooms are considered as large class size with large number of students. In this respect, Lakehal-Ayat claims that "The size of the class does have an impact on the effect of learning and teaching. The average number of students in classes is between 35 and 40, both in high schools and university". She adds that "large class size" is a barrier which requires careful consideration and "needs to be solved by education authorities" (432).

Generally speaking, small classes with limited number of learners create an atmosphere of learning where effective listening, collaboration and interaction are all present therefore improving students' academic achievements and meeting their personal needs, interests and preferences.

To create an autonomous learning, it is desirable to have small classes where the number of students does not exceed 20 students, this is likely to help the teacher to control and manage the students' behaviors and attitudes, as it gives him/her a better environment to assess and evaluate the learning/teaching outcomes.

Reasonable classroom size enables the teacher to interact with learners and give them equal chances to participate in constructing knowledge, to be heard and given enough time to express their ideas, share their experiences and negotiate one another's opinions. Furthermore, other students will not feel marginalized or not involved in the learning process. In classes with few students, learning becomes the focal point in the teachers' lesson plan, rather than focusing on the teaching process alone. This means, as autonomy implies, that the learner is the decision-maker of both content and process and an evaluator of progress. On the

other hand, the teacher is only a guider, facilitator, manager and a source of knowledge where necessary which is hard to achieve in large classes.

Autonomy as mentioned in the previous chapters, is not a matter of working alone without the teachers' help or the help of other classmates (independence) but rather being able to work both alone and in collaboration with others (interdependence), this requires dividing the classes into groups, these groups should consist of certain number of students which helps to have a constructive classroom communication.

5.2.8.3 Materials and Equipment

Technological tools have proved its efficiency in language teaching and learning. The teacher works better with learners in a classroom where materials and facilities are put at their disposal. However, poor classrooms are often passive and lacking. Policy makers should not adopt any teaching approach devoid of its materials. It takes equipment, theory and practice to reach autonomous learning as an educational objective.

Drawing students' attention, creating a vivid learning environment and interaction are all aligned with the learners' needs and preferences. In the digital age, students seem to be attracted when technological devices are integrated in the classroom. Despite the different learning styles, generally, language learners learn better when they see and listen. As mentioned previously, oral presentations are among the frequent classroom activities used in Algerian EFL context to boost students' autonomy, however, in the absence of the needed materials (at least a computer and data-show), learning becomes less effective.

Policy makers and curriculum designers have better to consider classroom equipment and materials as a defining component in the promotion of learner autonomy. The availability of some equipment such as computers, data-show, and loud speakers or any audio-visual aids or tech-tools can significantly increase students' motivation, engagement, and independent attitude towards learning.

5.2.9 Activities to Fostering Learner Autonomy

Once teachers, learners and classrooms are all ready to embrace autonomy and assume responsibility, the researcher is in a good position to propose classroom activities and practices to practically foster learner autonomy. These activities should be designed in a way to meet learners' needs, preferences and interests. It must be noted that students should be

involved in the design and selection of activities as a way to develop decision-making skills and give students some space to experience autonomy at earlier stages.

5.2.9.1 Syllabus Design

Syllabus design is the first task teachers conduct before any delivery of any course content. The first meeting between the teacher and the learners is usually dedicated to negotiating the learning syllabus (what is to be learnt). The latter is defined by Hutchinson & Waters as "... a document which says what will (or at least what should) be learnt." (80) This document contains the main elements and headings to be discussed along the year in the course in question.

Learner-centeredness views learning and decision making as shared responsibilities. Teachers and learners together discuss and debate what is to be taught and learnt based on their needs, wants and lacks. It is by no means to say that teachers cannot prepare a well-planned syllabus for their learners, but students' involvement in the selection and design of the learning content and process is helpful to make students feel that they are responsible for their own learning. Thus, providing learners with "opportunities to make significant choices and decisions about their learning" (Nunan 290) is one of the roles of teachers working on learner autonomy development through syllabus design.

Syllabus design should, thus, be seen as a prerequisite tool to develop decision making, self-evaluation and responsibility. Teachers can involve their students in this process through either negotiation or providing them with options to choose among depending on the level of the students. In the former, teachers may prepare a set of questions related to students' previous background knowledge about the course being taught and orally debate these questions with the students to figure out what they know about the subject matter and what they do not know (lacks). In the light of this discussion the teacher will design a syllabus where students' needs, lacks and preferences are considered.

In the latter, teachers can prepare a questionnaire. This questionnaire consists of multiple choice questions related to different aspects of the course such as the type of the content, the learning activities, the type of activities… ect. After gathering the required information, the teacher analyses and interprets the students' answers into a syllabus.

Once the teacher writes the final version of the syllabus, he/she shares it to the students. When the students see that their opinions, suggestions, and expectations were taken

into account, they feel motivated and responsible. Being involved in the learning content and process develops some degrees of autonomy in language learners. This involvement shows that students are not empty vessels to be filled with knowledge but partners who share responsibility with their teachers.

5.2.9.2 Group Work

As proved earlier, the Algerian classroom is shaped by collectivism, thus learners learn better when they are involved in groups. This sense of teamwork, collaboration, partnership is not solely a matter of students working together but with their teachers too, to this end, autonomy can be seen as a shared responsibility which can be developed through cooperative learning and group work.

As the name suggests, in groups students work together to learn from each other and collaborate to accomplish the shared learning goals. In such a learning environment, interact, students negotiate, debate, motivate one another, and make decisions collectively. All these indicators are some defining features of autonomous learning.

It is believed that group work can also develop students' language skills, communicative competence. The author has experienced the effectiveness of group work with first year students. It aims to make them engaged in learning, motivated and have an active role in constructing knowledge related to the subject matter being taught (research methodology). Below is a sample of a group work activity used by the author.

The title of the lesson: Research methodology: key concepts and definitions

Level: First year students

Participants: Teacher and students

Time: 30 minutes

Aims:

- Developing students freedom of choice and personal selection
- Making students collaborate with each other
- Helping students sharing their opinions and debating their ideas
- Engaging students in the learning process
- Motivating students through competition

Type of work: Group work (3 to 4 students in each group)

Materials: handouts (a diagram to work on)[41]

Instructions:

- The teacher asks students to organize themselves into groups of no more than four students in each
- Students are invited to name the groups and select a representative of each group.
- The teacher distributes the handouts to the groups (a diagram).
- The teacher explains the diagram and asks the students to answer the set questions related to key concepts about research methodology
- The teacher notes that the winner is the group who answers all questions on time

This group work activity aims to make students collaborate to construct knowledge, share their opinions, debate their ideas and develop some sort of self-reliance in terms of selecting the members of the groups, naming the groups and selecting the representatives. Informing students that at the end one group will win is a way to create a competitive atmosphere. It was noticed that students were highly engaged in the learning process and eager to win the competition.

At an individual level (when students work individually), it is recommended to motivate students to have an active role in the classroom by selecting the most active students as "the students of the session" or "top three". It is worth to mention that the teacher is not the one who selects the active members by the end of the session. The teacher may only elect some students, and their classmates are supposed to choose three most active students. The selection is based on the students' effective contribution in the classroom, questioning, answering questions and participation.

5.2.9.3 Written Projects

Written projects or homework assignments are extremely helpful to keep students in touch with the target language outside the classroom. More importantly, it develops student autonomy in the absence of their teacher. Written projects can be done individually, in pairs

---

[41] The diagram is demonstrated in Appendix VIII

or in groups, it is better to give students some freedom to choose their partners or to work alone.

Assessment is always at the heart of learner autonomy development, be it self or peer assessment. In developing autonomous learning through projects "The teacher gives praise and feedback" However, it is "…also supplied by the other learners when group work and product is jointly assessed after projects are finished" (Țurloiu and Stefánsdóttir 13).

5.2.9.4 Oral Presentations

This type of classroom practices is without any doubt an interesting activity to develop students' autonomy inside and outside the classroom. Out of the researchers' experience as a teacher at university, from the beginning of the academic year, students are informed about the course description and the methods of assessment. Students' are made aware of the fact that presenting a topic in relation to the course syllabus being taught is voluntary and a personal choice. In other words, the teacher only suggests the elements to be discussed and the student is completely free to decide whether or not to present the course content in the classroom.

Type of Activity: Oral Presentation

Classroom work: individual, pairs or group work

Level: Third year

Time: 15 to 20 minutes to present the work

Aims:

- Making students willing to participate actively in the learning process
- Taking the initiatives without being told.
- Determining strengths and weaknesses
- Developing outside autonomy
- Encouraging self-evaluation and peer evaluation

Instructions:

- By the end of each session, the teacher suggests the topic related to one of the headings of the syllabus designed to be discussed in the upcoming session.

- Students are asked to choose one topic to prepare at home and then present it
- Before the student (the presenter) starts presenting the topic, three students are voluntarily invited to evaluate the presenter's work
- By the end, the presenter is invited to choose top feedback among the three
- Then, the presenter is asked to evaluate him/herself

Comments:

- The Students have a complete degree of freedom to modify the title and create their own outline for their presentations (they are not limited by certain points to discuss; they only have to be relevant to the topic's main heading).
- The presenter can choose three students to evaluate his/her work
- The evaluators are expected to assess the students' performance, clarity of the content, the mastery of language and others.
- Other students are also invited to give feedback in case they are willing to.
- The teacher is also expected to give feedback at last.

Once the student puts an end to his/her presentation, evaluators start commenting on the performance (both content and process). The candidate is given space to defend himself and answer some questions raised by the students and teacher. The teacher is the last one to give his comments and feedback, starting by praising the students(s) for the effort, initiative and time. And then finally asks the student (s) to evaluate him/her work.

This idea suggests that students should be given some time to reflect on their own performance. Cotterall notes that any task given to promote learner autonomy should support students to "...monitor and reflect on their performance." (116). Self-evaluation is prerequisite to educational and personal development and autonomy.

In a way to cope with the students' beliefs (marks are a source of motivation), the teacher tells his students that the oral presentation is part of their assessment. Besides, students' efforts and contributions should be valued and given much interest through praising and rewarding them. In this view, Djoub believes that "Students need to perceive that their achievement is acknowledged by their teacher through rewarding and praising them". (316). Praising students and appreciating their efforts is top priority in teachers' roles in enhancing motivation and autonomy inside the classroom.

This way is both helpful and useful to enhance students' autonomy through decision making and taking the initiative to present, self-evaluating one's progress and performance, peer evaluation, communication skills and critical reflection which are all founding pillars of autonomy. In the end, It must be noted that raising awareness about how to assess and evaluate is needed in such a learning context, learners should be open minded to critiques and tolerant with differences in opinions so that to avoid any unexpected conflicts or misunderstandings.

Camellari et al propose 19 practical activities to introduce learner autonomy in language classrooms. The aim is to target many aspects of learner autonomy such as knowledge about LA, making decisions, identifying progress and strengths and many more. Below are three selected activities (Camellari et al 45-47-50)

Activity 1: in this activity learners are introduced to the concept to better get insights about its meanings and examine their attitudes and perceptions towards LA.

Learner Autonomy and Myself

Participants: Teachers and students

Time: 10 minutes

Aim: To find out how participants feel about learner autonomy

Materials: A closed box with the word "Learner Autonomy" on it

Procedure:

1. A chair with the word "Learner autonomy" box on it is placed in the middle of the room.
2. Participants are asked to look at the box and to try to reflect about what they know about learner autonomy
3. Participants are asked to stand at a distance from the box that represents their level of confidence/ knowledge of the concept. The more they feel they know, the closer to the box they stand.
4. Each participant tells the others why he/she chose that position.

Comments:

1. The time needed depends on the number of participants.

2. Instead of a box, a poster or a book on learner autonomy can be used.

3. The same activity can be repeated at the end of the course to find out how each participant's position has changed.

4. As a variation participants could be asked to write something about learner autonomy connected with the knowledge they have acquired and put into the box, either as feedback for the trainer, or for sharing in the group.

Activity 3: A Letter to Myself

Participants: Teachers and Students

Time: 15 minutes

Aim:

1. To develop skills of self-evaluation
2. To monitor participants' progress
3. To provide an opportunity to participants to express their hopes and ambitions

Materials: Paper for letter writing, an envelope for each participant, One large envelope.

Procedure:

1. Participants are asked to write a letter to themselves expressing their feelings, worries and expectations in relation to the course on learner autonomy. they begin with "Dear Me"

2. When they finish writing the letter, they put their letter in an envelope, seal it and address it to themselves.

3. The trainer collects all the envelopes in a larger envelope and writes the name of the class and the date when it is to be opened.

4. When the trainer thinks enough time has passed, he/she can open the larger envelope and deliver the letters to participants.

5. Each participants reads his/her letters in silence

6. An opportunity for sharing in the group can be given

7. Another letter following the same procedure can be written if appropriate

Comments

1. No one will be allowed to read anyone else's letter unless so desired.

2. Emphasis must be placed on monitoring own progress and self-evaluation

Activity 6: My Learning Needs

Participants: Students

Time: One hour

Aims:

1. To develop students' responsibility for their own learning
2. To give them an opportunity to identify their own learning needs

Materials: Slips of paper

Procedure:

1. Students sit in a circle (or circles depending on the number of students) of about 8 -10 students
2. Each student is given a slip of paper and is asked to write a sentence about the area of language in which he/she would like to improve his/her competence or knowledge
3. Each student passes the slip clockwise to the next student who reads the sentence
4. If the sentence is also true for the reader, he/she sticks the slip
5. The slips circulate around until each student gets his/her original one back. If there is more than one student interested in the same topic, they form a group.
6. Each group discusses and identifies the objectives and strategies for improving competence in the chosen area
7. Each group presents their plan in plenary

Comments:

1. If only one student is interested in a particular topic he/she might choose to join another group or to work by him/herself.
2. Other group and/or another plenary sessions could be organized to report their progress

5.2 Concluding Tips

In this chapter, the author attempts to shed some light on the main conditions and considerations in the promotion of learner autonomy. Here is a summary of some fundamental tips and suggestions are presented.

A. **The Algerian Policy of Education**

- Policy makers should first examine any imported methodology or approach before adopting it; if it is to be adopted, it should not be devoid of its equipment.

- They should provide training to teachers to develop autonomous teaching before fostering learner autonomy.

- They should equip the classroom with the necessary materials to promote autonomous learning.

- They should work together with the ministry of national education to study the possibility of gradually introducing at early stages of education so that students reach university with a satisfactory level of autonomy.

- Redefining learner autonomy in the Algerian context should be a priority in the policy-makers' agenda.

- After more than fifteen years since its adaptation, there is a need to evaluate the teaching methodologies in the Algerian higher education.

B. **Teachers**

- Teachers should first start by themselves developing autonomy in their teaching profession (the teacher as a learner)

- Redefining teachers' roles.

- Teachers should talk to their learners about learner autonomy and explain its principles.

- Teachers should raise their learners' awareness regarding their expected roles and responsibilities.

- Teachers should be aware of the Algerian learners' specificities and profile

- Teachers need to take into account the socio-cultural dimensions when fostering LA

C. **Learners**

- Learners should be aware of their learning styles and informed about their new roles

- Learners should take the initiatives identifying their learning goals and selecting appropriate materials and activities under their teachers' supervision and guidance.

- Learners should change their traditional beliefs and practices.

- Learners need to be aware of their own cultural strengths and weaknesses

5.4 Reconstructing Concepts in the Light of LMD System

If one is to look at the way the Learner-Centered Approach is physically constructed or formulated (the use of wordings), one may think that it is all about the learner responsibility to take decisions about learning and the teacher has no space in such responsibility which is a wrong belief. To avoid any misconceptions it is suggested to re-consider the formulation of both LCA and LA.

As the name suggests, the learner centered approach aims to put the learner at the center of learning; however, the physical structure of the concept seems to ignore the teacher's presence in such a process. To this end, the notion looks somehow misleading and subjective. In this way, Dufva argues that "…it could be suggested that the concept learner-centered itself is a bit biased as well." (24). It can be taken for granted that all misinterpretations and misconceptions about learner autonomy have been raised based on its structure. The latter devoted no space for the teacher to appear. By contrast, to show that both members (the teacher and the learner) are having equal importance in the classroom and their roles are crucial in meeting the desired objectives of learning and teaching a foreign language, it is suggested to replace Learner Centered Approach by Teacher-Learner Centered Approach in which the teacher "guides" and the learner "decides". At least, in the Algerian higher education context, there is no absolute teacher centeredness or learner-centeredness; in fact, it is a combination of both approaches. Both teachers and students are seen as partners who have equal roles and opportunities in the classroom.

By analogy, learner autonomy seems to belittle the teacher's function in making students autonomous. In the same way, it could be better if learner autonomy is replaced by Teacher-Learner Autonomy where both teachers and learners are expected to collaborate and share responsibility. By this it is meant that autonomy is not a matter of students' deciding on their own but rather it is a social, interactive and collaborative process between both teachers and students.

5.5 Autonomy in Language Education: a Joint Effort

"it is an unprecedented chance for reform towards student-centered learning and it requires a joint effort between all partners, an effort in which we, the students, are an equal partner able to shape our educational experience" (Deca qtd, in Djoub 13). It is worth saying that involving learners' in taking decisions about their own learning strengthens and upgrades the quality of education and ensures students' presence in the educational reforms. It is

certainly illogical to expect students to be autonomous if they are not involved in designing the curriculum. A regular meeting with the representatives of both teachers and students could be seen as a step to keep away from improvising and centralization in decision-making.

More importantly, it might be a good initiative if the ministry of higher education and scientific research invite some Algerian experts in anthropology, sociology, and psychology and language education to meet and debate some issues of language teaching and learning. This meeting aims to study the profile of the Algerian education, culture and current circumstances and come up with a fruitful curriculum that takes into consideration the nature of learning and teaching in the Algerian educational context.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter is about recommendations and pedagogical implications to foster autonomy in higher education. It attempts to provide teachers and learners with both theory and practice of learner autonomy development in the Algerian context. Learner autonomy in the Algerian educational context seems to be a matter of priority.

Although policy makers and their discourses seem to encourage the promotion of learner autonomy, it is still difficult to make a reality in the classrooms, this does not mean that autonomy is not a suitable concept in the Algerian culture but rather requires rethinking and reconstruction of teaching and learning practices and real intention. Making it a realistic goal is a joint effort of all stakeholders, policy makers, curriculum designers, administrators, teachers and students.

Autonomy is the Algerian context should be developed gradually taking into account two aspects: level and readiness and awareness. First, by level is meant that learner autonomy should start from primary education so that when learners reach university, they come with certain degrees of autonomy. Second, readiness in terms of assuming responsibilities, this means that policy-makers, teachers and then students should possess an autonomous attitude. It is unreasonable to expect learners to be autonomous if their teachers are still non-autonomous in their teaching practices. Teachers are certainly not blamed since they did not receive any training about learner autonomy. And third, awareness of the specificities of the educational setting where both teachers and students live and study, this awareness includes certain knowledge about both local and educational culture of learning in terms of advantages and shortcomings.

General Conclusion

Coping with the needs of modern time and rapid changes in the world of education is more than a necessity. Education is now seen as an important aspect in the life of individuals. Hence, it aims to produce effective citizens who are capable of ruling, leading and contributing in making decisions and solving the problems of the communities in which they live. This capacity requires readiness and willingness, new skills and competencies, in addition to possessing certain command of knowledge about their expected roles and responsibilities.

To make individuals able to play such crucial roles, more emphasis has been given to self-reliance, independence and autonomy. As a result, a shift has been made from teacher-led teaching to learner-centered trend to give chances to the learner to maximize learning opportunities and develop self-learning attitude. More importantly, this transition aims to connect the university to the world outside.

Despite the fact that learner autonomy as a capacity of being in charge of learning is influenced by different factors and may differ from one learner to another, one cannot deny that it is becoming axiomatic that the place where students live and study has a great impact on learners' learning attitudes and practices. Hence, the present research aims to analyse the impact of the Algerian socio-cultural beliefs and traditions on the development of learner autonomy in higher educational context. It also discusses three major influencing cultural dimensions (collectivism vs individualism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance) on EFL students' learning attitudes and expectations with particular reference to LA. This is to figure out whether or not learner autonomy fits in the Algerian context of education.

At a broader level, this thesis is one of the fewest researches that investigate learner autonomy in Algerian higher education from the socio-cultural perspective. Its significance lies in providing a important theoretical content to the literature and creating new directions towards lifelong learning in the field of language education. At the professional level, this work serves as a background foundation for people whose work involves language teaching and learning. With a chance to work on this issue, policymakers' and teachers' awareness regarding the importance of understanding and considering the specificity of the Algerian cultural and educational context is enhanced.

The analysis of data collection tools used in this research has revealed that there are a number of hindering factors in the advancement of learner autonomy such as:

- Lack of knowledge about how to learn autonomously
- Lack of motivation
- Lack of students' awareness of their expected roles and responsibilities
- Lack of equipment and facilities
- Lack of teacher autonomy
- Influences of traditional classroom practices
- Influences of socio-cultural beliefs and assumptions

Moreover, the results have also shown that the Algerian classroom is characterized by three cultural dimensions: 1) less sense of individualism and a higher level of collectivism in which students prefer to work in groups in the presence of their teachers and under their guidance. 2) Large power distance in which power and authority is accepted to be unequally distributed among the members of the classroom (teachers and students). In this classroom, teachers are considered as the main source of knowledge, this is why their authority is unquestioned and the learning content is not negotiated 3) higher uncertainty avoidance, this dimension represents the emphasis of students' avoidance of ambiguity and uncertainty in both interaction and relationships. In higher uncertainty avoidance classrooms, students are less risk-takers, the classroom regulations are respected and confrontation with the teacher is avoided. The EFL learners in the Algerian context do not only avoid uncertainties and ambiguities in their classroom but also fear the unknown future after graduation. All these indicators and cultural beliefs seem to limit the ability of Algerian learners to assume a higher level of autonomy. This result confirms the hypothesis of the current research.

The ways learner autonomy is manifested and promoted differ from one culture to another. This view put all learners of different socio-cultural upbringings in an equal position of assuming responsibility over their learning; it also removes a common stereotype that autonomy is not a suitable goal in non-western education. In the Algerian context of education, learner autonomy is associated with collectivism therefore the notion of learning autonomy is seen as an interdependent process where collaboration among the members of the classroom is preferred. Having said that does not mean that at the individual level, the Algerian learners cannot learn independently of their teachers. Moreover, it must be noted that the Algerian society and classroom are not as collectivist as it used to be, it is now shades

of both individual and collectivist behaviors and attitudes. The decision over whether to work alone or in collaboration with others depends largely on the nature of the learning task and the learning situation being in.

Autonomy is seen as a prominent appreciated goal in the Algerian EFL context, but it is somehow far from being a reality in the classroom context. This discrepancy is mainly due to factors such as traditional educational influences along with the inherited social and cultural beliefs about learning and education. To this end, it is suggested that correcting traditional beliefs and practices, spreading a positive culture of learning and making students aware of their roles and responsibilities are fundamental issues to consider in preparing learners for autonomous learning. Being aware of ones' cultural strengths and weaknesses paves the way for students' readiness for learner autonomy. Thus, teacher and learner training is becoming a necessity.

The training courses are not only limited to practical classroom activities as suggested in the fifth chapter, but should also shed light on some theoretical understanding of LA as a multi-dimensional concept. Autonomy in the Algerian context is a matter of priority in terms of implementation, whom to start with first is a focal question of interest. A focus on teacher training is worth considering in developing both teacher autonomy and learner autonomy. Teachers are the first to possess the required qualities and skills of autonomous teachers before any attempt to foster autonomy in their students. Learners too need to be trained to acquire skills and strategies to learn autonomously. Topics to be considered in both teacher and learner training may include but are not limited to the following:

- Learner autonomy in language education: Definitions and misconceptions
- Teachers' and students' roles and new responsibilities
- Traditional beliefs and their impact on learner autonomy
- Cultural awareness: its advantages and disadvantages in LA promotion
- Revising and evaluating educational culture,
- A critical reflection over the actual classroom activities and practices
- Correcting stereotypies about learning and education.

Since the latest reforms in higher education and the coming of LCA, it might be surprising, however, to say that learner autonomy is still a striving goal in the Algerian context. For this reason, there is an urgent need to evaluate the teaching/learning methodologies in Algerian higher education. There is no concept fits for all or fits for some,

and there is no concept seen as a culture-free influence. In fact, each concept has its unique ways of implementation across cultures and each educational setting has its own specificities and uniqueness. Therefore, the success of any pedagogical concept lies in the extent to which the socio-cultural dimensions are understood and considered. The author is not saying that other dimensions are less important, but just because other dimensions are beyond the scope of the current research.

Interactions between the members of society are shaped by different forms and practices. These practices influence the way they get engaged in a social situation, and are reflected in their attitudes, expectations and abilities to act in certain learning tasks. The degree and the development of their ability to act and behave autonomously are dependent upon the contributions and influences of the surroundings and their ethos. As a result, learner autonomy is a socio-cultural mediated concept and its promotion requires full understanding of the social context where learning happens. Thus, to make LA a realistic goal in higher education, policymakers are expected to take into account the socio-cultural characteristics and the uniqueness of Algerian students and educational particularities.

The Algerian socio-cultural setting is characterized by its uniqueness in terms of diversity and differentiations. This makes it different from other cultures as it consists of Arab, Tamazight, and European (Turks, Romans, France) cultural ethos and a shared religious culture with Arabo-Islamic countries. This cultural pluralism and social variations make the results of the current research quite difficult to be generalized since it was carried out in one educational setting (Ahmed Zabana University).

Learner autonomy has gained popularity in many fields and has been discussed from different perspectives. Yet, there is a need to investigate the promotion of autonomy across cultures. The way learner autonomy is practically fostered in the western educational classroom is certainly different from non-western settings. Another issue to consider is the study of learner autonomy from the political viewpoint to better understand how autonomy is seen by the eyes of power-holders.

Further exploration regarding LA as a matter of priority is another issue to pay attention to. Which comes first: school, teacher or learner autonomy? It might not be only a matter of expecting learners to learn on their own but rather joint efforts of students, teachers and the institution, therefore, doing research on teacher autonomy and institution autonomy to ensure the development of learner autonomy is highly recommended. It is also hoped to study

the possibility of fostering learner autonomy at early education (primary level) so that students reach university with a satisfactory degree of autonomy.

Works Cited List

Ackermann, Edith K. "Perspective-Taking and object Construction." *Constuctionism in Practice: Designing, Thinking, and Learning in a Digital World*, edited by Kafai, Y.,and Resnick, M, Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Part 1, Chap.2. 1996, pp. 25-37

Adamson, John and Sert, Nehir. "Autonomy in Learning English as a Foreign Language." *International Journal of Global Education*, vol 1. no, 2, 2012, pp.23-27.

Ahmed Khaled, Ahmed. "Teacher-Centered Versus Learner –Centered Teaching Style." *The Journal of Global Business Management*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2013, pp. 22-34.

Al Asmari, AbdulRahman. "Practices and Prospects of Learner Autonomy: Teachers Perceptions." *English Language Teaching*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2013, pp. 1–10.

Alesina, Alberto, and Paola Giuliano. "Culture and Institutions." *Journal of Economic Literature*, vol.53, no.4, 2015, pp.898–944. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:27759053;

Alhaysony, Maha. "An Investigation of EFL Teachers' Beliefs and Practices of Learner Autonomy." *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)*, vol. 4, no. 12, 2016, pp. 45-59.

Al-Issa, Ali and Al-Bulushi, Ali. "English Language Teaching Reform in Sultanate of Oman: The Case of Theory and Practice Disparity." *Educational Research for Policy and Practice*, 2011, pp.141-176.

Al-Khawlani, Ammar. "The Influence of the Learning Environment on Learner Autonomy: A comparative Study of Polish and Yemeni EFL Undergraduate Learners". *Sino-US English Teaching*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2018, pp.109-124.

Althaqafi, Abber Sultan. "Culture and Learner Autonomy: An Overview from Saudi Perspective." *International Journal of Educational Investigations*, vol. 4, no. 4, 2017, pp. 39-48.

Andang Suhendi and Purwarno Purwarno. "Constructivist Learning Theory: The Contribution to Foreign Language Learning and Teaching." *in The 1st Annual International Conference on Language and Literature*, 18–19 April. 2018, Universitas

Islam Sumatera Utara (UISU), Medan, Indonesia, edited by Purwarno, M et al, KnE Social Sciences and Humanities, 2018, pp. 87–95, doi10.18502/kss.v3i4.1921

André, Bernard, Dir. *Autonomie et enseignement/apprentissage des langues étrangères.* [Autonomy and teaching / learning of foreign languages] Recueil de textes et d'articles. Paris : Didier, 1989.

Arabski, Janusz and Wojtaszek, Adam. "Aspects of Culture in Second Language Acquisition and Foreign Language Learning." *Second Language Learning and Teaching*, edited by Arabski, Janusz and Wojtaszek, Adam, Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg, 2011.

Association for Academic Language & Learning (AALL). Good Practice Principles for English Language Proficiency, 2007. Accessed 25 July 2018, www.aall.org.au/sites/default/files/Final_Report

Badli Esham, Ahmada and Faizah, Abdul Majidb. "Self-directed Learning and Culture: A Study on Malay Learners". *Procedia social and behavioural Sciences*, vol.10 ,2010, pp. 254-263.

Barbot, Marie-José. Les Auto-apprentissages [Self-learning]. Paris : Clé international,2001

Barfield Andrew, Brown Stephen H. *Reconstructing Autonomy in Language Education: Inquiry and Innovation* , Basingstoke Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Bedouani-Kernane, Hakima.. "Algérie éducation : Réforme ou faux espoir ?" [Algerian Education: Reform or False Hope], Arabies, 2013. www.arabies.com

Benbouzid, Aboubakder. La réforme du système éducatif.N°1 [Reform of the Educational System N°1], 2004.

Benson, Phil and Voller, Peter. *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning*. Longman, 1997.

Benson, Phil. "Autonomy in language teaching and learning." *Language Teaching* , vol.40, 2007, pp. 21-40.

---, *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning*. Harlow: *Pearson Education*, 2001.

---, The philosophy and politics of learner autonomy. *Autonomy and independence in language learning,* edited by Benson. Phil & Voller Peter, New York, Longman, 1997, pp.18–34.

Blidi, Sofiane. *Collaborative Learner Autonomy*, Singapore: Springer, 2017.

Borg, Simon and Al-Busaidi, Saleh. "Learner autonomy: English Language Teachers' Beliefs and Practices". *ELT research paper*. 2012, http://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org.

Bouhass Benaissi, Fawzia. "EFL University Teachers' Autonomy as a Prerequisite to Learners' Autonomy." *Celebrating Diversity,* 2015, Ankara*, edited by Burcin Kagitci Yildiz and Sema Turan, Turkey.Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018.

---, "Learner Autonomy in Language Learning and Teaching: a Culture Bound Concept." *Arab World English Journal*, vol.6, no.1, 2015, pp. 409-419.

Bouherar, Salim. "Religion and Culture in Algeria: The Impact of Religious Interpretations on Social Practices." *International Journal of Education and Knowledge Management (IJEKM)*, vol.3, no.2, 2020, pp.1-15.

Boyadzhieva, Ellie. "Learner-Centered Teaching and Learner Autonomy." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol.232, 2016, pp.35-40.

Boyno, Mehmet. "An analysis of the factors influencing learner autonomy in the Turkish EFL context". PhD dissertation. Çukurova University, Adana. 2011

Brenner, Mary Elizabeth. "Interviewing in Educational Research." *Handbook of Complementary Methods in educational Research*, edited by Judith L. Green et al; Lawrence Erlbaum & Associates for AERA, 2006.

Brown, H. Douglas. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. Englewood Cliffs, JC: Prentice Hall, 1987.

Bryman, Alan. *Social Research Methods*, 4th ed, Oxford University press, 2012.

Cakici, Dilek. "An Investigation on Learner Autonomy in EFL Turkish Context" *International Journal of Higher Education*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2017, pp. 89-99.

Camilleri, George. "The Global view." *Learner Autonomy-The Teachers' view* edited by Camilleri, George, 1999, pp.28-34. http://archive.ecml.at/documents/pubCamilleriG_E.pdf

Candy, Philip. *Self-direction for lifelong learning: a comprehensive guide to theory and practice*, San-Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 1991.

Chan, Victoria. "Readiness for learner autonomy: What do our learners tell us?" *Teaching in Higher Education*, vol.6, no.4, 2001, pp.505-519, doi.org/10.1080/13562510120078045

---, "Fostering Learner Autonomy in an ESL Classroom." *TESL Canada Journal*, vol.18, no.1, 2000, pp.75-86. doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v18i1.901

Cohen, Louis, et al. *Research Methods in Education, 8th ed,* Routledge, 2018.

Cook, Vivain. *Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition*. Londyn: The Macmillan Press Ltd. 1993.

Cotterall, Sara. "Promoting learner autonomy through the curriculum: Principle for designing language courses." *ELT Journal*, vol 52. no.2, 2000. pp109-117.

---, "Learner Autonomy in a Mainstream Writing Course: Articulating learning gains." *Maintaining Control: Autonomy and Language Learning*, edited by Pemberton. Richard, et al. Hong Kong: HKUP, 2009.

---, "Readiness for Autonomy: Investigating Learner Beliefs". *System*, vol 23. no.2, 1995, pp. 195–205.

"Culture." Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Merriam-Webster 2017, www.merriam webster.com/dictionary/culture. Accessed 05 Dec. 2019.

Dam, Leni, et al. 'Towards a Definition of Autonomy." *Third Nordic Workshop on Developing Autonomous Learning in the FL Classroom*, edited by Trebbi, Turid, Bergen University of Bergen, 1990, http://www.warwick.ac.uk/go/dahla/archive/trebbi

---, *Developing Learner Autonomy: The Teacher's Responsibility*, Dublin : Authentik, 2003.

---, *Learner Autonomy 3: From Theory to Classroom Practice*, Dublin Authentik, 1995.

---, "Why focus on learning rather than teaching? From theory to practice". *Papers from the IATEFL conference on learner independence*, edited by Little. David, Leni. Dam, & J. Timmer, Kraków, Dublin: CLCS, Trinity College Dublin, 2000, pp. 18-37.

Dang, Tan Tin. "Learner Autonomy: A Synthesis of Theory and Practice", *The Internet Journal of Language, Culture and Society*, no. 35, 2012, pp.52-67.

DeMarrais, Kathleen. "Qualitative interview studies: Learning through experience." *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2004, pp. 51–68.

Dickinson, Leslie .*Self- Instruction in Language Learning* .Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Djoub, Zineb. "Portfolios Training for Autonomous Language Learning." PhD thesis. University of Oran. 2017.

Dufva, Hannele. Language Awareness and Cultural Awareness for Language Learners. Jyvaskyla.1994, pp.19-32.

"Autonomy." Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service. In: Encyclopædia Britannica. http://www.britannica.com.

Ertürk, Nesrin Oruç. "Language Learner Autonomy: Is it Really Possible?" *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol232, 2016, pp.650-654.

Esch, Ellen. Promoting learner autonomy: Criteria for the selection of appropriate methods. *Taking control: Autonomy in language learning*, edited by Pemberton, E et al, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1997, pp.35-48. https://books.google.com/books?hl=fr&lr=&id=pTHxAQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA35&dq=Designing+and+adapting+materials+to+encourage+learner+autonomy.&ots=qr4_V_TzId&sig

Fedj, Samia and Bouhass B, Fawzia. "Key Concepts on Learner Autonomy." *Arab World English Journal,* vol.9, no.3, 2018, pp.445-457

Ellis, Gail and Sinclair, Barbara. Learning to Learn English: A Course in Learner Training. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Flavell, John, Hurley. "Metacognition and Cognitive Monitoring: A New Area of Cognitive Developmental Inquiry". *American Psychologist*, vol.34, 1997, pp.906-911.

Fotiodou, Aggeliki, et al. "Learner Autonomy as a Factor of the Learning Process in Distance Education". *European Journal of Open, Distance and E-learning*, vol.20, no.1, 2017, pp.67-101.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. London: Penguin.1996.

Ganza, William La. "Learner Autonomy – Teacher Autonomy". *Learner and Teacher Autonomy: Concepts, Realities and Responses,* edited by Lamb, Terry & Reinders, Hayo, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2008, pp. 63-79. .

Gurbanov, Elmir and Mirzayeva, Almaz "Activities Contributing to Learner Autonomy in Language Classes" *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, vol.4, no.5, 2018, pp.23-32.

Gherzouli, Ikhlas "Towards a Democratic Algerian Curriculum Development through Secondary School EFL Teachers' *Involvement" International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*, vol.11, no.1, 2019, pp.1–22. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/fec8/999ba7db6f5f1d490536ad105fbf678d242c.pdf

Glikman, Viviane. ''Apprenants et Tuteurs : Une Approche Européenne des Médiations Humaines'' [Learners and Tutors: An European Approach to Human Mediations] *Education permanente*, no. 152, 2002, pp.55-69.

Goolam, Mohamedbhai. "Europe's Role in The Global Higher Education Setting". *Bologna 2009-2010: Achievements, challenges and perspectives Berlin: European HEA.n Higher Education*, edited by EUA, 2009-2010, p30.

Hadi, Khiera. "Promoting Learner Autonomy in an EFL Context: Learners' Readiness and Teachers' Roles." Magister Thesis, Tlemcen University, 2012.

---, "Promoting Learner Autonomy in English Language Learning in Secondary Education in Algeria." *Majalt Al-Ather*, no. 23, 2015, pp.57-69.

---, "Investigating Learner Autonomy among EFL Students and Teachers Readiness and Concept Perception." PhD dissertation, University of Tlemcen. Algeria. 2018.

Hallinan, Maureen T. "Sociology of Education at the Thresfold of the Twenty First Century." *Handbook of the Sociology of Education*, edited by Hallinan, Maureen T, Springer US, 2000, pp.1-12.

Harmer, Jeremy. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. 4th ed. Longman, 2007.

Hatch Evelyn, and Anne Lazaraton. T*he Research Manual: Design and Statistics for Applied Linguistics,* Newbury Publishers, 1991.

Ho, Judy and Crookall, David. "Breaking with Chinese Cultural Traditions: Learner Autonomy in English Language Teaching." *System*, vol. 23, no, 2, 1995, pp. 235-243.

Hoadjli, Ahmed Chaouki. The Washback Effect of an Alternative Testing Model on Teaching and Learning: An Exploratory Study on EFL Secondary Class in Biskra. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Biskra, Algeria, 2015.

Hofstede, Geert. "Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context." *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2011. Accessed 21 Feb 2019, doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014

---, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. London: McGraw-Hill, 1991.

Hofstede, Greet., et al. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, 3rd ed.. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010.

Holec, Henri. *Autonomy in Foreign Language Learning*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1981.

Holliday, Andrian. "Social autonomy: Addressing the Dangers of Culturism in TESOL". *Learner Autonomy Across Cultures: Language Education Perspectives*, edited by David. Palfreyman and Richard. C. Smith, rdrNew York: Palgrave, 2003, pp.110-126.

Hozayen, Ghada.. "Egyptian Students' Readiness for Autonomous Language Learning". *Fostering Autonomy in Language Learning*, edited by David. Gardner, Gaziantep: Zirve University, 2011, pp.115-125.

Hutchison, Tom. and Waters, Alan. *English for Specific Purposes: A Learner-Centered Approach. England*: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Iva, Emaliana . "Teacher-centered or Student-centered Learning Approach to Promote Learning?." *Jurnal Sosial Humaniora*, vol.10, no 2, 2017, pp 59-70

Jefferson, Gail. "Glossary of Transcript Symbols with an Introduction." *Conversation Analysis: Studies from the first generation*, edited by Gene. H. Lerner, Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 2004, pp. 13-23.

Jiang, Xiaoli. "Constructing Concepts of Learner Autonomy in Language Education in the Chinese Context: A Narrative-based Inquiry into University Students' Conceptions of Successful English Language Learning." PhD thesis, University of Warwick, Centre of English Language Teacher Education, 2008.

Jones, Jeremy. "Self-access and culture." *ELT journal*, vol.49. no. 3, 1995, pp.228-234.

Keith F. Punch. *Introduction to Social Research–Quantitative & Qualitative Approaches*. London: Sage. 2005.

Keith, Richards. "Interviews". *Qualitative Research in Applied Linguistics: a Practical Introduction*, edited by Heigham, Juanita and Croker, Robert. A. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillam, 2009, pp.182-199.

Khalil, Safaa Mostafa and Ali, Amira Desouky. Exploring EFL Teachers' and Students perceptions of learner autonomy in Egyptian Technical Schools. International Journal of English Language Education, vol, 6. no, 2, 2018.

Kneller, George F. *Educational Anthropology: An Introduction.* New York: Wiley & Sons.1965.

Koohang, Alex et al. "E-Learning and Constructivism: From Theory to Application." *Interdisciplinary Journal of e-learning and learning objects (IJELLO)*, vol. 5, 2009, pp. 91-109.

Kothari, C. R. *Research Methodology: Research and techniques*, New Delhi: New Age International Publishers, 1990.

Kramch, Clair., & Zhu Hua. "Language, Culture and Language Teaching." *Routledge Handbook of English Language Teaching*, edited by Graham. Hall , London: Routlege, 2016, pp.38-50.

Krueger, Richard A and Casey, Mary Anne. *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research. 5ᵗʰ ed*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2015.

Kumar, Krishna. "Conducting Group Interviews in Developing Countries." U.S. Agency for International Development, 1987.

Kumar, Ranjit. *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*. 3rd ed, Sage, New Delhi, 2011.

Kumaravadivelu, Bala. *Beyond Methods: Macro-strategies for Language Teaching*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

Lakehal-Ayat Benmati, Karima. "Is the Algerian Educational System Weakening? An Investigation of the High School Curricula and their Adequacy with the University Curricula." PhD thesis. Mentouri University of Costantine, 2018.

Lamb, Terry. Controlling Learning: Learners' Voices and Relationships between Motivation and Learner Autonomy. *Maintaining control: Autonomy and language learning*. edited by Pemberton, Richard. Toogood, Sarah. & Barfield, Andy. Hong Kong, 2009.

---, "Metacognition and Motivation - Learning to Learn." *Reflections on Motivation*, edited by Gary. N. Chambers, London, Routledge.2001, pp. 85-93.

Le, Quynh Xuan. "Fostering Learner Autonomy in Language Learning in Tertiary Education: An Intervention Study of University Students in Hochiminh City, Vietnam." PhD thesis, University of Nottingham, 2013.

Little, David "Strategies, Counselling and Cultural Difference: Why we Need Anthropological Understanding of Learner Autonomy". *BELLS (Barcelona English Language and literature studies)*, vol. 10, 1999, pp17-33.

---, "Learner Autonomy, Teacher Autonomy and the European Language Portolio," *Le Développement de L'autonomie dans L'apprentissage Intensif du Francias L2* , 17-20 March 2004, edited by Joan Netten, UNTELE, Université de Compiègne, 2004. http://www.utc.fr/~untele/2004ppt/handouts/little.pdf

---, "Language Learner Autonomy: Some Fundamental Considerations Revisited". *Innovation in language learning and teaching*, 2007, vol.1, no.1, pp.14-29.

---, "Learner Autonomy and Second/Foreign language Learning." *LLAS Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies*, 2015. https://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/gpg/1409#ref2

---, *Constructing a Theory of Learner Autonomy: Some Steps along the Way.* Trinity College Dublin, 2004.pp, 15-25.

---, *Learner autonomy: Definitions, Issues and Problems*. Dublin: Authentik, 1991.

---, "Freedom to Learn and Compulsion to Interact /Promoting Learner Autonomy through the Use of Information Systems and Information Technologies." *Taking Control: Autonomy in Language Learning*, edited by Richard. Pemberton, et al, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996.

Littlewood, William. "Defining and Developing Autonomy in East Asian Contexts." *Applied linguistics*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1999, pp.71-94. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Llaven Nucamendi, María Elena. Autonomy in Language Learning: the Learner, the Teacher and the Institution. Universidad de Quintana Roo, 2014

Loucks-Horsley, Sizer et al. *Designing Professional Development for Teachers of Science and Mathematics.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.1998.

Lumturie, Bajrami. "Teacher's New Role in Language Learning and in Promoting Learner Autonomy." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 199, no. 335, 2015, pp.423-427.

Metatla, Oussama. "Higher Education Reforms in Algeria: Reading between the Line." *Ousmet Blog*, Accessed on 16 Feb, 2016, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/higher-education-in-algeria-reading-between-lines-of-lmd-reform/.

Micheal. S, Merry. "Cultural Coherence and the Schooling for Identity Maintenance." *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, vol. 39, no. 3, 2005, pp, 477-497.

Miliani, Mohamed. "Self-access Learning: It Takes Resourceful Learners to be Autonomous." Proceedings of the XIIth MATE Annual Conference, 22-26 December 1991, Tetouan. 1991, pp.68-71, www.mate.org.ma/general_info.htm.

Missoum, Maamar. "Autonomous Continuing Professional Development for Algerian University Teachers of English." *Arab World English Journal*, 2015, pp. 164-179.

---, "Culture and Learner Autonomy." Magister dissertation. Blida University2, 2013.

Murray, Galord. "The Social Dimensions of Learner Autonomy and Self-regulated Learning." *Studies in Self-Access Learning Journal*, vol.5, no.4, 2014.pp. 320-341.

---, "Imagination and Metacognition and the L2 Self in a Self-access Language Learning." If We Had to Do It Over Again: Implementing Learner Autonomy in the 21st Century, 1-3 June .2010; Zirve University, edited by David Gardner, Turkey, 2011.

Murchison, De Julian. *Ethnography Essentials: Designing, Conducting, and Presenting Your Research*, Jossey-Bass, 2010.

Musarat Ysmin and Ayesha Sohail. Socio-cultural Barriers in Promoting Learner Autonomy in Pakistani Universities: English Teachers' Beliefs. Congat education. 2018. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2018.1501888.

Nancy, Ismail. "Mise en œuvre d'un Dispositif de Formation Ouverte en Langue Etrangere : Autonomisation et Evaluation." [Implementation of an Open Training System in a Foreign Language: Empowerment and Evaluation] PhD thesis. Universite de Lorraine, 2012.

Nguyen, Cao Thanh "Impacts of Socio-culture on the Development of Autonomous Learning: A Lens of Vietnamese Context". *Journal of Studies in Education*, vol. 1, no.1, 2011.

Nunan, David. "Nine Steps to Learner Autonomy", Symposuim, 2003, pp. 193-204.

---, *Practical English Language Teaching*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003.

---, *Research Methods in Language Learning*, Cambridge: CUP, 1992.

---, Towards Autonomous Learning: Some Theoretical, Empirical and Practical Issues. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. 1996.

O'Rourke, Breffni. and Schwienhorst, Klaus . "Talking Text: Reflections on Reflection in Computer–mediated Communication." *Learner Autonomy in Foreign Language Classrooms: Teacher, Learner, Curriculum and Assessment* , edited by Little David et al, Dublin: Authentik, 2003, pp.47–62.

O'Reilly, Karen. *Ethnographic Methods,* 2nd ed. Routledge, 2012.

O'Malley, Michael and Chamot, Anaa. *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition.* Cambridge University Press. 1990.

Obeidat, Bader Youcef et al. "Toward Better Understanding for Arabian Culture: Implications Based on Hofstede's Cultural Model". *European journal of social sciences.* vol.28, no.4, 2012, pp. 512-522.

Otukile-Mongwaketse, Mpho. "Teacher Centered Dominated Approaches: Their Implications for today's Inclusive Classrooms." *International Journal of Psychology and Counselling"* Vol. 10, no. 2, 2018, pp. 11-21,

Palfreyman, David. "Introduction: Culture and Learner Autonomy." *Learner autonomy across cultures*, edited by Palfreyman, D. & Smith, R.C. London:Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Palfreyman, David and Smith Richard. C, *Learner Autonomy across Cultures: Language Education Perspectives*, Basingstoke Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Pamela A, Dupin-Bryant. "Teaching Styles of Interactive Television Instructors: A Descriptive Study." *The American Journal of Distance Education*, vol.18, no. 1, 2004, pp. 39-50.

Pierson, D, Herbert. "Learner Culture and Learner Autonomy in the Hong Kong Chinese Context." *Taking Control: Autonomy in Language Learning* edited by Pemberton, Richard., et al., Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong, 1996, pp.49-58.

Piave, Vera lu´cia menezes de oliveira. Identity, Motivation and Autonomy in Second Language Acquisition from the Perspective of Complex Adaptive Systems, 2011.

Powell, Jerome. "Reducing Teacher Control". In D. Boud (ed.). Developing Student Autonomy in Learning. London: Kogan, 1988.

Ramos, Rosalba Cárdenas. "Considerations on the Role of Teacher Autonomy." Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal, no. 8, 2006, pp.183-202., doi:10.14483/22487085.10510.

Reliy, Philip. The Ethnography of Autonomy, In A. Brookes & P. Grundy (Eds.). *Individualization and Autonomy in Language Learning*. ELT Documents 131. Modern English Publications and the British Council. 1988, pp.12-34.

Ribé, R. Tramas in the Foreign Language Classroom: Autopoietic Networks for learner Growth. In Little et al.(eds.), Learner autonomy in Foreign Language Classrooms: teacher, learner, curriculum and assessment. Dublin. Authentik. 2003, pp.47–62.

Richards, Jack.C & Lockhard, Charles. Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms. Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Richards, Lyn."Qualitative computing: a methods revolution?" *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, vol.5, no.3, 2002, pp. 263–76.

Robson, Colin and McCartan, Kieran. *Real World Research, 4th ed*, Wiley, 2016.

Saeeda, Shah, "Islamic Education and the UK Muslims: Options and Expectations in a Context of Multi-locationality." *Studies in Philosophy and Education,* vol, 33. no, 3, 2013, pp. 233.

Salmon, Phillida. *Life at school: education and psychology*. London: Constable. 1998.

Satapathy, Subrata S. *Sociology of Education*. University of South Africa, https://ddceutkal.ac.in/Syllabus/MA_SOCIOLOGY/Paper-16.pdf

Scharle, Agota. & Szabo, Anita . Learner Autonomy: A Guide to Developing Learner Responsibility. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Scheurs, Jeanne, Dumbraveanu, Roza. "A Shift from Teacher Centered to Learner Centered Approach." *IJEP*, vol. 4, Issue 3, 2014, doi.org/10.3991/ijep.v4i3.3395

Sharan B. Merriam and Elizebith J. Tisdell. *Qualitative Research: A guide to Design and Implementation*. (4th edition), 2016.

Sinclair, Barbara. "Learner Autonomy: The Next Phase." *Learner Autonomy, Teacher Autonomy: Future Directions*, edited by Sinclair, Barbara., I. McGrath and Terry. Lamb Harlow: Longman, 2000.

---, "The teacher as learner: Developing Autonomy in an Interactive Learning Environment." *Maintaining control: Autonomy and language learning*, edited by Pemberton R., Toogood, S. & Barfield, A. Hong Kong, 2009.

Smith, Richard. "Pedagogy for Autonomy as (becoming-) Appropriate Methodology" *Learner autonomy across cultures : language education perspectives,* Edited by

Palfreyman, David. and Smith, Richard, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, pp.129-146. ISBN 9781403903549

Smith, Lois. "One Size Fits All? Faculty Professional Development Workshops in a Multicultural Context." *Learning and Teaching Across Cultures in Higher Education,.* edited by David, Palfreyman and Dawn Lorraine, McBride, 2007.

Sofie. Loynes, Remigius. Rikers, Henk. Schmidt. "Relationships between students' conceptions of constructivist learning and their regulation and processing strategies.", *Instructional Science*, vol.36, 2008, pp.445-462.

Sonaiya, Remi. "Autonomous Language Learning in Africa: A Mismatch of Cultural Assumptions." *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2002, pp.106-116, doi: 10.1080/07908310208666637.

Soulimane- Benhabib, Nouzha Yasmina. *A Contextual Study to Learner Autonomy and Motivation*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Tlemcen, 2017.

Spencer-Oatey, Helen. Culturally Speaking. Culture, Communication and Politeness Theory. 2nd edition. London: Continuum/ New York, NY, U.S.A. Continuum International Publishing Group, ISBN 9780826493101. 2008, pp. 258-273. Consulted in 20 Feb, 2019. https://www.academia.edu/43402841/

Spranger, Eduard. "Types of Men; the Psychology and Ethics of Personality." *Authorized Translation of the Fifth German*, edited by Paul J. W. Pigors, 1928.

Tamim, Ata Allah. "Social-affective strategy instructionin EFL materials:The case of Englishtextbooksand official programs in Tunisia." *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*, vol.2 ,no.4, 2016, pp.169-195.

Thanasoulas, Dimitrios. "Autonomy and Learning: An Epistemological Approach." *Applied semiotics*, vol.4, no.10, 2000, pp.115-131.

---, "What is Learner Autonomy and How can it be Fostered?" *Internet TESL Journal*, vol.4, no. 11, 2000, pp. 1-11.

Țurloiu, Adela and Stefánsdóttir Ína Sif. "Learner Autonomy: Theoretical and Practical Information for Language Teachers." 2011.

Tzotzou, Maria D. "Self-instruction in the EFL Context: Learning How to Learn a Foreign Language" *ASPECTS Today*, vol.29, 2011, pp. 10-14, https://www.academia.edu/6867961/Self

Ushioda, Ema. "Motivation, Autonomy and Sociocultural Theory." *Learner autonomy 8: Teacher and learner perspectives*, edited by Benson, Phill. Dublin, Ireland: Authentik, 2007, pp. 5-24.

Victor, Jupp: The SAGE Dictionary of Social Research Methods, 2006, https://methods.sagepub.com/reference/the-sage-dictionary-of-social-research-methods

Wenden, Anita L. "Learner Training in Foreign/Second Language Learning: A Curricular Perspective for the 21st Century." 1998.

---, "Metacognitive knowledge and language learning." *Applied Linguistics*, vol.19, no.4, 1998, pp.515-537.

Xaferi, Brikena, & Xaferi, Gezim. "Developing Learner Autonomy in Higher Education in Macedonia", *Procedia Social and Behavioural Sciences*, vol.11, 2011, pp.150-154.

Xu, Qing. "Maximizing Learner Autonomy Through Reflective Teaching". *Cross-Cultural Communication*, vol.9, no. 4, 2013, pp. 19-22

Yahia-Berrouiguet, Abdelkarim. "Algerian National Culture and TQM". *Journal of economics and business research*, vol XXI, no. 2, 2015, pp. 145-152.

Yunus, Melor and Arshad, Nur Dalila. "ESL Teachers' Perceptions toward the Practices and Prospects of Autonomous Language Learning." *Asian Social Science*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2015, pp. 41-51.

Yıldırım, Özgür. "Turkish EFL Learners' Readiness for Learner Autonomy." *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, ol.4, no.1, 2008, pp. 65-80.

Appendices

Appendix I

Classroom Observation Check-list

Observer: …………. ………   Number of students: …………

Course: ……………………   Hourly volume: ……………

Time and place: …………

Items observed	Description/Comments
1. Physical Aspects of Classroom	
2. Classroom Interaction	
3. Talking Time	
4. Learning Environment	
5. Classroom Practices and Activities	
6. Learners' Roles	
7. Teachers' Role	
8. Teachers'/ Students' Feedback	

Appendix II

Jefferson Transcription System Symbols

Symbol	Description
(.)	A micro pause - a pause of no significant length.
(0.7)	A timed pause - long enough to indicate a time.
[ ]	Square brackets show where speech overlaps.
> <	Arrows showing that the pace of speech has quickened.
< >	Arrows showing that the pace of the speech has slowed down.
( )	Unclear section.
(( ))	An entry requiring comment but without a symbol to explain it.
Underlining	Denotes a raise in volume or emphasis.
↑	Rise in intonation
↓	Drop in intonation
→	Entered by the analyst to show a sentence of particular interest. Not usually added by the transcriber.
CAPITALS	Louder or shouted words.
(h)	Laughter in the conversation/speech.
=	Will be at the end of one sentence and the start of the next. It indicates that there was no pause between them.
: : :	Colons - indicate a stretched sound.

Appendix III

The Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

     The following questionnaire is meant to gather information about learner autonomy in English language education. The study aims to investigate the ways in which learner autonomy and culture are interconnected. The content of this questionnaire will be used in the development of the practical part of research. I will be extremely grateful if you would give me some of your time and energy by filling it. Your cooperation is appreciated

Please read the following questions and tick (✓) the items you think appropriate.

Gender:

- Male   ☐
- Female   ☐

Section One: Learner autonomy in English language education

Q1: Are you a learner who depends on him/herself for learning?

- Yes   ☐
- No   ☐

If Yes, according to you, what characterises an autonomous learner?

- Active participants   ☐
- Motivated   ☐
- Critical thinkers   ☐
- Self-relaint   ☐
- Total dependence on the teacher   ☐
- Others…………………………………………………………………………………….

If No, is it due to :

- Lack of motivation to learn   ☐
- Teacher authority   ☐
- Bad learning conditions   ☐

     ☐

- NOT knowing how to learn autonomously

- Impact of traditional learning beliefs ☐

- Others…………………………………………………………………………………
……

Q2: What does autonomous learning mean to you?

- Learning without teacher's supervision ☐

- Freedom of learning ☐

- Being responsible about learning ☐

- Learning individually ☐

- Learning in collaboration with others ☐

- Others…………………………………………………………………………………

Q3: What roles do you often play in the classroom?

- Setting the objectives of the course ☐

- Selecting learning activities ☐

- Choosing learning materials ☐

- Asking questions ☐

- Listening to the teacher ☐

- Taking notes ☐

- Evaluating your weaknesses and strengths ☐

- I do not have any role ☐

- Others…………………………………………………………………………………

Q4: Do you self-evaluate your progress?

- Yes ☐

- No ☐

Q5: Do your classmates evaluate your work in the classroom?

- Always ☐

- Often ☐

- Sometimes ☐

- Rarely ☐

☐

- Neve

Q6: Do you consider the teacher as the only knowledge provider?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐

Q7: Do your teachers involve you in deciding what and how to learn ?

- Awalys ☐
- Often ☐
- Sometimes ☐
- Rarely ☐
- Never ☐

Q8: If your language skills are limited, whose responsibility is it ?

- Yours ☐
- Your teacher ☐
- Both ☐

Q9: Which kind of classroom activities do you do most in the classroom?

- Written projects ☐
- Powerpoint presentations ☐
- Classroom discussions ☐
- Language games ☐
- Role play ☐
- Portfolios ☐
- Others……………………………………………………………………………………
……

Q10: How often do you work in the classroom? (circle the answer)

- Individually   Always   Often   Sometimes   Rarely   Never
- In groups   Always   Often   Sometimes   Rarely   Never
- In pairs   Always   Often   Sometimes   Rarely   Never

Section Two: Examination of Learner Autonomy from the Socio-cultural Perspectives

Q1: I often take decision concerning my studies

- Alone ☐
- Parents ☐
- Friends ☐
- Teachers ☐

Q2: I consider my parents' opinions in my studies

- Strongly Positive ☐
- positive ☐
- Negative ☐
- Strongly negative ☐

Q3: I take my parents/teachers opinions and advice into account

- Always ☐
- Often ☐
- Sometimes ☐
- Rarely ☐
- Never ☐

Q4: What is your opinion about the following poetic verse and proverbs

كاد المعلم ان يكون رسولا   وقم للمعلم و فيه التبجيلا

…………………………………………………………………………………………

- من علمني حرفا صرت له عبدا

…………………………………………………………………………………………

- لي قرا قرا بكري

…………………………………………………………………………………………

Thank you very much.

Appendix IV

The Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire aims to collect information about interconnection between learner autonomy and culture to better develop the theoretical and the practical parts of the current thesis and reach the set objectives. Thank you for participating in this research work.

Please read the following questions and tick (✓) the items you think appropriate.

Section One: Personal and professional information

1. Gender:
   a) Male ☐
   b) b) Female ☐

2. Teaching experience………………………

3. Level taught ………………………………

4. Module in charge…………………….....

5. Have you ever had a training course?

   • Yes ☐
   • No. ☐

Section Two: Teachers' Perceptions about Learner Autonomy

Q1: What does learner autonomy mean to you?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

Q2: According to you what characterizes an autonomous learner?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

Q3: My learners are able to take charge of their own learning?

   • Strong agree ☐
   • Agree ☐
   • Disagree ☐

- Strongly disagree ☐

If you disagree/strongly disagree, is it because of:

- Weak English language proficiency ☐
- Lack of motivation ☐
- Lack of awareness regarding their roles ☐
- The impact of Local culture ☐
- Impact of traditional classroom Culture ☐
- Learning conditions ☐
- Others……………………………………………………………………………………………

Q4: What roles do you play in the classroom?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Q5: Do you negotiate the learning content and process with your learners?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐

Q6: Have you ever talked about learner autonomy in the classroom?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐

Q7: What challenges do you face when promoting autonomous learning?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Section Three: Social and Cultural Perspectives on Learner Autonomy

Q1: Please tick one answer only for each statement

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3. Learner autonomy is promoted through regular opportunities for learners to complete tasks alone.					
13. Learner autonomy can be achieved by learners of all cultural backgrounds.					
16. Learner autonomy is promoted through activities which give learners opportunities to learn					

from each other.

19. Learner autonomy is promoted by activities that

encourage learners to work together.

23. Learner autonomy is a concept which is not

suited to non-Western learners.

25. Co-operative group work activities support the

development of learner autonomy

30. Learning to work alone is central to the

development of learner autonomy.

Appendix V

Project Information Sheet

Djilali Liabes University of Sidi Bel Abbes

Department of letters, arts and languages

My name is Lakehal Benchaa. I am undertaking a research project as part of my PhD in English Discourse Studies and Applied Linguistics in the department of letters arts and languages, the University Djillali Liabes in Sidi Bel Abbes. My thesis supervisor is Professor Bouhass Benaissi Fawzia.

Title of study:

Autonomy in Advanced Language Education: Considerations of the Socio-cultural Dimensions and their Impact on EFL Algerian Students' Learning Attitudes and Expectations

Research aim

The main aim of the present study is to analyse the influence of socio-cultural aspects on the students' learning attitudes and expectations in relation to autonomous learning.

The interviewer: is the researcher

Participants

Third year EFL students can participate in my research. Participants have to belong to the Ahmed Zabana University of Relizane (Algeria) to be able to take part in the interview.

About the group interview

This research uses group interviews. Interviews are conducted face-to-face. The time it takes for an interview to be completed varies, depending on how much you have to say. Remember, if you want to stop the interview at any time, you can do so without giving any reason. The face-to-face interview will take place at an agreed empty room. Taking part is voluntary. If you would prefer not to take part you do not have to justify your refusal.

Trust and confidentiality

Make sure that being a participant in this research will not cause any harm for you. My research does not cover any sensitive or embarrassing issues. However, if you feel

uncomfortable, during the interview, the interviewer will pause for a break, after that you can choose to carry on the interview or quit.

Your identity will be only known to the researcher. Participants' real names will be replaced by other names or coded using "the student". Moreover, your identity will remain anonymous in all publications and presentations of the findings.

The benefits of participating in this study

By being an interviewee, you will help me to understand and analyse the social and cultural aspects of the Algerian EFL learners and how they influence their learning attitudes and expectations. Besides, it will help you develop communication skills and collaboration and a sense of teamwork. It will also give an idea about how to conduct an interview as a future researcher in the field of language education.

After the interview

It is to be understood that your information will be transcribed by the researcher in the analysis phase. Any data will remain confidential with the research team from the department of letters, arts and languages, Djillali Liabes university of Sidi Bel Abbes- Algeria.

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please use the following contacts:

<div align="center">

Lakehal Benchaa

Department of Letters, Arts and Languages

Djillali Liabes University of Sidi Bel Abbes

TEL: 0793.05.34.73

Email: benchaa.lakehal@univ-sba-dz

Supervisor: Prof Bouhass Benaissi Fawzia

Email: fbouhass@gmail.com

</div>

Appendix VI

The Consent Form

Title of project: 'Autonomy in Advanced Language Education: Considerations of the Socio-Cultural Dimensions and their Impact on the Algerian EFL Students' Learning attitudes and Expectations: the Case of EFL Students at Ahmed Zabana University'

Name of Researcher: Lakehal Benchaa

Consent form for participants

This form is for third students to state whether or not you agree to take part in the study. Please read and answer questions below. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

1.	Have you read and understood the information sheet about the study?	**Yes** ☐
		No ☐
2.	Do you understand that you may withdraw (before or during the collection of data) without giving any reason?	Yes ☐
		No ☐
3.	Do you agree to participate in the study?	Yes ☐
		No ☐
4.	Do you understand that the data gathered will be used for academic purposes?	Yes ☐
		No ☐

Your name:

Your signature:

Date:

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact the researchers:

<div align="center">

Department of Letters, Arts and Languages

Djillali Liabes University of Sidi Bel Abbes

TEL: 0703.05.34.73

Email: benchaa.lakehal@univ-sba-dz

Supervisor: Prof Bouhass Benaissi Fawzia

Email: fbouhass@gmail.com

</div>

Appendix VII

Group Interview Questions

Participants: 3rd year LMD students

Setting: Ahmed Zabana University of Relizane

Data: December 2019

Opening:

Good morning dear students, how are you doing?

Well, today you are here together to participate in a group interview. The aim is to discuss the ways in which educational and cultural aspects influence your learning attitudes and expectations in higher education as you have already read in the information sheet, so let's get started...

Questions

Q1. Before joining the university, you had set many expectations, what were they?

Q2. Were your expectations met?

Q3. How would you explain this proverb with reference to your expectations?

- الباك نشوة و الجامعة حشوة

Q4. How would you describe learning at university?

Q5. What is your opinion about the following proverb?

- لي قرا قرا بكري (maybe translated as whoever studies, studies in the past)

Q6. According to you, what roles do your teachers often play in the classrooms?

Q7**.** How would you explain the following proverb?

- من علّمني حرفا صرت له عبدا

Q8. In case of any mistake made by your teacher, do you take the initiative to correct it? Explain**.**

Q9. How would you describe your relationship with your teachers?

Q10. How does your relationship with your teachers influence your role in the classroom?

Q11. Do you share your and future plans and study interests with your parents?

Q12. Explain the following in dialectic proverb/abbreviation

- يد وحدة ما تسفق
- LMD (Liquider Maximum D'étudiants)

Appendix VIII

A Diagram about the Basic Concepts of Research

Instruction: Consider the diagram below and answer the following questions;

1. What is research? (construct more than ONE definition)
2. What are the main objectives of research?
3. Mention and explain the characteristics of research

Note: You are not required to use all words and phrases; you can use your own too.

	Problems/ answer questions		Knowledge/ inquiry
Systematic/ process			
Gathering information/ Analysing/	**Research**		Theories/ hypotheses
new facts/ Discover/Explain	Investigation		New conclusions/ Collect/organised