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Promoting Learner Autonomy in an EFL Context:  
(The Case of Second Year Pupils in Secondary Education in  
Algeria)

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# Dedication

This study is wholeheartedly dedicated to the Almighty God who has been our source of strength, wisdom and knowledge throughout this research. We are extremely grateful and thankful to his help and facilitation in the fulfilment of this important step of our lives.

I dedicate this work to my family and friends. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving parents who have been lighting candles of hope, determination and positivity from the beginning of my academic track , and who have devoted their lives to see me succeed.

-Adel

I am particularly thankful to my parents and family whose immeasurable assistance allowed me to continue my research journey and helped me to surmount several obstacles, whenever they came along, without their enormous personal sacrifice, their constant patience and unconditional love; I would have never become the individual that today, may God bless them.

-Farid

First and foremost, I express my immense gratitude to the Almighty God, Who allowed me to finish this research as required. Without His divine assistance and blessing this dissertation would have never been fulfilled.

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||

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# Abstract

This research is concerned with learner autonomy in the Algerian EFL context in general and secondary education in particular. Through this study, the researcher aims to discover to which extent the notion of learner autonomy exists in our secondary schools and how to promote it. Therefore, a case study has been designed to investigate both teachers' and learners' perceptions and attitudes towards autonomous learning in EFL classroom. The current study contains three chapters: Chapter one is a literature review that covers general areas of learner autonomy; definitions, characteristics, strategies... Chapter two provides the research methodology that serves the success of this research as a whole, it involves 4 main parts in which research is designed. The data collected from these research instruments were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively in the third chapter where some general findings have been drawn. In fact, the research findings show that the notion of learner autonomy is still considered as a challenge for learners as well as teachers in Algerian secondary schools. Therefore, this work is an attempt to reveal the hindrances that impede our pupils from being autonomous in their learning process, and to provide practical implications for both EFL teachers and learners to overcome the barriers they commonly meet when trying to be involved in autonomous learning.

## ملخص

يهتم هذا البحث باستقلالية المتعلم في سياق اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الجزائر التعليم العام والثانوي بشكل خاص. من خلال هذه الدراسة، يهدف الباحث إلى اكتشاف مدى وجود فكرة استقلالية المتعلم في مدارسنا الثانوية وكيفية الترويج لها. لذلك، تم تصميم دراسة حالة للتحقيق في تصورات كل من المعلمين والمتعلمين ومواقفهم تجاه التعلم المستقل في فصل اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. تحتوي الدراسة الحالية على ثلاثة فصول: الفصل الأول هو مراجعة الأدبيات التي تغطي المجالات العامة لاستقلالية المتعلم. التعاريف والخصائص والاستراتيجيات ... يقدم الفصل الثاني منهجية البحث التي تخدم نجاح هذا البحث ككل، فهو يتضمن 4 أجزاء رئيسية تم تصميم البحث فيها. تم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها من هذه الأدوات البحثية نوعياً وكمياً في الفصل الثالث حيث تم استخلاص بعض النتائج العامة. في الواقع، تظهر نتائج البحث أن فكرة استقلالية المتعلم لا تزال تعتبر تحدياً للمتعلمين وكذلك المعلمين في المدارس الثانوية الجزائرية. لذلك، هذا العمل هو محاولة للكشف عن العوائق التي تمنع تلاميذنا من أن يكونوا مستقلين في عملية التعلم الخاصة بهم، ولتوفير آثار عملية لكل من معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية والمتعلمين للتغلب على الحواجز التي يواجهونها عادة عند محاولة المشاركة في التعلم المستقل.

## Résumé

Cette recherche s'intéresse à l'autonomie de l'apprenant dans le contexte EFL algérien en l'enseignement général et secondaire en particulier. À travers cette étude, le chercheur vise à découvrir dans quelle mesure la notion d'autonomie de l'apprenant existe dans nos écoles secondaires et comment la promouvoir. Par conséquent, une étude de cas a été conçue pour enquêter sur les perceptions et les attitudes des enseignants et des apprenants à l'égard de l'apprentissage autonome en classe EFL. La présente étude contient trois chapitres : le premier chapitre est une revue de la littérature qui couvre les domaines généraux de l'autonomie de l'apprenant ; définitions, caractéristiques, stratégies... Le chapitre deux fournit la méthodologie de recherche qui

sert le succès de cette recherche dans son ensemble, il comporte 4 parties principales dans lesquelles la recherche est conçue. Les données recueillies à partir de ces instruments de recherche ont été analysées qualitativement et quantitativement dans le troisième chapitre où quelques conclusions générales ont été tirées. En fait, les résultats de la recherche montrent que la notion d'autonomie de l'apprenant est toujours considérée comme un défi pour les apprenants ainsi que pour les enseignants. Lycées algériens. Par conséquent, ce travail est une tentative de révéler les obstacles qui empêchent nos élèves d'être autonomes dans leur processus d'apprentissage, et de fournir des implications pratiques aux enseignants et aux apprenants d'EFL pour surmonter les obstacles qu'ils rencontrent couramment lorsqu'ils essaient de s'impliquer dans l'apprentissage autonome.

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# General Introduction

In order to bridge the gap between the knowledge acquired at school and real life, new approaches have been introduced in language teaching throughout the world, mainly because the traditional ones have proved to be inadequate to meet the demands of modern society. This society is not only requiring the mastery of language, but also a life-long study skill. This is the aim behind introducing the notion of learner autonomy in the educational context. It intends to develop responsible learners who are capable to take charge of their own learning. That is to say learners who share responsibility with the language teacher in the classroom and, moreover, do further research in real life situations so as to improve their level in language learning. An autonomous learner is that sort of learner who continues learning when teaching stops. This is in fact, one of the fundamental objectives of the new approaches in language teaching. In order to attain this purpose, a descriptive research and case study served as the optimal method owing to its practicality and feasibility. In the course of the investigation, questionnaires, interviews and class observation were utilized as data collection instruments in order to enable the researcher analyze and evaluate the findings both quantitatively and qualitatively.

In this context, and in order to make the educational system more developed and more fruitful Algeria has implemented certain reforms in the field of education. As a result, the Competency-Based Approach was implemented in Algerian schools. It is supposed that the CBA has reshaped teacher and learner roles and their responsibility in the language classroom. This approach aims at producing responsible and autonomous learners who are expected to take charge of their learning. This does not mean that learner autonomy aims at marginalizing the teacher; on the contrary, the teacher's role is essential in setting a suitable atmosphere that encourages learners to be gradually autonomous in English learning.

Fostering learner autonomy aims at changing learners' attitudes towards English class and making them assume more responsibility in learning. However, English teachers need to investigate first how much learners view themselves as responsible

for their learning, whether or not they are aware of the importance of learner autonomy, and are ready to develop it in learning. Just after doing this, looking for ways to foster learner autonomy seems to be highly recommended. The present investigation is carried out under four research questions:

- 1 – Is the notion of learner autonomy well respected and implemented in Algerian secondary schools?
- 2- How do learners perceive their own and their teacher's responsibilities in learning English?
- 3- What are the main hindrances that impede both EFL teachers and learners while implementing and fostering the notion of learner autonomy in Algerian EFL classrooms?
- 4- In what ways can learner autonomy be fostered in an EFL context?

These are but a few questions that arise when one addresses the notion of learner autonomy in English learning. All in all, the above questions investigate whether or not learner autonomy is a reality in our educational system and more particularly in secondary education. The answer to these questions concerns two levels: the first one is concerned with a brief description and an analysis of ELT in Algeria with reference to teachers and learners attitudes and roles. The second concerns the requirements and ways for fostering learner autonomy in secondary education and how to make it a reality. These two elements govern the general layout of this dissertation in which we try to give evidence to the following hypotheses:

- 1- Learner autonomy is still considered as a new concept in the Algerian educational context, therefore its implementation is still difficult for both teachers and learners in middle education
- 2- Pupils consider the teacher as more responsible in the learning teaching process. The reason why they may be reluctant to take responsibility, i.e,they have teacher-dependent learning characteristics.
- 3- Learners generally do not know which strategies to select and how to use them in order to learn English independently.

4- Autonomy can be fostered only if learners change their attitudes towards the language learning, and if both teachers and learners have autonomy-oriented training.

To follow up this study, the researcher divides his work into three main chapters: The first chapter presents the literature review of the field that relates to learner autonomy; definitions, reasons, influencing factors, theories and the main areas that provide the core of this research.

The second chapter provides an overview of ELT situation in Algeria and describes the notion of learner autonomy in the Algerian educational context in general and in the secondary education in particular with reference to the CBA and the ELT textbook for first year pupils.

Chapter three addresses the research methodology used in this dissertation. This chapter deals with a sampling of 22 English secondary teachers and 50 pupils from Kouidri Mohamed Secondary School Khemis Miliana. The reason behind this choice first lies on the fact that English teachers are aware of pupils' level of autonomy. And second, pupils of 1AS who have already finished four years of English learning and are supposed to have developed a certain level of autonomy. Moreover, these pupils are having lessons on computing in schools that will help them to be selfreliant in doing research far away from the teacher's presence. Furthermore, pupils of 1AS are about to decide which stream to join in their second year. Thus, they are aware of their strengths and weaknesses in learning. As for research instruments, we have used a questionnaire for teachers and pupils and classroom observation.

Finally, this research work is an attempt to contribute in promoting learner autonomy in secondary education in Algeria. It is in fact an attempt to expand an awareness of teachers and students concerning the necessity of autonomy in English learning. No doubt autonomy is essential; however, this concept often causes frustration among teachers and learners, because they are not in the best position for implementing it, due to the lack of formation, training and preparation for change. This may justify why making changes in the educational setting is often resisted and

difficult to implement. In fact, what both teachers and pupils really need is autonomy-oriented training.

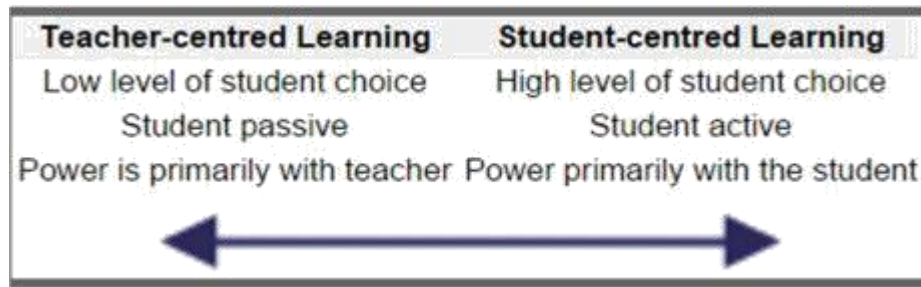
CHAPTER ONE:  
LITERATURE REVIEW

## 1.1. Introduction

The learning process in one of the main issues that have been tackled by eminent researchers and scholars. As a result, language teaching nowadays doesn't mean the ability to teach but the ability to make learners learn. Over the last two decades, the notion of learner autonomy has gained a great attention and it has been brought to the field of education as a whole, and in teaching languages in particular. In the early 20th century, it was consistently studied due to the development in the field of adult learning and based on the work of **Yves Chàlon** (1970), and **Holec** (1981). For more understanding to this field, its main principles, and its contributions to the learning process, we will provide a whole chapter which will cover the autonomy process starting from its definition to the state of this field in the present time. In the first chapter of this work, the researcher provides an overview of learner autonomy including its definitions, theories, obstacles, strategies and tips to foster it.

## 1.2. Defining Autonomy in Language Learning

Over the last decades, there has been changing views in the English Language Teaching (ELT); and emphasis was put on the role of the learner. LA emerged as a result of the emergence of the notion of learner-centered education (**Kaçak, 2003: 4**). This shift of interest from the teacher's role to the learner's has unveiled learners' active role during the learning process and hence, has given rise to the concept of LA (**Benson, 2001: 21**). Autonomy represents a basic component on which learner-centeredness stands. Before, the teacher's authoritative behavior restricted learners' autonomy and their right to make choices; all learning activities were controlled by the teacher (**Kaçak, 2003: 4**). Figure 1-1 illustrates the difference between the traditional teacher-centered approach and the student-centered approach.



**Figure 1.1:** Key points of teacher-centered and student-centered learning (O'Neill and McMahon 2005).

One of the most well-known definitions of the term “Learner Autonomy” dated back to 1981 when **Henri Holec** began his report to the European Council. According to him: *“Autonomy is the ability to take charge of one’s own learning.”* (Holec, 1981:3), noting that this ability is not inborn but must be acquired either by natural means or by formal learning, i.e. in a systematic deliberate way, and pointing out that:

*“To take charge of one’s learning is to have the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning.”* (Holec, 1981:3). In addition, **Holec**, as a prominent figure within the field of autonomy, suggested the theoretical basis and pedagogical implications of learner autonomy, and thus he was called **“The father of learner autonomy.”** Since then, the notion of learner autonomy has been tackled by many researchers and educationalists who gave different definitions to the term. However, some of them do not agree with **Holec’s** definition such as **Little** who says that:

*“Autonomy is a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making, and independent action. It entails that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning.”* (Little, 1991:3-4)

### 1.3 Reasons for Learner Autonomy

Many scholars and researchers in the domain of language teaching have believed that autonomy is a very essential characteristic of successful learners. The fact that justifies the rationale behind introducing it into the language classroom. Autonomy has become a desirable goal for three reasons: **psychological, practical and philosophical**. First, the psychological rationale is the most appealing to educationalists, simply because learners in general learn better when they are in charge of their own learning. In this context, **Candy** states 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.”*(Candy, 1991:24). Moreover, learners involved in the process are more likely to feel motivated in their learning and motivated learners are generally successful learners. We find an illustration of this in **Dickinson** (1987) who 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.”* (Dickinson ,1987:14) Similarly, In EFL classrooms in Algeria, one can notice that successful learners are to some extent psychologically free and independent from the teacher. This feeling will motivate them more and more to be involved in their learning. While the unsuccessful ones just wait passively to be provided with knowledge. The second rationale behind autonomy is practicability which emerges from the need of more suitable teaching situations. The traditional approaches are not practical according to **Van Lier** (1988) : *« there is a wide gap between knowledge obtained at school and the real life outside of it. »* i.e, learners could use the language neither in conversation nor in writing tasks. For this reason, a continuous adoption of new approaches is now one of the distinctive feature in the field of language teaching and learning. Another problem that faces teachers even recently is that in the classroom the teacher may not always be available to assist, due to the large number of students in a classroom, so learners need to be able to learn on their own (this is the case in Algerian schools in which sometimes the number of pupils in one class is more than 40). A society may not provide the necessary resources to all its members in

every area of learning as an example the computers and even the internet provided for pupils in secondary education may be insufficient or in a bad quality. In such circumstances, learners need to obtain their own learning needs, either individually or cooperatively, so as to get the knowledge and skill they desire. Third, the philosophical rationale behind autonomy is the belief that the individual has the right to be free to make his or her own choices not only in learning a language but also in other subjects.

According to **Knowles (1975)** : *societies are happier and healthier with free individuals who have not become victims of choices made by social institutions*. He

has emphasized that it is important to prepare learners for a swiftly changing future, where independent learning will be indispensable for effective functioning in society. With such preparation for independent learning, learners will also maximize their life choices, since the attitude and the conception of the role of the individual in society has been a move from: “man as product of his society” to “ man as the producer of his society” (Janne, 1977: 15 In **Holec**, 1981:3). If democratic states are to develop and flourish as democracies, they must undertake educational measures to develop the capacity of their citizens to think and act as free and self - determining individuals. So if Algeria is to flourish as a democratic country, plenty of educational measures should be made first so as to make Algerian learners and from an early age autonomous in their learning, free and self-determining simply because children of today are men of tomorrow. Once they have developed their autonomy as learners in a later stage they develop their autonomy as persons and citizens.

#### **1.4. Factors influencing learner autonomy**

In the process of acquiring the autonomous learning approach, diverse factors seem to intervene exerting an influence, some of which are internal and some external. First, there are factors associated with the inner world of the learner himself/herself, for example: motivation, attribution, self-esteem, learning beliefs and attitudes, learning experiences, learning styles, and learning strategies. Second, there are factors that relate to the learners' external surroundings for example: the school environment, the teaching approaches, and the social culture. Such features can, to a certain extent, either enhance or restrict students' autonomous learning capacity. In this section, I will

try to cover the most dominant and recognized influential factors in the literature such as: attitudes, beliefs, motivation and learning environment.

#### **1.4.1. Beliefs and attitudes**

The concept of beliefs denotes a key parameter that shapes one's own learning conduct. Beliefs are engaged in conceptualizing and making sense of the world, they are involved in understanding thoughts and internalizing information. They represent the mental state which takes ideas as being true (though they may not be). Thus, learners' beliefs about any aspect of their language learning are remarkably influential and determinant of how it will be approached. For example, learners with positive beliefs about taking the initiative and responsibility in their language learning "*tend to develop a more active and thus, autonomous attitude that allows them to take charge of their learning whatever the situation may be*" (Victori & Lockhart, 1995 as cited in Thanh Nga, 2014) .However, if learners hold mistaken negative beliefs about their capability to learn a foreign language with a certain degree of self-reliance and independence, they become unlikely to "*adopt a responsible and active attitude in their approach to learning and may never become autonomous*"(ibid). Fortunately, such unconstructive learning beliefs are adjustable and can be modified particularly by instructors. For educators have the chance and capacity, during class time, to dig out, discuss, and alter those misleading convictions. Therefore, they might redirect them towards new constructive directions. Accordingly, teachers can play a central role in reconstructing and implanting worthy beliefs within learners, which may possibly help them embrace learner autonomy principles. However, this might only be expected to occur, if teachers themselves hold constructive and optimistic beliefs about autonomy. Because, the latter's teaching practices are fundamentally based on their beliefs too.

Learning attitudes are by no means less influential than learning beliefs in determining learners' actions. A study conducted by **Charney, Newman and Palmquist (1995)** demonstrated that learners' attitudes and beliefs influence their thought, their actions while reading and writing, and their achievements as well. The word attitude means, "*a favorable or unfavorable evaluative reaction toward something*

*or someone, exhibited in one's beliefs, feelings, or intended behavior"* (Myers, 2003, p. 36). Hence, learners' conceptualized attitudes towards the idea of autonomy impinge on their choice of learning action, on their response to challenges and consequently on their decision making. The more students perceive independence in learning as valuable and rewarding, the less they are likely to reject its adoption for their learning approach. Whereas, negative or indecisive perceptions of taking control and responsibility in learning, might create psychological and cognitive barriers towards autonomy.

#### **1.4.2. Motivation**

The term motivation has long been tightly tied to second language acquisition and foreign language learning. Most educationalists regard it as one of the most central affective factors that influence the success or failure of language learning. They also agree that motivation has significant bearings upon learner autonomy. **Dickinson** (1995,p. 14) argues that "*learning success and enhanced motivation is conditional on learners taking responsibility for their own learning*". Hence, motivation appears to be a precondition leading to learner autonomy. As, it provides them with the driving force that helps them to take action, to seek out learning opportunities, to shoulder responsibility for their own learning and therefore to be autonomous. Besides, motivation directs learners to use metacognitive strategies; this metacognitive engagement in learning implies self-action which is in turn central to learner autonomy. If learners lack motivation in their language learning, it will be most likely challenging for them to experience or develop autonomy. They will be reluctant towards choice making and self-directed practices, thus will lack autonomy traits. Hence, there is an undeniable solid correlation between motivation and autonomy.

#### **1.4.3. Learning Environment**

Any form of language learning, be it autonomous or not, is bound to a certain learning surrounding which could either encourage or restrain it. The learning environment is naturally a broad concept that comprises various elements. These are mainly external to the learner such as: the classroom context (syllabus, examination systems, peer collaboration, teachers roles, etc) as well as the social and the cultural contexts. With

respect to the learning cultural context, **Holliday** (1994) interestingly specified several learning sub-cultures like the: national culture, professional academic cultures, international education-related cultures, host institution culture, classroom culture and student culture. They are all, more or less, involved in the overall process of language learning.

Some learning environment parameters are seen as favorable to the cultivation of autonomy because they tend to facilitate it. For example, syllabuses which provide rich learning opportunities for responsibility taking and shared decision making, or teachers acting as counselors instead of knowledge resources allowing some space for freedom of pedagogical choices, are likely to yield responsible and independent language learners. However, classroom culture is not contextually sufficient for fostering autonomy because, the latter depends heavily on the social learning environment : *“students’ readiness to internalize curriculum goals and values depends to a large extent on the degree to which the social learning environment supports their sense of autonomy”* .This suggests the primordial role of the social learning situation in the adoption of autonomy principles

### **1.5. Promoting Learner Autonomy**

Learner autonomy has become a major interest in the present history of language teaching and learning. In the field of language teaching, teachers are in struggle with the ways with which learner autonomy is promoted or at least to reinforce the idea of autonomy in foreign language classrooms.**Jack Brajcich** has suggested several ways in which the teacher can promote learner autonomy in the classroom. First of all, the teacher has to encourage the learners to act independently in the classroom and solve their activities simultaneously because this will raise the sense of competition and also cooperation between them and give them the chance to be involved in the learning courses. Yet, the learners have to be given some different projects and homework to do. So, they will have to learn without the teacher’s guidance, to make themselves in touch with their learning program and also to practice language which will help them prove their level as autonomous persons and show progress. In this case, the teacher should direct the students how to use their school resource centers, such as the library

and the language lab, which may motivate them to become good researchers and creative thinkers and also help them refine their performance in the language learning classroom.

In order to use the second language regularly, the learners need to be supported to use only English in class without being embarrassed by their mistakes and the teacher here has to play his role of creating a supportive environment where students feel they should communicate in the foreign language and feel comfortable doing so.

Actually, environment plays a huge role for the learner to become autonomous. The more supportive the learning environment is, the better the learners' performance will be. Moreover, promoting learner autonomy is also based on allowing the students to use reference books like dictionaries in the classroom which can help them check words and meanings and learn how to use them. This will help them acquire many vocabularies and concepts from the target language and also encourage them to communicate more with fewer errors. At this point, the teacher has to stress fluency rather than accuracy, quantity rather than quality, which may increase the learners' participation in the classroom without paying attention to the mistakes. Furthermore, teachers hope that their learners practice the second language outside the classroom, that is why it is needed to ask the learners to keep journals or diaries of their learning experiences hoping that they will reflect on their lessons, discover their difficulties and success, and arrive a greater grasp about language and language learning.

Nowadays, we are living in a world of modern technology, and learners are so much in touch with the Internet, for example. So it is good for them to be allowed to use this technology which may help them learn by themselves and raise the sense of autonomy and responsibility for themselves. These technologies will help them get the information they want faster and easier. It is appropriate for the autonomous learners to continue their search for knowledge, and it is also important for them to know how to use it because the Internet is not only for studying, that is why they need to be directed carefully because many people know that the Internet contains not only good thing but also bad ones.

For learners to do better in their learning and understand the target language, there are many strategies which need to be followed.

### **1.6. Learner autonomy and language learning strategies**

Promoting language learner autonomy entails helping students learn how to learn, to develop their learning capacities, attitudes and to enable them to think critically and independently. **Holec** (1981), in this regard, argues that learners necessitate practical training for self-directed learning and this comprises a facility in learning strategies use. Hence, learner autonomy can possibly and partly be developed through the good use of a range of cognitive and meta-cognitive learning strategies, especially the latter as **Westhoff** (1993, p.13) maintains “*for an autonomous learner, the meta-cognitive domain is most important.*” On the importance of learning strategies in language learning, **Chamot and O`Malley** (1994,p. 58) declare:

*“There are two major reasons why we integrate learning strategies into the instruction of academic language and content. The first is the theoretical consistency of learning strategies with the cognitive view of learning which underlies CALLA (Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach). The second is the impressive amount of research that supports using learning strategies with academic language and content information.”*

Initially, the pedagogical interest in learning strategies aroused from two major conditions (**Little, in Byram & Hu (Ed)**, 2013,p. 666). The first was in the 1970’s, 1980’s, it was associated with researchers’ attention to communicative strategies of second language users and learners, which derived from research in the area of inter-language. Studies on the strategic behavior of second language learners/ users have put forward the idea that explicit instruction can possibly boost second language learners’ performance, and that strategy training might also be of advantages to second language learners. Interestingly, a few decades later, an assortment of studies at the universal scale, **Watanabe** (1990) in Japan, **Yang** (1993) in Taiwan, **Wharton** (2000) in Singapore, and **Anderson** (2002) in USA have confirmed with evidence the strong correlation between language learning strategies use and successful language learning, The second condition under which focus on learning strategies have come to light is

the growing interest in learner autonomy. Proponents of learner autonomy such as **Little** (1996) argue that encouraging autonomous learning necessarily entails the promotion of an explicit strategic control of the language learning process. **Nunan**, (1988,1999) believes that awareness of language learning strategies helps to activate a learner-centered approach and results in more effective learning. Other autonomy supporters, such as **Oxford** (1990a) and **Wenden and Rubin** (1987) reveal a desire for learner autonomy and taking control in learning by means of language learning strategies.

The term language learning strategy has been defined by many researchers. **Rubin** (1975) defines learning strategies as *any sets of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information*. Similarly, **Wenden** (1998) defines them as follows: “*learning strategies are mental steps or operations that learners use to learn a new language and to regulate their efforts to do so.*” (Wenden, 1998: 18). All language learners use language learning strategies either consciously or unconsciously when processing new information and performing tasks in the language classroom. In English learning our pupils are using certain strategies which they learn to use in the middle school and learn how to use others in the secondary level. Learners can face challenging tasks that present a real difficulty for them. So they attempt to find the quickest or the easiest way to do tasks. That is to say, using language learning strategies is inescapable.

### **1.6.1. Strategies for promoting language learner autonomy**

As discussed beforehand, learners’ strategic behavior plays a primordial role in the processes of language learning and learner autonomy development. Therefore, students are greatly encouraged to be aware of the power of strategy use and the imperative impact it has on their autonomous language leaning. Nevertheless, to be more successful and more independent, they are required not only to recognize the various learning strategies but also to determine the most appropriate ones that fit to their own learning styles and the ones which help them boost their self-directed learning behavior. In this regard, **Oxford** (in Hurd and Lewis, 2008) has thoroughly

designed a set of practical strategies (as shown in the following table) that are aimed at promoting language learner autonomy.

Type of strategy	Strategy	Tactic
<b>Metacognitive</b>	Plan	I set realistic objectives for this weeks' two major writing tasks.
	Organize	I organize my computer files on my laptop before doing anything else.
	Monitor	During, the reading task, I monitor my energy level and clarity of thought every 20 minutes or so.
	Evaluate	I compare my current listening performance a month ago to evaluate progress.
<b>Affective</b>	Build positive	I search for something about the task that excites my interest.
	Maintain	I use positive self-talk to keep going.

	Deal with negative emotions	I lower any unhelpful anxiety by deep breathing, music, humour, relaxation...etc.
<b>Cognitive</b>	Combine	I combine this week's new phrases to write five different sentences.
	Group	I group the new material I find about the topic and put in the various files so I can find it.
	Analyze	I break today's multisyllabic words into component parts so I can understand and remember them.
	Synthesize	I use topic sentences in paragraphs to help me write a summary of the essay I just read.
<b>Social-interactive</b>	Ask questions	I ask the tutor the questions and listen well to the answers.
	collaborate	I respond to other students' postings in the discussion forums.
	Notice socio-cultural factors	I ask myself the meaning of certain social behaviors that I encounter by video.

Table 1.1: Oxford 's strategies for promoting language learner autonomy (in Hurd and Lewis; 2008,p. 52-54)

This detailed categorization and explanation of strategies offers a useful guide for learners to take control, monitor and evaluate their own language learning process. Employing the tactics, such as setting realistic objectives, controlling the affective factor, and interacting with teachers and students, makes learning more focused and definite, consequently more effective. This might also raise learners' level of motivation and help them shoulder more responsibility for their own language learning. What is more, such strategies are not inherent in learners, they are rather learned as **Oxford** maintains "*L2 learners, no matter how autonomous they wish to be, are not born knowing all the strategies and tactics they need. They must learn about these strategies and tactics.*" (**Oxford**, in Hurd and Lewis, 2008,p. 54). Therefore, these strategies are learnable and more importantly, they are teachable. Hence, in order to make them well grasped and implemented, learners can be trained on their use. This is referred to as 'strategy training' or 'strategy instruction', it is a technical approach executed by instructors for developing learner autonomy, in which they take action to aid their learners identify and apply the strategies that help them become more independent. An example of this is provided by **Sykes** (2004), where he proposed four useful strategies that can be adopted by tutors to develop an autonomous conduct within learners. It is briefly illustrated and summarized in the following table:

The Strategy	The Steps
<b>1- Identifying and sharing preferences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What kind of class work do you prefer (e.g., individual, pairs, groups)?</li> <li>-What kind of class activities do you prefer (e.g., lectures, discussions, projects)?</li> <li>-What sort of materials do you prefer to learn with (e.g., books, handouts, videos, games)?</li> </ul>
<b>2- Encouraging Self-monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-How did you prepare for the assignment?</li> <li>-What materials did you use for the assignment?</li> <li>-Did you discuss the assignment?</li> <li>-How much time did you spend on the assignment?</li> </ul>
<b>3- Summarizing and Sharing Texts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The facilitator identifies relevant texts, e.g., book chapters articles, reports and case studies, for learners to read.</li> <li>-Learners are divided into pairs or small groups and are assigned one of the identified texts to read.</li> <li>-Individually, learners read the texts and summarise the key points.</li> <li>- Learners share their summary with their partners and compose a shared version of their summaries.</li> <li>- Learners present their summary orally or in writing to the rest of the group.</li> </ul>
<b>4-Creating Learner-generated Quizzes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The facilitator asks learners to identify parts of the course material they want to review. (Alternatively, the facilitator can make this decision.).</li> <li>- In pairs or small groups, learners review the material and prepare a set of questions to quiz their classmates.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The pairs or groups share and answer each other's quizzes.</li> <li>- The learners check their classmates' answers to the quizzes.</li> <li>- Each pair or group reports on the questions that received the lowest number of correct answers.</li> <li>- With the help of the facilitator, the learners compile a list of problem areas that need to be reviewed further</li> </ul>
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Table 1.2 : Four Strategies for Promoting and Developing Learner Autonomy (Sykes, 2004)

To sum up, the strategies used for enhancing learner autonomy can be handled on two levels. First, they can be utilized by learners, through individual reflection and action. Second, they can be implemented by instructors who tend to provide guidance and assistance in order to boost learners' independent capability to use them. However, no matter which form is utilized in the learning process, both are proved to be effective in enhancing language learner autonomy.

### 1.7. Characteristics of Autonomous Learner

Many researchers as **Holec**, **Little** and **Benson** have shared the same view of autonomous learners and expect them to manage their own affairs. In other words, they see them as independent individuals entirely able to take charge of their own learning. **Holec** defines the autonomous learner; in his famous book *Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning*, as:

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

*(Holec, 1981:3)*

To support his definition, **Holec** (1981) adds that autonomous learner is supposed to be able to determine the objectives, define the content, select the strategies to be used and assess what has been acquired. According to him, learners can be autonomous if they are responsible for their own learning through being involved in the different aspects of the learning process. In the same context, **Holec** (1988) mentions that:

*“...the autonomous learner is not automatically obliged to self-direct his learning either totally or even partially. The learner will make use of his ability to do this only if he so wishes and if he is permitted to do so by the material, social and psychological constraints to which he is subjected.” (Holec, 1988:8)*

However, **Little** has a different point of view about autonomous learners he says 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, 1991:11)*

It is important to know what characterizes the autonomous learner to make it is easy for the teacher to deal with him. The learner can be autonomous but s/he will always need someone to direct him/ her because s/he cannot be completely responsible for his learning. With the guidance of the teacher, learner autonomy will be fostered successfully.

### **1.8. Teacher Autonomy**

In the course of working on the worthwhile goal of learner autonomy in language education, teachers need not only to play the role of facilitators, counselors or monitors, but need also to be effective decision makers, responsible leaders, and independent professionals at schools. Those roles, in effect, are focal conditions for academic autonomy. This implies that teachers are presupposed to be, in some degree, autonomous. With this regard, **Little** (1995) argues *“the promotion of learner autonomy depends (in fact) on the promotion of teacher autonomy”* (1995,p. 179) and adds that learner autonomy is more likely to be developed if teachers have themselves received an autonomous encouraging education (**ibid**: 180). Furthermore, **Breen and Mann** (1997) maintain that *“an essential precondition for the teacher to be able to foster autonomous learning is an explicit awareness of the teacher’s own self as a learner”* (1997,p.145). So, teachers ought to conceive themselves as learners not only of the teaching craft but also, of the foreign language they teach or even of their students’ first language.

The construct of teacher autonomy has initially been used, in the field of language education, by **Allwright** (1988) and subsequently elaborated by **Little** (1995) who defined it as “*teachers’ capacity to engage in self-directed teaching.*”. It generally embodies learner autonomy tenets, in assuming responsibility, self-directedness, taking control, and freedom of choice. In this sense, **Aoki** (1999) supposed that if learner autonomy is: “*The capacity, freedom, and/or responsibility to make choices concerning one’s own learning . . . teacher autonomy, by analogy, can be defined as capacity, freedom to make choices concerning one’s own teaching*”. (Aoki, 1999,p.111) **Benson** (2000,p. 111), defines teacher autonomy as “*a right to freedom from control (or an ability to exercise this right) as well as actual freedom from control*”. As can be seen, the term teacher autonomy, akin to learner autonomy, has been described in several ways; as a capacity, a set of skills, and a right for freedom. To make it easier for users to employ the term , **Smith** (2001,p. 5) has made an interesting list out of the various dimensions of teacher autonomy that are presented in the educational literature, in which he summarized six points in relation to two main categories, one associated with professional action and the other linked to professional development:

\* In relation to professional action:

- A. Self-directed professional action
- B. Capacity for self-directed professional action
- C. Freedom from control over professional action

\* In relation to professional development:

- D. Self-directed professional development
- E. Capacity for self-directed professional development
- F. Freedom from control over professional development

What can be drawn from the above distinction is that, the first set concerns the teacher’s action solely, that is, the autonomy of the teacher is experienced while

exercising the teaching activity regardless of the proceeding effect, therefore, it sees autonomy as a 'state'. Unlike the second set, that takes autonomy as an 'ongoing process', and emphasizes on the developmental dimension of the autonomous teacher. By inference, the two categories imply different degrees of autonomy, teacher autonomy in the first sense tend to bear a lower level of autonomy if compared to the second, because the act of developing an action entails higher autonomy and is more demanding than the act of doing the action itself. Besides, teachers who have the capacity and freedom to take control of their professional development are certainly well able to take self-directed professional action, but the other way around is not necessarily true.

### **1.9. Conclusion**

Learning is a continuous process; it may take the learner's whole life without being ended. During this process, learners are taught and guided to become autonomous and take the responsibility for their learning so as to improve their language skills. Hence, learner autonomy has become a central theme in language teaching. It is part of a wider development in education to organize and direct their own learning inside and outside the school context. In general, there is now a broader awareness of the importance of developing language and autonomous learning skills in addition to language competencies. The aim of this chapter was to give the general idea about the concept of learner autonomy in language learning. In fact, we have just scratched the surface of this concept. There are certainly many pieces of this puzzle termed learner autonomy missing. In the next chapter, we are going to shed light on the Algerian ELT situation and position in the Algerian secondary schools and the notion of learner autonomy in the Algerian educational context by passing through the most used methods . By the end, we will take a look at the status of both teacher and learner while learning and teaching.

CHAPTER TWO:  
RESEARCH  
METHODOLOGY

## 2.1. Introduction:

In this second chapter, we will describe the process through which the practical side of the research was conducted. This section aims to describe the methods and procedure used in the present research. We will present (1) the research objectives and questions, (2) the population and sampling, (3) the research design, and (4) the data collection procedure.

### 2-1-1-Research objectives and questions

The primary aim of this study is to discover students and teachers' attitude toward the autonomy of students and teachers of Kouidri Moahmed Secondary School, Khemis Miliana. Therefore, a case study has been designed to investigate both their perceptions and attitudes regarding autonomous learning in EFL classroom of Kouidri Secondary School. This study intends to answer the following research question: "which extent of learner autonomy exists in our secondary school and how to promote it?"

### 2-1-Population of the study

The population of the study consists of twenty-two (22) teachers and fifty (50) students mainly selected from Kouidri Mohamed Secondary School, Khemis Miliana. The reason behind choosing 2nd year pupils as participants of our research is that they are at the middle of their study process. As I am an English teacher in Kouidri secondary school and I teach 2nd year scientific stream classes I decided to choose 2nd year pupils as participants of our research. So they are more available for questioning beside that I have an idea about my student's personality and I know who is autonomous and who is dependent.

### 2-1-3-research design( tools of data collection )

This section consists of processing the data obtained from each tool used during this empirical study, mainly: questionnaires, classroom observation and the inspector's interview, which will be discussed and interpreted after being analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. According to Mariam, "questionnaires are an easy way to collect a wide range of data from a large sample within a short time" (2013, p34). According to Selinger and Shohany: "In quantitative analysis: the data is in numerical form, or some form which can be converted into numbers and the analysis almost utilizes statistics, quantitative data analysis techniques deal with non-numerical data usually linguistics units in oral and written form." (Selinger and Shohany, 1989:201) In this study, the researcher has followed both quantitative and qualitative method for analyzing the results of teachers and learners' questionnaires. Then he has analyzed the data gathered via classroom observation and the inspector's interview using only the qualitative method. The questionnaire has been administered to around 22 EFL teachers from different secondary schools in the city of Algiers. It has been chosen for eliciting data from the informants to investigate the research questions and hypotheses. (After collecting data, we have considered it convenient to treat it in tables, pie charts and graphs for better illustration and to analyze the questions according to their appearance and order in the questionnaire. In fact, treating data with the aid of statistics usually makes the research more manageable and more efficient. (Selinger and Shohany, 1989).

### 2.1.3.2 Description of the Research Tools

#### 2.1.3.2.1 The Learners Questionnaire

This questionnaire is given to fifty (50) pupils from Kouidri Mohamed Secondary School pupils to know their opinions about autonomy in EFL learning and the kind of support they need to refine their performance in and outside the classroom in order to develop their competence in learning the target language. Moreover, this questionnaire is helpful for us to have an idea about the importance of learner autonomy and the benefits which the learners get from working independently by asking them some questions. The learners are asked to answer briefly by choosing the right answer from different options. The questionnaire was clear enough in order to become understandable for the learners and to help them choose the right answers.

#### 2.1.3.2.2 The Teachers Questionnaire

The questionnaire has been administrated to around 22 EFL teachers from different secondary schools. It has been chosen for eliciting data from the informants to investigate the research questions and hypotheses.

#### 2.1.4 Procedure of Data Collection

The students questionnaires will be distributed to fifty (50) second year students and the researchers will question the 22 EFL teachers (five) at Kouidri Mohamed Secondary School, KhemisMiliana. The data were collected during the second semester of academic year 2021-2022. The researchers were present to guide the students and to make sure that every item is clear for them. The researchers will also be present with the participant teachers, in order to make the administration of the questionnaire carried out without any issues.

### Conclusion

In this section, we have described the research question and objectives, the population of the present study, the sampling procedure, the research design, and data collection procedure. The instruments used in this study consist of a questionnaire for the students and the teachers. The teachers and Students questionnaires were administered in Kouidri Mohamed Secondary School, Khemis Miliana during the second term of academic year 2021-2022. The next section will deal with the treatment and presentation of the data collected in this study.

# CHAPTER THREE:

# DATA COLLECTION AND

# ANALYSIS

CHAPTER THREE : DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

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## **3.1. Introduction**

Education is considered as the most sensitive sector in the society since it is the tool by which the leaders can form the future generations. Therefore, improving the quality of both teaching and learning becomes the chief concern of any responsible authorities in the world. The Algerian policy makers, being aware of enhancing the educational system as a top priority, have been seriously interested in providing learners with the appropriate training which help them reaching the desired sample of future citizen who needs to be an autonomous and responsible person. Thus, fostering learner autonomy in Algerian schools is actually at the forefront of the Algerian education precedence in general, and the EFL teaching/learning in particular. Consequently, the CBA has been implemented as a new approach which contributes effectively in promoting this kind of autonomy. This chapter serves the prime purpose of interpreting and analyzing the research findings. It illustrates and explains the informants' EFL learning experience vis-à-vis autonomous practice.

In this current chapter, different types of data are analyzed and organized according to the chronological order of their exploratory process. The researcher aims to obtain considerable perceptions through the data gathered from the pupils, students of 2AS, EFL teachers, and the inspector of English in the secondary school level regarding their involvement in autonomous learning. In this practical side, the respective order of their interpretation begins with a presentation of the pre-questionnaire results plus an analysis based on fundamental sections of learner autonomy. Subsequently, it describes the findings of the classroom observation taking into account the positive as

well as the negative notes then draws conclusions from them. Finally, this chapter ends up with an exploration of the post-questionnaire responses and presents a comprehensive discussion of the overall findings, and a special attention is devoted to a particular study about viewing the extent to which learners are autonomous in their learning.

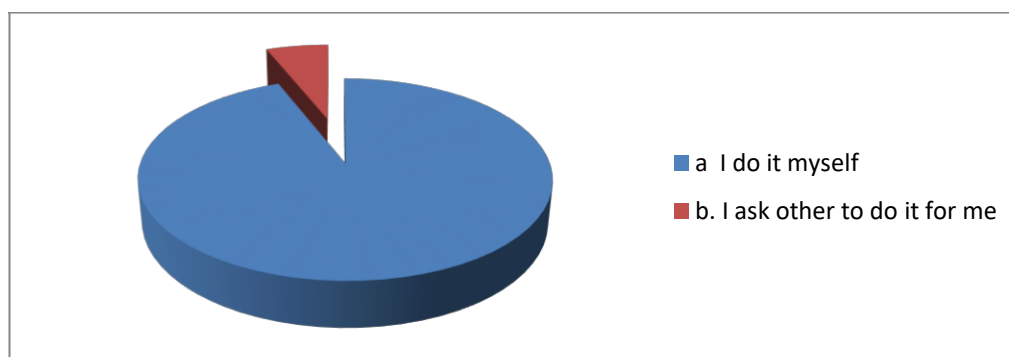
## 3.2. Students' Questionnaire

### 3.2.1. Data Collection and Analysis

**Q1: When you are asked to do a project, do you do it by yourself or do you ask others to do it for you?**

Option	Number	Percentage
a.I do it myself.	46	94%
b.I ask others to do it for me	04	06%

**Table 3.1.1:** Independence of students in doing projects.



**Figure 3.1.1:** Independence of students in doing projects

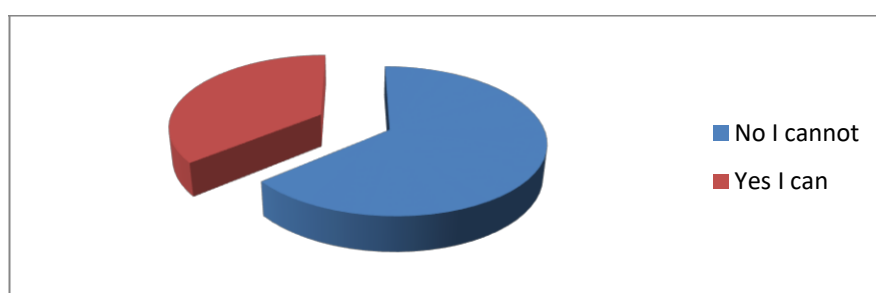
There are different views of students about the learner desire in doing projects. Most of the students, (46) persons, (94%) like to do their projects by themselves whereas the rest (04) persons (6%) do not like working on their projects , so they ask others to

work for them because they are dependent ones and not capable of doing such things and may have no idea about being an autonomous and responsible person.

**Q 2: Can you be responsible for your own learning or do you need your teacher's guidance?**

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes, I can.	18	36%
No, I cannot.	32	64%

**Table 3.1.2:** Students' responsibility for learning independently.



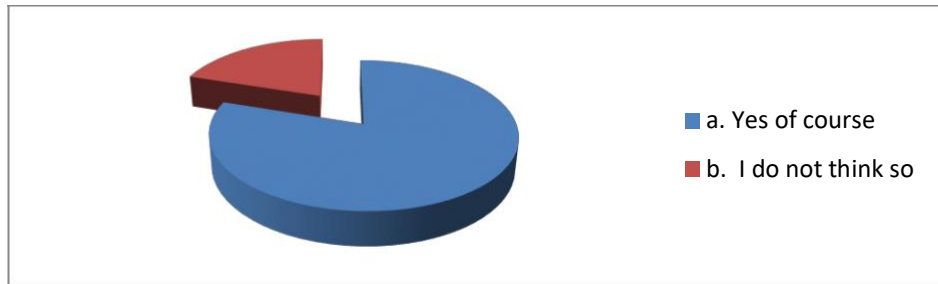
**Figure 3.1.2:** Students' responsibility for learning independently.

The subjects are asked whether they can be responsible for their own learning or they still need the teacher directions. Eighteen (18) respondents (36%) say that they are capable to take responsibility for their own learning, while the majority, (32) students (64%) say that they cannot study by their own; they still need the teacher guidance especially in EFL learning. It is true for they are beginners and need an assistance in their learning before they are completely responsible and independent.

**Q 3: Do you think that your learning performance will be affected if you receive motivation and encouragement?**

Option	Number	Percentage
a. Yes, of course.	40	80%
b. I don't think so.	10	20%

**Table 3.1.3:** The learners' opinion about motivation and encouragement.



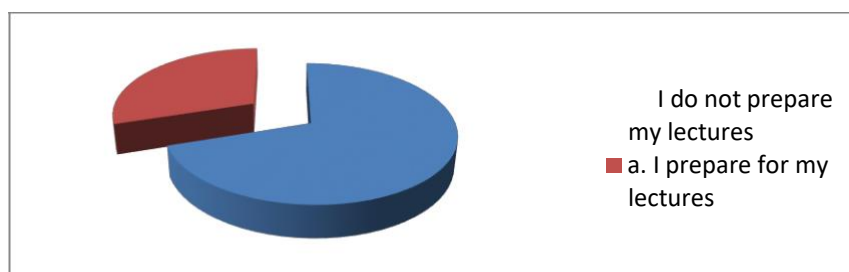
**Figure 3.1.3:** The learners’ opinion about motivation and encouragement.

This question is asked to know the learners’ view about motivation and encouragement and if they affect their performance in learning. (40) students (80%) think that motivation and encouragement affect the learning of the students positively and help them achieve their goals successfully. By contrast, four (10) students (20%) see that motivation and encouragement cannot affect their learning and they are wrong because they are very important factors in EFL learning. They can help the learners refine their intellectual level and raise self-confidence inside each one as well.

**Q4: Do you prepare for the coming lectures or just come and take what the teacher gives you?**

Option	Number	percentage
a. I prepare for my lectures	15	30%
b. I do not	35	70%

**Table 3.1.4:** Students’ preparations for their courses.



**Figure 3.1.4:** Students’ preparations for their lectures.

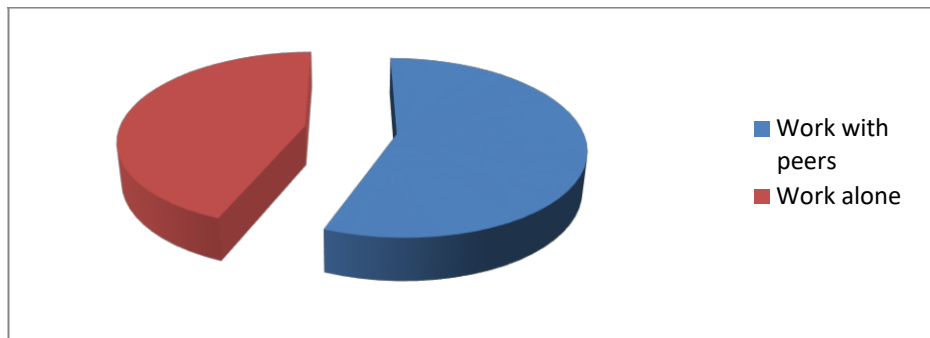
With this question, we aim to know whether the students prepare for their coming lectures or just come to the classroom and wait for the teacher to give them something.

Well, we were astonished of the answer because only (15) persons (30%) of the students do prepare for their lectures while the rest (35) students (70%) do not. An answer like this makes our investigation a little bit difficult. The learners are not able to prepare their lectures for they need an assistant or someone to guide and help them.

**Q5: When you have homework to do, do you like to work with your peers or do you prefer working alone?**

Option	Number	Percentage
a. Work with peers	28	56%
b. Work alone	22	44%

**Table 3.1.5:** Cooperation and independence of students in EFL learning.



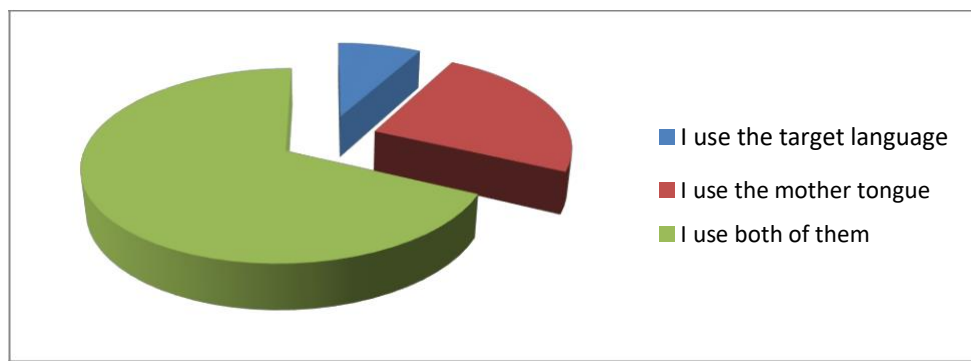
**Figure 3.1.5:** Cooperation and independence of students in EFL learning.

With this question, we tend to ask the students about the way they like to work in doing home works, with peers or alone. The result comes out with twenty eight (28) students (56%) who like to work with peers because they think that cooperation is a good way for learning whereas the other twenty two (22) students (44%) say that the best way to learn is to work alone to prove themselves. At this level of learning, it is good for learners, from time to time, to work to gather to exchange knowledge and cooperate with each other.

**Q6: After the end of the session, you are speaking with your peers outside the classroom. Do you speak using the target language, your mother tongue only or both of them?**

Option	Number	Percentage
a. Use the target language	04	8%
b. Use the mother tongue	12	24%
c. Use both of them	34	68%

**Table 3.1.6:** Students' use of language outside the classroom.



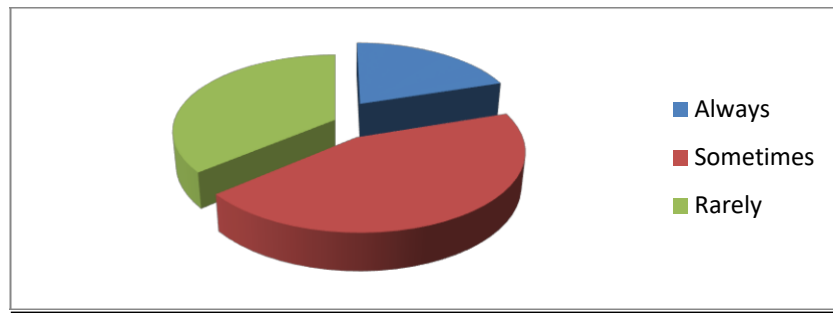
**Figure 3.1.6:** Students' use of language outside the classroom.

This question is determined to know whether the learners use the second language in their conversation with peers outside the classroom, their mother tongue, or both of them. Four (04) respondents (8%) use only the second language when they communicate with peers, twelve (12) persons (24%) use their mother tongue because they are not capable of using the second language yet and thirty four (34) others (68%) who mix the two languages together because they are still beginners and cannot use the English language alone.

**Q7: Inside your house, do you receive support from your family members?**

Option	Number	Percentage
a. Always	10	20%
b. Sometimes	22	44%
c. Rarely	18	36%

**Table3.1.7:** Students' reception of support from their families.



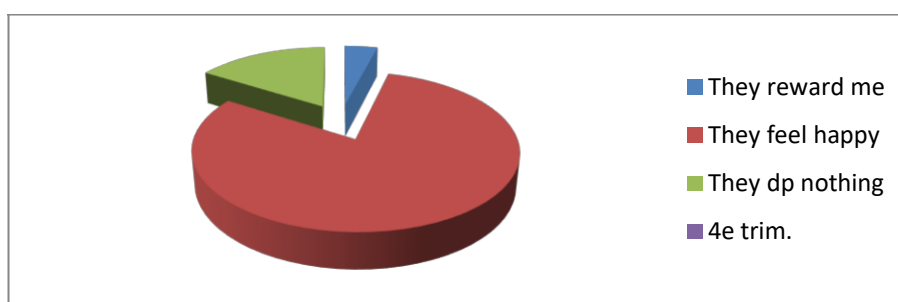
**Figure 3.1.7:** Students’ reception of support from their families.

Through this question, we attempt to guess whether the students receive support from their family members. Ten (10) students (20%) are highly motivated because their family members always encourage them while twenty two (22) students (44%) say that they sometimes receive support and encouragement from their families and (18) others (36%) say that hardly when they are supported by their families for several reasons like when their parents are not educated people or busy most of the time.

**Q8: When you get a good mark in exams, what is the reaction of your parents?**

Option	Number	Percentage
a. They reward me	2	4%
b. They feel happy	40	80%
c. They do nothing	8	16%

**Table 3.1.8:** Parents’ reaction upon their kids ‘success.



**Figure 3.1.8:** Parents’ reaction upon their kids ’success.

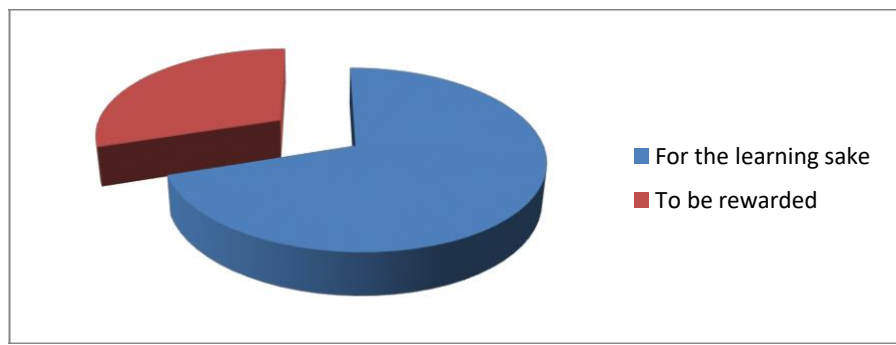
By asking such question, we try to find out what is the reaction of parents when their kids get good marks. Two (02) respondents (4%) get rewarded by their parents, forty (40) others (80%) say that their parents show happiness and pleasure when they get good marks. The rest of the students (08) which is (16%) claim that their parents do

nothing when they get good marks; they show no reaction as if they are not interested and this may affect the learners' performance in classroom because of the lack of motivation.

**Q09: Do you learn the English language for the learning sake or for being rewarded?**

Option	Number	Percentage
a. For the learning sake	35	70%
b. To be rewarded	15	30%

**Table 3.1.9:** The students' reasons behind learning the English language.

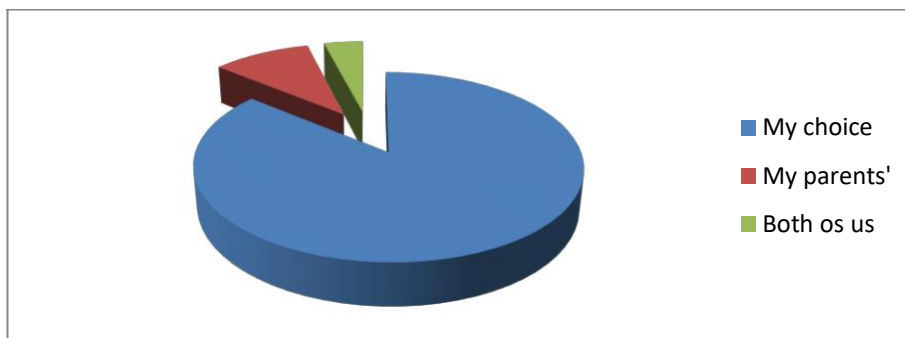


**Figure 3.1.9:** The students' reasons behind learning the English language.

This question is asked to test the learners' desire for learning foreign language and to see whether they learn it because they want to learn and gain knowledge or just because the rewards given by their parents. Thirty five (35) persons (70%) say that they learn for the learning sake whereas fifteen (15) students (30%) say that they learn just for being rewarded. For them, being rewarded is a good way to be pushed to learn but, in fact, presents are considered as an external motivation for them to learn but without the internal one, they cannot carry on. They need to have the will to study, gain knowledge, succeed and be educated persons. Gifts are not enough alone.

**Q10: Is it your choice to learn the English language, your parents' wish, or both**

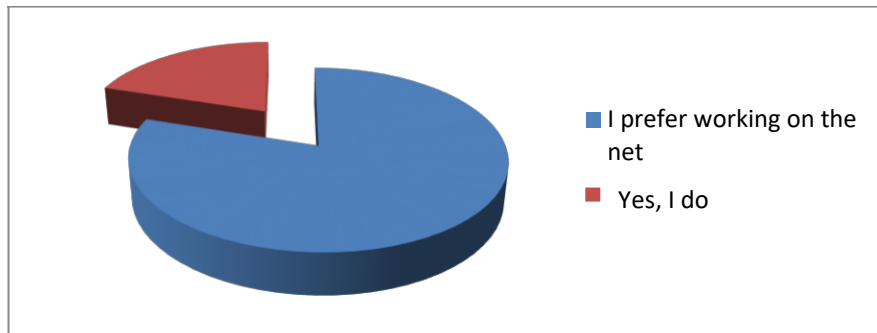
Option	Number	Percentage
a. My choice	43	86%
b. My parents'	5	10%
c. Both of us	2	4%

**of you?****Table 3.1.10:** The learners' decisions upon learning the English language.**Figure 3.1.10:** The learners' decisions upon learning the English language.

Through this question, we attempt to examine the capability of the learners of taking charge of their own learning and choosing what they see it is right for them and also making decisions concerning their choice of learning EF language. Forty three (43) persons (86%) say that learning EF language is their own choice without any interference from any one. On the other hand, five (05) subjects (10%) say that choosing the English language is their parents' wish .They think that parents know better than them concerning their future and the only way to choose is to let their parents choose for them. The rest of the students are two (02) (4%) who say that the choice they made about learning EF language is shared between them and their parents because they think that choosing something they both like will create a positive cooperation between them in addition to a lot of encouragement and motivation.

**Q 11: Do you use the library books or do you prefer working on the net?**

Option	Number	Percentage
a. Yes, I do.	10	20%
b. I prefer working on the net	40	80%

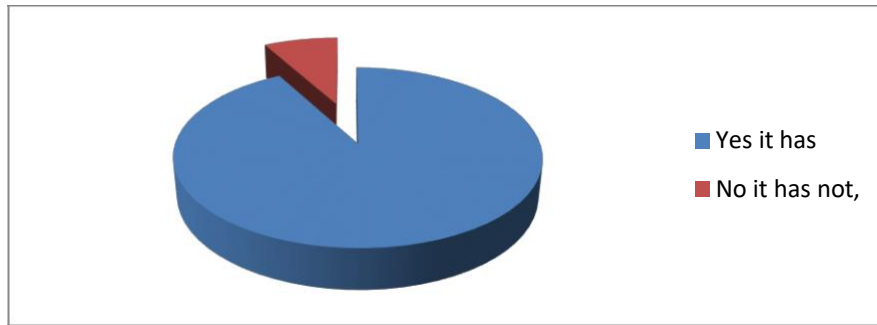
**Table 3.1.11:** The learners' choice between books and the net.**Figure 3.1.11:** The learners' choice between books and the net.

The informants are asked this question to have knowledge about whether they use the library books or prefer working on the net. Since we are in time of technology, there is a huge heed towards this modern technology. Ten (10) students (20%) say that they use the library books for they think that using and reading books is a good way to know, discover, read, and gain knowledge whereas (40) students (80%) prefer the net because they think is the easiest, cheapest, and fastest way to look for the information they want.

**Q 12: Do you think that technology, like the Internet, has a positive role in your learning inside and outside the classroom?**

Option	Number	Percentage
a. Yes, it has.	46	92%
b. No, it has not.	4	8%

**Table 3.1.12:** The role of technology in the students' learning.



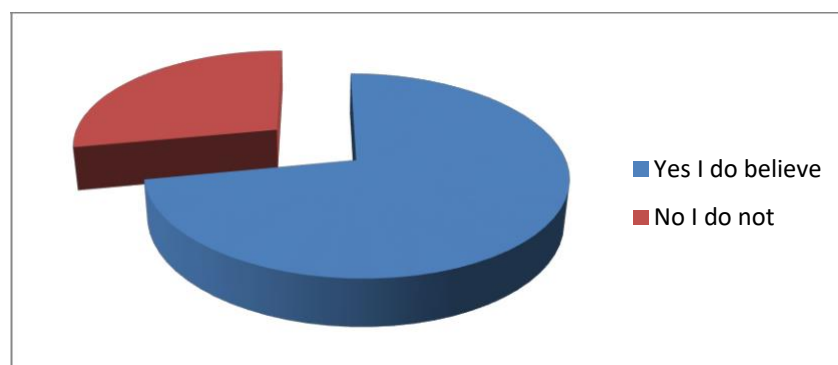
**Figure 3.1.12:** The role of technology in the students' learning.

We ask the students this question to have an idea about their opinion about the internet and whether they see it as a positive means with a positive impact on their learning inside and outside the classroom. Forty six (46) students (92%) claim that using the internet is a good way to learn and it helps them to make researches. They consider it as the best means which affect their learning positively. Four (04) respondents (8%) think that the internet has no role to play in their learning and books are more affective. Actually, technology like the internet helps the students get the information easily and quickly which makes them save more time.

**Q13: Do you believe that participation is a good way to improve yourself and your language?**

Option	Number	Percentage
a. Yes, I do believe.	36	72%
b. No ,I do not.	14	28%

**Table 3.1.13:** Students' belief about participation.

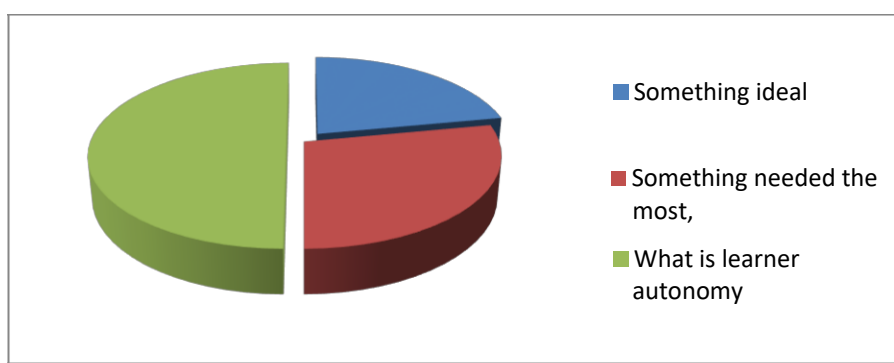


**Figure 3.1.13:** Students' belief about participation.

We aim, by asking this question, to have an idea about the students' beliefs about participation and whether they look at it as a good way to improve themselves and their language. (72%) of the students think positively by saying that through participation, they can improve themselves, levels, and language while (28%) believe the opposite. They say that participation cannot help them improve themselves and their language. There are some students like that, who choose writing instead of speaking and participating to improve their levels because they feel afraid of talking in front of others. But participation helps them get rid of fear, speak, share, and practice language speaking in addition to the encouragement they get by competing with peers inside the classroom.

**Q14: From your personal perspective, how do you see learner autonomy?**

Option	Number	Percentage
a. Something ideal.	11	22%
b. Something needed the most	14	28%
c. What is learner autonomy?	25	50%

**Table 3.1.14:** Students' view about autonomy.**Figure 3.1.14:** Students' view about autonomy.

The reason behind asking this question is to investigate the learners' view about autonomy and how they see it. Eleven (11) students (22%) say that they see autonomy as something ideal, perfect, and sometimes cannot be achieved whereas Fourteen (14) students (28%) answer by saying that autonomy is something needed the most and if a person is autonomous, he/ she can take responsible for his/ her own learning. Half of

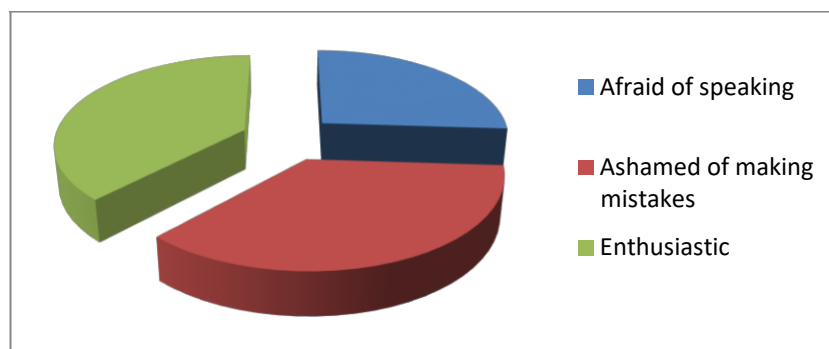
the general population (50%) has no idea about autonomy because when we asked the students about their view on autonomy, they reply with a question, what is autonomy?

This is a problem for students who want to be the future learners of EFL. They need to be active and start learning about autonomy and being autonomous because one day, they will be asked to do projects, researches, and then they will know the value of autonomy, independence, and responsibility.

**Q 15: When you are asked to present a specific topic in front of your mates, how do you feel?**

Option	Number	Percentage
a. Afraid of speaking.	13	26%
b. A shamed of making mistakes	18	36%
c. Enthusiastic	19	38%

**Table 3.1.15:** Students' feeling when presenting a topic in classroom.



**Figure 3.1.15:** Students' feeling when presenting a topic in classroom.

Through this question, we attempt to investigate on the students' feelings when they are presenting topics in front of their mates. Thirteen (13) students (26%) say that when presenting a topic, they are afraid of speaking a foreign language in front of their mates, maybe they suffer from some psychological problems and maybe they are not social people who talk freely with others. Moreover, there are students who are afraid of the number of persons who are listening to them. Eighteen (18) students (36%) say that they cannot present topics in front of their mates because they are ashamed of making mistakes. At this stage, for beginners, it is a normal situation where a student makes mistakes because they cannot learn without mistakes and no one is perfect. Yet,

the rest of the students, nineteen (19) persons (38%) say that they feel enthusiastic when speaking and presenting topics in front of their mates because they see this as an opportunity to prove themselves and refine their level and also benefit from their experiences and mistakes. It is good for them to do so because engagement helps them a lot in learning and especially in EFL learning.

### **3.3. Discussion of the findings**

#### **3.3.1. Discussion of the Students' Questionnaire**

Concerning the students' questionnaire, we have deduced many important points and each point reflects each answer. Most students are capable of doing project on their own. This is a good start for them which may help them take responsibility for their study and move step by step towards the independence and autonomy in EFL learning. They also use the English language in addition to their mother tongue to communicate with peers outside the classroom. Because they are still beginners in learning the target language so, it is suitable for them to use both of languages to cover the lack of vocabularies they suffer from in dealing with the target language. The majority of students receive support from their family members from time to time and this is not enough, because they need encouragement to continue their study with desire and strength for this will help them take charge for their own learning and be responsible for the decisions they make, and when they see happiness in their parents' faces when get good marks, they get encouraged, motivated and excited to do more for more success and joy.

It is unpleasant to realize that the majority of students cannot be responsible for their own learning without their teacher directions. In fact, students, at this level, need an assistance to help them carry on with their studies. They cannot be independent all at once; they need help to reach that level of responsibility and free decision making.

It is a good thing when we find that most Students like to work collectively because cooperation has an important role to play in the learners' learning process. It is the opposite of competition, which raises the learners' self-confidence and gives them opportunities to help each other and solve problems as well. Yet, students learn the target language for the learning sake, for gaining knowledge. That hunger for learning and

eagerness for knowing more will give them the chance to have good access in learning foreign language and open the doors of success to them for sure.

Autonomy and decision making are related to each other. Most students made their own decision and chose to study English. It is a nice thing to do for being responsible and do something they like. More than that, the use of library books is reduced because most students prefer technology, the net. The net helps the learners a lot to get the information they want easier and faster. They do not like reading books. It has a positive role in their learning which makes them in need of it most of the time.

Participation is a good way for learners to improve their level and language .They need to refine their language and benefit from their mistakes and get rid of fear and shyness and also engage in learning. This will give them the chance to learn well.

Half of the general population has no idea about autonomy which may create some difficulty in learning independently. The students' ignorance of autonomy will affect their learning and their performance inside and outside the classroom.

In addition to this, students suffer from fear and shame. Fear from speaking in front of people and shame of making mistakes. No one is perfect and these aspects are very dangerous on their learning progress and make them lose their confidence.

### 3.4 .Teachers' Questionnaire

## 3.4.1 .Data Collection and Analysis

***Section A: Teachers' Attitudes towards Learner Autonomy***

In this section, the participants are asked to answer by 'yes' or 'no'.

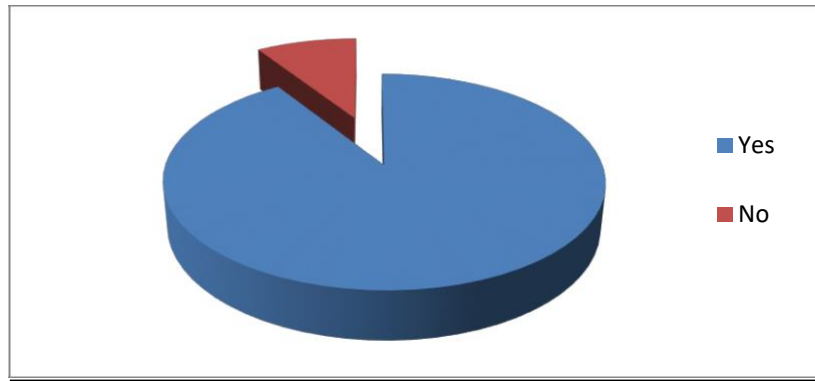
**Q1: Do you think that learner autonomy is important in EFL classes?**

The aim behind this question is to reveal the teachers' attitudes towards learner autonomy in English learning.

<b>Items</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	<b>20</b>	<b>90.90%</b>
No	<b>02</b>	<b>9.09%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.2.1:** Teachers' Attitudes towards the Importance of Learner Autonomy in EFL classroom.

The answers to this question indicate that the overwhelming majority of the informants have positive attitudes towards learner autonomy; 20 teachers tick in the box of "yes", while only 2 teachers answer by "no".



**Figure 3.2.1:** Teachers’ Attitudes towards the Importance of Learner Autonomy in EFL classroom.

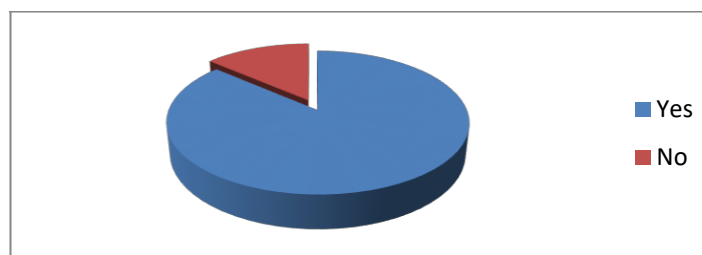
**Q2: Do you think that your learners have a sense of responsibility towards their learning?**

Through this question, we aim to know the participants’ views about their learners’ readiness to be responsible for their learning and to measure the degree of autonomy among them.

Items	Number	Percentage
Yes	3	13.63%
No	19	86.36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.2.2:** Teachers’ Perspectives towards their Learners’ Responsibility for Learning.

Interestingly, the results show that the great majority of teachers believe that their pupils are not ready at all to handle their learning process and be autonomous. Unfortunately, most teachers (19) respond by “No” to confirm that their learners have no sense of responsibility in learning; however, very few teachers (3) see that their pupils are ready to take charge of their learning.



**Figure3.2.2:**Teachers’ Perspectives towards Learners’ Responsibility for Learning.

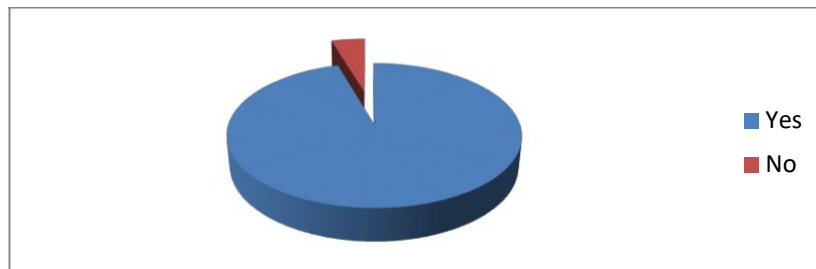
**Q3: Do you think that your students depend only on what you give them in the classroom to learn English?**

One of the main features of autonomous learner is being eager to look for more information by making extra researches outside the classroom in order to enrich his knowledge and enhance his autonomy.

Items	Number	Percentage
Yes	21	95.45%
No	01	4.55%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table3.2.3:** Teachers' Views about Learners' Reliance in Learning English

As it is exposed in Table 3.3, the teachers' answers to the above question show that the majority of them (21) confirm that their learners are satisfied with only what is given to them by the teacher and done in the classroom. However, only one teacher sees the opposite.



**Figure3.2.3:** Teachers' Views about Learners' Reliance in Learning English.

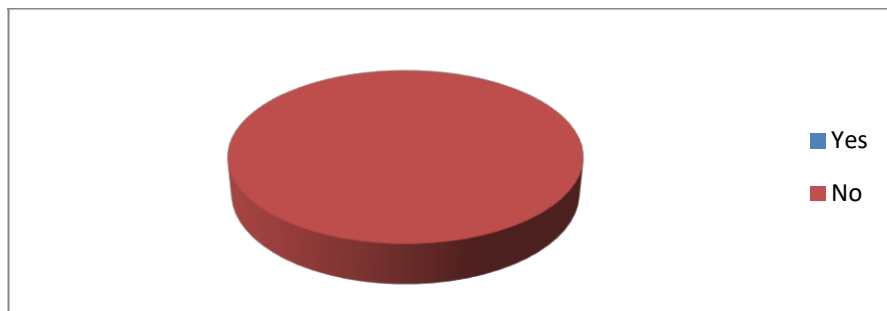
**Q 4: Do you give your learners the opportunity to direct their learning process?**

Being autonomous learner means the learner dominates while the learning process is taking place, and so this process becomes more learner-centered rather than teacher-centered. Through this question, teachers are asked whether they allow their learners to conduct the learning process.

Items	Number	Percentage
Yes	00	00%
No	22	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.2.4:** Teachers' Views about Learners' Conduct of the Learning Process.

Surprisingly, all the participants affirm that they do not give their learners a chance to be in charge of directing their learning process. This confirms that the learning process is still totally teacher-centered in our middle schools.



**Figure 3.2.4:** Teachers' Views about Learners' Conduct of the Learning Process.

**Section B: Teachers' Readiness to Enhance Autonomous Learning**

The second part of the teachers' questionnaire contains close-ended questions to which the participants are asked to respond by "Always", "Sometimes" or "Never". The objective from addressing this kind of questions is to see whether or not EFL teachers are involved in the new model of teaching and ready to foster their learners' autonomy.

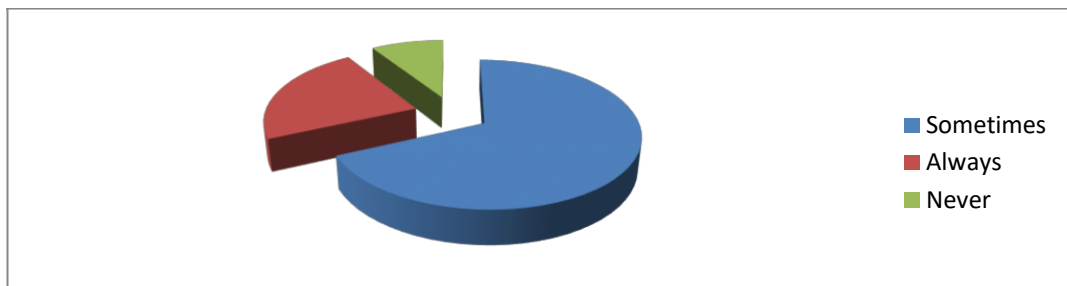
**Q1: Do you encourage your learners to take part in decision-making?**

In fact, the pupils' dependency on their teacher is a real obstacle to take decisions, and unfortunately, most of learners see their teacher as the only decision maker in the classroom. The purpose behind asking this question is to explore the extent to which teachers are ready to give their pupils the opportunity to take decisions and make resolutions about their learning.

Items	Number	Percentage
Always	05	22.72%
Sometimes	15	68.18%
Never	02	09.09%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.2.5:** Teachers' Encouragement to Learners to be Decision-makers

For this question, only 05 teachers affirm that they always give their learners a chance to make decisions related to their learning process. However, the majority of teachers (15) claim that they sometimes encourage their learners to be decision makers in order to make them feel more autonomous, whereas only two participants answer with "never".



**Figure 3.2.5:** Teachers' Encouragement to Learners to be Decision-makers.

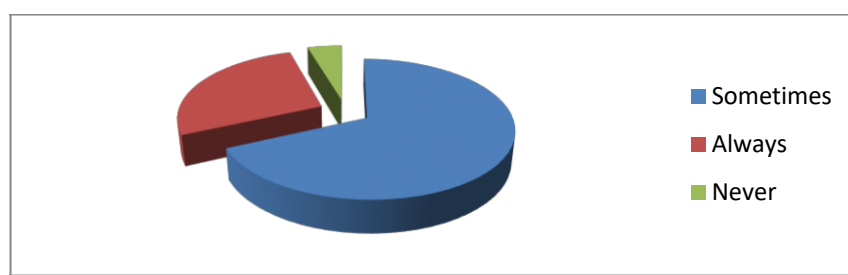
**Q2: Do you encourage your learners to work in pairs and within groups in order to enhance their autonomy?**

Working within groups and in a collaborative way gives pupils more opportunities to learn better and interact with each other. It is said that the pupil learns from his peers better and faster than from his teacher. The second question aims at checking whether teachers are interested in planning collaborative learning.

Items	Number	Percentage
Always	06	27.27%
Sometimes	15	68.18%
Never	01	4.55%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.2.6:** Teachers' Frequency of Encouraging Collaborative Learning.

The answers to this question show that most of teachers 68.18% are not really interested in collaborative learning , whereas only 27.27% affirm that they always encourage pair and group works, while only one teacher (4.55%) chooses the box of “never”.



**Figure3.2.6:** Teachers' Frequency of Encouraging Collaborative Learning.

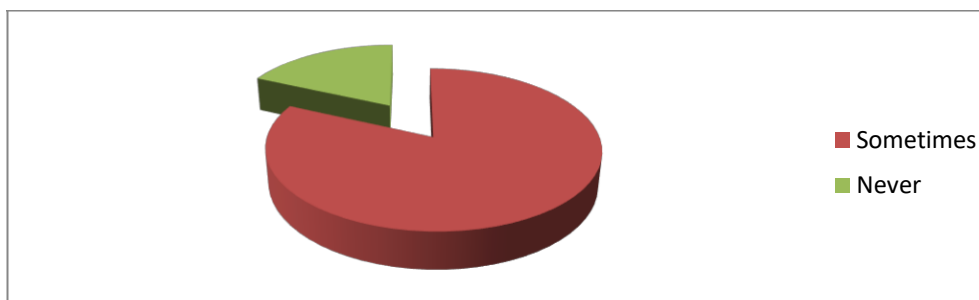
### **Q3: Do you use technology and audio-visual aids in teaching English?**

In the traditional teaching, learners used to be passive listeners and the teacher was the only autonomous body who knows acts and speaks in the classroom. Today, the use of technology and audio-visual aids in teaching languages helps a lot in shifting superiority towards learners. These aids benefit learners and help them develop a sense of self-reliance and independence. The main objective of this question is to determine the importance of technology for EFL teachers and to know if they really consider it as a tool for creating certain autonomy in learning.

Items	Number	Percentage
Always	00	00.00%
Sometimes	18	81.81%
Never	04	18.18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table3.2.7:** Teachers' Frequency of Using Technology in Teaching English.

Surprisingly, most of them (18 teachers) answer that they “sometimes” use visual-aids in teaching English. However, 4 teachers confirm that they “never” use these aids, and no one responds with “always”.



**Figure 3.2.7:** Teachers’ Frequency of Using Technology in Teaching English.

#### **Q4: Do you use the textbook as a tool to promote your learners’ autonomy?**

As previously stated in the second chapter, English textbooks in Algeria have been changed and designed many times and by many authors in order to design the convenient textbooks which suit the Algerian pupils’ level, needs and culture, and to help them to step towards autonomy. Hence, the researcher asks this question to know EFL teachers’ reliance on the textbook as a means to foster learner autonomy.

Items	Number	Percentage
Always	02	09.09%
Sometimes	09	40.90%
Never	11	50%
Total	22	100%

**Table 3.2.8:** Teachers’ Frequency of Using English Textbook to Promote LA.

The answers show that the textbooks do little to foster learner autonomy and that when they do; they offer limited opportunity for practice to students. That is why half of the informants (11) agree that they never focus on the textbook to foster their learners’ autonomy. However (09) teachers affirm that they sometimes use it, and only (02) teachers replay with “always”.



**Figure 3.2.8:** Teachers' Frequency of Using English Textbook to Promote LA.

### 3.5. Discussion of the findings

#### 3.5.1. Discussion of the Teachers' Questionnaire

From the analysis of the teachers' questionnaire, we can deduce that the notion of learner autonomy is still in its infancy in the Algerian educational context. This reality is clearly reflected in the teachers' answers in the current research. In fact, most of EFL teachers in Algeria are not familiar with the notion of learner autonomy. In addition, there is a lack of understanding about this concept, and a little belief that it is a supporting factor in learning and a necessary element for the learners' success.

However, the majority of the participants view the concept generally very positively, they agree that the idea of learner autonomy is very interesting and they are aware of its importance in EFL classrooms, but, at the same time, they confess that learner autonomy does not really exist in the Algerian schools in general and in the secondary ones in particular. Moreover, they confirm that their learners show no readiness to handle their learning process and they depend totally on what is given to them by the teacher; they get the habit of being spoon-fed from the primary school where they used to be active listeners, but passive learners.

After many educational reforms, the Algerian EFL classroom is still teacher centered and far away from learner autonomy. In fact, EFL teachers in Algeria have been responsible for both of the teaching and learning process for a long period of time, and they have been considered as the most dominant figure that is the only knowledge owner and decision-maker in the classroom.

Unfortunately, the great majority of teachers have no readiness to abandon the traditional mode of teaching which depends on the flow of information only from the

teacher to learners, and they do not accept the new roles they should perform in the classroom in order to enhance their learners' autonomy. Hence, introducing, for them, learner autonomy together with the shift from a teacher centered to a learner-centered approach and changing their roles in the classroom is not an easy task to be accepted and applied by the teachers.

In fact, we cannot expect EFL teachers in Algeria to foster pupils' autonomy if they do not know what autonomy is, because they had never been taught about it before. Most of the informants confirm that they had no knowledge or understanding about learner autonomy. Thus, teachers who aim at promoting their learners' autonomy should start by themselves (**Little**, 2002). In addition, some participants point out that even at university; this concept was just mentioned slightly in a theoretical way. Hence, it is important to note that teachers hold a wide range of interpretations and various definitions about the term of learner autonomy. Most of them believe that this term refers to learners' total responsibility for their own learning; whereas others see that the notion of learner autonomy is synonymous with learner-centered classroom. However, being responsible does not mean the total exclusion of teachers' contribution as guides and managers leading to an effective learning. This element was missing from all the participants' definitions of learner autonomy. In other words, learners are able to work independently, but in negotiation and with support from the teacher who is positioned as a facilitator whose role is to negotiate and facilitate the teaching/learning process to enable his learners to be responsible for their own learning.

Consequently, EFL teachers' knowledge about learner autonomy is one of the main constraints to fostering learner autonomy. As previously mentioned, they did not receive an effective training in their pre-service career, and even the in service training programs do not provide them with any pedagogical strategies or techniques which help pupils step towards learner autonomy. Thus, they suggest the best solution for their current situation is "teacher training". In fact, their answers show that they are poorly trained on how to enhance autonomous learning in their classrooms, especially with regards to teaching large classes.

To sum up, we can say that autonomy is a good idea in theory, but it is an idealistic goal of language teaching in practice. Thus, promoting learner autonomy is seen as a burden which is so much heavier on the EFL teachers in Algeria.

### **3.6. Recommendations**

Based on the results of this research, here are some recommendations proposed to students of English language in secondary schools , in order to help them take responsibility for their learning.

- The good preparation for the coming lectures is required for better understanding and participation.
- Before starting to speak English, students should start thinking in English first to help them get the picture about the topic they tackle.
- Before being autonomous, students should know first what is autonomy and how they can be as such.
- Students should engage in the classroom activities to learn more, act more, and communicate more.
- Psychological stress like fear and shyness are not welcomed. Students need to get rid of them by involving in the classroom activities for better performance.
- Students should not base in their studies only on the net, books are beneficial and can give them more knowledge. Also, they need to raise the habit of reading and discovering because they will affect their learning much better.
- The role of the teacher has to appear clearly because autonomy does not mean the absent of the teacher but the guidance of the teacher.
- Secondary schools should provide their learners' teachers with autonomy-oriented education in terms of theories and practice, which guarantee that teacher apply them in their schools.
- In service teachers should be exposed to professional development programs such as courses, workshops, or seminars on learner autonomy to equip them with the best strategies of fostering autonomy.

-The Ministry of Education should provide comprehensive and practical framework of how the concept of learner autonomy should be manifested in language classrooms.

-The development of autonomous learning needs collaborative work and great efforts from all the parties involved in the educational context including administrations, schools, teachers and learners.

### **3.7. Suggestions for Further Research**

As stated before, our population is represented in the secondary school of Algiers.

Our samples are the teachers and learners of Kouidri secondary school and we have chosen only 50 learners and 22 teachers from them. The results we found are between positive and negative and do not represent all that we wanted from the start. So far, these results cannot be generalized on all the learners and teachers of Kouidri School.

Also, we suggest for other researchers to choose a larger population than we have used to discover whether the results we obtained reflect both learners and teachers attitude in Kouidri secondary school

### **3.8. Conclusion**

As a matter of fact, it is hard to establish learner autonomy in our secondary schools since both teachers and learners alike are poorly prepared for the move to such kind of autonomy. Hence, the current chapter focuses on the importance of preparing EFL teachers and learners for autonomy through showing them how to promote it and make it a concrete reality in the Algerian secondary schools. In fact, both of teachers and learners need a sort of training towards autonomy; such training should be made before the changes have been occurred in the teaching of English in Algeria.

Teacher training programs should provide teachers with adequate training to foster their autonomy as well as that of their learners. As for learners, learner training may be the solution of their overreliance on the teacher, and prepare them for taking much more responsibility in the classroom by raising their awareness of the importance of autonomy in their learning. Teachers can do this through creating basic motivational

conditions, encouraging homework assignments and project works and establishing a persuasive communication to alter learners' beliefs and attitudes.

It is therefore important for Algerian EFL teachers to recognize that their role is not to transmit factual knowledge to the heads of their learners; rather they are required to empower their learners by assisting them acquire the knowledge, skills, and strategies they need to become autonomous learners.

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