

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA  
MINISTRY OF HIGER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH  
Abd Elhafid Boussouf University Centre - Mila



*Institute of Literature and Languages  
Department of Foreign Languages  
Branch: English*

**Becoming an Autonomous Learner: The Strategies Developed by  
Master One EFL Students When Studying Independently**

The Case of Master 1 Students at Mila University Centre

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirement of the Master Degree in  
**Didactics of Foreign Languages**

**Presented by:**

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Chairwoman: Dr. Fouzia BENNACER

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Examiner : Dr. Mahha LOUNIS

**Academic year:2022-2023**

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**Dedication I**

I dedicate this work to...

Me, myself, and I

**Besma**

## **Dedication II**

I dedicate this work to

To my family, whose unwavering love and support have been the bedrock of my journey,

To my advisor, whose guidance, expertise, and mentorship have shaped my academic pursuits and pushed me to new heights of knowledge and discovery,

To my friends, whose encouragement and camaraderie have provided moments of respite and joy during challenging times,

To the countless individuals who participated in this study, generously sharing their insights and experiences, without whom this research would not have been possible,

To future generations of scholars and researchers, may this work contribute to the collective knowledge and inspire new avenues of exploration,

And finally, to myself, for the perseverance, determination, and sacrifices made along the way. This dissertation is a testament to the power of passion and the belief that anything is attainable with dedication and hard work,

May this humble contribution make a small but meaningful impact in the field and serve as a reminder that knowledge knows no bounds,

This work is dedicated to all those who have believed in me and supported me throughout this academic endeavour.

Thank you

**Hadir**

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### **Abstract**

The current study explores the learning strategies created by autonomous learners whilst studying independently and whether they succeeded in becoming autonomous learners. A mixed research method has been employed, where a questionnaire and an interview were conducted with Master One students of English at Mila University Centre. The findings revealed that the students have developed learner autonomy and that most of them take charge of their learning through various strategies acquired inside and outside of the classroom. Despite all the challenges they confronted, their autonomy was progressively built through years of academic education and the support of their teachers, who encouraged them to become autonomous. Therefore, this study accentuates the need for students to acquire learning strategies to become self-dependent and the need for the educational system to encourage learners to become masters of their learning.

**Keywords:** Learner autonomy, Autonomous learning strategies, EFL classroom, Strategy development, Language learning.

### **List of Abbreviations and Symbols**

**%:** percentage.

**CARPEL:** Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues.

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language.

**LLS:** Language Learning Strategies.

**LS:** Learning Strategies.

**M1:** Master One.

**P:** Page.

**PDF:** Portable Document Format.

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## **General Introduction**

### **1. Background of the Study**

Learner autonomy has been a prominent notion in foreign language teaching in recent decades, particularly concerning learning skills. It takes as its starting point the idea that students are capable of self-direction and can develop an independent, proactive approach to their studies. In the field of higher education, students find themselves struggling with the shift from predominantly teacher-led classes to more individualised and learner-centred learning, whereupon they are expected to be dependent on themselves instead of relying on their teachers and receiving knowledge passively. As the case may be, learners find themselves in a position where they have to improvise, develop their abilities, and discover their own learning strategies to achieve a successful academic experience and gradually become masters of their own learning.

### **2. Statement of the Problem**

The shift from teacher-based classrooms to student-based learning has been accelerated by the concept of learner autonomy, which puts students in charge of their own learning while reducing the role of the teacher to that of a facilitator. However, many university students seem to largely depend on their teachers in their learning and consider them the only source of information, without making an effort in exchange, until they reach the level of Master One, where they are to be researchers and must thoroughly depend on themselves in making their own research and seek information using their own techniques and strategies that should be developed as mechanisms for a successful academic education. Howbeit, they wrestle with the shift in education and struggle to develop the appropriate strategies to ease their learning process.

### **3. Aims of the Study**

This study explores the strategies developed by autonomous learners and the

challenges in face of their autonomy development in an attempt to discover whether they have succeeded in becoming autonomous learners.

#### **4. Research Questions**

Three main questions guided the study:

1. Did the students at the department of English at Mila University Centre develop learner autonomy?
2. What are the strategies that the learners have developed to study independently?
3. What are the challenges that students face when working autonomously?

#### **5. Research Assumptions**

Based on the afore-stated questions, it is assumed that:

1. Students at the university centre in Mila have developed learner autonomy.
2. Learners developed autonomous learning strategies to study independently.
3. Students faced personal, educational, and cultural challenges when working autonomously.

#### **6. Research Methodology**

The research was carried out at the Abdelhafid Boussouf University Centre in Mila, with Master One EFL students as the population. A mixed-method research approach has been adopted, where both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered to fulfil the aims of the study. Master One Students were interviewed, and a questionnaire was distributed at random to a representative sample of the specified population. Both research tools examined students' various perspectives on learner autonomy and their developed learning strategies, as well as the challenges they face in becoming autonomous.

#### **7. Structure of the Study**

The research consists of two main chapters. The first chapter is dedicated to the theoretical part which provides a review of learner's autonomy and language learning

strategies; each topic is discussed in a separate section. While the second chapter makes the practical part which forms the core of the work. It tests the assumptions mentioned before via a questionnaire and an interview answered by Master One EFL learners.

## **Chapter One: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

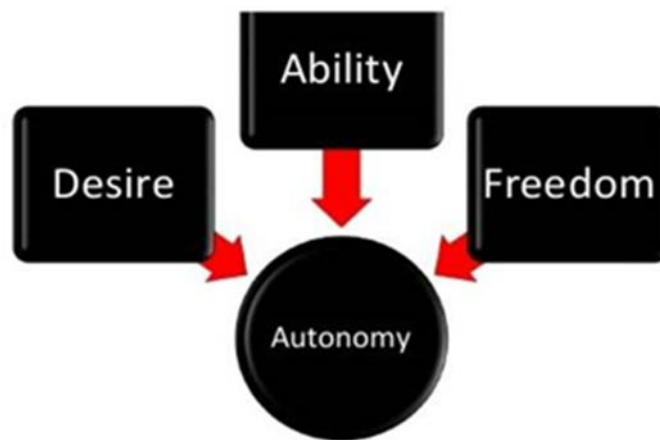
There has been remarkable attention and discussion about the notion of learner autonomy in the realm of language teaching and learning. That mirrors changes in how knowledge is perceived and taught, as well as a movement towards more personalised and learner-centred approaches in Algerian higher education. However, following updated curricula, university students are expected to display and improve their ability to engage in self-directed learning, which led to their acquisition of autonomous learning strategies to assist them in their higher education, although they struggle with many challenges that stand as stumbling blocks in their way of autonomy. Therefore, we must explain the relationship between learner autonomy and learning strategies by providing detailed information about the notions and taking into consideration the main challenges that students deal with in their independent learning quest.

### **Section One: Learner Autonomy**

#### **1.1.1. *Definition of Autonomy***

The concept of autonomy encompasses a wide range of meanings, including taking ownership of one's learning and having complete control over one's learning process. Various scholars have discussed autonomy in different ways. According to Littlewood (1996), an autonomous person is one who "has an independent capacity to make and carry out the choices that govern his or her actions" (p. 428). Buchanan & Brock (1989) added that it is also the ability to decide for oneself what to do and how to do it. In the following figure, autonomy is described as the capacity to control your own learning and describes a person's ability to self-govern.



**Figure 1:***Autonomous Learning Model (Orientation)*

The concept of autonomy in language learning is often attributed to its Western origins in literature. One of the early initiatives dedicated to fostering autonomy in language learning was the Council of Europe's Modern Language Project, which was established by the University of Nancy in France during the 1970s. The notion of autonomy was rooted in social endeavours aimed at enhancing the overall "quality of life" by fostering individuals' capacity to "assume greater responsibility in managing societal affairs" (Holec, 1980, p. 2). Additionally, autonomy is not a teaching or learning method but rather a characteristic of the learner's approach to language learning. An autonomous learner can engage in classroom-based learning as well as pursue self-directed learning methods (Benson, 2001).

According to Benson (2007), autonomous learners possess the capability to assume responsibility for their learning. Moreover, autonomy can be observed through the independent and proactive engagement of learners in their learning process, as stated by Dickinson (1995). Autonomous learners demonstrate the ability to go beyond the boundaries between learning and everyday life, as noted by Little (1995). This means they can apply what they have learned within the confines of teacher-led educational environments to broader real-life contexts (Little, 1991). The theoretical perspectives mentioned above serve

as the fundamental basis for adopting the framework of learner autonomy in the present study. After conducting an extensive review of the literature on the concept of autonomy, Sinclair (1997) provided a concise summary of its various dimensions. These are summarised as follows:

1. Autonomy encompasses the ability and willingness of a learner to assume responsibility for making decisions about their learning.

2. The capacity and willingness to take such responsibility are not necessarily inherent.

3. Autonomy exists in varying degrees.

4. These degrees of autonomy are subject to change and can vary.

5. Developing autonomy necessitates a conscious awareness of the learning process, which involves deliberate reflection and decision-making.

6. The teacher plays a role in supporting the development of the necessary skills and fostering positive attitudes towards learner autonomy.

7. Autonomy can manifest both within and outside the traditional classroom setting.

8. Autonomy encompasses both individual and social aspects.

9. Promoting learner autonomy involves addressing both psychological and political dimensions.

10. Different cultures have diverse interpretations of autonomy.

11. The promotion of learner autonomy necessitates adapting approaches to suit different teaching and learning contexts. (pp. 12-13).

In essence, "autonomy" refers to the freedom to chart one's course and make decisions based on one's values and beliefs.

### ***1.1.2. Definition of Learner Autonomy***

Over the past few decades, learner autonomy has been the subject of extensive discussions within the field of language education. However, the literature reveals that there are diverse interpretations of this concept based on individuals, contexts, and implementations. Additionally, alternative terms such as self-regulation, open-learning, and self-management are used to refer to the same fundamental idea. In North American adult education, for instance, the term self-directed learning encompasses a broad area of study relating to non-institutionalised learning. Other terms associated with self-directed learning include independent study, self-instruction, self-education, and autonomous learning (Knowles, 1975).

The core notion of learner autonomy depends on the learners' capacity. One of the pioneers who addressed the idea of learner autonomy in education was (Holec, 1980). He began by defining learner autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s learning”(p. 3) which was then clarified as being in charge of making decisions about one's education, management, and structure of learning. He also explained that this skill is not inborn but must be developed either naturally (subconsciously) or consciously through rigorous instruction. Although Holec’s concept continues to be the most frequently used term in the area, many academics disagree with him and claim that his explanation of learner autonomy ignores important factors.

An autonomous learner can also be defined as someone responsible for their education, sets goals for it, and works hard to achieve them (Little, 1991). It is also a person who has acquired the capacity to learn independently, without needing constant instruction from a teacher or tutor (Benson, 2011).

Little (1991) expanded on Holec’s notion to offer a brand-new, important dimension relevant to psychology. In terms of the learner’s psychological relationship to the process,

learner autonomy is an issue of the learner's capacity for critical reflection, independent judgement, and action.

Within the literature, the concepts of learner autonomy and self-directed learning are frequently discussed with one another. While they are interconnected, they are also employed in contrasting ways. According to Holec (1980), learner autonomy refers to the learner's capacity, whereas self-directed learning pertains to the specific approach in which the learner assumes control over the learning process. Dickinson (1987) presents an alternative perspective by reversing the terms, suggesting that autonomy is characterised by the learner's complete responsibility for making decisions related to their learning and putting those decisions into action.

Learner autonomy promotes critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills, which can be vital for achievement in the 21st century. One instance of the political implications of learner autonomy may be discovered in the Finnish schooling system. Finland has a robust lifestyle of selling learner autonomy, and this method has been credited with contributing to the country's excessive ranges of instructional achievement (Sahlberg, 2011). In Finland, college students are recommended to take responsibility for their studying, and teachers act as facilitators instead of dictators of the studying process. Dickinson (1995) points out that the learner has the opportunity to choose different learning approaches both in a classroom environment where the teacher directs the learning process and in a self-directed setting. Overall, the idea of learner autonomy highlights the significance of empowering college students and giving them the liberty to take possession of their studies.

### ***1.1.3. Historical Development of Autonomy and Autonomous Learners***

The autonomous learner has been a subject of educational research interest for decades. The historical development of autonomous learners can be traced back to the early 20th century when progressive educational movements began prioritising the learner's role in

the educational process (Dewey, 2018). The history of autonomous language learning traces back approximately four decades and is believed to have begun with the efforts undertaken at the Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues (CRAPEL) in France during the 1970s. The establishment of CRAPEL was a result of the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project. Following the passing of the original leader, Yves Châlon and Henri Holec assumed leadership of the CRAPEL institute and continues to be a prominent figure in the field of autonomous language learning today (Benson, 2011). Furthermore, the inception of autonomous language learning originated and is attributed to the 1970s, marked by Henry Holec's pioneering efforts in collaborating with adult learners. In the 1960s and 1970s, educational researchers like Tough (1967) focused on adults who had learned without the assistance of a teacher or a formal course of study. He discovered that they were highly self-directed and had developed a variety of strategies for self-learning. An influential study, conducted by Knowles (1975), suggested that adult learners are more motivated to learn when they control the learning process and perceive the relevance of what they learn.

During the 1980s, theorists like Jean Paul Martin Holec, David Little, Phil Benson, Anita Wenden, and Philip Candy continued to explore the concept of the autonomous learner. As stated by Benson (2011, p. 14) in the late 1980s, the term "autonomous language learning" encountered a degree of uncertainty regarding its identity, as it was frequently linked with independent learning. In light of this context, for instance, Little commenced his book titled 'Learner Autonomy, Definitions, issues and problems' by initially elucidating what autonomy does not entail.

At the onset of the 1990s, Little observed that autonomy had become the latest "buzz word" in language learning, and this observation remains relevant today. Benson (2007) further highlights the continuous significance of autonomy, noting that the volume of publications in the 21st century has already surpassed the cumulative number of publications

from the preceding 25 years. Ushioda (2011) has made significant contributions to the field of autonomous language learning, particularly with extensive writings focused on motivation. In addition to Benson, Little, and Dam, Ushioda's work (2011) stands out as a valuable resource in this area. Farrel and Jacobs (2010) emphasise the significance of autonomy as a crucial component of effective language teaching. They highlight how autonomy has emerged as one of the primary objectives in the realm of foreign language instruction. Moreover, the scope of autonomous language learning has expanded beyond Western contexts to encompass regions such as Asia and Africa. Notably, Kuchah and Smith (2011) shed light on the African context, while Nakata (2011) provides insights into the Japanese context.

The 1990s marked a crucial period for the development of autonomous language learning, largely due to the publication of Dam's work in a Danish school setting. This publication played a vital role in shifting the focus of autonomous language learning from predominantly adult learners to the realm of school education. Recognizing the necessity of engaging unmotivated learners, Dam dedicated efforts towards devising autonomous learning methods, which yielded remarkably successful outcomes.

#### **1.1.4. *Challenges Associated with Learner Autonomy***

Learners enrolled in full-time education differ from adults. It is known that learners have interests, not necessarily because they want to, and their learning ends not when they have achieved their learning targets but according to a timetable usually prescribed by their date of birth.

Autonomous learners can face several challenges in searching, citing, and referencing when writing dissertations, for example. They may lack sufficient knowledge and understanding of citation and referencing guidelines. This can lead to incorrect formatting. Time restrictions may also be a significant barrier because most independent learners are

typically juggling their daily duties, and finding the time to study and reference can be difficult. However, students may not have enough time to pursue their learning objectives, particularly if they have other responsibilities such as work or family (Boud et al., 1985). Putting learner autonomy into practise presents many challenges.

Self-motivation and self-regulation are required for learner autonomy, which some students may lack. Thus, autonomous learners must rely on their internal drive to stay motivated and engaged in the task that they do, for example, when writing a dissertation. However, not all students exhibit strong self-motivation and self-regulation skills. Certain students may encounter difficulties sustaining motivation or effectively managing their learning behaviours. Furthermore, challenges in self-regulation can impede learners' capacity to plan their learning, track their progress, and adapt as needed. As a result, their autonomy may be compromised as they heavily depend on external guidance and support, often feeling unsure or overwhelmed when confronted with independent learning tasks.

Learner autonomy frequently entails using and learning a language on one's own, which can be challenging for students with limited proficiency in the target language (Little, 2007). The lack of language skills in learners is a key challenge that needs to be addressed to support language-learning goals. Students with limited language proficiency may face problems to accurately self-assess their language abilities. Without a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, they may find it difficult to establish suitable goals, select appropriate learning resources, and evaluate their progress effectively. As a result, their ability to take ownership of their learning and make informed decisions regarding their language learning journey can be hindered.

Cultural differences may also be considered a challenge for autonomous learners. Nevertheless, different cultural perspectives on education and learning may influence how students view and value learner autonomy (Benson & Voller, 1997). Individual attitudes and

behaviours towards autonomous learning can be significantly influenced by cultural differences. Learner autonomy is shaped by cultural elements, including beliefs, values, and learning approaches. Consequently, when learners from diverse cultural backgrounds partake in autonomous learning, they may face obstacles stemming from these cultural differences.

#### ***1.1.5. The Relationship between Autonomy and Learning Strategies***

Learners with a high level of autonomy use more effective learning strategies, so autonomy and learning strategies are closely related. Although numerous research studies have focused on language learning strategies and learner autonomy, the majority of these studies have examined these topics independently. For instance, Alfian (2021) and Gani et al. (2018) investigated them separately, while Bećirović et al. (2021) and Yusnimar (2019) explored their relationship with other variables. There is a lack of research examining the correlation between learner autonomy and language learning strategies. However, a few studies have aimed to investigate this relationship, and some of them are outlined below.

In a study conducted by Chen and Pan (2015), 130 ninth-grade students from a junior high school in central Taiwan were examined to identify their preferred language learning strategies, their level of English learning autonomy, and the association between English learning autonomy and language learning strategies. The results indicated that the participants possessed a moderate level of English learning autonomy and exhibited infrequent utilisation of language learning strategies. Among the strategies, memory strategies were the most commonly used, while affective strategies were the least utilised. Furthermore, a correlation was observed between learners' levels of learning autonomy and their usage of language learning strategies.

Samaie et al. (2015) conducted a study to investigate the level of autonomy and gender differences in language learning strategies among 150 Iranian university EFL students from three different universities. The research explored the relationship between autonomy



and the use of learning strategies. The data was collected using the Learner Autonomy questionnaire (Spratt et al., 2002) and the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Oxford, 1990). The findings indicated that the students possessed autonomy in language learning and had a belief in their ability to take responsibility for their learning. A statistically significant difference was observed between male and female students in terms of their use of learning strategies, with female students demonstrating higher usage. Furthermore, the results revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between students' autonomy and their utilisation of language learning strategies.

Although the aforementioned studies were conducted in different contexts, they yielded similar results, indicating a positive relationship between the use of language learning strategies and learner autonomy, it is important to acknowledge that these studies represent only a limited number of investigations. Given the diverse range of EFL contexts worldwide and the significance of language learning strategies and learner autonomy in language acquisition, there is a need for further research to validate and expand upon these findings. Thus, the present study aims to contribute to filling this gap by providing a deeper understanding of Indonesian students' utilisation of language learning strategies and their levels of learner autonomy, as well as examining the connection between the two. The anticipated results of this research endeavour are expected to validate and supplement the findings from previous studies while offering practical recommendations to teachers in the Algerian context.

## Section Two: Language Learning Strategies

### 1.2.1. Terminology

There have been different definitions of strategy, where different researchers use various terms and concepts. Early definitions described language learning strategies (LLS) as techniques that help the learner acquire knowledge in language learning (Rubin, 1975). Subsequently, the term strategy traces its roots back to the Greek word "strategos" which means generalship; stratos (meaning army) and agos (meaning to lead). The word came into use in the English language in the early 1800s and was derived from another English word, "Stratagem" which has been in use since the late 15th century. The following figure depicts the origin of the word strategy and the alterations that occurred in its spelling.

**Figure 2**

*The origin of the word "strategy" (cited from Oxford Languages, 2020)*



The spelling of the term altered as it went from Greek to French to English, but the fundamental meaning remained the same. A strategy is a set of activities that work together to achieve a specific goal. That destination is determined by a set of choices that distinguish the organisation from its competitors, aiming to maximise its strengths and minimise the strengths of the competitors.

### 1.2.2. Definition of Language Learning Strategies

In language learning, Rubin (1987) explained that strategies are actions or routines that learners select to make it simple to get information, store, and use it in the future. In his

definition, Cohen (1998) described LLS as "processes that a learner chooses to enhance learning a language through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about that language" (p. 4). Cohen's definition represents the primary purposes for using a strategy; however, it failed to include that strategies are conscious actions and behaviours and not only processes. According to Weinstein and Mayer (1986), learning strategies are "behaviours and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning and that are intended to influence the learner's encoding process" (p. 315). Further, a learning strategy is also known as a "cognitive strategy," according to Rigney (1978), and it is used as "operations and procedures that students may use to acquire, retain, and retrieve different kinds of knowledge and performance" (p. 165). Hence, it is a decision made by the learner to pursue a learning objective. Correspondingly, Cohen (1998) contends that "the element of consciousness is what distinguishes strategies from these processes that are not strategic," (p. 4) and he goes on to explain that strategic learners must be somewhat cognizant of the strategies they apply. Additionally, according to Nisbet and Shucksmith (1986), strategies are always deliberate and goal-driven. This viewpoint confirms Cohen's perceptions. Nevertheless, Nisbet and Shucksmith (1986) argue that strategies are not always undertaken at a conscious or purposeful level. That is, strategies can be utilised subconsciously as a result of mechanical processes that learners undertake without realising; mental processes that occur without learners being aware of the techniques used, such as constructing mental pictures or linking new knowledge to existing information.

Despite the numerous definitions of strategies offered by experts in the area, there is conflict and a lack of concurrence over the term, which has caused experts to claim that the definition is ambiguous. The wide semantic range of terms used to describe strategies, such as plans (McDonough, 1995; Oxford, 1990), operations and routines (Rubin, 1987), steps, processes, actions, or tactics (Oxford, 1990), could be the cause of this ambiguity.

Another point of contention when it comes to learning strategies is whether the approach is observable or not. "Learning strategies are for the most part unobservable, though some may be associated with observable behaviours," writes (Chamot, 2004, p. 15). Cohen's concept is consistent with Weinstein and Mayer's (1986) contention that learning strategies include both actions and ideas. LLS are considered observable when they operate as actions and unobservable when they work as mental processes. However, whether observable or not, whether a behaviour or a thought, the level of consciousness is what makes a learning strategy useful, because strategies are goal and purpose-oriented.

Language learning strategies, according to Chamot (1987), are "techniques, approaches, or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information" (p. 71). She indicated that certain language acquisition processes are observable, while others are not. Language learning strategies, according to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), are "the special thoughts or behaviours of processing information that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (p. 1). They discovered that while strategies might be adopted deliberately, they can also become habitual and mechanical with practice.

Reading over the definitions offered by learning strategy researchers, most definitions agree that a strategy is a deliberate, planned, and goal-oriented activity or behaviour. Then, it would be appropriate to propose that learning strategies are individual mental or physical activities or behaviours that are performed consciously and intentionally to pursue a goal to learn, retain, or comprehend either new information or to retrieve, recall, practise, or use old information. Accordingly, due to the level of consciousness and purpose involved in the action or behaviour, choosing to sit in the front row, arriving early, taking notes, remaining silent to listen, creating mental images, or even deciding to use a pen or a pencil may perfectly fit into the description of a strategy. For example, the learning approach of using a

pencil because it is simpler to erase when something is incorrect, might be used to have the correct information. It is vital to highlight that LS are employed in any learning setting; learners use the many and diverse LS in their strategy repertoire to better handle, manage, or utilise not just new but also familiar material.

### ***1.2.3. Strategy Repertoire Development***

Prior learning experiences are widely recognised as offering learners strategies that they store in their repertoire for subsequent usage. Yet, research has not shown where these strategies originate nor how learners learned and stored them in their repertoire. According to Riding and Rayner (2013), learners create strategies in response to the demands of difficult material or the environment that are typically incompatible with their cognitive style. The strategy repertoire of adult language learners has been moulded by their prior learning experiences. Learners can determine whether or not the strategy was successful based on the learning outcome. The strategies are then saved and employed in subsequent learning situations. This process can be repeated continuously by the learners, and eventually, some will become fixed, discarded, or adapted.

Strategies can be obtained from a variety of sources. Direct instruction, for example, can come from more experienced individuals such as parents, teachers, and peers. Someone who gives a strategy for completing a task is (or was) a user of the strategy, potentially with positive outcomes

Teachers teach a large number of strategies in the early stages of education, either directly or indirectly through learning activities. They assign tasks to students, explain how a problem should be solved, and outline the stages of a strategy a student should follow to get high results, and they expect students to fulfil their assignments. Teachers can teach strategies explicitly even if they do not use a specific strategy education technique. For example, when

teachers explain how to learn conjugation or how to recall verbs in different tenses, they are teaching students strategies that will help them deal with similar problems in the future.

In addition to direct instruction, learners acquire strategies indirectly from their classmates as well as the teacher through the process of observation. Learners observe or listen to approaches to learning processes that assist their classmates in learning; they attempt to borrow or discard such strategies. When learners are obliged to accomplish tasks, they go through procedures to complete the work or achieve their goals. The learner observes and evaluates these processes, and via trial and error, learners select the strategies that are more helpful, efficient, or favourable for their specific peculiarities.

According to Entwistle (1988), senior learners may determine which strategies are better suited to the needs of specific tasks. Coertjens et al. (2013) performed longitudinal research with 245 learners on the evolution of learning strategies in higher education. They discovered that learners in the longitudinal group who persisted with their learning progressed from undirected and surface-oriented learning to high-quality learning and self-regulation strategies over time. Strategies stored in the learners' repertoire do not function in isolation; Oxford (2011) noted that strategies work in "chains," while Macaro and Wingate (2004) stated that strategies work in "clusters," such as listening to music in the target language. This strategy entails a sequence of tasks, techniques, and behaviours that a learner must carry out to reap the benefits of the strategy, for example, paying attention, searching for unfamiliar words, selecting vocabulary to search for, inferring meaning from context, repeating after listening, and being tolerant or patient to complete a task. Furthermore, when strategies are viewed as a series of behaviours, they change as the learner approaches a skill or employs a strategy deliberately and purposefully.

It is a proven truth that successful, competent, or good learners employ learning strategies in their repertoire. They adopted and modified the strategies for their learning

environment after gathering them through experiential events, direct teaching in earlier learning settings, or even peer transmission. Such strategies grow more precise, productive, planned, and ordered over time and with practice to better fit their particular peculiarities (Ellis, 2004; Dörnyei, 2002).

#### **1.2.4. *Strategies Associated with Autonomous Learning***

Throughout the autonomous shift, learners implement different strategies to aid them in becoming independent in their learning. According to Little (1995), the primary foundation of student autonomy is that students must be able to take accountability for the complete learning process. This ability has social, emotional, and cognitive consequences; it necessitates a positive mindset towards learning while also developing their capacity to reflect on the entire learning process, including both the materials and methods used, to bring their thinking as far as possible deliberately.

According to Nunan (1995), autonomous learners use a variety of skills, have a love for learning, enjoy their field, take a focused and active approach to learning, and are ready to continue even if failure and public disapproval are possible. Little (1995) proposed that autonomous learners take responsibility for their learning. They establish learning goals, organise and carry out learning tasks, and assess and monitor the effectiveness of their learning.

There is a significant relationship between strategy use and learner autonomy. Learners deliberately and consciously select strategies to achieve personal learning objectives. They must develop an independent mindset to employ learning strategies. According to Oxford (1990), learning strategies encourage learner autonomy; however, for a learner to choose a learning strategy, he or she may need to engage in autonomous behaviour.

Additionally, Fewell and Brown (1994) also suggested that having a language learning strategy is important in attaining autonomy in learning and that a metacognitive strategy will lead to greater student autonomy and a shift towards more individual instruction.

Metacognition is a well-known cognitive psychology theory that primarily centres on an individual's change in the thinking process. Wenden (1998), defined metacognitive knowledge as information acquired by learners about their learning results, including both the process and the achievement. Metacognitive strategies, on the other hand, are the ability and entire system that students use to control, direct, arrange, and lead their learning through careful planning, process supervision, and evaluation of learning outcomes.

According to cognitive psychology, this learning strategy relates to self-control and self-direction in adult education. As a consequence, it is closely connected with autonomous learning skills as transferable key skills, such as planning, watching, assessing, reflecting, decision-making, and getting and arranging information.

In his study of the connection between metacognition, motivation, and listening ability, Vandergrift (2005) discovered that motivation at three levels (motivation, extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation) had a very high overlap with the metacognitive strategies. He goes on to contend that these correlation patterns provide some support for a relationship between self-determination, autonomous learning, metacognition, and student autonomy theories.

Developing learner autonomy involves learning how to study, which is a gradual and sometimes difficult process. To become self-sufficient, learners must develop strategies through learning activities, working with peers, and seeking information from different sources, not only the teacher. This will be achieved through the combined efforts of the teacher, classmates, and the student.



### **1.2.5. Factors Influencing Autonomous Strategy Development**

Many factors have had an impact on the development of autonomy, such as attitudes, motivation, education, culture, and peer relationships. These are going to be discussed in the following section.

**1.2.5.1. Attitudes.** There has been much debate about the role of student attitudes in strategy use and autonomy. Attitude is a hypothetical concept used to explain human behaviour in terms of purpose and persistence (Baker, 1992). According to Wenden (1998), learner attitudes are views that students have about their function and capacity as learners and are reliant on other ideas they have about themselves as learners. For example, if a learner thinks that leadership is a personality trait required to execute a specific task, they will simply quit the task if they lack that trait.

In addition, Thanasoulas (2000) explains that if students are under the impression that learning is only successful in the "traditional classroom," where the teacher directs and manages the learning activity and students must follow in the teacher's footsteps, they are likely to be resistant to learner-centred strategies aimed at autonomy.

Hence, a student may have positive views towards learner autonomy, believing or considering that learner autonomy is important, but this student may believe that becoming independent is difficult or unattainable in a teacher-centred teaching strategy; however, with positive attitudes towards autonomy, this learner may be ready to become autonomous by accepting accountability for their learning.

Moreover, attitudes underpin motivation and self-efficacy; for example, if students believe they are incapable of performing a task, they will not attempt to do it. Bandura (1997) asserts that learners will not participate in learning or embrace learning objectives unless they believe they are prepared to perform successfully. Then, it is reasonable to anticipate that self-efficacy and motivation precede independent learning (as cited in Ponton et al., 2005).

**1.2.5.2. Motivation.** Researchers have been drawn to the study of motivation in the context of learner autonomy, where it has been identified as an important component in the autonomy process. Motivation is the urge that, under the proper conditions, leads to an attempt to learn. Autonomous learners are intrinsically motivated to be resourceful and effective as they try to achieve worthy endeavours when working alone or with others, and they abide even when faced with challenges.

According to Van Lier (1996), intrinsic language learning motivational factors such as enjoyment, a sense of challenge, and skill development, and extrinsic language learning motivational factors such as personal goals and endeavours are best perceived as working in harmony with one another in the good language learner. What appears to be crucial is not whether these motivational factors are intrinsic or extrinsic to the learning process but whether they are internalised and self-determined, thus originating within the learner, or externally enforced and governed by teachers, peers, curriculum, educational, and societal expectations. Externally controlled motivation can only provide short-term benefits; the long-term goal is to develop the learner's motivation from within.

Although there are contentious opinions on whether autonomy fosters motivation or the opposite, research has shown that motivation is increased when students have more control over their education, and autonomy is strongly linked to metacognitive strategies that involve self-reflection, planning for learning, monitoring the learning task, and self-evaluation (Lamb, 2009).

Numerous studies on learner autonomy have also revealed that when students have more control over their learning, they are more motivated. According to empirical research conducted by Roth et al. (2007), teachers who were more autonomously motivated for teaching had students who perceived them to be more autonomy supportive. Students take initiatives that contribute to learner engagement, which allows teachers to assess how

students truly connect themselves to learning tasks as they attempt not only to learn and develop skills but also to create a more motivationally supportive learning environment for themselves.

Several studies have demonstrated that motivation is a result of autonomy, we could therefore classify motivated learners as independent learners.

**1.2.5.3. Education.** Achievement in language acquisition represents students' performance assessment and self-evaluation. Wang (2004) emphasises the link between self-monitoring and higher language proficiency. According to Yamamori et al. (2003), inefficient monitoring of learners' learning has a detrimental impact on learners' success. Ames (1986, as quoted in Gan et al., 2004) defined an effective language student as an engaged participant, autonomous, and confident in guiding his or her learning.

In their research, Yamamori et al. (2003) discovered that effective language learners are always conscious of the stages of their learning process. It is evident that high-achieving students consistently demonstrate meta-cognitive knowledge of their learning behaviours, deciding efficiently which strategies to use, and increasing their motivation to learn English. Grenfell and Harris (1999) argued that autonomy is required for language proficiency and competence in the language learning process. They also asserted that without a certain degree of autonomy, a person cannot be an effective language student and user as an "independent personality" (p. 34).

Furthermore, higher academic achievement is usually associated with improved self-esteem and learner responsibility (Hyland, 2008). In addition, Cotterall (2000) assumes that the growth of learners' language proficiency is embedded in language course design, allowing learners to influence their language-learning process.

**1.2.5.4. Culture.** There has been much argument about the effect of culture on learner autonomy. An intriguing direction of study investigates the role of culture in autonomous

learning, or whether various cultures influence the growth and practice of learner autonomy in different ways. There had been identified two types of cultures affecting learner autonomy: general culture and educational culture.

**1.2.5.4.1. General Culture.** According to Little (2002), studies on learner autonomy have been wrestling with the issue of whether learner autonomy is a uniquely Western societal construct. The author contends that, while evidence suggests that learner autonomy can be a universal concept, culture always affects learning. Ahmad and Abdul Majid (2010) investigated the connection between the readiness of students for autonomy and Malaysian cultural norms. According to their findings, culture impacted the growth of interviewees' readiness for learner autonomy. It has the potential to either hinder or promote learning independence.

Culture 'dictates' the roles that students and teachers may serve in educational environments, in other words, their rights and duties in learning activities; who should do what, when, and how. Culture can probably suppress or promote learner autonomy to the degree that it stifles, allows, or promotes the attitudes and skills that underlie learner autonomy. By way of explanation, a culture embraces learner autonomy if it permits or promotes its members to: first, take primary responsibility for their lives; second, make their own choices; third, cooperate with others for higher task performance; and so on.

**1.2.5.4.2. Educational Culture.** Educational culture can be described as a combination of shared beliefs and practices shared by all parties in education, particularly students, teachers, and administrators. It also contains regulations governing the objectives and strategies to be used in teaching and learning. Könings et al. (2007) discovered that teachers were sceptical of student autonomy after researching teachers' views on innovations in Dutch schools. Teachers in certain cultures may perceive young independent learners as rebellious and disrespectful of their superiors' authority. As a result, it should be recognised

that teachers' readiness for autonomy is influenced by their beliefs. Their attitudes towards learner autonomy are likely to influence whether and how they attempt to build the learning autonomy of their students.

**1.2.5.5. Peer Relationships.** Student-to-student cooperation has deep origins in learning theory. Vygotsky (1979), for example, emphasised the social aspect of learning and the crucial role of language in this social learning. Collaboration offers an opportunity for this type of social learning. Peer collaboration may be particularly helpful, and essential for children's social and intellectual growth as well as adult achievement.

In education, peer relationships can be extremely powerful. A large body of research indicates that student cooperation can lead to better outcomes on a variety of cognitive and emotional factors, such as accomplishment, intellectual abilities, interpersonal relationships, passion for education, and self-esteem (Ibáez et al. 2013). According to Allen et al. (1994), teenagers who have profound relationships with their peers are more likely to develop autonomy than those who do not. Unfortunately, students are sometimes reluctant to collaborate with peers (Matthews, 1992), so they may also be reluctant to become more autonomous (Little, 2007).

### **1.2.6. *The Importance of Language Learning Strategies for Students***

Teachers cannot constantly educate the student throughout his or her life; thus, these strategies are crucial in promoting learner autonomy. Learners may make the greatest use of these strategies to develop self-directed learning skills. According to modern developments in foreign language teaching, LLS can assist students in developing their autonomy in foreign language acquisition. Employing suitable language learning strategies frequently results in enhanced language learning ability (Thompson & Rubin, 1996; Oxford et al., 1993). Those who employ these strategies well may learn on their own, assess their development, and gradually build their self-esteem.

The transition from a teacher-centred methodology has resulted in a new style of language instruction. This new instruction requires a focus on students as individual learners and a profound knowledge of learning. LLS are a crucial aspect of this new education for a variety of reasons. According to Chamot (2001), learning strategies are significant in the language acquisition process for two reasons. Initially, by discovering learners' present strategies, the language acquisition process, including cognitive, social, and affective processes, will be comprehended. Second, defining foreign language learners' strategy profiles will give important insights for educating less successful learners, who are assumed to lack awareness of the use of strategy in the learning process. According to Oxford (1990), language learning strategies are crucial in the language learning process because they are instruments that support self-directed involvement and they enable learners to take charge of their learning in the learning process.

### **Conclusion**

This literature review has shown that there is a close relationship between LLS and learner autonomy, which is a key characteristic for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Because appropriate strategy use allows learners to take more responsibility for their learning, students who adopt successful learning strategies have a greater ability to work outside the classroom on their own when their teacher is not around to provide direction or feedback for their learning. Understanding learners' strategy use and autonomy is, therefore, crucial since it helps provide students as well as teachers with useful information for developing language learning strategies needed by autonomous learners.

## **Chapter Two: The Study**

### **Introduction**

To examine the autonomous strategies developed by Master One students of English, their opinions and thoughts on learner autonomy, developed strategies, and the challenges they are dealing with, have been sought. Their answers were gathered via a questionnaire and an interview. This chapter is devoted to explaining how these research tools were implemented, including a comprehensive explanation of the techniques employed for gathering and analysing data. The results gathered from both research materials will crucially help in testing the research's hypotheses and confirming or rejecting them.

### **Section One: Data Collection Tools and Procedures**

#### ***2.1.1. Research Method***

In this study, we collected data through quantitative and qualitative methods.

#### ***2.1.2. Population and Sampling***

We selected approximately one-fifth of Master One students of English at the Department of Foreign Languages at the Abdelhafid Boussof Mila University Centre. The (50) students were selected randomly from an overall population of around (206) students. The selection of such a level is based on the belief that they have been studying English for four years and have experienced the necessity to become independent learners and develop strategies required for autonomous learning.

#### ***2.1.3. Research Tools***

The current study was carried out through a questionnaire and an interview conducted with students.

**2.1.3.1. The Questionnaire.** The perspectives of the students have a considerable impact on their autonomous strategy repertoire development. Therefore, an online questionnaire was created on Google Forms software and distributed on online platforms,

where all the questions were fully answered by the whole selected sample. The students' questionnaire is composed of (33) question items. It is divided into four sections, each of which covers a variable that the study is focusing on, but all four variables are related together and hint back into the research questions. The questionnaire consists of background information questions and positive and negative statements, requiring the students to rate their answers on a four-point Likert scale. The first section is devoted to background information about the students' gender and age. The second section is made up of eleven questions and is devoted to exploring learners' attitudes towards autonomy. The third section is also composed of eleven questions that seek to know students' developed learning strategies. The questions in this section were adapted from Maamar MISSOUM's article (2016). The fourth section, which contained nine questions, focused on the challenges that learners face when studying autonomously.

**2.1.3.2. The Interview.** The interview was conducted with five Master One students of English at the Department of Foreign Languages at the Abdelhafid Boussouf Mila University Centre, where they were interviewed separately to avoid getting similar answers. The duration of the interview was about 20–25 minutes for each student. They were asked six open-ended questions. At first, they were questioned about their educational background to see if they had had support lessons before and after entering university. After that, the interviewees were asked about their perspectives on studying without the help of the teacher and whether they receive encouragement from their teachers to study autonomously. At the end, we asked questions about the strategies they employ to learn independently and the problems they struggle with when studying on their own.

#### **2.1.4. Data Analysis Procedures**

The quantitative data was statistically recorded and analysed on Google Forms software, and the results were displayed in graphs automatically. On the other hand, the



qualitative data was analysed by examining the discourse of the interviewees and highlighting their thoughts and opinions.

## Section Two: Data Analysis

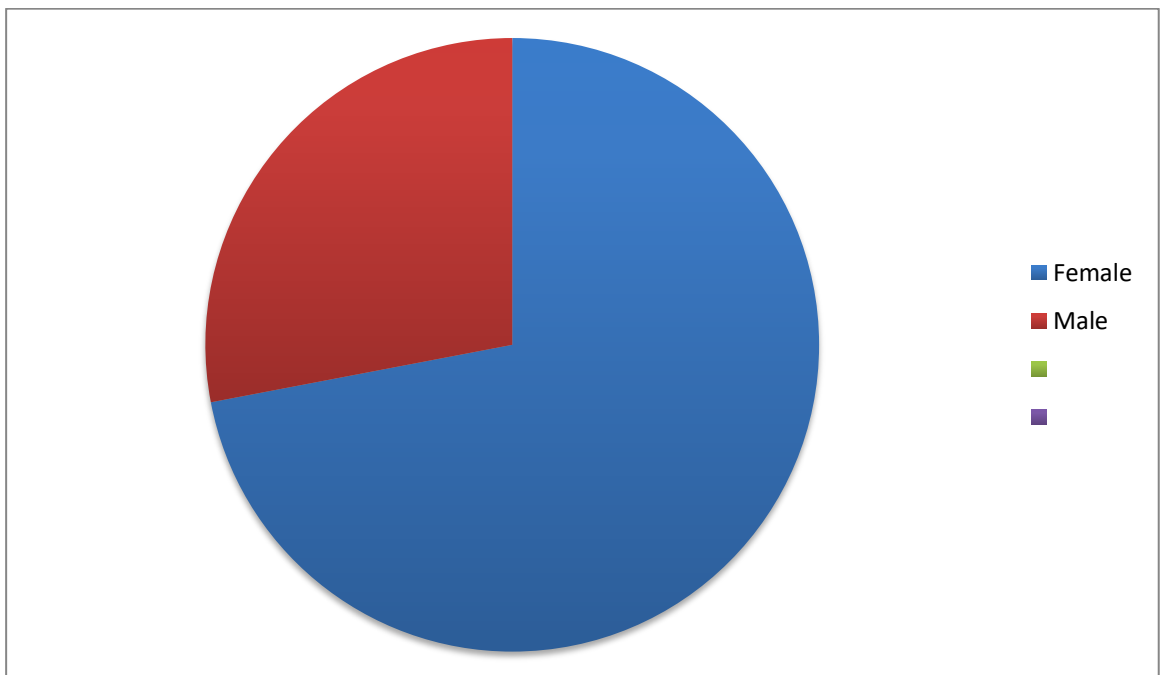
### 2.2.1. Analysis of the Questionnaire

**2.2.1.1. Background information.** This section aims to get general information about the participants, such as gender and age.

**Question 01:** What is your gender?

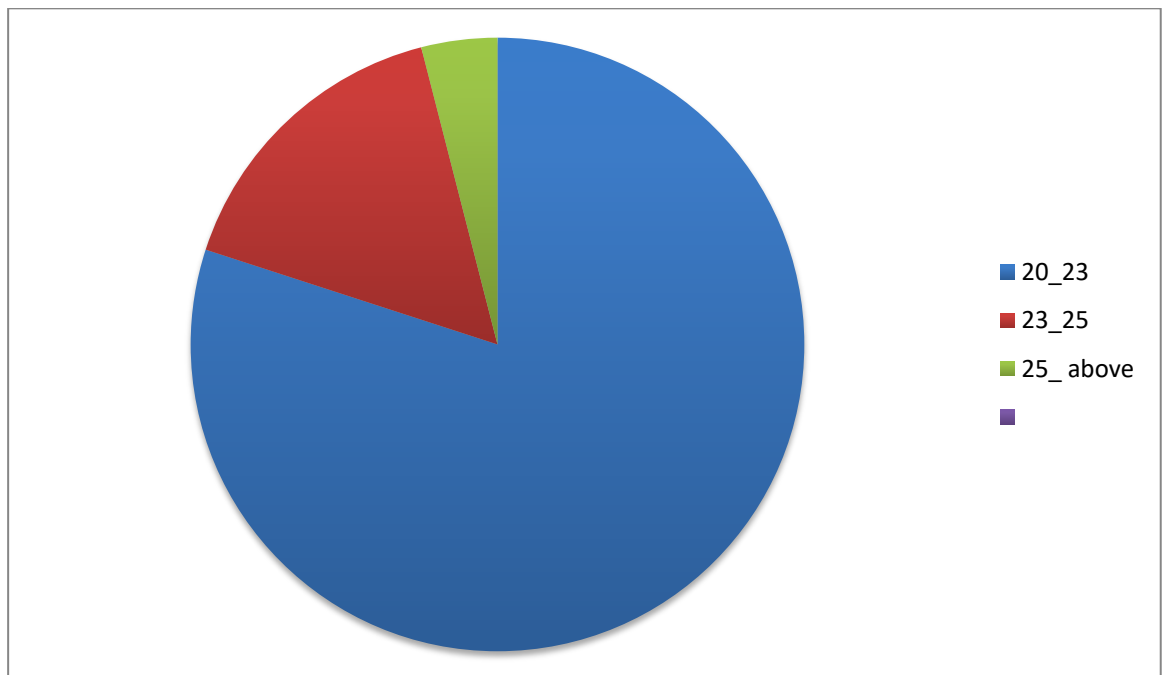
**Figure 3**

*Students' gender*



The pie chart above demonstrates that (72%) of the population were females, while (28%) were males. This indicates that females were more involved in answering this questionnaire.

**Question 02:** What is your age?

**Figure 4***Students' age*

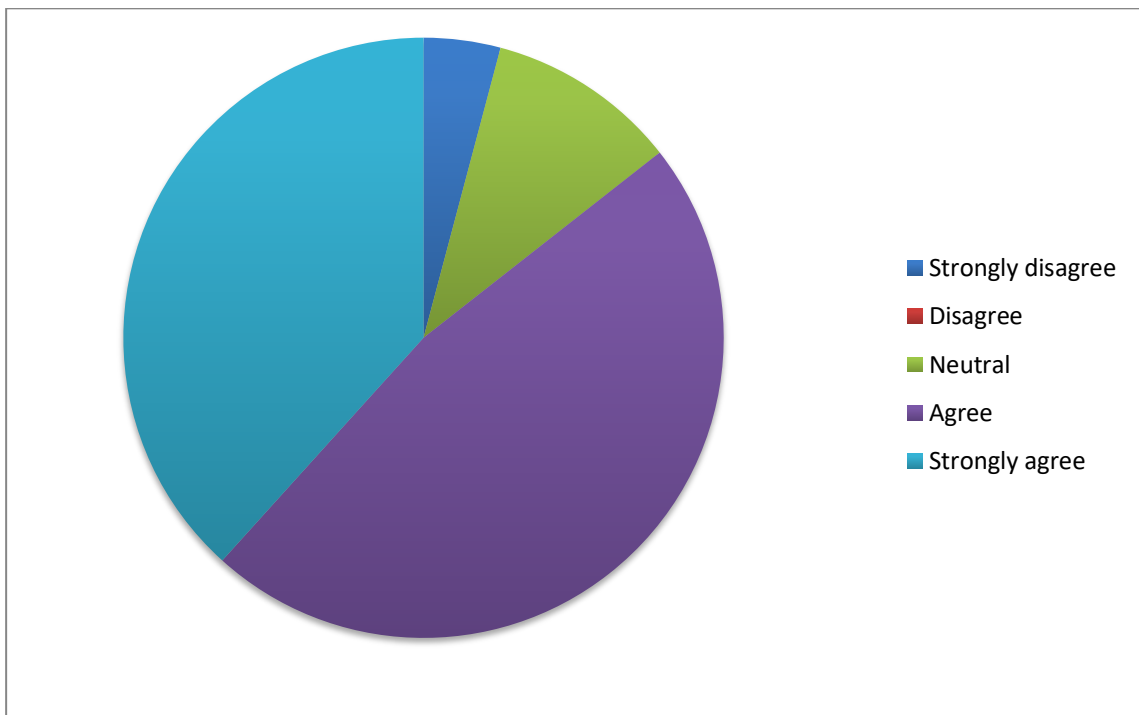
The graph above illustrates that the majority of students (80%) were aged between (20) and (23) while eight students were aged between (23) and (25) which represents (16%) of the population. On the other hand, only (4%) were aged from (25) and above. It can be noted that the majority of respondents are at a young age.

**2.2.1.2. Learners' Attitudes towards Learner Autonomy.** This section aims to explore EFL learners' perceptual and attitudinal readiness for learner autonomy.

**Question 01:** I enjoy searching by myself about the English language.

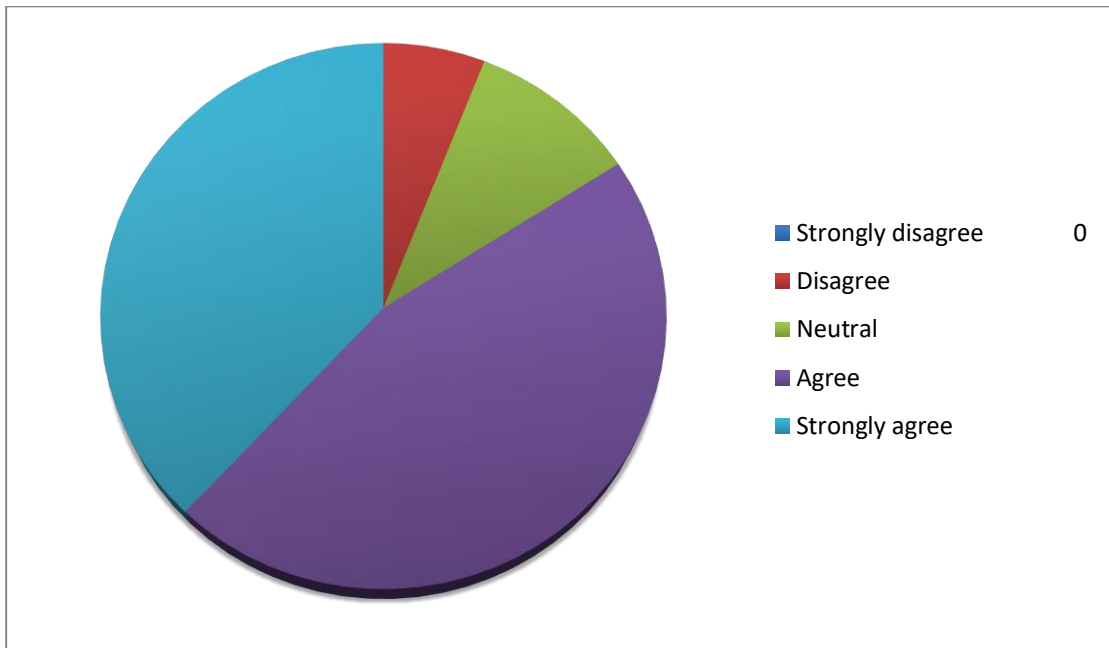
**Figure 5**

*Students' enjoyment when making English language searches*



The question at hand seeks to ascertain how much students enjoy performing searches and gathering information about the English language. They were given four choices on a Likert scale; (46.9%) agreed on enjoying their time while searching, and (38.8%) strongly agreed on this, while (10.2%) remained neutral and a small percentage (4.1%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The analysis suggests that students find amusement when studying and searching about the English language.

**Question 02:** I am a better achiever when I study on my own.

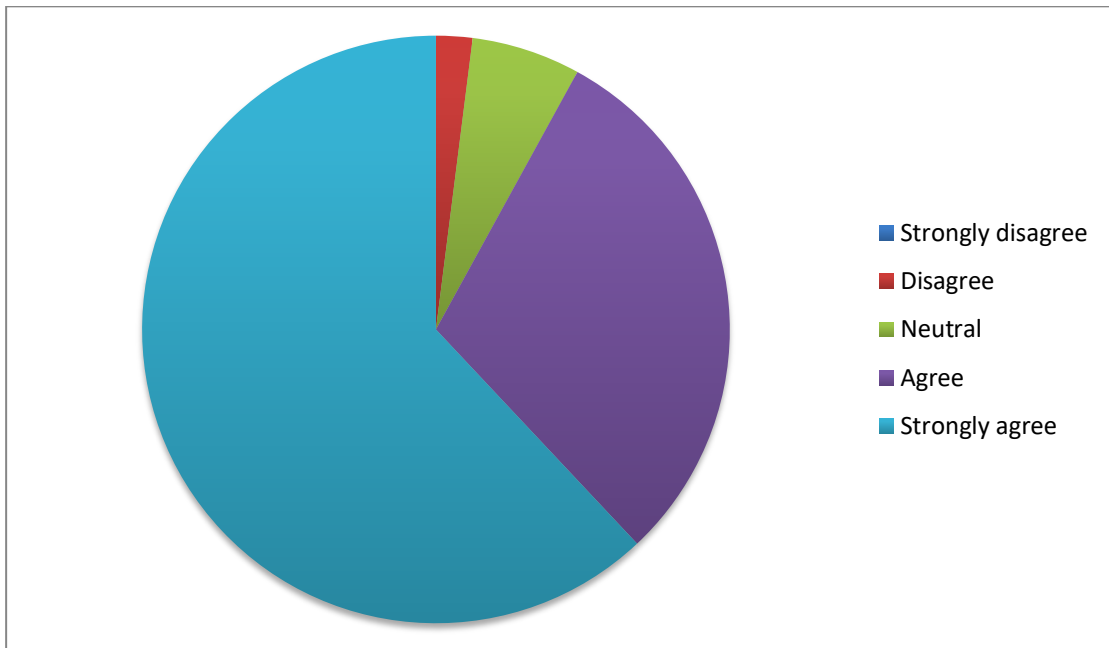
**Figure 6***Students' achievement when studying autonomously*

As seen in the pie chart above, the majority of students (46%) agreed that they accomplish better when they study independently, while (38%) strongly agreed, indicating a high conviction in their capacity to study independently. Nonetheless, (10%) of students were indecisive, indicating a lack of awareness regarding their level of achievement. At a rate of (6%), the lowest proportion went to those who disagreed with autonomous achievement. The findings indicate that the concept of autonomous achievement is commonly believed among students.

**Question 03:** I think it is important for me to improve my English skills outside the classroom.

**Figure 7**

*Students' improvement of their English skills outside the classroom*

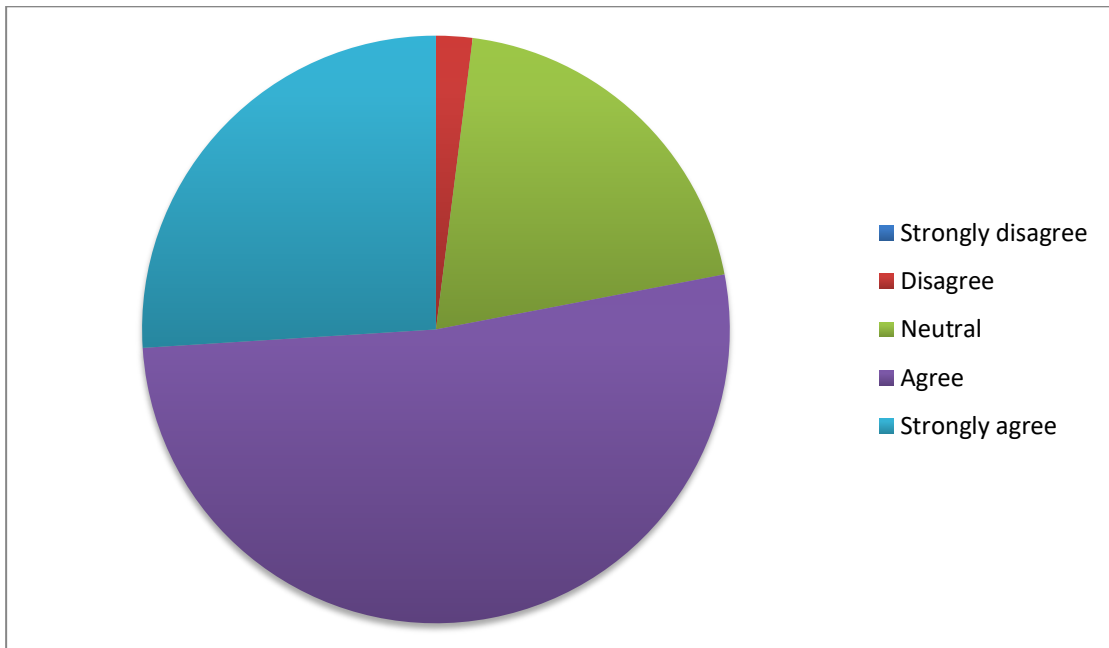


According to the results, the highest percentage (62%) goes to those who strongly agreed with the importance of developing their language skills outside the boundaries of the classroom and seeking to master the language on their own, same saying goes for those who agreed at a rate of (30%). On the contrary, only (2%) of respondents disagreed with this statement, while the remaining (6%) were neutral. These results are almost expected since the majority of EFL learners adopt the English language in their personal life as a part of going along with their daily activities from personal to social activities.

**Question 04:** I learn by myself because I have the right to select my English learning materials.

**Figure 8**

*Students' selection of their English learning materials*

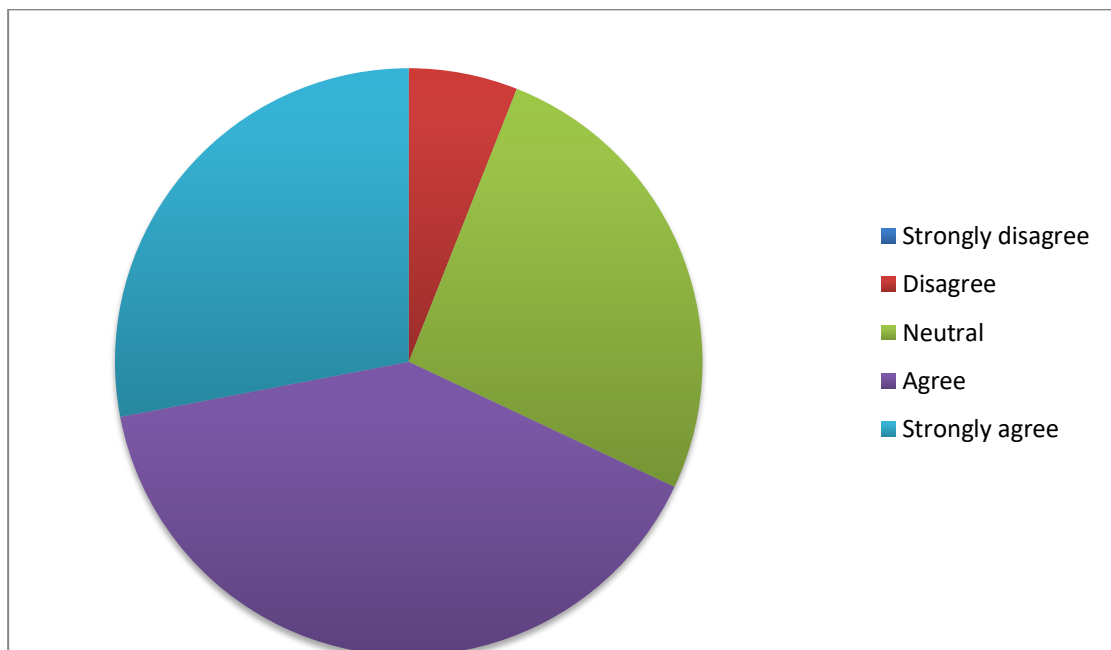


The pie chart above depicts the responses of participants to the fourth question of the questionnaire concerning their right to choose their learning materials. (52%) of respondents stated that they prefer to study independently since they have the freedom to select their favourite learning materials. An average portion was divided between remaining neutral at a rate of (20%), and (26%) who agreed with the statement. While merely a tiny percentage of (2%) were opposed to choosing their own learning materials. Hence, it can be said that students show autonomy when taking charge of choosing their learning materials.

**Question 05:** I think I can learn more English through my free study than through attending courses.

**Figure 9**

*Students' opinions on whether a free study is better than attending courses*

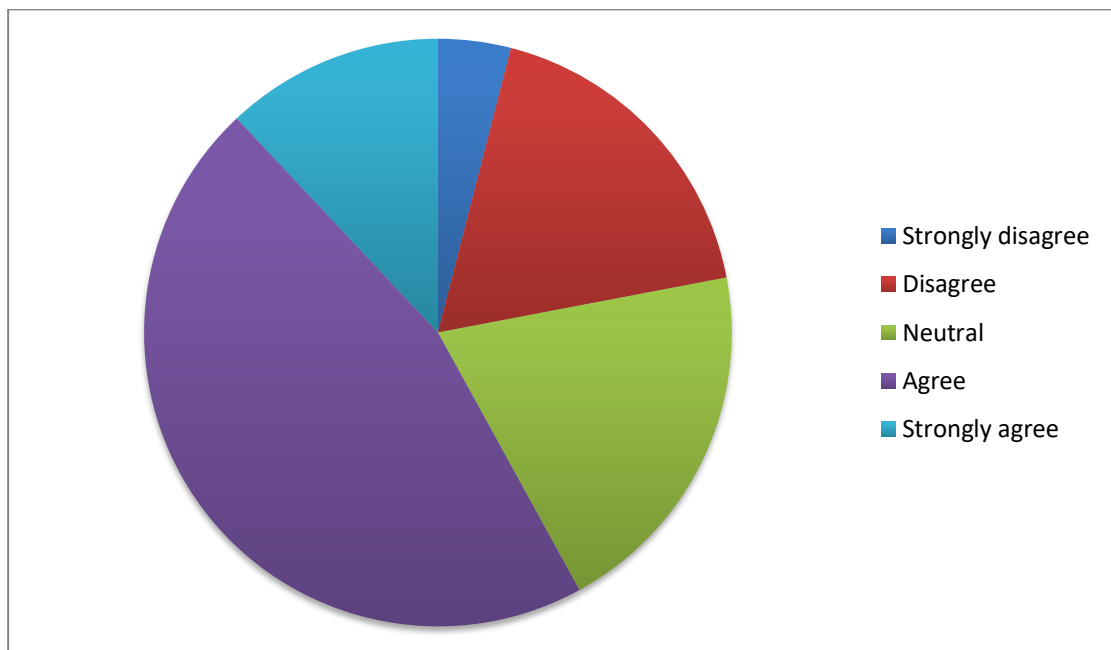


The pie chart above reveals students' perspectives on their capacity to study English better autonomously than in the classroom with the teacher. A large proportion of students (40%) claimed that they learn better in their free study, and (28%) strongly agreed with this. While (26%) were indecisive, only three students (6%) disagreed with this concept. These findings show that the majority of students prefer to learn on their own and could develop greater language skills outside the classroom.

**Question 06:** Teachers encourage me to learn outside the boundaries of the classroom.

**Figure 10**

*Teachers' encouragement for autonomous learning*



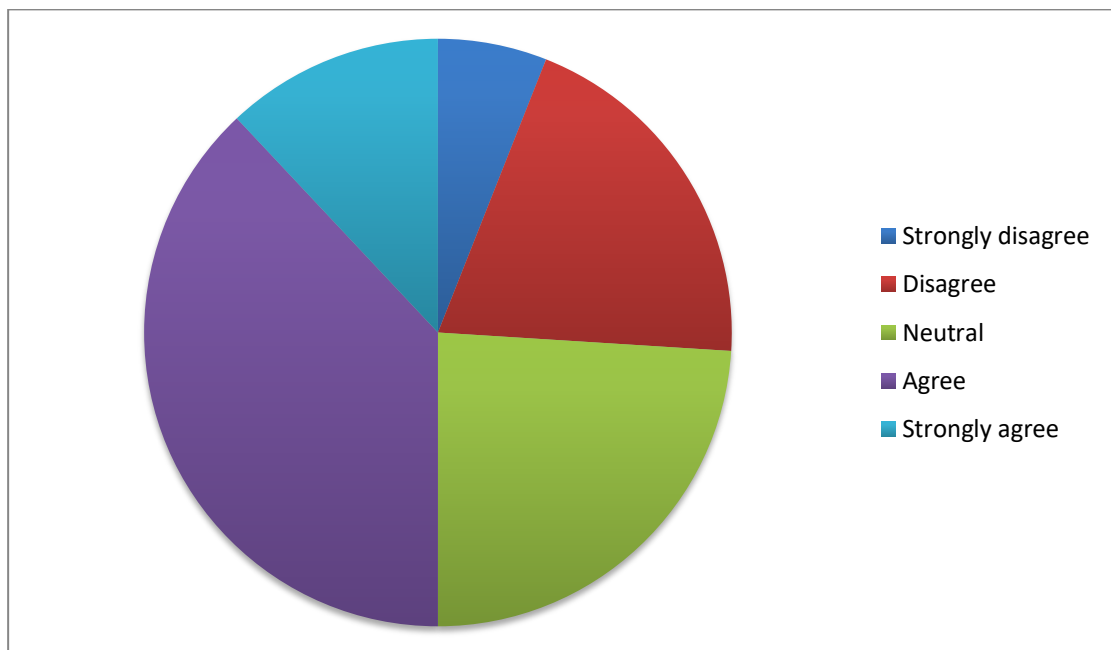
According to the above chart, (46%) of the participants agreed that their teachers encourage them to study outside of the classroom, whereas only (12%) strongly agreed. While (20%) remained neutral, leaving the answer undirected; (18%) disagreed; and only (4%) strongly disagreed, this indicates that a small percentage of students find their teachers either discouraging or encouraging autonomy. The findings reveal that a significant portion teachers encourage their students to learn independently.

**Question 07:** Group activities help me with independent learning.



**Figure 11**

*Students' autonomous learning through group activities*

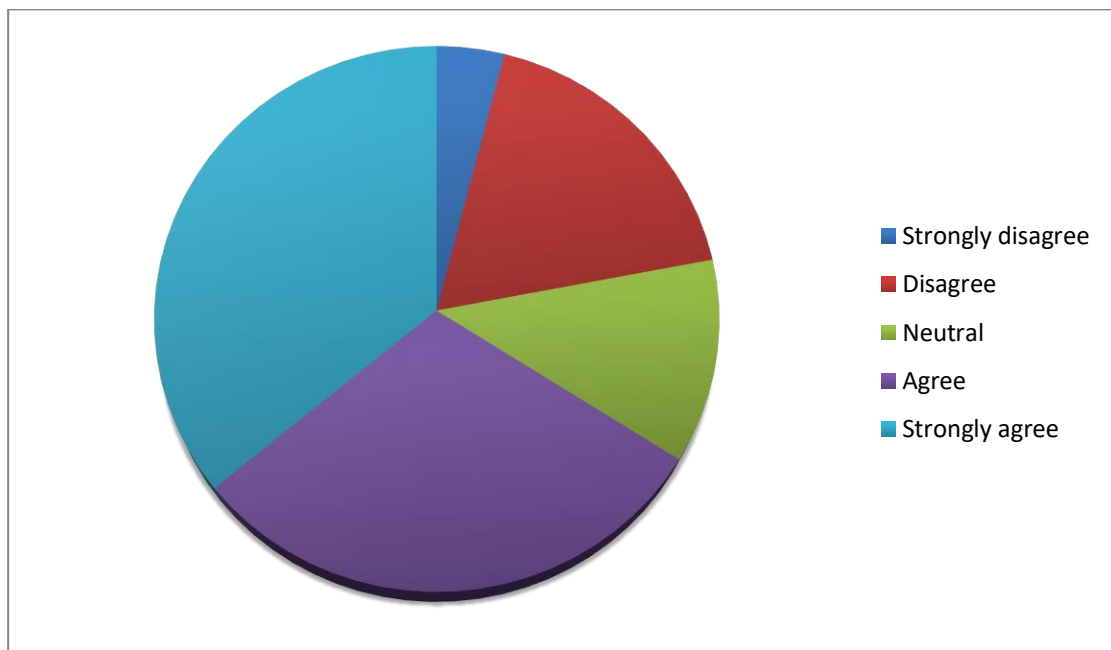


According to the pie chart above, (38%) of participants agreed that group activities assist them during independent learning, and (12%) strongly agreed. However, (20%) of respondents disagreed with group learning, while only three students (6%) strongly disagreed. however, (24%) of the students were neutral towards working in groups. We can see that almost half of students are tolerant of group activities when they need assistance with their studies instead of only relying on the teacher.

**Question 08:** I think learning in class is not sufficient.

**Figure 12**

*Students' opinions on classroom learning sufficiency*

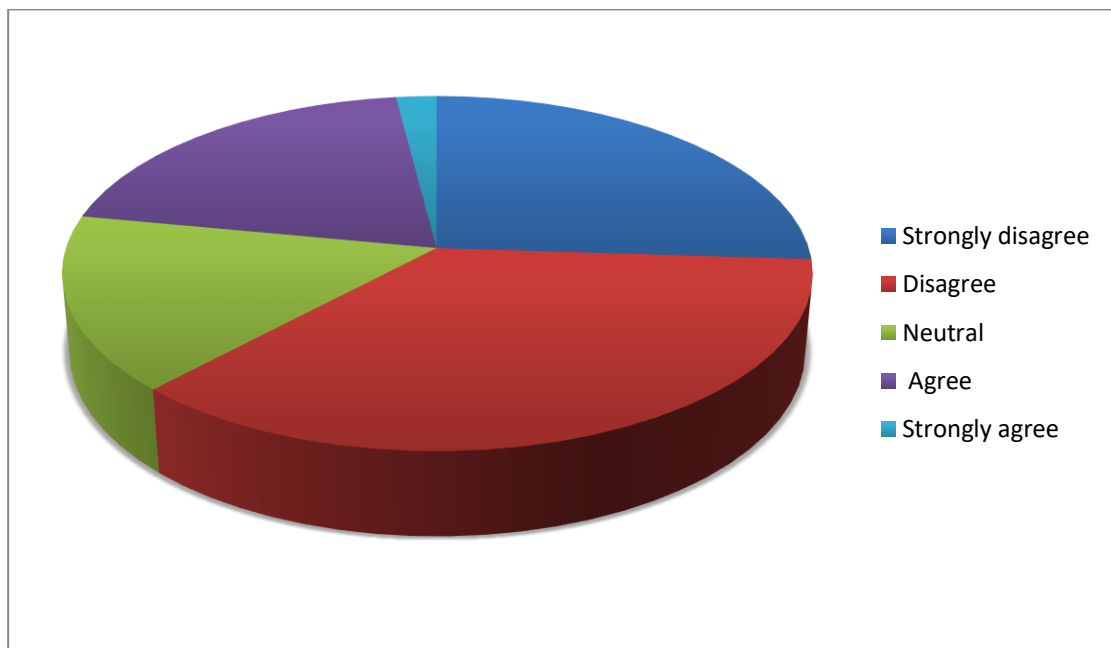


According to the findings, (36%) of participants strongly agreed that classroom learning is insufficient, and (30%) agreed with the concept. Whereas (12%) were undecided, a small proportion (18%) disagreed with the idea of classroom insufficiency, and (4%) strongly disagreed. The findings reveal students' negative attitudes regarding the sufficiency of classroom learning, and the majority of them do not depend only on what they learn in school.

**Question 09:** I think the best way to learn English for me is mostly in the classroom with the teacher.

**Figure 13**

*Students' opinions on learning in the classroom*

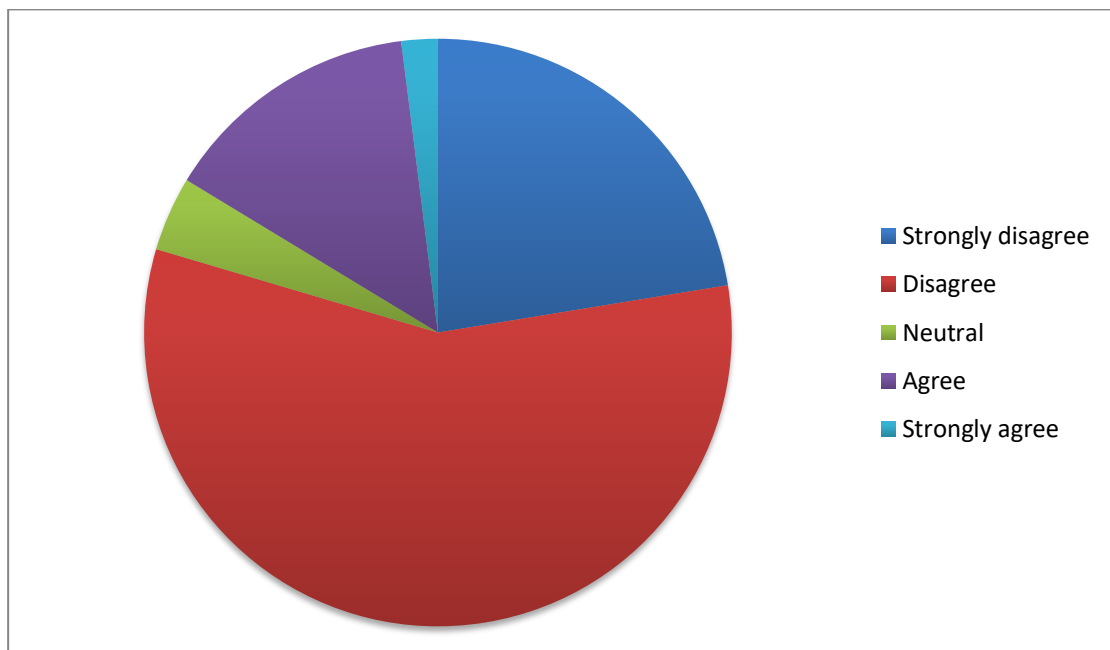


According to the pie chart, the majority of students (36%) disagreed and (26%) strongly disagreed with the assumption that the best method to learn is in the classroom with their teacher. While (16%) were neutral, (20%) agreed that learning in the classroom is the best way to learn the language, whereas only (2%) strongly agreed. We can see that most students believe that the best way for them to master the language is to further study outside the classroom and depend on themselves.

**Question 10:** I learn only from the material (notes, books) that the teacher provides me to learn from.

**Figure 14**

*Students' use of the teacher's materials to learn*

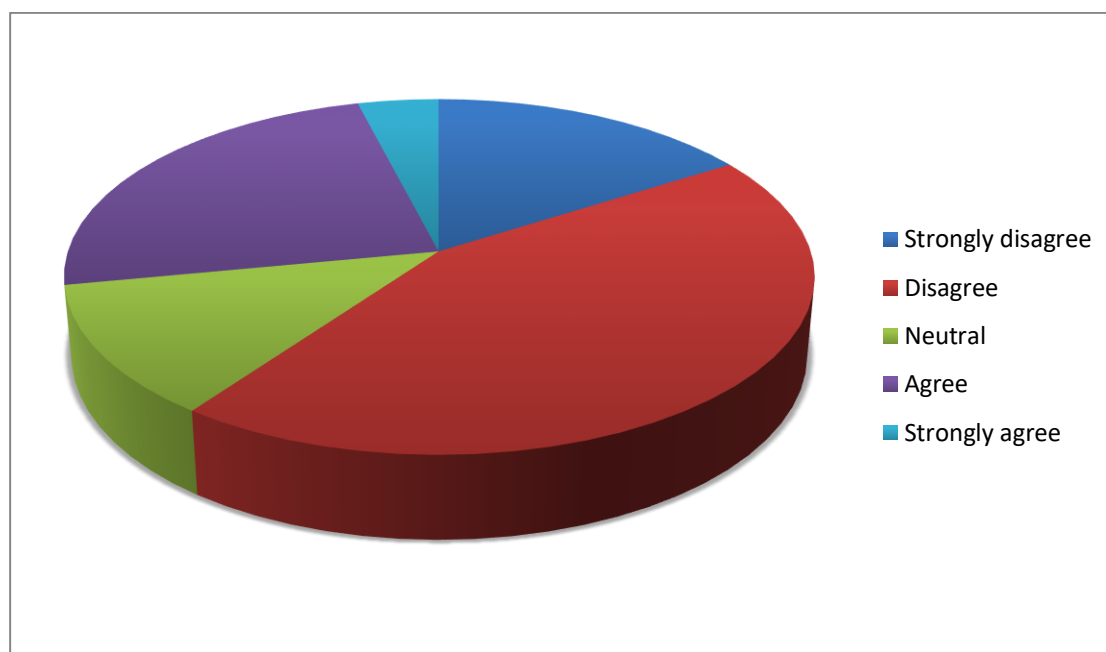


According to the pie chart above, the majority of participants (57.1%) disagreed and (22.4%) strongly disagreed with the idea of learning merely from the material offered by their teacher. However, only (14.3%) agreed that they rely only on what the teacher provides and only (2%) strongly agreed, whereas (4.1%) remained neutral. According to the data, most students are aware that the classroom material is not enough for their language learning.

**Question 11:** Independent learning cannot take place without the help of the teacher.

**Figure 15**

*Students' opinions on independent learning with the help of the teacher*



According to this graph, a large percentage of respondents (44%) disagreed and (16%) strongly disagreed with the assumption that autonomous learning cannot occur without the assistance of a teacher. While (24%) agreed and (4%) strongly agreed that they needed the teacher's assistance when studying alone, whereas (12%) remained neutral. The findings of this chart show that most students understand that autonomous learning entails exerting independent effort without the support of an instructor.

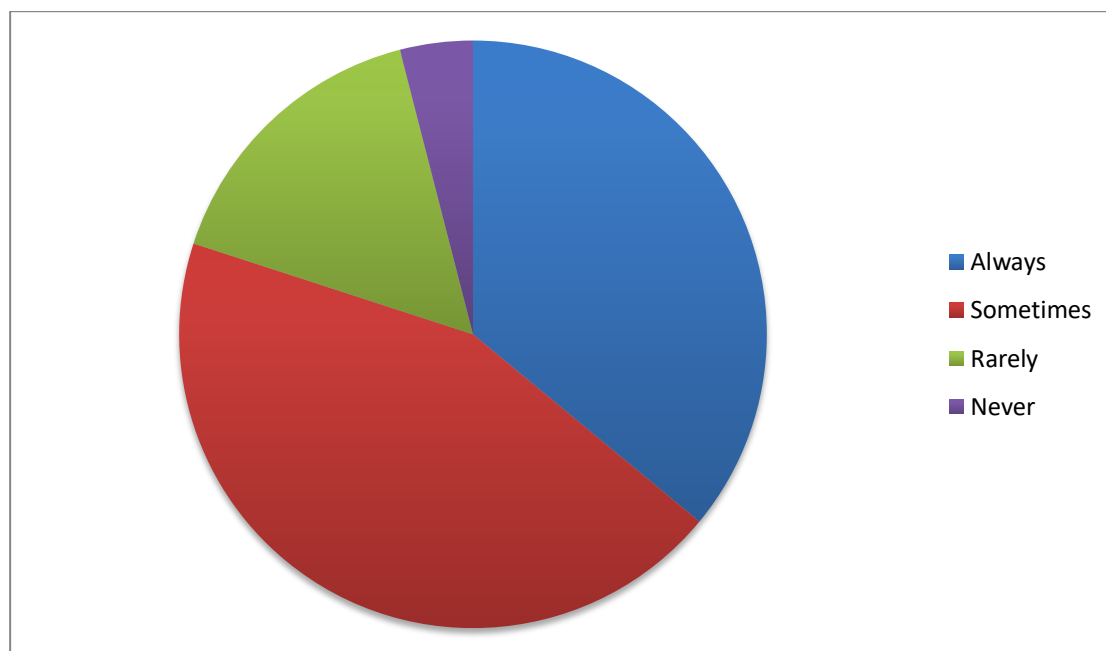
These myriad answers of the participants tell a lot about their attitudes towards learner autonomy. Most of them hold a negative attitude towards the sufficiency of classroom learning and rely on the knowledge provided by their teachers or curriculum, which suggests that most learners are open to autonomy and individual work. They also seem to be aware of their needs and interests in language learning. Nevertheless, a minority of students are still dependent on their teachers, believing that autonomy would require the assistance of the teacher.

**2.2.1.3. Detecting Students' Developed Learning Strategies.** This section is designed to know the developed autonomous learning strategies by EFL learners.

**Question 01:** How often do you set your learning objectives?

**Figure 16**

*Students' set of learning objectives*

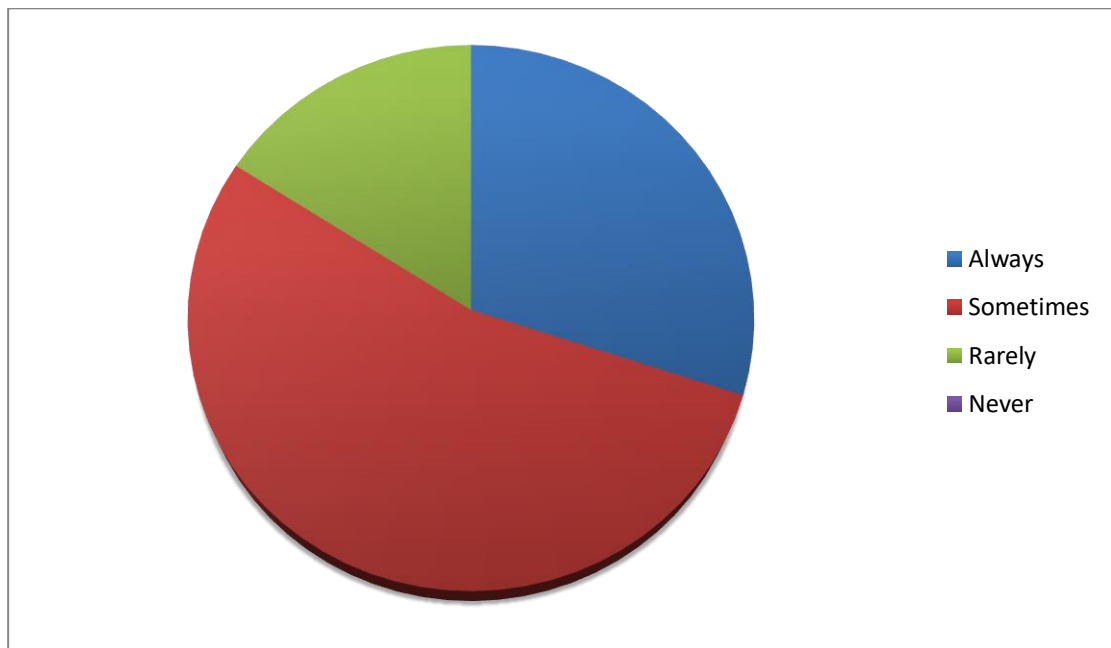


The results shown in the pie chart above suggest that a large number of students (44%) sometimes set their own learning objectives. However, (36%) of them declared that they always set their objectives. About (16%) of them rarely do so, while two students, representing (4%) claimed they never set their learning objectives. Hence, it can be said that students are in charge of setting their learning objectives.

**Question 02:** How often do you plan your learning?

**Figure 17**

*Students' planning for their learning*

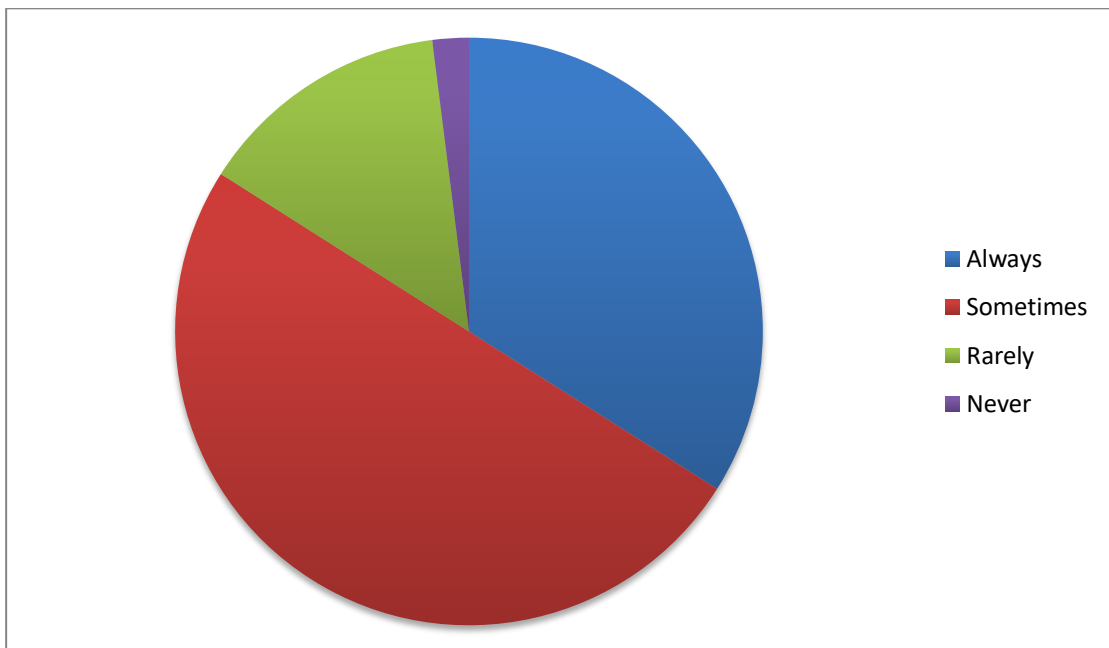


As seen in the pie chart above, it can be understood that a large number (54%) of the respondents sometimes plan their learning, (30%) of them always do so, and (16%) rarely plan their learning. The analysis suggests that the majority of students take responsibility for planning their learning.

**Question 03:** How often do you assess your learning achievement?

**Figure 18**

*Students' assessment of their learning achievement*



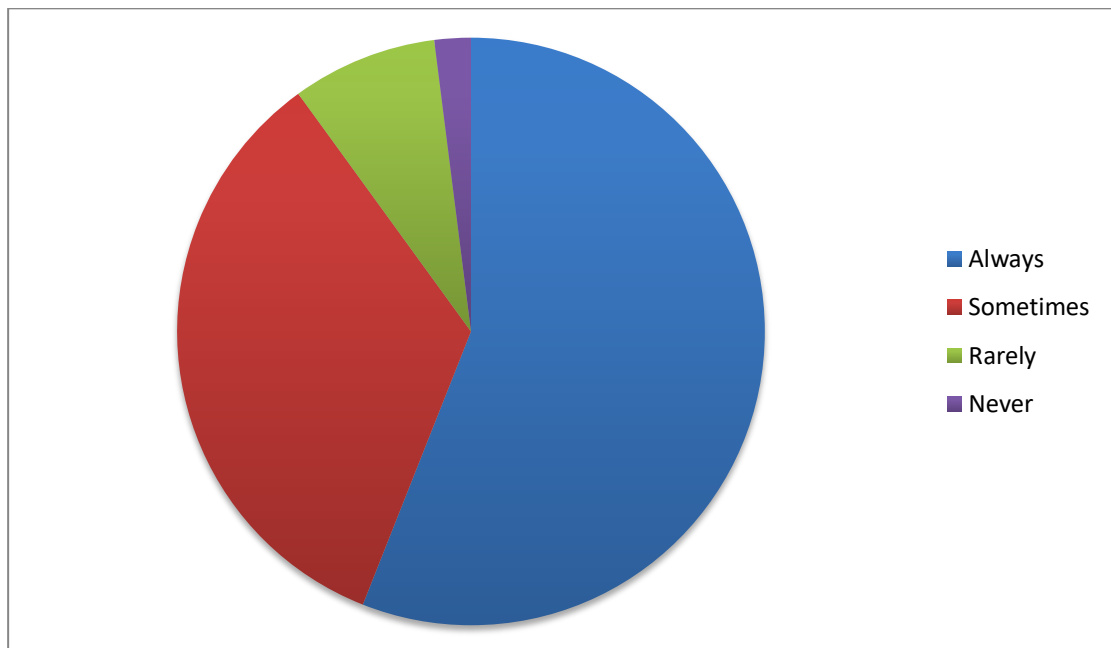
The pie chart above shows to what extent students assess their learning achievement. The biggest portion went to those who sometimes assess their achievement at a rate of (50%), while (34%) claimed they always assess their learning accomplishment and (14%) of them answered they rarely do so. On the other hand, only (2%) never assess their learning achievement. These findings indicate that most students are aware of what they achieve and take responsibility for their own assessments.

**Question 04:** How often do you motivate yourself to learn?



**Figure 19**

*Students' self- motivation for learning*

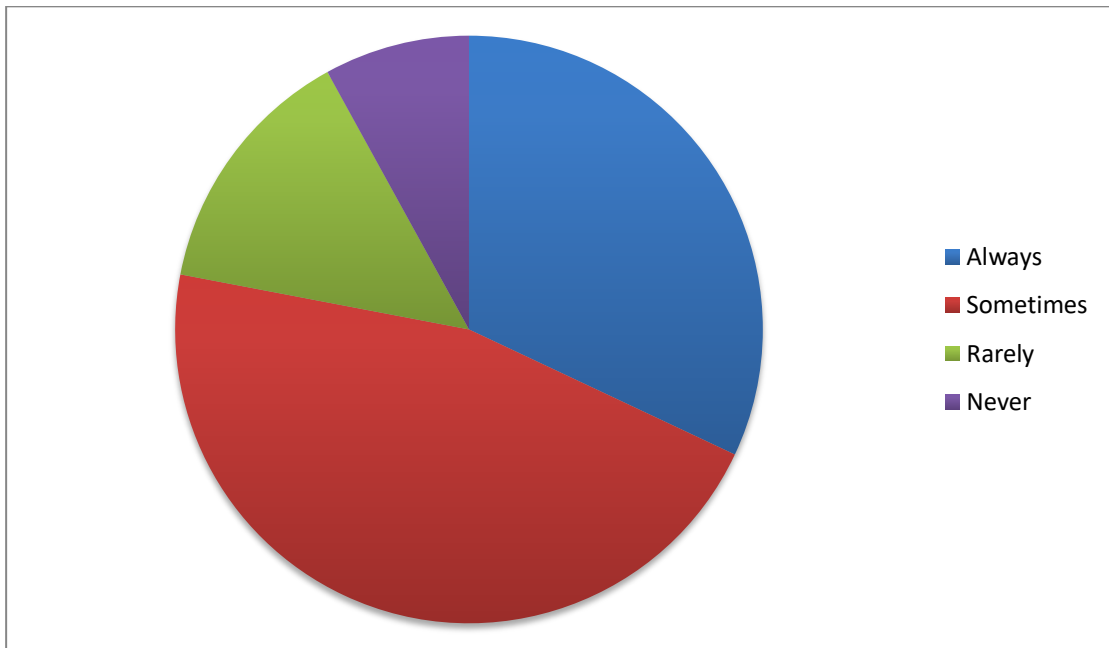


The graph above demonstrates the answers of the participants to the fourth question in this section. The majority of them (56%) declared that they always motivate themselves to learn, and (34%) of them sometimes do; on the contrary, (8%) rarely and (2%) never motivate themselves to learn. From these results, it can be said that self-motivation is commonly spread and applied among EFL students.

**Question 05:** How often do you plan your schedule to have enough time to study English?

**Figure 20**

*Students' schedule planning for studying*

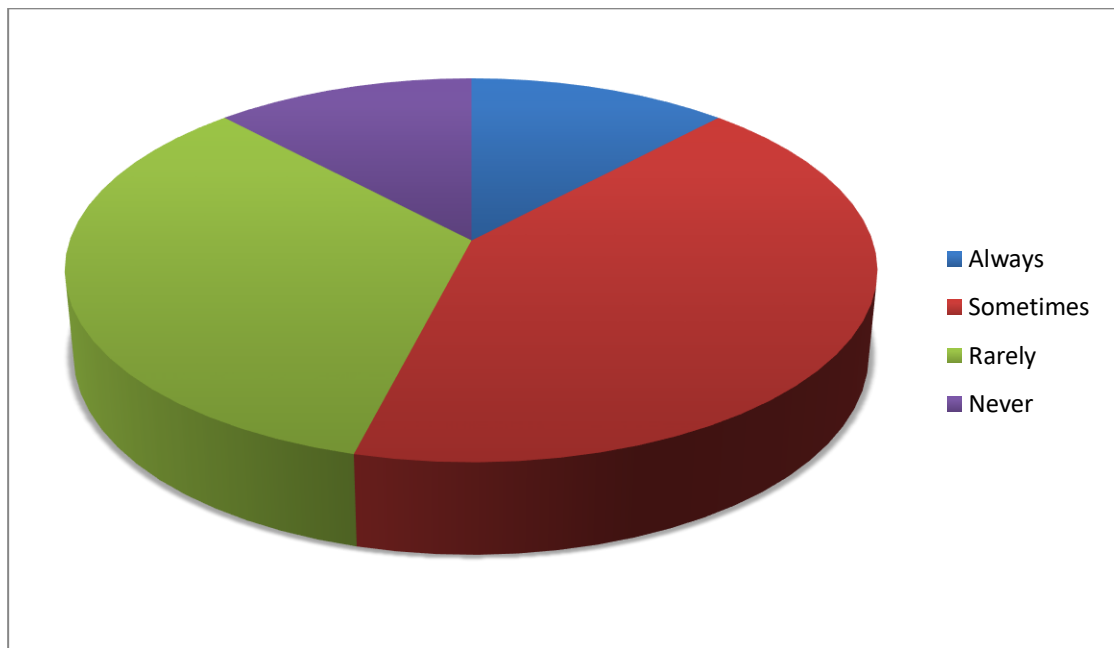


This chart depicts the results of how frequently students manage their schedules in order to have adequate time to study English. The majority of students (46%) arrange their schedules sometimes and (32%) always do, whereas (14%) rarely and (8%) never intend to free up time to learn English. Understandably, most students are eager to study English, and they plan their daily time to learn more English.

**Question 06:** How often do you collaborate with your peers or other people to learn?

**Figure 21**

*Students' collaboration with peers to learn*

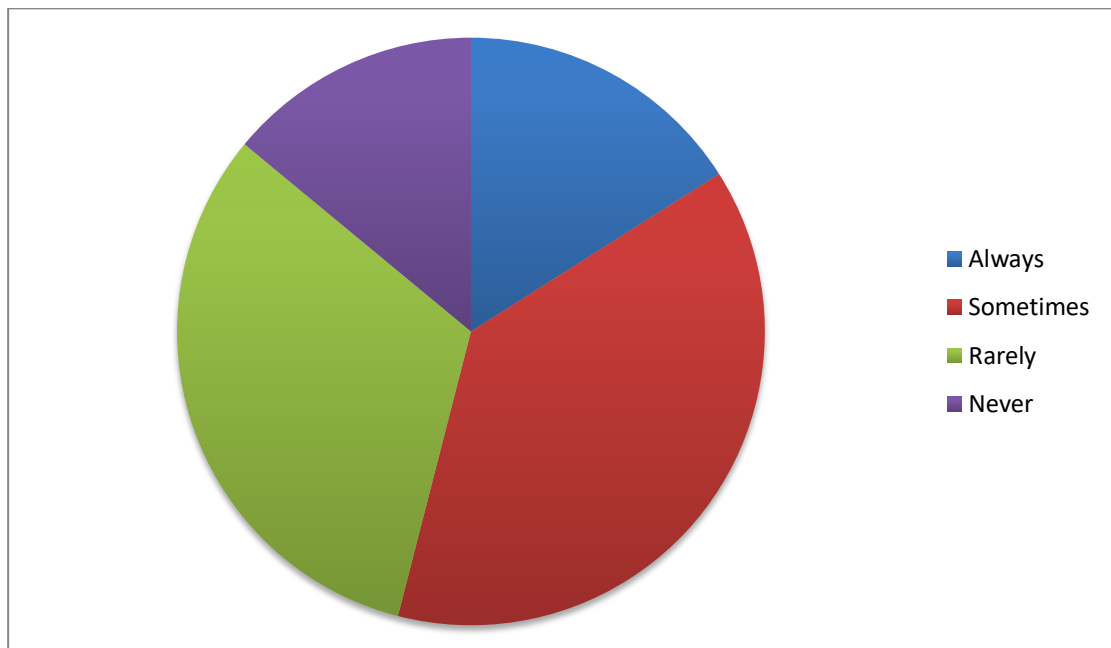


The chart above demonstrates how often students collaborate with their peers to learn. Most of the participants answered that they sometimes cooperate at a percentage of (42%), in addition to those who always collaborate at a rate of (12%). On the contrary, (34%) claimed they rarely collaborate with others, and (12%) never do. It can be concluded that most learners veer to not cooperate with their peers when they are attempting to study.

**Question 07:** How often do you ask for help from other English speakers?

**Figure 22**

*Students' requirement for assistance*

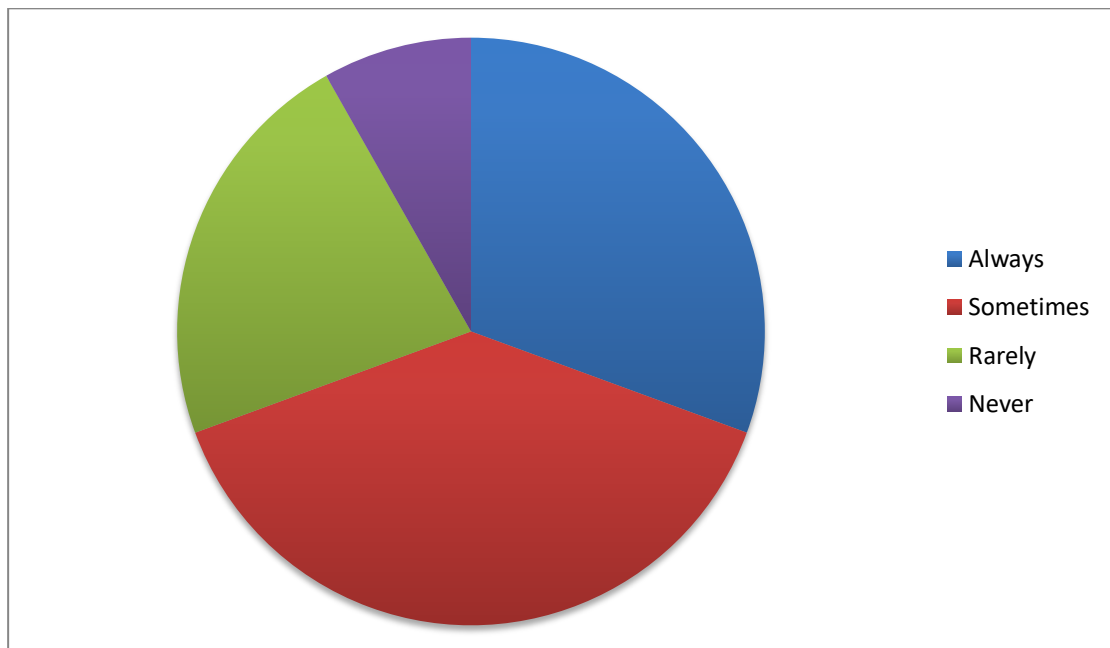


From the above pie chart, it can be understood that a large number of the students who represent (38%) sometimes ask for assistance from other English speakers. However, (32%) of them rarely demand help. About (16%) of the respondents always ask for help, while (14%) never ask other English speakers for their assistance. Henceforth, it can be said that students are somehow resistant to demanding the help of others in their learning.

**Question 08:** How often do you evaluate your own and others' decisions about learning goals?

**Figure 23**

*Students' evaluation of their and others' decisions about learning goals*

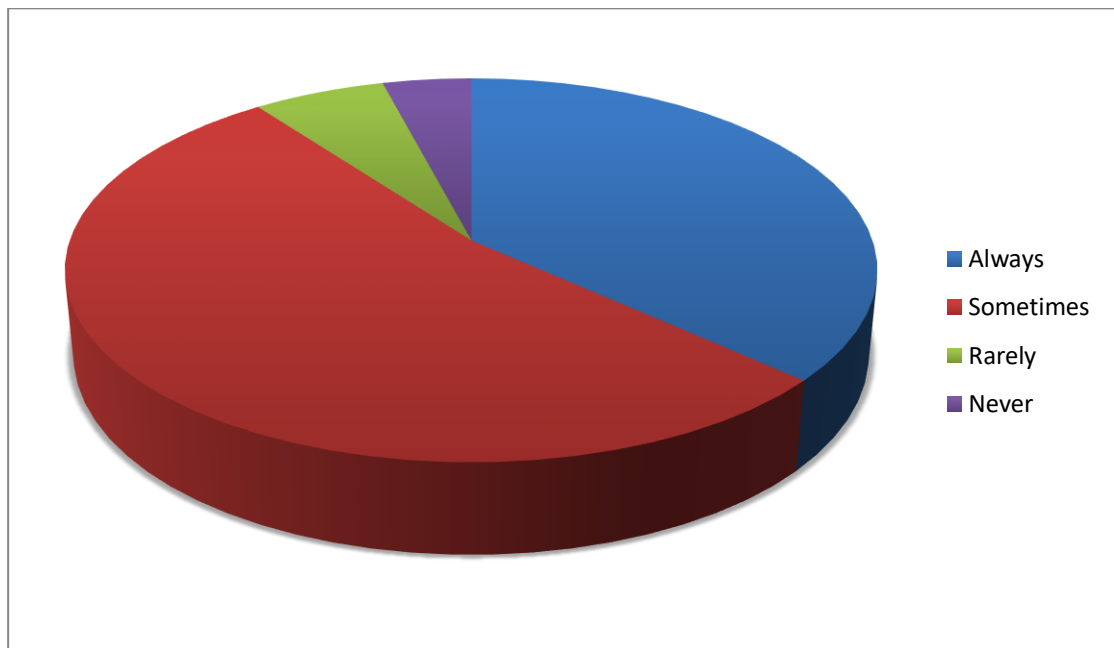


According to their answers, (38.8%) declared they sometimes and (30.6%) always evaluate their own and their peers' decisions about learning goals. Inversely, some students answered that they rarely do so at a rate of (22.4%), while (8.2%) never attempt to evaluate their and others' decisions about learning goals. These results inform us that the majority of students venture to evaluate their goals and objectives and those of others as well.

**Question 09:** How often do you manage your emotions to stay on task?

**Figure 24**

*Students' management of their emotions to stay on task*

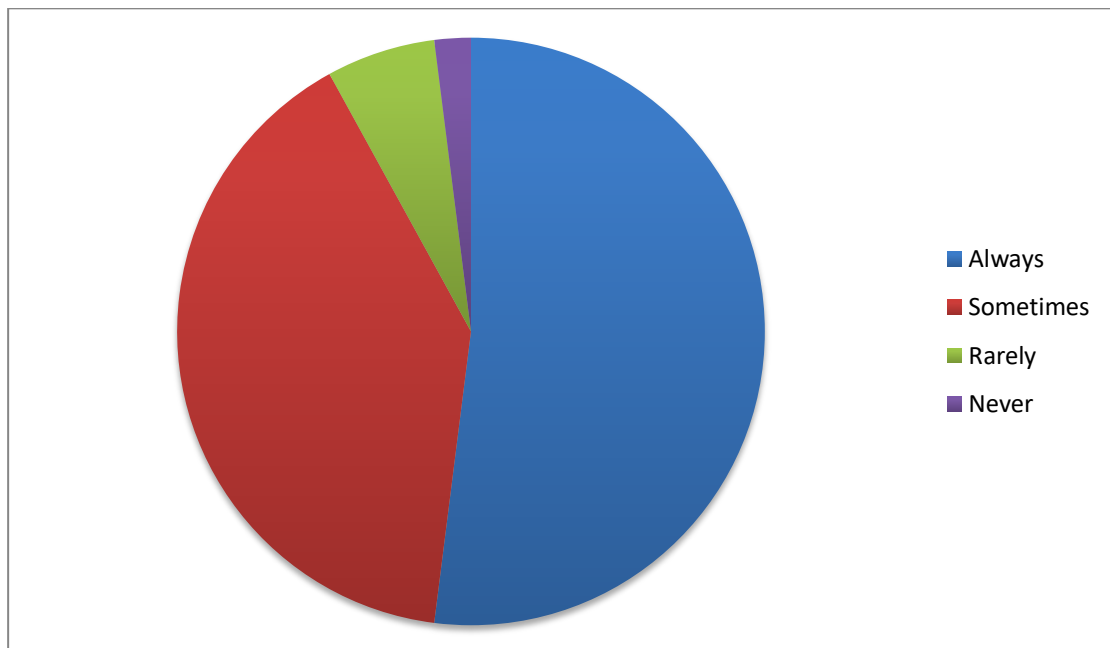


It can be observed that the majority of the students (53.1%) sometimes manage their emotions to stay on task and work more. (36.7%) always control their emotions. Conversely, (6.1%) rarely and (4.1%) never take control over their emotions to remain on task. It can be concluded that the majority of students possess the ability to control and manage their emotions when studying, allowing them to progress farther in their learning.

**Question 10:** How often do you evaluate the input (content) knowledge used in your learning?

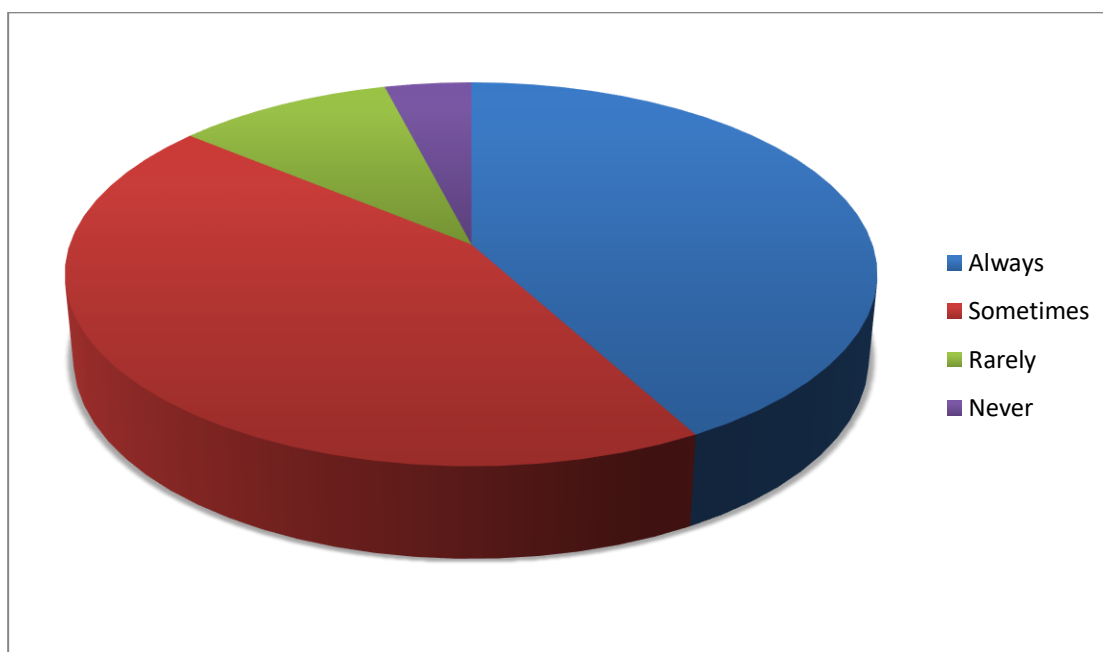
**Figure 25**

*Students' evaluation of the input*



The pie chart shows that a large number of students always evaluate the input presented to them at a percentage of (52%), adding to them (40%) of those who sometimes evaluate the knowledge that they use. On the other hand, (6%) rarely and (2%) never evaluate what they learn about. These findings inform us that most students assess what is presented before them to learn about, which tells us that they filter what to take when they study.

**Question 11:** How often do you evaluate the materials (textbooks, videos, flashcards, etc.) used in your learning?

**Figure 26***Students' evaluation of the materials*

According to the above figure, the results revealed that (44%) of the participants sometimes evaluate the materials in their learning, while (42%) always assess them, inversely, (10%) of the students rarely and (4%) never attempt to evaluate the materials presented in their learning. These findings indicate that the majority of EFL students evaluate the materials they use in their studies, allowing them to select the best materials for a better learning experience.

From these findings, it can be seen that students have developed various autonomous strategies to take the wheel of their learning and become independent from the teacher's assistance.

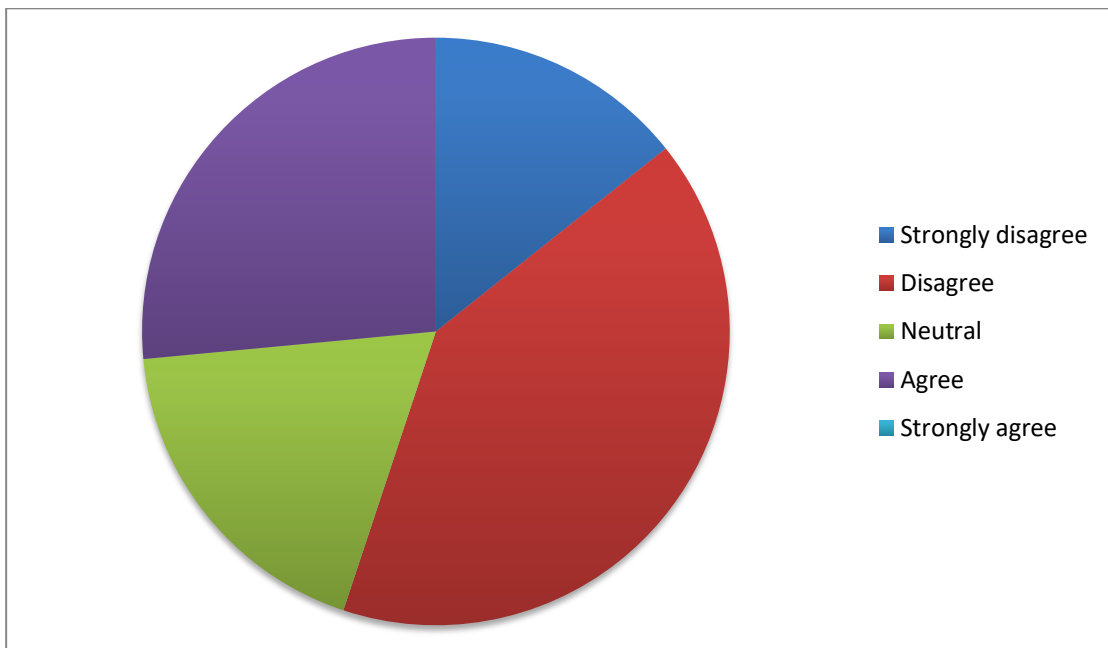
**2.2.1.4. The Challenges Associated with Learner Autonomy.** This section aims at detecting the challenges and problems that learners face when studying autonomously.

**Question 01:** You find it difficult to search, cite, or find references when you study independently.



**Figure 27**

*Students' difficulty with searching when studying*

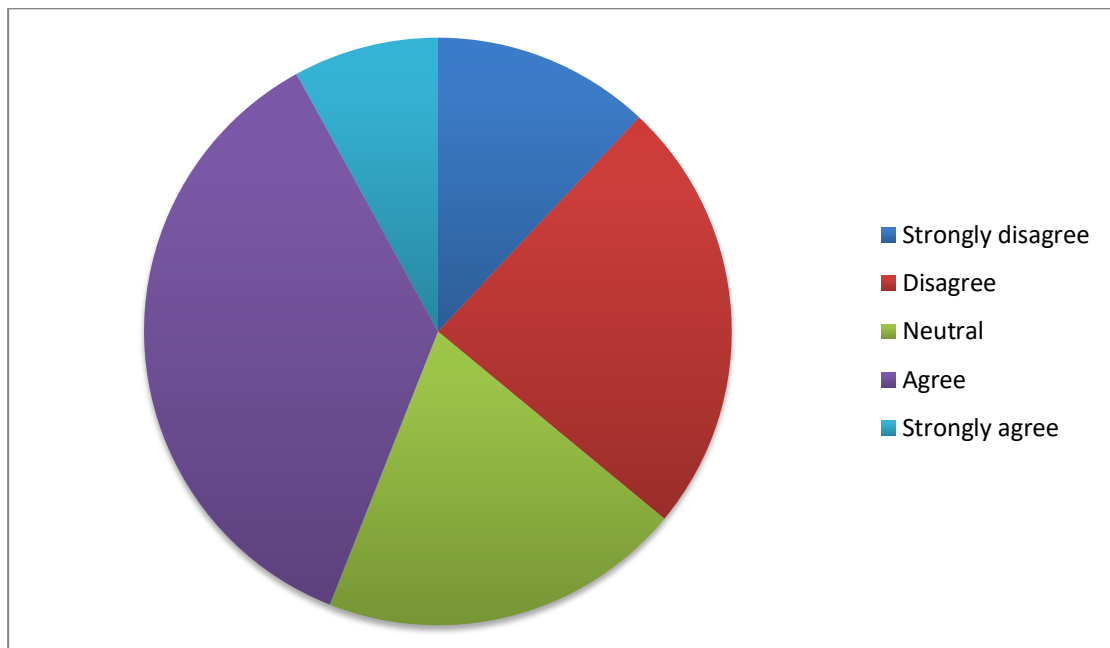


As seen in the chart above, it can be understood that a large number of students (40.8%) disagreed that they have difficulty citing or searching when studying on their own; on the other hand, (14.3%) strongly disagreed, which is a total of (55.1%) of the population. Whereas a minimal number were neutral (18.4%), and (26.5%) of students agreed that they face difficulties during searching. These results inform us that the majority of students do not have a problem finding references or citing sources when studying autonomously

**Question 02:** You do not have enough time to pursue your learning because of work, family, and daily responsibilities.

**Figure 28**

*Students' responsibilities in the way of their learning*

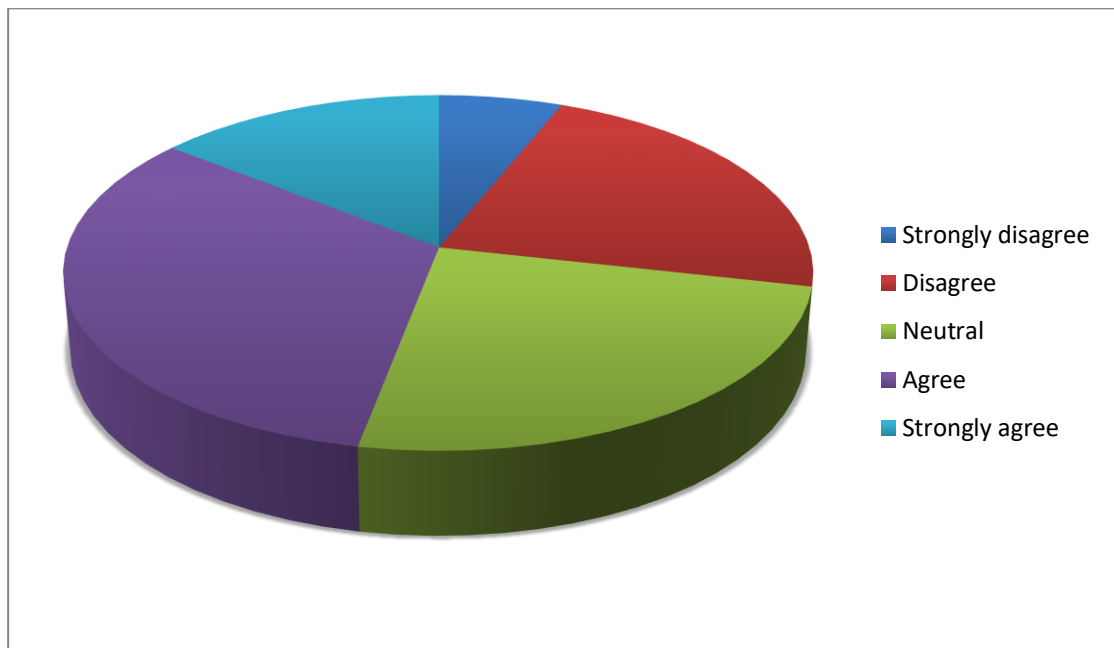


It can be observed that the majority of students agreed with not having enough time to study because of personal responsibilities, at a percentage of (36%) while (8%) strongly agreed, which makes (44%) of them. On the contrary, (24%) of the population disagreed and (12%) strongly disagreed, declaring they do not have a problem with time and responsibilities, whilst (20%) remained neutral. These results show that the majority of students struggle with having enough time to pursue their learning due to their daily responsibilities.

**Question 03:** You lack motivation and self-regulation to study on your own.

**Figure 29**

*Students' lack of motivation and self-regulation*

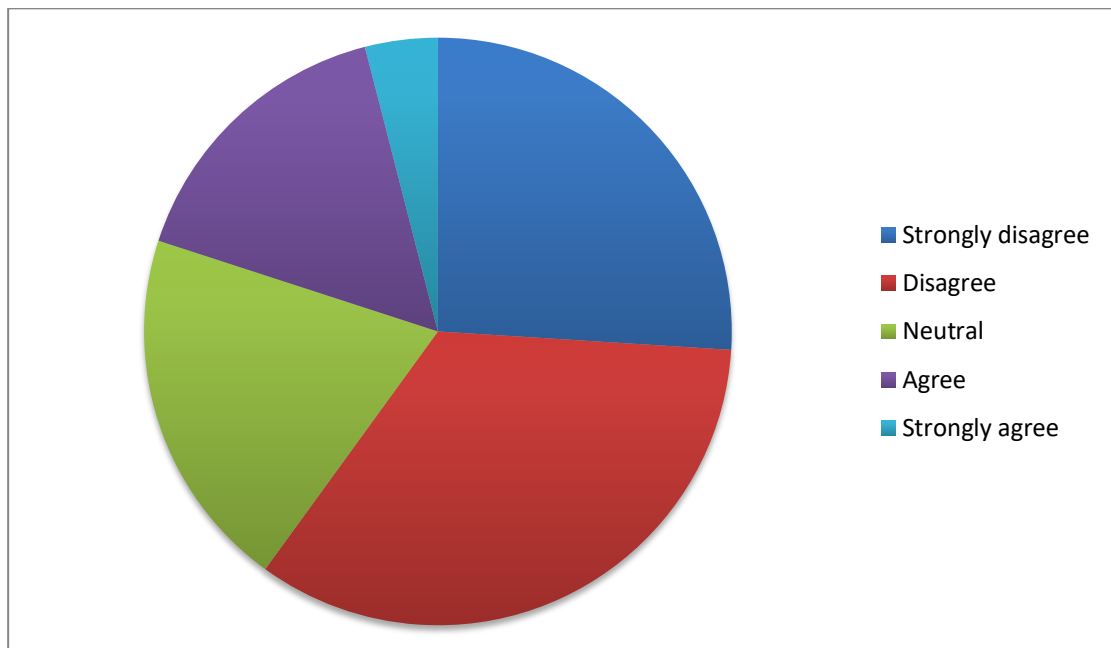


The findings show that (32.7%) agreed and (14.3%) strongly agreed that they lack motivation and self-regulation when they study independently. While in contrast, (22.4%) disagree and (6.1%) strongly disagree with the statement, and (24.5%) of students were undecided. The analysis suggests that a lack of motivation and self-regulation should be worked on among students to achieve autonomy.

**Question 04:** You lack the language skills to study independently.

**Figure 30**

*Students' lack of language skills*

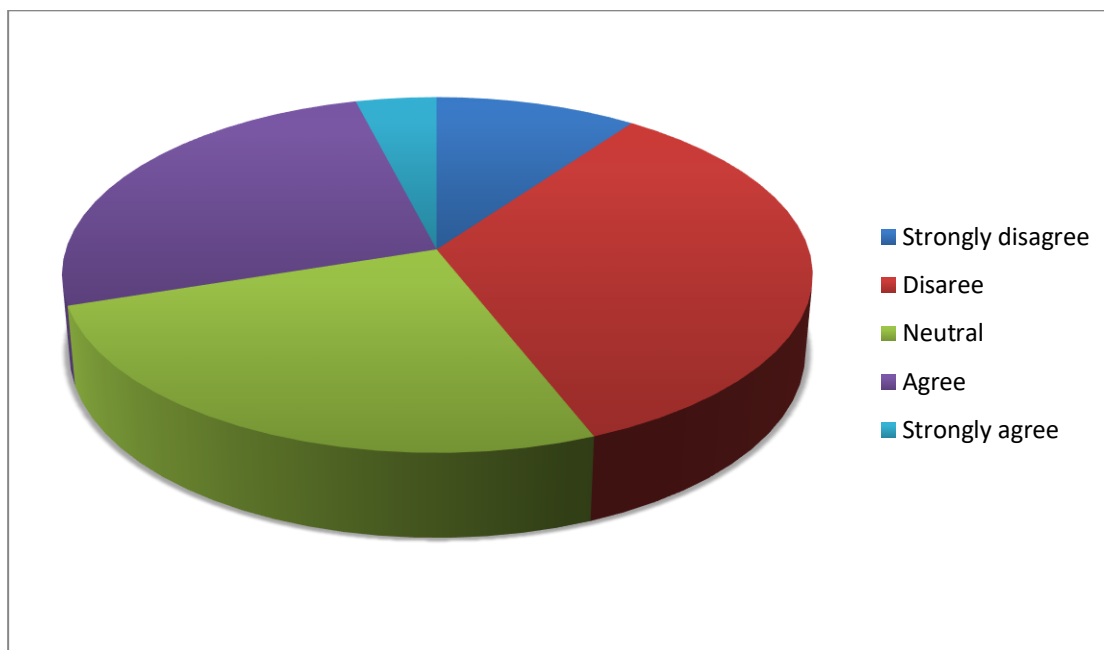


According to their answers, (34%) disagreed and (26%) strongly disagreed with lacking the language skills to study on their own. Meanwhile, (16%) of them agreed and (4%) strongly agreed that they have this problem. while (20%) of the respondents were neutral. The findings suggest that most students do not lack language skills, which allows them to depend on themselves to study the language.

**Question 05:** You are unaware of the correct and effective strategies to learn autonomously.

**Figure 31**

*Students' awareness about effective learning strategies*

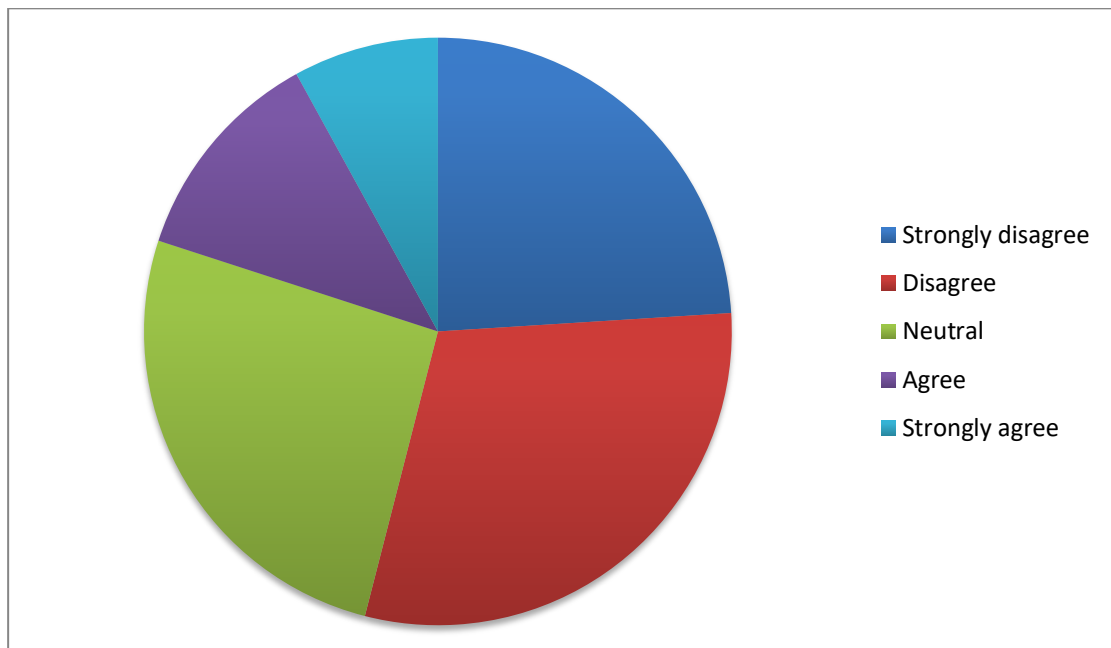


According to the above figure, the results revealed that (34%) of students disagreed and (10%) strongly disagreed with not being aware of the correct learning strategies. On the other hand, (26%) agreed, and two students (4%) strongly agreed. In addition, (20%) of the population remained neutral. From these findings, it can be concluded that the majority of Master One students are quite aware of the strategies needed to study autonomously.

**Question 06:** Algerian culture encourages learner autonomy.

**Figure 32**

*Students' opinions on the encouragement of autonomy in Algerian culture*

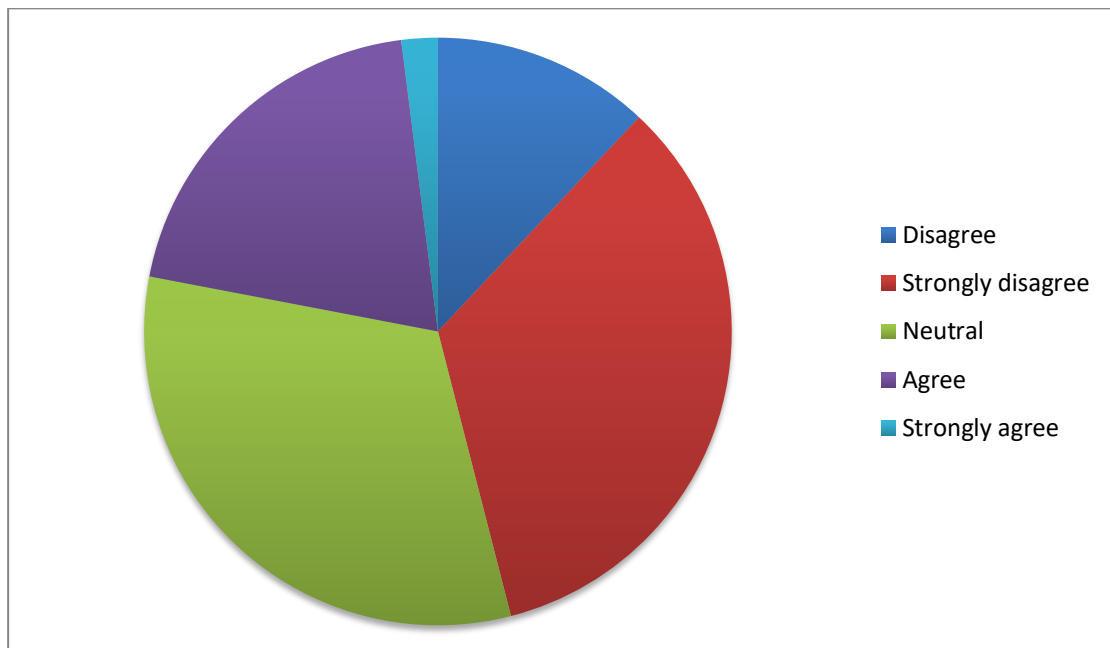


The previous chart shows that most students had a negative attitude towards the Algerian culture encouraging autonomy, with (30%) of them disagreeing and (24%) strongly disagreeing. In contrast to them, (12%) of students agreed, and (8%) strongly agreed with the idea, and finally, (26%) were neutral. These results inform us that the majority of students believe their culture discourages learner autonomy.

**Question 07:** Autonomous learners are considered disrespectful by their teachers.

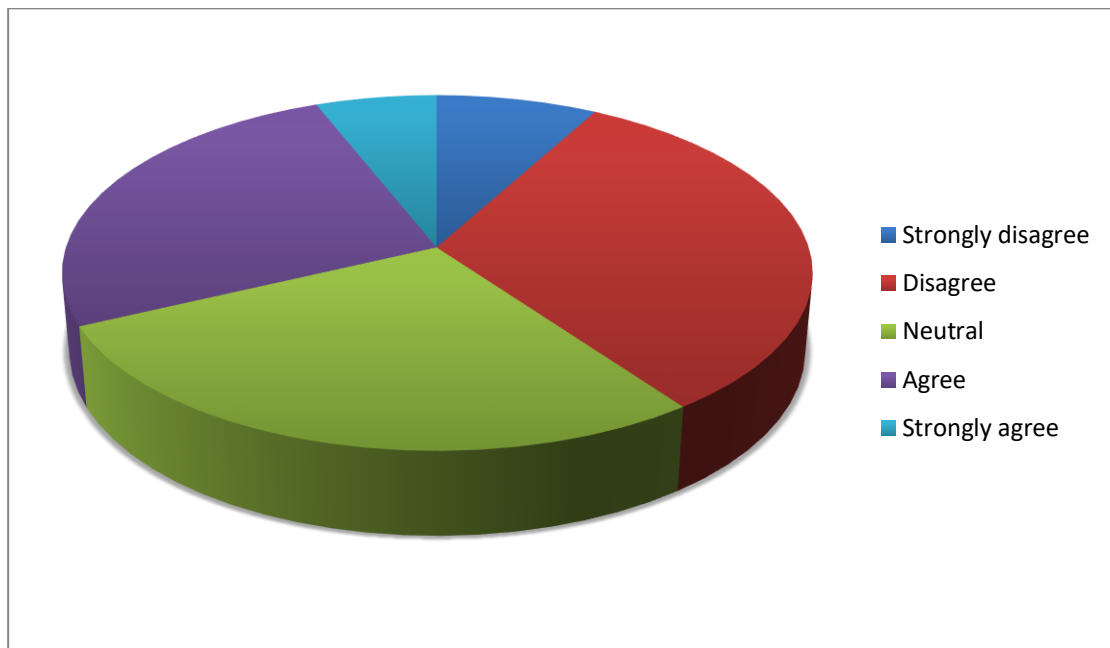
**Figure 33**

Students' opinions on autonomous learners



As seen in the pie chart above, a large number of students disagreed that autonomous learners are considered disrespectful by their teachers at a rate of (34%) and (12%) of them strongly disagreed. While other students around (20%) agreed with the statement, only one student (2%) strongly agreed, in addition to (32%) who remained neutral. Hence, it can be said that most autonomous learners do not feel tension with their teachers.

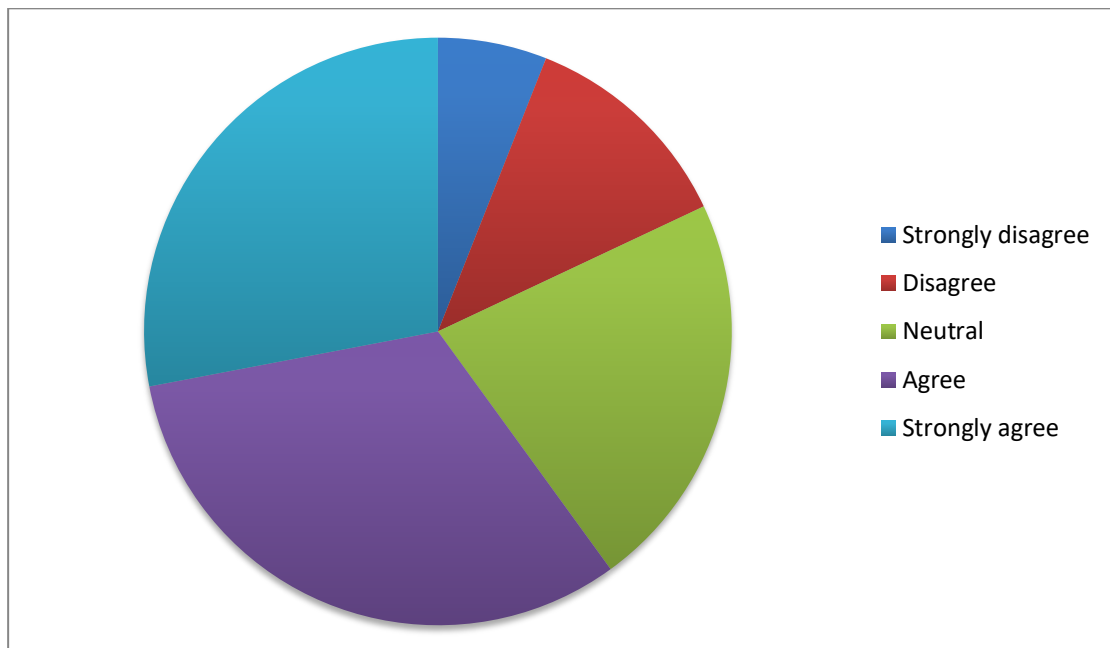
**Question 08:** Teachers do not allow students to make initiative in their learning.

**Figure 34***Students' opinions of their teachers*

According to the graph above, it can be said that the majority of students (32%) disagreed and (8%) strongly disagreed with the idea that teachers do not allow them to take initiative in their learning; on the contrary, (26%) agreed and (6%) strongly disagreed with the idea. While (28%) were neutral. We can understand that teachers allow their students to take initiative and become autonomous learners.

**Question 09:** The Algerian educational system, from primary to secondary school, discourages learner autonomy.



**Figure 35***Students' opinions on the Algerian educational system*

It can be observed that the majority of students (32%) agreed that the Algerian educational system discourages learner autonomy and (28%) strongly agreed, whereas (12%) disagreed and (6%) strongly disagreed with the idea, as well as (22%) were neutral. These findings suggest that the Algerian educational system, from primary school to secondary school, hinders learner autonomy.

These results indicate that both the Algerian culture and the educational system are stumbling blocks in the way of autonomy. Since the first grade, they are taught to depend only on the teacher and have support lessons in different modules, which is also encouraged by their parents, who believe that this is an effective way of learning and better achievement; however, they become less hard workers and lack a sense of individuality and responsibility. Besides to time management issues and self-regulation, which are some of the major challenges that Master One students are facing.

### **2.2.2. Analysis of Students' Interview**

**Question 01: Did you ever have support lessons during your studies before and after entering university? If yes, did you find it difficult to study at university because this help is unavailable?**

This question aims to get details about whether students have been autonomous before and after or not; this would indicate the tendency towards the autonomy of each student. The interviewees' answers were as follows:

**Interviewee A:** "I have never had support lessons, neither after nor before entering university, and I had no problem during university."

**Interviewee B:** "Personally, I did not take support lessons in any module throughout my education, but at university I somehow faced problems in preparing presentations; otherwise, I find studying easy."

**Interviewee C:** "I had support lessons in different modules during high school, but I did not have any at university, and I found some difficulties in my first years adjusting to the different way of learning where we had to get lessons from platforms and seek answers to my questions on my own, but I resort to the internet and my classmates when I do not understand something."

**Interviewee D:** "I did not have support lessons before, and when I got to university, I did not find difficulty because I usually prefer to study at home on my own, and take enough time to better understand my lessons."

**Interviewee E:** "I had support lessons many times at different levels, and when I reached the university level, in my first years I found difficulties in understanding some lessons because I used to study a scientific branch in high school."

Three students have shared that they never had support lessons even before entering university, while two students admitted that they had them only before university but

afterwards had to study on their own. It can be noted that students who had support lessons had more difficulty learning at university than those who did not.

**Question 02: Is learning without a teacher possible? Explain further, please.**

This question was proposed to scope out the perspectives of the interviewees on autonomous learning. Their answers were the following:

**Interviewee A:** “Of course it is possible. I study by myself using the internet, which allows me to access all the information I want without needing a teacher.”

**Interviewee B:** “I think learning without a teacher is possible only in higher education because we become aware of what we want to learn and how, as for lower levels, they need the instruction of the teacher.”

**Interviewee C:** “Yes, it is possible, though not completely, because there are times when we need feedback on our presentations or essays, and the teacher can be quite helpful.”

**Interviewee D:** “I believe that everyone can study without a teacher because we have all the necessary tools to study on our own, except for those with low levels who require guidance and motivation from the teacher.”

**Interviewee E:** “I cannot imagine a classroom without a teacher, because no matter what, they remain the first source of guidance for me, and then I do the rest of the studying. Therefore, I think studying without a teacher is not 100% possible.”

Almost all of the interviewees answered yes, saying they can learn without a teacher because they all have access to the internet and an awareness of what and how to learn. However, they also mentioned that teachers are quite helpful when providing feedback for their essays and presentations, and to motivate students of lower levels, it can be understood that most students believe that learning without a teacher is possible, mostly in higher education.

**Question 03: Have you ever tried to solve any task yourself at home? If yes, explain whether the experience was difficult or enjoyable.**

The idea behind this question is to assess to what extent students enjoy learning on their own and whether they are completely able to solve tasks and assignments independently. The answers were as follows:

**Interviewee A:** “Yes, I have. The experience was very enjoyable; I enjoy solving problems by myself.”

**Interviewee B:** “Of course, whenever we are assigned to do a task, I attempt to solve it at home, and sometimes I enjoy the experience depending on the task I am solving, for example, I like preparing presentations while I dislike writing essays.”

**Interviewee C:** “Honestly, I solve tasks at home only when I have to, because I do not like the feeling of being obliged to do something. I prefer free study, where I solve the tasks that I choose for myself and enjoy them.”

**Interviewee D:** “I do my best to solve many tasks, but when I find them difficult, I ask my classmates for help, and mostly, I enjoy the experience.”

**Interviewee E:** “Yes, I have solved many tasks at home, and the experience varied depending on the task's difficulty.”

All the answers of the interviewees came in agreement with the question; they declared that they solve tasks at home, but not all of them find it enjoyable, whether because of task difficulty or the feeling of being obliged to do something. Therefore, their answers suggest that they are capable of solving some tasks independently.

**Question 04: Do your teachers encourage you to learn the language independently? How?**

This is a direct question to know if teachers support learner autonomy. This question elicited a favourable response from the students. Their answers were the following:

**Interviewee A:** “Yes, they do. It is well known that learning any language requires a hard-working and patient student, and practice makes perfect. For that reason, teachers usually support us and encourage us to learn the language by ourselves because the lessons they give are not enough for a person to master the language.”

**Interviewee B:** “Most of them do, by reminding us that we are university students and we have to depend on ourselves, especially this year. They say we are researchers now, and this requires self-learning, where they assign us research projects and presentations to do.”

**Interviewee C:** “Yes, they do, by assigning us tasks such as writing essays and conducting research proposals.”

**Interviewee D:** “There are teachers who seem to not care that much about our learning, but there are others who provide us with extra resources such as PDF documents and YouTube videos to watch and urge us to study with extra resources at home.”

**Interviewee E:** “Yes, all of them do, through giving us assignments and presentations to do.”

The majority of students thought that teachers were actively attempting to build autonomy in them by assigning them various tasks both within and outside of the classroom. Such as research projects, classroom presentations, recommended social media, and YouTube videos to improve their learning. As a result, we can say that most teachers encourage and take action to promote learner autonomy.

**Question 05: What strategies do you think were helpful for you to develop autonomy in your learning?**

This question aims to investigate the strategies learners use to study independently. The interviewees have shared the following information:

**Interviewee A:** “Usually I learn on my own through watching YouTube videos and using educational applications to study for my exams and to improve my grammar and my accent.”

**Interviewee B:** “In my first years, I did not know that I should seek information from other sources because I was used to the high school method of learning, where teachers provide us with full lessons with limited information and we learn through memorization. Therefore, I found myself in a place where I had to develop new methods of learning, so I started watching YouTube videos and reading articles on websites, in addition to asking my classmates for help when I needed it.”

**Interviewee C:** “The strategies that helped me develop autonomy in learning were searching for extra information on different websites, watching videos, and group revision with my friends.”

**Interviewee D:** “I always attend lectures and classes where I take notes from the teacher’s explanation; these notes help me a lot when I revise for exams, besides watching YouTube videos on certain lessons to understand some points.”

**Interviewee E:** “I use the internet for my learning at all time, whether they are videos or websites, and I summarise lessons, then share them with my classmates, and we study together at the university’s library.”

The majority of students shared that studying extra resource material from online articles and YouTube videos has helped them study independently, some learners reported that peer studying, taking notes, and summarising lessons have been effective in their learning. It can be understood that all students study through autonomous strategies.

**Question 06: What problems do you face when studying on your own? Elaborate please.**

This question is intended to understand the difficulties that students face when trying to become autonomous learners. The answers were as follows:

**Interviewee A:** "The only problem that I face while studying alone is time, because when I do not understand a term or an idea, I take a long time searching for its meaning before moving on to another piece of information, and this is time-consuming when I am revising for exams."

**Interviewee B:** "The problem that I struggle with is that I cannot practice the language in my everyday life with everyone because most of the people I know do not study or speak English; therefore, my speaking skill is still unpolished."

**Interviewee C:** "I always have a problem with time because I am a worker, and I find myself fighting to have enough time to prepare presentations and attend some classes. As a result, I barely have time to develop my language on my own."

**Interviewee D:** "I always postpone my duties and tend to feel too tired to study more and revise my lessons; therefore, my main problem is procrastination."

**Interviewee E:** "I always struggle with time because I have a busy lifestyle, which prevents me from having spare time to study English and develop my language skills."

The majority of the interviewees have a common problem which is time due to social and domestic responsibilities. Furthermore, students have stated that since Arabic is their mother tongue and is frequently used locally, professionally, and in social activities, they have no chance to practice, learn, and improve their language capacity, and they lose confidence because they feel uncomfortable speaking in front of others. In addition to procrastination due to the lack of motivation that one student mentioned. From these answers, it can be said that the major problem students struggle with is time.

### **Section Three: Data Discussion**

#### **2.3.1. Quantitative Data Discussion**

The quantitative results from the students' questionnaire show that the age of the participants was mainly between 20 and 23 years old, which is the expected age of Master One students. It is also an indication that most of the students (40) did not skip many years in previous levels. Moreover, the female element (36) was greater in number than the male gender (14), which is a phenomenon that has been noticed recently.

As for searching about the English language, the majority of respondents enjoy searching by themselves; (23) students find pleasure when searching in English, as well as (19) students strongly agree with them, which indicates a high individual effort and interest in learning. Whereupon five students remained neutral, and only three students stood opposed to this, which suggests that a minimum number of students do not search independently while the majority attempt to do that and enjoy it.

In the next answers about being a better achiever when studying autonomously, (23) students said they are better achievers when they study on their own, and (19) participants took their side. On the other hand, five participants remained undecided, and three of them disagreed with the idea, which leads to questioning their educational level.

As for expanding knowledge beyond what they learn in the classroom, (46) students believe that they should improve their language skills outside the classroom, which is explained by their clear propensity towards taking charge of their language development. Whereas three respondents were neutral and only one student disagreed with the idea, which is not concerning.

Additionally, (78) participants choose to learn on their own because they believe that they have the right to select their learning materials, this indicates that most students are aware of their learning styles and peculiarities and prefer to study autonomously to select the suitable materials for their learning, while a very low number of those who remained both neutral and disagreed to the idea which is not concerning since the majority of students



around (39) do not learn from the materials such as books and notes provided by their teachers to learn from, this reveals students' negative attitudes towards the scholar materials and their reliability on external ones, on the other hand, nine students declared that they learn only from what the teacher provides them with, indicating their lack of autonomy while only two were neutral. These numbers are clear indicators that the current generation of students is more presumably to be autonomous learners.

Moreover, (34) students learn English more through their free study than by attending courses, which demonstrates students' discrepancy in classroom knowledge. Conversely, three students disagreed with this idea, and (13) of them remained undecided. These results are much related to the ones in question on their opinions on whether classroom learning is not sufficient, where the majority of participants (33) agree that it is not sufficient and (11) students believe it is sufficient, while six students were neutral. These findings suggest that most students hold a negative attitude towards classroom learning, which means that it does not provide them with deep knowledge, which is quite natural since the teacher cannot fulfil each student's needs.

A large number of students (29) admit that their teachers encourage them to learn outside the boundaries of the classroom, (11) students said they do not, while (10) of them were neutral. This may imply that teachers themselves are split regarding supporting learner autonomy.

In regards to learning through group activities, (25) students find them helpful when learning independently; this suggests that learners support each other for autonomous learning and attempt to assist one another. Also, (13) participants stand opposed to the idea, suggesting that some of them prefer individual learning while (12) students remained neutral.

Besides, when they were asked if the best way to learn is in the classroom with the teacher, (31) of the respondents took an opposing side to the idea, and (11) believed that

mostly this is the best way to learn, while only eight students took a neutral side. This is a high indicator that students find learning in the classroom deficit, which leads them to resort to external sources of information to fulfil their language development. Nonetheless, the rest of the students who rely only on classroom learning are believed to lack learner autonomy as well as academic achievement. In the same vein, when they were asked about their opinions on whether independent learning cannot take place without the help of the teacher, the majority, (30) students disagreed with that, indicating their awareness of the concept of autonomy, while (14) students believed that being independent would require the help of the teacher and six of them were undecided. These findings reveal students' awareness of the right meaning of learner autonomy, while a minority of them are still dependent on their teachers even when they take the step to study individually.

Further, when asked about setting learning objectives, (22) students claimed they sometimes set their learning objectives, and (18) participants always do, while eight of them rarely set them and only two never do. Also, a large number of students declared that they evaluate their and others' decisions about learning goals, and only a few denied this. As for planning their learning, a large number of students (27) sometimes do and (15) always plan their learning, whilst only eight rarely do so. This is an indicator that the majority of students set goals and objectives, evaluate them, and plan their learning on their own as a form of autonomous learning, while the minority of students are either ignorant of the necessity to do so or have a lack of interest in learning.

Along with this, (42) participants declared that they assess their learning achievement, and the rest either rarely or never do so. This may imply that most students are responsible for their learning achievements and are aware of the progress they make. On the other hand, when it comes to self-motivation and managing emotions, the mass participants said they take control over their emotions and motivate themselves to stay on task and pursue their learning,

while only a few students denied having the ability to do so. These results show that Master One students have one of the key factors to achieving autonomy, which is motivation.

Furthermore, when students were asked about peer collaboration in learning and asking for help from other English speakers, they were split into two equal parts: one half said they prefer to collaborate and attempt to ask for help, and the other half said they do not. This may imply that collaborative learning is not supported by all learners; some of them prefer individual work and resort to different sources rather than asking for help from others.

In addition, most participants (89) said they evaluate the input and materials used in their learning, and only (11) said they do not. This is closely related to their answers about choosing their materials and content since they evaluate what is presented to them and then choose whether to use it or not as a move towards autonomous learning.

Concerning finding difficulties in searching, citing, and referencing, a large number of the population around (28) students said they do not face any difficulty, while (13) students said they do, and nine of them were neutral. These results are expected since the majority of students have access to sources on the internet, including websites, online libraries, and videos, which allow them to extract all the needed references and information. As for the minority, it is probably their lack of awareness about the best sources of information and the correct ways of citing and referencing the works that may affect their learning and lead them to always require the aid of a professional.

Moreover, a vast number of participants (22) mentioned that they do not have enough time to study due to their social and domestic responsibilities, and (18) participants said they do not face such problems, while (10) remained neutral. This issue is commonly seen among Master One students since they happen to be at an age where they have many life duties to do. That cross paths with their educational responsibilities and require the skill of time management and enough motivation to pursue their learning. In the same vein, most students

(24) confessed that they lack motivation and self-regulation to study on their own, whereas (14) participants denied this and (12) chose to be neutral. These results are concerning because motivation and self-regulation are necessary for independent learning; however, looking back at their answers on self-motivation, most students tend to prompt themselves to study on their own.

When students were asked whether they lack the language skills to study independently, the vast majority (30) disagreed with the idea, and the rest (20) were split between those who were neutral and those who admitted lacking the language skills. For Master One students, these results are desired since they are at a level where they should have acquired the skills that would allow them to learn the language on their own. For the minority, these results are expected because not all students have the same proficiency level in language learning, thus they are required to put more effort into improving their four language skills.

In addition to this, the results that were found when they were asked whether they are unaware of the effective strategies on their own show a low number of those who took an opposing side, about (22) students, while (15) of them said they are unenlightened of the correct strategies to become autonomous learners, and the other (13) participants remained neutral. These results indicate that half of the population is not mindful of the right and effective learning strategies that they need to adapt to study independently, which is concerning because each student should be aware of these strategies to achieve academic success.

Most of the students (23) disagreed with the idea that autonomous learners are considered disrespectful by their teachers, while (16) of them remained neutral, and only (11) students agreed with the statement. These results suggest that teachers are tolerant and respectful towards autonomous learners and even encourage them to learn independently.

Finally, the majority of students (27) disagreed with the claim that the Algerian culture encourages learner autonomy, while (10) of them agreed and the rest (13) were neutral. In parallel, when they were told that the Algerian educational system from primary to secondary school discourages learner autonomy, (30) students agreed to that, and only nine stood against it, while (11) students remained neutral.

### ***2.3.2. Qualitative Data Discussion***

As for the qualitative results of the interview, it is noticed that three interviewees did not have support lessons before and after entering university, while only two said they had them before. All five interviewees claimed that they found difficulty studying at university in their first years, mainly, but then they could accommodate; nonetheless, those who had support lessons before faced more difficulty than the others. Also, when they were asked whether learning without a teacher is possible, three said it is possible, while only two students added that the teacher is helpful when it comes to providing feedback and motivating them. These answers show that nowadays most learners veer to use various online sources to learn rather than just depending on the teacher, which is a form of autonomous learning; however, some students are still in need of guidance in their learning.

In addition, when they were asked whether they have difficulty solving tasks at home, all interviewees asserted that they solve tasks at home, and if they find difficulty, they resort to online solutions or ask their peers for assistance. These answers suggest that learners can study independently, despite task difficulty.

Also, the interviewees reported that their teachers encouraged them to learn the language autonomously through performing presentations, conducting research projects, and group work that allowed them to experience different ways of learning and develop autonomous traits such as conducting research by themselves, preparing their presentations,

and learning skills of public speaking, in addition to becoming collaborative learners. These reports suggest that teachers at the University of Mila encourage learner autonomy.

Next, when they were asked about the strategies that were helpful for them to develop autonomy, the interviewees reported that they watch YouTube videos, read articles on websites, and visit online libraries, in addition to taking notes, attending classes, summarising their lessons, and studying with their peers. The strategies learners use are most likely online activities since, at this time, all learners use their laptops and smart phones to learn.

Regarding the difficulties that they face when studying on their own, all interviewees mentioned the same problem which is time due to work and daily duties, which causes them to miss classes and attend only exams and presentations, in addition to the sense of procrastination and lack of motivation among some students, which affects their pace of learning. Also, they reported that the mother tongue is another barrier for them to practice the language since everything is in Arabic and the second language is French, which causes them to lose confidence in speaking English in front of others. These results indicate that time management and culture are the main problems students deal with.

Overall, the results of the students' questionnaire and interview revealed that the majority of students are aware of the concept of autonomy and have developed it in their language learning; hence, they developed learning strategies that they use inside and outside the classroom while dealing with a set of challenges personally, educationally, and culturally.

#### **2.4. Answering Research Questions**

The present study is an exploration of whether Master One students in the Department of Foreign Languages at Mila University Centre have developed learner autonomy and the strategies they acquired to become so. In order to undertake this study, three research questions were raised:

1. Did the students of the University Centre in Mila develop learner autonomy?

2. What are the strategies learners have developed to study independently?
3. What are the challenges that the students face when studying autonomously?

The findings of the study, implied that Master One students have developed learner autonomy and that the majority of them take charge of their learning through various learning strategies acquired inside and outside of the classroom such as watching YouTube videos, reading articles on websites, and visiting online libraries, in addition to taking notes, attending classes, summarising their lessons, and studying with their peers. Despite all of the personal and external problems they confront like lack of time, lack of motivation, and culture, their autonomy was progressively built through years of academic education and the support of their teachers who encouraged them to become autonomous. As a result, these findings confirmed our assumptions.

## **2.5. Suggestions and Pedagogical Recommendations**

The current findings indicate that a variety of factors impact students' autonomy. EFL students at Mila University's Department of Foreign Languages confront several problems, such as lack of motivation to study independently and to sustain their pursuit of learning, poor time management, and discouragement from both the Algerian culture and educational system. Based on the reported findings, below are some pedagogical suggestions that might assist EFL teachers and students in developing strategies for autonomous learners.

To begin with, the educational system must change since it is focused on the teacher, not the learner, and classrooms should become learner-centred, not teacher-centred. Also, learners should be trained from a young age to be independent so that it will be implanted in their behavioural mechanisms. In addition, learners need to be taught effective learning strategies that will help them become self-sufficient. Besides, the university should provide students with specialised teachers and the necessary materials to develop learner autonomy.

Moreover, learners should break the cycle of their society and culture and learn to become self-reliant, whether in education, work, or life, in addition to learning time management skills to assist them in pursuing their learning.

Finally, the researchers suggest that more studies should be conducted about it, especially experimental studies that show the importance of language learning strategies in the acquisition of the language and achieving autonomy.

## **2.6. Limitations of the Study and Future Research**

This study is structured to elicit detailed information from Master One students of English about their developed autonomous strategies at the department of Foreign Languages at Mila University Centre.

Gathering such information is time-consuming. This was one of the first barriers encountered, preventing us from employing various research methods to test our hypotheses. Additionally, it is hard to generalise the results since the sample consists of only (50) students. Also, the researchers faced a few difficulties with accessing online libraries, where some books and dissertations were locked.

Despite the restrictions of the study, it is hoped that it can offer some guidelines for further research on the subject of autonomous learning strategies to gather more information and uncover other aspects of the subject that may not have been revealed in the current research.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a thorough discussion of the results, as well as recommendations and limitations of the research, which are offered in the concluding chapter.

The findings from both the students' questionnaire and interview have shown that the participants are aware of the importance of learner autonomy and shared the strategies they



used/developed along their pursuit towards autonomy. In light of these findings, some implications and pedagogical recommendations are offered to boost learner autonomy in our classrooms and learners.

## General Conclusion

The current study questions the development of autonomy by Master One students in the Department of Foreign Languages at Mila University Centre and tracks the autonomous strategies they acquired during their four-years of university life. It is assumed that the students at Mila University Centre have become autonomous learners and are employing various autonomous learning strategies.

A mixed-method approach guided the research described above. This study is presented in two chapters. The first one illuminates the subject matter of the study, learner autonomy and language learning strategies, with a discussion of the relationship between the two. The second chapter describes the practical framework for gathering and analysing the data. A questionnaire and an interview were the main research tools and were examined both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The findings revealed that the majority of students are aware of the concept of autonomy and its importance and utility for language acquisition. They have developed different learning strategies to ease their learning process. These include taking notes, attending classes, working in groups, watching videos and visiting online sources. These strategies were used both inside and outside the classroom. Moreover, the results revealed a list of challenges in the face of learners' autonomy development such as: the educational system, the Algerian culture and their daily responsibilities. Based on the reported results our hypotheses were confirmed. However, further research is recommended in this field, where greater emphasis and attention would be placed on improving the study skills course and its syllabi regarding autonomy.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

You are kindly invited to fill in the following questionnaire for a master's dissertation on the strategies developed by M1 EFL students when studying independently. Answer in terms of how well the statement describes you. Do not answer how you think you should be or what other people do. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Your collaboration is much needed and highly appreciated.

#### Section one: Background Information

1\_ What is your gender:

Female

Male

2\_ What is your age:

20\_23

23\_25

25\_above

#### Section two: Learners' Attitudes towards Learner Autonomy

This section is designed to explore learners' attitudes towards autonomy.

Please rate these statements by ticking (✓) the item that represents how you feel about each statement.

Learners' attitudes	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1_ I enjoy searching by myself about the English language.					
2_ I am a better achiever when I study on my own.					

3_ I think it is important for me to improve my English skills outside the classroom.					
4_ I learn by myself because I have the right to select my English learning materials.					
5_ I think I can learn more English through my free study than through attending courses.					
6_ Teachers encourage me to learn outside the boundaries of the classroom.					
7_ Group activities help me with independent learning.					
8_ I think learning in class is not sufficient.					
9_ I think the best way to learn English for me is mostly in the classroom with the teacher.					
10_ I learn only from the material (notes, books) that the teacher provides me to learn from.					
11_ Independent learning cannot take place without the help of the teacher.					

### Section three: Detecting Students' Developed Learning Strategies

This section is designed to know your developed autonomous learning strategies. Please respond to the questions by ticking (√) the corresponding item that tells us whether you ALWAYS use a given strategy, SOMETIMES, RARELY, or NEVER use it.

Autonomous strategies	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1_ How often do you set your learning objectives?				
2_ How often do you plan your learning?				
3_ How often do you assess your learning achievement?				
4_ How often do you motivate yourself to learn?				
5_ How often do you plan your schedule to have enough time to study English?				

6_ How often do you collaborate with your peers or other people to learn?				
7_ How often do you ask for help from other English speakers?				
8_ How often do you evaluate your own and others' decisions about learning goals?				
9_ How often do you manage your emotions to stay on task?				
10_ How often do you evaluate the input (content) knowledge used in your learning?				
11_ How often do you evaluate the materials (textbooks, videos, flashcards, etc.) used in your learning?				

#### Section four: The Challenges Associated with Learner Autonomy

This section is devoted to detect the challenges that learners face when studying autonomously. Please rate these statements by ticking (√) the item that represents how you feel about each statement.

Challenges associated with learner autonomy	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1_ You find it difficult to search, cite, or find references when you study independently.					
2_ You do not have enough time to pursue your learning because of work, family, and daily responsibilities.					
3_ You lack motivation and self-regulation to study on your own.					
4_ You lack the language skills to study independently.					
5_ You are unaware of the correct and effective strategies to learn autonomously.					
6_ Algerian culture encourages learner autonomy.					
7_ Autonomous learners are considered disrespectful by their teachers.					
8_ Teachers do not allow students to make initiative in their learning.					

9_ The Algerian educational system, from primary to secondary school, discourages learner autonomy.					
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**Thank you very much for your collaboration.**

## **Appendix B**

### **Students' Interview**

**Question 1:** Did you ever have support lessons during your studies before and after entering university? If yes, did you find it difficult to study at university because this help is unavailable?

**Question 2:** Is learning without a teacher possible? Explain further, please.

**Question 3:** Have you ever tried to solve any task yourself at home? If yes, explain whether the experience was difficult or enjoyable.

**Question 4:** Do your teachers encourage you to learn the language independently? How?

**Question 5:** What strategies do you think were helpful for you to develop autonomy in your learning?

**Question 6:** What problems do you face when studying on your own? Elaborate please.

### ملخص

تستكشف هذه الدراسة استراتيجيات التعلم التي ابتكرها المتعلمون المستقلون أثناء دراستهم باستقلالية، وما إذا كانوا قد نجحوا في التعلم باستقلالية. انتهجت طريقة مختلطة للبحث أُجريت فيها استبيان ومقابلة لطلبة السنة الأولى من طور الماجستير في المركز الجامعي ميله. أظهرت النتائج أن الطلبة قد أصبحوا متعلمين مستقلين وأن معظمهم يتحكمون في تعلمهم بواسطة استراتيجيات متعددة اكتسبوها داخل وخارج القسم. بالرغم من كل التحديات التي واجهوها، فإن استقلاليتهم في التعلم قد بُنيت بفضل سنوات من الدراسة الأكاديمية ودعم أساتذتهم الذين شجعوهم على أن يصبحوا مستقلين. بالتالي، تركز هذه الدراسة على الحاجة المفروضة على المتعلمين بأن يكتسبوا استراتيجيات للتعلم ليصبحوا مستقلين، والحاجة لأن يشجع النظام التعليمي المتعلمين على أن يصبحوا المتحكمين في تعلمهم.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الاستقلالية في التعلم، استراتيجيات التعلم المستقل، قسم الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، تطوير الاستراتيجيات، تعلم اللغات.



## Resumé

La présente étude explore les stratégies d'apprentissage créées par les apprenants autonomes tout en étudiant de manière indépendante et s'ils ont réussi à devenir des apprenants autonomes. Une méthode de recherche mixte a été employée, où un questionnaire et un entretien ont été menés avec des étudiants du Master One English au Mila University Centre. Les résultats ont révélé que les élèves ont développé une autonomie d'apprentissage et que la plupart d'entre eux prennent en charge leurs apprentissages grâce à diverses stratégies acquises à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur de la classe. Malgré tous les défis auxquels ils ont été confrontés, leur autonomie s'est progressivement construite grâce à des années de formation académique et au soutien de leurs enseignants, qui les ont encouragés à devenir autonomes. Ainsi, cette étude accentue la nécessité pour les élèves d'acquérir des stratégies d'apprentissage pour devenir autonomes et la nécessité pour le système éducatif d'inciter les apprenants à devenir maîtres de leurs apprentissages.

**Mots-clés :** autonomie de l'apprenant, stratégies d'apprentissage autonomes, classe EFL, développement de stratégies, apprentissage des langues.





