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**Challenges EFL Learners Face in Developing Autonomous Learning: Teachers' and Learners' Perspectives**  
**Case Study: First Year EFL Students at AbdElhafid Boussof University Centre-Mila**

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**Didactics of Foreign Languages**

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## **Soulaf Bounemour's Dedication**

*Praises to Allah, the most gracious.*

*As a start, I would like to appreciate my efforts and all blood, sweat, and tear that I put in order to make this work accomplished.*

*I would love and be honoured to dedicate this thesis to:*

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*My siblings Loukman, Hadjer, Meriem, Karima, Douaa, and never forgetting my sister-in-law Mey. You guys are who make life way easier with your unlimited encouragement.*

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*To the soul of my grandmother whom I miss the most, without her unexposed aids I could have not reached this status.*

*to all my dear friends one by one. Thank you.*

*And last but not least, special thanks to my partner in war, my dearest Khoula.*

---

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

*This research work is dedicated to:*

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## ABSTRACT

Responsibility is quite possibly the main part of human life character. It is one of the peculiarities of people's personalities which denote that individual take care of their own affairs without depending on others. The international trends in education show a paradigm shift from the traditional teacher-oriented approach to a learner centered approach. This latter has been accelerated by the concept of learner autonomy (LA). In this respect, the aim of this research is to study the encountered challenges that EFL learners face in their process of developing their autonomy. Hence, this research attempts to reveal the sustainable obstacles first year licence (L1) EFL students face in their path to enhance their self-reliance traits in terms of education. The purpose of the current study is to shed light on the pre-mentioned challenges and give learners some tips to avoid these obstacles and boost their learning level. Three main research questions were raised; whether first year EFL learners aware and ready to adapt autonomous learning approach, and what are the types of the challenges they face. For this purpose, two research instruments were used to collect the required information, a students' questionnaire and a teachers' interview. This study argues for the urge to promote learner autonomy at university level for the positive impact this approach has on EFL learners' level of performance, and the findings showed that first year EFL learners are more aware than to be ready for adapting autonomy, and that students have potentials to develop learning responsibility but they do not use them appropriately for their benefits. In addition, teachers share the blame in learners' poor level of developing LA.

**Key words:** Autonomy, EFL Learners, Autonomous learning, Responsibility, Challenges, Language teaching and learning

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## List of Abbreviations

**EFL:** English as Foreign Language

**ICT:** Information and Communication Technology

**L1:** 1<sup>st</sup> year Licence

**LA:** Learner Autonomy

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## List of Tables

<b>Table 01:</b> Dimensions of Autonomy .....	20
<b>Table 02:</b> Autonomy Levels of Implementation (Nunan, 1997) .....	23
<b>Table 03:</b> Levels of Autonomy (Alrabai) .....	25
<b>Table 04:</b> Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Motivation .....	33
<b>Table 05:</b> The Main Roles of Autonomous Teachers .....	43

---

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 01:</b> Illustration of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.....	30
<b>Figure 02:</b> Student’s Gender .....	54
<b>Figure 03:</b> Student’s Choice of Studying English.....	55
<b>Figure 04:</b> Students’ English Level.....	56
<b>Figure 05:</b> The Ability to Learn Independently .....	56
<b>Figure 06:</b> Lessons’ Preparation.....	57
<b>Figure 07:</b> Learners’ Reliance on Teachers .....	58
<b>Figure 08:</b> Searching for Information with Teachers ‘Guidance.....	59
<b>Figure 09:</b> Looking for Information without Any Teachers’ Guidance .....	60
<b>Figure 10:</b> Knowledge Application in Real Life Situations .....	61
<b>Figure 11:</b> ICT Facilities in schools .....	62
<b>Figure 12:</b> Students’ Focus When Learning.....	63
<b>Figure 13:</b> Autonomy for EFL University Learners .....	64
<b>Figure 14:</b> Students’ Readiness to Adopt Autonomous Learning .....	65
<b>Figure 15:</b> Enhancing Learners’ Autonomy Responsibility.....	66
<b>Figure 16:</b> Reasons behind Students’ lack of autonomy .....	67
<b>Figure 17:</b> Obstacles Faced by Learners in Developing Independent Learning .....	68
<b>Figure 18:</b> Students’ Progress Evaluation.....	69
<b>Figure 19:</b> Learners and Teachers Relationship .....	70



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<b>Figure 20:</b> Environmental Factors Influence .....	71
<b>Figure 21:</b> Learner's Capacity to Conduct a Research .....	72
<b>Figure 22:</b> Monitoring Learning Progress All Alone.....	72
<b>Figure 23:</b> Students' Ability to Set Learning Objectives .....	73

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## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments .....	4
Abstract .....	5
List of Abbreviation .....	6
List of Tables .....	7
List of Figures .....	8
General Introduction .....	14
1. Background of the Study .....	14
2. Statement of the Problem .....	15
3. Aims of the Study .....	16
4. Research Questions .....	16
5. Research Methodology .....	17
6. Structure of the Study .....	17
Chapter One: Autonomy .....	18
Introduction .....	18
1.1. Section One: Autonomy in Language Learning .....	18
1.1.1. What is Autonomy? .....	18
1.1.1.1. Self-Governance Dimension .....	19
1.1.1.2. Self-Determination Dimension. ....	19
• Freedom .....	19
• Opportunity .....	20
1.1.1.3. Self-Authorization Dimension .....	20
1.1.2. Autonomous Learning .....	21
1.1.3. Levels of Autonomy .....	22
1.1.4. Characteristics of Learner Autonomy .....	25

---

1.1.5. Aspects of Autonomy .....	27
1.1.6. Theories Related to Learner Autonomy .....	28
1.1.6.1. Humanistic Learning Theories from Learners' Autonomy Perspective.....	28
1.1.6.1.1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. ....	29
1.1.6.1.2. Self-Determination Theory. ....	31
1.1.6.1.3. Zone of Proximal Development.....	31
1.2. Section Two: Internal and External Obstacles .....	32
1.2.1. Internal Challenges .....	32
1.2.1.1. Lack of Motivation. ....	32
1.2.1.2. Fear of Failure .....	34
1.2.1.3. Laziness. ....	34
1.2.1.4. Dependency .....	35
1.2.1.5. Fear of Taking Responsibility in Terms of Learning Process .....	35
1.2.1.6. Lack of Searching Skills Experience.....	37
1.2.2. External Challenges .....	37
1.2.2.1. ICT Facilities. ....	37
1.2.2.2. Life Quality .....	38
1.2.2.3. Teachers' Teaching Strategies (Teacher-centred approach). ....	39
1.2.2.4. Time Management. ....	40
1.2.2.5. Limited Support and Encouragement .....	40
1.2.2.6. Restricted Access to Resources. ....	41
1.2.3. Teachers and Students' Roles in Promoting Autonomy .....	42
1.2.3.1. Teachers' Roles. ....	42
1.2.3.2. Students' Roles. ....	44

---

1.2.4. Fostering the Bond between Teachers and Learners .....	44
1.2.5. Strategies to Promote Autonomous Learning among Students .....	45
1.2.5.1. Step One: Make Instructional Goals Clear to Learners. ....	46
1.2.5.2. Step two: Allow learners to create their own goals.....	46
1.2.5.3. Step three: Encourage Learners to Use their Second Language Outside the Classroom. ....	47
1.2.5.4. Step four: Raise awareness of learning processes. ....	47
1.2.5.5 Step five: Help Learners Identify Their Own Preferred Styles and Strategies .....	48
1.2.5.6. Step six: Encourage learner choice .....	48
1.2.5.7. Step seven: Allow Learners to Generate Their Own Tasks .....	48
1.2.5.8. Step eight: Encourage Learners to Become Teachers. ....	49
1.2.5.9. Step nine: Encourage Learners to Become Researchers.....	49
Conclusion .....	49
Chapter Two: Methodology and Data Analysis and Interpretation .....	51
Introduction .....	52
2. 1. Methodology .....	52
2.1.1. Sample and Research Instruments of the Study .....	52
2.2. Data Analysis .....	54
2.2.1. Students Questionnaire .....	54
2.1.3.2. Teachers' Interview .....	75
2.1.3.2.1. The Description of Teachers' Interview .....	75
2.2.2. Teachers' Interview .....	75
2.3. Results and Discussion .....	87
2.4. Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations .....	89

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2.5. Limitations of the Study.....	90
Conclusion .....	90
General Conclusion .....	91
References .....	95
Appendix 1	
Appendix 2	
Résumé	
ملخص	

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## General Introduction

### 1. Background of the Study

Recently, unlike the previous years, the concept of autonomy speedily spread in many fields specifically the educational one in order to improve the process of teaching and learning inside and outside the classroom. A paradigm shift led to various changes in language teaching learning approaches and the most important change is autonomous learning as Jacobs and Farrell (2003) suggested. In this respect the focus shown from the traditional teacher centred-approach to student-centred approach. The main aim is to enable learners to be responsible for their own learning, independent, and self-reliant. The term “autonomy” got more attention of EFL teachers and researchers when it was first defined by Henri Holec (1981), who is considered as the father of autonomous learning, as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (as quoted in Benson, 2007, p.22). Holec presented many extensive researches which were devoted to autonomy by several scholars within the foreign language’s situations such as: Benson (2013), Little (1991), Alibakhshi (2015), Al-Asmari (2013), Borg and Al-Busaidi (2011), Dickinson (1995).

In the past years, autonomous learning has received little interest because the focus was on the teacher centred-approach. However, with the development of technology and second language acquisition (SLA) theories and the emergence of new teaching approaches, like the communicative one, and shifting the focus to the student-centred approach, autonomous learning gained more importance as it is very significant in the learning process.

It is claimed by Camilleri (2007), Cotterall (1995), Palfreyman (2003) that LA learner autonomy promotes democratic societies, improves language learning quality, and prepares learners for life-long learning (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012, Rao, 2006). It is also claimed that

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LA is a human right and it allows learners to benefit from learning opportunities in and out of classroom (Alibakhshi, 2015).

Learners and teachers' perceptions towards the barriers of practicing LA is largely absent in such studies and analyses and their beliefs affect how students learn, how teachers teach, and how or whether the Algerian English language institutes and universities seek to develop LA. As a consequence, this research addresses this gap by investigating what difficulties EFL learners would face in developing their autonomy. Therefore, there seems a need for a qualitative study on EFL learners about the challenges faced by learners to improve LA.

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

Societies nowadays lack individuals with great sense of responsibility in most aspects of life, and when following the roots of this problem one can find it extends reaching the educational system. For that, autonomy and independence in learning were raised to be two significant concepts in the field of language learning. Shedding light on the situation EFL learners in Mila university centre, an investigation was conducted to detect the level of autonomy for first year EFL students and to which extent they are aware for the importance of developing learner autonomy, especially after Covid 19 pandemic where both students and teachers suddenly found themselves facing imposed reality of teaching and learning online.

Because learners lack autonomous learning skills, they faced a set of problems which effected both their results and their English level performance. However, due to this pandemic, learners and teachers realized the value of developing autonomous learning and learning responsibility where it became a must to implement autonomous mind-set among students to avoid any degradation concerning learners' level which would last for decades and affect generations negatively. Yet, many obstacles still hinder the process of developing

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autonomous learning among learners in general and first year EFL learners in particular like absence of motivation, fear of failure, life quality and many other aspects that can be considered as challenges for learners to develop autonomous learning skills.

On the basis of the up mentioned facts, this research paper was conducted to investigate the difficulties which hinder students' developmental process of autonomous learning, and categorize the main factors that mostly affect students' performance and English level as internal obstacles which are related to learners' personality and mindset, or external obstacles which can be represented in any outside influence like teachers, equipment, and resources.

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

The objectives behind conducting this study are:

1. To investigate the encountered obstacles by first-year EFL learners in the process of developing their autonomous learning skills,
2. to classify the difficulties as either internal or external for learners,
3. to shed light on the significance of creating autonomous mindset for learners in order to boost their learning responsibility.

### **4. Research Questions**

The study aims at answering the following questions:

1. Are first-year EFL learners aware of autonomous learning importance?
2. Are first year EFL learners ready to adapt autonomous learning approach?
3. What are the internal and external challenges that first year EFL learners come across when developing autonomous learning?

### **5. Research Methodology**



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This research is conducted at AbdElhafid Boussouf University Centre of Mila, involving first year EFL students as a population. The present study is conducted through a descriptive method (quantitative and qualitative data) aiming to answer the up mentioned research questions through administrating two means of research. A questionnaire is distributed to 60 first year EFL students to get a clear idea about learners' barriers in developing their Autonomy and an interview is directed to 10 teachers, in order to gather information about their viewpoints concerning the concept of autonomous learning.

The questionnaire is chosen as an instrument of research because it saves time and efforts and enables the researcher to collect a huge amount of information in a short period of time. However, the interview is used with teachers because it can be conducted easily with small number of participants.

## **6. Structure of the Study**

The present dissertation is made up of two major chapters. The first chapter represents the theoretical background of the research work, which consists of two sections. The first section is deduced to present general information about autonomy: definitions, scope of autonomy, its characteristics and related theories. While the second section is about the nature of those difficulties learners face in their process of developing responsibility and autonomous learning. On the other hand, the second chapter is devoted to the field work which explains the research methodology and tools which were implemented, and provides the analysis and discussion of the findings, concluding with some recommendations.

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## Chapter One: Autonomy

### Introduction

This chapter is mainly devoted to autonomy and the main challenges may be faced by EFL learners in developing their autonomous learning. Autonomy and autonomous learning will be dealt with first through providing their definitions, levels, characteristics and some related theories. Then, a thoughtful understanding of the internal and external obstacles that EFL learners may be confronted in developing their autonomous learning.

### 1.1. Section One: Autonomy in Language Learning

Section one provides the most important concepts and definitions related to autonomy in language learning. Before diving into the notion of autonomy in the educational context, it is significant to shed light on the universal use of the term autonomy.

#### *1.1.1. What is Autonomy?*

The word autonomy has roots that extend to ancient Greece, since it used to be believed that the word “Autonomia” represents the notion of self-ruled and self-sufficient personality. Individual autonomy is a key concept that was presented in early ages, where one can meld it to fit his/her own principles and needs. Neuhouser (2011) stated that the concept of autonomy is a form of freedom, “the right or ability to do as one pleases, unimpeded by the interference of others” (Neuhouser, 2011, p. 479).

The fact that some people tend to prefer individual work rather than group work is a significant point in the promotion of autonomy and self- responsibility. Deci and Flaste (1995) demonstrated that people innately crave for that sense of responsibility and to have full charge in their decisions, behaviours and opinions rather than having any sort of extrinsic

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commanding authority. Here it can be said that autonomy characteristics, independent performance, and oneself reliance is a nature in human beings to avoid any kind of manipulation and unprofessional results when performing any wanted task.

In addition, autonomy is considered as a step one for people to reach their great potentials. Veltman and Piper (2014) claimed that it plays a significant role in individuals' self-development. According to Mackenzie (2014), there are three dimensions of autonomy.

#### **1.1.1.1. Self-Governance Dimension.**

According to (Mackenzie, 2014), self-governance is having the ability and needed capacities to perform the notion of autonomy and self-governance, and act according to one's preferences and personality norms. The idea of self-governance requires taking full charge in decision making taking into consideration only one's own principles, values and point of view without regarding any external reliance, means performing control over personal affairs.

#### **1.1.1.2. Self-Determination Dimension.**

According to Mackenzie (2014) Autonomy is considered as a multidimensional concept. Means that it contains different aspects and can be used in various contexts, speaking of educational context, ethics, financial...etc. It is meant here by self-determination the independency and freedom to take personal decisions that are related to personality aspects "internal capacities" such as "what to value, who to be, and what to do". (Mackenzie, 2014, p. 17). Two main external conditions are remarkable in the development of self-determination:

- **Freedom.** To be responsible for your different aspects of life, freedom is a relevant exercise that should be provided for individuals in terms of social life, political

preferences and point of views. Any chains and limitations that influence the process of autonomy negatively would be an obstacle and should be changed. (Mackenzie, 2014).

- **Opportunity.** This condition refers to the different types of opportunities that should be presented for individuals to choose from. To give their best potentials in all society's fields, it is required to have a variety of chances to choose from so that individuals would be free and comfortable to perform quality practices. Mackenzie (2014, p. 17) stated that "Opportunity conditions specify the kinds of opportunities that need to be available to agents in their social environment".

**1.1.1.3. Self-Authorization Dimension.** Mackenzie (2014) defined the last dimension as having the authority to be both, self-determined and self-governed. Means that one has be allowed to be responsible over his/her decision making with hardly any existence of external influence "self-governance", and the freedom to determine personality aspects according to the needs and preferences of the person him/her-self "self-determination". These three dimensions are summarized by Mackenzie (2014) as presented in this table.

**Table 01.** Dimensions of Autonomy

<b>Self-Governance</b>	<b>Self-Determination</b>	<b>Self-Authorization</b>
- Capability of making decisions according to one's preferences. - Absence of external reliance.	- Independency and freedom. - Having control over personal aspects' determination "values, principles ...etc." - Two conditions for developing self-determination: freedom and opportunity.	- Having the power to be both, self-governed and self-determined.

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### ***1.1.2. Autonomous Learning***

Learner autonomy is often seen as an important goal in education, since it can help learners to develop the skills and knowledge needed to continue through their learning process. When learners are autonomous, they are likely to be motivated, engaged and self-directed in their learning unlike students who mostly depend on any external aid. The concept of learner autonomy has been explored from different viewpoints through the years. And maybe the most famous definition would be that of Holec (1981), “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (p. 3). However, many other scholars have dealt with the notion of autonomous learning.

Little (1991), stated that the notion of learner autonomy has an extensive variety when speaking of its definition, thus one cannot recapitulate it in a paragraph. However, Little (1991) decided to define autonomy in reverse; means, providing the misconceptions and the fallacy ideas when speaking of autonomous learning. The most widespread misconception is that autonomy is synonymous with self-instruction; that it is essentially a matter of deciding to learn without a teacher. Certainly, some learners who follow the path of self-instruction achieve a high degree of autonomy, but many do not. For autonomy is not exclusively or even primarily a matter of how learning is organized (Little, 1990, p. 3).

For Little (1991), the teacher is relevant in the working plan of autonomous learning, teachers’ guidance is a key factor in the developmental process of learner autonomy to boost and affirm on learners’ potentials. Side by side with the constant encouragement that would provide the learner with great sense of responsibility and validation. In addition to this, Little (1991) indicated for autonomous learning perception that “the learner enjoys a high degree of freedom” (p. 4). However, this freedom is not total and infinite, but more of a finite and restricted power. That is what would explain the need for teachers in the developmental

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process of autonomous learning since “independence is always balanced by dependence” (p. 5).

Adding to Little’s view point, Benson (2011) defined autonomy as a “mechanism” that learners at a certain level have to acquire and adapt into the personal learning system. Benson (2011) shed light on the significance of a number of factors, that “adult learners would need to develop skills related to self-management, self-monitoring and self-assessment” (p. 11-12) where these mentioned factors would make the learning experience even more effective and enhance learning responsibility among learners. In a similar position, Benson (2011) indicated the misconception that many people would fall into when defining the idea of autonomous learning that it is “the situation in which the learner is entirely independent of teachers, institutions or specially prepared materials” (p. 14). However, he preferred to refer to the concept as “the capacity to control or take charge of one’s learning” (p. 14).

On another hand, Al-Asmari (2013) claimed that the objective behind spreading the idea of autonomous learning is the ability for students to cope with any facing situation autonomous learning would provide. Other brief definitions for autonomous learning are “a capacity and willingness to act independently and in cooperation with others, as a social, responsible person” (Dam, Eriksson, Little, Miliander & Trebbi, 1990, p. 102) “to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning” (Nunan, 1996, p. 15) “the capacity to take control of one’s own learning”, from “a recognition of the rights of learners within educational systems” (Gardner & Miller, 1996).

### ***1.1.3. Levels of Autonomy***

The level of learners is an essential part to identify the learner autonomy in their education. For example, primary school students are less independent in their learning in

comparison to middle pupils while they are too less autonomous than secondary students. Accordingly, autonomy is a skill that grows and develops as a student advance and matures. Thus, it is not easy to give a direct and agreed definition for the concept of autonomy since it contains several levels and some of researchers in the late of 1990's argued that autonomy is a matter of levels and each researcher has a specific model.

The first in attempting to organize learner autonomy into degrees was Nunan (1997). According to student's actions, he puts a model of five levels: awareness, involvement, intervention, creation and transcendence. So that, this model seems to be the steps of a learning process that shows how learners perform and behave in learning a language item and increases learner-centeredness. The following table will present more details proposed by Nunan (1997, p. 195) (as cited in Dang ,2012, p.54):

**Table 02.** Autonomy levels of Implementation (Nunan, 1997, p.195)

<b>Level</b>	<b>Learner Action</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Process</b>
1	Awareness	The instructional objectives and content of the resources used by learners are made clear to them.	Learners recognize their own proffered learning styles or methods as well as the implications of pedagogical activities for their own learning techniques.
2	Involvement	From a variety of available options, students are involved in choosing their own objectives.	Students make choices from a variety of possible options.
3	Intervention	Students alter or change tasks. The learning program's objectives and	Learners adjust or change tasks.

		materials are modified and adjusted with the help of the learners.	
4	Creation	Learners establish their own objectives and goal.	Students design and develop their own assignments.
5	Transcendence	Learners extend their learning outside of the classroom by connecting what they are learning in class to the outside world.	Students become instructors and researchers.

Second, three dimensions of autonomy are identified by Littlewood (1998) and meant to be applied gradually. As it is described with Nunan (1997), this model also involves steps that describe the learner's level of autonomy and the types of choices that he/she is able to make at a certain level: the communicative level, the learning level, and the personal level. As a first step, autonomy seems to be as a communicator since it enables learners to make choices independently about language use and to communicate with appropriate strategies in real, unpredictable situations. As a second step, the learning level means the learner's ability to take responsibility of their own study and to apply learning strategies appropriately and independently, so that autonomy plays a role as learner. As the final step, the personal level means the student's ability to make choices about his/her language learning in a wider context (Fakieh.A, 2017, p. 223).

Third, Macaro (2005) proposed a three-stage model which involves: autonomy of language competence, language learning competence, and autonomy of choice and action, as shown in Table 2 below. Finally, Scharle and Szabo (2000) propose a three-phase model including raising awareness, changing attitudes, and transferring roles.



Despite the fact that the previous mentioned levels are categorised in a slightly different way, they all share a number of characteristics, including an analysis of how a language learner can progressively become autonomous as they advance through levels. Those classifications are summarised in the following table by Alrabai (2017, p. 223).

**Table 03.** Levels of Autonomy (Alrabai, 2017, p. 223)

<b>Nunan Model 1996</b>	<b>Littlewood's Model 1996</b>	<b>Scharle &amp; Szabo's (2000)</b>	<b>Macro's Model (2005)</b>
- Awareness. - Involvement. - Intervention. - Creation. - Transcendence.	- Autonomy as a communicator. - Autonomy as a learner. - Autonomy as a person.	-Raising Awareness -Changing attitudes. -Transferring roles.	- Autonomy of language competence. - Autonomy of language learning competence. - Autonomy of choice and action.

All the classifications above emphasize how to the degrees of autonomy increase gradually. Since all students are concerned, it is important for EFL learners at Algerian universities to be conscious of these levels, as well as instructors.

#### ***1.1.4. Characteristics of Learner Autonomy***

There have been many researches who tried to give a suitable list of EFL learner characteristics. Ellis and Sinclair (1989:2) claimed that in order to help students to take more responsibility for their own learning there are three reasons are: first, learning can be more efficient unless students take charge of their education because they get to choose the material they study; second, they can also continue learning outside the classroom; and third, they can apply the learning strategies they have mastered to other subjects.

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In a study by Chen (2001) (as cited in Ahmadi and Izadpanah 2019, 76) a number of qualities that Chen identified as identifying the independent learners were retrieved based on their own perceptions are: highly motivated, goal oriented, well organised, hardworking, initiative, enthusiastic about learning, flexible, active, willing to ask questions, develop the capacity for detachment, critical thinking, and making use of every to improve their learning.

Concurrent with Breen and Mann's study (1997) (as cited in Benson, 2001, p. 84), autonomous learners are characterized as:

1. They have the capacity to perceive the relationship between what needs to be learned, how it will be learnt and the resources offered as one in which they are in charge or in control;
2. They have a true bond with the language they are learning and a sincere desire to master it;
3. They possess a strong sense of self that is unlikely to be compromised by any real or imagined negative evaluations of themselves or their work;
4. They have the ability to pause what they are doing, think about it, and decide what they should do and experience next;
5. They are able to shift in a flexible, inventive, and opportunistic manner;
6. They possess the capacity to learn regardless of the educational methods they are undergoing;
7. They possess the strategic ability to understand the context in which they are placed;
8. They have the ability to make a balance between addressing their own demands and attending to the needs and requirements of other group members.

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### *1.1.5. Aspects of Autonomy*

The language teaching profession appears to have recognized and largely embraced thirteen characteristics of self-directed learner, according to Sinclair (2000) those elements are:

- 1- Autonomy is a construct of capacity
- 2- Learning to assume responsibility for one's own education is a key component of autonomy.
- 3- Students may not be born with the ability or desire to accept such responsibilities.
- 4- Full autonomy is an aspirational ideal.
- 5- Autonomy comes in many levels.
- 6- The levels of autonomy are inconsistent and erratic.
- 7- Putting learners in circumstances where they must be independent is not enough to foster autonomy.
- 8- Fostering autonomy calls for conscious knowledge of the learning process, as well as conscious consideration and judgment.
- 9- Developing LA requires more than just effective teaching methods and techniques.
- 10- Both within and outside of the classroom, autonomy is possible.
- 11- Both of the social and the individual aspects of autonomy exist.
- 12- Improving autonomy involves political and psychological components as well.
- 13- Various cultures have various ideas about the concept of autonomy.

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### ***1.1.6. Theories Related to Learner Autonomy***

Learner autonomy refers to learners' ability to assume responsibility for their own learning process, set their learning goals, and enrol to self-aligned activities. A variety of theories has been proposed to demonstrate and explain the concept of learner autonomy and the beneficial impact it provides learners in educational contexts. Qi (2012) expressed that autonomy has gained a wide popularity in modern societies due to three educational theories' impact on the academic field, humanistic theories, constructivist theories and cognitive theories.

In addition to that, Swanson and Chermack (2013) believed that theories demonstrate the framework of certain behaviours, orientations and preferences since theories tend to explain the way how things are working and the steps to reach the ultimate goal in any given domain. According to Hughes (2003), autonomous learning and independence became a key concept to promote among students, when a great assembly of scholars and researchers perceived that student perform better, in educational contexts, when they are given certain degree of freedom and authority to set the learning process according to their preferences, potentials and needs. He also summarized the view point of both humanistic and constructivism theories regarding the significance of autonomous learning where both has played a crucial role in "...inspiring and justifying pedagogic approaches ... at maximizing learner autonomy" (Hughes, 2003, p. 4). On the basis of the pre-mentioned information, two main theoretical perspectives will be examined, humanistic learning theory and constructivist learning theory.

#### **1.1.6.1. Humanistic Learning Theories from Learners' Autonomy Perspective.**

Humanistic learning theories highlight the positive influence of self-awareness, personal growth and taking learning responsibility in educational context. Since those

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theories give credit to the amount of creativity and potentials individuals would present only if they work in a fitting environment that support learners' choices and capacities.

#### ***1.1.6.1.1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.***

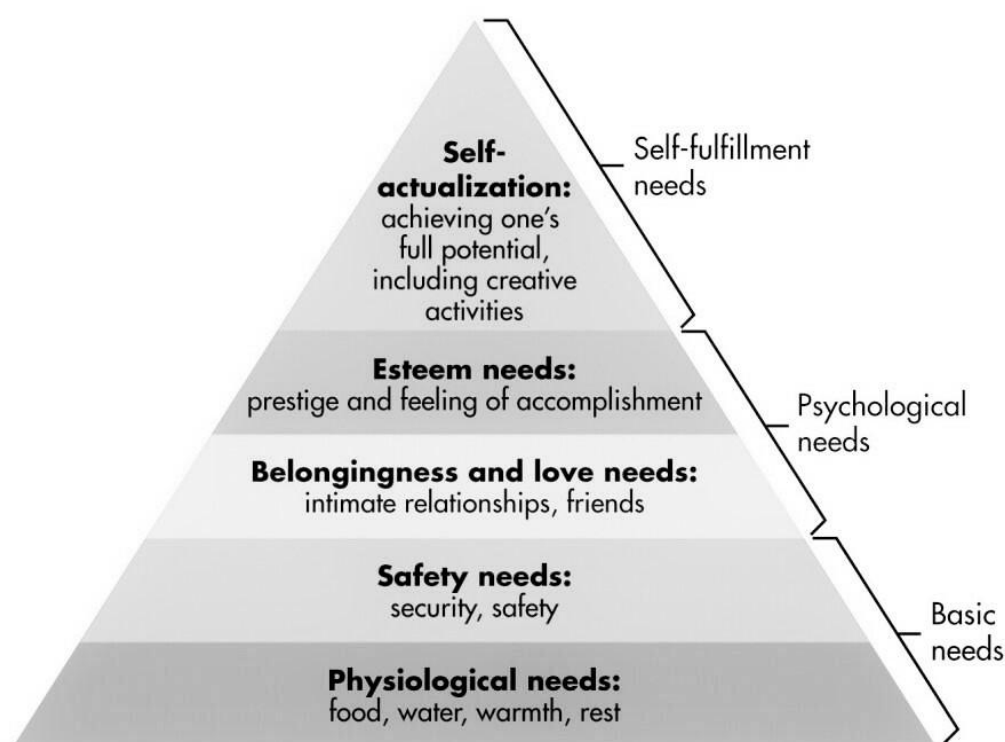
Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology by Abraham Maslow that depicts needs of human in an organized and prioritized manner. McLeod (2018) stated that this hierarchy of needs is often shown as "hierarchical levels within a pyramid" (para. 1). According to Bishop (2016), Maslow's pyramid of needs has studied the significance of surrounding environment on personal growth and self-generated motivation. This latter is considered as a key element in developing the notion of self-automated learning and learning responsibility, the hierarchy of needs can be seen as a map to follow in order to reach high level of self-actualization and use all potentials one's have for effective and valid outcomes in educational context.

According to Maslow (1954) (as cited in Freitas & Leonard, 2011) the basic set of needs which are air, food, sleep, water and shelter are the most essentials to be provided, otherwise, a person would not be able to maintain in the process of development to reach the higher level in the pyramid which is depicted as self-actualization, as well as, the performance of students who lack such deficiency needs would not be at its great conditions. The same case for the second phase in the hierarchy of needs, the fact of feeling safe and secure would boost one's confidence and motivation to make a further step in the progress to higher levels of inner potentials. "Moving from survival needs to more social development needs, one of the highest levels is self-actualization, where persons are concerned about their legacy, the needs of humankind, and how to make the world a better place for its inhabitants" (Freitas & Leonard, 2011, p. 10).

Even though it is hard for students to meet all needs mentioned in the hierarchy, especially those psychological ones, since they are innate traits, only the students can have

full control for, however, positive outside influence on personal factors for learners is what would be the plot twist in the students' process of developing learning responsibility and fulfil their goals. Self-actualization in the hierarchy of needs is the highest level in the model and the last stage to reach, in parallel, autonomous learning is what learners seek to achieve as one of the highest levels of learning performance.

Burleson and Thoron (2014) believed that the hierarchy is process need to be well realized in order for students to reach the state of autonomous learning and be able to generate creative visualizations since “based on this model, we know that when these basic needs are not met, learners will not be able to focus on learning” (p. 2). Moreover, lack of autonomy in general and learning responsibility precisely would be an obstacle for individuals in their track to achieve their goals, which is the case also for achieving the top of Maslow's pyramid, that is how autonomy is necessary for individuals to pursue that higher level of needs towards achieving self-actualization.



**Figure 1.** Illustration of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (McLeod, 2018)

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#### ***1.1.6.1.2. Self-Determination Theory.***

According to Deci (1985) and Ryan (2000), the theory of Self-determination is a macro-theory of motivation that explains the relationship of human demands for autonomy, competence, and relatedness to self-determined motivation and self-regulated behavior. According to their viewpoints, motivation and self-determination are associated since learners can be self-determined when they also motivated. Since self-determination and motivation are related, the two are also related to autonomy. This is backed by Ushioda and Hua's (2006, as cited in Hu & Zhang, 2017. P. 155) statements that "self-determined motivation was closely related to learner autonomy".

#### ***1.1.6.1.3. Zone of Proximal Development.***

Poehner (2012) indicated the shift from teaching centred approach to learning centred approach in most education systems around the globe, since the aim of governments is to generate new and different generations who can depend on themselves in all aspects of life, and people who are able to set their own objectives in life generally and in the educational context specifically in order to erase the notion of overreliance. However, it is worth mentioning that teachers or any external assessment factor should never be fully neglected, the idea is that teachers (or mediators) and learners work collaboratively to make the learning proves more efficient, yet, without performing any extra reliance on the knowledge provider.

Poehner (2008, as cited in Poehner, 2012) defined this collaborative work as Dynamic Assessment (DA), where he stated that it is "an approach to integrating teaching and assessment as cooperative activity undertaken jointly by teachers, or mediators, and learners" (p. 610). Dynamic Assessment is a reflection to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal development (ZPD) according to Poehner (2008), for that they share the same concept which "views social interaction as a powerful source of development" (p. 611). As a result, collaborative work

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should not be seen as learner reliance on teachers, yet, rational collaborative work between mediators and learners is a side to autonomous learning.

## **1.2. Section Two: Internal and External Obstacles**

This research work aims at investigating the obstacles EFL students are facing nowadays to develop autonomous learning. Therefore, the current section covers a set of barriers which are divided into internal and external challenges. The former aspects such as lack of motivation, fear of failure, Laziness, dependency, and fear of taking responsibility may affect students' performance negatively. While the latter elements may have less impact on their learning such as lack of ICT facilities, the quality of life, and time management and so on.

### ***1.2.1. Internal Challenges***

Each student has specific ways of learning at different places because of their innateness and psychological differences. This latter can be considered as internal factors affecting students' performance towards autonomy since they come from inside the individual. They are as follows:

**1.2.1.1. Lack of Motivation.** Motivation is considered as an essential condition for learners along with their learning process. The study of this latter has attracted the attention of many researchers, and they have addressed the connection between learner autonomy and motivation. Starting with Murray et al who contended that motivation is necessary for autonomy (as cited in Mailbi, 2013:24). From this perspective, it is obvious that motivated learners have more opportunities to be autonomous and responsible inside or even outside classroom.



According to Ushioda (1995), motivation is a force that moves a person to take certain decisions, to involve and to persist in action. In line with this, a strong link between motivation and autonomy showed by Dickinson (1995) where he argued that the criteria of enhanced motivation are that students take ownership of their education and recognize that their achievements and failures are a result of their own efforts rather than external circumstances (Dickinson, 1995, p. 173-174).

Basically, both of autonomy and motivation are always related to each other and then no one can learn independently if they are not enough motivated. This factor is made up of two different types in which they are distinguished by Ryan and Deci (2000, p.21) as intrinsic which is defined as a means to an end in itself, for its own pleasurable rewards of enjoyment, interest, and knowledge development. And extrinsic motivation which refers to do something as a means to some separable outcome (as mentioned in Ushioda, 1996)

The first type is intrinsic motivation which is related to learners who are interested in doing activities and who learn just for the sake of pleasure. The second type, extrinsic motivation, involves learners who are imposed to learning or who want to be rewarded for learning (Murray et al, 2001). The difference between these aspects according to Murray et al (2001) and Ushioda (1996) is presented in the following table:

**Table 04:** Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Motivation

<b>Intrinsic Motivation</b>	<b>Extrinsic Motivation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- leads to more successful and effective learning.</li> <li>-Comes from an internal desire to accomplish a goal.</li> <li>-Driven by own desires, needs, and satisfaction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- leads to less successful and effective learning.</li> <li>-Comes from external rewards and praises.</li> <li>-Driven by outside sources or other people</li> </ul>

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Finally, learners that are motivated intrinsically care much more about doing things correctly than those who are extrinsically motivated, but still have a reason to learn independently whether intrinsic or extrinsic. Therefore, the more students are motivated the more they have the ability to control their learning process and to overcome problems and difficulties.

**1.2.1.2. Fear of Failure.** This aspect is one of the main challenges EFL students may face when developing their autonomy. Some learners feel like they have no skill or knowledge to do something, underestimate their capacities, and will never be able to achieve their goals. According to the American Psychological Association (2007, p.369), fear of failure is defined as continuous and illogical worry that one will fall short of one's own or other people's expectations and aspirations (Martin, A. J, 2012).

In this respect, learners who are always thinking if they will be able to achieve their needs or not, they will be affected by their doubts and fail to be responsible. In line, Convington (1992) stated that failure fearers frequently experience anxiety, a significant level of self-doubt, and uncertainty regarding their capacity to avoid failure or succeed.

**1.2.1.3. Laziness.** Most of learners fail to promote autonomy because of their laziness. This latter is something all people feel from time to time especially for students with new tasks. According to Meador (2020) lazy student can be defined as the one who has the capacity to succeed but never does because they do not put in the effort to fulfill their potential.

Non autonomous learners are intelligent as those who are autonomous, but they are unwilling to make more efforts regarding their study. This point is supported by Kessels and Heyder (2020) where they stated that they tested for mediation effects using multilevel analysis, and the findings demonstrated that target students' disruptive behavior caused

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students to attribute low academic accomplishment to lack of effort rather than lack of aptitude. Thus, EFL students have the ability to learn independently but their laziness and uninteresting inside or outside classroom leads to poor performance or even fail to be autonomous since they are totally unwilling to spend more energy.

**1.2.1.4. Dependency.** Dependency in learning context is a very common aspect which effect students' progress and developing learning responsibility away from teachers' reliance. According to Beltran (2019) students with learning dependency personality have trust issues concerning their potentials.

Also, they prefer to ignore any possibility to consider their learning process individually with hardly any reliance on teachers, yet, they constantly expect support and care from teachers or any external factor. Besides to that, the overreliance on teachers will create obstacles for both the teacher and the student, for teachers it would affect their interaction with other learners since over reliant students would manipulate the teachers' time and efforts for themselves.

In addition to that, Beltran (2019) insisted on the negative consequences on the learner him/her-self since "[Students'] excessive reliance on you [teachers] can limit his involvement with his peers, thus minimizing opportunities to develop essential social skills and stifling his social development" (p. 1).

Furthermore, Egel (2009) found that learners are able to take control over their learning progress with the necessary support rather than full reliance on teachers. For that, he insisted on "the importance of developing learner autonomy within the classroom through the support of the teachers and collaboration of the learners" (p. 2024).

**1.2.1.5. Fear of Taking Responsibility in Terms of Learning Process.** Learners through the years have gained a mind-set of irresponsibility, and that they are not mature

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enough to take charge over their learning process which created a sense of fear to share opinion and be involved in their own learning program. According to Ayish and Deveci (2019) most university students nowadays lack the sense of personal responsibility concerning their learning progress and this may be due to the lack of involvement in the learning environment.

Also, absence of communication and practical opportunities where the learner would be able to perform and engage in the learning process and by so raise their awareness and readiness to take responsibility over both their learning progress and over their personal life choices. Students need to understand the fact that they have rights and privileges teachers and parents provide them with, but at the same time, they need to perform a set of duties one of them is being mature and responsible to take decisions and take actions over their personal learning process.

Corno (2013) indicated that students who take learning responsibility as a major charge are more likely to be knowledgeable about how learning tasks and materials works and tend to perform better individually, On the other hand, other students' goal is to obtain grades rather than be involved in the learning process. That is why personal responsibility is believed to have a notable influence on the learning process that learners' performance would be evolved positively (Macaskill & Denovan, 2013).

This issue can occur when teachers manipulate the teaching/learning process and preventing any intervention from learners by refusing the notion of collaborative work between learners and teachers. For that Edwards (1982) insisted on the significance of collaborative work between learners and teachers where he indicated that "This process of student-teacher interaction involves responsible contribution by both student and teacher in terms of what the student's learning program will be" (p. 147).

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However, even students should generate personal opinions in terms of personal education bravely, paying little attention to whatever type of underestimation, and refusing any over domination from external sources concerning their learning process. "... teachers must willingly accept student descriptions ... students should be encouraged to display skills, describe their importance, assess their quality, and propose continued pursual or pursuit of alternative courses of action" (p. 148).

**1.2.1.6. Lack of Searching Skills Experience.** Fostering students' research skills is a fundamental factor to create autonomy in terms of learning. According to Braguglia and Jackson (2012, as cited in Maddens et al., 2023) students lack of researching skills is due to their laziness and ignorance to the value of such a skill, since learners believe that searching skills courses are either dull to take or they find it sort of insignificant in their real-life situations. Earley (2014, as cited in Maddens et al. 2023) argues that "students fail to see the relevance of research methods courses" (p. 166).

### ***1.2.2. External Challenges***

In addition to internal factors which influence students' performance towards developing independent learning, there are other challenges that come from outside the individual. These difficulties are listed in the following points:

**1.2.2.1. ICT Facilities.** Nowadays, technological equipment has a positive impact on education with all specialities and using these ICT's by students as part of their lives is needed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century era. Nadya, et al (2022, p.710) found that it is particularly advantageous for both teachers and students to use information, communication, and technology when studying English since it makes ICT a desirable teaching tool or medium. According to this point of view, those facilities are required for both teachers and learners at the same time since they facilitate the teaching learning process. Using such technological

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tools inside classroom is really helpful but unfortunately not all schools and even universities use them.

Suherdi (2012) claimed that ICT plays a major role in promoting the quality of English teachers and learners because the use of them helps teachers in teaching, and thus facilitating the process of transferring information from instructors to students. Since students today are considered as digital natives and use internet in their daily life, it is needed by learners to use this technology outside classroom and do not rely only on teachers.

Kee and Samsudin (2014) stated that they can find or explore any information related to their lessons by using ICT's (Lengkanawati, Melvina, & Wirza, 2020). Thus, learners have to check the internet either via goggle, you tube, website, or other sources in order to solve some problems they face in their learning, prepare lessons for the next session, and to facilitate some complicated topics.

**1.2.2.2. Life Quality.** Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be demonstrated in a variety of life aspects, educational context is definitely one of them. According to Maslow's pyramid of needs, one cannot reach to self-actualization unless they meet all needs starting from the first level which presents the basic needs, then the second level which represents the psychological needs to finally succeed reaching self-fulfilment needs (King-Hill, 2015).

Furthermore, needs cannot be all met for all learners especially basic needs like shelter and safety as Burleson and Thoron (2014) stated that "There is no possible way that a teacher or group leader can provide food, clothing, shelter, and adequate sleep for each learner" (p. 2). Yet, learners would not be able to reach full potentials to enhance autonomy if most, needs are not secured, this is one of the challenges learners may face in their learning process and may hinder their attempt to enhance learning responsibility.

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King-Hill (2015) assumed that learners must cover all needs in the hierarchy because they would not be able to focus on their learning goals, thus, they would not succeed to achieve their ultimate goal. Instead, learners tend to focus on their needs' imperfection and why they cannot meet them, "if the room temperature in a learning environment was low then individuals in there would be focused upon rectifying this rather than learning opportunities" (p. 55).

Therefore, Learners would seek to fulfil needs like love, belongingness and confidence by any mean possible, that is why Burleson and Thoron (2014) believed that teachers' role in such situations is important to preserve students' needs and provide them with the most possible ones, like boosting their confidence by addressing compliments so that the students would develop a feeling of accomplishment. All these actions should be taken into consideration in order to make learners' path easier to reach self-actualization and by so developing autonomous learning skills.

**1.2.2.3. Teachers' Teaching Strategies (Teacher-centred approach).** The majority of teachers still follow the traditional approach where students are waiting passively for knowledge and accept all what is presented to them. Vuong and Tran (2020, p. 4) stated that according to several scholars, teachers need to play more than only the role as knowledge transmitters in conventional classroom settings if they want to effectively contribute to improving LA. In this respect, teachers should not play only the role of the leader and the only source of information, but also have to encourage their learners to engage in the learning process and motivate them to learn independently.

Kamala (2016) and Leaver et al. (2005) believe that teachers' role is not only helping students to set learning objectives, select appropriate learning materials, and other topics, but provide learners with chance to make their own decisions (Vuong & Tran, 2020). Thus,

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learner independence reflects on teachers' autonomy and as Littlewood (1998) claimed that developing teacher autonomy reflects the promotion of learner autonomy.

Therefore, tutors have to respect that teacher-centred approach has been shifted to learner-centred approach where students involved in content and tasks. This is supported by Kolb who said that: “tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand” (Kheira Hadi. 2018). Finally, learners can be autonomous only when teachers involve them in making choices and decisions about what they are studying and engage in tasks and activities.

**1.2.2.4. Time Management.** Managing one's time is important in order to perform everyday activities and to become autonomous and independent (Wennberg et al, 2019). It is obvious that one the biggest difficulties at the beginning of learning process is how to plan and manage time and no one will push students to organize themselves. Some learners make much more efforts and spending all their time and energy doing tasks and activities, while others do totally the opposite and just wasting their time caring of themselves. Students have to organize their time between learning and their daily life interests because humans' brain need some breaks from time to time without absolutely neglecting their learning.

**1.2.2.5. Limited Support and Encouragement.** Lack of support and encouragement is a serious obstacle students' may face during their attempt to develop autonomous learning. Learners need support and guidance during their first steps into being responsible for their own learning process. Lamb (2006) obtained from his research data that students' support can be through helping them selecting suitable methods, materials and learning strategies according to learners' level, this according to learners is a fundamental encouragement to “sustain confidence ... [and it is] a successful support to independence in planning” (p. 106).



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Also, he, Lamp (2006), summarized students' perception on what is considered as effective support from teachers' side in terms of learning organization and planning. One way is to guide learners' choice and that those choices are suitable for each student's individual needs. On the basis of that, teachers should provide aid according to each learner's needs in order to be fair and to perform equity rather than equality. Also, reward system is an effective support method which would boost learners' motivation and confidence. Glaser et al. (2006) believed that peer mentoring programs provide students with a great helping hand where "new students are supported by a more experienced mentor student, and make social connections with other new students" (p. 4).

Both experienced students, who would play the role of learning monitors, and less experienced learners, who would benefit from the aid are winners in this equation, for the latter, (Jacobi, 1991, as cited in Glaser et al., 2006) believed that peer monitoring programs would help them "preventing the negative effects of stress" (p. 5), while for more experienced learners, Treston (1999, as cited in Glaser et al., 2006) it would develop their social skills.

**1.2.2.6. Restricted Access to Resources.** When speaking about learning resources in Algeria particularly, it definitely would be considered as an obstacle for college students. According to Brzoska and Ribeiro (2022), digital resources gained a valuable position in the learning/teaching process especially after Covid 19 pandemic, however, the education community realized the fact that these digital resources are limited for a great number of learners, and when speaking from the Algerian educational context it was limited before the pandemic and still even after it. "Poor or no internet connection, lack of adequate digital equipment and gaps in digital skills are all symptoms of digital divide" (para. 1). Jeevan and Tripathi (2008) indicated that lack of information literacy, which means "the set of skills

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needed to find, retrieve, analyse, and use information” (p. 616) is what intervene students from using knowledge appropriately.

### ***1.2.3. Teachers and Students’ Roles in Promoting Autonomy***

Modifying and changing the interest from teaching to learning results a shift from the traditional approach to learner-centeredness, thus changing the roles of both teachers and students during the learning process. Learners become more responsible, play the major role in developing independent learning, decision making, and may control their own learning. But such new movement does not neglect teachers’ role because they are part of this process as it claimed by Nunan (2003, p. 290). Additionally, Ganza (2008) supported the previous works and stated that gaining learner autonomy requires interaction between both teachers and students (p. 65) (as cited in Daflizar, 2023) which means that with the ignorance of teachers’ guide and help, the whole process will fail and become less effective and efficient (Yan, 2012, p. 559).

**1.2.3.1. Teachers’ Roles.** Teachers have certain roles to play inside classroom in order to improve LA and many researchers’ attention was attracted by this aspect. Boud (1995) claimed that teachers’ role takes place only through various stages and suggested four stages which are: The Entry Stage, The Reactive Stage, The Proactive Stage, and The Interactive Stage.

Firstly, the teachers’ job is to establish a trustworthy environment that encourages learners by giving them the needed information to succeed in their studies. Secondly, the Reactive Stage: the instructor must encourage students to communicate their thoughts and feelings. Next, the Proactive Stage: the teacher is responsible to promote and accept cooperative and collaborative behaviour while also giving prompt feedback in line with predetermined goals. And finally, the Integrative Stage: during this stage, teachers urge

students to collaborate a co-learn by creating internal standards and norms that will serve as a personal behaviour.

In addition, Boud, Camilleri (1997) and Voller (1997) identified three main roles for teacher to develop autonomy where he/she is considered to be facilitator (manager), counsellor, and a resource. These aspects according to Camilleri and Voller are showed in the following table:

**Table 05:** The Main Roles of Autonomous Teachers

Facilitator (Voller) Manager (Camilleri)	Counsellor	Resource
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Setting objectives</li> <li>-Selecting materials</li> <li>-evaluating students' learning</li> <li>-Encouraging and helping them acquire skills and knowledge crucial for developing sel-directed learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Giving required advice whenever it is needed.</li> <li>-helping students to approach different tasks</li> <li>-Coping with difficulties facing students.</li> <li>-Students' learning will be easier and efficient.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-giving necessary information in order to enrich the learners' repertoire about their learning.</li> </ul>

To conclude, LA would be impossible to be developed without teachers' support and guidance. In line with this, Little (2000) believe the growth and the promotion of LA requires the insight and direction of a skilled instructor. From this perspective, even if students become the centre of the learning process and promoting autonomy requires making them the centre of attention but it does not mean ignoring the role of teachers.

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**1.2.3.2. Students' Roles.** As they become the centre of learning process, learners cannot simply wait for teachers to spoon-feed them information and knowledge in an autonomous learning environment. It is necessary for EFL students to develop some learning habits which are supposed to be positive and effective. As it shown from Holec perspective (1981), they have to be able to take charge of their own learning, and take responsibility to grasp knowledge by themselves (Stefanou, 2004, p. 99)

Furthermore, Little (2003) stated that autonomous learners are those who are aware of the purpose of learning programme, explicitly accept to be responsible, participate in the formulation of learning objectives, take initiatives to plan and carry out learning tasks and activities, and periodically review and assess the effectiveness of their learning. In addition, Holec (1981, p. 3) who stated that autonomous learners are those who play the roles of taking responsibility for selecting their own learning objectives, defining the contents and steps of their learning, choosing the methods and techniques to be employed, keeping track the acquisition process, and assessing what had been learned.

Finally, to develop LA students need to play some roles such being responsible over their learning, make efforts, and being active because the role of learners is more than only receiving passively what teachers said inside classroom. They have to identify their own experiences, styles, and needs with the use of the appropriate techniques and strategies.

#### ***1.2.4. Fostering the Bond between Teachers and Learners***

Learner autonomy is a process related to learners at the first place, yet, the development of this approach for students should be shared with an external monitor whose role is to guide and facilitate this journey. Teachers have such a fundamental role in learners' process of creating an autonomous mindset this role is underestimated and neglected since most people believe that autonomous learning means fully independent learning.

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According to Voller (2017) teachers have three main roles in terms of autonomous language learning, facilitator, counsellor, and a resource. Coristine et al. (2022) believed that students' and teachers' positive relationship is need for both prementioned, and should be built through trust, respect, and valuing each other's opinions and recommendations in order to make the classroom a comfort environment for learning and teaching, and by so, the learning process successful and effective.

There are a set of tips to make a healthy bond between learners and teachers, one is to take their interests and preferences into account without undervaluing their choices, instead, if students' choices seem not suitable a deep private conversation should be conducted in order to be knowledgeable with the student's mindset and reasons behind his/her beliefs. Also, fairness is an essential trait for teachers, these latter need to perform equity rather than equality so that it would be fair for students to benefit from their monitor according to what they need, Coristine et al. (2022).

Furthermore, Buffet (2019, as cited in Coristine et al., 2022) stated that students benefit from the teacher/learner relationship short term education, means aid inside the classroom and provoke positive behaviours. On the other hand, teachers/learners bond affect students in a long term where it creates the sense of responsibility and confidence, also they feel valued in their community.

### **1.2.5. Strategies to Promote Autonomous Learning among Students**

Nunan offers a nine-step framework for encouraging learner autonomy. He asserts that by including these elements in the educational process, teachers may help their students transition from complete reliance on the tutors to independent learning. The following actions are required.

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**1.2.5.1. Step One: Make Instructional Goals Clear to Learners.** Making the learning objectives, ambitions, and goals apparent to the learners is the first step in assisting them becoming autonomous. By clearly stating educational objectives, the process of learning might require active participation from the student. They can also have the freedom to choose their own objectives and materials. Dam and Gabrielson (1998; as cited in Nunan, 2003, p.197) findings show that:

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

**1.2.5.2. Step two: Allow learners to create their own goals.** Providing students with the freedom to choose their own objectives and subject matter is another step toward becoming independent, engaged language learners. Students that are involved at this stage are more conscious of the real activities occurring during their learning process. Aside from, in relation to that, they would be able to decide what they wanted to accomplish once they were done. Nunan (2003) claims that “An interesting and practical way of involving learners at this level is reported in Parkinson and O’Sullivan (1990)”. They discuss the idea of the” Action meeting” as a means of involving students in changing course material.

In so that, it is said “a mechanism was needed for course management: as the guiding and motivating force behind the course, it would have to be able to deal with individual concerns and negotiate potential conflicts of interest, need, and temperament” (Nunan, 2003, p.198). By doing so, motivation is fundamental factor that will be increased and give the program a chance to be reviewed by the students themselves (Parkinson & O’Sullivan1990).

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Therefore, they contend that one approach to give students a voice in setting their own objectives is through the course material, where they are actively involved and where the presumptive conflicts of needs resolved by negotiation (Oussou, 2020).

**1.2.5.3. Step three: Encourage Learners to Use their Second Language Outside the Classroom.** According to Nunan (2003), teachers need to boost students to use any object possible for their benefits to learn new vocabulary, grammar, or even pronunciation. Neglecting target language use outside the learning environment (classroom) would make learners' language level poor because of the limited practice.

Nunan (1991, as cited in Nunan, 2003) mentioned a great example on how learners may use any possible method to learn new aspects in the target language independently and creatively outside the classroom. The teacher divided students into groups for better comprehension, where they tried to guess how they would use a mirror outside the classroom to learn the wanted language. By this way, the teacher targeted learners' critical thinking and creativity at the same time to end up with an autonomous home task for learners to use in order to enhance their language level.

**1.2.5.4. Step four: Raise awareness of learning processes.** Teachers here should raise learners' awareness to the methods should be used in the learning process, materials and suitable tasks for their individual differences. This would raise also their learning sense of responsibility and feeling themselves valuable in the learning process rather than neglected, which by all means tend to make the learning atmosphere active and effective. Furthermore, teachers need to make the learning task as clear as possible to learners so that they can track the process and never feel lost and ignorant. This step would give learners a push to search more about suitable learning methods and strategies to make his/her learning journey easier and more autonomous (Nunan, 2003).

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**1.2.5.5 Step five: Help Learners Identify Their Own Preferred Styles and Strategies.** According to Nunan (2003) teachers need to aid learners to identify and discover the most suitable learning styles, methods and strategies for their own individual learning process. Due to individual differences, people in general do not share the same ideas, opinions, and preferences, same with learners. A personal learning plans every student need to create according to his/her learning preferences and whatever method work better with his/her.

**1.2.5.6. Step six: Encourage learner choice.** Here learners would have to decide and choose between two items or learning aspects. As Nunan (2003) exemplified, the teachers would give the learners the authority to choose how they conduct a given task and the steps they prefer to follow, for instance "... if the data for a lesson include a reading passage and a listening text, learners might be asked to decide which they would rather do first, the reading or the listening" (p. 200). This authority would have a positive impact on students' level of motivation, engagement, and personality relevance. Learners at this level would gain confidence and autonomous learning skills since they experienced the ability to make choices where they felt involved and relevant to the learning process rather than passive learners.

**1.2.5.7. Step seven: Allow Learners to Generate Their Own Tasks.** After making learning choosing the order of conducted tasks, the following step is to encourage learners to create their own learning tasks and activities with relevance to their needs, curriculum restrictions and preferences. Nunan (2003) stressed on encouraging learners to use their creativity and learning potentials in order to "modify and adapt classroom tasks" (p. 201). However, Nunan (2003) insisted on making the process from simple to complex, and by time learners would develop this feature successively and effectively without extra pressure on the student.



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**1.2.5.8. Step eight: Encourage Learners to Become Teachers.** The best way for the information to stick in most learners' minds is to explain it to somebody else, this is what Nunan (2003) meant by encouraging learners to become teachers. The last level in the process of developing learner autonomy had to be this, playing the role of a knowledge provider and facilitator is the key concept in enhancing responsibility and autonomous learning among learners. This is also explained in Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978), where the notion is that older and more knowledgeable learners aid and monitor younger learners in the learning process which would benefit both learners as mentioned before.

**1.2.5.9. Step nine: Encourage Learners to Become Researchers.** Finally, the last step in the process of creating an autonomous learner mindset is to prepare learners to be free researchers. Searching skills is a fundamental aspect which learners need to master at a certain level, especially when developing autonomous learning skills. From Nunan's (2003) perspective, learners have to make real and practical experiments rather than teaching them only theoretical aspects. To a researcher learners would by all means think for themselves, generate hypotheses on their own, asking and seeking answers for questions with no dependency on any higher authority, all these researchers' features are great signs that the learners became an autonomous learner.

## **Conclusion**

In a broad meaning, autonomous learning is more than being independent in learning. It is a process that is arranged, developed in accordance with the learners' needs in a certain real-life situation. Nonetheless, EFL learners are commonly encountering difficulties in their autonomous learning. They need to be ameliorated. Teachers, on the other hand, still face

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problems vis-à-vis the ability to create an atmosphere where the students are encouraged to be independent

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## Chapter Two: Methodology and Data Analysis and Interpretation

### Introduction

This chapter describes the way the present study was carried out. It explains the research methodology and procedures. It introduces the research population and means of research. It describes, analyses, and discusses the data obtained from the teachers' interview and the students' questionnaire and provides answers for the research questions.

### 2. 1. Methodology

In the present research, a mixed research method (qualitative and quantitative) was used. A questionnaire for students and an interview for teachers were utilized in gathering data.

#### *2.1.1. Sample and Research Instruments of the Study*

Two different samples were targeted to conduct this field work: EFL learners and teachers. On the one hand, 60 first year EFL students were selected randomly from the English department of Abdlhafid Boussouf University centre of Mila. The reason behind nominating this population specifically is due to their recent experience at university as first year students and the fact that they shifted to a new system of education where they need to develop their autonomous learning to cope with university teaching methods and strategies. Also, they are likely to be open to the concept of autonomous learning since they have the advantage of using online tools for exchanging knowledge and data via educational platforms which they came to actual existence after Covid 19 pandemic. The students' questionnaire seeks to shed light on the importance of learners' autonomy and to detect students' awareness of the notion of autonomy and learning responsibility.

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The second sample, on the other hand, is a selection of 10 experienced English teachers at the English department of AbdElhafid Boussouf University Centre of Mila. They were targeted to investigate their attitudes toward the significance of adapting learner autonomy for university students and to transmit their great experiences and suggestions for students to enhance their learning skills and show them the best way how to reach their full potentials.

In order to collect the needed data, two main research tools were used: a questionnaire and an interview. Concerning the students' questionnaire, it has been handed to sixty (60) first-year English students at the Department of Foreign Languages at AbdElhafid Boussouf University Centre, Mila during the second semester. All sixty students were selected randomly. The preference of this level is based on the assumption that first-year EFL students are new to university teaching-learning system and new to the concept of autonomous learning for university learners. Also, a switch from a teacher-centered teaching system to a learner-centered teaching system was a fact and has been taken into consideration when choosing this sample. For that, a sort of comparison was conducted in the questionnaire between the students' experience in secondary school and their recent experience in university as first-year EFL students.

Moreover, the interview contains ten (10) questions for teachers to answer according to their experiences and teaching skills they gained during their long years of teaching EFL students. All ten questions are mainly concerned with applying autonomous learning to students' learning mindset and how would teachers promote it to their students in order to raise awareness among learners and boost them to learn effectively.

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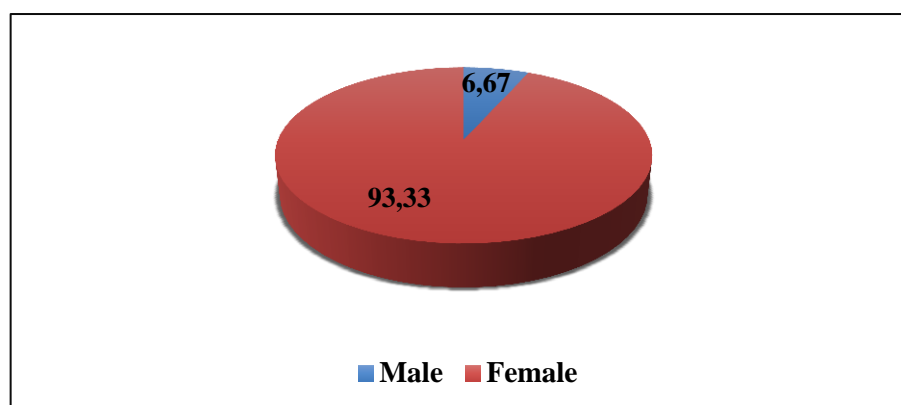
## 2.2. Data Analysis

### 2.2.1. Students Questionnaire

Students' questionnaire consists of four sections and a total of 23 questions varied between closed-ended questions and open-ended questions. The first section is devoted to general information; it is concerned with students' gender, level of English language, and whether they were able or unable to learn independently. The second section is about learners' experiences in their previous secondary school from different contexts, the aim from this section is to investigate the students' experience before university and the type of conditions they used to study in. Besides, there is a third section which is devoted to students' current position as college learners and their on-going experience in terms of learning autonomously. Last but not least, the fourth section is meant for any comments and suggestions students may feel the urge to share for the benefit of the research paper.

**2.2.1.1. Section one: General information.** This section consists of four questions. It aims to take a glance at the participants' background information such as age, gender, English level, and if there is any insight for a responsible personality in terms of education.

#### Question 1: Gender

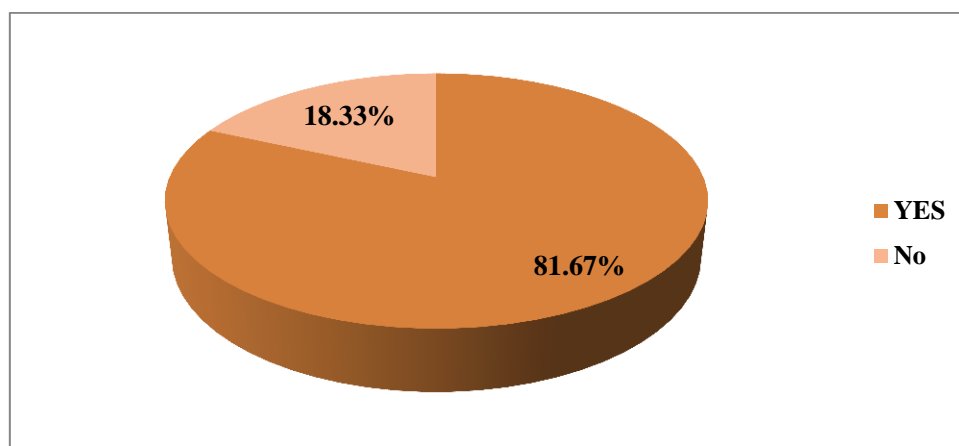


**Figure 02:** Students' Gender

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According to figure three, both genders participated in this research; however, females (93.33%) were more than males (6.67%). This may indicate that females tend to be more interested in learning English language at university as a profession, unlike males who may be keen for scientific fields.

**Question 2:** Do you choose to study English?

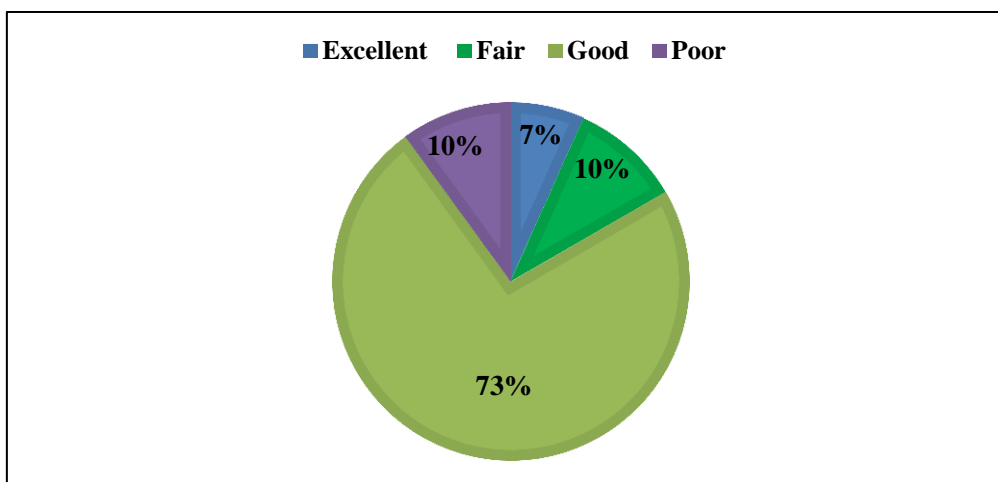


**Figure 03:** Student's Choice of Studying English

The figure above, the majority of students choose to study English at university (81.67%) while 18.33% did not. It was not their choice to learn this language. As it is known that every student can be active and creative only in the domain, he/she wants. Hence, the field of interest is the most important step in developing LA path because it makes learners feel energetic and excited, pay more attention, focused, and fully engaged.

**Question 3:** what is your English level?

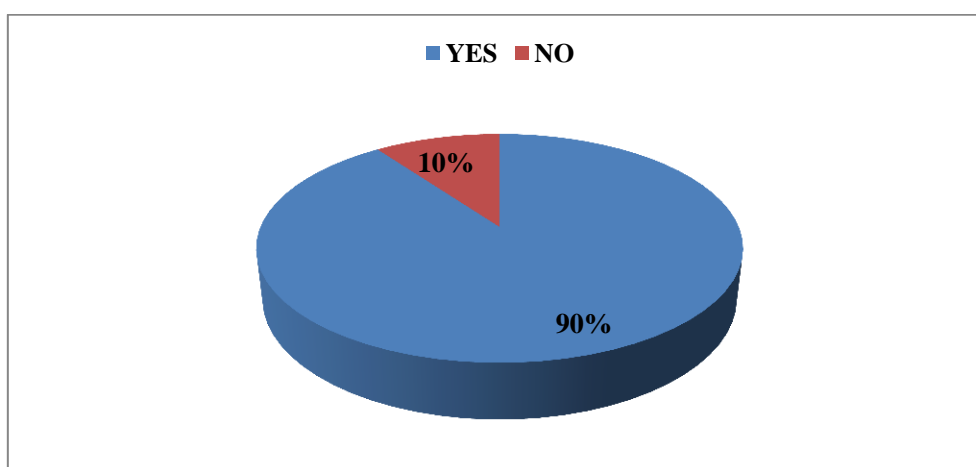
This question was dedicated in order to check approximately students' level in English language, especially since they are new to the field of study. The obtained results are presented in figure five below.



**Figure 4:** Students' English Level

According to the figure above, the majority of students choose to study English at university (81.67%) while 18.33% didn't. It was not their choice to learn this language. As it is known that every student can be active and creative only in the domain, he/she wants. Hence, the field of interest is the most important step in developing LA path because it makes learners feel energetic and excited, pay more attention, focused, and fully engaged.

**Question 4:** Are you able to learn independently and take responsibility for your learning process?



**Figure 05:** The Ability to Learn Independently

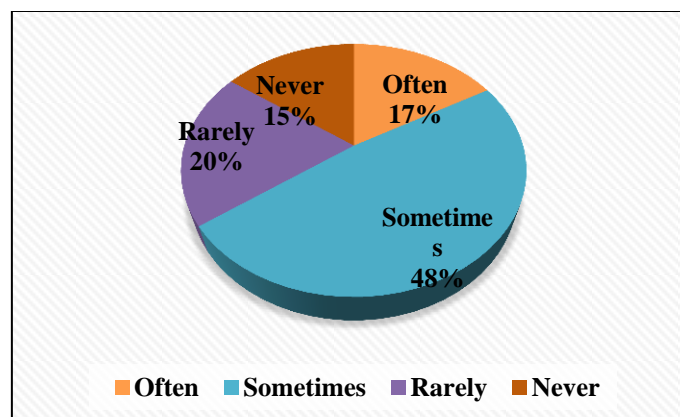
As it is shown in the figure above 54 (90%) of participants claim that they have the capacity to learn independently and may take responsibility for their learning process. Since they accept and declare that they have the ability to be autonomous there are some barriers learners may face. The 6 participants claim that they do not have that ability and responsibility to learn independently and it will be another obstacle those learners may face in their learning process. Therefore, the majority of participants want to be responsible in their life, work, and education as well.

### **Section Two: Autonomy at Secondary school (Q5-Q11)**

In this section, students were addressed to describe their high school experience and the environment they used to study in, in order to detect both positive and negative factors which helped shaping their learning personality and how it effects their current learning mindset in terms of responsibility and awareness to the importance of autonomous learning in the learning process.

#### **Question 5: Did you prepare your lessons before going to school?**

The aim behind this question is to see to what extent students are aware to the notion of self-directed learning by asking how often they used to prepare lessons, all alone, before the class.



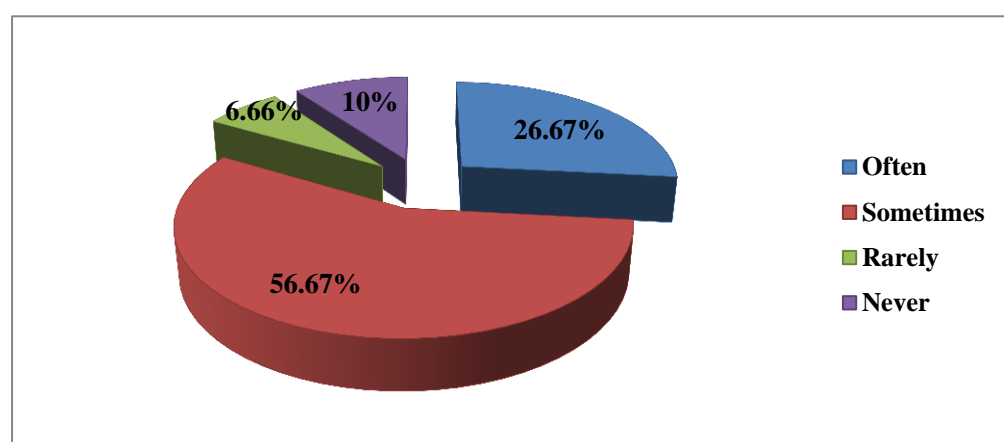
**Figure 6: Lessons' Preparation**



As the chart above shows, only (17%) of the asked population were preparing their lessons often before the actual presentation in the classroom by the teacher. Based on that, this minority of students is believed to have some sort of responsibility towards their learning process, since they give attention to details such preparing the lesson, and by so, they would carry great care to their learning progress as a whole, which would be reflected in their grades as well as their learning positive traits. (48%) of students answers with “Sometimes” which can be seen as a good sign for the positive intention to develop autonomous learning.

On the other hand, (20%) of learners rarely prepared their lessons by themselves, this may be due to many factors some are the pre-mentioned ones in the second section of the theoretical chapter. Laziness, teachers’ over-reliance, and lack of motivation side by side with many others may be reasons why these students did not have the urge to study before the class. At last, only (15%) of the population have never prepared lessons, once more, this type of students is considered as reliant learners those who either cannot or do not want to perform autonomy to develop their learning skills and prefer to depend mainly on teachers to provide them with the knowledge needed, and as stated earlier this is mainly due to laziness, dependency, absence of motivation or even fear of failure.

**Question 6:** Did you rely mostly on teachers to provide you with information?

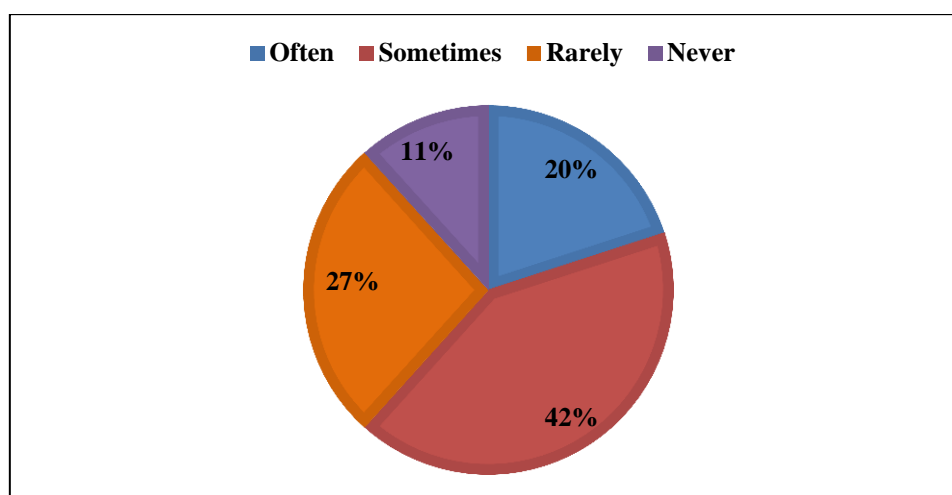


**Figure 07:** Learners’ Reliance on Teachers in Case of Gaining Information

As seen in figure 7 the vast majority of students sometimes rely only on teachers to get information. 26.67% of the sample answer that they often depend on their teachers in the learning process. Teachers play a crucial role in the teaching learning process since they prepare the younger generation to face the world and the future. Thus, they are considered as the best source of information where they share knowledge, provide educational guidance, and ensuring learners understand the input they teach. Students often go through irrelevant, expanded, and unknown information.

Whereas 6.66% said it is rarely to deal only with tutor's information and there are other sources. With all of these honest answers just 6 learners argued that they never rely on their teachers. In this context, a few numbers of students who achieve self-reliance can collect information without any tutor's direction using cleverly suitable strategies in searching even from books or technological sources.

**Question 7:** Did you search for the information you need with the guidance of your teachers?



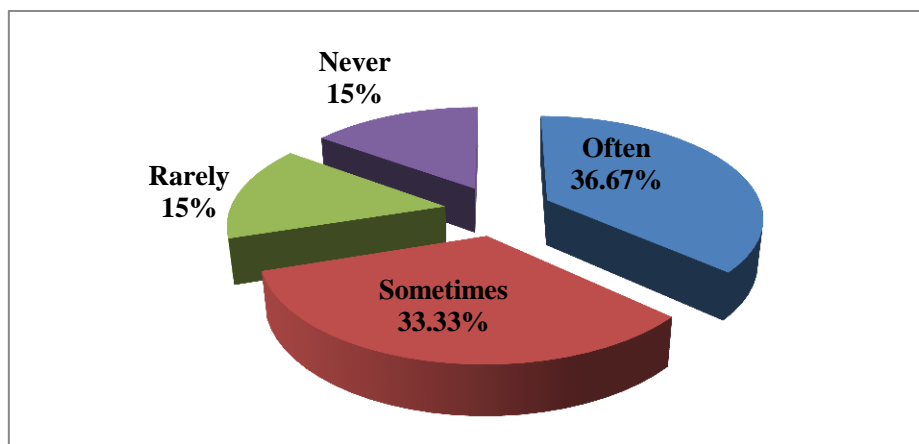
**Figure 8:** Searching for Information with Teachers' Guidance

According to the population's answers, about half of learners (41.67%) search for the knowledge with the help of their teachers, side by side with those who answered with often

(20%). On the other hand, about 37% of the sample is divided between those who rarely look for input with their teachers (26.67%) and those who have never did so (11.66%). This may be a positive indicator to the fact that developing autonomous learning is done through some sort of teachers' guidance unlike what most people believe that it is a pure independent concept.

Indeed, learners are asked to rely mostly on themselves and should develop their research skills to reach a high level of autonomy, however, teachers' role should not be neglected since autonomous learning promote learning independently with barely any reliance on teachers rather than the absence of teachers completely from the learning scene.

**Question 8:** Did you search for the information you need yourself without any teachers' guidance?



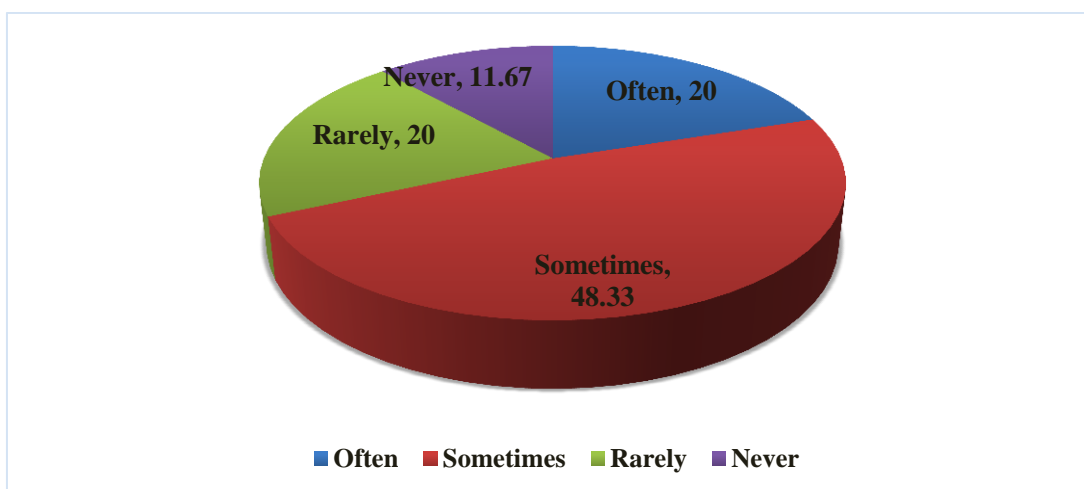
**Figure 09:** Looking for Information Without any Teachers' Guidance

This question was asked to know whether 1<sup>st</sup> year EFL learners look for information themselves without any teacher's guidance. As it showed in the chart above, most students (70%) indicate positive answers about learning independently. Students' responses stresses that they are ready to be self-directed as well as can be able to take charge on their own

learning but they do not achieve a complete autonomous learning due to the fact that the presence of teacher is a must in the learning process.

In addition, there are degrees and levels of autonomy as mentioned by Nunan (awareness, involvement, intervention, creation, and transcendence) learners have to reach so that they can be independent. On the other hand, 30% of the sample answer negatively since they need some support from their instructors. Without any teacher's guidance, students may be confused about the input they look for and go beyond more details. Therefore, learners should be autonomous and working hard without eliminating the role of teacher. This latter is considered as a guider or a director where students feel more secure in the presence of him/her.

**Question 9:** Did you apply what you learned in school in real-life situations?

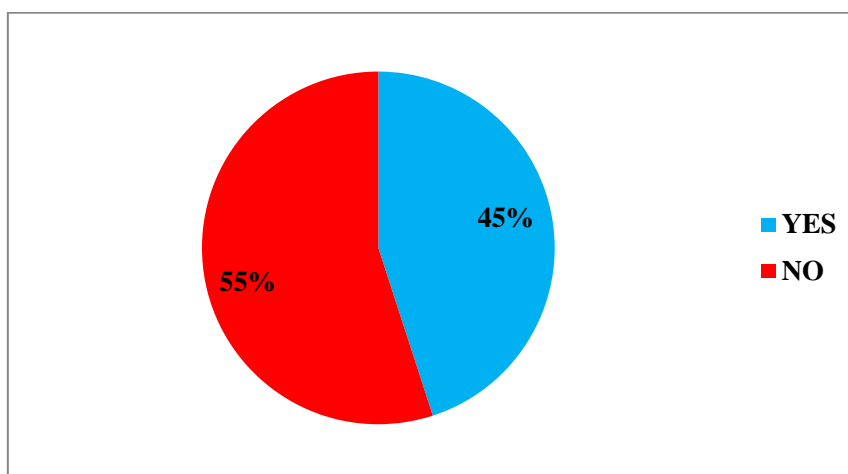


**Figure 10:** Knowledge Application in Real Life Situations

According to the collected data, the majority of students were aware of the practicality and importance of applying abstract knowledge they gain at school to solve real life matters. About 68% of population answered with either often (20%) or sometimes (48.33%), which is considered as a delightful sign of mindfulness, attentiveness, and mind maturation.

Applying acquired knowledge in real life situation is an essential extension for the learning process and for the long term. Students would develop their critical thinking skills as well as autonomous learning strategies, in addition to that, it would enhance their communication, observation and data grasping. Fewer students, about 30% seldom operate this feature which may reflect on their academic achievement.

**Question 10:** Did your schools provide you with ICT facilities such as computing labs, internet access, or any technological equipment for your service in your former secondary school?



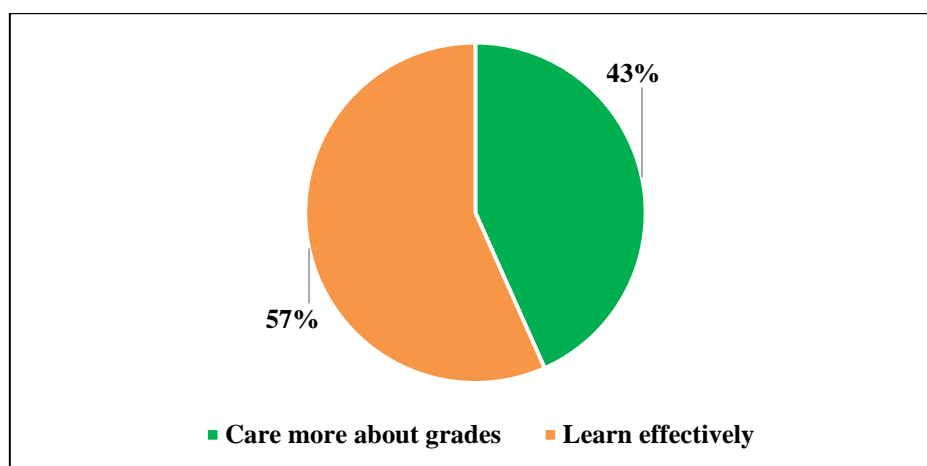
**Figure 11:** ICT Facilities in Schools

In this item, learners were asked whether their schools provide them with ICT facilities. 55% of the participants opted “Yes” but some of them express that most of that technological equipment were out of use. ICT facilities may help EFL learners to increase their level of independence and self-confidence especially in doing objects inside classroom. In this respect, allowing students to use internet make them familiar with many topics. In doing so, the role of teachers can be ignored and learners may work individually. About 45% of the sample report that they were not provided with ICT facilities. Despite the fact that

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some schools do not have such technological facilities students have the ability to learn independently but with less technological researching skills.

**Question 11:** Were you used to focus more on exam grades rather than studying effectively for long-term results?



**Figure 12:** Students' Focus when Learning

The outcomes for this question were kind of positive, since we asked students whether they used to focus more on exam grades rather than studying effectively for long term results. Most participants (56.67%) stated that they used to study for effective long-term outcomes or at least try to do so. This type of students is likely to adopt the concept of autonomous learning in a great manner which would create a responsible personality in terms of education and even post-education life. This question is partially related to question 10 above, learning effectively demands understanding the material being taught which is a key element in the application of abstract knowledge to solve real life problems.

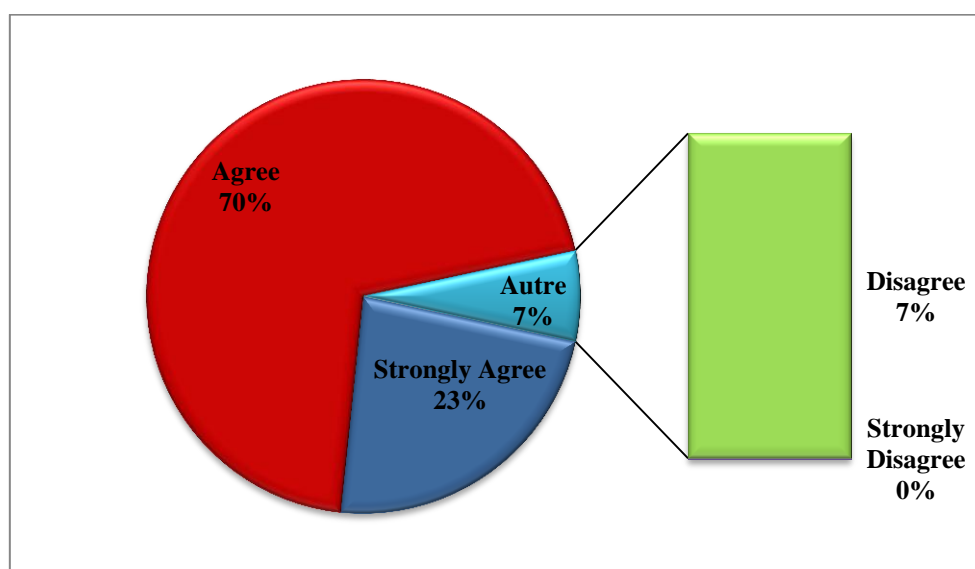
Hence, learning effectively involves expended research for additional resources which is considered as a postulate for autonomous learning strategies. On the contrary, (43.33%) of learners used to give more importance to grades. Caring about grade is not wrong since it is a tool to measure students' progress and performance, however, prioritizing it over efficient

learning is what students should avoid and try to find balance between both good grades and effective learning in order to gain better achievements. Finally, these findings shows that most students are indeed aware to the significance of autonomous learning.

### **Section Three:** Autonomy at University: (Q12-Q22)

This section of the questionnaire consists of 11 questions. It aims to investigate EFL learners' views and opinions regarding their up to this point of experiences in the academic environment at university. Additionally, at this advanced level of education, it focuses on students' perspectives for the development of autonomous learning.

**Question 12:** Autonomous learning must be adopted by learners at this level of higher education.

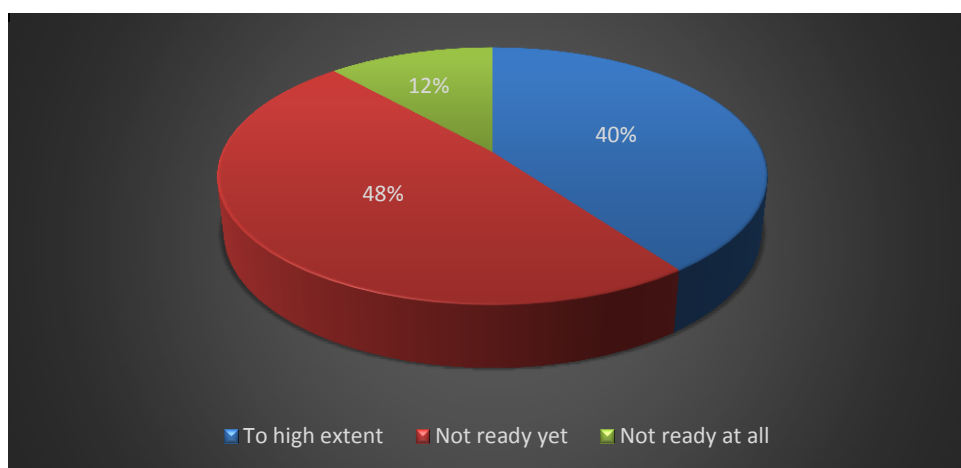


**Figure 13:** Autonomy for EFL University Learners

The results that are obtained above show that a major number of the respondents (70%) agree that being self-reliant is essential for learning at the university level. Those students really want to be autonomous at this stage but still confused which strategy should be used, so there is a need for teachers' guidance.

Most learners at this age become more aware and responsible of his/her decisions and therefore they can make this latter by themselves and be ready for setting specific goals. 23% of the whole sample strongly agreed with the fact that it is essential to learn independently in a certain level. Some students justify their answer by declaring that who wants to be successful in life especially study have to depend on himself and develop his skills. Also, some learners stated that they are aware of the importance of autonomy but not motivated enough. Unlike those who believe in self-reliance, a low rate of learners (7%) disagrees with this fact and just consider teachers as the only source of knowledge, have all responsibility in the teaching learning process, and they are not obliged to make any efforts.

**Question 13:** To what extent you are ready to adopt autonomous learning approach?



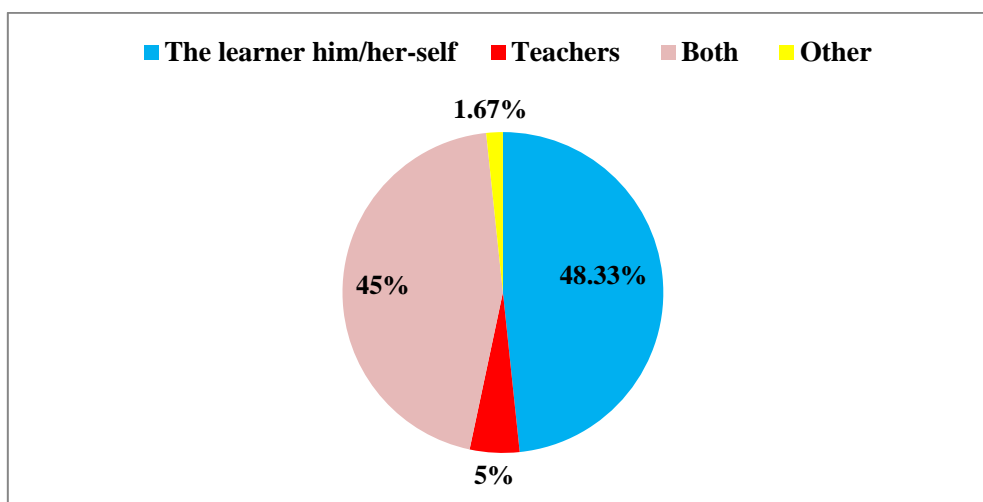
**Figure 14:** Students' Readiness to Adopt Autonomous Learning

The goal of Raising this question was to check to which extent students are ready to adopt autonomous learning into their learning journey. A good percentage of participants (40%) mentioned that they are ready to adopt autonomous learning approach, so the fact we mentioned earlier that majority of students are aware to the significance of autonomy in learning can be seen as a true intention from students' part. However, more than 50% of participants declared that they are either not ready yet (48.33%) or not ready at all (11.67%)



to reconsider adopting autonomy approach in their learning process. This declaration should be investigated to find the reasons behind it, whether it is because of lack of strategies and information about this approach or due to laziness and preferring full dependency on higher authority.

**Question 14:** Who is responsible for enhancing learners' autonomy?



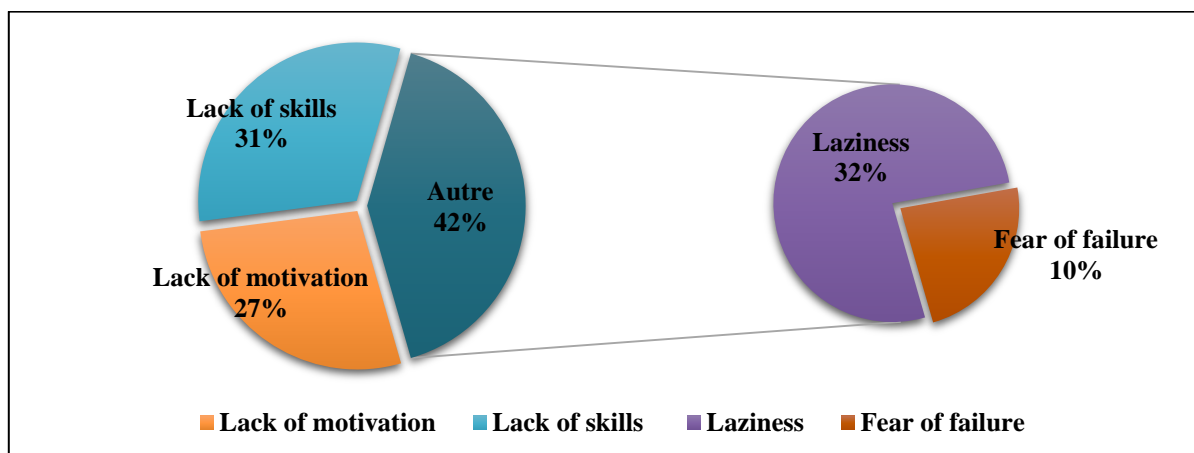
**Figure 15:** Enhancing Learners' Autonomy Responsibility

Statistically, the majority of participants (48.33%) consider that the learner him/her-self is the main responsible for improving LA. This confirms what Dam (1995) stated that students will never promote autonomy unless they are willing to take responsibility for their study. Thus, they have no right to accuse anyone about their leaning and failure since they do not have desire and just caring about marks. On the other hand, 45% of respondents place all the blame on teachers.

Indeed, tutors' role is significant and necessary to promote and enhance learner autonomy and for that reason can never neglected. In this context, they must perform their duties perfectly with guiding students correctly to achieve independence. Then, 5% declared

that the blame lies on both learners and professors, followed by 1.67% of population claimed that there are other reasons behind developing self-direction.

**Question 15: Why Students Cannot Develop Learning Autonomy?**



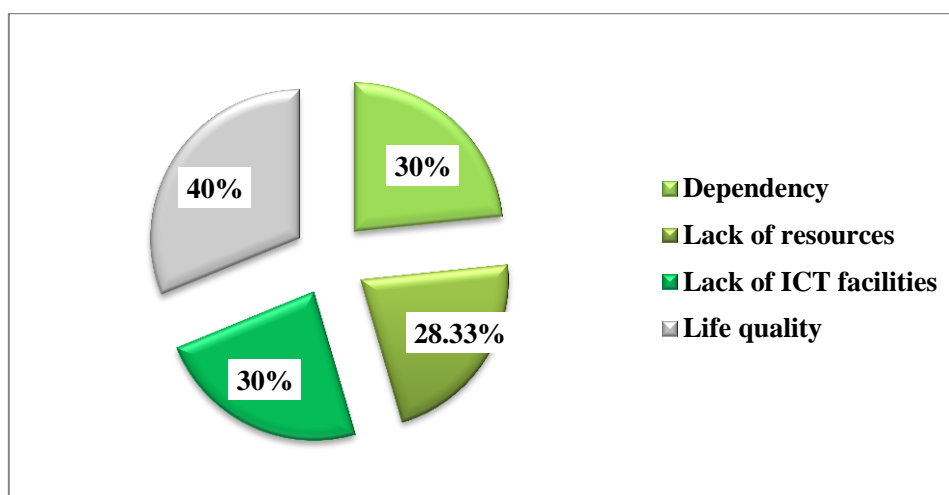
**Figure 16:** Reasons behind Students' Lack of Autonomy

This question is arranged to investigate the reasons why learners are not able to develop learner autonomy. Results have shown that four main factors have the most negative influence on enhancing autonomous learning from the perspective of first-year EFL students, and as anticipated, the biggest portion went to laziness. (32%) believe that laziness is number one enemy for them that prevent autonomous learning development, laziness which indirectly related to students' dependency on external resources like teachers.

(31%) of our participants indicated that lack of learning skills hinders autonomous learning improvement. In order for students to adopt autonomous learning learners need to acquire a set of learning skills such as specifying learning objectives, side by side with the ability to monitor the learning progress. (27%) of students think that motivation influences developing autonomy and this demotivational state would make learning difficult at the first place and any attempts to develop autonomy would be surely more difficult. Learners would not be able to perform autonomy and learning objective fulfilment would be harder even with

the help of teachers. At last, (10%) of participants' concerns was fear of failure which is a serious aspect that learner's distress about daily.

**Question 16:** what are the obstacles you as an EFL student face in the process of developing learning responsibility?



**Figure 17:** Obstacles Faced by Learners in Developing Independent Learning

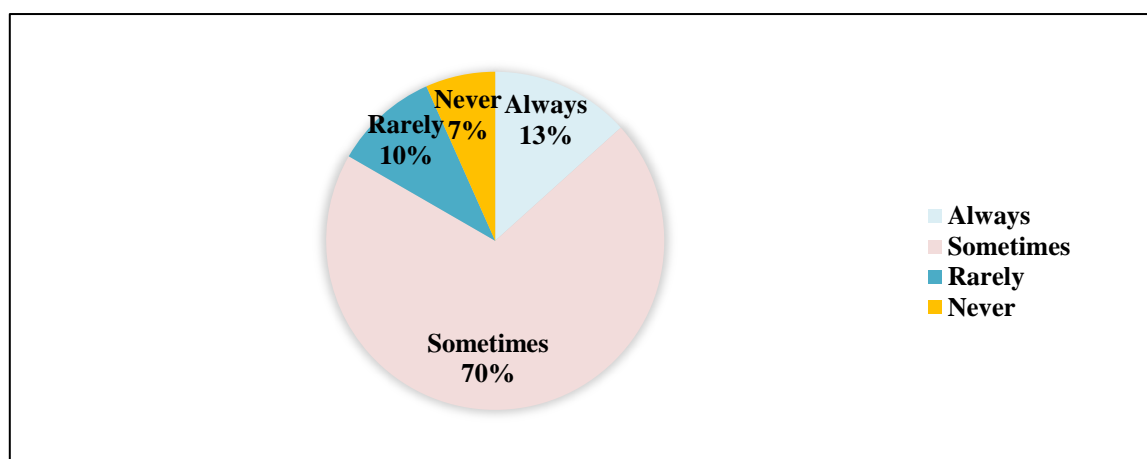
The data obtained in the above chart reveal that the percentages turned out to be close where 30% of the sample presents those who declare that dependency is one of the difficulties learners may face in developing autonomy, as well as lack of ICT facilities. Most of participants (40%) consider life quality as a barrier, whereas a rate of 28.33% state it is because of lack of resources. It is clear that most of students face many difficulties at university specifically with dependency since they get used to rely on teachers at secondary school.

In relation with ICT facilities, this technological equipment's are really useful for EFL learners. For example, internet help students in any project, research, or even preparing lessons before class and download online books which are not available in libraries. Additionally, labs open a space in which teachers incorporate a series of information to

develop a project for students and allow them experiencing situations like in the oral sessions where can enhance their skills, so that autonomy will be developed.

Some learners are living in rural zones in which no internet access, the way of living there is very difficult, and they may have to work in order to earn money. At the end, most of participants assert that they mostly do not find resources when making researches and this may cause extreme distress on students and go into debt to cover basic requirements, thereby increasing their dependence on teachers.

**Question 17:** How often do you evaluate your learning progress?



**Figure 18:** Students' Progress Evaluation

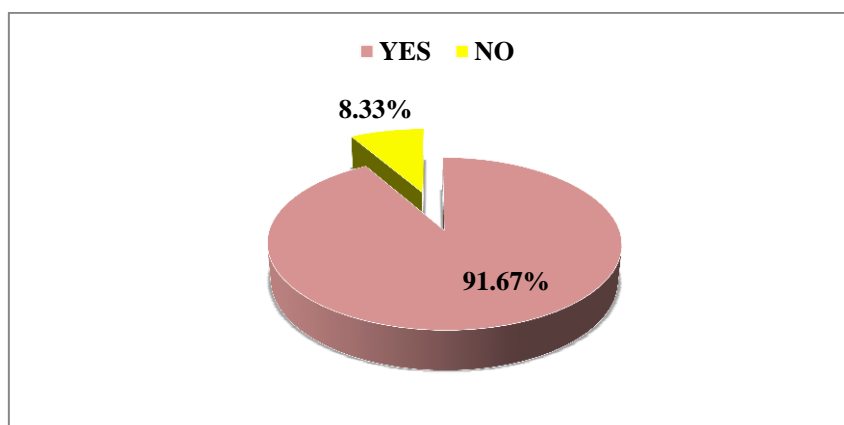
It can be observed in the chart above, most learners (83%) indicated positive answers concerning evaluating own progress. These answers give good impression on students' awareness to the significance of tracking own learning progress, in order to spot any weaknesses which need to be dealt with, as well as boosting students' confidence by themselves when noticing positive progress and great learning achievements over time.

On the other hand, a minority of students which represents (17%) stated that they either rarely or never evaluated their learning progress, that it can be due to many reasons and the most famous one must be dependency, learners tend to depend mostly on teachers on

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every aspect in the learning process including following their learning progress by using continuous assessment. This type of students is ignorant about the importance of self-assessment and how it helps developing personal growth and learning responsibility.

**Question 18:** Do you think teachers should ask for students' opinions concerning conducted tasks and activities in classroom?



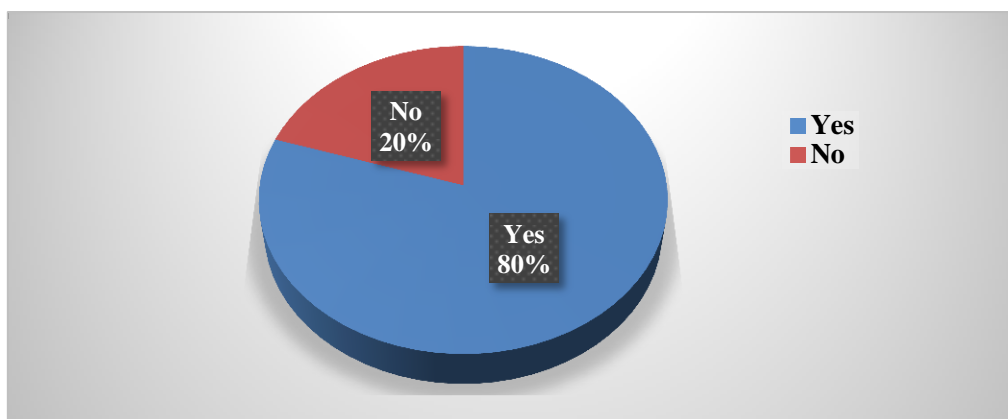
**Figure 19:** Learners and Teachers Relationship

Through the results covered from this question, the majority of participants (91.67%) agreed with the fact that teachers should ask for student's opinions concerning conducted tasks and activities in classroom, while the minority of the whole sample (8.33%) disagreed with this fact. These results ensure that most of EFL learners consider those activities which are chosen by tutors as obstacles in improving autonomy.

Therefore, teachers should involve their students actively in tasks and activities because of individual differences and try to meet their needs. By doing so, their attention will increase, focus more and will be motivated to engage in higher level of critical thinking. While few students claim that there is no need to ask for their perspectives and just accept any task or activity and this may decrease their willing to develop independence because not all strategies suit their styles.

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**Question 19:** Does environmental factors influence learners' autonomy?



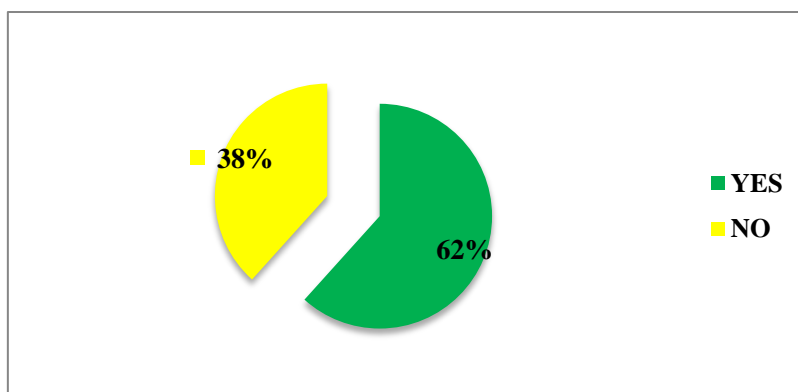
**Figure 20:** Environmental Factors Influence

Referring to the impact of environmental factors like security, health care, and people's support on learner autonomy enhancement, most students (80%) agreed to the notion that learners tend to be influenced by the surrounding environment either negatively or positively which may be reflected either way on learners' results.

This question has dimensions on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, this latter studied the significance of environmental factors on students' growth and the healthy development of a self-directed learner. This majority of students understands that there are certain needs have to be fulfilled in order to reach high level of self-actualization which is represented here by being an autonomous learner. On the contrary side, (20%) of the sample represents that environmental factor may not be a serious obstacle which prevents the progress of enhancing autonomy in educational context.

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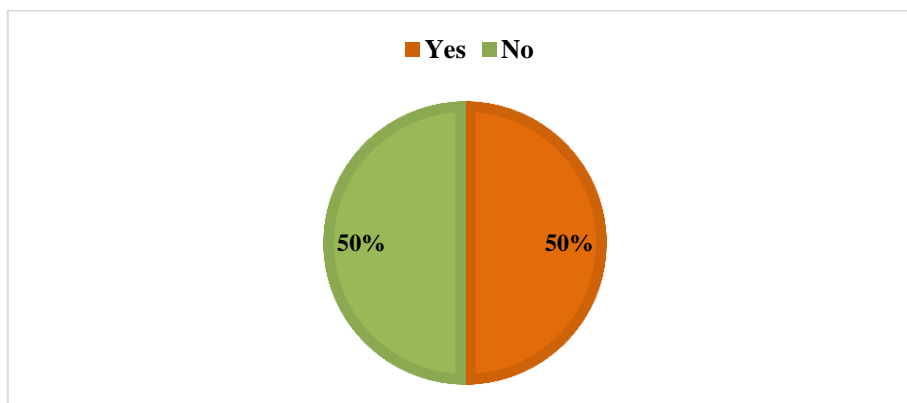
**Question 20:** Are you capable to conduct research on your own?



**Figure 21:** Learner's Capacity to Conduct Research

The chart above demonstrates that the highest rate of the whole sample is for those who can do research on their own with the percentage of 62%. EFL learners have the capacity to conduct any research unless it is in the field of their interests, and then obtain new information in order to solve problems. This means that since students can do projects for each module and present them, they can make research by themselves. On the other hand, the lowest rate (38%) is for participants believed that they have no ability to look for any wanted piece of knowledge alone. This implies that some students can never ignore the role of teacher to rely on them.

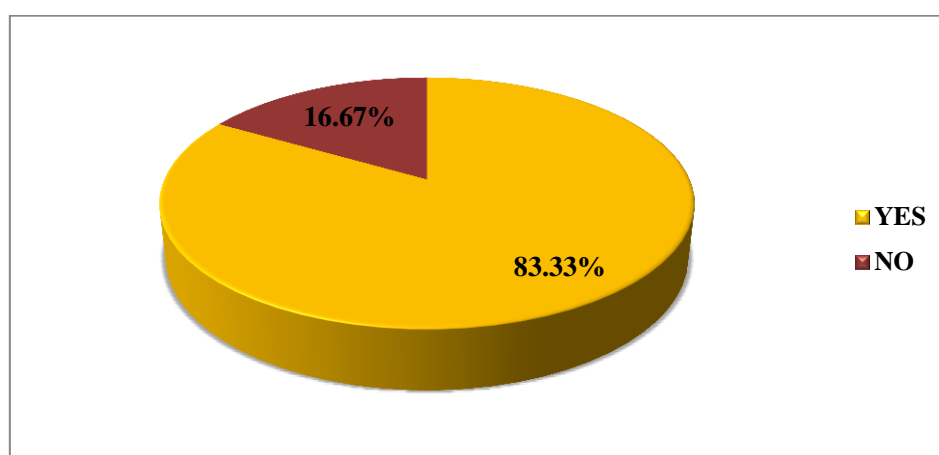
**Question 21:** Monitoring Learning Progress All Alone



**Figure 22:** Monitoring Learning Progress All Alone

Results obtained from this question were equal. (50%) of students were positive to the idea of monitoring their learning process without leaning to teachers' aid. By so, learners would be able to develop learning responsibility with ease and achieve high state of self-assessment to create autonomous personality. In contrast, (50%) of the population were not sure about their ability to take charge and monitor their learning process all alone. Students may fear this step because they consider themselves as minor and not much knowledgeable to the point of taking the wheel and supervise their learning process without teachers' help.

**Question 22:** Are you able to set your own learning objectives and fulfil them?



**Figure 23:** Students' Ability to Set Learning Objectives

This question is intended to see whether first-year EFL learners are able to set their own learning objectives and fulfil them. The clear results displayed in the chart above show that the majority of informants (83.33%) are capable to establish their own goals. Thus, they will be motivated to take more responsibility and give themselves the opportunity to learn effectively.

About 16.67% of population ensure that they have no ability to choose their own objectives and just following teachers in classroom. It is obvious that living in this life without any purpose make persons unsuccessful, feel empty and constantly bored, and life



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has no meaning. Therefore, goal setting helps learners to be clear on the choices and decisions need to make and want to achieve what is expected by the end of each course. Through objective-setting, students will learn to focus their time and resources more efficiently, to be aware of what occurs during the learning process, and then develop their autonomy.

**Question 23: Suggestions**

This part was devoted for students to express any further comments and recommendations in the context of developing autonomous learning among learners, and from reading the students' comments it was obvious their awareness and maturity.

One student said that "Autonomy requires hard work and persistence. It must be done in good ways to reach the level you want". Another learner stated some problems that face them in their journey to develop autonomous learning skills "One of the reasons that make autonomous learning hard is lack of motivation, students don't have any dreams, they just study to study". Finally, a participant summarized the importance of enhancing learning responsibility and the roles of both learners and teachers in the process, she believed that "students must be taught how to manage their own learning process, how to do research and build their systems that suits their learning purpose.

Many other learners believed that our country's educational system does not support autonomous learning approach since they prefer the easier path of teaching which is spoon feeding learners to avoid any extra effort.

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### **2.1.3.2. Teachers' Interview**

#### **2.1.3.2.1. The Description of Teachers' Interview**

This interview has been administrated to a sample of 10 teachers from the foreign languages department at AbdElhafid Boussouf, Mila. All interviewees are selected randomly without caring about their teaching experience at university or even their level. The current instrument comprises 11 varied questions which are not categorized in sections and that have already been prepared by researchers, so as to be answered by interviewees.

The questions start with asking about teachers' perception towards autonomous learner and ends with which steps they use to boost their students to develop and exercise their autonomy. The process of this interview has no specific date; it began in late March 2023 at the department of English. This operation was not easy and it lasted for 4 days since time was a major barrier to get prompt answers from all teachers.

Some teachers refuse to make an interview and ask for a hard copy to answer, as it was Ramadan schedule and interrogation period. While the majority of them accept to be interviewed. All of teachers were satisfied in terms of questions' content and length and to take part of this investigation. They were collaborative and helpful especially under the circumstances in which the interview has been done.

### **2.2.2. Teachers' Interview**

**Question 01:** What is learner autonomy?

When teachers were asked about their knowledge concerning autonomy in learning, all of them answered the question. The main target of this inquiry is to elicit the teachers' opinions and definitions regarding autonomy. Their responses are summarized in the following points:

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- It is when learners depend on themselves without totally teachers' reliance.
  - An autonomous learner is a learner who does not need a constant intervention of his/her teacher, who can learn in an environment where nobody is there to rely on.
  - It happens when the learner feels responsible towards his/her studies, take decisions on their own, and have the ability to conduct academic researches.
  - It means the ability to study under one's control and guidance.
  - It refers to the fact that learner is a self-reliant, should be aware of his/her learning process, and actively involved in activities and tasks rather than waiting passively for teachers' spoon-feeding.
  - Learners' management of their own learning and knowing what to learn and how to learn.

Basically, all the definitions said by interviewees support Holec's perception about autonomy (1981) as: "the ability to take charge of one's own learning".

**Question 02:** Do you believe that your EFL students have a great sense of learning responsibility? Why?

According to the obtained results, half of the total number of teachers agreed that EFL students lack a strong feeling of responsibility while other teachers claim that small percentages of learners have that sense. The first five tutors state that students have always relied on their teachers in almost everything. Thus, one of them said that all students are passively waiting for the direction; depend much more on the data and knowledge presented by teachers. In this context, the absence of responsibility is explained by students' lack of awareness since they accept all information without feeling curious.

Another one claimed that they have no sense unfortunately, because they came from a long spoon-feeding tradition and this implies that the blame is placed on the old educational system in which students were grasping all what is said without making any efforts to have

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extra knowledge about any topic. And added it is because of the overwhelming role of teachers since they just give information and oblige their learners to revise and rewrite it in exams, choose the suitable activities without caring about their differences, and do not involve them in lessons.

Particularly, instructors used to be the leaders inside classroom, always make learners depend on their knowledge, and push them to feel that learning process is teachers' responsibility. For instance, tutors do not ask students at least to prepare lessons before the class, do not have the freedom to make decisions such as choosing the topic of the homework which is better for them since it is in their field of interest, and do not give them the opportunity to participate in tasks. Thus, they become accustomed to this method along their learning and it is one of the reasons that make them failing to foster a sense of "responsibility". Here is one of the external challenges faced by students which is teachers' strategies. Thus, it is an answer for the third research question.

Furthermore, other teachers believe that not all students lack the feeling of taking charge on their own. One of them declared that not all of them because some students are lazy, just caring about exams' marks, and find certain reasons only to avoid learning outside classroom or even doing home works. The answer of this teacher confirmed that laziness is one of internal difficulties learners come upon, and at the same time is an answer for the third research question.

Another teacher demonstrated that it is a result of the idea that teacher is the leader of the learning process and the best source to obtain information since it is the contrast. As what is said above, other tutor stated that only few numbers of EFL learners have a learning responsibility and this is due to our educational system which is passive. From these views, there are some responsible students who do not only satisfied with instructors' explaining and try to study outside classroom in addition to revising and doing home works. But the majority

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of those learners used to depend on teachers, do not look for extra information, and revise lessons only for the sakes of their learning and grades.

The last interviewee claimed that they have to some extent, but they are wasting their time and energy blaming teachers. He/She stated that whe still believe that it is the teacher role to teach them and this is explained by students' incessant complaint that this teacher is bad, this one is inexperienced, this one make mistakes and so on. They keep hipping a huge amount of blame on their teachers and the system. So, this kind of students can be said to be responsible enough because if they are responsible, they will learn how to succeed despite all the exist challenges.

Consequently, it is clear that not only teachers but students also have an active role concerning the lack of responsibility regardless of the educational system and its traditions. Most of learners have no objective to set according to their studies; they just go to school or university, listen to professors then go home, revise lessons, and passing exams. This routine explains that the majority of students have not achieved the level of awareness yet. So, it's high time for learners to understand that learning is their responsibility more than teachers.

**Question 03:** What are the characteristics of a self-independent student?

This question is required to know how autonomous learner is characterized. Two teachers claimed that a self-development student is the one who develops his/her own skills, who practice what is learned outside classroom as practice speaking a foreign language at home or with friends either face to face or via social media, and listen to authentic materials to enrich grammar and vocabulary.

The third one said that is a student who feel responsible of his/her studies, active, aware of the learning process and able to be self-correct, involved in a process of meaningful tasks and activities, do not accept all sorts of information without looking for its truth (spoon feeding), and thinks critically. Whereas the fifth teacher stated that self-independent learners

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are those who look beyond the presented lesson by doing extra research after, should be engaged in classroom by presenting new information, and even prepare lessons before actual lesson. Other teachers' responses are varied as following:

- Have a great sense of self-confidence.
- Control their own learning
- Take responsibility of their own learning
- Critical thinkers
- Try to improve their skills
- Search all the time about new information by using technology
- Active more than passive students
- Have a will to do what they want
- Optimist students
- Setting their own objectives and goals

Finally, the last interviewee demonstrated that a self-independent student is who seldom blames others for his/her failure, who seldom looks for the short comings in a system, who seldom looks for the weaknesses that he/she notices in teachers. An independent student is a student who constantly does extracurricular activities, who knows and recognizes the true value and significant of working on his/her own beyond classroom settings.

**Question 04:** Do you agree that EFL students have potentials to develop learning responsibility?

As it shown in the teachers' answers, all of them agree that each EFL student has potentials to improve autonomous learning. Only 3 interviewees justified their responses and the first claimed that all humans have responsibilities towards their family, friends, and even society in which they have to solve problems according to them. In this respect, it is the same for students who have responsibility towards their learning since they have the capacity to

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learn independently but need to be encouraged by teachers to develop a learning style and participate in classroom activities.

Basically, EFL learners have the ability to improve autonomy but they cannot use these abilities in the absence of guidance and motivation. Teachers are responsible for students' learning as in their teaching since they play the role of facilitators and guiders, so they have to motivate learners to show their talents and capacities in classroom. Here, it can be said that the teacher's response previously is an answer for the third research question which is about internal and external challenges faced by EFL learners, and it is the lack of motivation.

Similarly, the second tutor stated that they have potentials but need to be pushed to this new method specifically with the rapid and wide spread of technology. In this respect, as it is said by the previous instructor, students need the help of teachers to have a great idea about the learning material and its main objectives. After that, teachers have to ask learners to do home works according to what is presented inside classroom with the use of internet. The latter has facilitated and accelerated the development of various positive aspects of learning. Additionally, they may give them the choice to identify topics they are interested in and ask them to work differently (write a story, a play, an article, or even drawing) according to their skills, so it can be developed.

The third interviewee said that every student has a potential but they are not ready to be responsible for their learning, they are too lazy, and rely mostly on teachers. Accordingly, students are constantly blaming instructors and the system in terms of their failure but without make any efforts to learn independently. They are depending heavily on their teachers, have no initiative to look for any piece of information, and passively waiting for

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teachers' knowledge. This teacher answered the second research question which said that learners are not ready to adapt autonomous learning approach.

**Question 05:** In your opinion, what are the obstacles EFL learners face when developing autonomous learning skills?

This question aims to gather interviewees' opinions about the barriers faced by EFL students in promoting independence. The majority of teachers at the department of English blame both tutors and learners; therefore, responses were varied from one teacher to another. According to an interviewee the educational system can be an obstacle since it used to teach students to be spoon feed, and by doing so they look at this as a norm and then just complete their learning following this tradition.

Without neglecting what is said by the previous instructor that not only the system and teachers are responsible of the absence of autonomy, but also learners who used to depend on teachers as the only source of knowledge. In this context, two other interviewees added that teachers should change the using methods and strategies along with shifting from teacher-oriented approach to learner-cantered approach, in addition to motivate students. This means that tutors have to be responsible as learners in developing independent learning or even be more responsible because they considered as leaders of learning process.

The rest of instructors demonstrated that there are other difficulties except both learners and teachers. In fact, the third and fourth interviewee accused students only in developing learner autonomy and declared as following: 3<sup>rd</sup> teacher claimed that EFL students, actually, have the ability to learn independently but they are not aware of the importance of this notion, just revising what is presented in classroom to have good marks or even get the average as.

From this perspective, it is clear that most of students care more about marks and graduates. Thus, they do not make efforts, feel satisfied of what is said inside classroom, and



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do not practice or search for information outside. And this is an answer for the first research question which is about learners' readiness to promote autonomous learning.

The 4<sup>th</sup> tutor stated that the majority of students recently rely much more on teachers or internet to obtain information and also may find fake sources that lead them go through unneeded details. This indicates that the dominant role of teachers and technology decreases and eliminates the role of learners in return, become less critical thinking developed, gain either limited amount of information or go into details or fake sources by using internet and thus fail to catch up with the original one. The remaining four interviewees gave other reasons that impede students' self-reliance as mentioned by the previous teachers which are:

- ✓ Lack of books in libraries and internet
- ✓ Lack of time management
- ✓ Laziness
- ✓ Pessimistic students
- ✓ Lack of skills and sources
- ✓ They are not encouraged and motivated by teachers

All of these reasons are considered as both internal and external challenges that faced by EFL students, and they answered the third research question.

The last interviewee claimed that the biggest problem is that students think university education is similar to that of secondary school where they absolutely depend on the system, the textbooks, and the teacher. This implies that students come to this level of education with the mentality of secondary school where they were passive receivers, and then they do not make any effort in the direction of developing autonomy.

Also, this teacher added that the teachers' intervention could have a role to play, so they constantly try to raise students' awareness towards the notion of autonomy. In addition

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to classify those obstacles into external as ICT facilities and internal ones as lack of motivation and laziness but most of them can be said to be purely internal because for instance students can be independent even without any internet access or other external factors.

From this perspective, EFL students can be affected more by the internal obstacles than the external ones. Consequently, EFL students have to do the best and make efforts in order to improve their responsibility towards their learning process, in addition to be motivated and guided by tutors without completely depend on them. Therefore, the more they rely on teachers in their own learning the more they face difficulties in developing LA.

**Question 06:** As a teacher, how would you promote autonomous learning among your students?

This question was devoted for teachers to share, out of their experience, the strategies they use in order to promote autonomous learning among their students. Majority of teachers shared one specific method which is encouraging students to make their own researches at home and recommend topics to search on before class for their own benefits and to enhance their general knowledge.

One teacher expressed that “In this way they [students] will gradually develop a critical thinking skill”. In addition to that, one teacher stated that students should take part in the learning/teaching process and engaging in classroom lessons would enhance both learners’ confidence and performance. She/he also expressed the importance for learners to set their own goals and create an atmosphere where students would be able to learn independently. One interviewee indicated that she/he shares responsibility with her/his learners, this action would boost students’ confidence and make them feel valued, respected and responsible.

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**Question 07:** Do you agree that teachers' roles should be limited in the teaching/learning process so that students would develop responsibility concerning their learning?

This question was devoted in order to track teachers' perspectives over the notion of roles' limitation for teachers. All participant teachers expressed positive answers to this question, since they found it a must for teachers to be roles limited so that students would be able to develop autonomy in learning. One teacher declared that "Teachers should let learners know why, what, and how to learn ... and help them [students] use the appropriate tolls for better learning".

This is a common opinion shared between all participants, due to the significant of teachers' guidance in developing autonomous learning skills. Another participant stated in a sarcastic tone that "Teachers are already limited ... time constrains, huge number of students per class, these are already massive limitations which on their own should prepare students to work". Students often blame teachers for not presenting the lesson properly and providing extremely few resources, but they underestimate and tend to forget the hard teaching conditions and the amount of constrains teachers are facing.

**Question 08:** How important is being autonomous in teaching/learning a foreign language?

Participants expressed a variety of answer concerning this question, one of the teachers explained the importance of learner centered approaches where she/he declared that "The recent learning theories focus on the learner and his role in the teaching/learning process. This is the reason why encouraging autonomy for learners is very important". Another teacher insisted on the significance of autonomous learning because "students are given the chance to work independently and have control on the leaning process".

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However, students are asked to work even harder in order to achieve their high potentials, as one of the teachers indicated that “Learning a FL is specifically a domain that necessitates from the learner a personal effort since no one will speak the language instead of him”. So, all teachers asserted the seriousness of growing autonomous learning for students since the domain of foreign languages demands hard work and self-directed learning process.

**Question 09:** From a teacher’s perspective, do you prefer teaching using learner-centered approach or teacher-centered approach?

Teachers’ viewpoints were varied concerning this question, this latter was devoted to tackle teachers’ preferences when speaking of teaching approaches. Majority of interviewees voted for the learner-centered approach for a number of reasons as one teacher explained that “Learner-centered approach ... is an effective way of teaching students to be independent and reliant on themselves in learning and transferring information” another teacher expressed that “Learning-centered approach is supported by recent leaning theories which advocate to learner responsibility”.

Other teachers have different perspective, where they believe that both are important to develop learner autonomy and none should be neglected, “Well, each approach has advantages and disadvantages, there are problems that hinder the implementation of autonomy like large classes and different learning/teaching styles”. At the end, one teacher summarized the idea by stating that “Learner-centered approach is said to be the most fruitful approach used to be adopted, but it cannot be used in all types of teaching activities, so it depends on the objective and the nature of the module being taught”.

**Question 10:** Do you encourage your students to analyse situations critically?

All interviewees agreed that they do encourage their learners to think critically, however, they did not provide any further explanation on how they tend to practice this

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action. Only one teacher clarified her position where she expressed that “this is how my module works, give them short stories to read then make a critical analysis where students share their opinion critically”.

**Question 11:** Do you boost your students to develop and exercise their autonomy through:

\*Awareness \* Involvement \* Intervention \* Creation \* Transcendence

In this item the purpose is to cover through which strategy teachers use to boost students to improve self-independence. All interviewees confirm in their answers they apply all steps of autonomy or even some of them which are considered as levels of implementation. The majority of teachers achieve only the first three elements as one of them declared that they encourage students to be aware of their goals and why should be responsible for the learning process, be involved in classroom activities, and even modify tasks on their own. It is obvious that setting objectives of any lesson within class help students to be involved in tasks, so that they will be pushed to learn new levels and this may occur only with awareness of the material should be taught.

Two other teachers declared they always try to investigate learners’ involvement and intervention during class. They involve students in learning input and its following exercises, for instance they ask them to read and analyse texts, to solve problems on the board, and can change some elements of activities according to their styles and strategies but it does not work for the majority of students. This is explained by instructors’ inattention to educate learners because awareness is the first and the most important level should be developed before involvement and intervention. Thus, EFL students have to be aware of content and the purpose behind it then they can involve in tasks and even adopt what does not fit their needs. Another interviewee stated that he/she had already boosted learners to be independent through awareness, involvement, intervention, and creation where transcendence is an

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exception. And used to advise them to be aware of their learning and identify the main objectives of each lesson so that they can recognise the content of the presented material. Also, he/she give them problems to solve, ask for their views which activity is suitable, and give them homework such as writing a story by using what is shown in the lesson.

From this perspective, it is noticed that students can be creative just when achieve awareness first then the other followed steps. Eventually, only a teacher claimed that he/she apply all steps and added that he/she often ask my students to prepare the lessons before class and sometimes give them topics to look for then do presentations inside classroom and it works with some learners. By doing so students can be autonomous in their learning since they have the opportunity to choose and make decisions about content, set their own objectives, and learn outside classroom.

Finally, the minority of teachers use all steps of promoting independence while the majority attain only two or three aspects and that can be a reason behind decreasing self-reliance. If all instructors follow the order of these steps as it mention in Nunan's model and guide their students, all of them will fulfil self-direct from awareness till transcendence because the more they achieve a level the more they develop their autonomous learning.

### **2.3. Results and Discussion**

The study covers both results of the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview. In the light of the findings of the conducted questionnaire, it is deduced that most students, if not all, were aware and agreed on the notion of autonomous learning even though they seemed not quite ready to adopt it, still, the data showed a positive side in which students perform autonomy; but, in a casual way rather than a professional one. A good portion of students have the curiosity to search for questionable information all alone.

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However, and as predicted, students faced a number of challenges concerning adopting autonomy in their learning process, ones we can mention are teachers' reliance, lack of ICT facilities for learners which definitely would make the learning process a bit exhausting and challenging, learners learning mindset where students tend to care more about the obtained grades to pass rather than learning for long term benefits, laziness, quality of life and other relevant aspects.

Students at the beginning must be guided to depend on themselves, otherwise either the developmental process would take forever to achieve the desired degree of autonomy, or students would be lost since day one. According to learners' answers, they are indeed aware of what is required to build that sense of responsibility and they are conscious of the seriousness and importance of auto-learning, yet they are not ready, as there is a difference between being aware and being ready, and they seem afraid to engage in such new experience and cannot take risks.

On the other hand, the teachers' interview was fruitful for the pieces of advice teachers provided both the researchers and first year EFL students with in order to elevate their learning quality, by offering new learning strategies and methods which would make the learning process easier, more effective and successful.

However, teachers expressed their disappointment concerning students' level and mind-set, where they believed that learners are wasting their potentials and not using them appropriately to develop autonomous learning and to become more responsible for their own learning progress, on the contrary, from teachers' perspective, learners are taking too much advantage and profit negatively from teachers with their over reliance on these latter, where they passed a message for students to start working on their learning mind-set as long as they still on their first steps before it become too late for that.

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## 2.4. Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations

According to the data obtained and its interpretation, it is confirmed that EFL students at AbdElhafid Boussouf University Centre suffer from a set of difficulties which hinders their autonomous learning development and these difficulties can be classified as internal obstacles and external obstacles. From this basis, the researchers suggest a number of recommendations for both students and teachers to make the developmental process of learner autonomy and learning responsibility occur in an effective manner.

At first, students' awareness to the concept of autonomous learning should be raised even more for the sake of better performance, for this reason, teachers are asked to provide their learners with extra information on how to develop and apply autonomy in the context of education by presenting opportunities for learners to experience objectives' fulfilment, there should be an atmosphere of collaboration and communication in the learning environment between learners and teachers which would automatically build an autonomous and confident personality for learners to take their learning wheel.

Moreover, learners need to get over dependency on external knowledge providers like teachers and parents, it is time to create a learning personality by developing their searching skills for their benefits. Also, setting own objectives is a necessity for university students, side by side with knowing the suitable learning style in order to learn in an efficient manner for long term positive results.

In addition to that, learners have to create a self-motivational mechanism so that they would not seek motivation from external factors which are likely to be unavailable when needed, instead, boosting one's own confident and encouraging own self is the key to creativity. In this context, learners should not let the environmental factors affect their learning progress and their learning autonomy and responsibility level.



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## **2.5. Limitations of the Study**

This research faced quite few numbers of limitations, starting with the students' inability to understand the concept of autonomy to start answering the questionnaire. Besides, it was the first time they deal with a questionnaire for the majority of participants. In addition, students could not comprehend most of the questions so that the researchers found themselves explaining every question in plain English and sometimes even in Arabic.

Another obstacle faced is the lack of variety in the sample in terms of gender, only little of participants were males which made the chances unequal. Finally, both students' questionnaire and teachers' interviews were conducted in Ramadan where most participants did not show up to university so that it was difficult to reach the needed number of participants.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the practical part of this study. It investigated the challenges EFL learners face in developing their autonomous learning. To answer the research questions, a students' questionnaire devoted to first-year EFL students and an interview for EFL teachers at AbdElhafid Boussouf University Centre of Mila were conducted. The obtained results showed that students face internal and external obstacles in their attempts to build up their autonomy in terms of learning.

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## General Conclusion

In the field of English language teaching and learning, the concept of autonomy has come to light frequently and become more noticeable subject. Through this method, several changes made over teaching and learning process. In this respect, the focus shifted from the traditional teacher-centred approach to the learner-centred approach. By doing so, EFL students have the opportunity to become independent and responsible for their own learning.

The present research tends to investigate the challenges EFL learners face in developing autonomous learning. The case study of this work is first year EFL students at Mila University Centre. Additionally, it aims to shed-light on the role of both teachers and students during the learning process and the main obstacles they face in promoting LA.

The current study depends on one main objective which is investigating the barriers EFL students face in their learning and suggest some strategies to foster the process of autonomy. In addition to answer the following questions:

- 1- Are first-year EFL learners aware of autonomous learning significance?
- 2- Are first year EFL learners ready to adapt autonomous learning approach?
- 3- What are the internal and external challenges that learners come across when developing autonomous learning?

This work is divided into two main chapters; the theoretical background has been covered in the first one which consists of two sections while the second consists of only one section that is about practical framework. The first section is about theoretical aspects closely related to the notion of autonomy and other related concepts.

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Some definitions regarding autonomy from different perspectives are presented as well as for the levels and characteristics of autonomous learners. In addition to dealing with a set of theories proposed by famous researchers explaining what and how should be done throughout the learning process in order to be independent in educational context.

The second section also has been devoted to the theoretical background about difficulties faced by students when developing their autonomy. Basically, it deals with the most possible and famous barriers facing EFL learners whether they are internal such as lack of motivation, dependency, and laziness...etc, or external as time management, life quality and so on. Then, referring to the roles teachers and learners have to play in order to facilitate the learning process. Finally, it deals with how to foster the bond between students and tutors and additionally which strategies teachers need to use and depend on to promote their students' autonomy.

The field work is related to a descriptive method which is carried out to reinforce and prove what has been argued in the theoretical section. It dealt with the data collection, the instruments have been used, and the data analysis, interpretation and discussion, pedagogical implications and recommendations, and limitations of the study.

As far as the research tools, two main research instruments were used; a students' questionnaire and a teachers' interview. The questionnaire has been administrated to sixty (60) first-year English learners at the department of foreign languages at Abdelhafid Boussouf Mila University and the interview has been done with ten (10) English teachers from the same university centre. Moreover, both instruments were administrated during Ramadan schedule and the period of tests.

Concerning the questionnaire, on the one hand, it consists of four sections with a total of 24 questions varied between open-ended and close-ended questions. These questions are

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sequentially asked starting with general background, followed by learners' experiences before university (secondary school experiences), then specific questions about their experiences as college students regarding autonomous learning, and lastly ask them to add some suggestions about the significance of this research or the topic itself if there any. The obtained findings from this questionnaire confirmed the research questions in the theoretical chapter. In the light of these results, it is deduced that the majority of students are aware of the concept of autonomy but still not ready to adopt it.

The answers of learners showed that some of them can be considered as independent but in a partial way not in a complete one; since they feel sometimes curious about some lessons that are explained by tutors, so that, they look only for the presented information by their teachers outside classroom and depend on the same elements. Most of students declared that they rely much more on their teachers as the only source of knowledge and passively waiting for their help. In this respect, the majority of respondents claimed that they have the ability to learn independently but they used to be spoon-feeding by teachers in secondary school.

Thus, the educational system and teachers are responsible for hindering the process of autonomy. In addition to the previous difficulties, students face a set of challenges as lack of ICT facilities and quality of life which are external factors; laziness and lack of motivation which are internal factors; and other relevant aspects.

Concerning the teachers' interview, it comprises 11 different questions. The first question was about the interviewees' perceptions towards learner autonomy and ends with the steps teachers follow to push their learners to promote their independence. The obtained results indicates that all teachers aware of the notion of autonomous learning and accept to be part of teaching learning process.

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They declared that they are not really contented with students' level and mind-set because they believe that students have the capacities to learn independently but they lack a great sense of responsibility. EFL students, in this context, are wasting their energy and use their potentials inappropriately to improve learner autonomy. Besides, some interviewees stated that not all teachers have the same perspectives toward autonomy since a number of teachers still preferred teacher-centred approach and that will affect students' willing to develop independence.

Furthermore, the participants expressed that they are limited in terms of time and the input of lessons and that can be considered as an obstacle. In addition to their teaching strategies which do not fit learners' needs and differences, and declared they do not reach all steps that suggested by Nunan, so it is another challenge learners may face. Finally, side by side with students, teachers in this interview blame themselves also in hindering the development of autonomy.

To conclude, based on the obtained findings from the practical part, the research questions are answered. The results showed that the concept of autonomy is widely spread and both teachers and students are aware of its importance in learning process but not all of them ready to adopt it as a basic notion for learning and education.

Additionally, the findings confirm that EFL students are facing problems with the promotion of LA. In this respect, these challenges are divided into internal and external barriers. Indeed, to overcome these obstacles, not only students are responsible to rely on themselves and develop their autonomy but teachers also need to be autonomous and thus they may create an efficient teaching learning process.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Students' Questionnaire

#### Dear Students

This questionnaire is designed for the sake of gathering needed information to accomplish a research study related to our Master's dissertation. You are kindly requested to answer this questionnaire by ticking (✓) the suitable box (or boxes if necessary) and provide a full statement wherever required to.

Your collaboration is very significant and appreciated.

#### Section one: General information

##### 1. Gender

Male

Female

##### 2. Do you choose to study English?

Yes

No

##### 3. Your English level is:

a. Excellent

b. Fair

c. Good

d. Poor

##### 4. Are you able to learn independently and take responsibility for your learning process?

Yes

No

#### Section Two: Autonomy at Secondary School

##### 5. Did you prepare your lessons before going to school?

a. Often

b. Sometimes

c. Rarely

d. Never

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6. Did you rely mostly on teachers to provide you with information?

- a. Often       b. Sometimes       c. Rarely       d. Never

7. Did you search for the information you need with the guidance of your teachers?

- a. Often       b. Sometimes       c. Rarely       d. Never

8. Did you search for the information you need yourself without any teachers' guidance?

- a. Often       b. Sometimes       c. Rarely       d. Never

9. Did you apply what you learned in school in real-life situations?

- a. Often       b. Sometimes       c. Rarely       d. Never

10. Did your schools provide you with ICT facilities such as computing labs, internet access, or any technological equipment for your service in your former secondary school?

- Yes       No

11. Were you used to focus more on exam grades rather than studying effectively for long-term results?

- a. Care more about the grades       b. Learn effectively

### **Section Three: Autonomy at University**

12. Autonomous learning must be adopted by learners at this level of higher education.

- a. Strongly agree       b. Agree       c. Disagree       d. Strongly disagree

\* Justify:

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13. To what extent you are ready to adopt autonomous learning approach?

- a. To high extent                       b. Not ready yet                       c. Not ready at all

14. Who is responsible for enhancing learners' autonomy?

- a. The learner him/her self                       b. Teachers                       c. Both                       d. Other

15. why students cannot develop learning autonomy

- a. You are not motivated                       c. Laziness
- b. Lack of skills                       d. Fear of failure

16. From your perspective, what are the obstacles you as EFL student face in the process of developing learning responsibility? (Tick “✓” as much it suits you).

- a. Dependency                       c. Lack of resources
- b. Lack of ICT facilities                       d. Life quality

17. How often do you evaluate your learning progress?

- a. Always                       b. Sometimes                       c. Rarely                       d. Never

18. Do you think teachers should ask for students' opinions concerning conducted tasks and activities in classroom?

Yes

No



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19. In your opinion, does environmental factors such as security, health care, and people's support influence learners' autonomy?

Yes No 

20. Are you capable to conduct research on your own?

Yes No 

21. Do you believe you can monitor your learning process with hardly any reliance on teachers?

Yes No 

22. Are you able to set your own learning objectives and fulfill them?

Example of learning objectives: By the end of this lesson/task I will be able to name and recognize prepositions.

Yes No 

**\* Suggestions:**

Here you can note any possible suggestions or comments related to the topic.

.....

.....

.....

You are much appreciated for your collaboration.

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## Appendix 2: Teachers' Interview

1. What is your view point about learner autonomy?
2. Do you believe that your EFL students have great sense of learning responsibility? Why?
3. What are the characteristics of a self-independent student?
4. Do you agree that EFL students have potentials to develop learning responsibility?
5. In your opinion, what are the obstacles EFL students face when developing autonomous learning skills?
6. As a teacher, how would you promote autonomous learning among your students?
7. Teachers' roles should be limited in the teaching/ learning process so that students would develop responsibility concerning their learning. Do you agree?
8. How important is being autonomous in teaching/learning a foreign language?
9. From a teacher's perspective, do you prefer teaching using learner-centred approach or teacher-centred approach?
10. Do you encourage your students to analyse situations critically?
11. Do you boost your students to develop and exercise their autonomy through?

\* Awareness   \* Involvement   \* Intervention   \* Creation   \* Transcendence

**You are much appreciated for your collaboration!**

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## RÉSUMÉ

La responsabilité est probablement l'élément principal du caractère de la vie humaine. C'est l'une des particularités de la personnalité des gens qui indique que les individus s'occupent eux-mêmes de leurs propres affaires sans dépendre des autres et gèrent toutes les conséquences possibles de leurs comportements. Dans le processus d'apprentissage et d'enseignement, les devoirs intrinsèques d'un étudiant sont d'apprendre et d'obtenir des informations de manière efficace. Les tendances internationales en matière d'éducation révèlent un changement de paradigme : l'approche traditionnelle axée sur l'enseignant est remplacée par une approche axée sur l'apprenant. Cette évolution a été accélérée par le concept d'autonomie de l'apprenant. Il a progressivement joué un rôle fondamental dans le domaine de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage des langues au cours des dernières décennies. A cet égard, l'objectif de cette étude est d'examiner les défis rencontrés par les apprenants EFL dans leur processus de développement de l'autonomie (interne et externe). Par conséquent, cette recherche tente de révéler les obstacles durables auxquels les étudiants en première année de licence (L1) EFL sont confrontés dans leur parcours d'amélioration de leurs traits d'autonomie en termes d'éducation. L'objectif de cette étude est de faire la lumière sur les défis mentionnés ci-dessus et de donner aux apprenants des conseils pour éviter ces obstacles et améliorer leur niveau d'apprentissage. Pour ce faire, deux instruments de recherche sont utilisés pour collecter les informations nécessaires : un questionnaire destiné aux étudiants et un entretien avec les enseignants. Cette étude plaide en faveur de la promotion de l'autonomie de l'apprenant au niveau universitaire en raison de l'impact positif de cette approche sur le niveau de performance des apprenants d'anglais langue étrangère.

**Mots clés:** Autonomie, apprenants EFL, apprentissage autonome, responsabilité, défis, enseignement et apprentissage des langues.

## الملخص

من المحتمل جدًا أن تكون المسؤولية هي الجزء الرئيسي من شخصية حياة الإنسان فهي إحدى السمات المميزة لشخصيتنا والتي تشير إلى أنه يمكن للفرد أن يتفاعل مع تحركاته ، ويمكنه تحمل بعض الالتزامات ومواجهة نتائج معينة للأنشطة التي قد تحدث. في عملية التدريس التعليمية ، تتمثل الواجبات الجوهرية للطالب في التعلم والحصول على المعلومات. تظهر الاتجاهات الدولية في التعليم قفزة نوعية من النهج التقليدي الموجه للمعلم إلى نهج يوجه تركيزه على المتعلم. تم تعريف هذا الأخير بمفهوم استقلالية المتعلم والتي لعبت بشكل تدريجي دورًا أساسيًا في مجال تدريس اللغة وتعلمها في العقود القليلة الماضية. في هذا الصدد ، تركز هذه الدراسة على كشف و اظهار التحديات التي يواجهها متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لتطوير استقلاليتهم. وقد تكون هذه الصعوبات بسبب عوائق داخلية و اخرى خارجية لذلك تحاول هذه الدراسة الكشف عن العقبات المستدامة التي يواجهها طلاب المستوى الأول في طريقهم لتطوير اعتمادهم على انفسهم في دراستهم. الهدف من الدراسة الحالية هو البحث عن طرق لتطوير استقلالية متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية على المستوى الجامعي. لهذا الغرض ، يتم استخدام اثنين من المعاهد البحثية لجمع المعلومات المطلوبة: استبيان التلاميذ ومقابلة (حوار) مع المعلمين. تم اختيار الطلاب والمعلمين المشاركين بشكل عشوائي من المركز الجامعي عبد الحفيظ بوصوف ميله. أثبتت النتائج أن الطلاب واجهوا مجموعة متنوعة من التحديات التي تمنع البناء الفعال لاستقلالية المتعلم. في ضوء هذه النتائج، يجب التوصية بضرورة منح المعلمين الفرص لطلابهم في اتخاذ القرار وتوحيدهم بأهمية التعلم بشكل مستقل. كما يجب على الطلاب تحفيز أنفسهم بدلاً من الاعتماد على المعلمين.

**الكلمات المفتاحية :** الاستقلالية ، متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، التعلم المستقل ، المسؤولية ، التحديات ،

تعليم اللغة وتعلمها