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**Teacher Cognition and Learner Autonomy: An
Exploratory Study of Teachers' Understandings of
Learner Autonomy**

**The Case of EFL Teachers at the Department of English
Abderrahmane Mira, Bejaia University**

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Master 2 Degree in English in Applied
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Dedication

First of All I thank Allah who enables me to accomplish this study,

I dedicate this work to my parents, brothers and sisters.

I dedicate it to all my classmates from the ELT specialty.

I dedicate it to my friends especially my best friends, “Lydia Benmouhoub” and “Samia Benmedour” who stand by me in my hour of grief and give me belief, along the five years that we spent together at University.

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“Good, better, best, never never rest, till your good is better”

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Abstract

The main aim of the present study is to explore teachers' understandings of learner autonomy. It seeks to uncover how EFL teachers at the department of English, University Abderrahmane Mira, Bejaia, view the process of language learning, the learners' roles, their own roles and their practices to promote learner autonomy. For this aim, a questionnaire is designed and administered to the teachers at the department of English. In addition, an interview is conducted with some teachers for the sake of clarifying certain issues of some of the teachers' answers in the questionnaire. The analyses of data reveal some interesting findings pertaining to the teachers' cognition. First, concerning their understanding of language learning, it seems that the participants hold some discrete views which oppose the notion and principles of LA. In defining their roles in the EFL learning process, most of the respondents claim that the teacher should play the role of a facilitator in an autonomy-based classroom. With regards to the characteristics of autonomous learners, it seems that most of the teachers have a limited understanding of them. Last but not least, when it comes to teachers' practices to develop learner autonomy, the majority of them believe that asking students to do research is an effective way to help them to assume responsibility for their learning.

Key Words: Learner autonomy (LA), teachers' roles, learners' roles, teacher cognition,

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List of Abbreviations

BALL: Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

ESL: English as a Second Language

LA: Learner Autonomy

LMD: License Master Doctorate

SLD: Language Science and Didactics

Glossary of Terms

Learner Autonomy: *is the ability to take charge of one's own learning.* Holec, 1981-cited in Bonson, 2001), However, learner autonomy does not mean to learn alone without the help of the teacher because the latter has a crucial role in developing learner autonomy.

Teacher cognition: Teacher's beliefs, Knowledge and thought. (Borg,2003)

Teachers' understandings (interpretations) of learner autonomy: What learner autonomy means for teachers. Theachers understandings are based on their beliefs, knowledge and thought.

Teachers' roles: The different teaching techniques and practices in an autonomy based classroom.

Learner's roles: The ways in which autonomous learners behave inside and outside of the classroom.

General Introduction

Educational systems in all over the world are under pressure of preparing autonomous learners in order to be able to cope with the demands of the 21st century. Since 1970s so far, the domain of language teaching and learning has known great developments thanks to cognitive psychology, humanistic pedagogy, communicative approaches, and constructivism. These methods and approaches that have flourished with new perceptions of teachers and learners roles, emerged as a reaction to the traditional approaches that perceive learners as empty vessels to be filled with information (Harmr, 2001).

I. Statement of the Problem

The most prominent goal that researchers and educators aim to pursue is learner autonomy (Broady & Kenning, 1996; Benson, 1967; Benson, 2004; Allford & Pachler, 2007; Jiménez Raya & Lamb, 2008-cited in Han, 2014), the latter does not just lead to successful learning, but also it makes of learners critical members of the society in which they live. Learner autonomy is one of the most innovations that the new paradigm 'learner-centeredness' came with; this shift in focus from the teacher to learners calls for radical changes in both teacher's roles and learners' roles.

Despite the fact that teachers play an important role in developing learner autonomy, research focused more on some aspects like the reasons why we need to foster learner autonomy and its implication for teaching and learning rather than on teachers' understandings of the term, therefore, what learner autonomy means for teachers remains unstudied (Borg, 2012).

Given the importance that teachers' cognition has its influential impact on their behaviours and practices (Borg, 2000), it is necessary to gauge teachers' interpretations of learner autonomy.

In our context, the Algerian higher education has launched the License, Master and Doctorat (LMD) system in 2004. A well claimed objective of that system is fostering learner autonomy that has been a hot topic among researchers. We cannot discuss the promotion of learner autonomy, if teachers' understandings of the term are put aside since their understandings of what autonomy means affect their practices. Teachers have an impact on

learner autonomy; it may be positive in where the teacher practices and insights towards the term encourage learner autonomy, as it may be negative where learner autonomy is repressed. Given the fact that learner autonomy has not received much attention, as well as, to bridge the gap between what learner autonomy means in theory and how teachers understand it in practice, the crux of the problem of this study is to uncover how teachers interpret learner autonomy.

II. Aim of the Study

Teacher cognition has a great influence on teachers' practices and those practices, in turn, affect students' learning outcomes; therefore, our study seeks to explore teachers' interpretations of learner autonomy.

III. Research Questions

To reach the aim of our study we ask the following questions:

1. How do teachers of English at Bejaia University interpret language learning?
2. How do they interpret their roles?
3. How do they interpret learners' roles?
4. What do they do in order to support learner autonomy?

IV. Method

IV.1. Data Collection Instruments

In order to collect data required to answer our questions, a questionnaire is administered to EFL teachers at the department of English, university of Bejaia. In addition 7 teachers are chosen randomly to be interviewed so as to clarify some information that may not be uncovered through the questionnaire.

IV. 2. Research Participants

Our population consists of the EFL teachers at the Department of English; Bejaia University, their total number is 58. Our sample consists of 17 teachers of different teaching experiences, different certificates (Master, Magister, Doctorate), and different specialties (Didactics, Literature and Applied Linguistics), and different learning experiences (there are teachers who studied under the classical system and there are those who studied under the LMD framework. In order to give each member equal chances to be selected, as well as to reduce bias we chose a random sampling method.

V. Organization of the Work

Our study is made up of two chapters, the theoretical chapter and the practical one. The theoretical part involves two sections; the first one includes a discussion about learner autonomy, while the second one discusses teachers' interpretations. The second part deals with two sections the first one; describes the methodology used; unlike; the second one is devoted to the analyses and interpretation of data, as well as, research limitations and implications of the study.

Chapter One: Learner Autonomy and Teachers' Interpretations

Introduction

Language learning has witnessed a flood of researchers who interest on teachers' cognition because of the strong influence that the later has on teachers' behaviours and practices. Even though it has been just appeared recently, it has contributed a lot to our understandings of many aspects of teaching. Regarding the organization of this section, it is divided into two sub-sections, the first one, deals with learner autonomy and how it is conceptualized from different perspectives, its related terms, dimensions, teacher's roles and learners' roles in learner-centered classroom, as well as; it gives insight on literature related to how to foster learner autonomy. Section two; sheds light on teacher's interpretations, first it deals with some related terms, and then it discusses teachers' interpretations regarding learner autonomy in relation to their understandings of language learning, their roles, and learner roles.

Section one: Learner Autonomy

I. Defining Learner Autonomy

The concept of learner autonomy was introduced into education in the 1980s by one among the first of pioneers of the domain, 'Henry Holec', who defines it as '*the ability to take charge of one's own learning*' (Benson, 2001, p.59). Holec's definition implies that autonomous learners decide on everything that concerns their learning, they set their objectives, they determine the content to be learned and how to learn it i.e. they are responsible for selecting the appropriate techniques and methods to learn, even though the teacher can help learners to take this responsibility, but, the ultimate responsibility should be taken by the learners themselves. (Oxford, 1990), Holec (1980, as cited in Little, n.d) considers this ability as not inborn but as a one which must be acquired either by natural means or developed deliberately by a formal learning in an educational setting.

Since the emergence of the concept of learner autonomy, a significant number of researchers has attempted to define the latter, so, divergent definitions are found in the literature. Little, defines it as: "*... 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 (1990-cited in Benson, p. 49)

According to Benson, Little's definition gives insight to cognitive processes of learner autonomy; whereas, Holec does not take into account that point, even though; his definition do cover all aspects of learning which are carried out by learners. For that reason; he agrees with Little and points out that his definition adds a vital psychological aspect to the one's of Holec.

Dam, Erikson, Little, Miliander, and Trebbi (1990-cited in Alasmari, 2013, p. 2), argue that it is “... *a capacity and willingness to act independently and in cooperation with others, as a social, responsible person*” Dam et al, Dam emphasizes that learners will not develop their autonomy unless they are willing to take responsibility for their learning.

While Dam uses the terms willingness and capacity, Dickinson in 1994 uses the term ‘attitude’, stating that autonomy is:

“... *an attitude towards learning in which the learner is prepared to take; or does take, responsibility for his own learning*’ (ibid). He views learner autonomy as a situation in which the learner is totally responsible for the decisions concerned with his or her learning and the implementation of these decisions. He also used the terms ‘full autonomy’ and semi-autonomy : the first one used as synonymous to independent learning to describe the situation in which a learner learns without a direct help of the teacher. (Benson, p. 14). While the second one used to describe a stage, in which learners are prepared to be autonomous learners (Finch, n.d).

Learner autonomy also is associated with life-long learning. Wenden (1991-cited in Richards, 2006) views this concept as developing students’ life-long learning and their willingness to plan, control, and evaluate their own learning.

Benson defines the term under discussion as “*the capacity to take control of one’s own learning*” (Benson, 2001, p. 47). This capacity involves taking responsibility of three interdependent features: learning management, cognitive processes, and learning content. Learning management entails to take charge of planning, organizing, and evaluating one’s learning. Cognitive processes include being aware and reflect on one’s own learning, while; metacognitive knowledge entails deciding on the content of learning.

Benson and Voller (1997-cited in Nunan, 2003 adopt Holec’s 1981 definition of learner autonomy and point out that the letter used in at least five different ways: First, it is used for

situations in which learners rely totally about themselves in their study, second; it is applied to a case where learners acquire a set of skills to implement them in self-directed learning. Third, learner autonomy is used to describe a capacity that learners born with and that can be decreased and reduced by the educational settings in which learners learn. Forth, it is used for the exercise of learners' responsibility for their own learning. Fifth, learner autonomy is used for the right of learners to decide on the direction of their learning. (Nunan, 2003).

While Holec in his definition of learner autonomy in 1981 views it as a capacity that should be developed through education; Benson and Vollar (1997) assert that learner autonomy as an inborn capacity can be decreased by the educational institutions where learning take place.

Sinclair (2000-cited in Kojima, & Kojima, 2005), suggests 13 features of learner autonomy seem to have been realized and accepted by the language teaching profession. She includes:

1. Autonomy is a construct of capacity.
2. Autonomy involves a willingness on the part of the learner to take responsibility for their own learning
3. The capacity and willingness of learners to take such responsibility is not necessarily innate
4. Complete autonomy is an idealistic goal
5. There are degrees of autonomy
6. The degrees of autonomy are unstable and variable
7. Autonomy is not simply a matter of placing learners in situations where they have to be independent
8. Developing autonomy requires conscious awareness of the learning process – i.e. conscious reflection and decision-making
9. Promoting autonomy is not simply a matter of teaching strategies.
10. Autonomy can take place both inside and outside the classroom.
11. Autonomy has a social as well as an individual dimension.
12. The promotion of autonomy has a political as well as psychological dimension.
13. Autonomy is interpreted differently by different cultures.

There have been ongoing hot debates about what autonomy is, so, a number of misconceptions about the term were appeared, therefore, Little (1990- as it is cited in Benson, 2001) moves from what autonomy is, towards a step further, to what autonomy is not, he states that:

- Autonomy is not a synonym to self-instruction; in other words, autonomy is not limited to learning without a teacher.
- 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.
- On the other hand, autonomy is not something that teachers do to learners; that it is not another teaching method.
- Autonomy is not a single, easily described behavior.
- Autonomy is not a steady state achieved by learners. (Benson, 2001, p. 48).

Benson argues that discussing “what autonomy is not” is better than dealing with “what autonomy is”, because as much as other views appear as much as it becomes complex. Learner autonomy from Little’s interpretation (1990-cited in Benson) entails an involvement from the part of the learner and that the latter has voice on the content of learning, but this does not mean to be totally independent from the teacher or to have an absolute freedom on the learner’s what, how and why of his learning. Learner autonomy is neither a stable capacity, nor a way of teaching and learning that can be abandoned when it is judged negatively, in other words, learner autonomy does not have a precise end where learners stop after reaching it, but rather it is a set of capacities that can be developed gradually through practice.

A crucial point that Little (1990-cited in Benson, 2001) mentions here is that learner autonomy is not manifested through one single behavior. So, we cannot say that a particular learner is an autonomous one because he performed a certain learning strategy or because he usually participates in the classroom, because one behavior cannot tell us whether this learner is autonomous or not. In addition to this, the learner who displays a high degree of autonomy in one area may be non-autonomous in another. Snodin (1987-cited in Kadous, 2013) ascribes the difficulty of defining autonomy to the fact that it contains multiple other concepts.

Gardner and Miller (cited in Chiu, 2014) identify three reasons leading to the difficulty of defining learner autonomy: Firstly; because the term is defined by different researchers, secondly; because there are still debates regarding some aspects of learner autonomy; thirdly; because there is a misconception of that term with other related terms.

Even though learner autonomy is defined differently from different researchers, but there is a general agreement about its fundamental principles (Cotteral, 1995, 2000; Dickinson 1993, 1995; Little 2002, 2006; Field 2007-cited in Brillaro, 2011). Autonomous learners accept the responsibility for their learning: they take part in objective settings, they know their purposes behind learning, they plan practice opportunities, they implement appropriate learning strategies, and they review and assess their progress regularly. In our research we are not concerned with a total autonomy but with a partial autonomy which involves the teacher support to develop autonomy among learners, so the appealing definition that suits our study is the one offered by La Ganza (2008 cited in Brillaro, 2011 , P.)

“Learner autonomy is an achievement, attained interrelationally between the learner and the teacher”. Autonomy means to be aware of one’s self as a learner and this awareness is developed through social interaction and cooperation with others (teacher, peers), learner autonomy also involves knowing how to interact with all resources available for one’s learning including the teacher and who has important role to play in helping learner. Also the surrounding environment in which learners learn should contribute to develop learner autonomy.

II. Learner Autonomy Dimensions

Despite the fact that learner autonomy is viewed from different perspectives, but most of the views of that term agree on some aspects of responsibility, therefore; Benson take these differences to discuss for the first time in 1997 about what is called “ learner autonomy dimensions or versions” he was among the first researchers who discussed dimensions of autonomy (Benson, 2001).

Benson (as cited in Finch, n.d) divided autonomy into three dimensions: Technical, psychological and political dimension. Later on, Oxford (1990) added a fourth dimension, the three first dimensions correspond to three major approaches to knowledge: positivism (language as a direct representation of objective reality), constructivism (knowledge as the

construct of meaning), and critical theory (learning is a process of engagement with social context, which entails the possibility of political action and social change).

1. Technical autonomy: it means learning a language outside of the educational settings boundaries without the help of the teacher. This perspective of autonomy appeals especially when it comes to learner strategy training, its primary objective is enabling learners to manage their learning outside of the classroom by teaching them the needed skills to do so. Positivism is related with technical autonomy because generally it supports drill-and-practice approaches to language learning. Benson (cited in Chiu, 2005).

2. Psychological autonomy: A capacity that allows learners to be more responsible of their own learning. This dimension is allied with constructivists who stress the importance of individuals to be free to act think and make decisions.

3. Political autonomy: control over the processes and content of learning. It is based on the principle that one should author his or her own world without being subject to the will of others.

4. Sociocultural autonomy: Social interaction and participation plays a crucial role in boosting learner autonomy. (Oxford, 2003-cited in Borg, 2012).

III. Learner Autonomy Related Terms

Learner autonomy is sometimes confused with other concepts which have emerged recently with the growing interest of seeking ways that enable learners to learn on themselves. For this plea, it is worthwhile to discuss the following three terms which one may perceive as synonymous to learner autonomy.

III.1. Self-access: Dickinson in 1987 defines it as learning which makes use of materials that facilitate learning. (Han, 2014). This term is particularly a well-known one in higher education and adult learning, it refers to a form of language learning in which a learner uses materials independently from the teacher. Self-access learning may be a particular program of learning or may be a type of learning conducted to accomplish a teacher-led course. Self-access is in an increase development because of two reasons: The first one is the fact that relying on classroom alone is insufficient for attaining all learning goals; the second one, is

the need to offer ample resources for individuals to acquire knowledge relying on themselves. (Richards, & Smidt, 2002).

III.2. Self-directed learning: There is no one interpretation of what self-directed learning means, some researchers view it as synonymous to learning alone, whereas; others like Dickinson and Knowels (1975-cited in Benson, 2001) see that it can be there an aid from the teacher. Dickinson (1987, as cited in Han, 2014), points out that it is a learning in which a learner takes decisions regarding his/her learning i.e he sets goals, selects content, and makes choices on the time to learn, however; it is not necessarily for him or her to apply or implement these decisions that s/he has taken, besides, it can be there an intervention from the teacher.

Dickinson (1987-cited in *ibid*) distincts between autonomy and self-directed learning regarding the degree of independence from the help of others. According to him, in self-directed learning a learner can receive a help from the teacher, while; in autonomous learning he does not, he is totally responsible for his or her learning. In another hand, Holec (1981cited in Chiu, 2005) distinguished between autonomy which can be applied only to a person not a process and self-directed learning. The first term ‘autonomy’, is a capacity that learners possess to various degrees, while the second one ‘ self-directed learning is what learners can do more or less effectively according to the degree of this capacity; as a consequence autonomous learners do not necessarily imply self-directed learning because they may not utilize their capacity to take charge of their learning. Different degrees of self-direction may be resulted from either different degrees of autonomy or different degrees of exercise of autonomy.

Knowels (1975, as cited in Benson, 2001) describes self-directed learning as a situation in which a learner takes the initiatives in carrying out his or her learning, determining his or her needs and evaluate his or her learning outcomes with or without the help of the teacher. There are different degrees of self-directed learning depending on the learner’s attitude and ability to organize and manage his or learning.

III.3. Self-instruction: The central belief that underlines self-instruction learning is that learners learn more effectively if they can make choices about the kind of things they want to learn, the strategies they use, and the amount of time they can spend on a learning task. According to Little (1991 cited in Han, 2014) it refers to “*learning without a teacher*”. Whereas; it is defined by Dickinson as “*learning without a direct control of the teacher*” (Dickinson, 1987-cited in Han, 2014). Dickinson’s view does not exclude the intervention of the teacher, meanwhile; the teacher can intervene to help learners but in an indirect way.

Despite the fact that these three terms imply to different degrees on learning by relying on one’s self, but, they do not necessarily mean that a learner is autonomous. One can be involved in self-directed, self-access or self-instruction learning, however, may not be autonomous because autonomous learners know how to learn effectively.

IV. Shift in Focus from Teacher-centered to Learner-centered

In traditional approaches to teaching the teacher was described as: judge, leader, authority and even the doctor who must treat his or her learners’ ignorance (Oxford, 1990). The teacher decides on everything from the beginning of the lecture till the end. His crucial role is imparting as much as possible knowledge to learners whose only source of information is their teacher. The status of the teacher can be summarized as being the total authority in the class.

Recently, thanks to humanistic pedagogy, educational psychology, developmental learning, communicative approaches and constructivism, learners are considered as those humans who have their prior knowledge on which they can build on. They have their views of teaching, needs, goals, and wishes, moreover; they have their different styles and preferences (Brown, 2001). Both teachers and learners’ roles, have witnessed radical changes.

Learners are given the floor to express their voice, to ask, to negotiate and seek for the information relying on themselves, Whereas; the teacher’s task is to facilitate their sake towards learning the language. To put learners on the center of instruction does not mean that the teacher has a secondary role that we can put aside, however, the teacher has a challenging

role that the traditional teacher do not has to cope with which is guiding learners to construct their own knowledge and not simply give it to them. (Harmer, 2001).

IV.1. Teacher's Roles and Learners' Roles in an Autonomous Classroom

IV.1.1. Teacher's Roles: The crucial role that the teacher plays in developing learner autonomy cannot be ignored as Yan (2012, p. 559) says'' *without teachers' counsel and supervision, the whole process will result in low efficiency or even fall into disorder.*'' It is misunderstood that the teacher has no role in an autonomous learning classroom; however, the teacher has a vital role in developing learner autonomy which takes time patient and support. According to Voller (1997-cited in Benson, 2001) the teacher under the frame work of learner autonomy, has three roles: facilitator, counselor and resource.

Teacher as a facilitator: means as Harmer (2001, p. 56) says'' *to create conditions in which learners learn for themselves*''; the facilitative role of the teacher covers the other roles because all of them aim to make learning easier for learners and this is what to be a facilitator means.

Teacher as a counselor: The teacher offers advice to those who need it, he or she offers advice to help learners to cope with learning difficulties, besides, he or she makes his or her learners capable of choosing the best learning strategies that enable them to learn effectively.

Teacher' roles as a facilitator and counselor provide both technical support, as well as, social support. First, technical support: includes helping learners to plan and carry out their learning by setting objectives, selecting materials, evaluating their learning. Moreover, the teacher assists learners to acquire the aforementioned skills and knowledge needed to carry out their learning. Second, psycho- social support: it involves three features the first one, is to make the process of learning easier for students, this is achieved by adopting some personal qualities like being supportive, patient, tolerant, the second one is to have a capacity to motivate learners, the third feature is to arise learners' awareness about their learning.

Teacher as a resource: the teacher is ready to give information when it is needed. In addition to the previous roles listed above, Harmer (2001) adds the role of the teacher as a

“participant” drawing attention to the fact that when the teacher participates learners pay more attention adding that the teacher should be aware and not dominate the classroom.

IV.1.2. Learners’ roles: On the light of the previous definitions of learner autonomy and characteristics of autonomous learners we can denote the roles of learner in an autonomy-based classroom.

Autonomous learners are responsible for their learning, they do not wait the teacher to decide on their place but they do take part in making decisions concerning the what and the how of their learning. They know when to depend on the teacher and when to be independent from him, even when learners are unable to carry out their learning they are responsible by asking someone who can help them this is what is called by Chanock (2004-cited in Barillaro, 2011) “responsible dependence on the teacher”. Autonomous learners evaluate their learning and monitor their progress to identify their strength and weaknesses they do not look to the teacher as the only judge of their learning. In addition, they are active members in and out-of-the class, for instance; they seek to find ample ways to practice the language, they are not just sitting on their chairs waiting the teacher to cram knowledge on their heads but they construct their own knowledge, negotiate with the teacher and peers and give feedback to them, Besides, autonomous learners take the initiatives, they know what to do and when to interact because they are in a community in which all members even the teacher are participants in the learning process.

IV.2. Teacher Autonomy and Learner Autonomy

Teacher autonomy is a new concept related to learner autonomy, the former is defined by Aoky (2000-cited Chiu, 2005) as a capacity, freedom and responsibility to make decisions on their own teaching. The teacher knows how to direct his or her teaching without being directed by others. Benson makes it clear that teachers cannot foster learner autonomy if themselves lack it. According to Little cited in Zhuang, 2010). Teachers who aim to foster learner autonomy must start from themselves by reflecting on their own beliefs, practices, experiences and expectations of the teaching learning situations. Teachers who want to foster learner autonomy must reduce the obstacles that stand as troublesome between learners and autonomy. (ibid).

V. Fostering learner autonomy

Ryan (1991-cited in Kojima, 2005), states it clearly that teachers and educational institutions should foster learner autonomy through involving learners in practices that allow their autonomy to be developed. Researchers insist on the following practices and tasks that aim to develop learner autonomy.

- **Learner strategy training:** Learner strategy training helps learners to uncover learning strategies that best suit them so as to approach language learning tasks successfully. (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989-cited in Hadi, 2012). Many researchers advocate the importance of learner strategy training in developing LA, Yan (1998-cited in Han, 2014) makes it crystal clear that the teacher should be responsible in training learners about learning strategies. Likewise, Xu & Xu (2004-cite in Han, 2014), states that the teacher role in developing learner autonomy is to help learners to think about learning strategies and put them into practice. In addition to his claim about the importance of learning strategies, Nunan (2003) says that teachers should give learners opportunities to use their own learning strategies and avoid imposing on them strategies that themselves prefer.
- **Giving learners opportunities to evaluate their own work:** Self-evaluation and self-assessment are crucial part of learner autonomy that should be developed among learners, because by evaluating themselves they step by step get rid of waiting just the mark of the exam and develop a sense of lifelong learning. (Lo, 2010-cited in Rungwaraphong, 2012).
- **Providing a choice of activities for students:** The concept of choice is another critical component of learner autonomy, giving learners a voice in deciding what to learn gradually lead them to become more autonomous. For instance if a learning task includes a reading passage and a listening one; learners might be asked to decide which one they would do first. (Nunan, 2003). To develop learner autonomy, among the teacher's roles is to be a facilitator which means to support learners 'making decisions.
- **Helping learners to build the belief and confidence in autonomous learning :** When learners have a readiness to learner under autonomy framework they will accept the

responsibility of their learning (Cotteral, 1995), therefore, to foster learner autonomy the teacher have to build the belief and confidence in autonomous learning among learners (Xu & Xu, 2004- cited in Han, 2014).

- Encouraging out-of-class tasks which require learners to use the internet: The Internet today becomes an interesting tool to foster learner autonomy, it encourages learner initiated interaction and shift of authority from teacher to learners. (Gitsaky & Tylor, 2001-cited in Kuo, 2008).
- Engaging learners in co-operative group work activities: Pair and group work help to develop learner autonomy, when learners are engaged in a pair or group activity they rely on their peers or on themselves, when confronting a given learning tasks, in that way they become gradually independent from the teacher (Harmer, 2001).

Section Two: Teachers' Interpretations

I.1. An Overview on Teacher Cognition

Teacher cognition (beliefs, knowledge and thought); has witnessed a significant interest in research agenda as it has an impact on teachers' practices. Despite the fact that second language teacher cognition started in 1990s (Jonson, 2006, & Freeman, 1989-cited in Bamanger & Gshan, 2014), the latter has made the most prominent contributions to our understanding of teaching and teachers. Even though the prominent importance it has received, there are multiple names and bewilderment labels given to the notion of 'teacher cognition'. Researchers, in one hand used different terms to describe the same concepts, and in another hand, they used similar terms to describe different concepts (Clandinin and Connelly, 1987- cited in Borg, 2003). For instance; while some researchers used some notions like culture of teaching, pedagogical reasoning, personal theories and many other terms Wood, in 1996 proposed the three related terms: beliefs, assumptions and knowledge (BAK).

The following table is an obvious picture of how researchers interpret the notion of teacher cognition in relation to teachers' teaching (ibid).

Table1: Terms in language teacher cognition research

Source	Term	Description
Borg (1998c)	Personal pedagogical systems	Stores of beliefs, knowledge, theories, assumptions and attitudes which play a significant role in shaping teachers' instructional decisions.
Breen <i>et al.</i> (2001)	Pedagogic principles	Shaped and generated by underlying and more abstract beliefs, these service to mediate between beliefs and on-going decision-making in particular instructional context.
Burns (1996)	Theories for practice	The thinking and beliefs which are brought to bear on classroom processes.
Crookes & Arakaki (1999)	Routines	Habitualized patterns of thought and action which remove doubts about what to do next, reduce complexity, and increase predictability.
Freeman (1993)	Conceptions of practice	A set of ideas and actions teachers use to organize what they know and to map out what is possible; they guide individual action but are also affected by new situations.
Golombek (1998)	Personal practical knowledge	A moral, affective, and aesthetic way of knowing knowledge life's educational situations.
	Image	A personal meta-level, organizing concept in personal practical knowledge in that it embodies a person's experience; finds expression in practice; and is the perspective from which new experience is taken.
Johnson (1992b)	Theoretical beliefs	The philosophical principles, or belief systems, that guide teachers' expectations about student behavior and the decisions they make.
Johnson (1994)	Images	General metaphors for thinking about teaching that not only represent beliefs about teaching but also act as models of action.
Meijer <i>et al.</i> (1999)	Practical knowledge	The knowledge teachers themselves generate as a result of their experiences as teachers and their reflections on these experiences.
Richards (1996)	Maxims	Personal working principles which reflect teachers' individual philosophies of teaching.
Richards <i>et al.</i> (1992)	Richards <i>et al.</i> (1992) Culture of teaching	The nature of teachers' knowledge and beliefs systems, their views of good teaching, and their views of the systems in which they work and their role within them.
Richards <i>et al.</i> (1998)	Pedagogical reasoning	The process of transforming the subject matter into learnable material.
Sendan & Roberts (1998)	Personal theories	An underlying system of constructs that student teachers draw upon in thinking about, evaluating, classifying, and guiding pedagogic practice.
Woods (1996)	BAK	A construct analogous to the notion of schema, but emphasizing the notion that beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge are included.

Adopted from Borg, 2003, p. 87

It is obvious from the table that researchers used different labels to the term cognition. Similarly; when we go to research done on learner autonomy and the way that teachers interpret it, we find that researchers use the term beliefs interchangeably with terms like views, perspectives, interpretations and understandings. Regarding teacher cognition, the term which appeals to our investigation is the one which is proposed by “Wood” in 1996 who used the term “ BAK “that stands for: beliefs, assumptions and knowledge.

II. Teacher Cognition’s Related Terms

I.2.1 Beliefs

Beliefs are constructed through experience, therefore, beliefs that teachers hold on teaching and learning are established when they were learners. Most researchers agree on the fact that beliefs are resistant to change. Among the salient definitions given to beliefs is the one suggested by Pajars (1992-cited in Kuo, 2008) who proposed a general definition of the term, saying that beliefs are : *‘attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, implicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, actions strategies, rule of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertoire of understandings and social strategy’* . He adds that beliefs affect perceptions and interpretations of new knowledge.

According to Fishbein and Ajzee, (1995 cited in Cavanoz, 2006), a belief can be defined as *‘representation of the information someone holds about an object, or a person’ understanding of himself and his environment*. It means that a belief is the way that someone interprets his role and the roles of others. When it comes to agreement, teachers have different beliefs that are different in terms of validity and appropriateness.

I.2.2 Assumptions

Assumptions are facts that we consider as true even that may not be true for the purpose of carrying out an activity. Before planning the lesson the teacher first take some assumptions about: language, language learning and teaching; there are a set of assumptions regarding language learning, the teacher may have the assumption that learning occurs explicitly or implicitly, other assumptions: whether language should be taught differently to different individuals, whether it is better to involve learners in decisions about what and how to learn. (Woods, 1996)

I.2.3. Knowledge

Knowledge is seen by Kagan (cited in Pajares, 1992) as beliefs which some one is affirmed about their truth. Knowledge is considered as things that we know, or in other words facts that are conventionally accepted. Knowledge can be evaluated and criticized and based on reason and evidence. Shavelson & Stern (cited in Woods, 1996) point out that teachers will rely on their beliefs when there is lack of the needed information.

I.2.4. Beliefs and Knowledge

A hot debate has occurred about what is meant by beliefs and what is the difference between beliefs and knowledge, as well as which one of them has more influence on our behaviours. First, regarding beliefs and knowledge distinction, there are researchers who distinguish between beliefs and knowledge, among them we have Nisbett and Ross (1980-cited in Pajares, 1992) who distinguishes between generic knowledge and beliefs; the first one is composed of cognitive structures while the second one consist of elements. Whereas, there are those who do not distinguish between the two concepts, for instance; Pajares (1992), suggests that beliefs are types of knowledge and the latter is a component of beliefs. What distinguishes each term from one another is that beliefs based on evaluation and judgment, like; children learn faster than adults, while; when it comes to knowledge, the latter is based on objective facts. However, when it comes to distinguish between knowledge and beliefs researchers fail to do so.

In 1987 Clandinin and Connelly tried to study the term personal knowledge construct; its meanings and origins they found other confused and related terms including: teacher teaching criteria, principles of practice, personal construct of theories, epistemologies, beliefs, perspectives teachers' conceptions, personal knowledge, and practical knowledge. (Pajares, 1992). According to Woods, (1996) distinguishing between beliefs and knowledge is difficult because teachers interpretations of something may based on their knowledge as well as it may base on their beliefs. We do not know on which bases the teachers have interpreted something.

Coming back to which one of the terms that has more impact on our behaviors, we have two opposing views, some researchers agree on the great influence that beliefs have on behaviors more than knowledge (Nespor, 1987; Ernest 1989-cited in Pajares, 1992) Ernest in 1987 conducted a study on two teachers , despite the fact that they have the same knowledge , they demonstrate different ways of teaching, that is why he comes to the conclusion that beliefs strongly affect behaviours.

In contrast; there are others who perceive knowledge as the one which more indicates teachers' behaviors than beliefs. As they state, knowledge is a result of a new experience which is interpreted and integrated into existing schemata, where beliefs are used when people find themselves in an aura where they have to decide whether something is right or wrong. Knowledge makes a sense of experience and the latter filter beliefs, thus, it is knowledge which determine teachers' behavior not belief. To make an end to this debate whether knowledge has more effect on our behaviors or the contrary, Pintrich in 1990 worked on the terms and found that that both beliefs and knowledge influence our understandings or interpretations. (ibid)

II. Teachers and Learners' Interpretations of Language Learning

Research have shown a great interest on teachers and learners' beliefs, it has been found that teachers and learners come to classroom with preconceptions about language and language learning and the latter affect their expectations and actions. There are various studies done on ESL and EFL learners' beliefs, to cite only few among the EFL studies we have (Peacock, 1999; Sakui and Gaies, 1999; Truitt, 1985; Wan and Johnson, 1995; Yang, 1999-cited in Vibulfol, 2004). These studies and others cover several issues, beliefs about language learning, beliefs and other factors which lead to successful learning like learner autonomy and learning strategies; furthermore, there are researchers who carried out research to examine the correlation between learners and teachers beliefs.

Among the first researchers who have advocated beliefs is "Horwitz" who has used the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALL); her instrument become the most tool which used widely to uncover learners and teachers' beliefs.(ibid). Horwitz (1987cited in Cotteral, 1995) points out clearly that there are beliefs that learners hold and which may affect negatively on their learning, for instance, learners who hold beliefs that making errors in their second language (L2) production will impede their language learning progress may be reluctant to participate in fluency-focused activities, thus, they will not improve their fluency. Similarly, a belief of the existence of a special ability to learn a foreign language may impede learners who experienced failure in their learning, because they may think that they do not have this aptitude which permits them to learn a foreign language. In 1999 "Mori", conducted a study which confirms Horwitz 'assumption, the study comes to the conclusion that learners who had a belief that foreign language is not a fixed aptitude performed better than those who held a belief which contrast with the first one. (Vibulfol, 2004).

Both Horwitz in 1978 and Wenden in 1986-1987 (cited in Ellis, 2008) in their study identified beliefs about the need to study grammar among learners, this dominant belief also identified by Schulz in 2001 (ibid), who found that Columbian learners of foreign languages in the US emphasized on learning explicitly a great number of grammar rules.

Altan (2006) adopted Horwitz's (BALLI) to investigate foreign language-major university students' beliefs about language learning. The results showed that there are many discrete beliefs held by the participants like 'some people were born with a specific ability to learn the language' 'it is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language'. These beliefs lead

learners to approach a learning task differently and to demonstrate different learning strategies. As it is cited above there are researchers who explored learners' beliefs in relation to autonomy and language learning strategies. For instant; "Abraham" and "Vann", in 1987 examined the relationship between beliefs and strategy use, the participants were two learners one of them has a belief that language learning has flexible and a variety of learning strategies, in contrary, the other one has a limited view towards learning strategies, the result showed that the first one used a variety of strategies which were successful most of the time ,however; the second one used a limited set of strategies which were successful just in only some situations. (Vibulfol, 2004)

Cotteral (1995) studied the correlation between learners perceptions and their readiness to be autonomous she found that learners who perceive their teachers as an authority figure were not ready to be autonomous, furthermore, they make it difficult for the teacher to act as a manager. In the same stream of idea, Holec in 1987 proposed that learners who are called autonomous hold beliefs that themselves are the managers of their learning, thus, they are prepared to take charge of their learning. Because learners' interpretations of language learning indicate at a great extent their behaviours and achievements; teachers should be aware of learners' beliefs by fostering learners facilitative beliefs which contribute to their success and refining those which debilitate learners' learning. (cited in, Vibulfol, 2004).

III. Teachers' Interpretations of Language Teaching and Learning

Teachers hold different interpretations of the nature of language learning and how language can be taught, Language learning can be interpreted as a matter of acquiring vocabulary and grammar in that case the teacher will focus on more activities aiming to master linguistic items rather than providing tasks entailing students to produce their own language (Altan, 2006), however, language is not a matter of learning the structure because learners should develop a fluent accent and use it appropriately in a particular context, also another important aspect is the cultural one learners should adopt to new social and cultural behavior. (Brown, 2006). Peacock (2001-cited in Vibulfol, 2004) investigated EFL students and pre-service teachers' beliefs in Hong Kong, he found a significant relationship between English proficiency and the belief about the importance of grammar, the students who

disagree that learning a language is almost mastering its grammar rules were more proficient than those who believe on the great importance of grammar.

Regarding the way in which language should be taught, Woods (1996) examined the role of BAK in teacher's interpretations of the classroom events, curriculum and learning; the participants were two teachers who were teaching the same curriculum but different classes of students. One of them view that learning starts with an explicit understanding of the information and then to be practiced in order to be applied in other context. In contrast, the other one views learning as a process that occurs through doing, while, information is not necessary to be explained explicitly. The study revealed obviously the great extent to which teachers' interpretations of language learning echo with their practices.

It is very important to gouge teachers views of learner autonomy since there are some views which contradict with the concept of learner autonomy "*girls are better at languages than boys*", "*you learn a language by learning its grammar*" with these views in mind "*there is no real progress towards learner autonomy*" (Toogood and Barfield, 2000, P.54); Furthermore, they add that these beliefs influence on learners' reflection and metacognition. According to Harmer (2001) it would be better for both students and teachers to be optimistic about all of the people of the class. The belief that some people have an aptitude to learn the language better than the others may lead teachers to treat learners who have fewer scores in different ways. Furthermore, it has been suggested that students who score badly will be demotivated and may fail in their language learning as the test predicted.

III. Teachers' Interpretations of Learners Roles and Their Own Roles

There are a number of studies that investigated teachers' beliefs regarding some aspects related to decision making, learners and teachers roles.

To begin with, Chan (2003- cited in Albusaidi and Alasmay, 2014) conducted a large scale mixed-method study which investigated 41 English teachers' perspectives of their roles and responsibilities about leaner autonomy and their assessment of their learners' ability to undertake decisions about learning in an institute in Hong Kong. The study concluded that the teachers thought themselves to be responsible for the methodological decisions (setting objectives and designing assessments) and less responsible about both the students' engagement in activities and their progress in learning English out of class. Al shaqsi in 2009 carried out a study at General Education schools in Oman on teachers' beliefs to figure out

learner autonomy through questionnaire, the result revealed clearly teachers' positivity towards learner autonomy.

Kavanoz (2006) studied the roles of teachers in creating learner-centeredness, the teachers in private schools view their roles as facilitators, guides and leaders they believed that they have to help learners to learn, since learning is a difficult process their role is to make it easy for them to learn, whereas, the ones who teach in public schools interpret their roles primarily as content deliverers who present the topics in addition to facilitators and guides. Sanprasert (2010), and Wei (2009) studied learners and teachers beliefs regarding learner autonomy, the result indicated that there was a mismatch between students and teachers' beliefs, while learners expected their teachers to teach them how to learn autonomously, teachers did not do so, this led learners to be anxious and fed up. (cited in Rungwaraphong, 2012, p. 21).

Through using open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interview, Duong (2014) investigated Thai EFL teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy. Regarding teachers' roles in fostering learner autonomy, the majority of the participants identify three roles to the teacher: facilitator, counselor and a resource. In terms of characteristics of autonomous learners, the EFL teachers perceive autonomous learners as those who set objectives and try to attain them, assess themselves and monitor their progress, seek opportunities to practice English inside and outside of the classroom, confident and ask questions when they confront problems.

In terms of their practices to develop learner autonomy, most of the respondents who advocated the promotion of learner autonomy give assignments to students, ask them to use different resources, require them to reflect and evaluate their progress and engage them in decision making concerning topics, materials and learning strategies. Balçıkanlı (2010) in her examination of students teachers attitudes towards learner autonomy, reports that in order to foster learner autonomy students teachers at Gazi University use portfolio assessment, outside tasks and journals.

Albusaidi and Al-Maamari (2014) explored the teachers' understandings of learner autonomy at the Language Centre at Sultan Qaboos University. The teachers' interpretations of the term grouped into three categories, one group of teachers understand LA in relation to methodology, assessment and materials, the second group interpret it in terms of control, capacity and freedom, whereas, the third group views it on emphasizing on some qualities which are in opposition with LA.

Conclusion

Learner autonomy is a multidimensional concept, therefore, it is perceived differently from different researchers. In addition; despite the fact that they defined the term differently most of the researchers believe that learner autonomy is associated with effective learning. Many of them consider learner autonomy, which today puts forward a new challenge to teachers of English, as the most goal that has to be reached. Teachers have a great role regarding learner autonomy. As they may create conditions in which they will develop this capacity among learners, if they perceive themselves as facilitators, or lead to repress this capacity that really need to be enlightened if they view themselves as imparters of knowledge. It is very important for teachers to understand the principles of learner autonomy in order to apply them in their teaching.

Chapter II: Research Methodology and Interpretation of the Results

Introduction

As it is stated in the previous chapter the aim of the study is to investigate EFL teachers' interpretations of learner autonomy in relation to their understandings of language learning, their roles, learners' roles and what they do in order to foster learner autonomy. Since we deal with abstract terms the appropriate design to our study is a mixed method one. i.e., it is both a qualitative and a quantitative study. So in order to attain our aim, we used questionnaire and interview to gather relevant data. Regarding the organization of this chapter, it is divided on two sections; the first one describes the methodology used: including the population and the sample, as well as data collection instruments, in which it gives a detailed description of the questionnaire and the interview. The second section sheds light first on the analyses on the results of the research tools, it starts first from the questionnaire, then the interview; after that it interprets the results; likewise, it starts from the questionnaire, then the interview.

Section One: Describing the Methodology

I.1 Population and Sample

Our population is the English foreign language teachers at the Department of English at Bejaia University their total number is 58. The sample consists of 17 teachers of different teaching experience, different certificates (Master, Magister, Doctorate), and different specialties (Didactics, Literature and Applied Linguistics), and different learning experiences (there are teachers who studied under the classical system and there are those who studied under the LMD framework).

II.1. Data Collection Instruments

In order to collect data required to answer our questions, a questionnaire was administered to EFL teachers at the Department of English of the University of Bejaia. Furthermore, seven teachers were chosen randomly to be interviewed so as to clarify some information that may be not uncovered through the questionnaire.

II.1. The Questionnaire

II. 1. 1. Aim of the questionnaire .Our questionnaire is divided into two sections: section one aims to gather data about teachers' views in relation to language learning, their beliefs and knowledge regarding their role and learners roles under the autonomy framework. In addition, it seeks to reveal what teachers do in order to foster learner autonomy. In that case; the questionnaire gives some items and asks the respondents to put a cross on the items that they adopt in their classes in order to foster learner autonomy. Whereas, section two aims to uncover the participants understandings or their interpretations of the following terms which are prominent concepts regarding learner autonomy, these terms are: facilitator, resource (teacher roles), assuming responsibility (learners' role).

II.1.2. Description of the questionnaire. The questionnaire is a likert scale includes five points ranged from strong agreement to strong disagreement. It is divided into two sections, section one involves a table that consists of 11 statements. Respondents are asked to put a cross to express their degree of agreement. We have 11 statements ranked from statement 1 to statement 11. Statements from 1 to 8 are ranged randomly, there are statements concerning teachers interpretations of language learning (statements 1, 3, 6), and there are others related to teachers' interpretations of learner autonomy (statements 2,4,5,7), these statements, as it is obvious, are arranged randomly in order to get objective answers from the respondents. Statement 1, asks whether language is better learned explicitly. Statement 2, asks: whether involving learners in what to learn increases their autonomy. Statement 3, asks if language learning is merely a matter of mastering its vocabulary words and grammar rules. Statement 4, inquires whether learners can develop their autonomy without the help of the teacher.

Statement 5, asks whether involving learners in what to learn increase their motivation. Statement 6 asks whether some people were born with a specific ability to learn the language. Statement 7, inquires whether the teacher has an important role in developing learner autonomy. Statement 8, inquires whether teachers should change their traditional ways of teaching and adopt new ones that make learners active participants. Statement 9 involves participates to choose one of 3 options, it asks whether learner autonomy is mostly based on

teacher roles, learners readiness or materials available. Statement 10 includes other 7 items they refer to some tasks in which autonomous learners are involved in. The main statement asks respondents to express their degree of agreement towards these tasks that autonomous learners are involved in. Statement 11, includes other 8 sub-statements that refer to a set of strategies and methods teachers adopt in order to foster learner autonomy. So, the respondent's task is to put a cross on the strategies and methods they use in order to encourage learner autonomy and express their degree of agreement. Section two; is a table, it consists of three statements, the respondents are asked to describe them according to their understanding. These statements are: teacher as a facilitator, teacher as a resource, learner assuming responsibility of his/her learning.

II.2. The Interview

II.2.1. Aim of the interview: The interview aims to clarify the questionnaire data which focus on teachers' interpretations of language learning their roles learners role as well as what they do in order to foster learner autonomy.

II.2.2. Description of the interview Process: The interview is done with 7 teachers each one individually, it consists of 7 questions, the first two questions related to language learning, one of them asks whether language learning is merely a matter of mastering its vocabulary words and grammar rules. The second one asks whether some people were born with a specific ability to learn a foreign language. Here the interviewees are asked to express to what extent they are agree or disagree and to explain their points of view.

The third question asks what are the roles that the teacher adopts in an autonomous classroom. The fourth question asks teachers to determine what are the characteristics and roles of autonomous learners. The fifth, six and the seventh questions are related to fostering learner autonomy, the fifth question requires the interviewees to explain how does the involvement of learners in taking decisions about what to learn increases their autonomy. The sixth one asks interviewees to define learner strategy training and how do they train learners about learning strategies, if they do so. The seventh question asks them about their practices to foster learner autonomy.

Section Two: Analyses and Interpretation of the results

I. Analyses of the Results

Before starting to analyze our research tools' results it is very important to mention that our analysis of the interview and the open-ended questions in the questionnaire, we based on frequencies.

I.1. The Questionnaire

I.1.1 Section One

Statement: 01: Language is better learned explicitly.

Table 02: Teachers' views of the explicit way of language learning

Option	Number	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	5,8%
Disagree	5	29,41%
Unsure	2	11,56%
Agree	8	47,05%
Strongly Agree	1	5,8%

As it is obvious from the table above, more than half of the respondents support the idea that it is better to learn language explicitly; 47, 05% of them agree on the statement, while 1 of them which makes 5,8% of the total number expresses his strong agreement. In contrast, 6 of the participants disagree with the statement expressed above; 29, 41% of them disagree, whereas, a proportion of 5,8% strongly disagrees with the explicit way of learning a language. However 11, 56% claim that they are unsure whether it is better to learn the language explicitly.

Statement 2: Involving learners in what to learn increases their autonomy

Table 03: Teachers' views about the ability of involving learners in content decision making in increasing learner autonomy

Option	Number	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	5,8
Disagree		
Unsure	1	5,8
Agree	5	29,40
Strongly Agree	10	58,82

The table indicates that the large proportion of the participants express their strong agreement with engaging learners in decisions about what to learn to increase their autonomy. A percentage estimated of 58, 82% strongly agree. Similarly, 29, 40% of them agree with the statement. However, just 1 of them strongly disagrees and another one is unsure.

Statement 3: Language learning is merely a matter of mastering its vocabulary words and grammar rules.

Table 04: Teacher's views of the importance of grammar and vocabulary in language learning

Option	Number	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	5	29, 10
Disagree	7	41,18
Unsure	0	0%
Agree	4	23,53
Strongly Agree	1	5,8

There are 12 of the participants who are against the statement that language learning is almost a matter of learning grammar and vocabulary; 7 of them (41, 18%) disagree, while, 5 of them (29, 10%) strongly disagree. Unlike the first view, 5 of the participants are not against the aforementioned statement, among them we have 23, 53% of the total number of the participants who agree while one of them strongly agrees.

Statement 4: Learners can develop their autonomy without the help of the teacher

Table 05: Teachers' views towards the ability of learners to develop their autonomy without the help of the teacher

Option	Number	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	2	11,56%
Disagree	4	23,53%
Unsure	4	23,53%
Agree	6	35,29%
Strongly Agree		

Almost 35% of the participants view that learners can develop their autonomy without the help of the teacher, other respondents do not share this view; 23, 53% of them disagree whereas 11, 56% of them strongly disagree. In addition to these opposing views the other 4 respondents are unsure about the ability of learners to develop their autonomy without teacher's assistance, whereas, there is one participant who does not answer that question.

Statement 5: Involving learners about what to learn increase their motivation.

Table 06: Teachers' views about involving learners in content decisions and increasing their motivation

Option	Number	Percentage
Strongly Disagree		
Disagree	1	5,8
Unsure	1	5,8
Agree	8	47,06%
Strongly Agree	7	41,18

All the participants (more than 88%) excepting two support the view that engaging learners in what to learn fosters their motivation. Whereas, only two of them do not express agreement, one disagrees while the other one is unsure.

Statement 6: Some people were born with specific ability to learn a foreign language.

Table 07: Teachers' views about the existence of an aptitude to learn a foreign language

Option	Number	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	2	11,76%
Disagree	2	11,76%
Unsure	3	17,65%
Agree	8	47,06%
Strongly Agree	2	11,76%

As it is showed from the table, 10 of the participants view that some people have an aptitude to learn a foreign language. 8 of them agree, while 2 of them strongly agree. As opposed to the first opinion, 4 of the respondents are against this view, 2 of them disagree; whereas the two others strongly disagree. However, the three remaining participants express their uncertainty towards the statement.

Statement 7: The teacher has an important role in developing learner autonomy

Table 08: Teachers' views about the important role that they play in developing learner autonomy

Option	Number	Percentage
Strongly Disagree		
Disagree		
Unsure		
Agree	8	47,06
Strongly Agree	9	52,94

All the participants agree with the statement cited above in the aforementioned table, 8 (47, 06%) of them agree, while 9 (52, 94%) strongly agree. Our result regarding that statement is similar to the one concluded by Borg (2012) when all the participants agreed that the teacher has important role in developing learner autonomy.

Statement 8: Teachers should change their traditional ways of teaching and adopt new ones that make learners active participants.

Table 09: Teacher's views about adopting new approaches of teaching and getting rid of the traditional ones

Option	Number	Percentage
Strongly Disagree		
Disagree		
Unsure		
Agree	5	29,40
Strongly Agree	12	70,60

All the teachers agree that they have an important role in developing learner autonomy. All of them agree that they should change their traditional ways of teaching and adopt new ones that make learners active participants. While, 5 (29, 40%) of them agree with the statement, 12 of the participants (70, 60%) strongly agree.

Statement 09: Promoting learner autonomy is mostly based on:

(In the following tables, N stands for numbers, P, stands for percentage)

Table 10: Teachers' views on which factor learner autonomy based on

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Unsure		Agree		Strongly agree	
	N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P
a- teacher roles							3	17,65%	2	11,75%
b- Learners readiness							5	35,29%	3	11,76%
c- materials available							1	5,8		

While more than 17% of the respondents agree with Dam (2003-cited in Borg, 2012) that learner autonomy is mostly based on teacher roles, 47, 05% of them claim that it is learners readiness which predicts developing learner autonomy; 35, 29% agree, while 11, 76% of them strongly agree. In addition, there are 3 respondents who choose more than one option. The

first one strongly agrees, the second views that it based on learners readiness and materials without mentioning his degree of agreement. While the third one puts a cross on the three choices also without expressing his degree of agreement.

Statement 10: In an autonomous classroom learners are involved in the following tasks:

Table 11: Teachers' views of autonomous learners roles

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Unsure		Agree		Strongly agree	
	N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P
a. Setting Objectives of the course			4	23,30%			8	47,06%	2	11,75%
b. Determining course content			6	35,29%			6	35,29%	2	11,76%
c. Selecting materials			3	17,56%	2	11,75%	7	41,18%	1	5,8%
d. Knowing their objectives behind learning					3	17,65%	8	47,06%	3	17,56%
e. Seeking opportunities to practice the English language							6	35,29%	7	41,18%
f. Implementing the appropriate learning strategies			2	11,75%	3	17,65%	3	17,65%	6	35,29%
g. Reviewing and assess their progress regularly							6	35,29%	7	41,18%

More than 58% of the teachers support the statement 'a' which says that in autonomous classroom learners are involved in setting the objectives of the course, whereas, 23, 30% do not agree. In regards to determining course content, the number of participants who disagree and agree is equal. The table shows 35, 29% with exception of those 2 who strongly agree. When it comes to selecting materials, 41, 18% of the respondents agree that learners should be involved in choosing materials, unlike, only one of them strongly agrees.

In contrary, 17, 56% of the participants which make 3 out of the total number disagree. However 11, 75% of them are unsure; they don't have a clear answer. Regarding, the statement 'd', 47, 06% agree that in autonomous classrooms, learners know their objectives behind learning, similarly, 17, 56% of them agree. An equal percentage of participants of those who agree are unsure. When it comes to statement 'e' which enquires whether learners are engaged in seeking opportunities to practice the English language and statement 'g' which asks whether learners are involved in reviewing and assess their progress regularly, it is surprising that they have the same results, 35, 29% of the respondents agree on both statements, similarly 41, 18% of them show strong positive view regarding the two statements.

Regarding implementing the appropriate learning strategies, more than half of the participants claim that in autonomous classrooms learners implement the appropriate learning strategies 35, 29% of the respondents strongly agree, likewise, 17, 65% agree ,however, just 11,75% disagree, while; 17, 65% are unsure.

Statement 11: As a teacher at university in order to foster learner autonomy you

Table 12: what teachers do in order to foster learner autonomy?

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Unsure		Agree		Strongly agree	
	N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P
a. Train learners about learning strategies.					2	11,75%	7	41,18%	6	35,29%
b. Give learners opportunities to evaluate their own work.							7	41,18%	7	41,18%
c. Provide a choice of activities for students					1	5,8%	9	51,41	3	17,56%
d. Help students to build the belief and confidence in autonomous learning							4	23,53	10	58,82
e. Encourage out-of class learning which require learners to use the internet							8	47,06	6	35,29%
f. Engage learners in co-operative group work activities.			1	5,8%	1	5,8%	3	17,56	9	51,41
g. Offering learners opportunities to decide about the time to finish assignments.		11,76 %		23,41 %		11,76%		23,41%		5,8%
h. Give learners opportunities to use their own learning strategies.							9	51,94%	5	29,41%

As it is obvious from the table; (there are just 13 who answered appropriately the above table)

The majority of the participants, do the following in order to foster learner autonomy:

- They give learners opportunities to evaluate their own work. (half of the participants; 41,18% agree, the other half strongly agree).
- They help students to build the belief and confidence in autonomous learning. The percentage of those who agree is 23, 53, whereas; the one of those who strongly agree is 58, 82
- They encourage out-of-class learning which requires learners to use the internet. 47, 06% agree, likewise, of them 35, 29% strongly agree.
- They (except two of them who are unsure) give learners opportunities to use their own learning strategies. 51, 41they train learners about learning strategies 29,441% strongly agree while11, 75% are unsure.
- They (except two of them who are unsure) train learners about learning strategies 41, 18% of tem agree and 35, 29% of them strongly agree.
- They (except two one of disagrees and another one is unsure) engage learners in co-operative group work activities: the majority of teachers; 51, 41% strongly agree that they involve learners in group work activities, likewise ;17, 56% agree.
- They (except one who is unsure) provide a choice of activities for students; 51, 41% agree, as well as, 17, 56% of them express strong agreement towards the idea. Concerning offering learners opportunities to decide about the time to finish assignments 23, 41% of the participants agree, the same percentage of the participants disagree. While just one of the participants strongly agrees, two of them are unsure and there are other two participants who strongly disagree with the statement.

I.1.2. Section Two

I.1.2.1. Teacher as a facilitator. There are three respondents who give a wide description of “a facilitator” insisting that the teacher should act as a facilitator one. Furthermore, two others add that to act as a facilitator means to make learning easier. Some respondents interpret the term in relation to the content or what to learn, 5 of them interpret the facilitative role of the teacher as making the content easier for learners to be understood, whereas, there are two others who have almost the same view, one of them agrees that being a facilitator means that the teacher does not give everything. Likewise, the other one interprets the term under discussion as to guide learners to get information.

Two other respondents interpret the term facilitator in regards to learning strategies. One of them claims that the teacher should guide learners to choose the right learning strategies that enable them to reach their objectives, while; the other stresses on the importance of equipping learners with knowledge and skills that enable them to construct their own knowledge. Unlike the previous mentioned respondents refer to learning strategies, one of them stresses on learning styles claiming that the teacher should help learners to identify their suitable learning styles, in addition, he or she adds that the teacher should clarify and simplify the input.

Other respondents make reference to learner autonomy. One of them says that after presenting the lecture, the teacher should let learners learn autonomously in workshops, likewise; another one indicates that teacher as a facilitator can only help learners to learn by creating an environment where learners learn autonomously, as well as he or she says “*this should be the most adopted role in our EFL classes to foster learning*”. Keeping on the same stream of idea, one participant interprets the role of the teacher as a facilitator as the one who helps learners to learn and intervenes just when it is necessary. As it is obvious from the previous mentioned interpretations of the facilitative role of the teacher, there are participants who share some common views.

Whereas the remaining respondents have slightly different interpretations, for instance one of them cites that the teacher should make the class atmosphere relaxed and positive to increase motivation- both extrinsic and especially the intrinsic one. In addition he or she adds that the teacher should monitor learners work but without being invasive. Another teacher says “*the teacher lets the learners find their own ways to learn, help them to make the right choices and decisions*”.

I.1.2.2. Teacher as a resource. Two respondents share the same interpretation of the teacher's role as a resource they view that the teacher provides knowledge but learners also should do their own research (not just relying on what the teacher provides). Some respondents view that the teacher acts as a resource when knowledge is needed. Similarly there are those who interpret the term "resource" as intervening when learners face difficulties. One of the respondents adds that the teacher should be helpful and available for learners but without making them over reliant on him or her. Other two respondents interpret it as a role which the teacher adopts in traditional approaches where the task of the teacher is to transmit knowledge to learners. Five of the respondents interpret the role of the teacher as a resource as providing knowledge. Furthermore, one of them comments that the teacher should teach learners about learning strategies, whereas another respondent claims that the teacher selects and clarifies the content to be learned.

However, one among the five aforementioned respondents agrees that the teacher as a resource provides as much as possible information, another respondent agrees with them that the teacher provides knowledge he refers to that as "suitable input", as well as agrees with the previously mentioned respondents who claim that the teacher should be helpful. However, the remaining respondents have slightly different interpretations of the term, so we gleaned the following interpretations:

- *"We don't need to forget the place of each one, the teacher should be the pillar of the learning process"*
- *" in that case the teacher should be the main source for his her learners in terms of knowledge, guidance and help"*
- *" the teacher's choice of the role he or she adopts should vary according to the content and context of the course. This role can be adopted when learners cannot work independently"*

I.1.2.3. Learners assuming responsibility for their learning: Two participants view the term "assuming responsibility of learners learning" as to take part in their learning. Other five respondents perceive it as to contribute to their learning by making their efforts to find the information. One of them writes *"learners are not spoon-fed by the teacher"*. Another adds that learners should explain and argue for their points of view. Two participants among the aforementioned ones, agree on the point that learners assume responsibility but under the guidance of the teacher. Other three respondents interpret the term in regards to the what, how

and when of their learning, two of them say that assuming responsibility means to know how and when to learn.

For other two respondents, the learners who assume responsibility of their learning know how and what to learn, in an another hand; one participant refers implicitly that learners take initiatives. Similarly, another respondent interprets ‘assuming responsibility’ in terms of freedom to make choices on the methods that they want to learn, in addition, the term for him/her means to know how to learn. One of the respondent associates assuming responsibilities with learning strategies saying that “*they use strategies and try to learn appropriately*”. He or she also adds that learners should be autonomous and not be depending on their teacher. Other interpretations are:

- *“of course learners should assume responsibility of their learning which is the basic of autonomy”.*
- *Knowledge thirsty , find decisions of which knowledge that will fit their research and future”*
- *This can help develop learner autonomy and we can associate it with teacher as a facilitator, learners can do this with the help of the teacher.*

II.2. The Interview Results

(Here, the interviewees are referred to below as IE, while; “Q” stands for “question”)

Q.1: Do you agree that language learning is merely a matter of mastering its vocabulary words and grammar rules? Why?

Regarding the first question, five of the interviewees (IE1, IE3, IE4, IE6, and IE7) agree about the importance of grammar and vocabulary in language learning. According to IE1, language learning is almost a matter of learning grammar and vocabulary because they are the basis of language learning. The other four interviewees do not totally agree that language learning is merely a matter of learning grammar rules and vocabulary words even though they confess about the important role that grammar and vocabulary play in language learning. IE7, for example answered “somehow *it is true*” because grammar and vocabulary help as to construct correct spoken and written language but we need also pronunciation and coherent writing.

IE4 and IE6 refer to performance saying that even though someone masters the language in terms of forms but he or she may not be able to perform them. Whereas IE3 refers to context, according to him or her, it is true that grammar and vocabulary are very prominent in language learning, but it is not sufficient because language is used in context and if someone cannot use it appropriately he or she cannot communicate with it. In contrast with the previous five interviewees, the other three remaining ones (IE2, IE5, IE8) express directly their disagreement with the statement by saying “ no” regarding the statement and giving the reasons why language is not a matter of learning grammar rules and vocabulary words. IE2 says that we also need pronunciation, spelling and social skills, and negotiation, on the other hand, IE5 and IE8 share the same view they state that they disagree since language as IE3 views used in context and if we master grammar and vocabulary and we do not know how to use it in context we cannot communicate using that language.

Q.2: Do you agree that some people were born with a specific ability to learn a foreign language? Why?

In answering question two, five of the interviewees (IE1, IE2, IE3, IE4I, and E7) agree that some people have a capacity to learn a foreign language easily. Even though they all share the same view their explanations however are different. IE1 justifies his or her view by saying

that some learners even though they lack materials, they learn the language successfully. Unlike some learners even we offer them everything but they cannot learn the language. IE2 views that some people were born with that capacity to learn a foreign language because they are motivated to learn it know how to manage the language and they are good in it.

For instance, IE3 says “*as some people born with the capacity to learn mathematics and physics, others born with the ability to learn foreign languages*”.

IE4 views that some people have an innate capacity to learn the language better than the others; this concerns especially pronunciation and oral communication where we find some people especially girls have the ability to speak the language like native speakers while; when it comes to writing all people develop it in the same rate.

IE7 makes reference to motivation, he or she views that some people have aptitude to learn the language easily especially those who have intrinsic motivation to learn the language. In opposition with the first view, IE5 and IE6 see that all people have the same ability to learn the language, they view that it is the environment and practice which make some people learn better than the others, according to them the more that one exposes to the language especially in early childhood the better we will master that language. Whereas; IE8 agrees that people have different characteristics in their attitudes, aptitude, learning styles and strategies and motivation, he or she adds that those people who have strong motivation to language learning learn better than some others.

Q.3: It is stated that “teachers should change their traditional ways of teaching and adopt new roles that make learners active participants”. In your opinion, what are these new roles that the teacher should adopt?

When it comes to teacher’ roles in autonomous classrooms, all the interviewees assign the role of a facilitator to the teacher, this role is also explored by Vollar (1997) and Withall (1975-cited in Kavanoz, 2006) who conceptualizes that “*the primary role and purpose of any teacher of any classroom is to help learner to learn*”. IE2 views facilitating learning to students as forgetting one’s role as a resource and considering one’s self as a student by creating a close relationship with students and this makes them confident and their autonomy will be developed.

IE1 and IE2 share the same view with Dickinson (1987 cited in Finch, n.d) that the teacher should be supportive, encouraging and friendly as a result of these characteristics learners feel free to express themselves in a relaxed atmosphere. IE3 views it as looking for learners' needs and gaps and trying to satisfy those needs and bridge those gaps according to the group he / she teaches. For instance, if the teacher notices that learners commit errors in punctuation he or she helps students to get rid of them. IE4 interprets a facilitator as someone who raises learners' awareness about unknown or unclear facts.

According to IE5, among the teacher roles is the role of being a facilitator which means to guide and advice one, for example; how to use a certain strategy, how to lower down anxiety, shyness and how to present their work in front of their classmates. IE6, explains that the teacher does not teach learners but he or she provides them with a space to look for the information themselves or as Harmer (2001, P.56) says" *to create conditions in which learners learn for themselves*". The two remaining ones; IE1 and IE8 even though they do not use the term facilitator but they refer to it, the first one claims that the teacher gives general points which should be explained by learners. For instance the teacher shows how to write a paragraph, whereas the second one says: *the teacher is like a spark that ignites the talent capabilities in students, he has to enable his students to reveal their potentiality by giving them assurance and trust in themselves very often helped by content-based courses*. According to the previous interviewee learner autonomy can be fostered especially when the teacher teaches the subject of writing and methodology, where the teacher shows learners how to do things then they will do it themselves.

In addition to a facilitator, IE2, IE5, and IE7 adds that the teacher is a guide, IE2 explains this role as helping learners to find the answers themselves and not give it to them directly. IE5 interprets it as showing learners how to do something, for instance; the teacher shows how to do a certain activity; learners do it relying on themselves.

IE6, IE7 agree that the teacher role as a guide is to provide learners with some points that should be developed by themselves. IE2 and IE7 do not just interpret the role of the teacher as a facilitator and guide; furthermore, they add the counseling role of the teacher. IE2 views it as finding solutions to problems that hamper learners learning. For example, if learners do not learn just by listening to lectures the teacher provides them with handouts. Unlike; IE7 views it as being like a psychologist by understanding learners, for instance; the teacher should be tolerant when students commit errors. In addition to facilitator and guide IE5 adds that the

teacher is a prompter who helps learners to reach their goals. In addition to facilitator, IE3 and IE6 view the teacher as a resource. For IE6 being a resource means to guide learners where to find the required knowledge when they face difficulties, while IE3 perceives it as providing knowledge which depends on the level of the group the more the level of learners is pour the more the teacher provides more knowledge. In addition to facilitator, IE4 views the teacher as coach, evaluator or monitor, the first role means to be like a sport trainer; to show learners how to learn better, while the second one means to evaluate learners' work and provide them with feedback.

Q.4: What are the roles of learners in an autonomy-based classroom, or; in other words what are characteristics autonomous learners?.

According to IE3, autonomous learners do not just rely on what has been taught in the classroom but they develop, furthermore, they seek for the information by themselves, similarly; IE5, perceives autonomous learners as self-reliant in doing activities and ask questions when they meet a problem. Likewise, other interviewees refer to self-reliance, IE1, says that autonomous learners do things by themselves like finding answers, IE2, views that they try to understand things by themselves. IE4, sees that autonomous learners solve problems relying on themselves IE6 says that autonomous learners help themselves by themselves and construct their own knowledge, while, according to IE7, autonomous learners do not rely on their teacher. In another hand some interviewee (IE1, IE5,) describe autonomous learners as being active, while IE6 describes them as being active and motivated.

In addition to the previous description of autonomous learners, our interviewees add other characteristics; IE1 says that autonomous learners try to understand where are the gaps, whereas, IE2, perceives autonomous learners from another angle she or he states that they are aware that they should learn by themselves; they make decisions and choose their learning styles and strategies. In addition to solving problems on their own IE4, views autonomous learners from two dimensions, first in terms of content they try to assimilate what they learn and should master all the academic skills to respond to their learning needs, second in terms of learning process they should be in continuous research for new techniques and strategies.

According to IE7, autonomous learners are involved in their learning process, they learn inside and outside of the classroom, they are ready to bring changes in the classroom and

when they are asked to do research they do it on relying on different resources. Unlike the aforementioned interpretations of autonomous learners; IE8 views autonomous learners from another perspective, he or she says that autonomous learners do not take things for granted, they are not afraid of embarking into new field of research, moreover; they can confront what other researchers say.

Q.5: How does the involvement of learners in taking decisions about what to learn increases their autonomy?

Some interviewees respond to the question in relation to attitudes, and motivation. IE2 claims that: involving learners in decision-making, raises positive attitudes towards the teacher, and the content. IE5, IE6, and IE7, agree that: This enhances learner's motivation, so, they learn better. Keeping in the same stream of idea, Dornyei(2001-cited in Kuo, 2008) states that motivation is related to autonomy since it needs learners to take independent actions. IE3 perceives that involving learners in decision-making fosters their autonomy, because, according to him, or her, when learners are asked about what they want to learn; they will suggest topics related to their weaknesses, and the fact that they identify them, they are autonomous.

IE4 states that decision-making, especially, if we train students to make decisions from the first year, it develops their autonomy, because, they will be able to make appropriate choices and apply them efficiently. In contrast, IE1 totally disagrees with giving learners the opportunity to make choices on the content to be taught, because, as he claims they will not learn, they will just suggest topics that interest them, not what actually they need, so, what he or she does is trying to identify learners' weaknesses and assigns tasks and activities to remedy.

Q.6: How would do you define learner strategy training, and how do you train learners about learning strategies if you do so?

Regarding this question, there are only few interviewees who answered; IR2, IE4 and IE8, the first one says that she or he trains learners about learning strategies by giving activities related to them like planning, evaluating, giving texts and ask learners to sort out the main points. IE4, defines first strategy training as showing learners how to perform a certain strategy but without answering whether he or she trains learners in strategies and how. IE8,

says that she or he does not teach learners about learning strategies since each one has his own preferable strategies

Q. 7: What do you do in order to foster learner autonomy?

Regarding their practices to foster learner autonomy, IE1 and IE2 share the same view saying that they do not give learners everything but they give hints and push them to synthesize. All the interviewees claim that they push learners to do activities. According to IE1 she or he gives them activities and problems to solve them, as well as he or she gives learners activities and ask them to correct each other (peer's correction) because when learners are corrected by their peers they feel shy and this push them to work better side. In order to foster learner autonomy most of the interviewees ask learners to do research (IE2, IE3, IE4, IE5, IE7, and IE8), IE4 comments that he/she asks learners to do research and present them it front of their classmates who are invited to debate in order to raise interaction, and, IE5, comments that he /she gives individual projects to push learners to work alone.

IE8 adds that he/she asks learners to do research for three reasons first; in order to foster learner autonomy, second; to prepare them to teach, third; to be able to communicate. Moreover, he /she pushes learners to give their opinions and interpretations of text and not repeat what other researchers say. IE3 adds that he or she asks learners to participate and encourage them to take risks. In order to foster learner autonomy, IE6 explains lectures without giving learners handouts. In addition to asking learners to conduct research, IE5 and IE7 give learners tasks and activities of their preference, like role play and topics that interest them such as: football but this happens just in oral expression. In addition, IE7 also, adds that he or she pushes learners to cooperate with other by working in pairs and groups. According to (Little 1994-cited in Brillaro, 2011) interaction, negotiation and cooperation are important factors in developing learner autonomy.

II. Interpretation of the Results

II.1. The Questionnaire

II.1.1 Section One

II.1.1.1 Teachers' interpretations of language learning. The questionnaire reveals interesting findings, first even though the large proportions of the teachers have positive views towards the explicit way of learning the language, there is also a prominent number of teachers who do not support that perspective either because they disagree or they are unsure. Second, more than a quarter among the total number of teachers interpret language learning as structure composed of grammar and vocabulary. Interpreting language as a matter of mastering vocabulary and grammar leads teachers to invest more time on these elements rather than on communicative tasks (Altan, 2006).

Another discrete belief (Altan, 2006) is the one in the existence of an aptitude to learn the language, the majority of teachers view that some people were born with specific ability to learn foreign languages, because this view may discourage learners who experienced failure since they think that they do not have what permits them to succeed in the language . It may also lead teachers to perceive that some learners do not have a capacity to learn the language so, they may invest more efforts on those who owe this capacity. After the emergence of language learning strategies, most of the researchers now do not attribute success or failure to this gifts or aptitudes but they attribute them to different learning strategies that are used differently from different learners (Oxford, 1991).

II.1.1.2. Teacher's interpretations of their own roles. Regarding teachers' interpretations of their roles, they express positive views towards their roles. All of them agree that the teacher has an important role in developing learner autonomy; as Yan 2012,

p. 559) points out *"without teachers' counsel and supervision , the whole process will result in low efficiency or even fall into disorder.*

On the other hand the majority of them disagree with Dam (2003-cited in Borg, 2012) who says that learner autonomy is mostly based on the teacher roles, according to teachers of English at Bejaia University, learner autonomy is mostly based on learners' readiness rather than on teacher's roles.

II.1.1.3. Teachers' interpretations of learners' roles. Compared to teachers' interpretations of their roles, many teachers are unsure about some characteristics of autonomous learners that they should develop among learners. In their interpretations of learner autonomy, some teachers disagree with some learners' roles under autonomy instruction like, setting objectives of the course, implementing the appropriate learning strategies and especially determining course content where we find that 35, 29% do not view that autonomous learners take part in determining course content. Whereas, almost all researches who define learner autonomy agree that among the crucial principles of learner autonomy is to be involved in determining, what to learn and how to learn, such as Holec, (1981-cited in Benson, 2001. P, 59), who define learner autonomy as *" the ability to take charge of one's own learning"*. Moreover; Little (cited in Zhuang, 2010) makes it clear that teachers who want to develop autonomy among learners must start from themselves first to be autonomous by reflecting on their beliefs, experiences and expectations of their teaching and learning.

II.1.1.4. Teachers' practices to develop learner autonomy. Most teachers train learners about learning strategies, give learners opportunities to evaluate their own work, encourage learners to do tasks outside of the classroom that requires the use of the Internet. According to Hedge (2000) learner training leads to more effective learning and develops learner autonomy because when learners are trained to do learning tasks through time they approach them successfully on relying on themselves. Likewise; the Internet nowadays becomes a crucial tool that increase learner initiated interaction and helps to shift the authority from teachers to learners. Also self-assessment lead learners to become lifelong

learners ones because step by step they will get rid from waiting the mark of the exam (Lo, 2010, as it is cited in Rungwaraphong).

II.1.2. Section Two

EFL teachers at Bejaia university interpret the term facilitator as making learning easier to students, as Harmer (2001) views it, as to help learners to learn relying on themselves. Whereas, a resource means to provide knowledge when it is needed (Vollar, 1997-cited in Benson, 2001). Regarding learners assuming responsibility for their learning, for the majority of teachers it means that learners are not spoon fed by teachers, instead, they seek for the information themselves. Only few teachers who mention that learners know what and how to learn and make some choices about their learning as Holec (1981-cited in Benson, 2001) means in his definition of learner autonomy. However, Holec, goes steps further, to take charge of their learning, learners should set their objectives, determine the content to be learned and how to learn it.

II.2. Interpretation of the Interview Results

II.2.1. Teachers' interpretations of language learning. When it comes to their interpretations of language learning, the majority of EFL teachers at Bejaia University view language learning not as a structure which is composed of grammar rules and vocabulary but as a means of communication. According to them, to master a language it is not enough to know its grammar and vocabulary, but also we need to speak it in a fluent way and use it appropriately in a given context. In another hand, most of them think that some people have a special ability to learn the language better than the others, some researchers and educators consider it as a discrete belief that lead teachers to behave differently with those who have this aptitude and those who lack it (Horwitz cited in Altan 2006; and Harmer,2001), moreover; such belief hamper learner autonomy development (Toogood and Barfield, 2010).

II.2.2. Teacher's Interpretations of their roles. The majority of teachers interpret the teacher 'roles in a learner-centered classroom mainly as a facilitator who does not impart knowledge to learners but helps them to construct their own knowledge, they also use other terms like "guide", "counselor", "promoter", "resource", but all of them can be put under the term "facilitator" which means to help learners to get knowledge by relying on themselves and intervenes just when it is necessary. Some teachers also add the roles of "evaluating", "monitoring" who provides feedback and evaluate student's learning achievements. In his description of a facilitator and counselor, Vollar (1997-cited in Benson,2001) explains that teacher as a facilitator and counselor helps learners to plan , set objectives, select materials, and evaluate their learning, all these tasks which are central to learner autonomy almost are absent from the EFL teachers 'interpretations of their roles in developing learner autonomy.

II.2.3 Teachers' interpretations of learners' roles or characteristics of autonomous learners. According to EFL teachers, autonomous learners are those who do not rely on what has been taught in the classroom but they develop and seek information from different available resources, moreover; autonomous learners are not passive recipients of knowledge but they construct their own knowledge on relying on themselves. Add to their interpretations of autonomous learners as self-reliant, EFL teachers at the Department of English at Bejaia University interpret autonomous learners as active and motivated. Autonomous learners according to the majority of researchers; accept the responsibility for their learning; which means that they take part in setting objectives, they seek opportunities to practice the English language inside and outside of the classroom, they know their purposes behind learning, they implement the appropriate learning strategies and assess themselves regularly.

II.2.4. Teachers' practices to foster learner autonomy. To begin with all teachers agree that involving learners in what to learn increase their autonomy, some of them explain that when learners choose what to learn they will learn better. When it comes to learner strategy training, we find a clash between the questionnaire results and the interview, more than 70% of the teachers claim that they train learners in learning strategies, however, when they are asked to define what learner strategy training means and how they do so; almost all of them do not respond. Some teachers say that they teach learning strategies but they do not explain how they do so. The teacher should be responsible in training learners about learning strategies. Yan (1998-cited in Han, 2014), moreover; Xu and Xu (2004-cited in Han) states

that to develop learner autonomy the teacher has to help learners to think about learning strategies and put them into practice.

In order to increase learner autonomy, in addition to pushing learners to seek for the information themselves; EFL teachers at Bejaia University ask learners to conduct, research, as well as they engage them in pair and group work. Pair and group work encourage learners to be autonomous because when they are engaged in a given learning task learners rely on their peers or themselves to solve the problem. Out of classroom tasks also play an important if not a necessary role in making learners rely on themselves (Harmer, 2001).

III. Limitations of the Study

Throughout our investigation, we confronted some limitations that need to be mentioned. First of all, we wanted to distribute the questionnaire to all EFL teachers at University of Bejaia, but because of some constrains such as, the strike which lasted more than two months, and the fact that some teachers were very busy and could neither accept to answer the questionnaire or afford us an interview. Second, some teachers may not have answered the questionnaire confidently this can be noticed especially when it comes to learner strategy training.

IV. Implications

Even though the sample consists just of seventeen teachers who answered the questionnaire and only seven of them are interviewed. This study comes with important findings. Since teachers themselves are not sure about some characteristics of learner autonomy; how can they develop them among learners?. In order to promote learner autonomy in our university; it is very important to train pre-service teachers about learner training in order to develop their understandings of the term as well as put it into practice as future teachers. Learner autonomy should be developed from the first year in order to make learners step by step autonomous; therefore, it is better to include a subject related to learner autonomy from the first year. Moreover, it is necessary to discuss learner autonomy in conferences, especially because the latter differs from culture to culture, and from one situation to another.

Conclusion

Through the analyses of the questionnaire and the interview we come to the conclusion that EFL teachers from the department of English, University of Bejaia have some beliefs which contradict with the notion of learner autonomy, in relation to their roles, both the questionnaire and the interviews show that they interpret the teacher role generally as a facilitator, while learners roles as an active participants. However, when it comes to characteristics of autonomous learners both the questionnaire and the interviews reveal that EFL teachers at the department of English University of Bejaia have a limited understandings of some characteristics that they should develop among learners. Regarding teachers' practices towards developing learner autonomy, most teachers assign research to learners in order to be able to take responsibility of their learning.

General Conclusion

Learner Autonomy is the most important educational goal that should be developed among learners, especially at university level. In our attempt to explore how EFL teachers at the department of English, Bejaia University understand learner autonomy in regards to their interpretations of language learning, their roles, learners roles and what they do in order to foster learner autonomy, we use questionnaire and interview to collect the required data.

Our research show the following results; first; regarding language learning, in one hand a large proportion of teachers interprets language learning as a means of communication and not as a structure, but in an other hand many of them share the belief that some people have a talent to learn the language better than the others. Add to this some teachers think that language learning is mostly a structure. With these beliefs in mind learner autonomy cannot be developed, the latter develops in a learning situation that puts its principles at its hart and do not contradict them.

Second, when it comes to teacher' roles; teachers interpret their roles under learner autonomy instruction as facilitator, guide, counselor and resource. Even though these roles are very important in learner-centeredness, there understandings of the term remain very general. Because to act as a facilitator does not mean just to push learners to seek for the information,

but also to help them to acquire the skills needed like to set objectives, select materials reflecting on their learning and assessing themselves.

Third, regarding learners' roles, according to the EFL teachers, they are those who do not rely on just what has been taught in the classroom but they use other resources. However, there are some roles which are considered as the basic principles of learner autonomy that are not realized by many teachers like: setting objectives of the course, selecting materials and implementing the appropriate learning strategies. Moreover; to improve learner autonomy teachers do not have just to have knowledge on characteristics of autonomous learners but they need to acquire these skills since teachers who want to develop autonomy among learners should start by themselves to be autonomous.

Forth, regarding their practices to foster learner autonomy; EFL teachers ask learners to do research they do not give learners everything to learners as a way to push them to look for the information themselves, in addition; they engage learners in pair and group work. All these practices lead to develop learner autonomy, but are not sufficient because there many other practices that are necessary in order to develop autonomy among learners like teaching learners about learning strategies and involve them in decision making concerning all aspects of their learning.

In our university we should give more attention to learner autonomy; this can be achieved by training pre-service teachers about learning strategies, incorporating a subject related to learner autonomy from the first year in order to help learners to become effective and autonomous learners, another crucial point is to encourage teachers to deepen their knowledge about learner autonomy and how to foster it among learners.

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Appendix 1

Teacher Questionnaire

Dear teacher, this questionnaire is a part of a study that seeks to gather information about your understanding of learner autonomy and how it can be fostered at university level.

Therefore, any data that you will provide would have a crucial contribution to our study.

Thank you for your collaboration

1) Please, put a cross (x) where necessary to express your degree of agreement with the statements in the table below:

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Language is better learned explicitly					
2. Involving learners about what to learn increases their autonomy					
3. Language learning is merely a matter of mastering its vocabulary words and grammar rules.					
4. Learners can develop their autonomy without the help of the teacher.					
5. Involving learners in what to learn increases their motivation.					
6. Some people were born with a specific ability to learn a foreign language.					
7. The teacher has an important role in developing learner autonomy.					
8. Teachers should change their traditional ways of teaching and adopt new ones that make learners active participants					
<p>Circle one of the options below and put a cross where necessary to express your degree of agreement with the whole statement</p> <p>9. Lerner autonomy is mostly based on :</p> <p>a- teacher roles b-learner readiness</p> <p> c- materials available</p>					
10. In an autonomous classroom learners are involved in the following tasks:					

a. Setting objectives of the course.					
b. Determining course content.					
c. Selecting materials.					
d. Knowing their objectives behind learning.					
e. Seek opportunities to practice the English language.					
f. Implement the appropriate learning strategies.					
g. Review and assess their progress regularly.					
11. As a teacher at university, to foster learner autonomy you:					
a. Train learners about learning strategies.					
b. Give learners opportunities to evaluate their own work.					
c. Provide a choice of activities for students.					
d. Help students to build the belief and confidence in autonomous learning.					
e. Encourage out-of-class tasks which require learners to use the internet.					
f. Engage learners in co-operative group work activities.					
g. Offering learners opportunities to decide about the time to finish assignments.					
h. Give learners opportunities to use their own learning strategies					

2. Describe what the statements in the table below mean to you:

Teacher/ learner role in an autonomous classroom	Teacher's interpretations
Teacher as a Facilitator
Teacher as a Resource

Learners
assuming
responsibility
for their learning

.....

.....

.....

Appendix 2

Interview Questions

Teacher's Interpretations of Language Learning

To what extent do you agree with the following statements and explain why:

Q. 1: Language learning is merely a matter of mastering its vocabulary words and grammar rules.

Q. 2: Some people were born with a specific ability to learn a foreign language.

Teacher 'Interpretations of his/her Roles

Q. 3: It is stated that “teachers should change their traditional ways of teaching and adopt new roles that make learners active participants”. In your opinion what are these new roles that the teacher should adopt.

Teachers' Interpretations of Learners' Roles

Q. 4: What are the roles of learners in autonomy-based classroom, or in other words what are characteristics of autonomous learners?

Fostering Learner Autonomy

Q.5: How does the involvement of learners in taking decisions about what to learn increases their autonomy?

Q.6: How would you define learner strategy training, and how do you train learners about learning strategies if you do so?

Q.7: What do you do in order to foster learner autonomy?