



**BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD
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FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

**EXPLORING LEI STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT
FACTORS INVOLVED IN AUTONOMY DEVELOPMENT**

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TESIS

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PRESENTADA POR

ELISHEVAH CARRILLO MALDONADO

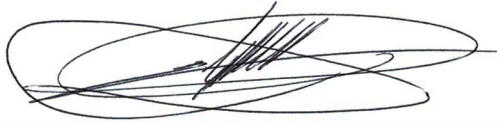
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to provide the reader information about the background, the rationale, the goals and the research questions that are elemental subjects to understand the research territory outlined for this project as well as its purposes.

1.1 Background

Autonomy has become a factor that plays a vital role in the development of proficient learners since decades ago, (Asadinik & Mirza, 2015). According to Benson (2001), being autonomous allows learners to take charge and control of their own learning in order to improve its quality, besides, it provides learners the ability “to control the situation” (Beseghi, 2018, p. 235) and to solve problems efficiently. For this reason, autonomy is the key to achieve better learning outcomes and to improve the quality of individuals that are immersed in the professional world.

Although there is a rich field of research about how to promote autonomy and the benefits of it, some authors imply that there is a gap between theory and the real application of autonomy. As shown by Hamdi, (2016), it is well-known that autonomy helps students to be more efficient, however, authors like Hammer, (2015), Lin and Reinders (Lin & Reinders, 2019) and Paudel (2019), describe some complexity in the development of this concept. In this way, they claim that teachers and students show difficulties to put into practice autonomous learning. In other words, teachers are still the center of the learning process as in the traditional way. Because of this, it is necessary to try to understand the elements that have a negative or positive influence in autonomy development in order to identify areas of improvement.

Although autonomy is a concept that has been researched by a significant number of authors, some of them indicate that research about autonomy may not represent the same results in different contexts. Then, the development of autonomy depends on the settings learners are immersed in. Supporting this idea, Asadinik and Mirza, (2015, p. 53), claim that it is important to evaluate autonomy taking into account the educational context, since it shapes the way educational concepts are conceived and applied. Besides this, Duong (2014) explain that it is necessary to go further than the context in the classroom and to also consider the effect of cultural aspects. Because of this, it is important to investigate the problems and obstacles students face to develop autonomy contemplating the educational and cultural aspects and the level of learners' awareness of this concept as important factors in the successful development of autonomy. With this, it can be concluded that, even though autonomy is a well-known concept in ELT, there may be several reasons why the principles are not applied.

As mentioned before, a significant number of studies have been carried out. These studies have been related to the benefits, the perceptions about the development of autonomy of teachers and learners and some methods to improve the levels of it while others have analyzed the important elements to develop this concept. For example, Abdelrazeq (2018), who states the value of two elements to develop autonomy: readiness and awareness. In the study Abdelrazeq emphasizes the importance of readiness since "it is necessary to measure learners' readiness for change in their beliefs and behaviors." (p. 726). Abdelrazeq also mentioned that it is vital for teachers and learners to know their roles in the language learning process in order to succeed in the development of autonomy. In other words, in order to change learners' behaviors and actions and be ready for autonomy, they need to be aware of what they should be doing. In this way, it must be asked whether students really know what autonomy is.

Furthermore, other studies have focused on the awareness of autonomy and the real practice of it. For example, My Duong and Seepho, (2014) mention in the conclusions of their study, there are contradictions between theory and practice of autonomy promotion. Following this idea, some researchers attribute these contradictions to the roles of teacher and student in real contexts. As illustrated by Oruç (2016, pg. 650), reflecting about autonomy in real contexts, concluded that teachers, at the end of the day are the most active learners in the classroom as they prepare for their classes, reading and planning activities for students that just have to sit and do “relatively little”.

Moreover, González, Vargas, Gómez del Campo, and Méndez (2017, p. 76-77) claim that the educational context also plays a vital role in the successful development of autonomy since the current educational situation in Mexico pushes students to be dependent on teachers. In fact, it can be said that the context in Mexico has been the same since 1995, when Connie Rae (1995, p. 22) states in her study “Learner Autonomy in the Learner-Centered Curriculum” that “Owing to our culture and educational system, most Mexican language students are passive and accustomed to being spoon-fed the content of their classes.” Besides this, González, Vargas, Gómez del Campo, and Méndez, (2017, p. 77), claim that one of the main reasons why university students fail to achieve good English levels is the lack of strategies and resources to promote and develop autonomy. Then, the existing gap between theory and practice of autonomy in the classroom can be related to factors like the educational and social contexts in which individuals are involved. For this reason, these obstacles should be moved away from the path in order to encourage students to be autonomous, giving them the tools to do it and working with them so they know how to do it. Having this background, the purpose of this study is to explore how much students know about autonomy, their level of autonomy and to explore the factors that, according to students, are involved in autonomy development.

1.2 Rationale

The interest of the researcher in this topic started when it was seen that students involved in a major of teaching were having problems to get the proficiency level the institution expects from them. This problem became important when a proficiency test revealed that students struggled attempting to pass, firstly their classes related to English Language learning, namely Target Language and, secondly, to get good scores in language certification tests. Since the researcher's perspective, who was involved in the same context as the individuals studied in this project, it had been noticed that students showed difficulty to develop autonomy skills to improve their learning process. It was concluded then, that one of the consequences of not being autonomous was the low grades in proficiency tests and performance in class using a second language. This problem resulted very interesting to the researcher, since the students involved in this study are future English teachers who are aware of learning theories such as constructivism which purpose is to encourage students to build their own knowledge by creating meaning (Wang 2014). Having said this, some questions came to the researcher about the factors behind the gap between the theory and the practice.

Another reason to carry on this project is the importance autonomy has nowadays in the classroom, especially at the moment of learning a second language. According to Asadinik and Mirza, (2015, p. 43), an extensive number of studies have shown that “there was a significant difference in the means for the successful and less successful users of autonomous learning with regard to the self-efficacy construct.”. For this reason, the promotion and analysis of autonomy should be something to take into account when trying to encourage students to learn a second language.

Finally, even though an important number of studies have focused on the benefits and advantages that autonomous learners have, others have claimed that awareness of autonomy needs to be considered in the analysis of successful autonomy development. For example, Quoc and My Dzung (2018, p. 6) claim that “the traditional learning methods in which an EFL teacher plays a key role in the classroom has certain impacts on the learners' autonomous learning, especially, their awareness of autonomy”. Then, researching autonomy awareness, as a factor influencing autonomy development would be useful in order to know more about the obstacles students may deal with in the process of becoming successful learners.

For the above, researching about the perception students have of autonomy as well as the factors that motivate or represent an obstacle to develop autonomy is important in order to be the first step in finding a solution to the problem of learning to learn better and, in this way, to help future teachers to their future students to develop skills to solve problems and become autonomous learners having all the benefits the literature shows.

1.3 Objective

The general objective of this research is to identify what LEI students know about autonomy, to identify the participants' level of autonomy and to identify and describe the factors that have effect on autonomy development.

Specific Objectives

The purposes of this study are the following:

To find out what LEI students define autonomy.

To identify the levels of autonomy in LEI students.

To point out the factors that, according to LEI students' perspectives, are involved in autonomy development.

1.4 Research questions

Regarding the objectives already settled in the previous headland, a qualitative method was used in order to get an answer to the following questions:

How do LEI students define autonomy?

What is LEI students' level of autonomy?

According to LEI students' own experience, what factors are involved in autonomy development?

1.5 Significance of the study

The development of autonomy is an important element that, as many authors have stated, helps students to improve the quality of language learning. In this way, the results of this study will tell the researchers the reasons why students at the Languages Faculty of BUAP, fail or succeed in developing autonomy. At the same time, this will help teachers and students to improve their language levels by not just knowing the concept but being autonomous. To support this idea, Connie Rae (1995, p. 22), describes the positive effect that autonomy has on the second language acquisition, when she claims that "Teaching learning strategies will have minimal success unless the learners want to have greater responsibility for their own learning". Another point is that, with this study, LEI students can become conscious about the requirements of being autonomous and apply them correctly without misunderstandings of the concept and, for instance, reach the levels of language domain that they expect from themselves with the teachers working as their facilitators

and councilors. In the teachers' perspectives, as it was said before, this study might contribute to know more about the relationship between consciousness and the application of autonomy in order to look for conditions and strategies that allow teachers and students to take knowledge to practice effectively.

Moreover, the results of this study might be useful to improve the quality of learning to identify the problem and correct it. A result of this would be the acquisition of positive results that are expected by the curriculum as the main goal of educational policies and, for instance, curricula, is "the production of autonomous individuals who are able to grow through lifelong learning based on the ability to take control over situations in order to train themselves to meet any circumstance" (Barrantes & Olivares, 2013, p. 326). The result of this, would be that the Languages Faculty would prepare competent subjects to the field of English Teaching that would give their students better opportunities to learn, not only a language but any other thing they want to, as autonomy, being related to learning, would give the basis to be applied in different fields.

Besides the above, Pekkanli Egel (2009, p. 2023), emphasizing the importance of applying and researching autonomy in learning, states that "As language teachers, it is our duty to be aware of the factors which are conducive to learner autonomy because autonomy is the key to lifelong learning.", because at the end, the purpose of the teachers' job is not to stand in front of the class and talk about how much they know or "transfer knowledge" as it was thought years ago, but to encourage students to learn what is going to be needed in their professional and daily life.

To conclude, helping students and teachers to recognize, firstly, the relationship between theory and practice of autonomy as well as the factors that motivate or represent an obstacle to develop autonomy, would be good to correct the problem and take matter on them.

1.6 Research Content and Organization

Regarding the content and organization of this study, it will be found in the first chapter a general overview of the main issue for this research and an introduction to the problem. Also, in Chapter I, are included the purpose, the general and the specific objectives as well as the research questions. Finally, the significance of the study, the methodology and definition of key terms are going to be found in this section.

In Chapter two, all the information regarding to the main topic of this study, which is autonomy are presented such as definitions, misconceptions of this concept, measurement models, the roles of teachers and learners and other important aspects about autonomy. Besides this, other important elements involved in the process of autonomy development namely, motivation, constructivism, and language levels of proficiency are also discussed. Thus, the description of the theoretical basis of this study are presented in this second chapter.

Chapter III is composed by the description of the research context and the participants. Besides this, the instruments: a questionnaire and an interview, their design and the data analysis process used to interpret data are presented. Besides this, the procedures followed to collect data and to pilot the instruments are explained here.

Chapter IV covers the procedure followed to analyze the data collected through the instruments.

Finally, Chapter V comprises the conclusions based on the analysis of the data, the answer to the research questions and the aspects the researcher believes should be covered in further research based on the experience of this study.

1.7 Definition of terms

Key terms: autonomous learning, levels of autonomy, LEI students.

Autonomous learning: “the active, independent management of learning ... where the learner sets or attempts to control the goals, curriculum, pedagogical method, or content of the learning program” (Rivers & Golonka, 2009, p. 255).

Levels of autonomy: The stages that define the “behavioral and cognitive actions” students do in order to learn a “language item” (Dang, 2012).

LEI students: Students in the major of English Language Teaching at Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Through this chapter, the key terms related to this study are defined in order to understand the concept and its perspective. The chapter starts discussing the main issue of this study, which is autonomy, the theory behind it, a discussion about the relation between autonomy and related concepts, the characteristics of an autonomous learner, and the levels of autonomy development. Also, readiness and awareness, which are two important factors that determine the development of autonomy, are explained as well as the roles learners and teachers are characterized to take in order to promote autonomy. Moreover, in this section important elements involved in the process of autonomy such as metacognition, learning strategies and motivation are reviewed.

2.1 Autonomy in learning

Through the last decades, different teaching theories and methods have made changes in the classroom dynamic to improve the results of learning. One of the most significant changes is the role teachers and learners play in the classroom. In this way, teachers are not the center of the learning process as it was many years ago, where students would “mechanically repeat the content teachers transmitted” (Solórzano-Mendoza, 2017, p. 243); now, learners are supposed to be the center of the learning process (Barrantes & Olivares, 2013), in other words, to be autonomous. Because of this, autonomy has become a well-recognized concept in learning and the discussion about it has increased in the last three decades, especially in the field of language teaching (Pekkanli Egel, 2009), but where does this idea come from?

Autonomous learning, according to Solórzano-Mendoza (2017) is not a new concept. Thus, the idea of taking control of one's own decisions can be seen in the learning ideas that philosophers such as Confucius (551-479 AC) had, claiming it was important to raise children in a way in which they were able to face life by themselves, although the concept of autonomy in learning was formally used hundreds of years later. This term was originally taken from the fields of politics and moral philosophy (Smith, 2006) that conceives autonomy as an attitude referring to the independence of making decisions.

The concept of autonomy was first introduced in the field of education in the 50's and by the 70's some authors had already made studies on learners' autonomy (Barrantes & Olivares, 2013). Through time and more research, some authors have explained the origin of learner autonomy such as Little (1996), who recognizes Henry Holec's work at CRAPEL in the 1970's as one of the earliest and most recognizable. The main reason the idea of autonomy was developed, according to Benson (2001), was through the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project that had the purpose of establishing the "*Centre Recherches et d'Application Pédagogiques en Langues*" better known as CRAPEL at the University of Nancy in France.

In addition to this, Smith, (2008), explains that one of the interests that CRAPEL had, was to offer more opportunities to access education. As a result of this, learning a foreign language in resources centers with no teacher intervention was offered to adults (Smith, 2008) in order to "provide [...] opportunities for lifelong learning" (Benson, 2001, p. 10). In addition, Faltis (2005, p. 58), mentions that these reasons took researchers to create Self Access Centers that were based on "the premise that students who managed their own learning had more powerful learning experiences". In this way, the participants in the project would get meaningful learning that would be helpful for their professional lives.

Even though the purpose seemed easy to understand at the beginning, the participants found difficult to take the decisions that had to be made in setting objectives, selecting contents, methods and techniques as well as evaluating their progress (Smith, 2008). As a response to this problem, Smith describes that CRAPEL offered counseling and training to help learners go through the process of becoming autonomous successfully. As it can be seen, this was the first evidence that free practice, combined with counseling, resulted in a good combination that brought benefits to learners to improve learning quality. Then, autonomy was developed as a technique to increase the opportunities to learn in a meaningful way a language, that later was combined with a teacher who would advise learners in the process of taking decisions over their process of learning.

Having the previous information as a precedent and knowing the benefits of autonomous learning, it started to be implemented also in the classroom since 1973. And, as this concept was employed as a response to difficult situations such as unmotivated teenagers (Smith, 2008), soon, autonomous learning started to be part of the classroom changing the perspective both, teachers and students, had of learning and their roles, which encouraged students to get more involved in their own learning process.

Through the evolution of autonomy in learning, this concept has been defined by different authors considering different elements that they consider autonomy encompasses. One of the most important definitions was provided by Holec (1981). This description is considered as the starting point of the discussion about this issue since many of the authors ahead of Holec analyzed the term of autonomy based on his definition. Holec conceived autonomy in learning as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (p. 3). This view offers a very broad perspective of what autonomous learning is, as it requires that a learner assumes control over their own learning, however, it does not provide much information about what the action of “taking charge” of learning

requires. To understand this, Solórzano-Mendoza (2017, p. 244) says that “autonomous learning refers to the students’ intervention level in the objectives establishment, procedures, resources, evaluation and learning moments...” where it is seen that learners should be more involved in their own learning process as part of the control Holec talked about.

Thus, being more involved in the learning process should be “from an active role that they have to have to face the current professional training in which the learner can and should contribute previous knowledge and experiences from which it is intended to revitalize learning and provide it with meaning.” (Aprendizaje Autónomo, 2011 in Solórzano-Mendoza, 2017, p. 244). With this definitions, it can be concluded that taking charge of the learning process leads to intervention and this last one requires an active role in the learning process in order to prepare students for professional life through meaningful learning connected to the students’ previous experiences.

Another definition was proposed by Dearden (1975) who, in the words of Llaven-Nucamendi (2014, p. 18) says that autonomy “is an activity on the mind”. Dearden also describes that in this activity the process of “making choices, deliberations, decisions, reflections, judging, planning or reasoning” is involved, meaning that the learner is able to recognize their own mental processes in order to take decisions regarding learning. According to Rahimi and Katal (2012, p. 73), to do this, it is necessary to be conscious about the learning processes, that is to say, to develop metacognition as this concept refers to “one’s knowledge concerning one’s own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them” (Flavell, 1976 in Rahimi & Katal, 2012, p. 74). In this way, the autonomous learning in Dearden’s perspective refers to the consciousness a learner has about mental processes or metacognition. Another author that emphasizes the importance of metacognition in autonomy development is Wei (2008) claiming that metacognition is “the fundamental element to foster learner autonomy” (p.112) as it gives the foundation to be

efficient in “planning, monitoring and evaluating” (p.112) which is the general idea of autonomy in learning.

In a similar way of thinking, Solórzano-Mendoza (2017, p. 245) says autonomous learning “is the intellectual process whereby the subject executes cognitive, metacognitive, sequential, objective, procedural and formalized strategies to obtain strategic knowledge.” In this way, it is seen that not only consciousness about the learning process is required to be autonomous, but the use of appropriate and convenient strategies and techniques to learn, which also refers to metacognition. About this, Haukas, Bjorke and Dypedahl (2018) said that metacognition is divided in three strains, one of them referring to “strategy knowledge” that involves the discrimination of strategies to use the ones that are more appropriate for the situation. Then, with these last three conceptions it can be concluded that, there are some key elements for autonomous learning: the level of intervention a learner has in the learning process, awareness of mental processes and the use of learning strategies and techniques.

From a similar perspective to Dearden and Solórzano-Mendoza’s, Strike (1982 in Llaven-Nucamendi, 2014) conceives autonomy as an opportunity to make choices by exercising “rational judgement and self-control”. Then, according to Strike, the process of autonomy also requires the individual to think critically in order to make the choice that better conveys to them. Another author that emphasizes the importance of critical thinking in autonomy as well is Little (1991). Little conceived autonomy as “a capacity – for detachment, critical reflection, decision making, and independent action.” (Little, 1991 p. 4, cited in Benson, 2006, p. 23). With this definition it can be concluded that, in order to think critically, it is necessary to discriminate information knowing the advantages and drawbacks in a situation to take a decision. For instance, an

autonomous individual would be the one who knows what is better for their own process of learning and what is not.

The previous definitions describe autonomy as a process that demands an individual to take actions regarding his own learning. In addition to this, other authors have specified the elements this process involves. For example, according to Benson (2006), being autonomous is a process that starts with motivation which is an essential part of autonomy since the interest of being involved in the learning process is what determines being autonomous or not. In other words, the learner wishes to learn “how to learn intentionally” (Little, 2004 p. 105, cited in Barrantes & Olivares, 2013). In a similar way, Solórzano-Mendoza (2017) claims that autonomous learning appears when someone is interested in learning which motivates “a conscious acting” (p. 245). Thus, the intention an individual has to learn also shapes how involved the learner is in the process and will define the probability of success, since Solórzano states that because of motivation, the subject understands that “it is necessary to do their outmost and the best of themselves” in order to achieve an objective, which will most likely turn right.

Besides, Barrantes and Olivares, (2013 p. 327), state that there are three important steps in being autonomous: planning, monitoring and evaluating, Benson, (2001,) defines autonomy in terms of the aspects of learning that correspond to the planning, monitoring and evaluating parts Barrantes and Olivares (2013, p. 327) propose. Then, autonomy means:

To have, and hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, i.e.:

- determining the objectives;
- defining the contents and progressions;
- selecting methods and techniques to be used;
- monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc.)

-evaluating what has been acquired.

In addition to this, Sierra Pérez (2005) talks about other elements that “Autonomous Learning [...] has to have [...] to make it viable and effective” (n.p.). According to her, these elements are:

-technology: where technologic resources and the abilities to use them are involved;

-research: where abilities to research and will to do it are found; and

-meaningful contents: necessary to “potentialize competencies”.

With the information presented above it can be said that autonomy is directly related to the decisions that learners should take over their learning. This decisions include the determination of objectives, the progress of learning and the evaluation that fits better to the learner. For instance, the roles of teachers and students change, as it was mentioned before, the process is not centered in the teacher but in the student. However, this change does not mean that teachers should disappear from the learning process, instead, they have a specific and limited role as it will presented further in this section. Students, on the other hand, should become “self- conscious about what to do, where to go or how to undertake the proper actions to improve one’s learning” (Barrantes & Olivares, 2013, p. 327) and this is how autonomous learning develops, by being able to take understand and control how is that each student learns best.

Based on these ideas, learners should be successful language learners. Lazar (2013, p. 460) supports this idea talking about the benefits of being autonomous when she mentions that the learning process “can be more effective when learners take control of their own process of learning, because they learn what they are ready to learn”. In this way autonomous learning allows students to control the learning process and be conscious about when and how is that they are ready to start using the appropriate strategies to achieve their own goals.

Theory so far has shown that autonomous learning is very important to be considered in the curricula, however, theory and practice seem difficult to meet at the same time. Recent studies like Simon Borg and Saleh Al-Busaidi (2012), in which the participants were 10 teachers representing different nationalities, showed that there is a gap between the consciousness of the importance of promoting autonomy and the real promotion of it as the term is sometimes confused with independent learning. On the other hand, when autonomy meets theory and practice the results are positive. For example, Benson, (2001), cited in Pekkanli Egel, (2009, p. 2024) presents a variety of studies which show that learners, when provided with “opportunities to make decisions within the classroom” develop cognitive skills that significantly improve learning. In this way, the participants on these studies have control over aspects related to their learning, that, with the correct support, makes them successful learners.

To conclude, in this headline, it was discussed the origin of the concept of autonomy, definitions provided and what it requires according to different authors. Having all this information and for this study, autonomous will be conceived as a concept that involves taking charge of the learning process which, at the same time requires the active and high involvement of students in taking decisions over objectives, learning content, planning, monitoring, reasoning and evaluating learning, setting objectives and choosing the most suitable learning strategies or techniques that starts with motivation.

2.2 Misconceptions of autonomy

Thanks to different views and perceptions of autonomy, there has been a relationship and sometimes confusion between this term and others. Llaven- Nucamendi (2014) emphasizes six main concepts commonly related to autonomy, claiming there are some that differentiate from autonomy and others others very similar to the concept studied in this section. These terms,

according to Llaven-Nucamendi are individualization, self- instruction, self- direction, independent learning, self- regulation, learner centered education and self- access. Through this section, the differences and the relationship between autonomy and the terms that have been confused or sometimes taken as synonyms of autonomy are analyzed and discussed.

The first term to analyze is individualization. Llaven-Nucamendi considers three authors to define and analyze this term. Firstly, Dickinson (1987), implies that individualization refers to modes of learning in which the teacher is involved but not directly in control of the learning process. Secondly, from a different perspective, Chaix and Oneil (1978), claim that the characteristic of individualization is the adaptation of the learning process to a specific learner's characteristics. Llaven- Nucamendi (p. 27), concludes then, that individualization is an "approach to teaching and learning that takes learner differences into account but does not necessarily seek to develop autonomous learning capacities or allow learners to take control of their learning". In this way, the process of adaptation could only take into account the needs of a specific individual but, as Llaven-Nucamendi mentions, the main purpose is not to promote autonomy. Because of this, it can be concluded that individualization is a mode of learning and teaching in which the content is adapted to a learner depending on his or her characteristics rather than an ability that allows the individual to take charge of the process of learning.

The second concept to be analyzed is self- instruction. This term refers to the situation in which the learner decides to learn without the teacher being involved in the learning process (Dickinson, 1987 p. 11 cited in Llaven- Nucamendi, 2014). With this definition it can be said that, in self- instruction the individual can make crucial decisions but counselling would be left to the air. In this way, self- instruction enables learners to develop skills to have absolute control over their learning. This differs from autonomy since the main purpose is to develop the learner

motivation to be involved in the decisions regarding to the process of learning, however, the one monitoring the process to measure improvement, giving advice and providing a menu of activities and procedures to the students' willing, should be a tutor or a teacher, according to principles of autonomy development that are discussed in the next sections.

Self- direction is the third term in this compilation. Self- direction has been occasionally related to autonomy, and, in some cases, researchers have used these two words as synonyms (Llaven- Nucamendi, 2014, pp. 28- 29). Tudor (1996, pp. 26-27) sees self- direction as “the strategic and attitudinal traits of a learner who is able, or who is in the process of developing the ability to make informed decisions relative to his language learning, and who accepts the responsibility in a free and willing manner.” Then, it can be concluded that self- direction is similar to autonomy, as it has been defined emphasizing the importance of the control over the decisions a learner has to take in order to learn in a willing manner, meaning not being forced by anyone to do it.

Another important concept that has been involved in the same area is independent learning. Ryan and Deci (2006, in Llaven-Nucamendi, 2014, p.26) explain that independent learning is the situation that “does not necessarily imply having taken a conscious decision to do it”. Consequently, independent learning is not a decision that the learner takes by self- determination, then the decision to learn independently may be taken due to a specific situation or by someone else's choice. On the other hand, autonomy, as explained previously, is the capacity that allows students to decide how to learn (Little, 2004) and what methods, strategies and techniques to use (Barrantes & Olivares, 2013). Thus, independent learning is a situation in which the learner does not always participate actively in the process of decision making and autonomy is a learner decision.

Besides the previous terms, self- regulation is another concept narrowly related to autonomy. Llaven Nucamendi (2014, p. 29), defines self- regulation as “an integrated and constructive process developed by the learners and consists on the control of metacognitive, motivational and behavioral actions to pursue a set of goals in a specific environment.” In this definition, many of the elements that have come up with the definition of autonomous learning can be seen such as control of actions, motivation and the use of metacognitive skills, objective setting and a set of strategies to reach them. In addition, Ryan and Deci (2006) in their definition of Self-Determination Theory, conceive autonomy as the regulation by the self to self- governance” (Llaven-Nucamendi, 2016, p.29). Then self- regulation in Ryan and Deci’s view has to do with having control as well as Llaven-Nucamendi describes it. Then, it can be concluded that, different from the previous concepts, self- regulation can be used as a synonym of autonomy since both terms lead to the same purpose, focusing on a process which requires individuals to be motivated to take decisions over actions to achieve a goal.

The next concept is learner-centered education. For its own name, learner-centered education is another concept easy to compare to autonomy. Llaven-Nucamendi, explains that this methodology “may include individualization, self-direction, self-instruction, autonomy, and independence.” (2014, p. 30). Then, it can be said that autonomy is a component of this approach, not the complete idea itself. Llaven-Nucamendi also pinpoints that the role of the learner is crucial in this type of education, since it attempts to emphasize the role and the control learners must have in the process of learning. To conclude, learner-centered education is an idea that entails autonomy, meaning that autonomy is part of the whole that this approach is.

Finally, self- access may also be confused with autonomy. However, self-access is a resource that was born because of the need to help learners to become autonomous. In this way,

self-access refers to the idea “of providing individuals with didactic materials for self-instruction” having a tutor that supports the use of these materials, yet it does not guarantee autonomy (Llaven-Nucamendi, 2014, p. 30). As a result of this, self-access is a center that provides resources that help in the process of seeking autonomous learning.

Additionally, Nucamendi states the importance of recognizing what autonomy is and what it is not. Knowing this, she points out the importance of having what in math is called “common multiple” which refers to the same number as a basis for different numbers. This idea comes from the necessity of redefining autonomy as years go by, without overlooking the center of the theory (Little, 1999). As a result of this, according to Nucamendi, Little, established what autonomy is definitely not:

- Autonomy is NOT exclusively or primarily a matter of how learning is organized.
 - Autonomy does NOT require the teacher to relinquish all initiative, intervention and control.
 - Autonomy is NOT something that teachers do to learners. It is not a new methodology.
 - Autonomy is NOT a single easily described behaviour; autonomy can manifest itself in a very many different ways.
- (Little, 1999, cited in Llaven-Nucamendi, 2014 p. 32-33)

As it can be seen, Little (1999 in Llaven-Nucamendi 2014) stated a very clear framework in order to avoid losing the main point of autonomy. He considers that it is crucial to understand the essence of the organization of learning, the role of the teacher, the way autonomy should be conceived, how autonomy is a multifaceted concept, and the levels of autonomy in different areas.

Having the previous information, it can be said that autonomy has been easily confused with different terms. This is because they have some similarities, but they also differ from each other, being the most important aspects the intervention of the teacher, the conscious decision making that reflects the will and active involvement of an individual in the learning process. As a

result of this, it is imperative to understand the difference between autonomy and the concepts previously explained in order to have a clear idea of autonomy.

2.3 Autonomy as Capacity and Control

As it was explained in the paragraphs above, autonomy can be defined in different ways considering different elements related to metacognition. For instance, many of those definitions have two elements in common: capacity and control. Llaven-Nucamendi emphasizes the importance of these two parts of autonomy due to the way it can be measured. For instance, Holec, with his definition of autonomy: “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning... taking responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning” (1981, p.3), includes both elements: capacity and control, in which the ability is connected to the control that learners can have when taking charge of their own learning (Llaven-Nucamendi, p. 34).

Llaven-Nucamendi implies that the different definitions of autonomy may focus either on capacity or control. For example, Dam, whose definition of autonomy is “readiness to take charge of one’s own learning in the service of one’s needs and purposes. This entails a capacity and willingness to act independently and in cooperation with others as a socially responsible person.” Dam (1995, p. 1) uses words like “capacity”, “willingness” and “readiness” that, according to Llaven-Nucamendi, are considered as capacities too. Although many of the definitions provided by different authors are on the side of capacity, Llaven-Nucamendi suggests there might be problems to measure capacities since they are not completely observable.

On the other hand, autonomy as control can be more observable than as a capacity. This premise can be seen in Holec’s (1981) definition, as Llaven-Nucamendi sees it, since he focuses on “taking charge of one’s learning”. This way, it is easier to observe the process and result as

there is evidence such as journals, working plans, evaluations or portfolios. In addition, not only Holec paid attention to control but also authors like Dickinson (1987), Pierson (2014) and Riley (2014). In this way, having documents that can prove how much a learner has done regarding strategies and plans to follow is a way in which control can be measured.

To sum up, autonomy can be seen from two perspectives or as involving two important elements, capacity and control. On one hand it is found that autonomy can be seen as a capacity, which is more related to an ability, and, on the other hand, it can be seen as control that reflects how learning is organized and managed. It is important to mention that autonomy for this study is not conceived only from one perspective but from both combined since the development of autonomy requires the ability to do certain activities that require the control of learning.

2.4 The role of learners

Autonomy, as it is discussed in the previous headlines of this chapter, is the capacity to take charge over one's own learning. This premise, as it has been discussed, implies that individuals make different decisions and have certain attitudes regarding the process of learning that take them to have a specific role in it. About this, Llaven-Nucamendi (2014) claims that the fact of "accepting that learners have a role in learning" is accepting that they are "more than simply recipients of a service" (p.61). In this way, as described along with the definition of autonomy, having more participation or an active role in the process of learning is the most important principle of autonomy.

The role of the learner, according to Llaven-Nucamendi, has to do with consciousness. Thus, learners with an active role in the learning process "use conscious strategies in their learning [...] which in some cases may be linked to observable behaviors" (2014, p. 61) meaning that the

control they have over their learning is reflected in the decisions they take over learning. In addition, the same author claims that learners are not only aware of language, but they should also comprehend their own role in the learning process and what results the teacher and the institution require from them. Then, as learners should identify what they are required to do, they also have to recognize what the other actors in the process should offer learners such as teaching approaches and attitudes (Oxford R. L., 2014).

Moreover, Scharle and Szabo (2000 in Llaven-Nucamendi, 2014, p.63) mention some of the functions of learners. They claim that learners “may supply or choose materials and activities, self-evaluate, participate in organizing activities [...]”. With this information it is very clear what it is expected from learners to do, however, Horváthová, (2016) proposes a view which is more specific. This is Omaggio’s view (1978 cited in Horváthová, 2016 p. 125) who recognized 7 attributes that autonomous learners attend to. Thus, autonomous learners:

1. Have insights into their learning styles and strategies
2. Take an active approach to the learning task at hand,
3. Are willing to take risks -to communicate in the target language at all costs,
4. Are good guessers
5. Attend to form as well as to content, that is, place importance of accuracy as well as appropriacy,
6. Develop the target language into a separate reference system and are willing to revise and reject hypothesis and rules that do not apply,
7. Have a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language.

In conclusion, the role of the learners includes several of the aspects described in the section referring to the functions or the job of autonomous learners. In this headline, it was shown the main features of the process of having an active role as learners in the process of learning. These features include, firstly, the active role taking part of the decisions concerning the selection of materials and activities to do in order to achieve a learning outcome. Moreover, the active role

needs learners to be aware of what to expect from the institution and teachers regarding teaching approaches and attitudes as well as what they are expected to do. Finally, taking responsibility for their learning also requires learners to be motivated to take risks and use the language as much as they can in order to apply what has been learnt. To sum up, learners' role is not to be told what to do, but to make choices about what to do.

2.5 The role of teachers

Learning autonomy, as Huang (2006) defines it as “negotiation between teacher and learner”. With this definition, it can be implied that the teacher is not the one in charge of every aspect of the learning process, but that there is a shared responsibility with the learners. As it was discussed in the section of differences between autonomy and related concepts, the teacher in different situations such as independent learning is taken out from the process of learning, however, in the pursuit of autonomous learning, the participation of a teacher or tutor is essential (Farmer, 2006) although they have a specific role. As a matter of fact, in order to create an autonomous learning environment in the class, the teacher, as some authors like Farmer (2006), Gremmo (2009), Mynard (2011), Barrantes and Olivares, (2013) and Asadinik and Mirza, (2015) describe the attitudes and actions teachers or tutors have to take in order to help learners to be autonomous.

Firstly, Farmer (2006) claims that teachers should be learning supporters by carrying out “administrative and managerial functions” (cited in Llaven-Nucamendi, 2013, p. 64-65). These functions have to do with curriculum design, evaluation procedures, goals setting, further recommendations about the process of learning, “providing access to support services” (Farmer, 2006 p. 64-65), etc. In this way, the teacher is seen as a supervisor of the process and, also, a resource for learning in case of questions and doubts about the aspects described. In this

perspective, the teacher stops having total control over students' learning to become "an instructor or supervisor in the learning process" (Zhuang, 2010, p. 593). Another author that describes the importance of the teacher involved in the learning process is Gremmo (2009) who calls the role of the teacher "language advising". According to Gremmo, language advising refers to "a pedagogical device based on human interaction" (Llaven-Nucamendi, 2013, p. 66) and its purpose is to ease the process of decision making in order to get "conscious and meaningful choices" (p. 66). From this perspective, the teacher is not just a supervisor but an advisor that learners can trust in to take the best choices according to their needs.

Talking about some specific actions that learning advisors should accomplish, Mynard, (2011), proposes a list of ten functions. In this way, teachers or tutors should pay attention to "raising awareness of the language learning process, guiding learners, helping learners to identify goals, suggesting suitable materials by offering choices (rather than prescribing activities), motivating, supporting and encouraging self-directed learners, helping learners to self- evaluate and reflect, assisting students in discovering how they best learn, actively listen to learners and helping learners to talk through their own problems." (Llaven- Nucamendi, 2014, p. 67). From this list, it can be seen that it should not be expected that students already know how they best learn, but teachers must make sure learners know it by walking them through the way of discovering their learning styles. From the same view, Asadinik and Mirza (2015, p. 42) enlist different ways in which teachers should help learners. Thus, teachers need

- to teach students according to their own choice,
- to teach students to plan their progression, divide their duties and time,
- to teach students ways to motivate themselves,
- to teach students how to self-evaluate.

In this way, these authors focus more on time management and organization of the content more than in the content itself. However, with all the points in which all the authors previously cited view the teachers role, it can be concluded that they are the advisors in terms of giving advise learners to help them take decisions over materials and strategies but also be a mentor, with the purpose of guiding learners through the correct path in order to help them to evaluate procedures and setting objectives; in addition, the teacher is also a tutor to motivate learners in order to provide extrinsic stimulation to help learners get their goals.

2.6 Readiness and Awareness in autonomy

As some authors have suggested, there are different aspects that must be considered in order to help students in the process of becoming autonomous. One of them is to know whether learners are in the correct position and to know how conscious they are to get in touch with this methodology of learning.

Readiness, as Chan, (2003), cited in Yildirim (2008, p. 67), sees it, refers to how prepared “students seem to take on the autonomous learning conditions and opportunities”. In this way, readiness is the first step to take in order to identify if students are in an adequate point to develop autonomy successfully. Rungwaraphong (2012), says that autonomy is known in terms of theory, but it is difficult to take it into practice. For this reason, he concludes that both teachers and learners are not completely prepared to use new methodologies like autonomous learning. In addition, Sönmez, (2016), claims that the purpose of identifying how ready learners are to be autonomous would ease the application of this methodology. Also, the results of his study on the level of readiness of Turkish University students showed that learners ready to foster autonomy are the ones that are intrinsically motivated to be successful. Moreover, in Rungwaraphong’s study, it was shown that the “Students perceive their teachers in a traditional way”, (p. 38), in other words, the

one in charge of the activities to carry on was the teacher. Also, the study revealed that students did not “take on an active part in the learning process” (p. 38), and that “students do not sufficiently employ learning strategies” (p. 38), that are part of becoming autonomous. With this data, it can be concluded that, a student ready to be autonomous should first, be motivated to success; secondly, the learner should understand who has to be in charge of the learning process, and, for instance, should know how to be active in this process as well as to identify the learning strategies that fit better for him/her.

On the other hand, Barrantes and Olivares (2013) recognize awareness as one of the three key elements which autonomy depends on. These authors explain that awareness is developed “through the use of conscious mechanisms” (p. 336). In other words, awareness refers to a level of mindfulness about processes that, in this case, refer to learning. This can be seen in the definition of autonomy of Little (2004), “learning how to learn intentionally”, implying that students should be aware of “techniques, strategies, motivation, strengths and weaknesses” of their own learning (Barrantes & Olivares, 2013, p. 327). It can be concluded that awareness is one of the most important elements in the process of autonomy development as it encourages learners to pay more attention to the learning activity in order to identify how the process works and use it for their own convenience.

2.7 Characteristics of an autonomous learner

Through the previous paragraphs it was discussed the definition of autonomy, the difference with other concepts and some key elements in the development of autonomy. Based on this information, the characteristics of an autonomous learner and what each of them imply are explained in the following part.

With the definitions explain in the first paragraphs of this second chapter, and being based on the premise that autonomy is the ability “to take charge of one’s own learning” it can be said that an autonomous learner is an “independent decision maker” (Ertürk, 2016 p. 651), who is able to control (Rivers & Golonka, 2009, in Duong & Seepho, 2017) the content and the actions regarding to his own learning in order to achieve a goal. For this, an autonomous individual has “reflective involvement” (Barrantes & Olivares, 2013, p. 327) in the learning process, this is directly related to motivation, the inner will an individual has to do something because he wishes to. In addition, the autonomous student is able to understand “the factors influencing the learning process” (Zou, 2011, in Oruç, 2016, p. 651) which reflect a certain level of awareness that, at the same time is linked to meta-cognitive skills. So far, it can be said that an autonomous individual in learning makes independent decisions over how to control learning, for instance is highly involved in it and is aware of the factors that influence it.

Another important characteristic of autonomous learners is their ability to recognize the importance of sharing responsibility with teachers regarding to aspects related to the learning process. Barrantes and Olivares argue that the teacher is still involved in the process of learning “as an indirect and supportive agent” (2013, p. 329). This statement can be delicate if the definition of autonomy is not clear or the difference with other concepts is not well defined. For this reason, it is necessary to understand that, sharing control over learning does not mean that the teacher has to control the whole process but to act as a monitor that supervises the learning development working as an “instructor or supervisor” (Barrantes & Olivares, 2013, p. 329) for the learner in order to provide advice about the materials and learning strategies in order to make improvements in the learning outcomes. To sum up, a learner that exercises autonomy is the one that can make decisions knowing that he/she has a tutor to ask for advice in case of doubt.

Finally, an autonomous learner is the one who can “transfer the ability to control the learning process so as to be able to perform successfully in real- life communication outside the classroom” (Oruç, 2016, p. 652). In this way, the characteristics not only focus on the manner of walking to the process, but on the product. Little, with this statement suggests that an autonomous learner is highly likely to succeed in communicating in real life, that is, to put into practice and achieve the goals settled in the process of learning. Thus, the quality of learning can be measured by the quality of performance students in real contexts by applying the theory already acquired.

2.8 Levels of autonomous learning

In the previous headlines it has been discussed different aspects regarding autonomy, but how can the learners’ level of autonomy be defined? In order to measure autonomy, various models have been proposed (Littlewood, 1996; Nunan, 1997; Scharle, Szabó, & Ur, 2000) to identify the characteristics of a learner that correspond to different levels of development (Dang, 2012). In addition, these models define different aspects depending on the perspective that they focus on, for example, control areas, competences and stages of development.

Abdelrazeq, (2018) developed a detailed rubric that is divided in four levels. This rubric, according to Abdelrazeq, was based on “Tassinari’s (2012) description of each activity” (p. 730) in order to identify the level of autonomy of senior non-native students in the Birzeit University in Palestine. In this study, the author used the rubric in order to categorize the participants into different levels going from “emerging” to “advanced”. In this model, it can be seen that different “autonomous activities” are described according to what the learners are able to do depending on a level. As it can be seen in Table 2.1, the frequency with which the subject does the activities described indicate a level, in this way, the adverb “always” indicates an advanced level of autonomy. However, similarly to the model proposed by Nunan, it is very likely that the

individuals show an advanced level in some activities and intermediate or beginning levels in others. Thus, it can be concluded that autonomy can be measured by specific areas or in general or average as it is done in this study.

Table 2.1
Students' Autonomous Levels Rubric

Autonomous Activity	Advanced Level	Intermediate Level	Beginning Level	Emerging
Motivating oneself	Learners always have the will to learn autonomously.	Learners sometimes have the will to learn autonomously. They sometimes motivate themselves.	Learners rarely have the will to learn autonomously. They rarely motivate themselves.	Learners never have the will to learn autonomously. They never motivate themselves.
Controlling one's feelings	Learners always effectively control their feeling while learning.	Learners sometimes effectively control their feelings while learning.	Learners rarely effectively control their feelings while learning.	Learners never effectively control their feelings while learning.
Recognizing one's own needs and setting goals.	Learner always effectively recognizes one's own needs, formulate them into realistic learning objectives, and structure them into steps and create a learning plan.	Learner sometimes recognizes one's own needs, formulate them into realistic learning objectives, and structure them into steps and create a learning plan.	Learner rarely recognizes one's own needs, formulate them into realistic learning objectives, and structure them into steps and create a learning plan.	Learner never recognizes one's own needs, formulate them into realistic learning objectives, and structure them into steps and create a learning plan.
Choosing materials and methods.	Learner always chooses and works with suitable learning materials, methods and strategies.	Learner sometimes chooses and works with suitable learning materials, methods and strategies.	Learner rarely chooses and works with suitable learning materials, methods and strategies.	Learner never chooses and works with suitable learning materials, methods and strategies.
Completing tasks	Learner always organizes time to learn and completes tasks.	Learner sometimes organizes time to learn and completes tasks.	Learner rarely organizes time to learn and completes tasks.	Learner never organizes time to learn and completes tasks.
Reflecting	Learner always reflects on topics, tasks, learning process, and thinks about oneself as a learner.	Learner sometimes reflects on topics, tasks, learning process, and thinks about oneself as a learner.	Learner rarely reflects on topics, tasks, learning process, and thinks about oneself as a learner.	Learner never reflects on topics, tasks, learning process, and thinks about oneself as a learner.
Self-evaluation	Learner always evaluates his/ her competencies and progress.	Learner sometimes evaluates his/ her competencies and progress.	Learner rarely evaluates his/ her competencies and progress.	Learners never evaluates his/ her competencies and progress.
Cooperating	Learner always learns with and from others.	Learner sometimes learns with and from others.	Learner rarely learns with and from others.	Learner never learns with and from others.
Managing one's own learning	Learner always connects all aspects of the learning process and summarizes important steps and phases of autonomous learning from other areas.	Learner sometimes connects all aspects of the learning process and summarizes important steps and phases of autonomous learning from other areas.	Learner rarely connects all aspects of the learning process and summarizes important steps and phases of autonomous learning from other areas.	Learner never connects all aspects of the learning process and summarizes important steps and phases of autonomous learning from other areas.
Structuring knowledge	Learner always structures all autonomous learning phases and activities.	Learner sometimes structures all autonomous learning phases and activities.	Learner rarely structures all autonomous learning phases and activities.	Learner never structures all autonomous learning phases and activities.

Source: Abdelrazeq (2018)

2.9 Autonomy in the Mexican Context

As described in the previous paragraphs, autonomy is a concept that definitely depends on how it is conceived in order to be applied. For this reason, the researcher finds relevant to describe how autonomy has evolved in Mexico.

To begin with, autonomy came to Mexico along with the Self-Access Centers (SAC) which origin was explain at the beginning of this chapter. According to Bravo (2021) the self-access centers “appeared in Mexico in the early 90’s and they have been present since then in the agenda of this country universities” (np). This information is important, since, SAC’s started taking place in Europe in the 70’s, this means that after twenty years, due to the political and economic problems Mexico was going through, these centers, the idea of autonomy and independent learning arrived to this country. As Bravo describes it, the Secretaria de Educación Pública (SEP) and the British Council, together brought the idea of Self-Access Centers as a project that involved several stages and which intention was to promote “the development of autonomous learning” (Bravo, 2012, np.). In this way, Mexico went from a focus on translation to the promotion of learners “becoming competent users of the language” (Hamilton, 2013, p. 6). As stated by Hamilton, this change in the teaching dynamic had resulted “more difficult to achieve in practice” (p. 6), since the philosophy learners had had for so many years was totally different before programs involving autonomy development.

As mentioned before, due to the late adoption of autonomous learning in the curriculum, Mexico is not a country that contributes enough with studies about this concept. Then, even though several institutions in Mexico, like the one involved in this study, have educational philosophies

related to the development of autonomy, there is not much information about this topic. As a matter of fact, Llaven-Nucamendi in 2013, mentions that one possible reason why Central and South America have not produced much information about autonomy is that, these countries have very little economic power. Moreover, it is important to highlight what was said in Chapter I: in Mexico, part of the educational culture is to have dependent learners and traditional teaching, especially in language learning. Some evidence of this about the ideology of autonomous learning that was starting to spread in the country, is provided by Clemente (1998), who expressed that Mexico was acting cautiously because of “the incapacity of the education system to adequately support schools in their exercise of autonomy” (p. 575).

Besides these problems, Mexico is a country, that, as illustrated by Hamilton, (2013), has low levels of English learning at different stages of education. Then, although there are several Self-Access Centers across the country, Hamilton explains that they are not used by students. This attitudes towards SAC’s may be the result of several reasons, one of them is, as explained previously, that, as Mexico comes from a very traditional way of teaching and passive roles for learning, students do not seem to be very interested in being autonomous. Another problem seen by an analysis of English learning in Latin America (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017), is that countries like Mexico have established very high and ambitious expectations from their students. An example of this is what is seen in the Facultad de Lenguas, the institution in which this project is carried out: Students, after taking their classes related to English Learning should be able to reach a B2 level, however, as showed by simulations of tests like First Certificate by Cambridge, they do not reach this level. This can be the result of several issues, then, deficient autonomy development may be one. To conclude, even though institutions provide students with centers to

practice autonomy, many of them seem to be not aware of the importance of autonomy and how it works.

Conclusion

Through this chapter, different conceptions of autonomy and concepts related to this issue were discussed. Firstly, the history of autonomy was reviewed and its definitions as well as its importance in the development of individuals to be ready to face the real-world situations. In addition, as autonomy has been compared and confused with different concepts, the differences between autonomy other concepts were explained, as well as the characteristics of autonomous learners, the roles of teachers and learners, the levels to measure autonomy in order to understand clearly what teachers and learners are expected to do in the process of autonomy development as well as how autonomy started and how it is conceived in Mexico.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Through this chapter the method that was followed to conduct this research is revised. Also, the context in which this research takes place and the specifications of it are described as well as the characteristics of the participants. Moreover, the procedures to collect data in order to answer the research questions are presented and the process followed to analyze the data obtained is described.

3.1 Approach

In order to achieve these research objectives, a qualitative research was conducted. According to Creswell (2012, p. 16), qualitative research is made for “exploring a problem and developing a detailed understanding of a central phenomenon”. Then, with this type of research, the researcher had the possibility of learning more about the issue in which this investigation is based. In addition, Kothari (2004), explains that qualitative research is vital for behavioral sciences that intend to understand why humans behave the way they do. Regarding to the data collection, according to Creswell (2012), it focuses on perceptions and experiences of the subjects which help the researcher to interpret the studied phenomenon in specific contexts, something important since the context, in every case, plays a vital role in the way a phenomenon develops.

In addition, Creswell also explains that this type of research intends to find out “more from participants through exploration” (2012, p. 16). Then, qualitative research enables investigators to get data about what characteristics the participants have, what they like and the reasons behind

this. Following this idea, Kothari (2004), states that this approach allows the researcher to “analyze the various factors which motivate people to behave in a particular manner” (p. 3). With all this, a qualitative research was used to get more information about the participants and the reasons why they act in a specific way, since as it was indicated in Chapter 1 of this paper, the main objective is to know what the students’ perception about autonomy is, their level of autonomy and to identify, based on their experiences and the problems they may encounter in the development of autonomy.

3.2 Design

As the main purpose of this research is to recognize learners’ perceptions about autonomy and the factors influencing its development, an exploratory research design was conducted. Although there is not a broad discussion about this type of research (Swedberg, 2018), it is known that these designs are used to collect data in order to have a better understanding of a topic because there is not much previous information about it.

According to Singh (2007), the exploratory “is the initial research which forms the basis of more conclusive research” (p. 64). In this way, in order to come up with solutions to solve a problem it is necessary to know more about the main issue and this first step is usually done by conducting an exploratory research. Following this idea, Stebbins (2001) claims that this kind of investigation is carried on when it is necessary to “examine a thing or idea for diagnostic purposes” (p.2). Besides this, Swedberg, 2018, argues that one of the two forms of this type of design seeks to “produce new ideas and hypotheses” (p. 2–3). Likewise, Reiter (2017, p. 139), affirms that an exploratory research helps investigators to “make sense” of the reality of the issue by looking at different angles of it. Thus, exploratory research enables investigators to understand a topic by seeing different angles of it in order to provide a basis for action research. To conclude, the

exploration of perceptions, which is the purpose of this inquiry, allowed the researcher to discover information about autonomy in the academic life of the participants in order to identify the perceptions they have about autonomy and factors involved in the process of autonomy development.

3.3 Setting

This study is carried out at Facultad de Lenguas, a campus belonging to the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. The educational model followed by this institution, namely, Modelo Universitario Minerva, is based on constructivism that, according to Wang (2011, p. 273), is “the basic theory behind autonomy” and basically says that “learners are the builders and creators of meaning and knowledge” (Wang, 2011, p. 274). This means that the philosophy of this university is to provide the professional field autonomous individuals, in other words, learners should develop autonomy (Modelo Educativo-Académico 2: Modelo Universitario Minerva, 2007).

3.4 Participants

The participants are 20 students attending to Facultad de Lenguas where they study the English Teaching major. This major trains individuals to become English teachers that, according to the graduate- profile of this institution, are able to identify the most recent methodologies in order to promote effective learning. The participants ages are between 19 and 26 years old and the group is formed by 5 males and 15 females.

3.5 Sampling

The subjects studied in this research are part of a non- probability sampling. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), the participants of a study selected by a non-probability sampling method are the ones that are “purposely selected” (p. 110). Likewise, Kothari (2004), mentions that the purpose of doing this, is to choose the elements according to what suits better for the study or which outcomes may result favorable.

Thus, following this sampling procedure, in order to be chosen to participate in this study, the subjects accomplish certain characteristics. Firstly, as it was mentioned before, the participants of this study are studying a major in English Teaching, for this research it was decided to focus on individuals in their second year since, at this point, they have already taken classes related to language teaching such as “Learning Theories and Processes”, and “English Teaching Methodology”. Due to this, the subjects are starting to be aware of teaching techniques that require them to be autonomous. Thus, in this point, the individuals may be able to identify different attitudes and actions that learners and teachers should have regarding learning. This is important as autonomy would not be a brand-new concept and information would be more revealing to explore their perceptions about autonomy development.

In sum, the participants of this study were selected purposely, focusing on the ones that might provide favorable results for the research in order to get information about the level of awareness they have and, the factors involved in the process of autonomy development.

In this specific faculty two majors are found, English Language Teaching and French Language Teaching. As this study focused on the English area, the participants are identified as pre- service English teachers. The objective of this major’s curriculum is to prepare highly competent teachers

who domain the language, in a B2 level, as a minimum, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, as well as the English culture (Programa Educativo de la Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés, 2009). In addition, students at the end of this major, should be able to develop “critical abilities in communicative events” (Programa Educativo de la Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés, 2009, p. 27) as well as be able to apply different strategies and techniques to teach the language in different contexts and levels. Besides this, the curriculum states that learners should be involved in the teaching- learning process, it means, to develop autonomy in order to practice their cognitive skills to improve learning quality.

3.6 Techniques

In order to accomplish the objectives of this research, a questionnaire and an interview are used as the techniques to collect the data necessary. Then, the process of data collection is divided in two phases: firstly, a questionnaire is administered and, secondly it is planned to conduct an interview. In the following headings each instrument is described.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

As this study intends to know more about the factors involved in autonomy development, it was also necessary to explore what participants know about autonomy and their level of autonomy. The purpose of doing this is to contextualize the issue being studied and to get information from the students who get the highest levels of autonomy in learning. For this reasons, it was necessary to use a questionnaire to answer the first and second research question of this study.

Barr, Davis and Johnson in Kothari (2004, p. 57), define a questionnaire as “a systematic compilation of questions that are submitted to a sampling of population from which information is

desired”. This is important for this study, as it is intended to know, firstly how the individuals conceive autonomy in learning and their level of autonomy and, secondly, measure their level of autonomy.

Due to the social situation that is happening at the moment of carrying out this study in the world, in which people is isolated because of COVID19, it is planned to administer a questionnaire sent through email. The advantages of using this type of questionnaire, according to Kothari (2004, p. 101) are, for example, that “Respondents, who are not easily approachable, can also be reached conveniently”. In this way, with access to internet, the participants can be able to answer the questionnaire having no inconveniences due to distance.

As previously mentioned, the questionnaire (Instrument A) is intended to get data to answer the first and second research questions, due to this, it is divided in three parts. The first part seeks to get general data about the participants, the second section, named “Students’ definition of autonomy” has the purpose of gathering information about how is that participants conceive autonomy, this corresponds to the first research question. And, lastly, the third part, “Autonomy level”, seeks to measure the subjects’ current level of autonomy, which will be useful to choose the most suitable participants for the second phase for this research.

To begin with, in the first part of the questionnaire, the participants are asked to write general information. In this section they write their names, age, their cell number and whether they have taken a Certification test. For the second part, the subjects are expected to write their own definition about autonomy. This has the purpose of identifying if students are aware of this term and whether they can define autonomy, or they have misconceptions about. After this, students move on to the “Autonomy Test”, which is composed by 40 statements related to autonomous and dependent

behaviors. This Autonomy test was adapted from Hamid Gholami (2016), used in his research “Self-Assessment and Learner Autonomy” in which the author measured learners’ autonomy. The structure used in the questionnaire is also based in Gholami’s ideas, however some changes were made, and the process of data analysis was different. This questionnaire was originally composed by 44 items divided in nine dimensions which are related to autonomous learning (See Table 3.1) Then, these dimensions represent different attitudes towards learning and actions to be taken in order to develop autonomous learning. Moreover, Gholami uses a Likert scale using numbers where 5 represents “Always True” and 1 “Never True” to the rank the statements.

As it was said before, with the purpose of adapting the questionnaire, some modifications were made. The changes that were made are related to the number of items, the words used in each of them and the number of dimensions as well as the format in which it is presented. In this way, some of the statements were changed in order to be more understandable and others excluded because of relevance.

Regarding to the dimensions, it was necessary to adjust them. As a result of this, the relationship of the new items to each dimension was analyzed in order to review the categorization. After the analysis, it was decided to add a new dimension (highlighted in Table 3.1) named “Metacognition”, an important concept that reflects awareness of mental processes in order to improve learning. Also, to reduce the extension of the questionnaire, the third and fourth dimensions originally proposed by Gholami were combined.

Table 3.1

Dimensions of Autonomous Learning

Dimension	# of items (Original)	# of items (Adapted)	Focus
Dimension 1	5 items	5 items	Readiness for Self- Direction
Dimension 2	6 items	6 items	Independent work in Language Learning
Dimension 3	12 items	11 items	Importance of Class/ Teacher
Dimension 4	5 items	5 items	Language Learning Activities Outside the Class
Dimension 5	3 items	2 items	Selecting Content
Dimension 6	1 item	1 item	Intrinsic Motivation
Dimension 7	4 items	4 items	Assessment/ Motivation
Dimension 8		2 items	Metacognition
Dimension 9	4 items	4 items	Interest in Other Cultures

Source: Adapted from Gholami (2016)

Moreover, in order to rate the statements, the original questionnaire uses a Likert Scale representing frequency with numbers. Nevertheless, in order to ease the process of data analysis, this scale was reduced only to three options: “Always True”, “Sometimes True” and “Never True” and, instead of numbers, it was decided to give participants options to choose one of these

frequency adverbs to rate the statements. Moreover, each of the items corresponds, firstly, to an attitude and, secondly, to one of the dimensions defined in Table 3.1.

Overall, a questionnaire is applied for the first phase of this study's process of data gathering. This questionnaire is divided in three parts and its purpose is to get firstly, general information about the participants, their definition of autonomy to know how much the participants know about it and their autonomy level to contextualize the main issue and choose participants for the second part of the study in order to get information to answer the first and second research questions of the research.

3.6.2 Interview

After the questionnaire, the second phase includes an unstructured interview. This interview is conducted as the second phase of this study to get detailed information from the participants, taking into account their responses in the first phase of this study, about the factors influencing autonomy development according to their experience and perception.

Creswell (2012, p. 217) defines an interview as a process in which “researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers [...] transcribes and types the data into a computer file for analysis.”. In addition, Kothari (2004, p. 97) claims that an interview “involves presentation of oral- verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral- verbal responses”. In this way, an interview is the process of data collection in which the researcher orally asks questions to the participants who respond also verbally. Moreover, the interview used for this research was conducted by a video or phone call since it was more convenient for the researcher to orally elicit specific information needed from the participants in case there were any problems

for the subject to answer effectively, as Creswell and Kothari indicate this is one of the advantages of performing interviews.

Besides this advantage, Kothari (2004, p. 98) also states that, by using an interview, the researcher may get access to “more information that too in greater depth can be obtained”. Thus, detailed information could be collected about the subjects’ perception regarding the elements in their learning environment that affect autonomous learning, which is the data that this interview intended to obtain.

Then, with the purpose of getting information for the last and most important research question, an unstructured interview was conducted (Instrument B). This interview is the second phase of this study, and it intended to find out information about what the participants consider the factors influencing autonomy development are, according to their own experience.

Instrument B is composed by twenty questions based on the interviewee answers in the questionnaire. Basically, this instrument was personalized as it was adapted to the interviewee previous answers to know the reasons why they chose the option they did. In this way, it could be known what the factors that have an impact over autonomy development are, depending on each participant’s experience. Another important aspect of this interview is that it was conducted in the native language of participants to avoid misconceptions or language barriers to communicate ideas.

The interview is divided in questions regarding to motivation to learn a language, learning style, learning strategies and importance of autonomy development as well as questions about the answers provided in the questionnaire used in the first phase of the study. More specifically, the topics appraised in the interview are related to the personal motivation the participants have to learn English since it shows the intrinsic strength they have to learn and, it could be seen, based

on this, how much effort and interest they invest in learning. Besides this, the participants were asked about their awareness of their learning style and the strategies they use when learning. Moreover, the subjects were asked about their responses to some items in the questionnaire regarding to the responsibility they had in the process of learning and in the class content. Then, the participants were asked about who they think is responsible for autonomy development and what the reasons why some students look for other ways of learning and other do not are, according to their perspective. Finally, the interviewer questioned the subjects whether they considered important developing autonomy and why.

As a conclusion, the second part of the study is an interview, Instrument B. This 20 questions interview intends to gather information to answer the third research question related to the factors that, based on the students' perspective, have effect on autonomy development.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

In order to collect the necessary data to answer this study's research questions, it was needed to ask the participants to provide an answer to the questionnaire previously described by e-mail. In this way, time and availability are not a significant problem neither for the subjects or the researcher.

Once the questionnaire is answered and sent to the researcher, students' responses were analyzed. The first part of the questionnaire, in which students wrote their perception about autonomy, was analyzed by generating three categories for answers to be examined as the process of "coding" indicates: "Complete Idea", "Incomplete Idea" and "Misconception". The following table determines the characteristics that had to be met by participants' definitions in order to be classified in each of them, based on the information presented about autonomy and the concepts

that autonomy compares to in Chapter II. It is important to mention that the first four requirements listed in the “Complete Idea” column are considered to be the most important to be included in students’ definitions.

Table 3.2

Categories for Definitions of Autonomy in Learning

Complete idea	Incomplete Idea	Misconception
Participant includes: -Decision making over the learning process -student intervention in the learning process -metacognition -use of learning strategies	Participant includes: -Less than 3 of the elements in “Complete idea”	Participant includes: -Defines individualization -Defines self- instruction -Defines independent learning -Defines learner centered education -Defines self- access

For the second part of this instrument, referring to the level of autonomy, the subjects’ responses were separated in the ones that showed autonomous behaviors and dependent attitudes. Depending on their results, they were categorized in four categories: “Advanced”, “Intermediate”, “Beginning” and “Emerging” level.

Having the participants’ results, and being already located in a category, then the participants with the highest points in the autonomy test were chosen for the next phase: the interview. In this way, they were interviewed, and the answers were recorded to be transcribed later. After the answers were transcribed, they are analyzed, creating different categories to determine the factors.

3.7.1 Piloting

As Kothari (2004, p. 101) states it, the piloting of a survey is important as it “brings to the light the weaknesses (if any) of the questionnaires”. In this way, the piloting gives the researcher the chance to improve different aspects of the questionnaire and interview and avoid errors in the data collection. With this as a precedent, the questionnaire was tested with 7 students with the same characteristics as the real subjects participating in this study to be sure they would not have problems to understand the items and the desired data was collected. After the piloting, it was necessary to add a space for the participants to write their names as it was necessary to see who answered the questionnaire. This, due to the way the questionnaire was applied which was through Google Forms, that, does not provide the name of the person who answers the forms and it would cause a problem to contact a specific person. Besides this, in the same section, the subjects are asked to write if they have taken any Certification Exam, but it was observed that some of them got confused when asked about the certification exams and whether they should consider simulation exams or not. Because of this, it was necessary to add in this part that they have to specify if the exam was a real certification or a simulator.

For the second section it was necessary to make changes as well. In this way, it was noticed that, where the subjects are asked to write down what autonomy is, they defined autonomy in general and, as the purpose is to focus on autonomy in learning, it was necessary to specify for participants to explain in their own words what autonomy in the learning context is.

Finally, the third section, where the autonomy level is determined, also had changes. Originally, this set of questions had five options, but it was seen that, when analyzing the answers

per participant to determine the autonomy level, the process got complicated. Because of this, it was decided to offer participants only three options to facilitate the process of answers counting.

Besides, the interview was also piloted in order to ensure that the responses could be reliable and accurate for answering the last research questions. It is important to mention that, before piloting this interview it was revised by the teacher directing this project. Then, after this, the interview was tested with two students with the same characteristics as the real participants. With this first try it was noticed that when asked about the importance of autonomy development, the participants described autonomy in general terms, so, in the real application of this interview it must be explained that they should focus on autonomy development in learning.

As a conclusion, after the piloting and revision of these instruments, it was seen that some improvements could be made. Then, after these changes, it was seen that the information collected was relevant and enough to successfully answer this study's questions.

3.8 Data Analysis

In order to organize and analyze the data collected by the questionnaire, a coding process was followed. Kothari (2004, p. 123), defines coding as “the process of assigning numerals or other symbols to answers so that responses can be put into a limited number of categories or classes”. In this way, following this procedure, it was intended to, firstly, classify the answers participants provide about their definition of autonomy into different categories to analyze who knew what autonomy is and who did not. Besides, with the results about the autonomy test, the information was also classified into the participants that were autonomous, the ones that had an initiative to be autonomous and the ones that were dependent. Regarding to the second instrument, the interview, the same process was followed: dividing the answers into labels to know what the

factors that seemed to have an impact over autonomy development. This, according to Kothari (2004), has the purpose of making the analysis more efficient in order to use only the necessary data to answer the research questions and, as Creswell (2012, p. 243) explains it, to “disregard other data that do not specifically provide evidence” for the study.

Conclusion

Through this chapter, the description of the main characteristics of the subjects that participate in this study as well as the context they were in were analyzed. It was seen then that the participants are students preparing to be English Language teachers which means they are in contact with information regarding to teaching and learning methodologies of English as a foreign language. In addition, the instruments used as well as the procedure to analyze the data were presented. Firstly, the questionnaire, which involves three sections: general information, students' perception of autonomy and a Learner Autonomy Test and, secondly, a semi-structured interview to find out the factors that may influence autonomy development. The information collected from the questionnaire in the first part was evaluated by making categories and the second by analyzing the answer to questions that reflected autonomous or dependent behaviors. After this, the participants with the highest autonomy levels were selected to continue with the second phase of the study: the interview. In this, the subjects were asked about their personal motivation to learn English, awareness of learning processes, importance of autonomy development and the reason behind their answers in the questionnaire. With these tools and procedure, it is intended to collect information to answer the research questions for this study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter involves the presentation of the results obtained. This section then, goes back to the questions that were stated at the beginning of this project to remind what the purpose of this study is. This is followed by the results obtained from the questionnaire, the information collected from the interview, and finally, the discussion of the results regarding the research questions.

Firstly, in order to remember the information, the research questions are presented again. Due to some interesting characteristics observed in the population of LEI students by the researcher, this study intended to find out:

1. How do LEI students conceive autonomy?
2. What is LEI students' level of autonomy?
3. According to LEI students' own experience, what are the factors involved in autonomy development?

The data collection for this study was divided into two phases: the first phase included answering the questionnaire and, the second phase involved an interview to the students who got the highest levels of autonomy in the first phase. In the following sections, the results of each part and phase of the data collection procedure are presented.

4.1 Results from Instrument A: Questionnaire.

With Instrument A, it was possible to get data to answer the first and second research questions. The results for these three parts are specified below.

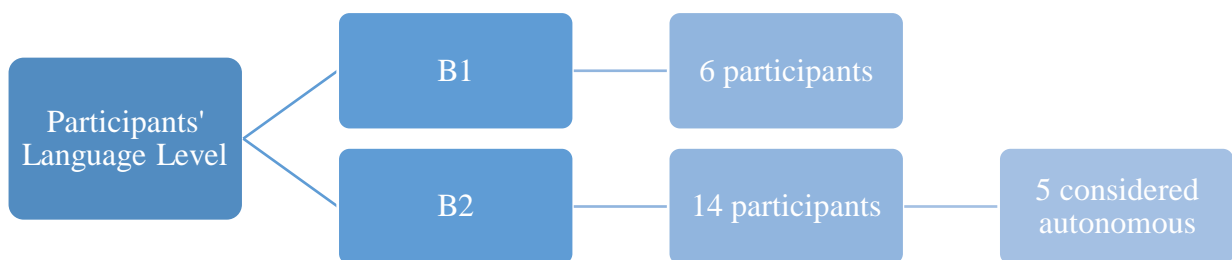
4.1.1 Part 1: Participants' General Information

Even though the subjects were previously described in a general way, more information about them was collected after applying the first instrument which is presented in this section.

The data gathered showed relevant information about the participants' language level and regarding certifications. To begin, when they were asked about their language level, there were only two different answers: B1 and B2. Something to highlight is that 5 of the participants who consider they have a B2 level turned out to be the most autonomous learners of the group and they were selected for the second phase of the study.

Figure 4.1

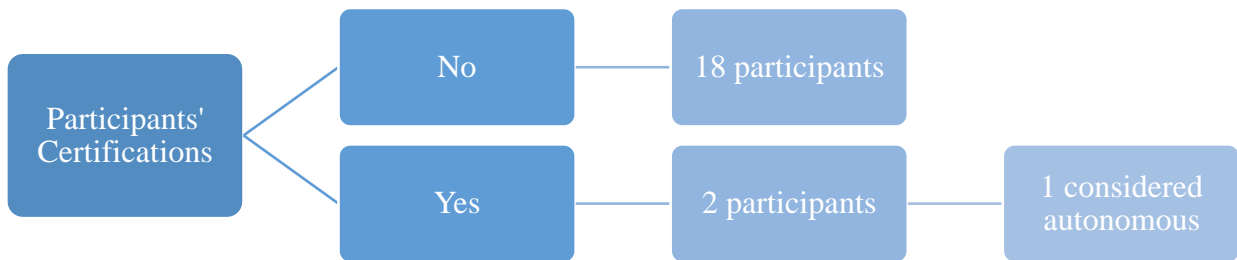
Participants' Language Level



Moreover, participants were asked about certifications. With this it was found that 18 participants had not taken a language certification exam and that only 2 participants had. It is worth mentioning that 1 of these 2 participants was classified in the group of the autonomous learners, based on the results from the questionnaire that measured participants' autonomy level. as shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2

Participants' Answers Regarding Certifications



4.1.2 Part 2: Participants' Definition of Autonomy

In this part, participants were asked to write what they considered autonomy in learning is. For this, following the process of coding, participants' answers were analyzed and classified in three categories: "Complete idea", "Incomplete idea" and "Misconception". The results that were obtained are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Definition of Autonomy in Learning: Classification Results

Category Participant	Complete Idea	Incomplete Idea	Misconception	Category Participant	Complete Idea	Incomplete Idea	Misconception
1		X		11			X
2			X	12		X	
3			X	13	X		
4		X		14			X
5		X		15			X
6			X	16			X
7		X		17		X	
8		X		18			X
9			X	19		X	
10		X		20	X		

In this table, it can be observed that only 2 participants provided a complete definition. In this way, only two of them were able to define autonomy in learning considering the most important elements of this concept. In addition to this, it is seen that 9 students were classified in

the category of “Incomplete idea” and the rest, meaning 9 students, have a misconception of autonomy. In the next subheadings, these categorization is further described.

4.1.2.1 Participants’ Definition of Autonomy in Learning: Complete Idea

It was decided to classify 2 participants in the “Complete idea” category since they covered four or three main elements that, based on the literature review, define autonomy in learning.

Despite this, one of these two subjects, Participant 20, wrote:

*“Being autonomous is when you're self-aware of what you want to learn and HOW you learn, also when you know what methods are the ones that are better for you”
-Participant 20*

With this definition, elements like awareness, metacognition, decision making, and the use of methods are found. First of all, this participant mentions awareness, which, according to Rahimi and Katal (2012) is important to first be conscious about the learning process in order to take decisions over learning. In addition to this, Barrantes and Olivares (2013) consider as a key element of autonomy development that allows learners to pay attention to learning mechanisms that are helpful to understand how learning works. This participant also refers to the selection of methods that are better for the learning, that Barrantes and Olivares (2013), also consider as part of the decisions that should be taken by learners. Similarly, Participant 13 defined autonomy as follows:

*“Capacity of recognizing your strategies of learning, and which method fits you.
With all these tools improve your knowledge by yourself” -Participant 13*

With this definition, this participant pointed out the recognition of learning strategies, selection of methods and tools to improve learning. In this way, recognizing strategies and methods that work best for the learner are part of the awareness Barrantes and Olivares (2013) talked about as the previous participant mentioned. In addition to this, this definition makes reference to, not

only recognition but the use of strategies that help improve learning. About this Barrantes and Olivares (2013) conceive “selecting methods and techniques to be used” (p. 327) as one of the main steps in autonomous learning.

4.1.2.2 Participants’ Definition of Autonomy in Learning: Incomplete Idea

On the other hand, Table 4.3 shows that 9 participants have an incomplete idea of autonomy. They were classified in this category as they provided ideas that were in part related to autonomy but not complete or accurate. The answers in this category were mainly related to the process of learning, having the initiative of investigating or using resources by themselves, Then, in this category, it was seen that, participants 1 and 2 focused their definitions on learning. For example, Participant 1 defined autonomy as follows:

*“Your learning depends on yourself, for you truly learn you should put your effort.”
-Participant 1.*

Then, Participant 1 emphasizes the control the individual has over his own learning. This idea is seen in one of the first definitions of autonomy, provided by Holec (1981) which, as remarked before, states the importance of taking control for “one’s own learning” (p. 3). Besides this, Participant 1 mentions that it is necessary to put “effort” to learn, which leads to a higher level of involvement in the learning process (Solórzano-Mendoza, 2017).

Following a similar idea and also mentioning the importance of investigating information by their own means and the use of different resources, Participant 5 wrote:

“I understand “autonomy” as working by ourselves, for example when we look up for information to be completely sure about what we are doing, so we don’t only have limited resources, and being autonomous in Learning is when you are organized in order to get better results.” -Participant 5.

Then, Participant 5 mentioned some elements of autonomy. When she wrote “working by ourselves”, it is perceived that there is certain control of what activities to do. This idea is backed up by Oruç (2016), when explaining that taking decisions about the selection of methods and strategies in order to learn is one of the characteristics of autonomous learners. Besides, Participant 5 wrote “not only having limited resources”, which is an idea that reflects the importance of administrating resources as the individual needs in order to learn something, as it was explained by Scharle and Szabo (2000, in Llaven-Nucamendi, 2013). Something else that is worth explaining further is the organization Participant 5 mentioned since, according to Abdelrazeq (2018), the more organized the learner to manage “time to learn and complete tasks”, the more autonomous the learner is. Following a similar idea, Participant 7 defined autonomy as:

“something that people acquire and they are able to organize their process of learning.” -Participant 7.

With his answer, Participant 7 used the word acquire, which can be an inaccurate way to define autonomy since most of authors refer to autonomy as something that is developed rather than acquired (Barrantes & Olivares, 2013; Wei, 2008; Llaven-Nucamendi, 2014) In addition, this participant, mentions an important part of autonomy which is the organization of the learning process, that Little (1999 in Llaven-Nucamendi, 2014) claims, autonomy is “not exclusively or primarily a matter of how learning is organized” (p. 32), meaning autonomy in learning goes beyond that.

Talking about resources, Participant 10 wrote:

“Being autonomous is to find by yourself the resources to get knowledge and learning new things or, depending on your situation, the required topics you must be able to know and manage.” -Participant 10

With this answer, it is seen that participant 10 highlighted the use of resources to learn. According to Scharle and Szabo (2000) part of the learners' role is this precisely, to "supply or choose materials and activities" (Llaven-Nucamendi, 2014, p. 63). In this way, this participant considered it is important to look for different ways of learning what they need to, where student intervention in the use of strategies and decision making over them are seen. Following the same idea, Participant 11 wrote:

"From my perspective, autonomy in learning means that the student is able to look for information in order to acquire or reinforce knowledge by themselves." - Participant 11

Here, this participant also mentioned the purpose of looking up for more information as the reinforcement of knowledge. However, as Participant 7, Participant 11 also mentioned the acquisition of knowledge that is not related to autonomy development nor the theory behind it, constructivism. Besides these two participants, Participant 19 said:

"It's the action to learn something by yourself. When you have the chance to learn using your own resources." -Participant 19

In this definition, participant 19 not only encompassed the use of resources to the will of the learner but the importance of doing it by themselves. In this way, it can be seen the control of the learning process that autonomy is about, as well as the use of resources that are chosen by the learner.

Alternatively, Participant 8 defined autonomy as follows:

"Autonomy means being willing to undertake new things by your own. You can learn anything you want just by your own initiative." -Participant 8

With this definition, it can be appreciated how autonomy is perceived as the will to undertake new things. This participant then focuses on the learners' will or motivation to learn by

themselves, that, as explained previously, is one of the main elements involved in the success in learning as Gopalan, Abu, Nasir, Alwi and che (2017) state it. In addition, this participant also makes reference to learn by oneself, which as discussed above, is an important part of taking control over learning which autonomy is based on.

Besides this, Participant 12 conceived autonomy in the following way:

“I think it means that you can learn by yourself, for example, listening to music or watching movies in the original language.” -Participant 12

In this sense, participant 12 conceived autonomy as the way in which an individual can learn by themselves by being in contact with the language.

To sum up, as seen in the definitions provided by participants in this category, even though participants identify some characteristics of autonomy in learning, they provide ideas that did not define this concept including the four main elements of autonomous learning. Furthermore, the rest of the participants' answers were classified in a third group: Misconception of autonomy.

4.1.2.3 Participants' Definition of Autonomy in Learning: Misconception

In the last category, as seen in Table 4.3, “Misconception” the concept of autonomy was confused with other terms by 10 of the participants. In this way, misconceptions are due to different ways in which autonomy has been perceived such as in the field of philosophy or being considered the same as self- instruction and independent learning.

It was seen that participants provided definitions that were more related to the fields of philosophy and politics (Smith, 2006). This was seen in the definition provided by participants 2, 15 and 17:

“It’s simply the ability of jurisdiction to govern oneself and not be influenced by external entities.” -Participant 2.

“Autonomy is a value that everyone must have to success in any activity and the daily life” -Participant 15

“to have self-confidence to choose whichever decision by ourselves.” -Participant 17

Then, in their conception of autonomy, it is reflected that some participants assumed that autonomy means the same in different contexts. Consequently, participant 2, for example, indicated that autonomy refers to “govern oneself”, which somehow refers to control, however, when mentioning “not being influenced by external entities” is where the definition is considered as a misconception, since being autonomous requires the teachers to be involved indeed but with a limited role (Farmer, 2006).

Participant 15, on the other hand, defined autonomy as a value to be successful in one’s life. Even when autonomy in learning does lead to success, this participant focused more in life in general when the definition of autonomy that was requested from participants was in learning, specifically.

Moreover, Participant 17 indicated that autonomy refers to self-confidence take decisions by oneself. Then, in this definition, the ability to take control over decisions is seen and the confidence this participant mentions is also part of the goal of autonomous learning as Asadinik and Mirza (2015) state it.

On the overall, these definitions provide information about being able to take decisions by their own that are convenient for the individual. However, as seen in the literature review of this study, autonomy in learning goes beyond than just taking decisions, it also involves “judging,

planning or reasoning” (Llaven-Nucamendi, 2014, p. 18) and the development of “metacognitive, sequential, objective, procedural strategies” (Solórzano-Mendoza, 2017, p. 245).

Besides this conception of autonomy, other participants confused this term with self-instruction. In this way, participants in this group emphasized the importance of learning by themselves with no intervention of the teacher. For example, Participants 3 and 9 write:

“[...] autonomy makes reference to be capable of finding the correct tools in order to achieve something. So, [...] autonomy in learning means develop your skills and acquire more knowledge without the guidance of a teacher.” -Participant 3

“Autonomy is the quality that individuals have to be independent and free in order to acquire knowledge and improve skills. [...] is a person who doesn't need a teacher or a guide to learn. He/She has the desire to learn more and more. For that reason, he/she looks for different strategies and materials to achieve the learning process.” -Participant 9

In this answer, participants 3 and 9 mentioned the importance of finding tools and acquire skills, however, they also claimed this is done without the guidance of the teacher. As presented by Dickinson (1987 in Llaven-Nucamendi, 2014) self-instruction is the situation in which an individual takes the decision to learn without a teacher involved in this process. For instance, even though autonomy does refer to the involvement and control of the own learning process, according to Huang (2006 in Horváthová, 2016) as the participants mentioned it, the teacher is significantly involved in autonomous learning since there should be a “negotiation between teacher and learner” (p. 126). In addition to this, participant 9 also mentioned “the desire to learn more” where the will to learn is found, something also important for autonomous learning according to Sierra Pérez (2005).

Following the same idea of not having help from any other character, Participants 6, 16 and 18 defined autonomy in the following way:

“Autonomy is when you do things without any help, and being autonomous in learning mean that you study for yourself” -Participant 6

“It is the state when someone has the will to learn things for their own sake. There's no need of external stimuli (teachers, mentors etc.) whatsoever. When someone is being autonomous, he/she is aware of their learning process and the things it involves such as goals, progress etc.” -Participant 16

“We are autonomous in learning when we focus and learn on our own without obligation, but to learn to grow our knowledge and without going to an instructor.” -Participant 18

First, with this evidence, it is seen that participants 6, 16 and 18 considered the teacher or instructor is not needed when being autonomous, which as explained before, is not an accurate idea of what autonomy in learning is. In fact, participant 16 mentioned awareness of the learning process and more specific details such as the establishment of goals and progress in learning, that, according to Farmer (2006) are important elements in autonomous learning. Participant 16 then, includes the main elements of autonomy in their definition, motivation and awareness of the learning process, but the role of the teacher seems not to match with this study perspective. In addition to this, participant 18 said that autonomy has to do with learning without obligation. In this way, the will Sierra Pérez (2005) talks about is present in this definition. However, this participant mentions the same idea as the two previous participants saying that autonomous learning happens without a teacher or instructor.

Furthermore, the rest of the participants conceived autonomy as what independent learning is. They defined autonomy in the following ways:

“I consider that autonomy means development about yourself, a process to be independent and acquire many things as possible.” -Participant 4

“It means that you learn or have to learn on your own” – Participant 14

Here, it is seen that these subjects considered autonomy is being independent in learning or learning by themselves. In this way, it is seen that this participants have a misconception of

autonomy since, even when independent learning seems to be a similar concept to autonomy in learning there are some important differences between these two, in the sense that independent learning is considered as a method or educational philosophy (Meyer, Haywood, Sachdev, & Faraday, 2008) and autonomy is more a capacity (Little, 1991; Llaven-Nucamendi. 2014), for example, or the decision of the learner about learning or not in this way (Ryan & Deci, 2006). This last idea is reflected in the words of Participant 14 when writing “you have to learn on your own”, referring to an obligation to learn. This idea clearly differs from autonomy since being autonomous requires the individual to be willing to learn about their learning process and manipulate it as it best conveys.

With all the above, the results to the second part of Instrument A revealed meaningful data to answer the first research question of this study. One of the objectives of this study was to find out whether LEI students know what autonomy is and how much they knew about it. To answer this question, the results presented above showed that only 2 participants were able to define autonomy, which means that only them have a complete idea of autonomy. However, these two participants were not classified as autonomous learners. The second important outcome retrieved from this part of Instrument A is that most of the participants have an incomplete idea or a misconception of autonomy. In the results presented it was seen that most of them assumed autonomy has the same meaning in the field of philosophy than in learning or confused this term with independent learning. With this, it can be said that LEI students do not have a complete and accurate idea of what autonomy is, even when this is an imperative concept in learning and teaching.

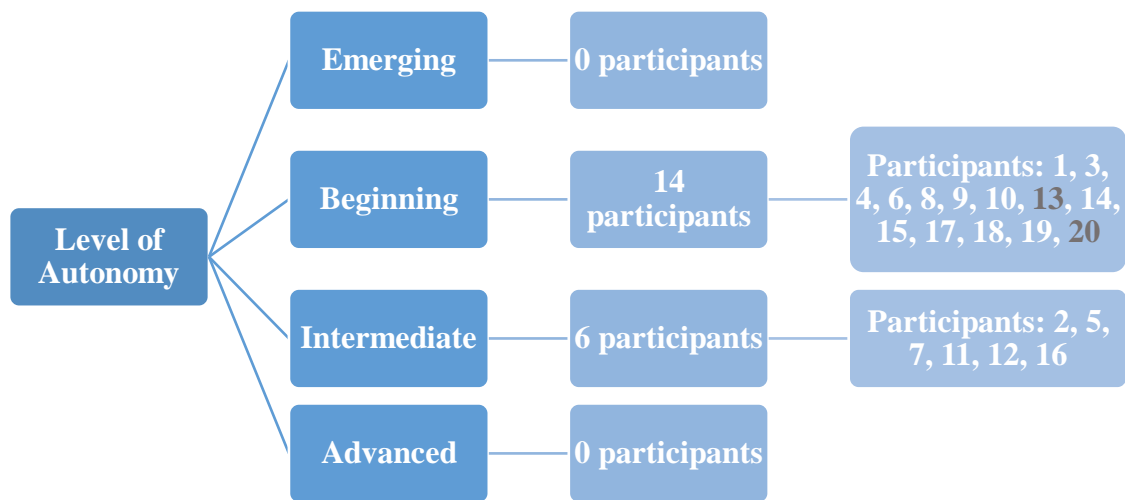
4.1.3 Part 3: Participants' Level of Autonomy

Besides finding out participants awareness of autonomy, this study had the purpose of identifying their level of autonomy. In this way, identifying the level has the objective of identifying what these students' level of autonomy is in order to get more information from the most autonomous of the group to obtain information about the factors that are involved in autonomy development from them and provide a more complete context for this research. It is important to mention that, as it was intended to get a general idea of the participants' level of autonomy, the level of each participant was calculated in an overage, not in specific attitudes as proposed in Abdelrazeq (2018), however, the levels' names were took from his rubric and used for this analysis. Because of this, the third part of Instrument A intended to identify participants' level of autonomy.

Having said that, after defining autonomy, participants continued with a 40 statements questionnaire. In this part, subjects rated statements going from "Never" to "Always"; once the results for this part of the questionnaire were gathered, they were classified into four categories: Advanced Level, Intermediate Level, Beginning Level and Emerging as Abdelrazeq (2018) stated in his proposal to measure autonomy. Figure 4 shows the categorization after the analysis of the participants' answers:

Figure 4.4

Participants' Level of Autonomy



In Figure 4.4, it is shown that, firstly, any participant was able to get the enough points to be in the “Advanced” category, but at the same time, no students were classified in the “Emerging Level”. In addition, only 6 students were categorized in the group of “Intermediate”. In this category, it was seen that participants have some attitudes that reflect autonomy, however, there are other aspects that do not contribute to autonomy such as the importance they give to the teacher in providing all the material and sharing the responsibility of deciding what to do in the class, as it will be explained further with the information gathered from Instrument B. Another important thing about these results is that any of the participants in this category was able to define autonomy as it was expected.

Furthermore, the third category referring to a beginning level of autonomy contained the majority of the subjects. In this way, most of the participants, meaning 14, got placed in this level due to the amount of autonomous and dependent attitudes they have, where dependency goes over autonomy. In addition to this, as presented in Figure 4.4, participants 13 and 20, whose definitions were considered the most accurate, were classified in this category.

The results obtained so far are similar to what Lin and Reinders (2018) and Paudel (2019) say about the gap between theory and practice in autonomy development. The reasons of this were seen in the answers the subjects provided in this part of the questionnaire. For example, in Table 4.5, the number of times each option was chosen is shown. It is important to mention that the statements represented in the following tables are the ones that caused more impression as they were related to two main issues: the importance of the teacher and classroom, meaning Dimension 3, and selection of content which is Dimension 5. As it can be seen, all the statements in this table represent dependent attitudes, for instance, to be considered autonomous, participants should have chosen “Never”, but, when choosing “Always” or “Sometimes”, means that they reflected dependent attitudes.

Table 4.5

Frequency of Answers: Statements for Dimension 3: Dependency Statements

Item	Statement	Frequency		
		A	S	N
15	I feel happy when my teacher explains the use of English in detail	19	1	0
19	I like my teacher to correct my errors when I make them.	16	4	0
20	I want the teacher to give us the words that we are to learn in the course.	10	7	3
8	I am afraid that I won't learn a topic if the teacher doesn't explain it in the class.	5	11	4
11	I feel confident when the teacher is beside me while I am learning English.	5	10	5
12	I study based only on what the teacher explains in class.	3	12	5
13	My teacher always has to guide me in learning English.	3	13	4
33	My learning depends on what I do in the classroom.	3	9	8

With this information, the most concerning items in which they showed dependent attitudes were in items 15, 19 and 20, that are part of the 3rd dimension: Importance of Class/ Teacher, referring specifically to the teacher. With this evidence, it is clear that the importance participants give to the teacher is still high, even when they have studied teaching and learning theories that

emphasize the importance of the learner being the center of the learning process. In addition to this, statements 8, 11, 13 and 33 also showed that the teacher is still considered as the main provider of correction, materials and explanations. Furthermore, with the results of statement 12 it can be concluded that the will of researching about the topics seen in class is not something students are always willing to do.

Another important thing noticed by the results of the frequency in the answers of the questionnaire was related to Dimension 4: Selecting content. Table 4.6 shows the number of times each option was chosen regarding to Dimension 5: Selecting Content. In this table, is explained how many students chose each option and it can be seen that “Sometimes” is the most chosen option.

Table 4.6:

Frequency of Answers: Statements for Dimension 5: Selecting Content: Autonomy Statements

Item	Statement	Frequency		
		A	S	N
23	I would like to select the materials for my foreign language lessons.	7	12	1
24	I would like to share the responsibility of deciding what to do in my English lessons.	6	12	2
27	I like to choose the content of what is taught in the English lesson.	3	12	5

Then, this evidence showed that participants are not always willing to participate in the decisions regarding to selection of content in classes, some of them, as it will be discussed in the results of Instrument B, even said they know that this is what teachers do. As a result of this, the attitudes regarding to materials and content selection is affected, as previously mentioned, by the perception they have of the role of the teacher and learners' role.

To conclude, in this section, the results of Instrument A were presented. Firstly more information about the participants such as their age, their language level and whether they had taken a certification document was found. In addition to this, it was seen that any student was able to define autonomy and the majority of them have a misconception of this concept. Moreover, it was found that most of the participants have an emerging level of autonomy and only 6 have an intermediate level. Then, the data that was collected was useful to provide a context for the next research question to be answer, the factors that, according to the participants' own experience are involved in autonomy development and to choose the participants that were going to be interviewed in the second phase.

4.2 Results from Instrument B: Interview: Factors Involved in Autonomy Development

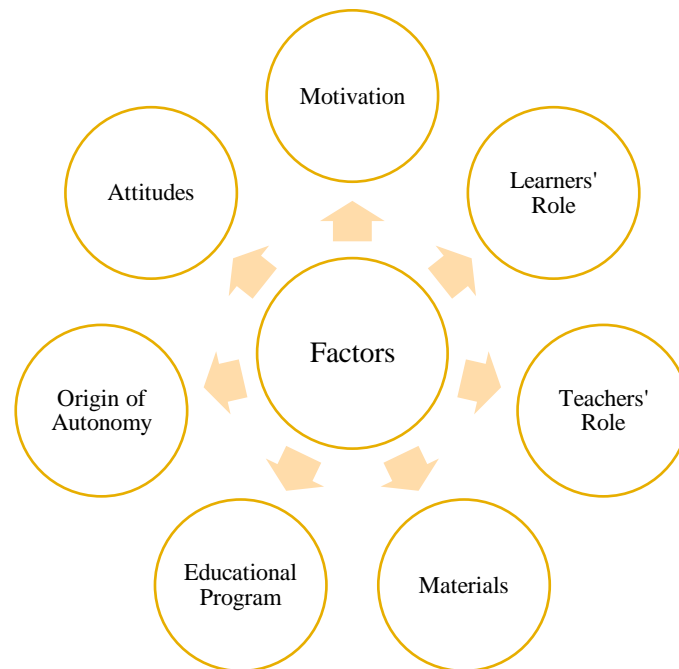
Instrument B (See Appendix B) had the purpose of retrieving information about the factors that, according to the subjects, are involved in autonomy development. For this reason, the questions in this interview were based on the answers provided by each of the subject in the questionnaire for their autonomy level identification. This provided a background of the reasons behind the behaviors subjects have when it comes to autonomy in language learning. For instance, the results retrieved from this instrument would help answer the third question of this research: "According to LEI students' own experience, what are the factors involved in autonomy development?".

The original number of participants to be interviewed was 6, however, only 5 of them were successfully contacted. In this second phase of the study, subjects were asked questions related to the motivation they have to learn a language, attitudes and decisions related to autonomy towards learning and their perception about the importance of autonomy. Besides this, they were asked about the reasons why they chose the options they did in certain statements of Instrument A, Part

3, referring to autonomy learning (See Appendix A). Then, after analyzing the answers that subjects provided to each question, they were classified into different categories or themes and they are presented in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7:

Factors Involved in Autonomy Development According to Instrument B



As Figure 4.7 shows, according to participants' responses, there are 7 factors that influence autonomy development. Firstly, it was seen that these factors lay on different elements such as the student, the teacher and the institution. In this way, it was concluded, based on the results of the interviews, that motivation and attitudes are two factors that are focused on the learner, then teacher and learner's roles are more related to awareness of how autonomy works for each character in the process; on the other hand, materials and the institution and educational system represent factors that are external to the learners and, finally, the origin of autonomy development, in which learners started to assume a greater responsibility for their learning refers to the external

stimuli that pushed them to do it. Hereafter, every factor is described and some evidence from the subjects' answers are presented.

4.2.1 Positive Factors

With the information gathered from Instrument B, it was found that there are positive and negative factors influencing autonomy development. In this way, there are some aspects that motivate and promote autonomy and there are others that represent obstacles or simply, do not promote autonomy development. In the next sections, the factors that positively impact autonomy in learning are listed.

4.2.1.1 Motivation

The first factor that was found is motivation. As presented in Chapter 3, motivation is defined as “the force that encourages” (Gopalan, Abu, Nasir, Alwi & Che, 2017, p. 1). In this way, motivation represents the reasons why a person does something, and, for instance, why a student takes different actions upon learning. Having said this, it was not surprising for the researcher to find that, one of the most important elements in being autonomous is the motivation individuals have, since Benson (2006) states that autonomy starts with motivation. Because of this, when participants were asked about the reasons why they study the language, all of them seemed to have a clear reason to do it. The answers that were categorized into “Motivation” are represented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8:

Factors Involved in Autonomy Development: Motivation

Factor	Description
Motivation	Seeking personal and professional growth.
	Having interest in learning.
	Relating the language with things the individual likes.
	Intention of working or traveling in a context related to the language.
	Having the intention to use language in real contexts
	Wanting to improve
	Enjoying teaching or work area.
	Recognizing the importance of autonomy development in professional life.
	Understanding the real use or application of the learned content in real or professional life.
	Use of the language as a mean to learn about other topics.

First, it is important to remember that there are three types of motivation: intrinsic, extrinsic and amotivation. As shown in Table 4.8, all the categories refer to inner matters, meaning that, according to participants, the type of motivation that influences autonomy development is intrinsic motivation. In question 1 of Instrument B, the subjects were asked about their motivation to learn English besides needing it for their major and Table 4.8 shows the categories gotten from the answers to these questions. First of all, some of the participants talked about personal and professional growth. For example, Participant 12, said:

“abre muchas puertas el aprender inglés, no solo en poder comunicarte o hacer amigos, sino en cosas laborales” -Participant 12.

Here is seen that communication to make friends and professional growth are the main motivation for Participant 2 to learn English. Then, language is not only seen as something learners must do because it is necessary for academic purposes, but something that can be used to get a better job or to apply in the professional world. Besides this, Participant 2 said:

“Siempre busco aprender nuevas cosas” -Participant 2

With this answer, participant 2 showed motivation to learn more. This is something important, as Gopalan, Abu, Nasir, Alwi and Che (2017) mention that motivation is nurtured by curiosity of doing something, in this case, learning. Alternatively, participant 7 explained:

“Me gusta mucho ver series y películas... por eso trato como de entender a qué hacían referencia” -Participant 7

With her answer, Participant 7 claimed that she is motivated to learn English since it is related to things she likes. Here is seen that the relationship of things this participant likes can be productive to endeavor and have a more significant learning for the student as mentioned above. Then, enjoying what they are doing is beneficial when developing autonomy, and, for instance, learning. Another aspect that represents motivation is seen in the next fragment:

“Siento que es mi motivación para poder viajar y ser maestra” -Participant 5.

As seen in this answer, traveling is another motivator to learn the language, that is to say, using it in a real context. Here, it is also seen that this participant wants to become a teacher, the major participants are enrolled in. This represents a significant element, since, again, the interest they have for what they do is a major determinant factor to being efficient. Moreover, participant 12 said:

“Si tú quieres aprender un idioma es para conocer más gente” -Participant 12.

This participant then, expressed that one of the objectives for learning the language that refers to the use of the language to meet more people, which can also be considered using the language in a real context. This can be considered as well as a motivator to learn the language. So far, some of the factors involved in autonomy development, related to motivation, according to participants' perception have been presented. These factors, according to the results of the first question, were related to personal and professional growth, interest in learning more, having the

intention to use the language in real contexts such as getting to know more people or traveling and finding a relationship between language learning and things they enjoy.

Also, regarding to the same category, after being asked about their motivation for learning a language, in question 3, participants were asked about their language level. The researcher questioned them about their satisfaction with their English language level and, their responses were also considered as a motivator to be autonomous. For example, participants 7 and 2 said:

“Todavía quiero mejorar” (Participant 7)

“Desearía que fuera mayor todavía” (Participant 2)

With these examples, it was seen that participants would like to be better and improve which is something that motivates the subjects to be autonomous.

In addition, participant 16 claimed:

“...siempre me he visto motivado por esto. Quiero aprender esto, ah, pero necesito saber inglés para aprenderlo.” -Participant 16

Thus, this answer suggests that another aspect that motivates students to learn a language is using it as the means to learn something else. Then, learning a language is not something individuals may learn as a whole, but as the way that leads them to achieve another goal.

Thus, with the information presented above, it can be concluded that, for these participants, motivation is a key element in being autonomous, specifically, intrinsic motivation. This type of motivation refers to the inner motives that students have to learn a language, and, as previously explained, they refer to improvement, as they link the language to things they like, traveling, working and as a mean to learn something else. Having said this, what Benson (2006) says is

proved: autonomy starts with the inner force that leads a person to do something which can lead to high levels of proficiency.

4.2.1.2 Attitudes

The information obtained from the interview also suggested that besides motivation, the attitudes that students have represent an important factor that determines autonomy success. As stated by Little (2004), autonomy is the process in which an individual learns “intentionally”, and, in order to have intentions, it is necessary to have certain attitudes towards learning. In Chapter II, when describing the characteristics of an autonomous learner it was noticed that most of them refer to attitudes that can be taken towards learning. Indeed, it was found that most of the participants that were interviewed reflected attitudes that are similar to the characteristics of autonomous learners. In this way, the attitudes gotten from the information gathered with the interviews are presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9

Factors Involved in Autonomy Development: Attitudes

Factor	Description
Attitudes	To have responsibility to learn (to pay attention to and care for)
	To have the initiative of researching by themselves
	To have the initiative of participating in the decision making of activities to do in class (materials and activities)
	To know the importance of implementing correction
	To know the importance of autonomy development in academic and personal life
	To be introspective

Having this information, it can be said that the attitude that encompasses most of the ones presented in Table 4.9 is active involvement in the process of learning (Solórzano-Mendoza, 2017). However, it is also important to see, specifically, what actions are part of this involvement

in the learning processes. To begin with, it was seen that responsibility of learning is the main attitude autonomous learners reflect and what most of students implied in the interview. This is something not surprising, since, autonomy is reflected in the responsibility, a subject has for his own learning (Holec, 1981, Benson 2001; Barrantes & Olivares, 2013), meaning that autonomous learners pay attention and care for their own learning. Regarding this, participants 5 and 12 state:

“Las clases no solo me las van a dar en la escuela, necesito poner de mi parte para aprenderlo.” -Participant 5

“Porque nadie se va a hacer cargo de ti, no va a estar una maestra como alguien de kínder diciéndote -tienes que hacer esto.” -Participant 12

With these examples the perception participants have over their own learning is seen. In this way, they understand the process of learning is their own duty claiming nobody else is going to do it for them and that they have to do their part to learn. Because of this, taking control and being more involved in the learning process leads learners to have the initiative to take different actions (Barrantes & Olivares, 2013; Solórzano-Mendoza, 2017), such as researching information by themselves and deciding what to do in the class regarding to materials and activities to use. The evidence of this is seen in the following fragments of Participant 2’s answer:

*“Si los maestros nos dan el vocabulario o el tema específico, nosotros podemos investigar de ese tema y podemos buscar artículos...”
-Participant 2*

In this extract, the participant shows an initiative of searching for information by themselves. Then, when saying “we can research about the topic” there is evidence that shows that if the teacher provides just the topic, the learners can do the rest. Then, it can be concluded that when being autonomous, it is not necessary for the teacher to provide all the materials since autonomous students can make their own sense, by their own means, of the topic they are studying (Scharle & Szabo, 2000). Another attitude based on the idea of being more involved in the learning

process is what Participant 2 says when she was asked why she had chosen “Always” to a statement saying “I would like to share the responsibility of deciding what to do in the English Class”:

“Sí, sí me gustaría porque tengo muchas ideas para distintos materiales y más ahorita que estamos viendo todas estas materias de Taller de Materiales” - Participant 2

In this answer, Participant 2 indicated she has lots of ideas for different materials due to a specific subject. To analyze this fragment, it is important to remember that since the participants of this study are preparing for being teachers, there are subjects in their curricula to help them develop different teaching skills. One of these subjects is “Taller de Materiales”. In this subject, LEI students learn about different strategies to design and choose materials that can be implemented in their classes. Having said that, with this answer, it can be concluded that taking responsibility of deciding what to do or what materials to use is another positive attitude participants have, firstly to put theory into practice, also identify what materials and strategies work best for them and finally, be part of the decision making about the materials to use in the class (Scharle, Szabó, & Ur, 2000). This is also seen in Participant 7’s answer:

“Siento que escuchar la opinión de los alumnos es importante, porque qué tal que lo que estoy ocupando no les está sirviendo a ellos, siento que no tendría chiste.” - Participant 7

In this answer, participant 7 talks about the importance of listening students opinion about the materials, strategies or activities being used in the class. In this way, this participant believes it is important to make sure whatever it is being used in the class is working for learners which is a positive attitude towards students learning and teachers’ materials, strategies or activities selection for classes. This is related to the negotiation between teacher and learner that Huang (2006) talks about. Besides this, participant 5 said:

“...si me queda la duda, o no le entendí muy bien, tengo que ver videos o algo” - Participant 5

In this fragment, participant 5 was asked about statement 17, saying “If I cannot learn English in the classroom I can work on my own”. In the answer to this question, this participant said that if they have any doubt or did not understand something, they have to watch videos. With this, it is seen that this participant has the initiative of clearing their doubts using a strategy. Then, being willing to do something about their doubts or questions about any topic, is part of taking responsibility regarding their own learning when using tools and strategies. This was also considered as a positive attitude that learners have in order to completely understand a topic.

The next attitude that was identified in some of the participants is related to the initiative they have to participate in the decision making of what to do in the class, meaning selection of materials and activities to do. This can be seen in Participant 2’s answer:

“Sí [...] siento que puedo aportar [...] porque soy joven...” -Participant 2

In this way, this participant indicated he would like to share the responsibility of deciding what to do in the English lesson stating he could contribute with the fact that he is young. Besides, participant 2 also said when he was asked if he would like to select materials for the English classes:

“Sí, [...] se ve más atractivo para mí si escogieran [...] actividades con los teléfonos, con videos o audios y salir de esa rutina...” -Participant 2

With this, it is seen that this participant would like to contribute in the selection of materials and activities for the class in order to choose activities that are more attractive to them.

Another important attitude that was identified in the interviews is regarding correction. It is true that correction is something vital for learning, however, the attitudes towards correction can

also shape the way it is applied. For instance, when explaining why they had chosen the option “Always” to a statement saying “I like my teacher to correct my errors when I make them”, participant 7 explained:

“Porque, como sé que aún sigo aprendiendo, pues sigo cometiendo errores y [...] me gusta que me corrijan en esas partes para que yo vea en qué estoy mal [...] y pues así siento mejoré, no siento que sea malo [...] porque me ayuda a mejorar.” - Participant 7

In this answer, it is seen that, according to Participant 7, correction is something positive in order to improve. In addition to this, participant 7 says that as they are still learning, mistakes are still being committed and that correction is necessary in order to see what is being done wrong. Because of this, it can be concluded that, according to participants, when correction is conceived as something good it can lead to improvement. This was considered as a positive attitude towards autonomy development since Horváthová (2016, p. 125) when talking about the attributes of autonomous learners says that they “are willing to take risks to communicate in the target language at all costs” meaning mistakes can come along these risks and also that they “have a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language” (p. 125) that can be considered as the tolerance autonomous learners have for the target language and the learning process it involves.

The next attitude that was found is the importance that learners give to autonomy development. In this way, Participant 2 said:

“Porque si una persona no se pone a ver lo que le hace falta, en qué cosas podría mejorar, en qué cosas podría estudiar más, [...], se va a quedar como una persona ignorante, [...] no es nada más para la licenciatura, es en general, eso te sirve mucho.” -Participant 2

Then, when participants were asked if they thought autonomy is important and why, participants implied it was the main factor in their personal, academic and professional life. In this

first example, Participant 2 highlights the importance of autonomy development not only in learning but in life in general. Here, this participant claims that if there is not to self-assessment about what is missing and what can be done better the person will simply be ignorant. With this, it can be concluded that when the goals are to broaden learning and learners understand the importance of autonomy development it predisposes them to act positively (Smith, 1971 in Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011), this can be easily seen in the results of the levels of autonomy, since having this type of ideas seems to be reflected in their autonomous learning levels. In addition to this, participant 5 said:

“Sí, porque así te vas conociendo como persona, por ejemplo, si entras a un trabajo no vas a ser alguien irresponsable... Vas a buscar lo mejor para tus alumnos...” - Participant 5

Here, besides conceiving autonomy as an important element for academic learning, this participant stated it is also vital for professional life. Then, in this answer, it is evident that, for this participant, there is a relationship between being autonomous and being responsible at her job as a teacher, stating that it is not only for them, but for their students. As a result of this, being autonomous is not only important for teachers, but to be able to provide better options for students as well. Likewise, Participant 12 said:

“Sí, [...] es algo muy importante porque [...] como futuros docentes de inglés, basamos nuestra vida en el inglés, entonces de qué vas a vivir, si tú no buscas maneras de poder ayudarte, de poder crecer.” -Participant 12

Also, with this answer, this participant addresses the importance of autonomy development for their future job as teachers in order to first, be able to identify ways to help themselves to grow professionally. In addition to this, Participant 16 explained:

“yo creo que parte de ser un ser maduro es desarrollar esa autonomía [...] tiene que ver con ese desarrollo personal que deberíamos alcanzar porque si somos autónomos siempre vamos a estar a introspección, sabiendo qué está mal de nosotros, [...] qué es lo que está bien, sabiendo qué es lo que funciona, sabiendo lo que no [...] para mejorarlo. -Participant 16

With this participant’s answer, it was seen that autonomy development also plays a role in personal aspects. In this way, this participant mentions that autonomy in learning is also related to personal development, and he mentions introspection as well, the act of constantly evaluate oneself in order to detect areas of improvement. With this, it was concluded that since, assessing what is being done, what needs to be improved and take care of this, is one of the main attitudes behind autonomy development (Llaven-Nucamendi, 2014).

To sum up, in this section the attitudes that positively influence autonomy development were described. Within these attitudes are found the responsibility to learn, initiative to research and participation in materials and activities selection, as well as the attitudes towards correction and self-assessment. It was seen that these attitudes or factors are considered to be important according to participants in the second phase of this study to develop autonomy.

4.2.1.3 Role of the learners

The next factor obtained from the analysis of the interviews related to autonomy development is the consciousness learners have about their own role in the learning process. It was seen that, to be involved in learning and to take control over their own learning (Barrantes & Olivares, 2013; Solórzano-Mendoza, 2017), it is necessary for students to understand what they are required to do and what their job is in the learning environment. In Table 4.10, the features that are involved in learners’ role obtained from the answers provided in the interviews are presented:

Table 4.10

Factors Involved in Autonomy Development: Role of the Learner

Factor	Description
Role of the Learner	Identify their weaknesses
	Work on their weaknesses
	Identify their learning style
	Identify strategies and techniques that work for them
	Are able to select materials and strategies based on goals
	Know how to use strategies, materials and tools to learn
	Self- assessment
	Implement correction: peer correction
	Reflect about their mistakes
	Monitor their own learning process
	Complement what is learnt in class with activities done by their own
	Take knowledge into practice
	Understand autonomy (importance and how it works)
	Know the role of the teacher

As explained above, awareness of their own role in the learning process is a vital aspect of being autonomous. It was seen that, participants, even when they were not considered to be highly autonomous, they were aware of most of the aspects presented in this table. The first feature found has to do with the identification of weaknesses. Regarding this, participant 5 and 16 said:

“ ...salí baja en listening, entonces sí me puse a buscar más videos, ver las películas en inglés.” -Participant 5

“...como es el speaking y listening donde digo, “sí, me falla esto” y le voy a invertir algo de tiempo y me pongo a hacer cosas que sé que me van a ayudar a mejorar.” -Participant 16

In these examples, these participants indicate that have identified their weaknesses and that they also work on them. This is an important aspect in the role of autonomous learners, as the fact of being able to identify their weaknesses and, also, do something about them is part of being able to evaluate their progress as Barrantes and Olivares claim autonomy in learning is. However, identifying weaknesses is not something easily done, according to participants, it also involves a

process of assessment. Thus, some participants talked about the way they identified their weaknesses, for example, participant 16 responded:

“Fue principalmente por los exámenes, [...] Entonces, [...] a veces salía más alto en el listening, en el writing, y en el Reading, y ahí es donde me doy cuenta de que [...] estoy en este nivel de writing y estoy en este nivel de listening”, [...] es así como me he ido dado cuenta.” -Participant 16

In this fragment, participant 16 stated that they were able to identify his weaknesses due to formal evaluation. At the same time, this information shows that the identification of weaknesses can also be connected to the opportunities learners are given to do it, since this participant says exams have been helpful to see what levels they have for each language skill.

Besides identifying weaknesses and do something about them, participants were asked if they knew their learning style and, for example, participant 12 stated:

“por lo que yo he trabajado, soy más auditiva -Participant 12”

In this example, participant 12 mentions that, based on what she has worked with, she knows she is auditory. This was considered to be part of being aware of their role, since, in order to be responsible for their learning process, it is necessary for learners, also, to identify how this process works for each of them and the factors that influence learning (Zou, 2011) where learning styles are definitely a factor that affect learning. In fact, when asked why participants considered it is important to identify their learning style, participant 7 answered:

“Pues, como lo hemos visto [...] es algo muy importante saber cómo aprendemos, porque de esa manera nosotros mismos nos podemos enfocar en nuestro aprendizaje porque si yo sé que soy auditiva pues puedo trabajar con ciertos audios, [...] y que sea más fácil el aprendizaje.” -Participant 7

In this answer Participant 7 states that, by identifying their learning style they can be able to focus on a certain type of activities that makes learning easier. In addition to this, Participant 2 said:

“Yo sé que tengo visual, porque siempre todo lo que hago lo aprendo mejor si hago diagramitas o si lo vuelvo a escribir.” -Participant 2

In this way, participant 2 states, that besides being able to identify their learning style, they know what type of activities they can do to learn better. Thus, identifying their learning style takes learners to the next level, in which they are able to detect the activities, tools and resources that work better for them in order to assure learning, and this is seen where this participant indicates that she learns better by doing diagrams. On the other hand, participant 2 also said:

“Dependiendo del tema, porque, por ejemplo, si es una lectura [...] lo que hago es mejor usar un mapa conceptual o un diagrama de flujo, pero si es un tema gramatical, mejor hago tablitas o fichas y subrayo cada parte clave del tema.” - Participant 2

In this answer, it is seen that, the activities to choose, are not only based on learning style, but also on the goals the subject has for learning. This was something considered as part of the role of learning in an autonomous environment, since, taking control over one's learning requires being able to have a “reflective involvement” as Barrantes & Olivares (2013, p. 327) state it, where students discriminate the use of strategies or resources attending to needs such as learning style and goals.

The next aspect of the role of learners that was found has to do with assessment. As it has been presented in a couple of fragments of participants' answers, it was seen that, according to participants, the role of learners also involves assessment. In addition to this, it is known that assessment can come from different characters in the learning process, the learner, the teacher and other learners, for example, participant 12 said:

*“Considero que uno mismo también debe realizar su retroalimentación...-
Participant 12.*

In this example it is seen that Participant 12 thinks self-assessment is important as well as not only taking into account what other classmates say. Then, it is seen that assessment is important for students when it comes from themselves, however, when participant 5 was asked if she considered the teacher is the only one that can offer correction, she answered:

*“Nosotros mismos... o [...] nos podemos ayudar entre compañeros. Por ejemplo, cuando hemos trabajado con writings, le he ayudado a ____ y [...] ____ a mí...” -
Participant 5*

Then, according to their perspectives, to receive feedback from others is also helpful. Thus, as Participant 5 says, they can work with their classmates in order to provide feedback to each other. This is something important to consider since Shen, Bai, & Xue (2020) explain that peer feedback seems to help learners to not rely as much on teachers for assessment which indeed enhances learner autonomy. In addition to this, another important feature of taking an active role in autonomous learning that was found is being able to reflect about their mistakes. Thus, Participant 16 said:

“Pero [...] cuando hay otras situaciones te dicen “[...], está mal, corrígelo”, [...] te pones a pensar en qué está mal. Si me dan el escrito sin corregirlo, [...] de una manera más consciente lo checo para ver qué está mal. Y, cuando encuentro un error, como me llevó cierto tiempo y trabajo mental encontrarlo, [...]se queda aquí (Señala su cabeza) e intento ya no cometerlo...” -Participant 16

Here, Participant 16 talks about the importance of reflecting on mistakes but also the benefits of doing it. Then, this subject states that, it is more beneficial for him to have opportunities to reflect about his mistakes, and, at the same time, he mentions the benefits of doing it because, as he explains it, learning is more meaningful and would help him to try not to commit that mistake

again, on other words using rational judgment and self-control, an idea that Llaven-Nucamendi (2014) uses to conceive autonomy in learning.

The next aspect of the role of learning in the learning process is monitoring the learning process as explained in Chapter II. Regarding this, participant 7 said:

“sí está bien que [...], el profesor [...] vaya viendo tu progreso, pero, [...] también depende de ti mismo, no tienes que esperar hasta que el maestro te diga [...] nosotros mismos vayamos viendo nuestro progreso.” -Participant 7

With this participants' answer, it can be concluded that, in the role of autonomous learners, being able to monitor their own progress is included. This participant in fact, emphasizes the importance of doing it by themselves, which is part of what Wei (2008) indicates is involved in autonomy in learning. This is another idea that is presented further about the role of the teachers.

The next aspect found indicates that autonomous learners also complement the activities done in class with others they do by themselves. As autonomous learners look for their own ways to reinforce what has been learned in class, Participant 16 says:

“Porque siento que, las clases son como algo secundario, el trabajo principal creo que es del alumno.” -Participant 16

In this fragment, participant 16 indicates classes are “secondary” and that the main job should be done by the learners. Due to this, it can be concluded classes can be complementary or a space for practice as this participant continued saying:

“yo siento que la mayor del trabajo se tiene que hacer fuera del salón de clases y ya el salón de clases debe ocupar [...] un espacio [...] para poner en práctica todo lo que sabes.” -Participant 16

With this answer, it is seen that, for this participant, the hard work is not done in class but by himself out of the class. In this way, according to this participant's view, being in the classroom provides learners opportunities to practice all they have learned by themselves. Also, some

participants talked about the application of knowledge in their daily lives. Thus, participant 16 said:

“es deber del alumno incluir el idioma en su vida diaria, y utilizarlo de una manera de -yo lo voy a aplicar aquí-.” -Participant 16

In this fragment Participant 16 indicated that trying to include or use the language in the daily life is a student's duty. This idea can also be seen in what Horváthová (2016) said about learners' role in autonomy development, saying that autonomous learners “are willing to take risks to communicate in the target language at all costs” (p. 125). In, this way, autonomous learners look for opportunities to take to application what they have learned, which, according to Bloom's Taxonomy is one of the most important levels of learning.

Apart from this, the data collected showed that being able to understand autonomy and how it works is one of the features included in learners' role. Thus, it was concluded that, understanding how autonomous learning works and everything this requires such as the learner and the teacher's role is something learners should know in order to put it into practice. About this, participant 5 explained:

“...yo soy la que necesito mejorar o estoy aprendiendo el idioma. Entonces, yo conozco mis estrategias y sé cómo aprendo mejor.” -Participant 5

With these words, participant 5 admits that they are who need to improve and learn and that a consequence of that is to know what strategies work for them and know how they learn best. That is to say, to have an active role in learning and being responsible for this process. In this way, recognition over the importance of their active role in learning takes the learner to take responsibility for it and move on to the active involvement in the learning process and all the elements that go along with it.

Finally, the last feature found to be part of the role of the learners in autonomy development, as mentioned before, has to do with the teachers' role. As seen above, the role as learners is not the only important aspect to understand about autonomy, but the teachers' as well. Because of this, it was seen that some of the participants that were interviewed described what the teachers' role is in the classroom. For example, Participant 16 says:

“...el rol del maestro es más como un facilitador”-Participant 16.

In the first part of this answer, it is seen that Participant 16 understands the role of the teacher as Farmer (2006) indicates that teachers' role is about “providing access to support services” (p. 64-65). Thus, for this subject, the teacher is seen as a facilitator who helps learners to have access to different resources and ease the process of learning.

With all this said, it can be concluded that the requirements of the learner's role are a key element in the process of autonomy development and learning. In this section, the way learners are supposed to act as part of the autonomous learning process was presented. It was seen then, that identifying weaknesses, their learning style, learning strategies that work best for them, select materials, self- assessment, reflecting about their mistakes, monitoring their own learning process and understanding what their role and the teacher's role is, are some of the actions that were found to be part of the learners' role. In this way, it was concluded that in a few words, having an active role in learning is what it is required from the learners to succeed in autonomy development.

4.2.1.4 Role of teachers

The next factor that was found has to do with the role of the teachers. It was found through the participants' perception that the role of the teacher is another important factor that influences autonomy development. Firstly, after the analysis of the interviews, there was evidence about what

participants consider the role of the teachers is in the process. In Table 4.11, the role of the teacher according to participants is described.

Table 4.11

Factors Involved in Autonomy Development: Teachers' Role

Factor	Description
Role of the Teacher	Be a facilitator
	Recommend materials, strategies or tools
	Promote the identification of learning styles
	Take into account all learning styles when planning learning content
	Promote participation in decision making about content and tools used in class
	Make sure content meets learners' interests
	Provide opportunities to reflect about mistakes
	Promote confidence when committing mistakes and asking questions
	Relate language learning with real situations related to the learners' daily life
	Promote strategies and intentional opportunities to help learners to develop autonomy
	To use different assessment methods besides exams
	Provide opportunities to apply what is being learned from other subjects

With the information presented in Table 4.11, the different aspects of what learners perceive teachers' role should be, are detailed. In this way, participants pointed out different actions their teachers should take into consideration to be part of the learning process. Related to this, Participant 16 said:

“el rol del maestro es más como un facilitador, [...]la persona que te va a facilitar que el proceso de autonomía sea más fácil para ti, que el desarrollo sea más rápido, o más eficiente”. -Participant 16

In this answer, it is seen what was stated in the literature review about the teachers' role. According to Gremmo (2009) the teacher should ease the process of decision making to get “conscious and meaningful choices” (p. 66), as participant 16 described it. Thus, the teacher should step out from being the center of the process and become a mean for the learners to get what they

need to learn. This participant also points out that when the teacher is a facilitator that helps learners to have a faster and more efficient development, which is the main point of taking the role of the teacher in autonomous learning. Besides this, participants 5 and 2 stated:

“...ellos nos dan algunas estrategias, nos pueden ayudar con algo de asesorías” - Participant 5

In this way, this participant claims that part of the job of teachers is to recommend strategies. This is the way in which learners can have what teachers, based on their knowledge and experience, can offer them in order to manipulate materials or strategies as best conveys learners. This is supported by Farmer (2006) when describing that the functions of teachers are more related about “recommendations about the process of learning” (p. 64-65). In addition to this, it is seen that this participant also talked about tutoring which is another important thing about teachers in which they can have personalized advice from teachers.

Another feature, part of the role of the teachers as perceived by participants is to promote the identification of learning styles. Participant 5 for example explained:

“la maestra [...] nos hablaba mucho sobre eso y nos hizo hacer tests. Hacíamos muchas actividades de estilos de aprendizajes.” -Participant 5

In this fragment, participant 5 indicated that a teacher used to talk about, do tests and activities related to learning styles. With this answer it is seen that when the identification of learning styles is promoted, it helps teachers to be better prepared for learners and students “to learn effectively” (Hasanah, 2013, p. 3). Also, the participants who claimed that their teachers had encouraged them to take different learning styles tests said that they were able to identify what activities were the most convenient for them. Because of this, it can be concluded that promotion

of this type of activities in which students learn about their own learning processes help them to personalize their own learning. Also related to different learning styles, participant 2 said:

“me gustaría mucho poder variarle, porque hay unos que son auditivos, otros que son visuales, otros kinestésicos...” -Participant 2

Here it is seen that this participant emphasizes the importance of having a variation when she was asked about the type of activities used. Thus, participant 2 claims they would like to take into account not only one learning style but all of them because of the different learning styles other students might have. In this way, the teacher’s job also involves considering all learning styles and helping learners to discover “how they best learn” (Llaven-Nucamendi, 2014, p. 67) as well as “suggesting suitable materials by offering choices...” in order to meet students’ needs. Moreover, another aspect that was found after analyzing the interviews is related to interests. For example, participant 16 said:

“Muchas veces no es que el profesor sea malo o no quiera trabajar [...], si no que su contexto es completamente diferente porque como aprendieron inglés fue de otra manera, con otros recursos, y [...] va avanzando la tecnología, hay más cosas...” -Participant 16

With this answer, it is understood that taking into account learners’ interests is an imperative task of the teacher. In this way, participant 16 explains teachers learned English differently and, with changes in generations and technology, it is important to know what learners of each generation find interesting and how their learning works in order to choose what is best for them. Then, in order to do this, participant 7 stated:

“...escuchar la opinión de los alumnos es importante porque qué tal que lo que estoy ocupando no les está sirviendo a ellos...” -Participant 7

With these words, participant 7 talks about the importance of knowing students opinion in case the materials being used is not being helpful for them. Then, the reason why it is important to

know what learners' interests and most effective resources are is seen. Firstly because, the more they engage with topics, activities and materials the better their performance is (Struyven, Filip, & Steven, 2008), something that is also included in the role of the teacher as they should also "actively listen to learners" (Llaven-Nucamendi, 2014, p. 2014). Besides this, with this answer, it is seen that the participant not only worries about their own teachers but about their performance as a future teacher.

Moreover, another aspect that was found has to do with opportunities of correction to be a factor involved in autonomy development. About this, participant 16 stated:

"...hay otras situaciones en las que te dicen "está mal, corrígelo", entonces te pones a pensar en qué está mal. [...], si me dan el escrito sin corregirlo, de una manera más consciente, lo checo para ver qué está mal. Y, cuando encuentro un error, como me llevó cierto tiempo y trabajo mental encontrarlo, siento que ese error se queda aquí (Señala su cabeza)" -Participant 16.

Here, this participant claims that when students have opportunities to reflect about something that it is wrong, instead of having it corrected, the process involves consciousness and critical thinking. Besides this, it is seen that for Participant 16, having to invest mental effort and time makes them learn about that mistake and try to avoid committing it in the future. This is also something considered in the teachers' role since, according to Llaven-Nucamendi (2014), the job of the teacher requires them to help students reflect and self-evaluate. On the other hand, participant 12 and 7 explained:

"...la mayoría de veces no aprendemos algo por pena a no preguntar." -Participant 12

"Igual yo siento que los alumnos tenemos esa concepción toda satanizada de los errores y de que "No me puedo equivocar". -Participant 16

In these two fragments it is seen that fear to ask and to commit mistakes make students to feel they should never do that or retails them from doing it. As a consequence of this, most of

students do not participate due to this fear. This leads to the conclusion that part of the job of the teacher is, also, to promote confidence for students to understand that learning comes along with mistakes and questions, meaning helping them to overcome their problems (Llaven-Nucamendi, 2014).

Another element considered as features involved in the role of the teacher was the importance of the connection between knowledge and its application in real life. About this, participant 2 stated:

“...nos estaban dando el tema como para extranjeros, como para cómo vas a pagar con tu tarjeta de crédito un tren [...] porque a veces son cosas que, está difícil que pasen.”-Participant 2

With this fragment, this participant indicated they would like to be able to relate what they learn to their real life in the way in which they can apply it. With this evidence, it is concluded that, for these participants, that teachers make sure that content is applicable in students' life. Regarding to this, participant 16 also said:

“no encuentra el sentido utilitario de las cosas, es de decir, “nunca me va a servir porque nunca lo voy a utilizar”.” -Participant 16.

Here it is seen that, according to this participant, when something is perceived as something that is not going to be needed then, it is not useful. Thus, it can be said, based on this information that knowledge should be considered applicable for learners in order to be learned. This is seen in Bloom's Taxonomy, indicating that the highest level of learning is being able to apply knowledge in a situation, however, this is only reached once students are given opportunities to do it.

Another feature found with the data collected is related to assessment. An example of this is seen in Participant 12's words:

“[...] yo creo que es mejor evaluar de otras maneras, [...] hacer que hablen en público, escribir una historia, [...] más que un examen, porque muchos pues no estamos tan al corriente con eso...” -Participant 12

In this fragment, participant 12 expresses their idea of evaluation. She stated she would prefer to have different ways of evaluating when she was asked if it was necessary for her to be tested regularly by the teacher. Besides this she proposed other ways of assessment that are related to the actual use of language since exams are good for some people but not for others, according to her point of view. Another participant shared their thoughts about evaluation:

“...podría ser una evaluación formativa en vez de una sumativa.” -Participant 2

In this answer it is seen the initiative participants showed to participate in the decisions regarding different aspects of learning. Besides this, participant 2 stated she would like to have a formative evaluation which can be seen in the development of projects, for example. Moreover, it was found that participants consider that the type of evaluation most of teachers choose lay on is exams, which is considered to be a summative evaluation. However, Participant 12 also explained:

“yo no soy muy buena en los exámenes y sé que no soy la única; hay muchos maestros que basan un 70% en un examen cuando la mayoría de las personas suelen estudiarlos una semana antes y memorizarlo. La memorización no es para todos, algunos solo lo retienen por un corto periodo -Participant 12.

With this information, participant 12 explains how exams require students to memorize instead of learning. In this way, it is seen that some students just focus on memorizing information and, as participant 12 describe it, some students may do it for a short period of time. However, as described by Bloom, memorizing is one of the basic levels of learning, but it does not mean an item is actually learned, which is the main goal of any school. In addition to this, Participant 16 said:

“... siento que aprender de esa manera limita al estudiante porque tal vez yo estoy aprendiendo cosas que no vienen en el examen pero que son igual de importantes.”
-Participant 16

In this fragment, this participant described his perception about the content of exams. He claimed that there might be content that a student is learning that may not be included in the exam, but, that does not necessarily mean the content is not important. With all this information gathered, the importance of taking students into account to take decisions about learning content and how it is evaluated as Llaven-Nucamendi (2014) describes, is seen. In this aspect, the decisions taken by the teacher regarding assessment are important as well, since the menu of activities, resources of learning and evaluation are provided by the teacher in the classroom. As a conclusion of this, teachers are also responsible for providing the accurate options to learners based on what they prefer, what is best for them and what works better in order to motivate them and ensure learning quality.

The next sub factor related to teachers that was found with Instrument B is related to the connection between different subjects in their area. For example:

“...tengo muchas ideas para distintos materiales y más ahorita que estamos viendo todas estas materias de taller de materiales y así.” -Participant 2

It was found, that according to this participant, they have many ideas of materials that can be used because of another subject where they are learning to design materials. For this, it is imperative to remember that the participants of this study are students preparing to be ESL teachers, thus, in their formation to become teachers, they have classes related to learning theories and workshops to design and use different materials to promote learning. In this way, it was found that participants have the initiative to implement what they have learned in these classes. Because if this, this is a matter related to the role of the teachers since, it is was found that if students want

to be able to apply what they learn in other classes, then it is necessary for teachers to provide opportunities to put into practice strategies, materials and knowledge they are getting in order to integrate all this knowledge.

To conclude, in this section, different actions to take having the role of the teacher were presented. With the information gathered from Instrument B some features of the role of the teachers were identified to be important to participants. Thus, it was found that being a teacher promoting autonomous learning it is necessary to act as a facilitator and to recommend materials and strategies. Besides this, participants indicated it is highly important for them to be considered in decision making regarding learning content and assessment to assure they meet students' learning needs and attend to learning styles and content learners are interested in.

4.2.2 Negative Factors

As described at the beginning of the results of Instrument B, there are positive and negative factors involved in autonomy development, and from the seven factors identified, three of them were considered negative. In the next subheadings, the factors that, according to participants, influence autonomy development negatively, are presented, namely materials, the institution and educational system and the origin of autonomy.

4.2.2.1 Materials

It is already known that materials play a vital role in the learning process, and, even more in autonomous learning and the evidence gathered from the interviews, indicated that, indeed, materials influence autonomy development, positively and negatively. In previous sections, participants described different ideas regarding to materials such as participation in the selection of them as well as the importance of considering students' likes and interests when choosing them.

These ideas were considered as something positive as the participants showed initiative for participation, however, in their answers it was also found that there are some negative aspects about materials as well as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.12

Factors Involved in Autonomy Development: Materials

Factor	Description
Materials	Be varied
	Meet students' needs and interests
	Meet students' learning styles

In this way, some participants talked about the variation of materials. For example, participant 16 said:

“...en la mayoría de todas las mis clases de lengua extranjera, el 90% [...] son los mismos materiales. [...] entonces yo siento que después de un tiempo ya se vuelve muy tedioso y automático, como rutinario, por así decirlo.” -Participant 16

In this fragment, participant 16 explains how most of the times the same materials are used in the classroom. Besides, this participant indicates that, according to his perception, using the same materials and type of exercises all the time becomes tedious. This resulted significant since it is highly important to use materials that are attractive to catch students' attention and motivate them to learn. Moreover, this participant continues saying:

“... se ve como que más atractivo para mí si escogieran actividades con los teléfonos, con videos o audios y salir como de esa rutina, [...] si tú tienes la motivación, pero luego llegas al salón de clase y dicen “vamos a contestar nuestro libro” [...] ahí tu motivación se echa a perder.” -Participant 16

In this other portion of the interview, this participant talked about motivation. Thus, Participant 16 indicated that, firstly, it would be more attractive to them to choose activities that involved audiovisual items to go out of the routine. At the same time, participant 16 relates

materials to the motivation they have in the classroom and how it can be damaged when the only material used is the book. From this, it can be concluded that materials work as motivators for students to practice, but, when they are not attractive, they do not motivate learners, which might not have as positive outcomes as if they found materials attractive and enjoyable (Struyven, Filip, & Steven, 2008). Because of the above, it is seen that, according to this participant, not having different and varied materials is something that negatively affects motivation for students.

In addition to variation of materials and attending to learners' interests and needs, it was seen that some participants mentioned learning styles. The evidence of this is seen in participant 12's words:

“usualmente muchas de las actividades tienen que ser como muy visuales” - Participant 12

Then, as mentioned by Participant 12, usually most of the activities are more on the visual side. Thus, it can be said, that according to participants' experience, activities might be more focused on some learning styles than others, when, as already mentioned, materials and activities must attend to all students' needs.

As a conclusion, in this section the negative aspects of materials were discussed. In this way, the evidence showed that materials can negatively affect autonomy development when they are not varied as this can affect at the same time students' motivation, or when materials do not meet students' needs, interests or learning styles.

4.2.2.2 Perception of Educational System

The next factor found to have effect on autonomous development according to participants is related to the educational system and the institution. As presented in the second chapter of this

study, the educational system in which the participants' program is based on has a constructivist approach. About this, participant 16 said:

“siento que no aplica en el actual sistema, porque siempre ellos van a tener el vocabulario que tú debes aprender para estar en un determinado nivel. Entonces si yo quiero aprender de esto, pero no viene en el examen, voy a parecer un tonto en el examen a pesar de que sí sé.” -Participant 16

With this answer, the perception of this participant shows that allowance to learn about other topics is not applicable in the current educational system. In this way, for this participant, limiting learning is an idea that comes, not necessarily from the educational system but from the idea students have of it. Then, it is understood that this participant perceives the system as something that has limits for learning even when the educational system and programs are based on constructivist ideas. The conclusion is, then, that participants perception about the educational system is being affected by the real practice in the classroom.

4.2.2.3 Origin of Autonomy

As explained briefly in previous sections of this chapter, the origin of autonomy turned out to play a key role in autonomy development. As it has been discussed, autonomy is a concept that develops when the appropriate conditions are offered to students (Thanasoulas, 2000). Then, it could be said that autonomy should be promoted providing the adequate opportunities to learners to develop strategies for autonomous learning, however, the information found with the interviews showed that autonomy is not only developed intentionally but it is also born as a reaction to a problem.

Because of this, based on the information provided by the participants on the interviews, different situations in which autonomy was born were found. For example, Participant 12 related the following:

“Muchas veces pasé por maestros que no me enseñaban las cosas como quería [...]ya tenía que entrar a la prepa, [...] y no sabía muchas cosas. Dije: si no me sé esto, qué hago. Tengo que aprenderlo por mí misma. Ahora hay muchas herramientas, entonces yo sola fui y busqué incluso a otros maestros para que me ayudaran. En ese momento fue donde pensé: No voy a depender de solo un maestro, yo también tengo capacidad de aprender por mí misma.”-Participant 12

As this participant stated it, starting to be autonomous was not necessarily born from a situation in which autonomy was promoted by a teacher. In fact, as this participant claimed, autonomous learning was born as a reaction to a problem in which she felt she was not learning enough. In this way, it cannot be said that this participant has a higher level of autonomy because it was promoted in the classroom but because she had to find a way to learn what she was not learning in class. It is worth highlighting what participant 12 said about some of their teachers that did not seem to teach in a way in which she felt satisfied with. Thus, there is a close relationship between this problem and the role of the teacher, since, as mentioned by Llaven-Nucamendi (2014), their job is to help students to overcome problems and find a way in which they learn best. In addition to this, participant 2 related:

“...me pasó muchísimo en preparatoria, en matemáticas, porque el profe iba y avanzaba y yo sentía que nada se me quedaba, entonces me di cuenta de que no podía quedarme con eso y echarle la culpa y decir: voy a reprobar por el profe; sino que tenía que buscar mis propios recursos, y yo misma como que ir empujándome para poder llevarles el ritmo, y al final me funcionó.” -Participant 2

In this experience, this participant was finding difficult to follow up with her classmates. Due to this, as participant 2 stated it, they started taking autonomous actions in order to learn what they were missing. Again, it is seen that this participants was not exposed to intentional situations

to become autonomous, but their autonomy development started from a situation in which they found themselves pushed to autonomous learning, or what could be independent learning.

The results of this section can be compared to other inquiries studied by Asadinik and Mirza (2015) in which the origin of autonomous learners is intentional. Thus, these authors indicate that participants in other studies had positive experiences in which teachers would give them more freedom to decide what to do in the class. This, according to Asadinik and Mirza, lead students to be more confident about autonomous learning, and, at the same time, emphasize that this was achieved when “non-traditional ways of language learning” (p. 46) were used.

With all the above, it can be concluded that the origin of autonomy may not necessarily represent a negative factor, however it represents the lack of intentional opportunities provided in the classroom to develop autonomous learning, which is an obstacle to promote autonomous learning for other students who are not motivated to learn as the participants in this part of the study.

4.2.2.4 Attitudes

Besides these negative factors, it was found that learners’ attitudes can have a negative influence on autonomy development as well. Because of this, in the following paragraphs the negative side of the factor “attitudes” described in the Positive Factors section of this chapter is presented.

Based on the information collected from Instrument B, some attitudes were found that might be considered as obstacles to develop autonomy or, at least, that would not contribute to this process. Thus, some participants implied that one of these negative attitudes is related to correction. For example, Participant 16 says:

“al principio me molestaba mucho que me corrigieran porque siempre quieres tener la razón ...” Participant 12

With this information, this participant indicated that they did not like to be corrected, a negative attitude towards the acceptance of correction. It is well known that in time and adequate correction of mistakes and errors can lead to improvement, but this is also determined by the way correction is perceived. Thus, a negative perception of correction can have a negative effect in encouragement and motivation for students (Zhu, 2010). This perception then can be considered as something negative in the role of the student, since as stated in Chapter II when discussing the characteristics of an autonomous learner, part of their role is to take risks towards the learning process of the language which is something that would bring along errors and mistakes that can be complemented by correction. In addition to this, another participant explained:

*“...los alumnos tenemos esa concepción toda satanizada de los errores y de que - No me puedo equivocar- Y no, yo siento que el error viene con la experiencia, entonces entre más te equivoques más experiencia vas a tener. [...] a veces debes tener la oportunidad de cometer errores para entender en qué estás mal y mejorar.”
-Participant 16*

In his answer, participant 16 first described the perception him and other students have about mistakes and errors. In his words, he expressed that students may have the idea that mistakes should not be committed in the first place. This is an idea that holds students back from participating and taking risks when communicating, as stated by Horváthová (2016). Having said this, being scared or having a negative attitude towards correction and mistakes making does not contribute to autonomy development, on the contrary, it refrains participants from taking risks when learning also leading to discouragement (Zhu, 2010).

4.2.2.5 Role of the Learner

Besides attitudes, it was found that within the features of the role of the learner, there are some that might negatively affect autonomy development. The first aspect found and one of the most significant for the researcher has to do with learners' participation in materials and content selection, for example, participant 12 said:

“...si tú haces una actividad por ti solo, no va a funcionar tanto” -Participant 12

Then, when Participant 12 was asked about complementing activities done in class with others done by their own, she explained that doing an activity by themselves would not be that good as they do not know whether it is correct or not. In this way, this participant shows the importance learners give to teachers as the entity that has all the knowledge in the learning process referring that they prefer to have activities proposed only by the teacher as they know about it and not their own. In addition to this, participants 2 responded the following when they were asked whether they would like to have a greater participation in materials, activities and content selection:

“...de cierta forma sé que eso no me toca a mí, porque le toca a los profes.” - Participant 2

“como los maestros preparan las clases, ya tienen como que establecido lo que se va a hacer porque aparte tienen sus lesson plan.” Participant 7

In this fragment, it is seen that participants do not know what their role consists of, as this participant indicated that choosing materials and activities is more related to the teachers' job. Then, with these responses it is seen that students do not perceive they can be part of this decision making which makes them feel it is not necessary for them to take any decisions since they have been already taken, as participant 7 stated it saying teachers' lesson plans have been already done before they have a say on this matters.

As seen in the previous paragraphs, according to these participants' perception, the role of the learner can have a negative effect on autonomy development. In this way, not understanding everything they can participate in when it comes to taking decisions over their learning and the importance they still give to the teacher can be an obstacle to autonomous learning.

4.2.2.5 Role of the Teacher

The next negative factors to be discussed are related to the teacher. As indicated by the analysis of the interviews and based on the literature review, the role teachers take can have a negative effect on autonomy development. The first factor then, according to participants has to do with the type of assessment used in class. Regarding this, participant 12 explained:

“...hay muchos maestros que te basan un 70% en un examen...” -Participant 12

As presented before, in the section referring to the perception of the educational system, the kind of assessment used by teachers is another key in learning. However, the results showed that, very frequently, participants have exams as the main assessment tool in the classroom and sometimes a good portion of the final grade relies on the exam. In addition to this, participant 12 continued:

“...yo no soy muy buena en los exámenes y sé que no soy la única, [...] cuando la mayoría de las personas suelen estudiarlos una semana antes y memorizarlo. [...] algunos solo lo retienen por un corto periodo -Participant 12

This information shows that exams are seen as the situation in which learners have to memorize information rather than learn it. Then, it is important to highlight two points that this participant mentions: the first one is that not everyone is good at exams. Regarding to this, it is well known that there are many people that fail exams or do not get great grades in exams and, that there are many reasons behind this that may interfere with academic performance (Whelan &

Brown, 2011). The second point to emphasize from this fragment is memorization. It is known that memorization and, there are two types of memory: long and short term as well as two types of learning, according to Whelan and Brown (2011), surface and deep. In this way, it can be concluded that long term memorization and deep learning are the main goal for learning rather than surface learning that is only designed to pass an exam or subject (Whelan & Brown, 2011). Having said that, according to this student, some students can memorize information for a short period of time and others for longer, however, it is true that memorization is one of the basic levels in Bloom's Taxonomy and does not mean the subject is actually learned or considered as deep learning.

Besides this perspective, participant 16 indicated regarding exams:

"...porque siempre son, con cierto vocabulario, ciertas estructuras, que se supone que debes de saber o si no, no tienes el nivel que deberías tener. [...] aprender de esa manera limita al estudiante [...] tal vez yo estoy aprendiendo cosas que no vienen en el examen, pero son igual de importantes..." -Participant 16

Then, from his perspective, this subject indicates exams set boundaries or limits to learning. This, according to this words, makes them feel that whatever they learn, that is not included in the exam, may not be considered important even when it might be. On the other hand, other participant expressed:

"los exámenes causan estrés, entonces, si todos los maestros nos hicieran tantos exámenes, yo creo que, en vez de ayudarnos, nos estresaría demasiado." - Participant 2

According to this participant, when used very frequently, exams can cause more stress than what they should, and, as a consequence of this, the results of them may not be as objective as they are expected to be (Whelan & Brown, 2011), as the results of exams do not only depend on knowledge but other factors.

In this way, the results showed that the overuse of exams can cause stress and lead students to short memorization and surface learning. Due to this, it is concluded that when teachers rely only on exams to assess students, autonomy is not promoted, since students are not taking decisions about assessment tools and, for instance evaluation is not focused on their process but in a final question which does not determine whether the student learned or not.

Also, the analysis of the interviews regarding to teachers showed that correction methods can also influence autonomy development and the attitudes towards it. About this, participant stated:

“...las veces que he entregado un trabajo, [...]es no tan significativo para el alumno si ya se lo dan todo corregido. [...] Pero, cuando [...] te dicen “Okay, está mal, corrígelo”, te pones a pensar en qué está mal. [...]así, de una manera más consciente lo checo para ver qué está mal. -Participant 16

In this fragment, participant 16 explained how significant correction can be in two scenarios: when everything is corrected for them and when they are provided opportunities of reflection. This answer showed that when teachers correct without explanations or opportunities to reflect about mistakes, has a negative influence on participants autonomy development, since critical thinking is not promoted. This fragment also shows the importance of using the adequate correction strategies that suit learners the best, since the “lack of effective strategies using to correct learners’ errors creates reluctance in students” (Corneille, 2017, p. 69). Thus, participant 16 indicated that when teachers correct everything there is not much for students to do, in fact, according to his words, this participant ignored the mistakes as they have already been corrected.

Another result found with this analysis has to do with opportunities that teachers provide students to participate in the selection of materials and learning content. For example, when asked

how many opportunities participants think they have in real life to participate in decisions about materials and class content some of them answered:

“A veces creo... solamente en meta (one class).” -Participant 5

As presented in chapter 2, even when the educational program these students and teachers have has a constructivist perspective, the interviews showed that participants do not have many opportunities in real life to participate in decisions regarding the materials, learning content and assessment methods. In this fragment, it is seen that there is only one class for this participant in which they can do the activities they choose to. This participant then explained later that in this class, the space for students to put into practice activities they like is given to them. On the other hand, participant 16 said:

“... es muy baja, porque muy pocos profesores son los que te dan la oportunidad, [...] siempre el profesor es el único que determina las actividades que se van a hacer...” -Participant 16

As showed by this fragment, the situation is similar for this student. Very few occasions are the ones in which, according to this participant’s experience, teachers give opportunities to students to share activities with the rest of the group. Moreover, this participant details that the teacher is the only one that determines the activities to do in class. Another similar perspective was collected from participant 12:

“...no hay muchas oportunidades de elegir, porque usualmente un maestro tiene más de un salón, entonces están muy ocupados,” -Participant 12

In this example, participant 12 mentions the amount of work of teachers as the reason for not taking into account students in decision making. Thus, this subject says that teachers are normally very busy to provide opportunities for students to take students into consideration regarding decisions about what is going to be learned. This example is closely related to one of the

attitudes presented previously, in which learners, even when showing some autonomous attitudes, they still conceive the teacher as the one with the job to determine everything to be done in class, and that is an incorrect perspective of the teacher and learners' role.

To sum up, the previous subheadings presented the negative factors that influence autonomy development. Thus, the results of this part of the analysis of interviews showed that there are negative factors towards autonomy that are related to materials, the way the educational system is perceived, the origin of autonomy, attitudes towards learning and the roles of learners and teachers.

Conclusion

In this chapter the results of the instruments used to collect information were presented. The instruments used in this study were a questionnaire (Instrument A) and an interview (Instrument B) which intended to get data about the students' level of autonomy, their definition of autonomy and the factors involved in autonomy development according to their experience.

Thus, with instrument A, information about the age, English language level, certifications and level of autonomy was gotten. It was found that they are between B1 and B2 level of domain of the language. Moreover, it was found that the students who reported a B2 level were also the ones with the highest levels of autonomy. Also, the analysis of the data collected indicated that only two participants know what autonomy in learning is and the majority of them have a misconception or vague idea of autonomous learning. In addition, the results showed that most of the students have a beginner and intermediate level of autonomy, but any student was in an advanced level.

Finally, the results obtained from Instrument B, suggested that there are seven factors involved in autonomy development that have positive and negative effects on it. The factors that were identified are: attitudes of students towards learning, motivation to learn, the role of teachers, the role of learners, the materials used, the perception participants have of the educational system and the origin of autonomy.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

In this last chapter the conclusions of the analysis done in Chapter IV are presented. Firstly, a summary of the results is found along with the significance of the study, then, in order to remember the objective of this study, the research questions are presented so they can be answered. Besides this, information about the pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research are listed subsequently. Finally, the conclusions of the results obtained from the instruments are presented.

5.1 Findings and Significance of the Study

After the analysis of the information collected with the questionnaire and the interview, there were significant findings. It was seen that only two participants were able to provide a complete definition of autonomy; also, that 9 of the 20 students have a misconception of autonomy, and some others have an incomplete idea of this concept. In addition to this, the results revealed that most of the participants are in a beginner level of autonomy development and 6 participants were considered to be in an intermediate level. Having this information about the participants' level of autonomy 6 participants were chosen to move on to Instrument B. Thus, the data from Instrument B showed that there are seven factors related to autonomy development. Based on participants' perception and experience, the key elements for autonomy development are: motivation, attitudes taken by students towards learning, the role of learners, the role of teachers, materials used in the classroom, the perception students have of the educational system and the

origin of autonomy. Also, it was seen that there are factors that have a positive and negative influence in learners' development of autonomy and their role in this process.

The significance of this study lies on the importance of gathering information to reflect about learning and teaching practices. The reason behind this is the need of institutions to produce individuals that are capable of being autonomous and take control of different situations (Barrantes & Olivares, 2013, p. 326) as well as to adapt to the new requirements that are being created in different professional fields. Because of this, it was necessary to explore how autonomy develops in the context of these students and themselves and identify the factors that are involved in autonomy development in order to identify opportunity areas of improvement and, be the first step to plan a route to promote autonomous learning in the classroom that would allow the institution to comply its learning objectives.

5.2 Answers to Research Questions

On the overall, this qualitative and exploratory research intended to get information about how autonomy is conceived by students and the factors that, based on their own experience, are involved in autonomy development. Firstly, a questionnaire was used in order to contextualize the problem and answer to the first and second research questions; later an interview was applied which had the purpose of obtaining information to answer to the third research question. The procedure used to analyze the results of these instruments was coding, leading to the classification of participants' answers into different categories.

This inquiry was guided by three research questions:

1. How do LEI students define autonomy?
2. What is LEI students' level of autonomy?

3. According to LEI students' own experience, what are the factors that are involved in autonomy development?

In the following sections, the answer to each question is presented.

5.2.1 Research Question 1

As presented above, the first research question is:

How do LEI students define autonomy?

In order to answer this question, participants were asked to define autonomy using Instrument A. In this way, following the process of coding, their answers were analyzed and divided in 3 categories: "Complete idea" "Incomplete idea" and "Misconception".

After the analysis of the results, it was seen that autonomy in learning is not a very clear concept among LEI students. It was found that only 2 participants were able to define autonomy considering the most important elements of autonomy in learning; also, it was seen that 9 students provided an incomplete definition of autonomy in learning, meaning that they had some ideas of what autonomy in learning is, but not accurate enough; and, finally, 9 participants provided definitions that were considered misconceptions as they defined concepts such as independent learning and self-instruction. These results can be compared to the ones Khotimah, Widiati, Mustofa, and Ubaidillah (2019) obtained, reporting that more than half of the participants in their study also perceived autonomy in learning as independent learning, meaning that students may conceive autonomy in learning as a condition where the support from a teacher is not needed which is an incorrect idea of autonomous learning. Because of this, Khotimah, Widiati, Mustofa, and Ubaidillah (2019) also conclude that the perception students have "is likely to be affected by the lack of knowledge or information on this concept" (p. 378). This is an important outcome to

consider since even when the participants of this study are enrolled in an educational program that emphasizes the importance of students to develop autonomous skills (Programa Educativo de la Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés, 2009), the majority of them was not able to define autonomy completely. This evidence then, leads to a similar conclusion to Khotimah, Widiati, Mustofa, and Ubaidillah's (2019): promotion of autonomous learning is vital in order to have students be able to define and understand what autonomous learning is and what requires them to do.

5.2.2 Research Question 2

The second research question of this study was:

What is LEI students' level of autonomy?

To provide an answer to this matter, Instrument A, the questionnaire was used. Thus, this instrument, apart from being useful to obtain an answer to the first research question, it allowed the researcher to determine participants level of autonomy and function as a filter to choose participants to the second phase of the study. To analyze the data obtained each participant was classified into four categories: "Emerging Level", "Beginner Level", "Intermediate Level" and "Advanced Level".

The results of this analysis revealed that there were no participants in "Emerging level". However, it was seen that fourteen of the participants were categorized in the "Beginner Level", that is to say, students had a few autonomous attitudes which could be the same as if they were starting in the process of autonomy development. Moreover, it was found that six of the participants were placed in the "Intermediate Level". In this way, the highest level of autonomy that these participants were placed at is intermediate, that is to say, any student was classified in

the category of “Advanced Level”. These results are similar to the ones found in Barrantes and Olivares (2013) where any participant, also enrolled in an English Teaching Major at an university in Costa Rica, out of 6, was identified to be in the advanced level of autonomy. Again, even when participants at the university level are supposed to be autonomous, they seem to be still in the basic level of autonomy in learning.

It is worth mentioning that, based on this information gathered and after the comparison between how they defined autonomy and their levels of autonomy, it was seen that theory does not seem to define practice. The evidence showed that, participants 13 and 20, who were the only ones to provide a complete definition of autonomy were classified in the “Beginner Level” category. In addition to this, the participants who got the highest levels of autonomy provided an incomplete definition of autonomy in learning or misconception of this term, meaning that being able to define autonomy does not necessarily mean that the student is autonomous.

5.2.3 Research Question 3

The last research question for this study was:

According to LEI students’ own experience, what are the factors that are involved in autonomy development?

In order to answer this question, Instrument B was used to interview the participants with the highest levels of autonomy development according to Instrument A. However, the highest level of autonomy development that participants reached was intermediate level, then, the students classified in this category were chosen to be part of the second phase of the study: the interview.

Participants’ answers were divided in different categories, following the process of coding. After the analysis, it was found that students’ answers were mainly related to 7 themes: motivation

to learn the language, attitudes towards learning, importance and awareness of the role of the learner, importance and awareness of the role of the teacher, materials and activities used in class, their perception of the educational program and, lastly the origin of autonomy. Then, it was revealed that some of these factors can have a positive or a negative impact on autonomy development.

Within the “positive factors”, it was seen that the participants that were interviewed have positive motivation to learn the language, for example, some of the participants expressed they enjoy learning the language and they have a clear purpose of learning it, for example, travelling, working as a teacher, which is the professional field of the major these participants are enrolled in; and, as a mean for learning about other matters. These results were alike the ones found in the analysis of results of some studies made by Asadinik and Mirza (2015). These authors found that having a clear objective when learning English is highly important as it helps students to “commit themselves to taking control of their learning” (p. 44). In this way, clear objectives accompanied by motivation are good foundations to lead to autonomous learning.

Another factor that was found is related to attitudes towards learning. In this category, the answers of the subjects reflected attitudes such as responsibility to learn, which is one of the most important ideas behind autonomy according to Holec (1981). Moreover, it was seen that participants have the initiative of researching information for themselves and participating in the decision making of activities and materials to use in class. Also, the results showed the importance these participants give to different aspects of learning, such as self-assessment and the application of autonomy in their academic, personal and professional life. Then, with this factor, it can be concluded that in order to take actions it is necessary to have certain attitudes towards learning,

and, in this case, the initiative to participate and be involved in the learning process was the main attitude behind autonomous behaviors.

The next factors, as stated before, are related to the roles of the main characters in the learning process: the learner and the teacher. It was seen that, the awareness of the roles of learners and teachers is crucial for autonomy development, since it is highly important that learners, understand their own and the teacher's role (Oxford, 2014). In this way, the results showed that knowing what they are expected to do such as self-assessment, identifying their learning style, using strategies that are appropriate for their learning style, reflecting about mistakes and understanding the role of the teacher and what to expect from them, are some of the reasons behind these participants' autonomous development.

Furthermore, as described above, in the same way positive factors were found, there were aspects that could be categorized as a negative influence over autonomy development. Thus, the negative factors that were identified with Instrument B, seemed not to contribute to autonomous learning. Then, the first of these negative factors is, according to participants experience, the use of materials. Regarding this, the data analysis revealed that they are not regularly varied, which can affect learners' motivation to learn and the effort they put into practice. Moreover, the results suggested that materials do not always meet students' needs such as learning styles or interests. This reflected a problem because, some of the participants implied that materials that do not meet these characteristics may result not efficient or attractive to them.

In addition to this, it was found that the educational program plays another crucial role in autonomy development, since, according to students, it is not possible for them to become autonomous as they considered that the educational program does not allow it. The interesting part of this was that the educational program clearly states that learners in this major should develop

autonomous skills (Modelo Educativo-Académico 2: Modelo Universitario Minerva, 2007), however, the practice and the perception students have from it can be what does not allow them to go beyond in the learning process.

The next factor listed is the origin of autonomy. This category also resulted meaningful for the researcher due to the conditions, that, based on the participants' experience, helped students to foster autonomy, meaning that they were not intentional but born from a need. That is to say, these participants do not have autonomous attitudes because they were taught to do it, but because they had to look for other resources and ways of learning by themselves when they were not learning successfully in their classes.

In addition to this, the data suggested that some of the positive factors previously presented also had a negative side. Thus, it was found that negative attitudes towards correction and mistakes making can represent issues for the learner autonomy development. The results also suggested that the perception of correction students have is still attained to what teachers say, as most of participants concluded teachers are the ones with the knowledge to be able to correct them; in this way, self- correction was not considered as something very used by them. A similar result was found in the studies analyzed by Asadinik and Mirza (2015) where participants indicated the confidence they had to assess "their own work was very low" (p. 45).

Besides this, another negative attitude discovered with this study is related to the conception students have of mistakes. Then, likewise correction, when students have a positive perception of mistakes, this can help them to work on them, however, it was found that fear to commit mistakes and perceive them as something that they should never commit, also affects autonomy development.

The same situation happens with the role of the learner and the teacher. Thus, the answers from the subjects suggested that not being aware of their own and the teachers' role is something that holds them from autonomy development. For example, it was seen that, participants, even when they were considered to be in an intermediate level of autonomy, they still consider that there are things that only the teacher can decide about, such as the activities to do. Thus, the analysis of results indicated that, when learners do not accept full charge of their own learning process and give part of that control to the teacher, they are not being fully autonomous. Because of this, not being aware and not recognizing their own and the teachers' role can also affect autonomy development.

To conclude, as revealed by the results of Instrument B, there are positive and negative factors that influence autonomy development. In this way, according to participants experience, autonomy is affected by motivation, positive and negative attitudes towards learning, awareness of their role as learners, awareness of the role of teachers, participation in the selection of materials and activities as well as their characteristics, the application and perception of the educational program and the origin of autonomy which is not necessarily intentional but something learners were pushed to do.

5.3 Pedagogical Implications

Even when this study is focused on students' perceptions and their experiences on autonomy development, the results provided useful data to learn about teachers as well. Because of this, it is possible to talk about implications for both, students and teachers. First, it is important to understand that autonomy is crucial, however, as shown in the results of this study, not all students are autonomous even when at the university level, they are supposed to. Because of this, it is necessary to review learning and teaching practices and make sure that these meet the

educational program's teaching approaches and goals, since, as Lin and Reinders (2019) indicate it, there is, indeed, certain difficulty to put autonomous learning into practice, where the theory that educational programs are based on, is not being reflected in the classroom practice.

Moreover, since reviewing learning and teaching practices seems to be a very general idea, the researcher found important to make more specific recommendations. For instance, it is important for teachers to reflect about the actions that are being taken in the classroom and the first step to do this is to understand their own role and the students' as well. Then, teachers should understand the limitations their role has. Indeed, it is vital to recognize that "students are not simply recipients" (Llaven-Nucamendi, 2014, p. 61) of knowledge, but rather that they are supposed to take charge of their own learning, understanding that the teacher's job is to be a provider of support services" (Farmer, 2006) so learners are able to find the way in which they learn best (Mynard, 2011).

In addition to this, it is vital that teachers then, pay more attention and take into account students' characteristics such as learning styles, assessment preferences and interests, in order to plan a menu of materials, activities and content. Another recommendation that can be done for teachers is to provide more opportunities for learners to be part of the selection of learning content, materials and activities and provide a confident environment in which students feel comfortable to share their ideas and take risks when it comes to the language development (Horváthová, 2016).

The third recommendation for teachers, based on the students' experiences is related to students awareness of autonomy. In this way, it could be fruitful to provide students opportunities for them to understand how autonomous learning is supposed to work for them, where they can be educated about their role as students, strategies, resources and methods they can use so they use these tools in the classroom and to their own learning.

For the students, the results suggested that it is imperative them to be more educated about autonomous learning. In this way, it is necessary for them to learn about autonomous learning that brings along cognition and metacognition (Rahimi & Katal, 2012), meaning that they should be able to identify their learning styles and the strategies that best fit their way of learning. This implication can be linked to what was discussed in the previous paragraph, to promote opportunities for students where they can identify their learning styles and the strategies or methods that help them learn better and can put this knowledge into practice inside and outside the classroom. In addition to this, it is also important that students understand what their role in the learning process is, knowing that they have control over their own learning so they can take decisions over it and become more confident about sharing with teachers their ideas about materials, activities or methods.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

In order to carry out this study, the researcher had to deal with some issues. One of these has to do with the number of students that were supposed to be interviewed for the second phase of this study. In this way, 6 students were considered to be interviewed, however, only 5 of them were contacted due to the pandemic for COVID-19 that the world was dealing with at the moment of working on this project.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

As explained in the first chapter, this study was aimed to gather information about the current situation of autonomy development with LEI students. In this way, this study focused on the students' perception about autonomy, and it was intended to be the first step to raise awareness and reflect about the real practice of autonomy, then, a lot of areas were not covered by this

research related to non-autonomous students and teachers' perceptions, the role of culture in the type of learning and teaching autonomy as well as the impact of Self-Access Centers.

Firstly, the researcher found interesting to see what the perceptions of students who got the lowest levels of autonomy are. This would also give a good idea about what gaps are being missed in order to plan and develop strategies that help them to be autonomous. In addition to this, it is important to know what the perception of teachers is regarding autonomy development in order to determine if training is required to promote autonomy.

Another important aspect to consider when researching about autonomy is the role of culture students are involved in. As traditional learning and teaching methods are being brought into the topic, the researcher recommends culture is included in order to find out how much it influences students and teachers' perceptions, because as seen in other studies such as in Arabia, the results of autonomous levels are similar to the ones in Mexico, even when both cultures are different.

Moreover, as presented in Chapter II, self-access centers were created in order to promote autonomous learning in the way that students were able to have access to different resources. Then, another area to be investigated and analyzed is the impact that these centers have over students' level of autonomy and how much they are actually used.

Finally, the researcher concludes that there is still a lot of field to cover about autonomous learning, such as the implementation of the Self-Access Centers and their impact on autonomy development as well as the perception of teachers about the practice of autonomy.

5.6 Final Conclusions

Having all this information, there are important outcomes that can be drawn. Firstly, the results showed that even when students in this major are supposed to be autonomous, most of them were not able to define autonomy in learning, having incomplete ideas of this concept and confusing it with other terms, which leads to the idea that autonomy is not promoted enough for students to understand what they it requires them to do. One of the most important results gotten from this study is that the percentage of students that are autonomous is very low. With this information it was concluded that, there is a gap between the theory of the educational program and what it states and the actual practice of autonomy in the class. Meaning that even when the educational program is based on constructivism and autonomy development, students are not practicing this inside and outside the classroom.

In addition to this, it was seen that knowing what autonomy is or not, does not necessarily determine if a learner is autonomous or not. Thus, the results showed that a low percentage of participants was able to define autonomy but was classified in a beginner level of autonomy, while participants in the intermediate level, were not able to define autonomy. Then, even when awareness of autonomy does not fully determine their level of autonomy, it is true that it helps them to recognize what exactly is expected from them and their teachers since Tran and Duong (2018) consider awareness of autonomy a supportive factor for success in autonomy development.

Regarding the factors that influence autonomy development, it can be concluded that there are seven elements that influence the success of autonomous learning. One of the most highlighted factors, based on the results, was participants' perception of the teachers' role, where students assumed teachers should be in charge of everything related to materials and activities to do in the classroom. This outcome was also found in a study carried out in Turkey, where Okumus (2015)

reports that students still perceive the teacher as the “authority figure in the classroom who should take most of the responsibilities” (p. 90). Then, even when the educational programs and learning theories state learners are the center of the learning process, the reality in the classroom is different. However, in despite of this, students claimed that they would like to be considered to participate in the decision-making process, where autonomous attitudes can be seen. Then, this idea leads to the conclusion that students are willing to step in and participate more as long as teachers step out of the center of the learning process and take the administrative role as Farmer (2006) claims.

The last conclusion has to do with the importance of promoting autonomous learning among novice teachers Faltis (2015). This idea should be highlighted as the context and participants of this study are pre-service English language teachers since, according to Llaven-Nucamendi “In order to promote learner autonomy, and perhaps model it too, teachers need to have experienced it” (2014, p. 99). Then, something to conclude about this, is that it is even more important to help pre-service teachers to develop autonomous learning so they can encourage their future students to be autonomous as well.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

**EXPLORING LEI STUDENTS' PERCEPTION AND FACTORS INVOLVED IN
AUTONOMY DEVELOPMENT**

This questionnaire has the purpose of gathering data about your learning behaviors related to autonomy and your perception about what this concept means. The information required in Part I has the unique purpose of providing a general background and contact you in case it is needed to collect more information about you. All the data that you provide will be completely anonymous. Thank you very much for your help!

I. General Information:

1. ID Number:

2. Age:

3. Cellphone number

II. Autonomy Perception

4. Explain, in a minimum of 20 words, what you consider autonomy and being autonomous mean.

_____.

III. Learning Autonomy Level

Please, check the one closest answer to the following statements according to your true cases.

1. I usually set my own goal for each learning unit.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

2. I use other English books and resources on my own will

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

3. When I hear someone talking in English, I listen very carefully.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

4. I try to talk in English with my family or friends

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

5. I enjoy learning a grammatical point on my own.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

6. While learning English, I like activities in which I can learn on my own.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

7. I like trying new things while I am learning English.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

8. I am afraid that I won't learn a topic if the teacher doesn't explain it in the English class.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

9. I learn better when the teacher explains something on the board.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

10. I use my own methods to learn vocabulary in English.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

11. I feel confident when the teacher is beside me while I am learning English.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

12. I study based only on what the teacher explained in class.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

13. My teacher always has to guide me in learning English.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

14. While learning English, I like that my teacher repeats grammatical rules.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

15. I feel happy when my teacher explains the use of English in detail.

- Always True
- Sometimes True

Never True

16. In the English lesson, I like projects where I can work with other students.

Always True

Sometimes True

Never True

17. If I cannot learn English in the classroom, I can learn working on my own.

Always True

Sometimes True

Never True

18. I like learning English words by looking them up in a dictionary.

Always True

Sometimes True

Never True

19. I like my teacher to correct my errors when I make them.

Always True

Sometimes True

Never True

20. I want the teacher to give us the words that we are to learn.

Always True

Sometimes True

Never True

21. I like to use videos, movies and music in the foreign language, outside the classroom.

Always True

Sometimes True

Never True

22. I like to listen and read in English outside the classroom.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

23. I would like to select the materials for my foreign language lessons.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

24. I would like to share the responsibility of deciding what to do in the English lesson.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

25. I know what kind of learning strategies work better for me when I have to study.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

26. If I haven't learned something in my English lesson, I am responsible for it.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

27. I like to choose the content of what is taught in the English lesson.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

28. The teacher should give me tests regularly.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

29. I like English because I like to communicate in this language.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

30. I know my weaknesses and do something about them.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

31. Everytime I have an assignment, I avoid checking if I made mistakes, so the teacher should score or correct it.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

32. I think that I learn English better when I complement the activities done in class with other activities by my own.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

33. My language learning success depends on what I do in the classroom.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

34. I find it more useful to work with my friends than working on my own for the English lesson.

- Always True

- Sometimes True
- Never True

35. I do the English lesson activities only when my teacher is going to grade me.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

36. I have my own ways of testing how much I have learned.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

37. I try to understand the jokes and riddles of the foreign language.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

38. I also investigate the culture of the foreign language I am learning.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

39. I investigate the idioms and sayings of the foreign language I am learning.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

40. I ask people who have lived abroad about the lifestyles of people living there.

- Always True
- Sometimes True
- Never True

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW

EXPLORING LEI STUDENTS' PERCEPTION AND THE FACTORS INVOLVED IN AUTONOMY DEVELOPMENT.

Esta entrevista es parte de un estudio llevado a cabo en la Facultad de lenguas de la BUAP. El propósito de esta investigación es identificar la percepción de los alumnos de LEI acerca de la autonomía, su nivel de autonomía y los factores que afectan el desarrollo de la misma. Particularmente, esta entrevista busca recabar información acerca de los factores que influyen en el desarrollo de la autonomía, según tu propia experiencia. Entonces la información brindada aquí es completamente confidencial y será usada únicamente para propósitos específicos de esta investigación.

Fecha	19 de mayo, 2020
Entrevistador	Elishevah Carrillo
Entrevistado	Participante 2
Semestre	4°
Edad	19
Duración de la entrevista	32 min

1. ¿Qué te motiva a aprender inglés además de necesitarlo para esta licenciatura?
2. ¿sabes qué nivel de inglés tienes?
3. ¿estás satisfecha con tu nivel de inglés en este momento?
4. ¿cómo te consideras para aprender inglés?
5. ¿Sabes qué tipo de aprendizaje tienes?
6. ¿Cómo te diste cuenta?
7. ¿En qué te beneficia saber qué tipo de aprendizaje tienes?
8. ¿En qué basas tu elección de materiales?
9. ¿Dónde aprendiste esto?

Respuestas cuestionario:

10. En el statement “I like the teacher to give us the words we are to learn”, ¿por qué elegiste “Always True”, “Sometimes True” o “Never True”?
11. En el statement “I like my teacher to correct my errors when I make them”, ¿por qué elegiste “Always True”, “Sometimes True” o “Never True”?
12. ¿Crees que el maestro es el único que puede corregir?

13. En el statement “I would like to select the materials for my foreign language lessons” ¿por qué elegiste “Always True”, “Sometimes True” o “Never True”?
14. ¿Te gustaría tener la oportunidad de integrar materiales a la clase?
15. En el statement “I would like to share the responsibility of deciding what to do in my English lessons”, ¿por qué elegiste “Always True”, “Sometimes True” o “Never True”?
16. ¿En qué te beneficiaría poder compartir esta responsabilidad al decidir qué hacer en clase?
17. ¿Qué tantas oportunidades, en la vida real, tienes para participar en estas decisiones?
18. En el statement “If I haven’t learnt something in my English lesson, I am responsible for it” ¿por qué elegiste “Always True”, “Sometimes True” o “Never True”?
19. En el statement “I know my weaknesses and do something about them” ¿por qué elegiste “Always True”, “Sometimes True” o “Never True”?
20. ¿Fue difícil para ti identificar tus debilidades?
21. En el statement “I learn English better when I compliment the activities done in class with others done by my own” ¿por qué elegiste “Always True”, “Sometimes True” o “Never True”?
22. En el statement “The teacher should test me regularly” ¿por qué elegiste “Always True”, “Sometimes True” o “Never True”?
23. ¿De quién crees que depende el desarrollo de autonomía?
24. ¿Qué rol tienen tus compañeros o maestros en este proceso?
25. ¿Por qué crees que hay estudiantes que buscan otras maneras de mejorar y otros que no?
26. ¿De dónde crees que venga esta manera de pensar?
27. ¿Crees que el desarrollo de autonomía es importante?