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## **Investigating EFL Learner Autonomy in Algerian Secondary Education:**

**The Case of Third Year Pupils at Fatma N'soumer Secondary  
School. Amizour, Bejaia.**

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Master Degree in  
Linguistics

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## **Abstract**

In the Algerian secondary education, learner autonomy is expected to be attained through the implementation of the competency-based approach. The present case study investigated learner autonomy at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School at Bejaia, Algeria. EFL pupils' perceptions of their own and their teachers' responsibility, their ability, willingness and motivation to learn English were examined. It also explored teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy and their practices for its promotion. To reach this aim, a questionnaire was administered to one hundred seventy three third year pupils. The quantitative method was supplemented by four EFL teachers' interviews. The analysis of the data revealed the pupils' inability and unwillingness to assume responsibility for their learning. On the one part, they wanted their teacher to be their partner and guide. On the other part, they reported their over reliance on him and considered that he is the knowledge transmitter and classroom manager. The findings highlighted teachers' hesitation to abandon their authoritarian role, pupils' low level of motivation, unawareness of preferred learning styles and inability to personalize their learning through the implementation of appropriate strategies. On this basis, it seems essential for teachers to help and raise pupils' metacognitive awareness, train them to make use of strategies to manage their learning; and hence develop their confidence to move towards autonomous learning.

*Key words: EFL learners' perceptions, competency-based approach, secondary education  
EFL teachers' perceptions, responsibility in learning.*

## ***Dedication***

*I dedicate this work to:*

- ❖ *My beloved parents who have sustained me throughout life.*
- ❖ *My sister and her husband.*
- ❖ *My two brothers and their wives.*
- ❖ *My nephews: Aïmed eddine, Aymen, Rayan and Adam*
- ❖ *My nieces: Maysa and Anais*
- ❖ *All my relatives and friends.*

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**Abbreviations:**

- CALL: Computer Assisted Language Learning
- CBA: Competency-Based Approach
- CBE: Competency-Based Education
- CBET: Competency-Based Education and Training
- CBTE: Competency-Based Teacher Education
- CBVE: Competency-Based Vocational Education
- CLT : Communicative Language Teaching
- CRAPEL : Centre de Recherche et d'Application en Langue
- EFL: English as Foreign Language
- ELT: English Language Teaching
- FL: Foreign language
- FLL: Foreign Language Learning
- LA: Learner autonomy
- LLA: Language Learner Autonomy
- LSD: Learner Self-directed
- PBTE: Performance-Based Teacher Education
- PRO: Personal Responsibility Orientation
- SAC: Self-access centers
- SDL: Self-directed learning

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## **General Introduction**

With technological progress the world has become narrower than it has ever been. Thus, there is a need to find a common medium of communication that may facilitate interaction among individuals who don't share the same language. English has become a lingua franca that those individuals resort to in order to cope with their needs in all spheres of life. According to Carter and Nunan (2001: 1), globalization has made English a pivotal factor for the development of all countries in terms of economy, information, technology, politics, education and culture. Consequently, no one can deny the importance of developing one's English communicative competence. Obviously, there is no better place to help improve and meet this goal than schools. Hence, teachers are held responsible for reaching this ultimate goal.

“Teaching children is not simple or straightforward. Rather, it is a complex task that needs skillful teachers” (ibid: 6). English Foreign Language (EFL) teachers need to display their qualifications and knowledge so as to reach better learning outcomes. “we define effective teaching as that which leads to improved student achievement using outcome that matter to their future success” (Coe et al. 2014: 2). Hence, teachers should adopt effective methods and approaches to be implemented in their classrooms to maximize EFL learning. However, teachers' teaching styles should match with learners' learning styles in order to achieve better outcomes. So, the teacher should take into account the differences among his learners' strategies and techniques to cater for each of his learners' needs. Learners learn differently and at different paces due to their biological and psychological differences. Thus, the EFL teacher plays a crucial role in identifying differences and must be knowledgeable as for the methods, strategies and techniques he should implement in order to make the teaching-learning process effective and allow EFL learners achieve high levels of proficiency and competence in the English language (Tejada. M.G. et al. (2018).

Therefore, it is certain that every EFL teacher has wondered about the method that can be more effective in terms of learning outcomes and that will best serve his teaching process. Hence, different approaches and methods have been adopted by EFL teachers to foster EFL learning (Ibid).

Foreign language teaching has undergone remarkable changes and developed throughout history. Traditional methods which were teacher-centered, failed to meet the demands of modern society which requires effective use of knowledge and information in real-life situations. Consequently, there has been a shift to learner-centered approaches. The main objective of such shift was to enable learners assume responsibility for their learning.

The Competency-Based Approach (CBA) was implemented in Algerian schools after educational reforms were launched in 2003. Its aim is to help learners rely on themselves and become independent from the teacher. That is to say, promote learners' autonomy so as to take in charge their own learning (Holec, 1981: 3).

During my humble experience as a secondary school teacher (for about 14 years), I noticed learners' passivity for learning English and their lack of motivation, which stand as a handicap against a successful teaching-learning process. Except for foreign languages (FL) streams, secondary school pupils perceive English as a secondary subject. Consequently, they allocate the responsibility of their learning to the teacher, who finds himself spoon-feeding them, despite the fundamental goal set by the implementation of Competency-Based Approach which was fostering learners' autonomy. Hence, the present study is an attempt to investigate EFL learners' perceptions of their own and their teachers' responsibility for English language learning, their ability, willingness and motivation to be involved in their own learning. It also seeks to highlight EFL teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy (LA henceforth) and their practices in developing it.

The rationale behind our research is to investigate how far changes in the Algerian educational policy have contributed to develop learners' autonomy and responsibility in taking charge of their own learning, especially at the eve of launching the second generation of reforms, which has already been done in the two lower cycles (primary and middle). So, it has become crucial to evaluate learners' and teachers' adaptation to the new orientation brought by the reform, and examine to what extent they are familiar with the concept of learner autonomy; besides measuring their readiness to take part in that pedagogical process. Specifically, the aim is to investigate how far recent changes have extended learners' responsibility, involvement and motivation, which are important aspects of learner autonomy among Fatma N'soumer Secondary School pupils for a better life-long learning.

### **1. Statement of the Problem**

Foreign language teaching has undergone remarkable changes due to the evolution of educational language policies. Today's Learners need to develop new competences that are crucial to face the twenty-first century's challenges. Thus, new forms of learning and teaching have to be integrated to allow learners tackle these complex global challenges through a more efficient acquisition of the needed skills, such as critical thinking and the ability to communicate effectively, innovate and solve problems (Scott, 2015: 1). In addition to learning to learn autonomously (Benson, 2001, Holec, 1981, Dickinson, 1987)

The development of learner-centered approaches has introduced a new perspective into language classrooms. This shift has emphasized the importance of promoting learners' autonomy in the learning process. It has been revealed that learners achieve better outcomes when they are independent and autonomous in taking charge of their learning. That is why it is recommended to involve them in the EFL classroom for an effective teaching-learning process (Feidjel, 2013: XIII).

However, though autonomous learning is seen as an appropriate pedagogical approach in any educational context, it is doubtful that learners and teachers are able to put it into practice (Tayjasamant & Suraratde, 2016: 155). Various methods have been briskly introduced as an endeavor to foster learner autonomy in EFL education. Algeria makes no exception. Its educational system has undergone reforms to attempt to meet the needs of learners imposed by the unexpected changes and demands in our everyday lives. But, has this helped pupils in Algerian Secondary schools become ready and able to cater for life-long learning as it was argued?

The main purpose of fostering learner autonomy (LA) is to raise learners' awareness of their learning processes and enable them to take more responsibility in their learning. Consequently, the major concern of this present work is to highlight the importance of enhancing autonomy in language learning and to investigate pupils' readiness for autonomy and their awareness of the role it plays in promoting their learning outcomes. To achieve the goal of this research, the attempt was to answer the following questions:

- 1- Are pupils at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School autonomous in EFL learning?
  - a- What are the pupils' perceptions of their ability, responsibility and confidence in English language learning?
  - b- Do pupils use learning strategies in English language learning?
  - c- How motivated are pupils to learn English autonomously?
- 2- How is learner autonomy perceived and practiced by teachers at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School?
  - a-What are teachers' perceptions of their role at the EFL classroom?
  - b-What do teachers do to promote autonomous learning among their pupils?
- 3- What are the constraints that hinder the promotion of learner autonomy at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School?

## **2. Aim of the Study**

The present study aims at understanding the concept of autonomy from a local perspective. The researcher aims at shedding light on the extent to which pupils are autonomous at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School by investigating their perceptions of their responsibility, ability and motivation to take more control in the English language learning process. We also intend to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions of LA and their practices to enhance it. Moreover, the present study sets out to explore pupils' preparedness for autonomy at the eve of launching the second generation of reforms, after more than a decade of using CBA in its first version.

## **3. Significance of the Study**

The major objective of any educational reform is to make the educational system more efficient. CBA was implemented in Algerian schools to foster learner autonomy and facilitate learners' development of long-life skills to meet the demands of the modern world. Accordingly, it is desirable to check whether the adoption of this approach has brought the fruit of the presumed planted seeds.

“Autonomy is one of the bases of language learning” (Hadi, 2012: 47). Considering that autonomy plays an important role in language learning, the present study might bring significant evidence that can contribute to a better understanding of what Language Learner Autonomy (LLA) means to EFL teachers and learners in the Algerian educational context, and more importantly, the level of autonomy that pupils at FatmaN'soumer Secondary School have reached and how much this concept which emerged in the West fits the Algerian context.

#### **4. Thesis Organization**

The dissertation is composed of three chapters, besides a general introduction and a general conclusion.

The general introduction presents the background, the context, the research questions, the aims and purpose of the research, the significance and the dissertation outline.

In the first chapter, a critical survey of the relevant literature is provided. Theoretical aspects of learner autonomy are highlighted by examining different definitions that have been proposed by researchers and various implications of autonomous learning. The chapter also includes a discussion of how learner autonomy is related to motivation and learners' meta-cognitive awareness. It is followed by pointing out the importance of promoting LA in EFL classrooms and introducing the different approaches to promote it. Then, it provides a review of the research and literature about Competency-based Approach in relation to learner autonomy and provides an argument to support the focus of the study as regard to learner autonomy in foreign language learning.

Chapter two outlines the design and methodology of the research. The process of designing the data collection instruments, participants' sampling criteria, data collection and analysis procedures are also described.

Chapter three highlights the significance of the main findings of the research. It offers details of the results in relation to the learners' perceptions of their role in the English classroom and their willingness to assume responsibility for their own learning. In addition to the role that EFL teachers play in the development of learner autonomy in their classrooms. This chapter contains also a full discussion, interpretation and evaluation of the results with reference to the literature, in addition to implications of the findings as regard to their considerable pedagogical contributions. It also discusses the limitations of the research and provides recommendations for future research.

The general conclusion reviewed the research design and the significance of the main findings and their contribution in bringing enlightenment to the research questions that gives a clear idea of the situation of LA in Secondary Schools.

## Chapter One: Literature Review

### Introduction

In this chapter, the attempt is to provide a review of the literature on LA by discussing its underlying issues for a better understanding of this concept, its principles and how it contributes to the improvement the learning process. LA processes, starting from defining it to its state of being in the present day, are covered.

#### 1.1. Defining Autonomy in Language Learning

Over the last decades, there has been changing views in the English Language Teaching (ELT); and emphasis was put on the role of the learner. LA emerged as a result of the emergence of the notion of learner-centered education (Kaçak, 2003: 4). This shift of interest from the teacher's role to the learner's has unveiled learners' active role during the learning process and hence, has given rise to the concept of LA (Benson, 2001: 21).

Autonomy represents a basic component on which learner-centeredness stands. Before, the teacher's authoritative behavior restricted learners' autonomy and their right to make choices; all learning activities were controlled by the teacher (Kaçak, 2003: 4).

Figure 1-1 illustrates the difference between the traditional teacher-centered approach and the student-centered approach.

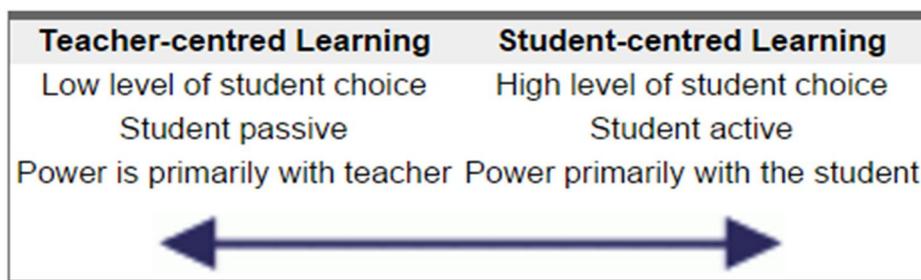
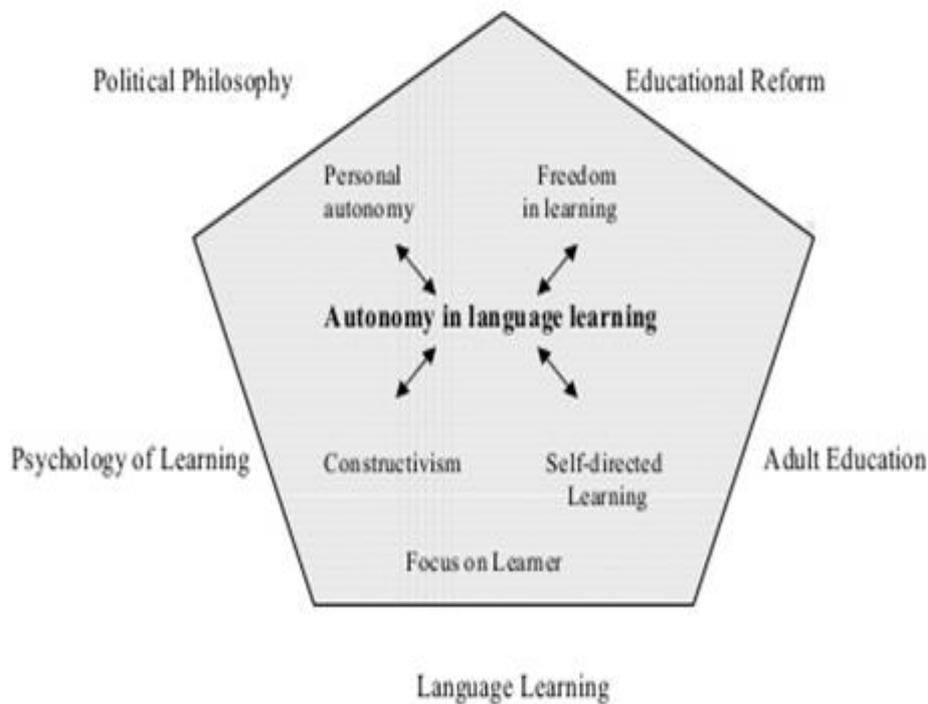


Figure 1-1: Key points of teacher-centered and student-centered learning (O'Neill and McMahan 2005).

Autonomy has been defined by many researchers in different ways due to the complexity of this term. Its meaning has been discussed from different perspectives. LA includes concepts from different domains, such as politics, education, psychology and philosophy, which in fact contribute to the complexity of this concept (Gremmo & Riley, 1995: 125). Figure 1-2 summarizes these influences.



**Figure 1-2: Major Differences on the theory of Autonomy in Language Learning (Benson, 2001: 22)**

Due to the objectives of the study which are purely educational, the concept of autonomy here is limited to the teaching-learning process.

The theory of Autonomy in the learning process, which was created in 1971, is seen as the offshoot of the Council of Europe’s Modern Language Project. As a result, the Centre de Recherche et d’Application en Langue (CRAPEL) has been founded at the university of Nancy in France. Yves Chalon was the father of Language Learning Autonomy (LLA), but after his death in 1972, Henri Holec coined the term. And hence, the concept of Autonomy has gone straight away into the field of language teaching (Benson, 2001: 8).

The notion of Autonomy was first introduced to the field of foreign language education in the context of innovative adult foreign language projects which were based in self-access language resource centers where learners were supposed to self-direct their learning. Then a shift to younger learners has changed the attention of researchers (Benson & Huang, 2008: 424)

The most cited definition of autonomy in the field is that of Holec (Benson, 2007: 22). According to Holec, Autonomy refers to “the ability of an individual to take charge of his own learning” (Holec, 1981: 3). Holec refers to autonomy as the learners’ attribute and quality. That’s to say that LA represents learners’ responsibility for the decisions to be made concerning all the aspects of their learning, such as determining the objectives, defining the contents and progressions, selecting methods and techniques and evaluating what has been acquired (Ibib: 4).

In Little’s famous definition, he describes what LLA is not, rather than what it is. He offers five (5) points in his definition:

1. Autonomy is not a synonym for self-instruction, in other words, autonomy is not limited to learning without a teacher.
2. In the classroom context, autonomy does not entail an abdication of responsibility on the part of the teacher; it is not a matter of letting the learners get on with things as best they can.
3. On the other hand, autonomy is not something that teachers do to learners; that is, it is not another teaching method.
4. Autonomy is not a single, easily described behavior.
5. Autonomy is not a steadily state achieved by learners. (Little,1990: 7)

Little offers another definition in which he considers the learner as possessing a capacity that enables him to direct his learning. He states: “Autonomy is a capacity for detachment,

critical reflection, decision making, and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning” (Little, 1991: 4). Little involves a psychological dimension in his definition in which he includes characteristics which are related to the way in which learners learn and which should be improved so as learners become active participants in the learning process. This definition makes evident the cognitive processes underlying efficient self-management learning, such as: attention, reflection and the development of meta-cognitive knowledge (Benson, 2001: 98).

Benson recognizes three versions of LA in the field of language education:

- 1- Technical version, “the act of learning a language outside the framework of an educational institution and without the intervention of a teacher”.
- 2- Psychological version, “a capacity, a construct of attitudes and abilities, which allow learners to take more responsibility for their own learning.”
- 3- Political version, “ability which allows learners to control both their own individual learning and the institutional context within which it takes place.” (Benson, 1997:19).

In his definition, Benson, as regard to the technical version of autonomy, refers to technical skills that learners may need to manage their learning, such as learning strategies and task implementation. These skills can be taught, thus, promoting the technical version may not be complicated.

The psychological version is related to constructivism. He argues that “if knowledge is constructed uniquely within each individual through processes of social interaction. It follows that learning will be most effective when learners are fully involved in decisions about the content and processes of learning.” (Benson, 2001: 36).

The political version emanates from critical approaches to language, in which control over processes and content of learning are of paramount importance (Benson, 2001: 44).

Dam opted for the social aspect of learning as he defines autonomy:

An autonomous learner is an active participant in the social processes of classroom learning, but also an active interpreter of new information in terms of what she/he already and uniquely knows. Accordingly, it is essential that an autonomous learner evolves an awareness of the aims and processes of learning and is capable of the critical reflection which syllabuses and curricula frequently require but traditional pedagogical measures rarely achieve. An autonomous learner knows how to learn and can use this knowledge in any learning situation she/he may encounter at any stage in her/his life. (Dam et al. 1990: 102; Dam 1994: 505) cited in (Summer, 2010: 8).

Kohonen (2012), defines autonomy development as a whole approach in which learners are believed to be committed people, having individual identities. This means that autonomy refers to being active, responsible and capable to take in charge their learning. So, learners are no more passive recipients to be filled with knowledge by teachers. Thus, learning is not limited to the sheltered environment in the classroom, but rather, can be extended to the outside world.

Sinclair (2000: 13) associates autonomy to culture and offers the following definition in which she explains that autonomy is a concept which “accommodates different interpretations and is universally appropriate.”

Benson (2001: 55) argues that autonomy may vary from an individual to another or even vary for the same individual in different learning contexts. Accordingly, autonomy will vary according to cultural context. So, can a concept such as autonomy, which is grounded in European educational institutions, be appropriate in other parts of the world, especially in non-western cultures?

## **1.2. Autonomy in the EFL Classroom**

English is the most widely taught foreign language in over 100 countries (Crystal, 2003: 5). In an article “The Triumph of English” published by the Economist in 2001, English is clearly described as “a world empire”. The article states: “It is everywhere. Some 380 million people speak it as their first language and perhaps two-thirds as many

again as their second. A billion are learning it, about a third of the world's population are in some sense exposed to it, and by 2050, it is predicted half the world will be more or less proficient in it" (Anderson, 2010: 1).

According to Burchfield (1998: 14) literate and educated individuals all over the globe can be seen to be deprived whenever they do not know English. The intensive globalization in all spheres has given rise to a huge demand for English as a foreign language (EFL). This has led to considerable changes in mainly the entire world's educational standards.

New approaches have been introduced to cater for the demands of the modern society which requires learners to be equipped with life-long study skills than only the mastery of language. More focus has been thrown on the communicative, functional and individual aspects of language. The shift from traditional approaches to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and learner centered approach was accompanied with a major support to learner autonomy. Thus, the notion of LA in language learning is historically and theoretically associated with CLT (Nunan, 2000 as cited in Alonazi, 2017: 183).

LA is one of the key learning factors that determine the rate of success of foreign language (FL) attainment (Feidjel, 2013: XXI). Nguyen (2014: 2) points out that "learner autonomy in English as a foreign language (EFL) education has received great interest from researchers all around the world."

Language learning has become a significant constituent in people's life. Accordingly, learners are held responsible for taking control over their own learning. The majority of researchers agree on the fact that autonomy has to be considered a worthwhile educational aim so as to enable learners master the foreign language (Nematipour, 2012: 126). "The concept of learner autonomy is often applied to the process and content of language learning but not specifically to its intended outcome, The development of

proficiency in a second or foreign language” (Little, 2007: 14). Consequently, promoting LA is not a goal confined to Western European countries, from where this concept emerged, but rather, it is desirable in all countries where English is taught as a second or foreign language (Hadi, 2015: 58).

Wenden (1991: 11) points out: “few teachers will disagree with the importance of helping learners become more autonomous as learners”. Learning a foreign language is not an easy task due to huge efforts that are required to be put in by learners for their personal adaptation with that foreign language (Talley, 2014: 24).

I am myself an EFL teacher at a secondary school, my interest in the importance of LA for learning English emerged as I observed learners’ passivity and lack of motivation and interest to learn English. In our context (Algeria), English is taught as a compulsory subject with purely examination purposes. Though recent reforms, which aim at highlighting the central role of the learner in the learning process, learners remain dependent on their teachers. Thus, they fail to develop their skills in English and feel demotivated. However, they show a great desire to become active participants despite their disability. Accordingly, LA should be promoted in EFL classrooms.

Iranian EFL teachers demonstrated positive perceptions about LA and are attempted to provide learners with the facilities to help them become autonomous (Alibakhshi, et al. 2015: 164-141)

Abrabai (2017: 22-299) points out to the vital role that LA had in Saudi EFL context. He argues that both teachers and learners are required to be aware of the importance of this concept and the role it plays in enhancing Saudi learners’ achievement in English as a FL.

Dogan, and Mirici (2017: 166-184) assume that LA is a central and desirable ability to develop in learners so as to attain a fruitful language learning-teaching process in EFL

classes in Turkey. Despite the fact that learners lacked the capacity to study independently, to take responsibility of their learning and were not willing to further their studies autonomously, most of EFL instructors displayed positive attitudes and awareness of LA in theory and familiarity with what it is.

In Malaysia, university students are learning English as a compulsory subject regardless of the specialties they are majoring in. However, after learning it for many years, they still fail to grasp this second language. This deficiency is mainly due to the teacher-centered approach that is prevailing in the National University on Malaysia. Another reason for their failure is that the capacity for learners to be autonomous is hindered by socio-cultural factors. In fact, learners display autonomous learning characteristics. However, they perceive the teacher as a symbol of respect and hence, they show a preference to remain stuck to their view. Thus, learners need to be supported and motivated by adopting another approach so as to propel them forward to greater autonomy (Ming & Alias, 2007: 1-16).

LA, as a western concept, may seem to mismatch with non-western contexts and appears to be something far-fetched and so it may conflict with traditions in their education. However, Littlewood (1999: 88) states: “at the individual level, there are no intrinsic differences that make students in one group, either less or more, capable of developing whatever forms of autonomy that are seen as appropriate to language learning”. Consequently, LA is an achievable goal even in settings that are believed to be inappropriate and may hamper and discourage learners to become autonomous. Hence, LA must be promoted in the EFL context for better outcomes in EFL learning.

### **1.3. Autonomy and other Related Concepts**

Learner Autonomy has been defined differently by various scholars who have employed a range of terms when attempting to describe and define this complex concept

as related to learners' involvement and responsibility in the learning process (Carson, 2010: 77).

Academic discourse is abundant with terms that are used interchangeably with the term autonomy, such as self-instruction, self-access, self-education, out-of-class learning and distance learning. The emergence of misconceptions in using these terms can be attributed to the fact that some aspects of LA are either differently interpreted or misunderstood (Al-Maqubali, 2010: 10). In fact, these terms play an important role in the manifestation of LA which has a broader meaning than all these terms.

### **1.3.1. Self-instruction**

Dickinson (1987: 5) defines self-instruction as: "situations in which the learner, with others or alone, is working without the direct control of a teacher".

According to Benson (2001: 62), self-instruction refers to "any deliberate effort by the learner to acquire or master language content or skills".

Jones (1999: 378) cited in (Ibid), defines self-instruction as "a deliberate long-term learning without teacher intervention".

This entails that learners can learn the target language by themselves without help from teachers or peers and without being to any institution. So, self-instruction may refer to learners' responsibility and working in isolation. According to Harris and Reid cited in Tzotzou, 2011: 8), in terms of responsibility, self-instruction in the EFL classroom refers to different self-regulation strategies that can be used by learners so as to manage and direct themselves.

However, teachers play an important role in raising learners' awareness about the need to recognize and adopt the right strategies so as to solve problems encountered when solving tasks during the learning process. Hence, a combination of both formal instructions provided by the teacher and self-instruction is necessary. Teachers and

learners should work collaboratively for a successful foreign language learning (FLL) (Ibid: 6).

### **1.3.2. Self-access**

Self-access is another term that is used synonymously with other terms for autonomy. Shereen (1991: 143) defines self-access as “a way of describing material that are designed and organized in such a way that students can select and work on their own” cited in (Benson, 2001: 113). Thus, according to Shereen, self-access refers to materials that are made available to learners so as to learn by themselves and not depend on the teacher.

Sturtridges (1992: 4) states that self-access is “the system which makes materials available to language learners so that they can choose to work as they wish, usually without a teacher or with very limited teacher support”.

The term self-access language learning derived from self-access centers. It refers to any kind of learning that takes place in a self-access center (Diaz, 2012: 117).

Benson (2001: 114) defines self-access center as designed facilities that offer a range of learning resources to learner, such as audio, video, and computer workstations, audiotapes, videotapes and computer software, and a variety of printed materials. These centers may also provide guidance and counselling. He adds that self-access learning doesn't entail that learners are able to control their own learning.

Shereen (1989: 7) explains that “the essential prerequisite to self-access learning is the provision of self-access materials within an organized framework so that students can get what they need”.

Gardner and Miller (1999), (cited in Benson, 2001: 114) consider:

Self-access is probably the most widely used and recognized term for an approach to encourage autonomy...it is sometimes seen as a collection of materials and sometimes as a system for organizing resources. We see it as an integration of a number of elements which combine to provide a

unique learning environment. Each learner interacts with the environment in a unique way.

Accordingly, self-access language learning cannot be regarded as the same as LA since it mainly refers to the materials that are available in the self-access centers (SAC) and that can contribute to develop LA. Nathan et al (2011: 19) assert that “... self-access centers encourage attendees to be extremely competent and resourceful language, cultural and social learners”.

For Dickinson (1987: 27) “self-access learning refers to modes of learning rather than where the locus of control may lie”. This definition matches with that of Gardner and Miller in that they agree on the fact that self-access language learning is an approach to language learning rather than language teaching and that different elements are integrated in this process. The following figure displays these elements.



**Figure 1-3-2: Interaction between the learner and the self-access environment (Gardner & Miller, 1999: 11)**

Accordingly, self-access learning may involve teachers who play the role of a counselor, evaluator, manager, provider of knowledge, assessor, whereas learners may play the role of a planner, self-assessor, evaluator, and organizer, in addition to collaboration among teachers and learners. Hence, we can say that self-access language learning can be seen as a context

among others which can contribute to enhance LA. So, it cannot be equated to LA which requires the skill of taking responsibility and control of the learning process (Holec, 1981:14).

### **1.3.3. Self-direction**

Words such as individualization, self-instruction, independent learning ... self-direction have been used synonymously to the term “autonomy”. However, though these terms are related to autonomy in language learning, they are obviously different (Nucamendi, 2014: 26).

Self-directed learning (SDL) emerged in the field of adult education. Malcolm Knowles was known as the father of andragogy or adult education which was introduced to North American educators. Concurrently, self-directed learning emerged to differentiate adult learners from children. It has been tried in elementary and secondary schools (Khodabandehlou et al. 2012: 2-4). Knowles (1975: 18) defines self-directed learning as “... a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and mental resources for learning, and evaluating learning outcomes”. In his definition, Knowles offered a view of self-direction which emphasizes the phases of a learning process. He claims that pro-active learners, those who take initiative in learning, learn better than reactive learners, those who are passive and rely on teachers to do everything for them (Ibid: 14)

Skiff and Beckendorf (2009: 76-77) share Knowle’s view, they define SDL as the process of identifying learning needs, planning learning goals, discovering learning resources, implement required learning tactics and strategies, and subsequently, evaluate learning outcomes.

In this sense, learners are referred to as pro-active participants in that they are actively involved in constructing knowledge. Thus, SDL can be understood as an instructional method which puts emphasis on actions of planning, implementing and evaluating. This can be referred to as the process orientation which focuses on characteristics of teaching-learning

transaction in which concern is centered on external factors of the individual, such as an education agent or resource which facilitates this process; this dimension is referred to as SDL (Ralph et al. 1991).

However, though learners can make decisions over their learning process. They can be unconscious of this process, as asserted by Brookfield (1985: 29):

it may be possible to be a superb technician of self-directed learning in terms of one's command of goal setting, instructional design or evaluate procedures, and yet to exercise no critical questioning of the validity or worth of one's intellectual pursuit as compared with competing, alternative possibilities.

Hence, this concept, SDL, from this view cannot be equated with LA which involves reflection and decision making about what to learn and how to learn it in a very conscious way (Little, 1991: 4).

However, another dimension in defining Self-direction has been elaborated. It takes into consideration the influence of personality traits on the process of SDL, as opposed to the original concept, which was characterized by the influence on contextual situations which affect the initiative of the learner. The dimension that stresses individual characteristics is referred to as Learner Self-directed (LSD) (Fishman, 2012: 9).

Dickinson (1987: 11) states that self-direction is "a particular attitude to the learning task, where the learner accepts responsibility for all the decisions concerned with his learning but does not necessarily undertake the implementation of those decisions". Dickinson stresses individualistic attitudes besides learners' ability to fulfill their decisions.

Stockdale and Brockett (2011: 29) describe LSD as "an individual's beliefs and attitudes that pre-dispose one toward taking primary responsibility for their learning". They add it is "a learner's desire or preference for assuming responsibility for learning (Ibid: 24). however, Brockett and Heimstra (1991) cited in (Fishman, 2012: 11) described responsibility as the individual's assumed ownership of their own thoughts and actions which implies control of one's internal state regardless of the impact that context exert on the learning process.

Accordingly, if we rate the individual characteristics dimension to Benson (2001: 2) in which he considers that autonomy is “not a method of learning, but an attribute of the learner’s approach to the learning process”, then learner self-direction seems to be synonymous to LA since it refers to capacity and control, however, in Oh’s definition (2002) cited in (Bordonaro, 2006: 30) LLA is concerned by both learner behavior and language learner context. Thus LSD is not synonymous to LA.

Gerstner (1992: 86) describes SDL as “a labyrinth of confusion and contradiction and has been rendered... ambiguous”.

To define the elusive concept, it is thus important to take into consideration the scholar’s view toward it. Either, it is viewed as an instructional process which allows external factors or it emphasizes personal and internal characteristics of learners.

Language Learner Autonomy may encompass both dimensions in the sense that they are interrelated and are of paramount importance to make learners take control and be more responsible for their own learning. Hiemstra and Brockett (1991) cited in (Saleem, A, 2009: 5) presented the PRO (Personal Responsibility Orientation) model of self-direction in adult learning to discriminate the differences and similarities of this SDL as an educational method and LSD as a personality characteristic. Figure 1-3-3 helps understand self-direction in adult learning.



**Figure 1-3-3 Personal Responsibility Orientation. Adapted from: Saleem, A, 2009: 6)**

#### **1.4. Learner Autonomy Indicators**

With the changing views in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), the learner is put at the center of the teaching-learning process. Accordingly, the role of both teachers and learners has changed; giving the learner a more active and participatory role, and that of a facilitator for the teacher. This shift of locus, which aims at improving the learning process, has emphasized the importance of promoting LA. According to Esch (2009: 28) the concept of LA has shifted from being a fringe opposition to traditional and established teaching norms to becoming an internationally recognize aspect of modern education, and in particular within the context of Foreign Language Learning (FLL).

In FLL contexts, learners do not have the chance to be exposed to the target language except in the classroom where instruction is limited to few hours per week. A fact which

reduces learners' opportunities for practice and interaction, and so attainment of a high level of efficiency depends on the learners taking responsibility for their learning (Kormos & Csizer, 2014: 276)

Benson & Huang (2008: 424) assert that LA is central in FLL. They explain: "... the increasingly accepted view that high degrees of language proficiency cannot be achieved through classroom instruction alone ... and that successful foreign language acquisition depends upon learners achieving and exercising some degree of autonomy in respect to their learning". It is highly recognized that LA is necessary to achieve high levels of proficiency and effective use of the language. Benson (2011: 16) claims: "1) language learners naturally tend to take control of their learning, 2) learners who lack autonomy are capable of developing it, and 3) autonomous language learning is more effective than non-autonomous language learning". Thus, there is a constant need to get learners involved and participate in the FLL process. However, can learners bear the expectations thrown on their shoulders? Implementing the concept of autonomy is very challenging for EFL teachers due to the fact that many variables have to be taken into consideration. Dam (1995: 6) states: "there is no simple recipe for its implementation in the language classroom". LA is not a product ready-made for teachers to apply, nor is an article of faith (Bassou, 2008: 35) as a matter of fact, fostering and developing LA would be easier if some conditions were gathered together. Little (2007: 23) proposes that success in second and foreign language teaching is governed by some interacting principles: learner beliefs and involvement, learner reflection and target language use.

Learners' beliefs about their role and responsibilities and those of the teacher have a significant effect on the development of autonomy. The beliefs they have about themselves affect their behavior in the learning process. Dam (2000: 22) emphasized that a "willingness on part of the teacher to let go, and on the part of the learner to take hold" is necessary to

implement LA in a classroom context. This willingness “may either contribute to or impede the development of their potential for autonomy” (Cotterall, 1995: 196). This implies that learners should accept the transfer of responsibility from their teachers and assume their own. Nunan (1988: 20) claims: “learners should have a say in what they should be learning and how they should learn it”.

Lack of personal responsibility stands as an obstacle for learners to reach proficiency and independence. In an EFL context where the notion of autonomy appears to be crucial, Little (1991:1) argues: “We take our first step towards developing the ability to take charge of our learning when we accept full responsibility for the learning process, acknowledging that success in learning depends crucially on ourselves rather than on other people”. Hence, the development of autonomous learning depends on learners’ development of control over learning. Victori & Lockhart (1995: 225) state that learners will not be able to become autonomous if they “maintain misconceptions about their own learning, if they attribute undue importance to factors that are external to their own action”.

Implementing the concept of autonomy seems to be difficult due to the fact that this concept emerged in Western Europe. Accordingly, learners in EFL contexts may be reluctant to assume responsibility for their own learning. They have a different view of the teacher. They perceive the teacher as an authority in the classroom; a fact that inhibits learners to exercise and develop autonomy in language learning (Priyatno, 2017: 56)

However, teachers may not accompany learners throughout their life. Thus, they are committed to involve their capacity to learn independently. Every learner should give himself immense importance. Learners’ decision making ability is a crucial indicator to enable them engage in an autonomous language learning process. As Holec (1981: 3) explained, learners are required to be able to make decisions such as setting the objectives, defining the content, selecting the learning methods, monitoring and evaluation of one’s learning. Moreover, they

are required to carry out the choices which govern their actions independently (Joshi, 2001:14).

This empowerment which refers to the operational aspect of taking charge of one's own learning and choice are leading to learners' development of autonomy and taking complete control of their own learning (Benson, 2006:22). Accordingly, learners' making decisions rests on the belief they have as regard to the role they and their teachers have in the FLL.

Dickinson (1993: 330-335) suggests that autonomous learners are those who are "aware of the learner material, its goal ... choosing and practicing appropriate learning strategies ... capable of self-assessing their performance". Benson (2001:8) defines autonomy as "the capacity to take charge of one's own learning and "the ability of learners to control their own learning". However, Sinclair (2008: 43) insists "this capacity consists of development and conscious awareness of a body of specific meta-cognitive knowledge about one's self as a learner; one's learning context, the subject matter to be learned and the processes of learning". Hence, awareness of the learning process is another indicator of learner autonomy. Bassou (2015: 24) clarifies that the principle of empowerment implies reflection, since accepting consciously responsibility for analysis cannot be realized without thinking about actual performance of that specific thing.

Daunwong cited in (Aleida, 2008: 49) affirms that willingness and taking responsibility for learning, which are components of LA, involve meta-cognitive awareness which allows learners to plan, monitor, manage and reflect on the learning process. Reflection can be explained by Dam's five questions (1995: 6): "what are we doing? Why are we doing it? How are we doing it? With what result? What are we going to do next?" Aleida (2008: 49) too highlights that LA pertains to learner's decisions about "what to learn, when and where learning should be developed, materials to be used, ways to monitor the learning process and how to carry out assessment of the process".

Little (2007: 24) affirms that setting goals, select learning activities and materials or evaluating outcomes is mainly not achievable without thinking about what is done. Cotterall (1995: 195) too points out that learners' control of their own learning is reflected in their ability to use a set of tactics in learning: setting goals, choosing materials and tasks, planning, practice opportunities, monitoring and evaluating progress. Accordingly, learners need to be reflective and be aware of their own thinking.

Wenden (1991: 135) emphasizes the significance of meta-cognitive awareness when describing LA as "learners' ability to know how to learn and to reflect on their own learning ... they can choose the right thing at the right time for the right reasons".

Pichugova et al (2016: 3) state that learners will be able to understand their own thinking and learning process once they become aware of how they best learn which includes their learning styles and strategies. Thus, be able to organize, select appropriate learning strategies, manage to solve a learning task, watch and check their performance, solve probable problems and evaluate themselves as regard to the task completion. They assert that most successful learners are those who take conscious steps to understand what they are doing when they learn.

Wenden (1998:531) suggests four steps to make learners aware of their meta-cognitive processes:

- 1- Elicitation of pre-existing knowledge and beliefs on meta-cognition;
- 2- Articulation of what the student has become aware of;
- 3- Confrontation of their view with different ones; reflection on the process, expanding or modifying the initial knowledge ... by making learners aware of their learning process they become autonomous in making decisions about their own learning.

However, learners' reflection and awareness is closely linked to learners' motivation. Ushioda (1996:2) defines motivation as "taking charge of the affective dimension of the

learning experience”. Oxford and Shearin (1996) cited in Hui-Ju Liu (2015:1165) maintain that motivation determines how much learners are actively involved in learning a second or foreign language.

According to Gardner and Mac Intyre (1993), motivation comprises three components: desire to achieve a goal, effort extended in this direction, and satisfaction with the task (cited in Djigunovic & Jelena, 2012: 58).

Enhanced motivation is a conditional on learners taking responsibility for their own learning, noticing that their successes or failures are related to their own efforts rather than to the factors out of their control (Dickinson, 1995: 14). That is to say that there is a clear relationship between LA and learners’ motivation. In this sense, focus is more on intrinsic motivation which is defined as “motivation to engage in an activity because that activity is enjoyable and satisfying to do” (Deci & Ryan, 1985: 39). Whereas extrinsic motivation refers to ‘actions carried out to achieve some instrumental end, such as earning a reward or avoiding punishment (Ibid). Accordingly, motivation determines to what extent learners make efforts to learn a foreign language which affects learners’ success or failure when using the target language. And hence, it is necessary to foster motivation through extrinsic rewards as learners are not always intrinsically motivated to learn all subjects.

Long lasting and effective learners’ outcomes are essential indicators of promoting LA in education (Zeqiri, 2013: 133).

The current trend for teaching and learning aims at an overall communicative proficiency which entail the ability to communicate appropriately and effectively in the target language. Communication entails interaction and expressing meaning between participants. However, in an EFL context, where English is taught only in class, learners do not have opportunities to practice the target language outside the classroom. Accordingly, classroom instruction should be held in the target language to increase learners’ chances to actively engage in using that

language. So, in order to cater for the needs of learners, EFL teachers have to create an environment which resembles actual use of the target language that can be referred to as an optimal learning environment (March, 2012: 2).

Little (2007: 25) explains that the principle of target language use implies that target language should be the medium of classroom instruction. According to Lap (2005: 39), a competent language learner is one who:

In addition to the ability to use the target language ... is able to use the target language to learn the language, to learn how to learn the language (how to plan, execute, monitor, and evaluate tasks and language acquisition processes) and to learn how to transfer (i.e. transfer of strategies learned from their classroom experiences for monitoring and evaluating their own task execution and language learning.

That is to say, learners have to use the target language to organize and reflect on their learning. Ridley and Ushioda (2003:19) point out that appropriate target language use encompasses the use of foreign language for both “genuine communicative purposes” and reflection on the target language itself, besides the learning process. In other words, “the target language in its meta-cognitive as well as its communicative function was the channel through which the learners’ agency was required to flow”. That is to say that both the meta-cognitive and communicative functions of the target language lead learners exercise their agency (make decisions, act on them and evaluate the results (Little, 2009: 35-36).

Little (Ibid: 22) states that for a successful learning process, the teacher has to scaffold the utterances of the learners for the construction of meaning. He puts emphasis on the interactive, interdependent nature of language (language learning and language use) which are inseparable (Little, 2016: 51).

However, “the students have responsibility for their learning but through scaffolding” (Lacey, 2007: 8). That is to say, teachers have to provide learners with opportunities and tools to make their decisions without denying that learners have a

say in what and how they learn. Accordingly, the teacher plays a role in maintain a learning environment to allow learners become autonomous. In fact, language learning is not only an individual and cognitive process. Rather, it is also a social phenomenon based on interaction and collaboration. This entails that developing proficiency of each learner contributes to develop the proficiency of other learners in the classroom (Little, 2017: 149).

Leni Dam makes sure that her learners develop proficiency in the target language by making the target language the medium of communication by involving them to use it in a spontaneous and authentic way during the learning process while she kept scaffolding them (Little, 2016: 43).

According to the constructivist view, cognitive processes develop as a result of different forms of social interaction (Wilkinson, 2010: 109). Donato (1994: 40) points out: "... in social interaction a knowledgeable participant can create, by means of supportive conditions in which the novice can participate in, and can extend skills to higher levels of competence".

Little (2007: 25) assumes that the implementation of the principle of target language use is reflected in the appropriate use of writing and the effective use of group work; the language produced interactively becomes part of the individual learner's internalized mental resources. As evidenced in the work of Dam (1995):

The dynamic of the classroom depends crucially on writing (in order to speak and speaking in order to write) ... (in their logbooks, their learning materials and the texts they produce, learners use writing to construct the target language; and their non-stop of writing makes learning visible, encourages a focus on form, and provides a basis for reflection in performing three interacting roles. They are communicator, using and gradually developing their communicative skills in the target language; experimenters with language, gradually developing an explicit knowledge of the target language system; and intentional learners, gradually developing explicit awareness of language learning. (Little, 2016: 50).

Vygotsky (1991: 218) argues: “thought is not merely expressed in words. It comes into existence through them”. Accordingly, the acquisition and use of a target language draws learner to engage in reflection and thinking about the learning process which are components of autonomous learning.

To sum up, learners’ readiness for autonomy is reflected by factors such as: learners’ beliefs, their decision-making abilities, and learners’ awareness of the target language use.

Trinh & Rylaarsdam (2003) cited in Lap (2005: 38-39) point out:

An autonomous learner is defined as the one who leads positive attitudes to autonomous language learning (i.e. willing and ready to assume her/his role in success in learning as crucial), is motivated to learn the language (i.e. with a communicative purpose) and able to take control over her/his own learning (i.e. planning, monitoring, and evaluating their communicative and learning tasks) to work independently and in cooperation with others.

### **1.5. Reasons for Promoting Learner Autonomy**

The concept of LA “emphasizes the role of the learner rather than the role of the teacher. It focuses on the process rather than on the product and encourages learners to develop their own purposes for learning and to see learning as a lifelong process” (Bajrani, 2015: 150)

For an effective language learning process, focus has moved from the teacher (teaching process) to the learner (learning process). Due the growing demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century innovation, education should accept the challenges that are emanated in the field of FLL. It becomes vital to work towards the production of autonomous learners who are able to take control over situations they may encounter outside the sheltered environment of the classroom, especially in an EFL context where exposure to the target language is absent. According to Littlewood (1999: 74), “the demands of a changing world will impose on learners of all cultures the need to learn without the help of teachers”. This shift of focus unveiled learners’ active role during the learning process.

Autonomous learners are more likely to cater for their own learning needs. The teacher may not assist learners in all situations, just as society may not offer its members all the resources in every area of learning. Therefore, it is the learners' duty to seek and obtain these needs, either individually or cooperatively, in order to get the knowledge and skill (Crabbe, 1993: 443-452); a fact that does not exclude the role of the teacher and peers from the learning process. In this sense, autonomous learners are more likely to become successful users of the target language due to the fact that they are equipped with the skills that enable them to reflect when using the language and hence, be able to communicate appropriately and effectively (Little, 2003: 15).

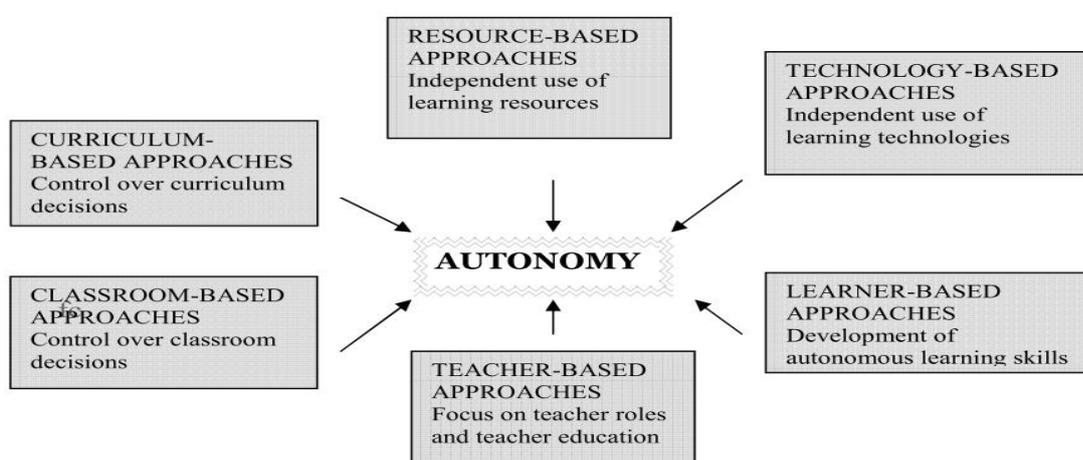
As discussed in the previous point (1.4. Learner Autonomy Indicators, p.24), there are different reasons for fostering learners' autonomy. It is largely argued that learners are more efficient when they play an active role in the learning process, which solves the problem of motivation. According to Little (Ibid) "if learners are proactively committed to their learning, the problem of motivation is by definition solved". He adds that these learners are likely to develop "the reflective and attitudinal resources to overcome temporary motivational setback" (Ibid).

Moreover, learners who assume responsibility and are in charge of their learning are more likely to learn better. Candy (1991: 24) assumes: "when learners are involved in making choices and decisions about the content and the mode of what they are studying, learning is more meaningful, and thus, effective". Accordingly, when learners are able to hold and gain control of the learning process, they develop a meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic knowledge which boost their sense of self-esteem, which in turn leads to greater involvement in the learning process (Dam, 2000: 19).

White (1995: 217) suggests "autonomy in language learning results from the way in which and the extent to which the learner manages his/her interactions with the target language,

rather than from the use of any specific set of cognitive strategies”. That is, developing meta-cognitive strategies will help them manage the learning process (Ibid).

As a matter of fact, Benson (2001: 2) affirms that autonomy is now “a legitimate and desirable goal of language education”. With respect to all the benefits of LA in language learning, different approaches have been suggested in an endeavor to reach this goal that can be a remedy for all EFL learners to cope with their needs in this changing society. Benson (2001: 111) classified these approaches under six headings as showed in the following figure:



**Figure 1-5: Autonomy in language learning and related areas of practice (Benson, 2001: 111)**

### **1.5.1. Resource-based Approaches**

Concern in these approaches is placed on the independent interaction of learners with learning resources in order to develop learners’ ability to take control over learning plans, the choice of materials and the evaluation of learning (Benson, 2001: 113).

Self-access, self-instruction and distance learning are claimed to be modes that can support learners’ self-direction. However, they are more effective in developing learners’ control over their individual learning than developing learners’ decision making over the collective learning-teaching process, which is considered as a collaborative process that is crucial to develop LA (Benson, 2001: 134). (For more details on self-instruction and self-access, see (1.3.1), (1.3.2).

### **1.5.2. Technology-based Approaches**

It can be thought of as an alternative to resource-based approaches. However, emphasis is on the technology used to access resources.

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is a typical form of this approach (Benson, 2001: 167). Computers attract great interest in language learning as they offer language learners with useful language experiences while learning a new language. Computers help learners learn independently from the teacher provided that they look for new things by themselves. This kind of technology enables teachers to make learners responsible to make decisions about their own learning and select authentic and meaningful material (Maliqi, 2016: 122).

CALL in EFL classrooms embraces many kinds of computer technologies such as “word processing, software, compact disks, authoring tools and software, e-mail, chat, discussion forums, videoconferencing, the world wide web, online courses ...” (Al-Jarf, 2005:5).

CALL is characterized by the use of multi-media, hyper-media and interactive technologies that help to promote a wide range of skills. However, the benefit that can be drawn from the use of CALL depends on learners’ attitudes towards computers. High computer literacy learners are likely to be more confident when working with not ready made things. Thus, they can achieve high degrees of LA, whereas less advanced ones do not achieve important level of autonomy due to inadequate skills in using computers. Hence, the integration of technology may either promote or hinder learners’ involvement in learning (Toyoda, 2001).

It seems that technology-based offers opportunities for self-directed learning and supports collaborative learning through the internet which facilitates learners’ control over interaction as they cater for learners’ different learning styles (Benson, 2001: 138-139).

Schwienhorst (2002: 205) claims “virtual environment provides tools for awareness-raising and critical reflection. They enhance conversation management and collaboration and encourage learners to actively participate in the creation and organization of their learning environment”.

By using different technologies, it is likely that the EFL classroom becomes lively and provides learners with opportunities to practice the language using multi-media materials which facilitates acquisition of different skills and involves them visually as in the real world. Accordingly, their LLA will develop as the different computer programs increase their motivation, confidence and interest.

### **1.5.3. Learner-based Approaches**

This approach places emphasis on the psychological and behavioral changes that are essential for learners so that they can take control over their learning (Benson, 2001: 142), as opposed to resource-based and technology based approaches which seek to provide opportunities that facilitate and contributes to learners’ control over their learning. In this sense, learner-based approach equips learners with abilities to take control over their learning and provide them with the skills that are necessary for the development of LA. Learner strategy training represents the main component of three approaches. Cohen (1998: 67) as cited in Benson, 2001: 144) argues: “strategy training, i.e. explicitly teaching students how to apply language learning and language use strategies, can enhance students’ efforts to reach language program goals because it encourages students to find their own path ways to success, and thus it promotes LA and self-direction”.

Benson (2001: 142) rather uses the term learner development instead of learner training or strategy training. He points out “all approaches to learner development aim at helping learners become better language learners”.

According to Weinstein (1988: 291):

Learning strategies are considered to be any behaviors or thoughts that facilitate encoding in such a way that knowledge integration and retrieval are enhanced. More specifically, these thoughts and behaviors constitute organized plans of action designed to achieve a goal.

In fact, as learners use strategies effectively, they become more independent and involved in the learning process. Wenden (1991: 15) assumes: “In effect, successful or expert or intelligent learners have learnt how to learn”. Learners who are aware of the best way in which they can learn are more likely to become autonomous and successful. as the old proverb says: “give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach him how to fish and he eats for a life time”.

However, Benson (2001: 15) warns against acquiring a set of techniques without being able to apply them flexibly and critically, and he favors reflective training models to explicit instruction in that they allow learners to develop awareness of the appropriateness of strategies to the overall self-direction of their learning.

#### **1.5.4. Teacher-based Approaches**

Benson (2001: 11) claims that these approaches emphasize the role of the teacher and teacher education in the practice of fostering autonomy among learners. As opposed to traditional modes of teaching in which the teacher was considered as supplier of knowledge, approaches that focus on promoting LA recast the role of the teacher as a facilitator, guide, counsellor and advisor, which implies that teachers’ beliefs about their role in the language classroom should be in harmony with their new role in order to help learners to take control over their own learning (Nguyen, 2004: 43). Thus, teachers have to feel comfortable with managing new forms of classroom dynamics and supporting multiple teams of students working independently as they explore and gain new understandings and skills to prepare them for the twenty first century life (Trilling & Fadel, 2009: 115). However, “if today’s teachers are willing to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learners, they must not only develop what they know, but also how they know”, which implies that if LA has to be developed,

strengthening teachers' autonomy is a necessary precursor. They are required to rethink who they are as teachers (Scott, 2015: 14-15).

Thavenius (1999: 160) defines teacher autonomy as "the teacher's ability and willingness to help learners take responsibility for their own learning". An autonomous teacher is thus a teacher who reflects on the teacher role and who can change it, and who can help learners become autonomous and who is independent enough to let learners become independent. According, it seems that teacher autonomy is a precondition for learner autonomy. As Little (1990: 7) states: "in the classroom context, autonomy does not entail an abdication on the part of the teacher..." That is to say LA does not deprive teachers of their responsibility in organizing and directing the class, but it happens simultaneously and reinforce each other. It gives learners the right to share decisions with their teachers in the learning process. Little (2000: 4-7) argues: "I believe that all truly effective learning entails the growth of autonomy in the learner as regard both the process and the content of learning, but I also believe that for most learners the growth of autonomy requires the stimulus, insight and guidance of a good teacher". Thus, teacher's vital role cannot be denied. Benson (2001: 110) refers to the processes initiated by teachers or institutions as fostering autonomy.

Hua (2001) cited in (Fumin & LI, 2012: 51) claim: "in the process of autonomous learning, teachers should assist learners in cultivating their abilities of setting goals, of selecting learning contents, of determining learning paces, of choosing learning methods and skills, of monitoring learning process and of assessing learning effects". Therefore, teachers should act as a counselor, facilitator, and resource person. In order to support LA, teachers should become autonomous and experience the process with learners (Ibid).

Han (2014) cited in (Hastikova, 2015: 7) claim that the role of the teacher changes from that of a director of learning to:

-Facilitator who initiates and supports decision-making process.

-Counselor who responds to the ongoing needs of individuals.

- Source who makes his knowledge and expertise available to the learners when it is needed.

Moloney (1997: 52) points out that an autonomous teacher is “aware of why, when, where and how pedagogical skills can be acquired and used in the self-conscious awareness of teaching practice itself”. In other words, teacher autonomy relates to the practice of teachers in the classroom and on the importance of his awareness of what and how to do to foster LA. Therefore “there is a need for a well-trained and confident teacher who can handle his constant process of negotiation” (Cook, 2001: 232).

Balçikanli (2009: 8) asserts that it is important to cultivate teacher autonomy in order for teachers to become aware of the underlying processes of teaching (i.e. the reasons why they pursue particular teaching strategies and stay update of new ideas in the field.

#### **1.5.5. Classroom-based Approaches**

Benson (2001: 151) assumes that working with peers and teachers makes learners develop responsibility for their learning. That is to say that cooperative learning in the classroom settings contributes in fostering LA. When learners are part of the decision-making process, they are more likely to be able to monitor their own learning process (Ibid: 155).

Dam (1995: 1) stresses the importance of the social aspect of autonomy arguing that autonomy refers to “a capacity and willingness to act independently and in cooperation with others, as a socially responsible person”. A fact which highlights the role that the teacher plays in enhancing LA through interaction and collaboration which allows a transfer of responsibility to learners who become active participants in the learning process. Benson (2001: 161) asserts that teachers’ support reinforces learners’ degree of control over the assessment and planning on classroom learning.

The classroom is a favorable environment where teachers and learners interact constructively and learn from each other (Bajrani, 2015: 426). Accordingly, it is crucial to

build up an atmosphere in the classroom that prompts learners to share their experiences with their teachers and their classmates. This interaction has a positive influence on the learning process which in turn can enrich learners' knowledge and allows them to achieve higher degrees of autonomy in their learning (Ibid).

Nevertheless, combining autonomous learning with approaches that are based on interaction and collaboration, such as cooperative learning, may increase learners' involvement in the learning process and foster LA (Onozawa, 2010: 135). The literature indicates that "cooperative learning is effective in promoting intrinsic motivation, task achievement, higher order thinking, and problem- solving skills, as well as improving inter- group relations, heightening self-esteem, and lowering anxiety" (Ibid: 131).

Thomson (1998) suggests that cooperative learning fosters LA in that the skills essential for cooperative learning such as problem-solving and negotiating differences of opinion are relevant to autonomous learning (cited in Takagi, 2003: 132). Besides, cooperative learning helps learners develop self-confidence as they take responsibility for their own learning. Moreover, the shift from traditional teacher-centered methods may bring anxiety and frustration to students. Thus, guidance through the period of transition should be done step by step.

Mahdavinia & Ahmadi (2012: 87) provide different benefits for the use of portfolios. They include "self-directed learning, improvement in self-confidence, development of self- assessment skills, a stress-free lass and a friendly relationship between the teacher and students". Portfolio leads learners to reflective and meta-cognitive processes, which are key factors in autonomy.

Indeed, all practices in the classroom should support and encourage learners to take charge of their own learning and thus create an autonomous classroom.

### **1.5.6. Curriculum-based Approaches**

Benson (2001: 111) indicates that curriculum-based approaches “extend the idea of learner control over the planning and evaluation of learning to the curriculum as a whole. Thus, to promote LA learners have to be involved in decision-making process at the level of the curriculum. According to this approach, the content of learning should emerge in the classroom through collaborative work. Trebbi (2003: 166) affirms that national curricula limit learners’ options of making autonomous choices in that these curricula provide all the content to be learned in the classroom through the materials to be used such as textbooks which contain texts, tasks that do not serve to foster learners’ control over their learning process, but rather allow the control of the textbook writers in making decisions about the learning process.

However, LA is based on the principle of emancipation and freedom of individuals in decision-making process. Little (2003: 36) points out that curricula should be learner-centered if they are to promote LA. Process syllabus is a term used by Benson to refer to ideas of curriculum-based approaches (Benson, 2001: 163).

Feez & Joyce (1998: 16) suggest five elements to clarify process syllabuses: 1) the process syllabus is not planned before the course commences, 2) the elements of the course and the sequence of those elements are jointly negotiated with the learners as the course progresses, 3) the syllabus is a retrospective record of what occurred during the course rather than a prospective plan of what will happen, 4) the focus is the process of language learning rather than products or outcomes, 5) a process syllabus is usually recorded as a list of activities undertaken by the learners.

According to Benson (2001: 163) there are two versions of process syllabus. The weak version involves project work in which learners make decisions about the content, the methods of inquiry and the outcomes. Baker & Westrup (2000: 94) argue that project work is

beneficial in that it can be “adapted to almost all levels, ages, and abilities” as is the case in foreign classes. Project work “brings opportunities for students to develop their confidence and independence and to work together in a real world environment by collaborating on a task which they have defined for themselves and which has not been externally imposed” (Fried-Booth, 2002: 6).

The strong version refers to negotiation and re-negotiation of the content or the learning method during the course.

Brown (1995: 187) suggests that learners’ preferences should be taken into consideration and should be involved in the curriculum, such as: 1) learning approaches, 2) attitudes towards learning, 3) learning styles, 4) strategies used in learning, 5) learning activities, 6) patterns of interaction, 7) degree of learner control over their own learning, 8) what constitutes effective teaching, 9) the nature of effective learning. Indeed, the more meaningful and purposeful is learners’ involvement in decision-making process; the easier learners take responsibility for it.

Dam (1995: 31) asserts that course content, selection and use of materials, position of desks and seating of students, discipline matters, homework tasks, time, place and pace of the lesson, methodology and types of activities and assessment are components of a curriculum that reinforce the active involvement of learners in the learning process and hence fosters LA.

Cotterall (2000: 110-115) suggests five principles for designing language courses that aim at fostering LA: 1) the course reflects learners’ goals in its language, tasks, and strategies, 2) course tasks are explicitly linked to its simplified model of the learning process, 3) course tasks either replicate real-world communicative tasks or provide rehearsal for such tasks, 4) the course incorporates discussion and practice with strategies known to facilitate task performance, and 5) the course promotes reflection on learning.

According to Snow and Kamhil cited in (Smith, 2015: 87) a curriculum is a dynamic system of three interrelated processes: planning (needs analysis, aims or goals, materials and activities), enacting (teaching and learning in the classroom), and evaluation (assessing learning outcomes). However, curriculum enactment requires negotiation between the teacher and learners (Ibid: 8).

However, Benson (2011: 184) argues that the effectiveness of this approach “depends upon explicit scaffolding structures that support learners in decision-making processes”.

To conclude, learners’ active role and involvement in learner-centered curriculum motivate them to engage in the learning process and achieve their goals, a fact which allows them to understand their responsibility and so take control over their own learning.

The following table summarizes the different approaches suggested by (Benson, 2001) as summarized by Thi Thanh Thao Phan (2015: 68)

<b>Approaches</b>	<b>Focus on</b>	<b>Key forms</b>	<b>Previous empirical studies</b>
Resource-based approach	Providing opportunities for learners to interact with educational materials. Two main forms are self-study or self-access and distance learning	Self-access language learning (SALL) Self-access Center (SAC)	Chiu (2005)
Technology-based approach	Providing opportunities for learners to work with diverse forms of educational technology. The roles of teachers and learning strategies are vital.	Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)	Lee (2005)
Learner-based approach	Providing opportunities and necessary skills for learners to participate in and control their own learning. The main form is learner strategy training or learner training.	Learning strategies and strategy training or learner training (Strategy-based instruction)	Nguyen (2009); Dion (2010); Le (2013)
Classroom-based approach	Changing the relationships between teachers and learners and classroom practices.	Learning agendas/ portfolios (setting goals, selection of tasks, self-assessment and peer assessment) Collaborative learning Out-of-class learning	Chan (2000); Fukuda (2014)
Teacher-based approach	Providing professional development and teacher education on such aspects as teachers' beliefs about autonomy, encouraging practices to foster LA.	Teachers' beliefs, commitments, and practices to support LA Teachers as facilitators, advisors and guides	No empirical studies
Curriculum-based approach	Positioning the negotiating between teachers and learners to enhance learners' participation in deciding their learning content, activities tasks and evaluation.	Process syllabus: - strong version: syllabus is not predetermined but negotiated, renegotiated by teachers and learners - weak version: project work	Trinh (2005); Ma and Gao (2010) No empirical studies

**Table 1-5-6: Approaches to Foster LA**

## **1.6. The notion of Autonomy in the Algerian Educational Context**

### **1.6.1. The Rationale behind the Implementation of Competency-based Approach**

The ever growing need for good communication skills in English has created a huge demand for English teaching around the world, as millions of people today want to improve their command of English or ensure that their children achieve a good command of English ... the worldwide demand for English has created an enormous demand for quality language teaching and language teaching materials and resources” (Richard, 2006: 5).

Due to the predominance and status of English all over the world, English learning and teaching (ELT) has become very important to enable learners become competent and effective users of this language. Accordingly, there has been a growing interest as regard to the choice of a suitable approach to implement is of paramount importance in order to meet this ultimate goal. The field of ELT has witnessed important changes, concern has shifted from teaching to learning and emphasis is put on the process rather than on the product. It aims at enabling learners acquire skills that can be transferred to the different tasks they may encounter in other settings. In fact, there should be a link between what is learned in the classroom and real life situations to cater for the demanding changes in society. According to Slavin (2003: 241) “if a student can fill in blanks on a language and test, but cannot write a clear letter to a friend or prospective employer, or can multiply with decimals and percents on a math test, but cannot figure sales tax, then the student’s education has been sadly discredited”.

Schools can be seen as the first place where changes should occur to meet this goal. In Algeria, English is taught as a compulsory subject in middle and secondary schools. However, after learning it for many years, learners fail to have a complete mastery over this language. It can be subsumed that the teaching methods that have been adopted (in particular) and the educational system as a whole (in general) have a major part of responsibility, and thus did not yield the desired objectives (Rezig, 2011: 1328). The shift from teacher-centered approach, which relies on teaching the objectives an exclusion of learners from the teaching-learning process, to learner-centeredness, gave the learner more responsibility and

involvement in the learning process. Allright (1988: 35) points out “the idea of learner autonomy was associated with radical restructuring of language pedagogy that involved the rejection of the traditional classroom and the introduction of wholly new ways of thinking”.

As a matter of fact, Competency-based Approach (CBA) was introduced in Algerian educational system as a result of the Algerian educational reform in 2002/2003. It has been adopted as an endeavor to meet the requirements that are imposed by globalization and hence produce responsible and autonomous learners that will be competent in their real life situations.

According to Chelli (2010: 30), CBA implies:

- Making the school acquisition viable and sustainable.
- Developing the thinking process of the learner.
- Presenting learning contexts in relation to the needs of the learner.
- Putting an end to disciplinary barrier.
- Choosing a personalized pedagogy.
- Assume responsibility and adopt an autonomous conduct and behavior.

Nunan (1988: 13) assumes that CBA fulfils the following objectives:

- To provide learners with efficient learning strategies.
- To assist learners to identify their own preferred ways of learning.
- To develop skills needed to negotiate the curriculum.
- To encourage learners to set their own objectives.
- To encourage learners to adapt realistic goals and time frames.
- To develop learners’ skills in self-evaluation.

Subsequently, if we consider these objectives we can assume that LA is relevant and fundamental within this approach.

### **1.6.2. Emergence and features of Competency-based Approach**

Competency-based approach emerged at the beginning of the XXI century in response to modernization of education which focused on the mastery of competences that allow the acquisition of knowledge by the learners by themselves rather than the transfer of knowledge from the teacher.

According to Butova (2015: 250): "...education and professional competency have taken leading positions in globalization history ... competency-based approach is a method for keeping general and professional education in balance with the needs of society or labor market"

CBA was first formed as an educational trend in the United States. It was intended to train specialists to vie and succeed in the working world (Tulegerovna, 2015: 183-184). In the 1980s, developments in the UK of different vocational training programs had a great significance to the movement. In the 1990s, vocational professional skills recognition played a major role in this movement in Australia (Hodge, 2007: 206).

Different terms, such as Performance-Based Teacher Education (PBTE), Competency-Based Teacher Education (CBTE), Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET), Competency-Based Vocational Education (CBVE), and Competency-Based Education (CBE), have been used similarly to refer to this approach. (Ibid: 181). These terminological differences are attributed to the introduction of some concepts, such as "professional", "competence", and "education" that are related to the central concept of competence. These concepts were regarded as prerequisites and basic notions of a future educational discipline (Butova, 2015: 251).

In fact, this approach was initially based on the Generative Grammar by Noam Chomsky who introduced the notion of competence (Ibid). However, the concept of competence has

been viewed and discussed from different angles and perspectives, a fact which too contributed to divergences in its terminology (Hodge, 2007: 181).

Spady (1977: 10) points out that Competencies are “...indicators of successful performance in life-role activities”. This implies the ability to accomplish one’s tasks in real life and to cope with changes in social conditions.

The European Qualification Framework for FLL defines competence as “ ... the ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations ...competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy ... competence is understood as the capacity to transfer knowledge into practice” (ECTS, 2009) cited in (Kennedy et al.2009: 3).

He adds: “... competence refers to the process of governing the application of knowledge to a set of tasks and is typically acquired by practice and reflection ... competence also encompasses the extent to which the learner can acknowledge his/her limitations and plan to transcend these through further learning” ( HETAC, 2006) cited in (Ibid: 4).

“Competences represent a dynamic combination of knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities. Fostering competences is the object of educational programmes” (Tuning; 2006) cited in (Ibid: 5).

As a matter of fact, autonomy and competence are two interrelated variables that are important in a school context, and more importantly positive outcomes are achieved autonomously through competence (Levesque et al, 2004: 70-81). Accordingly, building competences is the main concern of education (Klieme et al. 2008: 3).

CBA relies on these three objectives: “emphasizing the competencies that the student must master at the end of each school year and at the end of compulsory schooling, rather than stressing what the teacher must teach” (Rogiers, 2004: 106) cited in (Ait Haddouchane et al, 2001: 3).

Nevertheless, Competency-based Language Teaching (CBLT) is an application of the principles of CBE to language teaching. It is concerned with the outcomes of language learning (Ming, 2008: 180).

Docking (1994: 16) points out: CBLT

Is designed not around the notion of subject knowledge but around the notion of competency. The focus moves from what students know about language to what they can do with it. The focus on competencies or learning outcomes underpins the curriculum framework and syllabus specification, teaching strategies, assessment and reporting.

In CBA, there has been a shift from time, which was considered as the base of operations procedures, to outcomes as a base of those operations. In time-based schooling, procedures, decisions and opportunities for both staff and students are set by the clock, the schedule, and the calendar which represents a real constraint for the teaching-learning process. These approaches stress on roles rather than on goals. Whereas, in CBA, which is considered as an outcome-based approach to schooling in which time is no longer a constraint, goals and objectives are defined according to competencies and capacities that students demonstrate throughout the learning process (Spady, 1978: 18-19).

Spady (1978:22) affirms that CBA is fundamental in improving student's opportunities by:

- Dealing with time and opportunities for meeting goals more flexibly and realistically;
- Articulating goals and the purposes of instruction clearly and openly;
- Giving a specific content referent to assessment, evaluation, certification, and promotion criteria, and;
- Bringing school work closer to the real factors affecting success and fulfillment in life.

However, in order for it to be so, educators, policy makers, and the public will have to be willing to entertain some substantial departures from educational assumptions and practices (Ibid: 16).

Accordingly, every educational program must be based on competence-oriented curriculum which includes the competences that learners receive after the completion of the program (Bernicova, 2017: 317).

Candy (1991: 282-283) asserts “most learning requires the acquisition of a way of thinking about a subject – a process rather than a product- and accordingly, interaction with other knowledge users is necessary”. CBA is a social constructivist and negotiation is a significant aspect of it, since learning occurs through social interaction with other people which develops awareness and opportunities for reflection (Chelli, 2012: 49). Acquisition of knowledge through active construction is better than gaining it passively. It is important to understand how this knowledge, which is a process rather than a product, is built. However, learners have different learning styles. So, the process of building knowledge is different from an individual to another. Thus, it is important to take these differences into account. CBA has attributes that cope with this variation:

- Understand how one learns best;
- Understand exactly what is expected (outcomes of learning);
- Take responsibility for one’s learning;
- Motivated to learn, goal oriented.
- Critical thinking;
- Self-assessment learning and performance;
- Commitment to ongoing learning (O’ Sullivan & Burce, 2014: 73).

As a matter of fact, “well-designed CBE programs customize the learning activities of each student according to his or her needs”. And due to learners’ different styles of learning, CBE “offers learning activities in a range of modes, including written materials, video lectures, hand-on activities, demonstrations and games” (Klein- Collins, 2013: 9).

Bloom's taxonomy is an efficient resource that teachers can take into consideration when devising a lesson. It shows the different stages through which learners go to construct their knowledge by developing the ability to be creative, reflective and solve problems they encounter (Chelli, 2012: 55).

Riche et al (2005: 17) affirm that project work is a basic principle of CBA. In that it allows cooperation, interaction and construction of new knowledge.

To sum up, CBA has reshaped the roles of both teachers and learners by providing concrete opportunities for pupils to be active participants in the learning process. Patrick & Sturgis (2013: 1) claim: "CBA offers students greater opportunities for personalized learning, autonomy, flexibility, and responsibility for their own learning."

### **1.6.3. The role of the Teacher in Competency-based Approach**

The transition from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness has put the learner at the center of the learning process. CBA is learner-centered; it is concerned with learning outcomes and how learners shall learn (learn how to learn); a fact that redistributes the respective roles of learners and teachers. "The role of the latter is to organize the learning outcomes in the best way so as to bring their students to the level expected" (Ait Haddouchene et al, 2017: 4). Thus, the teacher's role changes so as to ensure a smooth transition from spoon-feeding attitudes to involvement in decision-making and responsibility (Bouhass Benaissi, 2015: 412).

In fact, "teachers are not only one of the variables that need to be changed in order to improve the educational system, but they are also the most significant change agents in each reform" (Salmi, 2012: 69).

The teacher ceases to play an authoritarian role; he becomes a facilitator who supports learners and assists them in their own learning, by providing a supportive and relaxed environment that makes learners feel at ease and not threatened. Widdowson (1991: 188)

points at the need “to maintain a non-authoritarian presence throughout this process so that students can feel secure and non-defensive to enable them to learn, not because the teacher demands it of them, but because they need in order to accomplish their goals” cited in (Hemaidia, 2008: p38).

The teacher is no more the transmitter of knowledge. He rather plays the role of a guide and counselor in providing advice to learners to learn how to learn and monitor their own learning in terms of learning strategies; “the teacher must guide, help and encourage the learner to take part in his own learning (ADEP), 2 AM, 2006: 80-81).

In fact, the teacher plays a crucial role in training learners to use a variety of learning strategies and provide them with feedback about their performances to assess their progress and keep them motivated. This does not mean that the teacher no longer gives information, but ways in which he delivers them are different. He provides authentic materials that are relevant to the target skills and provides learners with opportunities to learn and practice those skills, by keeping scaffolding them when necessary (Griffith & Huje-Yeon, 2014: 3).

In fact, “the only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to adapt and change; the man who has realized that no knowledge is secure; that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security” (Rogers, 1969 cited in Cardenas Ramos, 2006: 189).

The following table illustrates the differences between the role of the teacher in previous approaches and his role in CBA:

The Role of the Teacher within Previous Approaches	The Role of the Teacher Within CBA	What are the Differences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge holder</li> <li>- Knowledge provider</li> <li>- Omnipresent in the classroom</li> <li>- Decision-maker</li> <li>- Authoritarian</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Guide / help</li> <li>- Counsellor</li> <li>- Facilitator</li> <li>- Co-learner / partner</li> <li>- Participant</li> <li>-Advisor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less authoritarian attitude</li> <li>-Open and ready to negotiation and discussion</li> <li>-Aware of learners' need and interest.</li> </ul>

**Table 1-6-3 Teachers' Roles in Previous and New Approach (CBA) (From ADEP, 2011: 90)**

#### **1.6.4. The Role of the Learner in Competency-based Approach**

CBA perceives learners as active participants in the learning process; they are no more passive receivers of knowledge. According to the Algerian Partnership School Programs (2005: 4) cited in (Boudouda & Khelkhal, 2012: 20):

Learners obtain and retain language best when the topic accumulates their interests and when they are active participants in their learning. For example, when looking for personal meanings, when learning cooperatively with peers and when making connections to life outside of class”.

Interaction with peers and the teacher fosters learners' self-reflection and positive criticism which appeals to cognitive, affective and motivational strategies that facilitate his acquisition and retention (Chelli, 2012: p64).

In this approach, learners are supposed to assume responsibility for their own learning and develop awareness of the learning process. As argued in Edwards (1998: 68) “... when students are compelled to assume greater responsibility for directing their learning, they will gradually learn to see themselves as the controllers of their own learning. Learning is seen as self-initiated and not other-initiate”; a fact that contributes in increasing learners' motivation and hence achieve better outcomes.

According to CBA, learners' role can be summarized as follow:

- To know what to learn.
- Act upon what he learns.
- Build strategies.
- Solve problems.
- Learn to cooperate and collaborate.
- Work autonomously and put into question his learning process.
- Assess his leaning (ADEP, 2006: 79).

### **1.7. Measuring Learner Autonomy in Language Learning**

Learning a foreign language is not limited to the sheltered environment of the classroom. However, in an EFL context where there is little exposure to the target language, it becomes a challenge for both EFL teachers and learners, in that it requires personal adaptation; as regard to cultural differences with that language and the changing teachers' approaches to classroom instruction, that stands as barriers and limits their chances to acquire that foreign language (Talley, 2014: 24).

Communicative approaches and learner-centeredness have been predominant aspects that characterized the field of language learning for decades. Emphasis is placed on developing learners' competence in languages in order to meet their needs as individuals and as members of a society (Cardenas Ramos, 2005: 185). These approaches emphasized the importance of the language learner in the field of foreign language learning and hence LA emerged as a result of the switch from teaching to learning; especially with the seminal work of Holec (1981) "Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning" (Mohamadpour, 2013: 1187). Therefore, LA is vital nowadays for a more purposeful, meaningful and efficient learning process. In this sense, the degree of learners' autonomy determines his success or failure in achieving his goals. However, what can determine the learners' degree of autonomy? Is LA measurable? If

so, how do teachers realize how much their learners have developed their autonomy? Benson (2001: 51) argues: “for the purpose of research and the evaluation of practice, it would indeed be convenient if we had a reliable method of measuring degrees of autonomy”.

In fact, measuring and evaluating LA is advantageous for both teachers and learners. Reflection and awareness of one’s own competencies enables learners improve and regulate their learning process. Besides, helping teachers to detect learners’ strengths and weaknesses and thus provide a remedy for areas of deficiency. In addition to identifying to what extent their approach has been effective (Tassinari, 2012: 27).

Nunan (1997: 92) cited in (Benson, 2001: 5) points out “autonomy is not an all-or-nothing concept but a matter a degree”. Thus, it can be measured depending on different degrees exhibited by learners.

However, measuring the development of autonomous learning is not an easy task. Many factors can influence the learning outcomes; these factors may include autonomous learning skills, previous exposure to language or a certain interest in the subject (Mynard, 2006: 3).

Most research conducted to investigate LA, and approaches adapted to foster it have been descriptive: “teachers’ observation, interviews, learners’ journals, learners’ self-assessment and peer assessment, learners’ feedback or evaluation sheets, oral interviews and questionnaires, learners’ logs and evaluation of learning, teachers’ diaries and learners’ evaluation”, these studies have reported learners’ autonomous behavior and a relationship between LA and learning outcomes, but they could not provide tangible evidence (i.e. scores to the learners’ degree of autonomy) (Nguyen, 2012: 52).

Interpretative research approaches, which rely on interpreting learners’ thoughts and perceptions, can establish whether the success of the language process is due to the learner’s application of autonomous learning skills. This may include:

- Small-scale research and first-person narratives can be used to report learners' experiences and the environment in which learning takes place (it deals with a small sample of participants, individuals or small groups).
- Interviews provide learners' perceptions and descriptions of the learning process. Introspection allows learners to reflect on the behavior and thoughts when engaging in tasks.
- Learner journals are used to report learners' perceptions of the learning process.
- Observation serves to prepare interviews or survey questions that can be used to investigate learners' perceptions and behaviors. (Mynard, 2006: 4).

These techniques can provide data, based on the descriptors which give specific statements of individual competencies, skills and learning behaviors, that can be analyzed through frameworks or models such as Sinclair's model (1999) which investigated the level of meta-cognition in adult learners through interviews (Ibid). The following table shows some examples of studies and the tools used to measure LA:

<b>Cooker, 2012</b>	<b>Aims</b>	Operationalizing learner autonomy; Developing a tool for self-assessment and development of learner autonomy
	<b>Dimensions</b>	Learner control; Metacognitive awareness; Critical reflection; Motivation; Learning range; Confidence; Information literacy
	<b>Method</b>	Q-methodology
	<b>Instrument</b>	Formative (self-) assessment tool; a learner generated instrument, potentially unlimited; Languages: English
	<b>Use/Setting</b>	Self-access learning
<b>Dixon, 2011</b>	<b>Aims</b>	Developing a quantitative instrument for measuring learner autonomy; Comparing results of the quantitative instrument with teachers' evaluation; Helping teachers to help learners to develop learner autonomy
	<b>Dimensions</b>	Autonomy is a multidimensional concept; Autonomy is variable; Autonomy is a capacity; Autonomy is demonstrated; Autonomy requires metacognition; Autonomy involves responsibility; Autonomy involves motivation; Autonomy involves social interaction; Autonomy is political
	<b>Method</b>	Critical reflexive mixed methods: first exploratory and then quantitative
	<b>Instrument</b>	Questionnaire: Long List (256 items) and Short List (50 items); Languages: English and Chinese
	<b>Use/Setting</b>	Classroom learning, self-access learning
<b>Murase, 2010</b>	<b>Aims</b>	Operationalizing learner autonomy; Developing an instrument for measuring learner autonomy
	<b>Dimensions</b>	Technical (behavioural, situational); Psychological (motivational, metacognitive, affective); Political-philosophical (group/individual, freedom); Socio-cultural autonomy (social-interactive, cultural)
	<b>Method</b>	Quantitative
	<b>Instrument</b>	Measuring Instrument for Language Learner Autonomy (MILLA) (113 items); Languages: Japanese and English
	<b>Use/Setting</b>	Classroom learning
<b>Tassinari, 2010</b>	<b>Aims</b>	Operationalizing learner autonomy; Developing an instrument for reflection, self-assessment & learning support
	<b>Dimensions</b>	Cognitive and metacognitive; Motivational; Affective; Action-oriented; Social
	<b>Method</b>	Exploratory-interpretative, qualitative
	<b>Instrument</b>	Dynamic model with descriptors (133 descriptors in total); Languages: German and English
	<b>Use/Setting</b>	Self-access learning, language advising, classroom learning

Table 1-7-1: Comparison of studies on learner autonomy measurement. Adapted from Tassinari, 2015.

Benson (2001: 47) attributes the difficulty in measuring LA to the multidimensional aspect of autonomy. It can be manifested in different forms for different individuals or even in different forms for the same individual in different contexts and times. Derrick et al (2007) cited in (Yudakul, 2017: 15) define autonomy as the manifestation of behaviors which are associated with resourcefulness, initiative and persistence in learning. Littlewood (1996: 429-430) suggests a list of behaviors that discriminates the different levels of autonomy LA. The levels of autonomy according to him are set as regard to learners' choices that are made throughout the learning process. The following Table shows the levels of autonomy and the type of choices the learner is able to make at a particular level:

LEVEL	LEVEL OF CHOICE
1	Learners make their own choices in grammar and vocabulary – such as in role-plays.
2	Learners choose the meanings and the communication strategies to use to convey them.
3	Learners make decisions about goals, meanings and strategies.
4	Learners start shaping their own learning context – such as in project work.
5	Learners make decisions that traditionally concern the teacher, on materials and learning tasks.
6	Learners are involved in making the syllabus, controlling the progression of their learning.
7	Learners can use the language to communicate independently outside the classroom.

**Table 1-7-2: Littlewood's levels of autonomy (1996: 429-430).**

However, these behaviors are subject to change, they can be affected by many factors, such as learners' cognitive abilities, affective factors (attitudes, willingness, self-confidence), meta-cognitive strategies (setting goals, selecting materials, planning learning activities, self-assessment), social factors (willingness to work in cooperation) (Lap, 2005: 38). In addition to the fact that LA may be interpreted differently as it is bound to culture (Sinclair, 2000: 13). So, though different instruments can be used to measure LA, they presume a certain level of stability. If a measurement tool is to be practical, it should be stable with regard to dimensionality over time. The construct to be measured (in our case LA) should not change

over time but it is the level of this construct that should be subject to change. If constructs change over time then the tools that can be used for measurement become unstable, especially in longitudinal studies (Horai, 2013: 62-63).

Bachman (1990: 32) cited in (Dixon, 2006: 14) asserts that: “All measures of mental ability are necessarily indirect, incomplete, imprecise, subjective, and relative”. Indeed, what can be accessible to measure are aspects of autonomy that can indicate some ability to perform autonomously (Ibid).

Accordingly, we can assume that learners’ observable behaviors can be the basis for LA measurement; this can be achieved through assessment tools to determine how autonomous are learners, taking into account the dimensions that characterize LA such as cognitive, meta-cognitive, affective and motivational. This assessment can be done both by learners or teachers, not as a way to assessment of learning but as assessment for learning (Tassinari, 2015: 123).

The present review of literature has helped the researcher to gain insight into the study, which can help to interpret the findings correctly.

## **Chapter Two: Research Design and Methodology**

### **Introduction**

This chapter aims at discussing the research design used in the present work. It provides a description of the participants, instruments and details the procedures for data collection. Then, it documents the data analysis procedures.

### **2.1. Description of the Study**

#### **2.1.1. Research Design**

Anderson (1998: 27) defines research as “a dynamic activity that travels a long and winding trail from start to finish. It is not a single event; rather the act of doing research is a process”. Throughout this journey, a researcher may face uncertainty and complexity. Thus, good planning can discard any misgivings and pave the way for the researcher towards success (Fisher & Hobson, 1996: 122). Accordingly, the selection of an appropriate and suitable research design and subsequent methods and tools to collect data is an important step that should be taken cautiously in order to avoid unforeseen difficulties and misleading conclusions.

For Durrhein (2004: 29) a research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution, or implementation of the research strategy. Mc Millan & Schumacher (1993: 31) point out that a research design describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom and under what conditions data were collected. It aims at providing valid and accurate answers to research questions.

As a matter of fact, the research problem determines the choice for the researcher on the type of design to use. It guarantees how the researcher may address his quest effectively in terms of validity and reliability. Hence, the present study employed a mixed-methods design to find out if pupils at Fatma N’soumer Secondary School are autonomous through investigating their perceptions of their own role and responsibility and that of their teachers in

learning English; learners' awareness and use of meta-cognitive strategies; and their level of motivation in learning English. In addition to investigating teachers' perceptions of LA and their practices to develop it.

Wendelein (2002: 53-54) states that: "Descriptive research is not aiming at forming hypotheses or development of theory ... descriptive research is about describing how reality is" He asserts that "a lot of insight may also be derived from detailed description, as there are the thinking processes ... or decision-making process (Ibid: 53). Thick description creates "verisimilitude" that is, it gives the readers the feeling of having experienced the events that have been described in the study by providing as much details as possible, and allows access to the hidden aspects of phenomena (Barber Mbangwa, 2011: 94).

The choice of a case study lies on its advantage as "it allows deeper penetration into the core of the matter" (Wendelein, 2002: 54). Miles & Huberman (1994: 25) explain that a case study is "a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context. The case is in effect, your unit of analysis". Third year pupils at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School which represent the sample of this study serve as our unit of analysis.

Due to the nature of the research problem, the main instruments for collecting data are; a questionnaire designed for pupils and an interview with teachers. Thus, a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches is selected to yield data that can expand understanding of the research problem and ensure the validity of the findings.

The mixed methods approach allows the researcher to employ both inductive and deductive analysis in the same study; and enables the study of complex phenomena in a single study by highlighting the participants' view point and quantifying measurable variables (Williams, 2007: 70). Triangulation is the most common technique to mixing methods (Cresswell & plano Clarck, 2007: 62). It draws from the strengths and minimizes the

weaknesses of both approaches (Morse, 1991: 122). Triangulation thus increases the validity of the results, more than the use of either method alone (Risjord et al. 2001: 10).

### **2.1.2. Participants**

In order to carry out this study, data were collected from two different sources. The targets are third (3<sup>rd</sup>) year pupils and teachers of English at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School in Amizour, which is situated East of Bejaia.; in fact, the choice of the school has been made because of the researcher' familiarity with it. She is one of the teachers who are taking in charge the teaching of the English subject. Convenient sampling was used in this research and was confined to 3<sup>rd</sup> year pupils.

#### **2.1.2.1 Pupils**

It was agreed that all the population of third year pupils, which is as follow (Technical Mathematics (37 pupils), Maths (24 pupils), Experimental Sciences (52 pupils), Economy and Management (39 pupils), Literary and Philosophy (37 pupils) and Foreign Languages (26 pupils), make up the sample of the study. However, due to some unexpected events (medical examination), only 180 (83.72%) pupils participated from a total population of 215 pupils. The sample is composed of seventy-seven 77 boys (35.81%) and one hundred thirty-four 134 girls (74.44%). The difference in gender is due to the fact that the school is a boarding school for girls. The number of girls (459) exceeds that of boys (244).

It is worth noting that the English syllabus is nearly the same. Literary and Philosophy streams have the same syllabus content as Foreign Languages. The syllabus differs from that of other left streams which share the same syllabus, in only the themes of the units to be dealt with. The language points included in it are the same for all streams.

The choice of 3<sup>rd</sup> year pupils was conscious and deliberate. It was due to:

Firstly, it is agreed that older learners are more likely to be aware of the importance that a language can have in their future studies and careers. Kennedy & Bolitho (1984: 13-14)

affirm “the older is, the more likely to have his own definite ideas on why he is learning English ... the utility of learning English is likely to be apparent.”

Secondly, and more importantly, they are sitting for their baccalaureate exam by the end of the school year (20- 06- 2018), which requires to be more active and autonomous. Taking responsibility for learning improvement and progress is paramount since the teacher’s provision of content, due to some constraints such as time, large classes and strikes as is the case this year, is not be sufficient.

Another reason lies in the fact that after taking their Baccalaureate exam, they will join university where they are required to rely on themselves. Teachers at the university level complain about the low performance and lack of autonomy of students who enrolled at the faculty of English (Rezig (2011), Moussaoui (2012), Idri (2012), Ghout Khenoune (2015). Thus, diagnosing the roots of the problem and understanding the state of LA at the lower level, secondary education, may explain this deficiency.

All these facts made of 3<sup>rd</sup> year pupils a valuable source of collecting data intended to unveil the state of the art of LA. Their collaboration is one way of ensuring various perspectives as regard to the situation being investigated as they are at the center of the learning process.

Class	Number
GE	<b>39</b>
M	<b>24</b>
Sex	<b>48</b>
LPh	<b>36</b>
LE	<b>26</b>
Total	<b>173</b>

**Table 2-1: Summary of pupils’ sample profile**

### **2.1.2.2. Teachers**

Bowen & Marks (1994: 28) argue that: “A starting point for any investigation into your own teaching must be a willingness to examine critically what you are doing. This might stem from a sense of personal dissatisfaction with what you are doing, a feeling that things could be better”. Despite personal investment by EFL teachers, pupils’ lack concentration in the English class. Their disinterest, negative attitudes and demotivation to learn English and take part in the learning process raised the researchers’ interest to carry out the present study which aims at investigating to which extent pupils at Fatma N’somer Secondary School are autonomous through investigating their perceptions of their responsibility, ability and motivation to take more control in the English language learning process; besides, investigating EFL teachers’ perceptions of LA and their practices to enhance it. Thus, the teacher may be central to bring clarifications by responding to the interview intended for this purpose. They share as much responsibility as learners in enhancing LA, in that they are important agents in preparing learners for their final exam and even for real life situations by adhering to the principles of CBA implemented in Secondary education.

The rationale for including teachers in this study lies in the desire to gather accurate data that is relevant to the subject matter of the research. With respect to this, four teachers of English at Fatma N’soumer Secondary School constitute the sample of the present study which represents 80% of the whole population of English teachers at this school. Hence, due to the small number, the researcher opted to conduct interviews with them. They vary in terms of age, educational qualification and English teaching experience. Teachers can contribute significantly to the collection of necessary data. They are in direct contact with pupils. They are aware of their learners’ daily behavior as regard to motivation and willingness to take responsibility for their own learning, learners’ decision-making abilities and strategy use to accomplish tasks. However, they complain about the various constraints with respect to the

challenging goal set by the implementation of CBA. Teachers' views are crucial to clear up the research problem. They represent a basis for data collection to examine the extent to which they are aware of their role in fostering LA and how much they are dedicated and involved in this process.

Teacher	Highest degree	English teaching experience
-teacher1	License	8 years
-teacher2	Master	6 years
-teacher3	License	22 years
-teacher4	License	27 years

**Table 2-2: Summary of teachers' sample profile**

## **2.2. Data Collection Tools**

The present study makes use of quantitative and qualitative procedures. Cohen et al (2007: 141) claim that triangulation is best used to “map out or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behavior by studying it from more than one standpoint and, in so doing, by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data”.

As far as the present work is concerned, and for our purpose, a questionnaire for pupils is designed and an interview with teachers is intended to bring insights for a better understanding and answer the issues raised in this research.

### **2.2.1. Pupils' Questionnaire**

The main concern of this data collection tool is to discover learners' perceptions of responsibilities in the English classroom, their level of motivation toward learning English, and their strategies in task completion, as LA indicators.

The questionnaire as a quantitative instrument was adapted from the post positivist perspective in that it seeks answers to theory driven questions (Cresswell & Tashakkori, 2007: 306).

Dornyei (2007: 101) asserts: “the popularity of questionnaires is due to the fact that they are relatively easy to construct, extremely versatile and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily accessible”.

Thus, for the sake of our study, a questionnaire was constructed by the researcher with reference to the literature review. It included factors as the indicators for the manifestation of LA among pupils. The questions were mainly designed following the Likert scale model. The choice of using mostly Likert scale statements for greater number of questionnaire items was to facilitate and faster the informants’ answers. This type of questions requires them to select an answer from a range of answers so as to collect information that are limited to the parameters the researcher supplies. The questionnaire is organized into two parts. The first part of the questionnaire focuses on background information about pupils, such as age, gender, stream of study, years of English study, level of English proficiency and their view about English learning. This part included five questions.

As stated by Holec’s (1981) definition of LA, “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” which involves determining the objectives, defining contents and progression, selecting methods and techniques, monitoring the procedures and evaluating what has been learned (p.3). Thus the second part of the questionnaire represents its core concern. It comprised four sections:

Section one includes sixteen (16) questions, as it addresses pupils’ views of their own role and teachers’ role in language learning, besides learners’ decision-making abilities in learning English.

Section two includes eleven (11) questions which aim at examining pupils’ use of meta-cognitive strategies in language learning, such as planning, monitoring and evaluating. Meta-cognition gives rise to LA.

Section three includes seven (07) questions intended to measure pupils' level of motivation and their willingness to study English.

Section four includes only one open-ended question, inviting pupils to provide suggestions on the way they would like to learn English at school, to explore the respondents' willingness to have a say in how and what they are learning, and hence, indicate their way of thinking towards LA. In addition to prompt pupils to provide qualitative data which would highlight their mindset towards LA.

Accordingly, a total number of forty (40) questions were included within this questionnaire. Indeed, a lengthy questionnaire is more likely to self-report more reliable data by the informants, as pointed out by Seliger & Shohamy (2000: 187): "one way by which reliability can be increased is through lengthening data collection instruments by adding more items and questions".

### **2.2.2. Teachers' interview**

In order to strengthen and supplement the questionnaire data and have a closer look at the current situation of LA at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School, teachers can contribute significantly by expressing their perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes in the EFL classroom. Interviews served as an instrument to elicit qualitative data. "Qualitative researchers seek lived experiences in real situation" (Cohen et al. 2000: 41). It allows finding out the participants' interpretations and perspectives towards a specific point of view, besides direct interaction with the audience under study. According to Weinreich (1996: 54) the strength of qualitative approaches lies in the fact that "they generate rich, detailed data that leave the participants' perspective intact and provide a context for the phenomena being studied". However, this approach is disadvantageous in that its analysis is time consuming and labor extensive (Ibid).

Since the researcher is interested in finding out how EFL teachers at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School interpret the concept of LA and whether they take part in fostering it within their classes, interviews seem to be suitable and applicable for this study. Richards (2009: 195) assumes that interviews are “easy to do but hard to do well” in that the researcher has to consider the setting of the interview, developing means for recording interview data, and adhering to legal and ethical requirements for research involving people. Hence, it is recommended to develop an interview guide to identify appropriate interview questions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006: 40).

With this respect, the researcher adopted a semi-structured interview. This kind “allows interviewees to express themselves openly and freely and to define the world from their perspectives, not solely from the perspective of the researcher” (Ibid). And it enables “to bring a number of different perspectives into contact” (Morgan, 1997: 46). Therefore, interviewers should be skilled in communication and interaction to create an appropriate atmosphere for participants to express their ideas freely (Thao Phan, 2015: 109).

## **2.3 Data Collection Procedures**

### **2.3.1. Questionnaire Design**

#### **2.3.1.1. Piloting the Questionnaire**

A pilot study is “a small version or trial run in preparation for a major study” (Polit et al, 2001: 467). De vau (1993: 54) advises “not to take the risk, pilot test first”. Accordingly, in order to clarify ambiguity and confusion that may be felt by the respondents when filling in the questionnaires, pilot testing seems to be unavoidable in order to assume the quality of questionnaire as the first research instrument in this study.

After designing the questionnaire, the researcher submitted it to her supervisor, at the department of English at the University of Bejaia, who provided her feedback so as to improve the content of the tool. Then, after refinement it was piloted. Six pupils filled it

independently; however, they were informed that they could ask for explanation when needed. After this process, the researcher noticed pupils' ease to fill in the questionnaire and this allows the finalization of the data collection tool.

### **2.3.1.2. Administration of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was administered during regular classes in the scope of one week; from 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> of March, 2018. In fact, this instrument has some drawbacks in that some respondents do not bring it back in due time and they may avoid responding to all the questions. So, it was given in English due to its simplicity and was run by two colleagues, who are themselves teachers of English, so as to clarify misunderstanding and more importantly to minimize the possibilities of not answering and to handle the questionnaire back in the same session. In order to avoid subjectivity, the researcher asked colleagues to administer the questionnaires to pupils. Barber Mbangwa (2011: 77) asserts that so as "to ensure objectivity and avoid bias, the researcher should stand as a distant observer".

Teachers were briefed prior to the distribution of the questionnaires, the researcher sought their consent. And before distributing the questionnaires, pupils were guaranteed that the results would be confidential and would only serve the purpose of the present study. Pupils were asked to respond honestly, according to their personal views and experiences, as their responses are paramount and that their participation is an important component in our research, a fact that can motivate them and increase their willingness to respond truthfully. Seliger & Shohamy (2000: 108) argue that "second language learners may become more motivated simply because they are told that they are participating in a study that will help the researcher understand the process of language learning".

The participants were suggested to answer the last question (open-ended) in section four in whatever language they wanted, so as to express their deeper thoughts freely. Dornyei (2010:

48) affirms that the use of the mother tongue is preferable so as to provide quality data and more in-depth information.

The number of informants under investigation was one hundred eighty (180), but seven (07) pupils were absent the day the questionnaire was administered in their classes. Thus, one hundred seventy-three (173) questionnaires were returned to the researcher. With this respect, we do believe that the process of gathering data from pupils has occurred in good conditions.

### **2.3.2. Collection of the Semi-Structured Interview Data**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four (04) EFL teachers. They accepted to cooperate as they attached an interest in the research problem of our study. Due to our familiarity with both the setting and the respondents, it was not difficult to create a friendly and comfortable atmosphere for communication and interaction. This kind of interaction sought “to make sense, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005: 3). The researcher maintains good rapports with the interviewees, being colleagues, a fact that allows to elicit data easily; as pointed out by Opie (2004) “Semi-structured interviews are subject to the impact of interpersonal skills and the trust shared amongst research participants”. The interviewees were aware that they were not judged for their performance, but rather they were contributing to illuminate the complexity of the concept of LA from their perspectives. Teachers’ interviews were conducted face-to-face individually in an empty room at school so as to ensure privacy and avoid disturbance. Background information was sought first but the names of the interviewees were kept anonymous. Then, the core questions were initiated to ascertain teachers’ perceptions of LA as it was practiced in their classes. The order of the questions was sometimes not respected so as to keep a natural flow of the conversation. Despite the fact that the questions were prepared in English, the respondents were free to answer either in English or any other language. It took one week to conduct all the interviews which lasted thirty (30) minutes each (the

interviews were conducted from April 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> 2018). The researcher took careful notes as the interview was being conducted and audio-recorded the interviewees' responses "to ensure ... accuracy of reportage and add ... to the veracity of reporting" (Simons, 2009: 52). Dornyei (2007: 139) asserts that "there is a general agreement in the literature that if we want to use the content of a semi-structured or unstructured interview as research data, we need to record it –taking notes- is simply not enough as we are unlikely to be able to catch all the details". The researchers also transcribed them for analysis; interview transcripts are regarded as an interpretive practice that gives the person a sense of grounding or narrative coherence (Walker, 2006: 6).

At the end of each interview, the participants were warmly thanked for their valuable contribution and collaboration. Anderson et al. (1994: 147) explain that through collaboration both speakers are engaged in making meaning and producing knowledge which is crucial to bring enlightenment with regard to the subject matter of the present work.

#### **2.4. Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis Procedures**

A mixed methods approach was adopted in this study. Thus, both quantitative data, from the pupils' questionnaires, and qualitative data from the teachers' interviews were gathered. The questionnaire data were analyzed statistically by using the Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS 19.0). A numerical value was given to each answer in the questionnaire in order to calculate the frequencies and percentages in the analysis of the data. Descriptive statistical procedures were used to examine the data and to draw conclusions. Content analysis was used to analyze the open-ended question' responses and the data gathered from teachers' interviews. In this process the data were read carefully, some key issues were identified, and then were organized with reference to the variables that were intended to be examined in the present study and that will contribute to elucidate the research questions. In order to keep the names of the teachers confidential, a code (T) was given to each of them (T1

for teacher one, T2 for teacher two, T3 for teacher three and T4 for teacher four). The findings from both questionnaires and interviews relate to the research questions that guided the study.

### **Conclusion**

The present chapter described the setting and participants, research design, data collection and data analysis procedures. A total of 173 third year pupils participated through the questionnaires and four EFL teachers reinforced the data collected by collaborating through their participation in the interview that had been conducted with them.

**Chapter Three: Findings and Discussion**

**Introduction**

The present chapter presents the results collected through the research instruments. They are divided into two sections. The first section presents the findings obtained from the pupils’ questionnaires while the second sections presents the findings collected from teachers’ interview which will be analyzed in relation to the questionnaire results. The researcher seeks to interpret them so as to answer the research questions that were suggested in the general introduction.

**3.1. Findings**

**3.1.1. Section 1. Questionnaire Results**

This section presents the results of the questionnaire. As already stated in Chapter Three (p.65), the first part of this questionnaire i.e. background information aims at describing the participants’ profile while the other four sections represent the core of the research, with respect to the variables which are investigated.

**3.1.1.1. Background Information**

**Item 1: Pupils’ age**

Age	Frequency	Percentage %
17	43	24.9
18	61	35.3
19	30	17.3
20	27	15.6
21	12	6.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-1 Pupils’ age**

The results shown in the table above revealed that the informants’ age varies from seventeen to twenty-one. 24.9% were seventeen years old, which may suggest that they joined school at an early age, while 35.3% were eighteen. So, it may be assumed that they went to school at a normal age. Whereas the 17.3% were nineteen, 15.6% were twenty and the

remaining 6.9% were twenty-one. It may be assumed that they had either repeated a certain level or changed the stream.

**Item two: Pupils’ gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
boy	63	36.4
girl	110	63.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-2: Pupils gender**

From the table above, we can observe that there is a big difference between the number of boys (36.4%) and girls (63.6%). This can be explained by the fact that the school where the research was carried out is a boarding school for girls.

**Item Three :How long have you been studying English?**

Years of Study	Frequency	Percentage %
7 years	108	62.4
8 years	48	27.7
9 years	17	9.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-3: Pupils’ English studying years**

The table above shows the findings which indicate that the majority of the informants (62.4%) have been studying English for seven years Then, comes a group of forty eight informants who have been attending the English class for eight years, the percentage of attendance is estimated at 27.7%. Only 17 informants have been studying it for nine years with an average of 9.8%.

#### **Item Four : Pupils' opinion about studying English**

<b>Studying English is</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>enjoyable</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>25.4</b>
<b>boring</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13.3</b>
<b>interesting</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>61.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-4 : Pupils' opinion about studying English**

The table above represents the results obtained while inquiring about the informants' opinion concerning their perception towards studying English. At this level ,This question was intended to identify how motivated they were towards learning English. Since motivation makes learners more willing to learn and take charge for their learning process. 61.3% revealed that it was interesting. 25.4% revealed that it was enjoyable. Surprisingly, only 13.3% found that it was boring.

#### **Item five: How is your level in English?**

<b>Level of Proficiency</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>very good</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5.2</b>
<b>good</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>29.5</b>
<b>average</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>46.8</b>
<b>poor</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>18.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-5: Pupils' level of English proficiency**

From the above table, we can see that nearly half of the informants 46.8% reported to have an average level in English language. 29.5% evaluated their level to be good. 18.5% estimated their level of English proficiency to be poor, and only 5.2% revealed to have a very good level in English. However, this is the pupils judgement of themselves. It should be assessed and evaluated by their teachers.

### 3.1.1.2. Pupils' Responsibility and Decision-making

**Item one: In your English Class, decisions about classroom management like seating and class rules are made by ....**

Decisions are made by	Frequency	Percentage %
The teacher	46	26.6
Pupils	34	19.7
Both (teachers +pupils)	93	53.8
Total	173	100.0

**Table 3-6: Distribution of decisions about classroom management**

The question' aims was to figure out the informants' perceptions and views about themselves regarding their ability to make decisions in the classroom. Surprisingly, 53.8% of our sample think that making decisions about classroom management is a shared responsibility between teachers and students and that both are involved in making decisions such as sitting and classroom rules.26% of students think that the teacher is the only responsible for making such decisions. Only 19.7% think that this responsibility belongs to the pupils. Accordingly, pupils manifest their willingness to take part in this process.

**Item two: The best way to learn English successfully, is to do activities with the teacher in the classroom.**

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage %
agree	123	71.1
neutral	3	1.7
disagree	47	27.2
Total	173	100.0

**Table 3-7: Pupils' opinion about the best way to learn English**

This question intended to elicit the participants' reactions towards their ability and willingness to take charge of their own learning. The great majority 71.1% of them agreed that the presence of the teacher is paramount for them to learn English. 27.2% showed a disapproval with regard to the major responsibility and the monopolistic role of the teacher in

the learning process. 1.7% did not manifest their opinion as they were neutral. As it was expected, the pupils are in constant need to be supported by the teacher.

**Item three: It is important for pupils to know the aims of the activities given in the English class.**

<b>Konw the aims of activities is important</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>always</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>75.1</b>
<b>often</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8.1</b>
<b>sometimes</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>16.2</b>
<b>never</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-8: Pupils’ opinion about the importane to know the aims of activities**

This question intended to explore whether the informants perceived that it is important for them to be aware of the aims of the English classroom activities and hence be capable to decide on the objectives of a lesson. Surprisingly, mainly all the informants shared the same view as they reported positive attitudes towards the importance of being aware of the objectives of the English activities. The majority (75.1%) said that it is always important. 8.1% said that it is often important. 16.2% said that it is sometimes important. Only the remaining 06% declared that they did not find any importance in knowing the purpose of those lessons.

**Item four: The lessons and Activities that you should learn in your English class, should be selected by ....**

<b>Selection is done by</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>teacher</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>42.2</b>
<b>pupils</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<b>both(teachers+pupils)</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>19.7</b>
<b>ministry of educatin</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>35.8</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-9: Distribution of responsibility for the selection of the content of English lessons**

This question aimed at discovering the informants’ perceptions of their ability to make decisions independently with regard to the content to be learned. The results revealed that only

2.3% of them expressed their ability to make decisions. 42.2% considered that the selection of the lessons and activities should be made by the teacher while 35.8% considered that such decision should be made by the ministry of education. The remaining 19.4% viewed that this decision should be made by the pupils but together with the teacher. This implies that the informants think that the teacher is primarily responsible of whatever is happening inside the English classroom and then this responsibility is secondarily made by both teachers and themselves.

**Item five: I think that the teacher should explain every detail of the English Lesson.**

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>agree</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>86.1</b>
<b>neutral</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2.9</b>
<b>disagree</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-10: Pupils' view about the obligation of the teacher to explain every detail**

This question is related to the previous one in that it sought to find out whether the pupils perceive themselves as being able and ready to handle their learning process and be self-regulated learners. It intended to unveil their perceptions towards their personal responsibility for their own learning instead of putting it on the teacher's shoulders. The results show the informants' low confidence. 86.1% agreed that the teacher should explain every detail of the English lesson and only 11% disagreed. While 2.9% were indifferent. Pupils simply expected the teacher to do everything for them rather than taking things into their own hands.

**Item Six: When I make mistakes in the English Class, I rely on ..... to correct me.**

<b>I rely on ..... to correct me</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>teacher</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>67.6</b>
<b>classmates</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>12.7</b>
<b>myself(in books &amp; dictionaries)</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>19.7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-11: Pupils' beliefs about who should correct their mistakes**

this question aimed to explore the informants' self-reliance to correct their mistakes in the English class. As demonstrated in the table above, We have found that the great majority 67.6% of the informants agreed that the teacher was an effective way in correcting their mistakes in the English class. 19.7% of students declared that they do not depend only on the teacher but they use books and dictionaries as well to correct their own mistakes. However, 12.7% relied on their classmates to correct them. Despite the importance of self and peer evaluation and correction in fostering learners' autonomy, the results of this question indicated pupils' inability to rely on themselves and their over independence on the teacher to correct their mistakes. Only a few of them depended on themselves.

**Item Seven: To progress in English, I do grammar excercises although they are not given as homework.**

<b>I do grammar exercises to progress</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>always</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1.2</b>
<b>often</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.6</b>
<b>sometimes</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6.9</b>
<b>rarely</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>39.3</b>
<b>never</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>52.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-12: Pupils' practice of grammar to progress in English**

This question attempted to figure out how willing the informants are to take responsibility for their own learning and be active participants in their learning process. More than half 52% of them demonstrated their total disengagement from this process. 39.3% confessed that they rarely practise for the sake of improving in English and 6.9% explained that they sometimes did so. 1.2% of the participants were fully involved in this process and one participant said that he often practised. Accordingly, the results show that the pupils do not manifest any personal investment to attempt to improve their English proficiency.

**Item Eight: To learn English, I use other English books and resources than the formal textbook.**

<b>I use other resources</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>always</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>16.8</b>
<b>often</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>12.7</b>
<b>sometimes</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>34.1</b>
<b>rarely</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>17.3</b>
<b>never</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>19.1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-13: Pupils’ use of extra resources to learn English**

This question intended to explore pupils’ frequency concerning their use of other English books and resources than the formal textbook. 34.1% of pupils declared that they do not depend only on the information provided in the formal text book since they sometimes use other resources and 19.1% of them said that they exclusively use the textbook and do not try to search for further information except in the formal textbook. 17.3% declared having rarely used extra materials. Only a few pupils (16.8%) always use extra resources and 12.7% of them often do so) tried to find support apart from their formal textbook. Yet, learners’ exposure to a range of sources supports and develops their sense of responsibility for their own learning.

**Item Nine: While learning English, I like activities in which I can learn on myself without the help of the teacher.**

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>agree</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>42.2</b>
<b>neutral</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7.5</b>
<b>disagree</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>50.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-14: Pupils’ view about their self-reliance**

This question sought to investigate the extent to which the informants are self-reliant. The table above shows to what extent pupils liked activities in which they can rely on themselves

without the help of the teacher. Half ( 50.3%) of the sample declared that they disagreed. 42.2% said that they liked this type of activities, whereas 7.5% kept a neutral position. However, neither agreeing nor disagreeing may suggest their indifference and disinterest towards the type of activities they may be exposed to while learning English or their dependence on the teacher. Accordingly, the results displayed learner' beliefs and preferences for having a passive role in the English classroom.

**Item Ten: I like projects where I can work with my classmates.**

<b>I like projects</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>always</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>30.6</b>
<b>often</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>12.7</b>
<b>sometimes</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>29.5</b>
<b>rarely</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9.8</b>
<b>never</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>17.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-15: Pupils opinion about projects**

Collaboration and interdependence are two necessary components for the development of LA. Accordingly, this question intended to investigate whether the informants are interested to be involved in interactive activities. 30.6% revealed that they always liked projects. 12.7% revealed that they often appreciated to collaborate with their mates while 29.5% reported that they sometimes did so. However, 9.8% claimed that they rarely liked projects. The remaining 17.3% of the participants did not like cooperation at all. Admittedly, the majority of pupils reported their preference for working with their classmates in projects. In fact, this allows them to construct new knowledge collectively, as they benefit from each other's feedback and peer-assessment, and transfer it independently to other learning tasks.

**Item Eleven: Do you prepare your lessons before coming to your English class:**

<b>I prepare lessons</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>always</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2.9</b>
<b>often</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8.1</b>
<b>sometimes</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>30.6</b>
<b>rarely</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>16.2</b>
<b>never</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>42.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-16: Pupils' preparation of lessons**

This question sought to figure out if the informants are doing further research independently or they rather rely only on what is provided by the teacher. According to the table above, 42.2% of the informants declared that they never prepare their lessons before joining the English class. 30% of them prepare them sometimes, and 16.2% rarely did it. However, 8.1% often prepare their lessons while only (2.9%) of the pupils prepare them always. These results are mainly revealing the extent to which pupils depend on the teacher and their unwillingness to take charge of their own learning.

**Item Twelve: When the teacher asks questions in the English class, you ....**

<b>When teacher asks questions, I</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>catch chances to answer</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>61.8</b>
<b>wait for classmates to answer</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>16.8</b>
<b>wait for the teacher to answer</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>21.4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-17: Pupils' responses towards the teacher's questions**

This question intended to indicate learners' willingness to take initiatives and be a proactive learner in the English classroom. In addition, the pupils were asked to indicate what they did when the teacher asked questions. Unexpectedly, 61.8% of them were willing to catch chances to answer. However, 38.2% of them expressed their inability to be initiative since 21.4% confessed that they waited for their teacher to answer and the remaining 16.8%

waited for their classmates. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority seem to have a preference to participation and initiation in the English classroom.

**Item Thirteen: If you have not learned anything in your English class, it is because .....**

<b>I have not learned anything in English because</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>I haven't worked hard</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>17.3</b>
<b>lack of materials</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>33.5</b>
<b>I need a lot of guidance by the teacher</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>49.1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-18: Pupils' distribution of responsibility for their failure**

The purpose of this question was to indicate who the informants thought was responsible for their failure. The table above represents the reasons behind pupils' failure to learn English. 49.1% of the informants recognized that they needed to be guided by the teacher. 33.5% of them reported that their failure was due to a lack of materials. Only the rest (17.3%) of the pupils found themselves responsible for not having learned anything. The results show that pupils shift the blame for their failure to external factors (need of teacher's guidance or lack of material ( 49.1%+ 33.5% = 82.6% respectively) rather than assuming responsibility for their failure

**Item Forteen: I attend out of class activities to practise and learn English.**

<b>I attend out of class activities</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>always</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8.1</b>
<b>often</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6.9</b>
<b>sometimes</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>19.7</b>
<b>rarely</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>13.9</b>
<b>never</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>51.4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-19: Pupils' out of class activities attendance**

This question intended to explore whether the informants are making personal efforts to learn English outside the classroom. From the table above, it is clear that 51.4% of the informants do not attend out of class activities to practise and learn English at all. 13.9% do attend rarely. 19.7% of them sometimes attend. Only, 8.1% always attend out of class activities while 6.9% often do. Therefore, we can assume that pupils do not think of out of class activities as a useful and good strategy for them to practice the language.

**Item Fifteen: The Knowledge presented by your teacher of English is .....**

<b>Teacher's knowledge is</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>sufficient</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>43.9</b>
<b>rich</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>35.8</b>
<b>needs to be enriched</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13.3</b>
<b>not sufficient</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6.9</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-20: Pupils' opinion about the teacher's knowledge**

This question attempted to examine the extent to which the informants have a preference for spoon feeding by their teachers. According to the results demonstrated in the table above, it is clear that pupils depend entirely on the teacher. 43% of the informants declared that the information delivered inside the classroom by the teacher was sufficient. 35.8% estimated that it was rich and 13.3% judged it needed to be enriched. Only 6.9% of the informants reported that the knowledge presented by the English teacher was not sufficient. This means that they do not depend on themselves, but mainly on their teachers in learning the language and that they do not try to seek for further information outside the formal setting.

**Item Sixteen: The relationship between pupils and teachers should be that of ...**

<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>receiver and giver</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>24.3</b>
<b>partners</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>37.6</b>
<b>explorer and guide</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>34.1</b>
<b>controlled and controller</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-21: Pupils' opinion about the relationship between teachers and pupils**

An important feature of LA is to provide learners with an environment in which they are part of the learning process. This question aimed at exploring the extent to which the informants would like to participate in their own learning and be given the opportunity to decide. They were asked to express their thought with regard to the kind of relationship they would like to maintain with their teacher. Unexpectedly, the results revealed that the majority of the informants expressed their desire to be involved in their own learning and their reticence to be under the teacher's authority. 37.6% of them declared that they wanted to be partners. 34.1% saw themselves as explorers while the teacher was viewed as a guide. However, 24.3% were not ready to cut the umbilical cord as they considered themselves to be receivers and the teacher as being a giver, in addition to the remaining 4% who still believe that the teacher is the absolute authority in the English classroom. In order to be successful in developing LA, pupils need to be aware of their roles and responsibilities and be willing to change and be involved in negotiation concerning the learning process.

### 3.1.1.3. Pupils' Use of Strategies

**Item One: The teacher should vary his way of teaching according to learners' ways/ preferences of learning.**

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage %
agree	114	65.9
neutral	13	7.5
disagree	46	26.6
Total	173	100.0

**Table 3-22: Pupils' opinion about the teacher's teaching style**

The purpose of this question was to examine the informants' meta-cognitive skills and so their ability to use necessary strategies to learn by themselves and to overcome the difficulties they encounter in their learning process. As expected, 65.9% revealed passive attitudes towards learning and their total reliance on the teacher as they agreed that he should vary his teaching according to their different learning styles. Only 26.6% of the pupils disagreed with this claim while 7.5% of them were neutral. The majority of the pupils displayed a help-seeking behaviour which may be attributed to their poor self-management skills and their inability to keep up with the pace of the English instruction and their unawareness of their preferred learning styles.

**Item Two: The teacher should always correct the assignments given to pupils so as they can identify their mistakes.**

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage %
agree	166	96.0
neutral	1	.6
disagree	6	3.5
Total	173	100.0

**Table 3-23: Pupils' opinion about the teacher's obligation to correct mistakes**

The significance of this question lies in the fact that it addressed the informants' ability for self-assessment and self-monitoring. Unsurprisingly, 96% agreed that the teacher should always correct the assignments given to pupils to permit them to identify their mistakes. But

only 3.5% disagreed with this claim; whereas one pupil was indifferent. Thus, the results revealed the pupils' total dependence and reliance on the teacher to provide them with feedback about the mistakes they made.

**Item Three: I try to understand the reason of my mistakes in English in order to learn better and progress.**

<b>I try to understand the reason</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>always</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>59.5</b>
<b>often</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>14.5</b>
<b>sometimes</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>21.4</b>
<b>rarely</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<b>never</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-24: Pupils' understanding of the reasons of their mistakes**

The significance of this question lies in the fact that it sought to examine whether the informants are committed to thinking carefully and to self-questioning or receiving information passively. It also sought to find out whether they learn how to find meaning by analyzing the information and managing their knowledge in order to develop reflective and analytic skills and accomplish their learning goals. The table above shows the results of the pupils' responses. 59.5% of the informants always try to understand the reasons of their mistakes. 14.5% often reflect on their mistakes while 21.4% of them sometimes do so. Only 2.3% of the sample reported that they rarely or never focus on such aspects of their learning. Accordingly, the results display pupils' tendency towards possessing the necessary skills for a self-directed learning.

**Item Four: When I study for my English lesson, I try t summarize the main points using diagrams and tables.**

<b>I summarize the main points</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>always</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>16.2</b>
<b>often</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>15.0</b>
<b>sometimes</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>27.7</b>
<b>rarely</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17.9</b>
<b>never</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>23.1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-25: Pupils’ summarizing of the main points**

This question attempted to explore to what extent the informants adapted this learning technique to develop their English proficiency. From the results presented in the table above, it appears that most pupils are not quite competent in making use of this strategy. Only 16.2% reported that they always make use of it and 15% of them often do so. 27.7% declared their irregularity in making use of it as they sometimes dopted this strategy. 23% of the informants confessed their abstention and 17.9% reported their scarce adoption of this strategy. Accordingly, most pupils seem unaware of the usefulness and effectiveness of this strategy to reach better understanding as it allows to foresee difficulties in their learning by reviewing what they have learned.

**Item Five: When I meet a word I do not understand in reading, I.....**

<b>When I meet a word I do not understand in reading, I</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>Ignore it</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8.1</b>
<b>ask the teacher for its meaning</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>51.4</b>
<b>guess the meaning from context</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>19.1</b>
<b>look up in a dictionary</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>21.4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-26: Pupils’ strategy to understand English words**

The table above shows the pupils' responses to what strategy they resort when they meet a word they do not understand in reading. We can notice that more than a half of the informants 51.4% preferred to ask the teacher for its meaning. 21.4% of them preferred using the dictionary, and 19.1% declared that they tried to guess its meaning from context. Only 8.1% of them ignored the words they did not understand. It is worth mentioning that they could have selected more than one suggestion. However, all of them opted for one choice only. Therefore, we can state that the majority of the students considered that feedback provided by the teacher was a useful strategy to help them overcome their comprehension difficulties in the English classroom. They seem to be quite unaware that learning strategies contribute to facilitate their independence.

**Item Six: When the teacher explains a lesson in the English class, I note down new words and their meanings**

<b>I note down new words</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>always</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>24.3</b>
<b>often</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13.3</b>
<b>sometimes</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>35.3</b>
<b>rarely</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>18.5</b>
<b>never</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8.7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-27: Pupils' note-taking strategy**

This question sought to measure the frequency at which the informants use a note-taking strategy so as to improve their English proficiency. Admittedly, the great majority of pupils reported having taken notes when the teacher explained. 35.3% said that they sometimes did. 24.3% said that they always take notes while 13.3% said that they often did so. Conversely, 8.7% of the informants admitted not using this technique at all, while 18.5% of them rarely used it. If we were to combine between "Often" and "Sometimes" frequencies (13.3% +35.3%= 48.6% respectively) as opposed to the "Never" and "Rarely" frequencies

(8.7%+18.5%=27.2% respectively), then the result would highly be in the favor of the always frequency which implies that this kind of strategy is well appreciated among pupils.

**Item Seven: In order to understand new English words, I use them in sentences so that I can remember them.**

<b>I use new words in sentences</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>always</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10.4</b>
<b>often</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>14.5</b>
<b>sometimes</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>32.4</b>
<b>rarely</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>19.1</b>
<b>never</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>23.7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-28: Pupils’ memorising strategy**

The purpose of this question was to examine the informants’ use of memorising strategies to expand their learning by re-investing creatively prior knowledge and generate new sentences independently. However, it seems that pupils are not successful users of this strategy. The results in the table above show that 10.4% of them revealed they always adopt it. 14.5% often use this strategy. However, 32.4% reported their irregularity in using it as they sometimes resort to it. 23.7% of the pupils confessed their complete abstention from adopting such strategy while 19.1% of them demonstrated a scarce reliance on it to expand their English learning.

**Item Eight: When studying English grammar, I try to establish a relationship between the new rule and other rules I have already learned.**

<b>I try to establish a relationship</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>always</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1.7</b>
<b>often</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1.2</b>
<b>sometimes</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5.2</b>
<b>rarely</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>46.8</b>
<b>never</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>45.1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table3-29: Pupils’ reflection on Grammar rules**

This question sought to examine the informants' capability to reflect and activate their prior knowledge and experiences to construct a new knowledge. As shown in the table above, the overwhelming majority of pupils confessed their low proficiency with respect to this strategy. 64.8% of the pupils confessed that they rarely adopt it while 45.1% of them abstained totally from using it. Only 1.7% of them either always or often adopt it while 5.2% of them sometimes use it. Accordingly, it is clear that pupils are unable to make use of their background knowledge concerning the English language though it is helping them to control their own language learning.

**Item Nine: What do you do to improve your level in English?**

<b>To improve my level in English, I</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>read books &amp; magazines in English</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17.9</b>
<b>listen to English songs</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>49.1</b>
<b>watch English movies</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>27.2</b>
<b>talk to friends &amp; family in English</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5.8</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-30: Pupils' strategies to improve in English**

The question addressed the techniques and strategies used by the informants about the way they used to improve their level in English, it is also worth mentioning here that they could have selected more than one suggestion. However, all of them opted for one choice only. When asked about what they do to improve their level in English, nearly half of the informants (49.1%) reported that they listen to music. 27.2% prefer to watch English movies. (17.9%) declared that they read books and magazines in English. Only (5.8%) reported that they talk to friends and family members in English. Thus, we can notice that the majority of the informants prefer mainly to listen or watch others use the target language than using it themselves. So, they are more attracted by the element of self-entertainment than by an attraction for learning English.

**Item Ten: I evaluate to what extent I am making progress.**

I evaluate to what extent I am making progress	Frequency	Percentage %
always	3	1.7
often	11	6.4
sometimes	46	26.6
rarely	61	35.3
never	52	30.1
Total	173	100.0

**Table 3-31: Pupils' evaluation of their progress**

The significance of this question lies in the fact that it sought to examine the extent to which the informants reflect on and evaluate their own performance. 35.3% of the pupils admitted that they rarely evaluate their learning. 30.5% of them reported their disinterest in self-assessment. 26.6% of them confessed that they sometimes do. Whereas 6.4% and 1.7% of them with an “often” and “always” frequencies showed a tendency to evaluate their learning. Accordingly, the results, shown in the table above, revealed that pupils do not think of their learning process in terms of their strengths and weaknesses in order to make plans to improve their English learning. In fact, learners’ awareness of self-assessment determines the extent to which they accept the transfer of responsibility from teachers to learners.

**Item Eleven: It is the teacher who should teach pupils the best way to learn English.**

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage %
agree	129	74.6
neutral	8	4.6
disagree	36	20.8
Total	173	100.0

**Table 3-32: Pupils' opinion about the role of the teacher in learning English**

This question sought to examine the informants’ responsibility and ability to search, select, organise, plan, and evaluate their own learning. The results above show that the majority of

the informants (74.6%) confessed that the teacher is responsible for teaching pupils the best way to learn English. 20.8% disagreed with that claim. However, 4.6% were neutral. This implies their inability to take charge of their own learning and their lack of learning strategies to enrich their learning by relying on themselves. This indicates their need for the teacher's support to develop a metacognitive awareness of their own learning.

### 3.1.1.4. Pupils' Level of Motivation

#### Item One: I study English because of ....

I study English because	Frequency	Percentage %
interest in the language	27	15.6
compulsory for exams	118	68.2
more chances for getting a job in the future	28	16.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-33: Pupils' motives to learn English**

The question addressed to pupils intended to identify the reasons and motives behind their learning English and to spot light the informants' degree of interest in this language. 68.2% reported that they are learning English only because it was a compulsory subject matter. 16.2% of the informants showed an interest in learning the language due to its utility as it offers more opportunities for getting a job in their future careers. Only 15.6% reported positive attitudes towards learning English and manifested interest in it.

#### Item Two: I cannot concentrate in the English class.

I cannot concentrate	Frequency	Percentage %
always	13	7.5
often	22	12.7
sometimes	73	42.2
rarely	50	28.9
never	15	8.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-34: Pupils' lack of concentration in the English class**

This question is related to the previous one in the sense that it tried to explore the participants' feelings and interest towards learning English. If achievement is closely related to an increase of interest in learning, then pupils are expected to exert effort in the English class and not lose their concentration so as to be successful in exams. However, we notice their negative responses. 42.2% of the pupils sometimes lose concentration. In addition to the 12.7% with an "often" frequency and 7.5% with an "always" frequency who confessed having a loss of concentration too. Only 8.7% of the pupils asserted their complete concentration during the English class and 28.9% of them revealed that they rarely lose concentration. Accordingly, promoting pupils' interest and motivation in learning is not just about developing a sense of achievement but it rather requires pupils' personal and intrinsic motivation to feel that learning English is interesting.

**Item Three: I revise my English lessons only to take exams.**

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>agree</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>69.9</b>
<b>neutral</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<b>disagree</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>27.7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-35: Pupils' English revision to take exams**

The purpose of this question is identifying the participants' inner motivation towards the English subject. The data shown in the table indicates strong agreement (69.9%) towards the revision of this language only to take exams. Only 27.7% of the pupils expressed their disagreement while four pupils neither agreed nor disagreed. In this sense, pupils' efforts are related to their desire for higher performance on the class exams. Accordingly, their motivation to keep studying English is closely related to what they learned for. It seems that learning is rewarding and thus, motivating only if it brings accomplishment and success.

**Item Four: The teacher should give us opportunities to select the units we would like to learn.**

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>agree</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>35.3</b>
<b>neutral</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6.4</b>
<b>disagree</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>58.4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-36: Pupils' opportunity to select the English learning units**

This questions attempted to elicit the informants' views towards their desire to be given the opportunity to select the units they would like to learn. In fact, the need to be involved may be rewarding and so their interest will increase and hence helps to motivate the learners to learn. However, 58.4% of the pupils' answers were negative. 35.3% of them pointed out that their the teacher should give them the opportunity to choose the content of the course while the remaining 6.4% had a neutral opinion. This makes us presuppose that they seek their teachers' assistance for work and that they lack intrinsic motivation to tackle their learning as they do not express a desire to be involved in the selection of the learning units.

**Item Five: I want to be the best pupil in the English class.**

<b>I want to be the best pupil</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>always</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>42.2</b>
<b>often</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11.0</b>
<b>sometimes</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>22.5</b>
<b>rarely</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8.1</b>
<b>never</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>16.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-37: Pupils desire for success in the English class**

This question addressed the informant's inner desire to preform successfully and be the best pupil in the English class. According to their responses, they tend to express a conflicting view with regard to their responses to the previous question. More than a half, 42.2% with an always frequency and 11% with an often frequency, displayed a high

expectation of success, a fact that indicates their intrinsic motivation. However, this motivation may be closely linked to their expectancy for success in exams which can be their major reason for learning and so to be the best. Though 22.5% reported that they sometimes want to be the best, nevertheless, we can presuppose that they have a liking towards it and are in need for external incentives. 16.2% confessed that such feeling never crosses their minds whereas 8.1% of the informants claimed that they rarely think of that. Accordingly, those pupils indicated their disinterest to the belief of being successful in the English class. So, some external incentives may be helpful to raise their interest.

**Item Six: The role of the teacher is to motivate pupils continuously.**

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>agree</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>82.1</b>
<b>neutral</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4.6</b>
<b>disagree</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3-38: The role of the teacher in motivating pupils**

This question is highly appealing in the sense that it sought to elicit the informants' view and perception about whom does the responsibility of motivating them fall upon. If they consider that it is theirs, so it can entail their readiness to accept the transfer of responsibility from their teacher. Otherwise, they can be considered as overdependent on the teacher. Admittedly, the overwhelming majority 82.1% put that responsibility on the teacher. Only 13.3% were against this claim and 4.6% kept a neutral position which entails their decreased motivation. Thus, the results indicate that these pupils are not self-determined as they are seeking external help and encouragement to develop their motivation and to expand it to their English learning.

### Item Seven: How would you describe yourself in the English class?

In the English class, I am	Frequency	Percentage %
highly motivated	22	12.7
motivated	93	53.8
slightly motivated	44	25.4
not motivated at all	14	8.1
Total	173	100.0

**Table 3-39: Pupils' degree of motivation in the English class**

The results obtained from the previous questions indicate that most informants maintained a decreased motivation which is externally regulated. Thus, this question addressed the informants' perception of their level of motivation in the English class. Different levels of motivation are perceived. 53.8% declared that they were motivated. 12.7% declared that they were highly motivated. 25.4% reported their slight motivation. Only 8.1% manifested their total demotivating attitude. However, this motivation can be related to pupils' confidence and desire to tackle their English learning or their expectancy for better performance on class exams. But, whatever the reason, it is important to maintain and enhance both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of pupils.

#### 3.1.1.5. Pupils' Suggestions

##### Open-ended question: How would you like to study English at school?

CBA was implemented in EFL classrooms so as to promote LA. However, when it comes to putting theory into practice, it seems to become paradoxical. Through the analysis of the three sections of the questionnaire above, contradictory results were shown. It seems that pupils have failed to develop sufficient, if not any, responsibility for their learning. Accordingly, the qualitative data collected from the pupils' responses to the open-ended question may bring enlightenment to the current situation.

Pupils were asked to make suggestions on the way they would like to study English at school. They were encouraged to write their suggestions in the language they wanted. They

started by expressing some compelling complaints about their dissatisfaction with their performance which according to them was due to the classroom practices and environment which are not favourable to the promotion of LA. Most of them confessed that their positive attitudes towards their role in the learning process is mainly suppressed by their unsuccessful learning experience at the lower cycle (middle education) and the disadvantage of not having regular English language teachers. They (except for foreign languages stream) also confessed that they are not willing to spend and spare so much of their time to learn the English subject (with a low coefficient) that is worthless as opposed to the core subjects of each stream. They added that their passivity was due to the fact that they get used to the traditional role of the teacher which has been deemed safer than taking risks and bear a responsibility that can be too demanding for them. Nevertheless, the pupils provided some suggestions so as to improve their English learning and bring high motivation, confidence and positive attitudes:

- Teach English from early primary education so as to receive sufficient experience of English beforehand.
- Reduce class number of pupils and expand English teaching sessions per week in order to enable learners to keep studying by themselves at their own pace.
- Improve English classrooms by using more technology (ICTs).
- Customize the formal textbook with reference to learners' real life experiences.
- Make use of authentic texts, activities and realia to make classes enjoyable, interesting and avoid boredom.
- Offer a relaxed atmosphere and loose classroom control.

### **3.1.2. Section2. Interview Results**

Teachers play an important role in the implementation and success of CBA in the EFL classrooms so that learners can develop autonomy towards their own learning as required by this approach. Accordingly, In order to get a clear idea about classroom teaching practices, the

researcher interviewed four teachers so as to elicit their perceptions of LA and to what extent they are taking part in this process.

**Question one: CBA has reshaped the role of both teachers and learners during the teaching-learning process. So, what role does each of the teacher and learner assume within this approach?**

Interestingly, the results showed that all teachers seemed to be aware of the basic principles of CBA as they all assumed that the learner is the central focus within this approach. They added that the learner is obliged to work independently while the teacher plays the role of a facilitator and guide. They added that the shift to a learner-centered approach should affect pupils' learning positively as it encourages them to assume the responsibility for their own learning and be successful at school and outside of it.

*T1: CBA aims at ensuring pupils' acquisition of knowledge and skills that are necessary to succeed at school, higher education and future careers. However, teachers have to quit their monitoring role and involve pupils in all activities to develop the skills they need to achieve their goals by themselves.*

*T2: CBA represents a better way to reach better results in EFL teaching but it is not easy to implement. However, we as teachers, try to make this approach as fruitful as we can. Our role is to guide, prompt and motivate pupils. Who in turn should take part in the instructional matter and participate actively in all aspects of tasks.*

*T3: In CBA is a problem-solving approach in that it checks pupils ability to overcome difficulties encountered along their learning process by mobilizing their knowledge in a personal and independent behaviour.*

*T4: the role of the teacher within this approach is to facilitate and guide pupils throughout their learning process by helping them to find out the best way to learn successfully. Pupils are not just receiving knowledge passively but they interact, interpret and finally produce*

*These responses reveal that these teachers are well equipped with theoretical notions, but do they invest their energy to put this theory into to practice so as to enhance LA?*

## **Question two: How would you define learner autonomy?**

In order to lead pupils and enhance their confidence to learn English autonomously, it is important for teachers to have a clear understanding of what LA means. As a matter of fact this question is intended to elicit their beliefs and perceptions about learner autonomy.

*T1: According to me, learner autonomy is a situation in which pupils are responsible to take decisions to improve their language learning and to use his skills in the real world.*

*T2: For me, learner autonomy is related to the pupils' state of feeling independent from the teacher' authority and be able to invest their personal capacities to study and succeed on their own.*

*T3: personally, I think that it is the pupils' awareness of what they need to learn and more importantly be aware of the best way learn it.*

*T4: Well, As far as I am concerned, Learner autonomy is the ability of the learner to improve his English learning using his own tactics apart from the teacher. What I mean by tactics here is strategies, but be careful, if there is interest, there will be tactics, and if there are tactics language learning will take place with improvements.*

Admittedly, there seems to exist a consistency in all the teachers' responses in that they all considered LA as the fundamental attribute for successful learners. They also referred to the learners' use of strategies so as to achieve the state of being autonomous. However, only one teacher ( the most experienced one) referred to pupils' motivation that she considered to be vital to make learners willing to take initiatives and make effort to learn by themselves. And another teacher who made reference to the relation between classroom knowledge and the world beyond the classroom which is the fundamental purpose of LA. However, The four teachers mentioned the following terms such as: skills, how to learn, capacities and tactics. This highlights their clear views about LA. So, once again, does this theoretical background suggest that their teaching practices attempt to support autonomy?

**Question three: according to you, what are the characteristics of an autonomous learner?**

From the teachers' point of view, pupils need to maximize their own learning and cater for their individual differences and interests. As a matter of fact, some pupils may be more apt to take charge of this aspect of their learning and hence are more autonomous than others. The teachers assumed that the more pupils are autonomous, the more they are proficient. They all agreed on the following characteristics to describe this category of pupils:

- Willing to be involved in the learning process.
- Full interest and ready to apply any strategy to improve his language learning and impress his instructor.
- Practise outside the English class and use extra- materials.
- Methodical and creative.
- Curious and self-confident.
- Initiative and seeks opportunities to make choices and exhibit language proficiency.

**Question four: The role of the teacher in the classroom impacts directly the extent to which pupils may be autonomous. Do you give your pupils opportunity for making decisions?**

From the responses of the teachers to the previous questions, it is clear that they recognized the active role that learners are presumed to undertake. Accordingly, it is worth to investigate how they make use of their theoretical knowledge in their classroom.

From their responses, we feel an agreement between all the teachers with regard to providing pupils with choices and involving in decision-making. However, the extent to which they give up their authoritative role is restricted. Each of which explained the reasons of this restriction.

One of the teachers (T3) mainly allow the pupils to make choices and decisions when they are set to projects work. Pupils could chose the members of their groups, in addition to the topic

of their projects. Another teacher (T2) claimed that the teacher can set pupils to work on a writing task and give them the possibility to choose between different subjects, that are related to the same theme, but pupils cannot decide to write or not. She added that as it is a writing skill development, pupils have to obey. She added, after having scheduled the English test, pupils for example can choose the day on which they are to take their test but not postpone it to another week. An other teacher (T4) reported that pupils are involved in the learning process and are given the opportunity to make decisions in some cases, such as the correction of test and exams or some written activities in which pupils are given the freedom to correct each others' mistakes. The last teacher (T1) explained that his pupils are mainly involved in decision-making during oral interaction tasks where they can choose the topic of discussion among a set of other topics. However, they all agreed that pupils are massively participating and highly motivated when they have the opportunity to make choices. Paradoxically, pupils' involvement in decision-making process is questionable despite the teachers' prior agreement on its importance. It will be impossible for teachers to know how capable are learners to make decisions unless they give them such opportunity for all aspects of the learning process not in just some passing tasks.

**Question five: what are the classroom activities that you think can contribute to the development of your pupils' independency? By the way, can you tell me if you use ICTs when teaching?**

In order to motivate learners and raise their interest towards English learning the choice of activities should be consistent with their own needs. Our informants emphasized the importance of implementing activities that relate to real life situations to be in accordance with their needs to keep their motivation up. They suggested to use activities in which they urge learners to use a range of strategies to solve these tasks. In addition to activities that prompt them to search information beyond their formal textbooks. They suggested the

following activities: dialogue completion, free composition, constructing sentences, communication activities such as taking roles or question answer tasks, re-ordering sentences, dictionary use, gap filling without providing them with the missing words, listening activities which necessitate note taking, summarize reading passages, games (crosswords but very rarely). They also encouraged their pupils to have extra-activities such as reading at home, listening to music, recording their personal experiences in mini journals. Nevertheless, they all agreed that projects work is a valuable instrument that contributes to the development of LA as it allows pupils to work in collaboration and benefit from each other's feedback and assessment.

In response to the second part of the question above, with respect to the use of ICTs while teaching, all teachers enumerated the many advantages of using this kind of resources. They admitted that ICTs impact positively the development of pupils language learning by avoiding boredom and providing an enjoyable atmosphere in the classroom. A fact that contributes in motivating and raising pupils' interest. However, they confessed that they are rarely integrating ICTs in their teaching. They exposed the reasons behind their abstention.

*T1: I use ICTs only with classes with a reduced number of pupils but when it is overcrowded I do not. And as you know, we rarely have the opportunity to work with reduced classes.*

*T2: ICTs are very motivating and making learning more accessible. But using this kind of materials too often becomes a passive means of teaching, so, I do not use them. And you know, the only materials that are available at school are data shows which are monopolized by teachers of science, physics and history.*

*T3: The use of ICTs is very important in teaching within CBA, but unfortunately, I do not use them because of a lack of pedagogical means at school. teachers suffer because the internet connection is unavailable.*

*T4: I used to work with ICTs for a moment but I stopped. It is true that it is enjoyable and fruitful, unfortunately, I will never use them again unless a*

*projection room is available. I can no more carry the data show and my personal computer, when available, from room to room.*

From the teachers' views, it seems that they are willing to foster learners' independency in learning by incorporating activities, which they assume, can be solved through using a wide range of strategies, in addition to collaboration which is vital for developing LA. However, they reported their reluctance to integrate ICTs in their classes despite their importance. Finally, they explained that they are facing various constraints that are affecting their teaching decisions.

**Question six: what are the constraints and challenges you face with respect to the promotion of learner autonomy in the classroom?**

As mentioned above, teachers reported that their teaching decisions are affected by different constraints. With this respect, their responses brought clarification to their restrictive behaviour towards involving pupils in the decision-making process and hence, encourage them to assume responsibility for their own learning. All teachers contended that EFL classrooms in our context do not support the promotion of LA due to the large number of pupils in each class which prevents them to carry out such practices. They also complained about the insufficient number of hours devoted to English learning. Thus, they lack exposure to this language. Besides the low coefficient attributed to this subject as opposed to others. Consequently, pupils are demotivated to spend their time to develop their proficiency in this language (except for foreign languages stream). Their answers came to corroborate the results obtained from the pupils' questionnaire with regard to pupils' English revision only to take exams. All teachers aserted that the overwhelming majority of pupils feel that they are obliged to learn in order to ensure good grades but not for the sake of improving their learning. Our informants explained that most pupils often ask whether all that has been covered will be included for exams so as not to revise all the content. It seems that they don't want to learn. Accordingly, they assumed that these pupils are not exhibiting any desire to be involved in the

learning process. They lack initiative and so throw this responsibility on the teacher's shoulders. On the other hand, our informants shift the blame for such disinterest on the exam-oriented curriculum. They confessed their frustration towards the completion of the syllabus which is tailored by the ministry of education and which prevented them to pay attention to each pupil and so prevented them from cultivating an autonomous learning habit as well. Teachers' hesitations to entrust pupils for their responsibility for their own learning is hampered by their belief that they are responsible for covering the syllabus and finish on time. They feel the pressure to focus on exams in order to ensure pupils' success with high grades. So, they think there is no space to spare time and wait pupils to progress at their pace.

Moreover, our informants referred to another constraint that impedes the successful transfer of responsibility to pupils. They asserted that most pupils do not stop complaining about their unsuccessful previous learning experiences at the middle school and hence they felt demotivated to engage in self-study. This resulted in pupils' passivity and their over reliance on the teacher and so, they did not see any utility to change since they considered that they were well served. To sum up, teachers' reluctance to relinquish control of the teaching process is not due to their unawareness of the importance of involving pupils in decision-making process or to preserve their dominating status but it is rather due to their beliefs that pupils are not ready to make such a giant leap.

**Question seven: do you think that EFL learners in your school are ready to handle their learning process and be autonomous?**

As revealed in the previous responses, teachers do not deny the significance of switching responsibility to pupils. They rather exhibited their strong desire to be lightened from this workload which is stressful and demanding. However, our informants agreed that the majority of pupils lack autonomous attributes that can enhance the achievement of this goal. Teachers reported most pupils passivity and lack of interest to actively take part in the learning

process, except for a reduced minority. They confessed that when pupils are given the opportunity to exercise autonomy (e.g. group work activities , projects), less proficient pupils just rely on their more proficient peers to accomplish the task. They did not contribute in the process, they rather take profit of such gathering to narrate their personal experiences and leave the burden of hard work to the brilliant members of the group. Our informants complained about the fact that most pupils are unwilling to grasp these opportunities even if they may lead to success in their learning. Yet, when they are assigned a homework, they showed negative attitudes towards out-class activities. Unless the teacher threatens to punish them (e.g. reduce their grades or ask their parents to attend), most pupils neglect their assignments (and if done, our informants noticed that all answers were identical as most of them copied their mates answers). The interviewees exemplified with projects work too.

*T1: Well, to be honest I do not set pupils to projects work. For me it is just a waste of time. I used to do that. But I found that only few pupils made effort to prepare something personal. Others just went to the net and brought ready-made papers.*

*T2: I know that collaboration is essential to enable pupils share learning experiences. Our inspector insists on involving pupils in group work so as to benefit from each other. It is said that even less proficient pupils are somehow able to contribute in group tasks, they can expose ideas which even brilliant pupils do not think about. However, when such opportunity was offered, I wish I had not set a group work activity. I felt as if I were in the courtyard. My dear colleague, I think that all of us have been overwhelmed with such dissatisfaction, noise made me crazy. As I walked around the class and supervised the groups, I could realize that instead of taking advantage of such opportunity and allow peer-assessment, slow pupils were rather passive observers or rather disturbed and distracted the other members by doing staggering things such as pinching their mates!*

*T3: Personally, I do believe that the concrete realization of CBA is felt only through carrying projects work. However, it is time consuming, hence, I cannot prepare it for each unit as I myself prepare a copy of the work they are*

*supposed to submit. I also attract their attention towards the language structures they may need while we deal with them (I tell them to cross on their textbooks each point that is relevant with the project). I do so in order to guide pupils along the realization process of their projects. Unfortunately, though they massively submitted their projects, I found that not all pupils were motivated to follow my instructions, they were just receiving information without processing.*

*T4: I do encourage pupils' autonomy in various activities, but let us not exaggerate! This does not concern all streams. You know what I mean! When I set pupils to projects work, not all of them submitted their assignments, and when they did, I could guess that not all members of the group undertook research. I could notice that during the presentation session. Only those who worked on the projects were able to present and answer my questions or their mates'. However, happily there are still pupils who enjoy learning English, otherwise, I would quit a long time ago.*

To conclude, our informants assumed that pupils at their school (without including the insignificant minority of pupils who exhibit willingness and motivation to share such responsibility with their teachers) are not able to handle their learning process autonomously. They added that pupils are not aware of their strengths and weaknesses as they are pleased to be spoon fed, in addition to their ignorance of their learning preferences and learning strategies. They insisted that pupils' motivation to learn can be sustained only if they realize that their learning in class is tightly connected to their ability and willingness to be active participants in their learning process. However, many factors are essentially complementary to activate such thirst for achieving this desirable goal.

**Question 8: what are the solutions you can suggest to overcome these challenges?**

LA is admittedly a desirable goal, but is it feasible in our context? Our informants approved its effective outcomes, with respect to the few pupils who were eager to work hard towards the development of this attribute. Those pupils demonstrated their desire to be released from their dependency over the teacher. However, our informants considered that it can be done

gradually with the remaining majority according to the degree of readiness of each pupil to delve into this process. They explained that if LA is to grant and guarantee a solution to an effective learning, then, we all have to work out solutions. Accordingly, they made the following suggestions:

- Provide a supportive environment to promote LA such as equipping schools with adequate means (language laboratories, internet connection,
- Give pupils time, show them readiness to let them engage in the learning process and motivate them through using different types of teaching materials.
- Provide pupils with opportunities and situations that may motivate them like visits outdoors and cultural exchanges.
- The syllabus, the classroom, tests and exams as a way of assessment, represent real teaching and learning boundaries that hinder the development of LA in EFL classrooms. Thus, syllabus designers should take into account the needs, preferences of every individual. And the concerned authority should not impose a stressful way of assessment .
- Help demotivated pupils overcome their negative attitudes towards English learning and more importantly towards the importance of taking part in their learning process through counselling at school so as to raise their awareness and self-esteem.
- Set more time for English language learning in Algerian schools and heighten the low coefficient of this subject for scientific, technical, literary and mathematical streams.
- Set small numbers of pupils in each class.

In this section the results obtained from the pupils' questionnaires and the teachers' interviews were presented. Discussion of the findings of the research will be discussed in next section in relation to the research questions.

### **3.2. Discussion, Implications, Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

#### **3.2.1. Discussion and Answers to Research Questions**

The aim of the present descriptive study was to investigate to what extent pupils at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School were able to grasp the responsibility for their language learning and the teachers' perceptions of LA and their teaching practices to promote it in the EFL classroom. In this section, the results will be discussed by answering the following research questions that were addressed in this research:

- 1- Are pupils at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School autonomous in EFL learning?
  - a- What are the pupils' perceptions of their ability, responsibility and confidence in English language learning?
  - b- Do pupils use learning strategies in English language learning?
  - c- How motivated are pupils to learn English autonomously?
- 2- How is learner autonomy perceived and practiced by teachers at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School?
  - a-What are teachers' perceptions of their role at the EFL classroom?
  - b-What do teachers do to promote autonomous learning among their pupils?
- 3- What are the constraints that hinder the promotion of learner autonomy at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School?

#### **Research question 1: Are pupils at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School autonomous in EFL learning?**

This question aims at exploring pupils' readiness for autonomous learning. In order to answer it, three sub-questions were addressed with respect to four areas of LA; pupils and teachers' responsibilities, pupils' decision-making ability, pupils' meta-cognitive strategy use and pupils' motivation. Data from the open-ended question and teachers' interview responses

provided insights into the reasons underlying the findings generated in the three quantitative sections of the questionnaire.

The first section of the questionnaire intended to answer the first sub-question through investigating pupils' perceptions of their own responsibilities and those of their teachers in the language learning process. Moreover, it attempted to investigate their disposition; confidence and ability to (control) make decisions throughout their learning process. The findings revealed incompatible expectations. They showed pupils' failure and inability to make decisions and take responsibility for their own learning. Though, the majority of pupils seem to prefer their teachers to play the role of a guide or a partner, they expected their teachers to take responsibility for a considerable number of classroom decisions and activities. It seems that this partnership concerns only teachers' dominance and authority in setting rules and restricting pupils' freedom in the classroom. The only aspect of responsibility which they considered as a joint task was their desire to be involved in decisions concerning classroom management such as seating and class rules which supposedly oriented towards their personal comfort and convenience and their desire to lessen disciplinary measures. All other aspects of their language learning seem to be the teacher's duty. It was revealed that pupils entrust their progress in English language learning to the teachers' knowledge since they believed them to be resourceful and under obligation to enhance their interest in learning and provide them with information. They went back to their previous unsuccessful learning experiences to justify their failure. These pupils can be characterized as being more teacher-centered oriented. They demonstrated more negative attitudes towards assuming responsibility for the major learning aspects that were included in the questionnaire. From pupils' point of view, it seems that they are not fond of self-study outside class. They predominantly agreed that teachers have the main responsibility for making most decisions related to English class learning, such as the content of the lesson and assessment of pupils' learning. According to

the informants' responses, it appears that they do not value out-class study. They exhibited a clear reluctance to make personal effort and investment to practice outside class or even use extra-materials to progress. This implies their over dependence and reliance on their teachers for learning activities in the English language class and their unwillingness to be active participants in their learning process. They admitted that they needed the teacher's continuous guidance; a fact that entails that they accept limited, if none, responsibility for their progress.

Though, pupils manifested positive attitudes towards collaborative work, the teachers' responses seem to be conflicting with this view. They highlighted the reason behind such interest. And once again, it seems that most pupils are not really willing to benefit from their mates' feedback and assessment but they rather seek personal reward. They just wait quietly meanwhile the task is performed by others. Accordingly, they are prone to adopt a passive role throughout their learning process.

Pupils agreed on the importance of knowing the aims of class activities; this points to their desire to have some say in some classroom decisions. Nunan (1997: 198) suggests that decision-making implies learners to be "involved in making choices from a range of goals, a selection of content and a variety of tasks". However, due to teachers' confession, as reported in the interviews, it seems that they rarely give the opportunity to pupils to make decisions. Though they explained the constraints that prevented them from doing so, it remains a fact that reflects classroom reality. Even if teachers demonstrated awareness of the importance and a desire for relinquishing control in class and allow some space for pupils to practice their independence in learning, it seems that they still hold an authoritarian view of language teaching. This tradition results in a non-supportive environment which favors pupils' passivity and reluctance to engage in autonomous learning.

According to the findings of this section which unveil the allocation of responsibility in the EFL classroom according to pupils' and teachers' perceptions at Fatma N'soumer Secondary

School, it seems that pupils are unwilling and unable to take the responsibility for their own learning. Littlewood (1997: 428) defined an autonomous learner as a person who has an independent capacity to make and carry out choices which govern his/her actions. Nevertheless, this capacity depends on two main components: ability and willingness. Thus willingness and ability are inextricably intertwined if pupils are to assume responsibility.

The second section of the questionnaire aimed at answering the second sub-question through investigating pupils' meta-cognitive engagement while learning. It seeks to examine pupils' awareness and to what extent they make use of strategies when carrying out tasks. In addition to their ability to take advantage of opportunities for practice, plan and monitor their English learning process.

Oxford (1990: 1-2) explains that language learning strategies are important in language learning process. They are tools that reinforce self-directed involvement and help learners take control of their learning.

The results obtained from the pupils' responses to this section indicated that pupils exhibited no tendency towards using metacognitive strategies to manage their own learning. Though teachers appear to supply their pupils with a range of activities that favor the use of various strategies, pupils demonstrated that they were unsuccessful in using them as they failed to spot their strengths and weaknesses and hence fail to make plans to improve their level too. The results showed pupils' regular use of note-taking strategy as opposed to the other strategies that were suggested. Pupils tended to rely more on teachers' support, assistance and feedback to overcome the difficulties they encounter in their English learning instead of looking for other alternatives to manage it. They demonstrated their unawareness and failure to apply the suggested strategies competently. When asked what they did to cope with comprehension difficulties, they safely preferred to ask the teacher for clarification instead of selecting among the set of strategies provided. They predominantly agreed that the

teacher has to vary his teaching according to pupils' learning preferences. This may suggest their unawareness of their preferred learning styles and hence their inability to personalize their learning through the implementation of appropriate strategies to manage this process. Nunan (1996: 195-196) recommends five different actions to reach LA: awareness, involvement, intervention, creation, and transcendence. Awareness implies knowledge and understanding of pedagogical objectives, contents, materials, use of strategies for pedagogical tasks, and identification of their own learning styles as well.

Consequently, as they feel incompetent in using the language they consider that the teacher is responsible to teach them how to learn. They seem to be definitely unable to choose specific and relevant strategies that can facilitate their learning. They were asked to choose among different strategies the one that can improve their English level. Though they could have selected all strategies, they mainly opted for English songs and movies but they are more likely to serve for their entertainment!

Pupils' ability to plan and monitor their improvement is linked to their ability to evaluate and assess their learning. This meta-cognitive knowledge is paramount to enable them take a more active role in the classroom and more control of their learning process. Though it was claimed that reflection on one's learning should be done through the use of the target language, they suggested teachers to use their mother tongue to facilitate their understanding. Weinstein & Mayer (1986: 315) insist that strategy use in language learning "affect the learner's motivational state, or the way in which the learner selects, acquires, organizes, or interacts new knowledge." Nevertheless, and to answer the second sub-question, the findings highlight that pupils are not committed to using strategies.

The third sub-question attempted to explore pupils' motivation for learning English. In the background information section, most pupils declared that studying English was enjoyable and interesting. In this sense, it can be assumed that they are inherently satisfied of learning

this language and hence be able to develop self-confidence and sustain an autonomous learning. However, the findings revealed conflicting assumptions. This enjoyment is stimulated by their beliefs that English is instrumental in getting a better job in their future careers and more importantly by being a compulsory subject for exams; a fact that explains their agreement about revising it only to take exams which can be characterized as extrinsic motivation. It would be preferable if they were intrinsically motivated to generate their desire to be involved in their learning and maintain their concentration in class which they confessed they lack. Knowledge of their learning preferences could have helped them find ways to reinforce their motivation in learning. However, as indicated in the previous question, pupils lack knowledge of themselves as individual learners.

In an attempt to find out whether they can be intrinsically motivated, at least moderately, they were asked to express their view about their desire to be given the opportunity to take part in the learning process by selecting their study units of interest. They incredibly expressed their disapproval except for some of them. Paradoxically, they expressed their desire to be successful in English. Thus, we can assume that their motivation is closely linked to their expectancy for reward and not improvement. As a matter of fact, teachers' responses can corroborate this claim. They declared that in case pupils were given the opportunity to make choices (such as the topic of their projects, group work activities); they still exhibit their reluctance to engage in the accomplishment of the task. However, they felt obliged to submit their work to avoid punishment. Pupils attributed their lack of motivation to prior unsuccessful learning experiences, besides teachers' monotonous teaching and hence allocate the role of motivating them to the teacher. Holec (1979: 30) advises: "the teacher will find his new role become more varied rather than curtailed ... and much greater demands will make to his creativity than on his highly developed knowledge..."

Moreover, pupils complained about the lack of materials that can raise their interest in learning. Christopher (2006: 71) asserts that interacting with technology allows learners to exercise their controlling ability; tailor the learning process, and increase their engagement. With this respect, teachers confessed not using ICTs for a number of reasons. This can explain pupils' feeling of boredom, lack of concentration and demotivation. Accordingly, their academic performance is tightly linked to intrinsic motivation which in turn has to be extrinsically activated.

In their responses to the first section of the questionnaire, pupils expressed their wish towards establishing good rapport with their teachers by explaining that the teacher should be a guide or a partner. Paterson (2005: 69) asserted: "good teachers use a variety of methods so all students want to learn most of the time. These begin with the establishment of good rapport ... without this; other motivational tactics may be useless..." However, this wish was not oriented towards their sharing responsibility for their learning with him but rather to reduce their teachers' dominance in class. It was revealed by the teachers that though they sought to let their responsibility go, they hesitated to give up their authoritative role. Accordingly, it seems that these pupils tend to be extrinsically motivated, so, providing a relaxing classroom environment besides a supportive teaching methodology, as external incentives, can increase pupils' extrinsic motivation and hence develop their intrinsic motivation. Little (2004: 105) suggests that whenever motivation is involved in learning, management is likely to be shaped according to the learners' developing interest. Nevertheless, the findings highlight pupils' low level of motivation.

Holec (1981: 3) defined LA as "... the ability to take charge of one's learning..." He explained that this ability involves the responsibility for all decisions concerning all aspects of their learning such as setting objectives, defining the contents and progressions, choosing methods and techniques, monitoring, planning and evaluating. This entails learners' ability to

learn by accepting the transfer of control from the teacher and assuming responsibility for their own learning. Taking responsibility generates willingness to be aware of the learning process which reinforces awareness of themselves as learners and enhances their capacity for greater autonomy and which in turn requires meta-cognitive qualities. Making use of these tools provides motivation which increases their willingness and desire to exert more control on their learning process.

With reference to the findings and to Dam et al (1990: 102) definition of an autonomous learner as “an active participant in the social processes of classroom learning ... an active interpreter of new information in terms of what she/he already and uniquely knows ... someone who knows how to learn and can use this knowledge in any learning situation she/he may encounter at any stage in her/his life”. We can now answer the first research question. It can be assumed that pupils at Fatma N’soumer Secondary School, (without including the few minority), lack many attributes of LA and hence they can be classified as more re-active than pro-active English learners. Accordingly, they need to be supported to become aware of their own attitude in learning. Language teachers should guide pupils towards what, how and when to learn (Van Lier, 1996) so as to improve their learning abilities and take a more active role in the English classroom. In order to assist and help learners to become more autonomous, Little (2009: 224) allocates three main roles to the teacher: to aid learner involvement in terms of planning, selecting and evaluating learning experiences, to aid learner reflection, and to assist with target language use.

**Research Question Two:** How is learner autonomy perceived and practiced by teachers at Fatma N’soumer Secondary School?

The semi-structured interviews that were conducted with teachers attempted to yield data that can contribute to answer the second research question which aimed at investigating teachers’ perceptions of LA and their attitudes towards promoting pupils’ autonomous

learning. They were expected to share their opinions and experiences about their role in the English class, their teaching methodology and the learning activities they assume are related to the promotion of LA. Two sub-questions were addressed to tackle this issue.

a-What are teachers' perceptions of their role at the EFL classroom?

Within traditional educational approaches, classroom authority rested on the shoulders of teachers. This puts learners standing outside the whole learning process and adopting a passive role. However, the shift to learner-centered approaches has given learners a participatory role and teachers the role of facilitators of learners' learning. Accordingly, teachers are expected to quit their role of knowledge givers and absolute authority and to transfer the control of the learning process to learners. What does classroom reality tell with respect to this issue? Do EFL teachers at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School let this authority go?

According to the finding, it seems that our teacher informants are quite aware of their duties towards directing pupils to embrace and assume their active role in their English learning process. The four teachers agreed that they are no more knowledge holders and that the era of spoon-feeding has passed away. They assumed that their role is to assist pupils so that they can develop the ability to direct their English learning by identifying their strengths and overcoming their shortcomings (weaknesses). They clearly stated that CBA aims at fostering learners' autonomous learning, and their role is to facilitate and guide pupils throughout this thorny process. Through their definition of LA and description of an autonomous learner, they proved to be conscious of what LA entails in terms of letting their control go and preparing the ground for pupils to willingly grasp it. They know that the stage belongs to pupils whom they consider have to accept their new exploratory role by sharing decisions about the learning process, such as the choice of learning activities, setting objectives and selecting materials to use with the teacher whom they admitted has the

responsibility to advise pupils to recognize their individual preferences and make best use of their resources. The results revealed that most teachers demonstrated awareness about the importance of collaboration and interaction with each other and among pupils as well. They admitted that collaboration allows individual pupils to share learning experiences with their classmates, take advantage of their mates' feedback and assessment and then construct their own knowledge and make their language learning more effective. Thus, it seems that our teachers are relatively well informed about LA. But, are they conscious of what it implies when it comes to practice?

Auerbach (2000: 87) considers "moving towards autonomy is a bumpy ride where contradictions, uncertainty, and conflicts are obstacles to be expected and overcome."

When asked whether they give pupils a space to practice their role, teachers' responses were conflicting with what they advanced before. They reported that when they tried to disrupt the traditional practice, they started to feel the burden of the new challenging approach. Pupils seem to be reluctant to abandon their submissive and passive position which put teachers in a dilemma. They confessed that pupils, except for a few, are not willing to engage in independent learning and are continuously showing negative attitudes towards English learning. Though teachers provide them occasionally with opportunities to exercise their autonomy they did not manifest much interest about the progression of the task as the interest they hold to the product. Teachers indicated that pupils are demotivated and not attracted to move forward. However, they did not try to innovate in their teaching by introducing ICTs (they explained the reason for their abstention to use them in the findings section) to raise pupils' interest. Under the pressure of some constraints, such as: restrictions due to the curriculum, exams, pupils' willingness to be involved in the learning process, overcrowded classes, time allotted to the English study per week, lack of pedagogical resources, English subject low coefficient; teachers confessed their worries and reported that

they do not want to venture and take risks and compromise pupils' chances to perform well on exams. They wanted to make sure that the entire syllabus was covered as they believed that they are responsible for their pupils' performance. Little (1996: 85) explains:

It is not easy for teachers to stop talking: after all, if they stop talking they stop teaching, and if they stop teaching, their learners may stop learning. And it is not easy for teachers to let learners solve problems for themselves, for that takes time, and there is always so much ground to cover. Committing oneself to learner autonomy requires a lot of nerve.

Thus, they confine pupils' responsibility to some tasks only such projects which they reported negative experiences too. Nevertheless, they assured that they are willing to change but only if necessary measures were taken by the concerned authorities (see their suggestions in the findings section). In the open-ended question of the questionnaire, pupils suggested their teachers to lessen class control. This implies that the English classroom is controlled by the teacher. Paradoxically, teachers did not deny the importance of fostering LA in order to ensure effective language learning. However, they admitted that it will be a gradual process that will not be void of difficulties. Little (2007: 15) argues that "... autonomy is now a defining characteristic of language learners around the world ... the practical realization of language learner autonomy remains elusive."

Accordingly, the answer to the first sub-question is that though EFL teachers at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School showed a predisposition to work towards the promotion of LA, they are still hesitant to let the entire responsibility for their learning to pupils. Barcelos & Kalaja (2011: 286) comment that despite participants' knowledge and beliefs, it does not absolutely mean that these beliefs will necessarily become classroom teaching practices.

b-What do teachers do to promote autonomous learning among their pupils?

Teachers demonstrated understanding of the importance of learner autonomy and considered it to be a goal in their teaching and agreed that they should work towards its promotion. Nevertheless, as it is showed in their responses, they did not provide pupils with

too much freedom, due to constraints as they explained, in the classroom with regard to decision-making. Thus, how do they intend to foster LA? To what extent they considered that pupils should have some say in carrying out the English language classroom activities. And are these activities supportive for the enhancement of LA?

The findings revealed that teachers suggested activities that are relevant to promoting learner autonomy. These activities encourage pupils' interaction and cooperation, urge them to use strategies and practice outside class and address some of their personal interests as well (Question 5 in the interview analysis part, p. 102). Teachers claimed that they try to inculcate some autonomous learning habits into pupils as frequently as possible. They wish and intend to provide pupils with activities to work on their own or in collaboration with their peers so as to drive them towards developing responsibility for their learning and feel the need to be involved in their English language learning. Teachers believed that if pupils were given the opportunity to work with their peers (especially through projects and group work activities), they would be able to exchange ideas and allow peer feedback and assessment to happen, and hence allow them to extend what they learned to other learning tasks. Examples of such activities are working on projects presenting them together with all the members of their respective groups, games (to be done in groups or pairs mainly) such as crosswords (hardly ever to happen), set pupils in pairs to summarize a reading passage and role play (very rarely too). Our informants suggested activities that are expected to increase pupils' control and responsibility such as questioning, free composition, homework assignments and dialogue completion. Some of the activities also intend to urge pupils use learning strategies, such as gap filling tasks, re-ordering sentences to get a meaningful paragraph, note taking and summarizing. Teachers confessed that they occasionally encourage pupils' reflection and peer correction. They set written tasks that were corrected by pupils and corrected collectively in class where each pupil could identify and correct his mates' mistakes. These activities allow

language practice too. However, it was reported by teachers and even pupils that whatever is done to stimulate pupils' interest to drive them towards independency, pupils tend to ignore the benefits it can bring to them in short or long term goals. Teachers insisted that pupils were eager to work only under pressure. Pupils lack the initiative to learn on their own; doing homework and out of class activities (They reported their contempt for homework and out of class activities) can help them in deciding how to complete the assignments without the help of the teacher, find out their weaknesses, try to remedy them and thus manipulate their learning and practice an aspect of LA (self-study). However, as it was revealed by the results of both quantitative and qualitative data, pupils seem to expect their teachers to take responsibility for mainly all classroom activities and decisions so as to facilitate their learning while teachers, for a number of constraints, find it challenging to let their control go. Teacher's guidance and direction is necessary to help pupils recognize their learning preferences and styles to increase their confidence and motivation and hence accept responsibility for their own learning.

Though teachers demonstrated theoretical understanding about the issue of LA, they tend to exhibit a teacher-controlled behavior. Consequently, it is doubtful whether they really understand its implications on the ground. Accordingly, it is unreasonable to expect teachers to foster the growth of autonomy in their learners if they themselves do not know what it is to be an autonomous learner (Little, 2007: 27).

### **Research Question Three: What are the constraints that hinder the promotion of learner autonomy at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School?**

(Nunan. 1997: 201) explains: "how far one goes, or wants to go in encouraging learner autonomy, will be dictated by the context and environments in which the teaching and learning takes place."

Both teachers and pupils complained about the difficulties they faced in the EFL classroom. These obstacles hamper the promotion of LA.

Teachers mainly attributed them to:

- Institutional reasons: a syllabus to cover within a set timeline which creates pressure.
- Pupils' low level of motivation, proficiency and interest in learning.
- Exams' requirements.
- Overcrowded classes.
- Pupils' over reliance on the teacher.
- Lack of resources materials, such as ICTs, language laboratories...
- Low coefficient of the English subject.
- Short time allotted to the English subject.

Pupils attributed them to:

- Teachers' authority.
- Previous learning experiences which rooted a teacher-dependence behavior in pupils.
- Lack of motivation.
- Lack of materials such as ICTs.
- Monotonous classroom environment due to uninteresting and fun-free programme.
- Large number of pupils in class.
- Instability of the teaching methodology (not having the same teacher along their academic course).

### **3.2.2. Pedagogical Implications**

The pedagogical contributions of the present study to fostering learner autonomy can be observed in terms of the insights it brought with regard to the reality of EFL classroom in secondary education. The study shed light on the conflicting views between pupils' assumptions about their ability and responsibility in the learning process and the teachers'

reluctance to let them have a say owing to a lack of confidence in their capability to assume such load. It is however essential for teachers to help and guide pupils recognize their meta-cognitive qualities and train them to make use of these strategies in the management of their learning and hence develop their confidence to move towards autonomous learning. Teachers' focus and knowledge should be directed towards providing learners with opportunities to practice and accommodate to their new role; and be able to gradually lessen their control and finally let it go. Fostering LA requires pupils to develop self-directed learning which can be achieved through teachers' guidance, creativity, innovation and motivation to maintain pupils' motivation, confidence and sustain their involvement in the English language learning; and establishing good rapport with them as well. Nevertheless, some significant factors should not be overlooked. Both teachers and learners referred to constraints that caused them to fail in performing their respective roles. Accordingly, in order to make the teaching-learning process rewarding, it is high time the concerned authorities re-thought on the implications of adopting an approach that seeks to promote LA and provide instructors and learners with adequate resources to reach this goal. They may start by reconsidering the priority of the learners' and teachers' well-being than economic or political constraints. Schools should be equipped with the necessary materials such as ICTs to allow a better assimilation and keep learners highly motivated. Training should be provided for teachers so that they can cope with the challenges they encounter and make the best of their resources to promote LA. Syllabus designers should be more creative and innovative when designing materials. They have to be aware of the importance of providing authentic, funny and to real life-like materials if learners' interest and motivation are to be kept at a high level. Moreover, both teachers and learners suffer from the constraints of the classroom environment due mainly to the large number of pupils in classes; so, it is high time decision-makers took concrete decisions and allowed a reduced number of

pupils in classes. In addition to time allocation and coefficient that remain an obstacle which leads pupils mainly to underestimate this valuable subject.

All in all, patience and perseverance are key factors that all teachers and pupils should be armed with if satisfaction and promotion of LA are to be reached.

### **3.2.3. Limitations of the Study**

The present study sought to highlight EFL learners' perceptions of their own and their teachers' responsibility for English language learning, their ability, willingness and motivation to be involved in their own learning. It also sought to highlight EFL teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy and their practices in developing it. However, it is worth to acknowledge the limitations of the research.

Though case study design is flexible and offers researchers the opportunity to select from a wide range of methods and data collection instruments, it is not void of drawbacks. Its most common limitation is that case studies lack scientific credibility because of the difficulty of replication and findings cannot be generalized (Zainal, 2007: 6). However, readers can relate to the findings to facilitate generalized understanding of phenomena (Porter, 1998).

Questionnaires have been used as one of the research tools of this study to investigate the concept of LA with respect to four areas that constitute its components as manifested by pupils. However, the research could have benefited from using another tool such as interviews or classroom observation that could have supported and expanded the scope of the questionnaire data. Nevertheless, due to the double role of the researcher, the researcher is herself an EFL teacher at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School in charge of third year pupils, interviews or classroom observation would not be suitable. Pupils could have felt pressure to answer issues such as their relationship with their teacher or their motivation level with regard to learning English. They could assume that they have to provide erroneous answers that do not reflect their real thoughts, especially their negative feelings; they would only seek to

please the researcher due to their vision towards her as having a powerful role and status. So, to avoid bias, we deliberately avoid using interviews or classroom observation with pupils. Nunan (1992: 150) argues that bias that exists within the interview method reflects “the asymmetrical relationship between participants”.

Moreover, the core concern of the questionnaire investigated the concept of LA in regard to four areas; learners’ role and decision-making abilities, strategy use and motivation level. However, for such complex issue that is known for its multi-dimensionality, other features such as age, gender, learning styles and some other factors such as freedom (Little, 1990) could have been taken into account.

On the other hand, the research design was based upon triangulation. Mixed methods approach was adopted to collect data through pupils’ questionnaire and teachers’ interview; a fact that increases the validity and reliability of the findings. In addition to the pilot test of the questionnaire which also sought to strengthen the validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

#### **3.2.4. Suggestions for further research**

The present case study addressed the issue of learner autonomy from third year pupils’ and teachers’ perspectives at FatmaN’soumer Secondary School. It yielded insightful data that allowed the description of EFL classroom practices with respect to the promotion of learner autonomy. Further studies can be conducted to extend the scope in terms of pupils’ level and schools in order to reach more comprehensive results. Moreover, as most pupils attributed their demotivation to learn English to unsuccessful previous experiences, a similar study can be conducted at lower levels (middle schools) to shed light on the teachers’ current practices with regard to the promotion of LA.

#### **Conclusion**

The present chapter provided an account of the data collected through quantitative and qualitative approaches and the results of the data analysis. The roles played by both teachers

and pupils at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School with regard to the promotion of LA in the EFL classroom was spotlighted. To sum up, the investigation generated insightful information that displayed and unveiled teachers' perceptions of the facilitative role they were expected to play; and pupils' perceptions of their presumed active role in the learning process. The results revealed a conflicting reality with what was expected from the implementation of CBA. The results revealed a non-supportive learning environment that hampers the realization of LA.

## **General Conclusion**

English, a powerful tool, which attracts many individuals' interest, who are seeking to meet the requirements of modern society, remains a challenging goal in EFL contexts. It causes instructors to mobilize their will and efforts to enable learners acquire its fundamental prerequisites. The teacher is an essential agent in this process in that he is a facilitator, guide, adviser, counsellor and a partner. He strives to lead learners towards reaching high levels of English language proficiency by setting a suitable atmosphere that encourages learners to make the best use of their skills. Accordingly, learners are considered to be at the core of this bumpy process. LA enhances learners' achievements by prompting them to take part in their own leaning process. However, to what extent is this defensible and desirable goal achievable?

LA allocates learners the responsibility for constructing their knowledge and requires the teacher's supportive attitude in supervising and guiding them throughout this process.

The aim of the present work was to provide a description of learner autonomy at Fatma N'soumer Secondary School by highlighting to what extent pupils and teachers make the best advantage of personal understanding and investment in promoting this educational goal.

The present descriptive case study investigated pupils' perceptions of their own and their teacher's responsibility for their English language learning, their ability, willingness and motivation to be involved in this process. It also explored teachers' perceptions of LA and their practices to develop it.

Accordingly, the researcher employed mixed methods case study to investigate the research problem. A questionnaire was administered to third year pupils to examine their willingness, ability and motivation to embrace their responsibility for their learning. In order to overcome the shortcomings of the quantitative method it was supplemented by teachers' interviews that allowed a deeper understanding of the situation.

The analysis of the data revealed that pupils were unable and more importantly unwilling to assume responsibility for their EFL learning. They reported their over reliance on the teacher. On the one side, the teacher is considered the knowledge transmitter and classroom manager. On the other side, they wanted him to be their partner and guide. The questionnaire data analysis unveiled the reasons behind their over reliance. It seems that their inability was due to their unawareness of their potential to lead their learning and progress. To take initiatives and be active participants, they are required to make decisions in terms of choosing the content and materials, determining objectives, monitoring and evaluating their progress (Holec, 1981). However, our informants responded negatively to these expectations. They considered that all these aspects are the teacher's responsibility. An attitude that was corroborated by the teachers' responses in the interview which indicated that pupils are mainly passive in their learning and left the burden of this task to their teachers. Though they showed a tendency to dislike a teacher-controlled classroom, they seemed to expect the teacher to be responsible for all decision-making in class and for their English learning and progress. Their predilection towards the teacher's support and assistance was highly expressed. However, their lack of confidence and reservation in assuming responsibility may be due to their meta-cognitive immaturity. The findings revealed that they lack meta-cognitive qualities which could enforce their self-confidence and motivation; a fact that hampers their will to engage in pro-activity and autonomous learning. They adopted a more reactive attitude which caused their teachers to adopt spoon-feeding attitudes to avoid feeling remorse in terms of syllabus coverage and so affect pupils' performance in their baccalaureate exam; another reason behind their passivity and tendency to relying on the teacher. Their ability to manage their learning depends on how much they make use of strategies, but it was proved that they are unsuccessful and not committed to using them. Teachers' responses supported pupils' confessions. They agreed that pupils did not manage to accomplish their learning tasks; due

either to laziness or deficiency. Though they suggested a range of learning activities that could enhance pupils' autonomous learning, most pupils tended to omit doing them or rely on the more proficient ones to do the tasks for them. They expressed their preference to collaborative work, but it was their feeling under pressure and want for reward or avoiding punishment which drove them. Nevertheless, they complained about the demotivating classroom environment and old-fashioned teaching methodology which could be the major reason that impedes their willingness to accept the transfer of control; and thus not moving towards understanding their individual differences and developing meta-cognitive awareness. Accordingly, it was revealed that teachers remained caught up in their authoritarian and directive role instead of letting space to pupils to practice independently under his supervision and counselling. They confessed that they would be extremely relieved to let this control go. However, they felt confused and worried in terms of the mission they were entrusted with. Due to various constraints and despite personal investment, they could not drive pupils towards the appreciation of autonomous learning.

Finally, we can say that pupils' beliefs that English is only instrumental for getting high grades and passing exams successfully, or having more opportunities to get a better job in the future, can be altered if they experience the success they can achieve through their own efforts. Feeling confident, motivated and willing are paramount to enhance their commitment in learning and hence be ready to embrace their autonomy. However, we cannot expect overnight transformation. Teachers should be very patient and keep guiding, facilitating and scaffolding their pupils without complaining about their inefficiency. They can instead be creative, innovative, use methods that support autonomy and subscribe to traditional and teacher-centered approaches to learning. They should overcome all the constraints which, as they declared, hampered the progression of the learning process, and turned them into incentives that can raise pupils' extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and theirs as well. In this

sense, the EFL classroom will be a supportive environment for promoting learner autonomy and let its seeds grow inside each pupil and cultivate the fruits of their labor and assume lifelong language learning, as expected by the CBA.

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## Appendices

### Appendix (A): Pupils' Questionnaire

Dear pupils,

The questionnaire submitted to you aims at collecting information about Fatma N'soumer Secondary School pupils' degree of autonomy in English learning.

We would be very grateful if you could answer **HONESTLY** the following questions for the sake of our study. Read the questions and tick the appropriate answer.

#### Background information

- 1) Age: ..... Years.
- 2) Gender:            boy                                   girl
- 3) How long have you been studying English? ..... Years                                  class: .....
- 4) Studying English is: a)enjoyable                                   b) boring                                   c) interesting
- 5) How is your level in English?  
a) Very good                                   b)good                                   c)average                                   d) poor

#### Section one:

1) In your English class, decisions about classroom management like seating and class rules are made by:

- a) The teacher                                   b) pupils                                   c) both(teachers+pupils)

2) The best way to learn English successfully, is to do activities with the teacher in the classroom

- a) Agree                                   b) neutral                                   c) disagree

3) It is important for pupils to know the aims of the activities given in the English class:

- a) Always                                   b) often                                   c) sometimes                                   d) never

4) The lessons and activities that you should learn in your English class, should be selected by:

- a) The teacher                                   b) pupils   
c) both (teachers+pupils)                                   d) the ministry of education

5) I think that the teacher should explain every detail of the English lesson.

- a) Agree                                   b) neutral                                   c) disagree

6) When I make mistakes in the English class, I rely on ..... To correct me

a) The teacher       b) classmates       c) myself (looking in books, dictionaries...)

7) To progress in English, I do grammar exercises although they are not given as homework:

a) Always       b) often       c) sometimes       d) rarely       d) never

8) To learn English, I use other English books and resources than the formal textbook:

a) Always       b) often       c) sometimes       d) rarely       d) never

9) While learning English, I like activities in which I can learn on myself without the help of the teacher.

a) Agree                                       b) neutral                                       c) disagree

10) I like projects where I can work with my classmates.

a) Always       b) often       c) sometimes       d) rarely       d) never

11) Do you prepare your lessons before coming to your English class?

a) Always       b) often       c) sometimes       d) rarely       d) never

12) When the teacher asks questions in the English class, you .....

a) Catch chances to answer       b) wait for your classmates to answer

c) Wait for the teacher to answer

13) If you haven't learned anything in your English class, it is because:

a) You haven't worked hard                       b) lack of materials and aids

c) You need a lot of guidance by the teacher

14) I attend out-class activities to practice and learn English.

a) Always       b) often       c) sometimes       d) rarely       d) never

15) The knowledge presented by your English teacher is:

a) Sufficient       b) rich       c) needs to be enriched       d) not sufficient

16) The relationship between pupils and teachers should be that of:

a) Receiver and giver       b) partners                       c) explorer and guide

d) controlled and controller





## **Appendix (B): Teachers' Interview Guide**

**Question one:** CBA has reshaped the role of both teachers and learners during the teaching-learning process. So, what role does each of the teacher and learner assume within this approach?

**Question two:** How would you define learner autonomy?

**Question three:** according to you, what are the characteristics of an autonomous learner?

**Question four:** The role of the teacher in the classroom impacts directly the extent to which pupils may be autonomous. Do you give your pupils opportunity for making decisions?

**Question five:** what are the classroom activities that you think can contribute to the development of your pupils' independency? By the way, can you tell me if you use ICTs when teaching?

**Question six:** what are the constraints and challenges you face with respect to the promotion of learner autonomy in the classroom?

**Question seven:** do you think that EFL learners in your school are ready to handle their learning process and be autonomous?

**Question 8:** what are the solutions you can suggest to overcome these challenges?