



**Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla**

---

---

**Facultad de Lenguas BUAP**

**Learner Autonomy in Language Learning:  
Strategies and Outcomes in EFL Classrooms**

Tesis para obtener el título de:  
**MAESTRA EN ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS**

Presenta:  
**LIC. ANDREA SARAÍ VÁZQUEZ LUNA**

Director (a): **DRA. MARÍA AMELIA XIQUE SUÁREZ**



**Enero, 2026**

**“LEARNER AUTONOMY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING: STRATEGIES AND  
OUTCOMES IN EFL CLASSROOMS”**

The members of the thesis committee have read this thesis written by:

ANDREA SARAÍ VÁZQUEZ LUNA

And it is considered worthy of approval in partial fulfillment of the requirement for  
the degree of:

MAESTRÍA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

Thesis director

Dra. María Amelia Xique Suárez

Committee Member

Committee Member

Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Benjamín Gutiérrez Gutiérrez

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Josué Cinto Morales

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dra. María del Carmen Castillo Salazar

Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla

H. Puebla de Zaragoza

Enero, 2026

## DEDICATIONS

I want to dedicate this thesis to my parents, Delfino Vázquez Cortéz and Janneth Luna López, because despite everything that has happened, you have always believed in me. Thank you for believing that I could one day earn a master's degree, for always guiding me, taking care of me, and encouraging me to finish this thesis. I love you with all my heart and I am grateful that you are my parents. Thank you for everything you have sacrificed for me.

Also, to my sister Ana Paola, thank you for being my sister and helping me when I need it. I love you with all my heart as well.

I especially want to thank my husband, Marvin Eduardo; thanks to you, I have achieved things I never thought possible. Thank you for being my safe haven in the world and for encouraging me to be my best self every day. I love you with all my heart, my love.

And last but not least, I would like to thank Dr. María Amelia Xique Suárez for agreeing to collaborate with me on this project, for your patience, and for the help you have given me. And my friends and classmates in the master's program: Aldo, Juan, Liz, Alex, Iraís, Fátima, Hugo, Ernesto, Jaime, and Angélica. We did it!

## DEDICATORIAS

Quiero dedicar esta tesis a mis padres: Delfino Vázquez Cortéz y Janneth Luna López, porque a pesar de todo lo que pasa, siempre han creído en mí. Gracias por creer que yo podía tener el título de maestra algún día, por siempre guiarme, cuidarme y animarme a terminar esta tesis. Los amo con todo mi corazón, y agradezco que sean mis padres. Gracias por todo lo que han sacrificado por mí.

También a mi hermana Ana Paola, gracias por ser mi hermana, y ayudarme cuando lo necesito, te amo con todo mi corazón de igual manera.

Quiero agradecer especialmente a mi ahora esposo Marvin Eduardo; gracias a ti he logrado cosas que nunca creí lograr. Gracias por ser mi lugar seguro en el mundo, y por alentarme a ser mi mejor versión todos los días. Te amo con todo mi corazón, amor mío.

Y, por último, pero no menos importante, quisiera agradecer a la doctora María Amelia Xique Suárez por aceptar trabajar conmigo en este trabajo, por la paciencia, y ayuda que me ha brindado. Y a mis amigos y compañeros de la maestría Aldo, Juan, Liz, Alex, Iraís, Fátima, Hugo, Ernesto, Jaime y Angelica. ¡Lo logramos!

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I would like to thank SECIHTI for the great opportunity I was given to have a scholarship that helped me grow in so many aspects of my career and life.

I would like to acknowledge the help of Dr. Leticia Araceli Salas Serrano, because without your encouragement and support, I would not have decided to apply for the master's program. Thank you for your tireless advice and for helping me feel capable and deserving of being part of this program.

To my thesis advisor, Dr. María Amelia Xique Suárez, I would like to express my gratitude for your help and the trust you placed in me to work on this project together. Thank you for your patience and your invaluable support. I will always be grateful.

I would like to thank my peers Irais, Alex, and Aldo who acted as participants who decided to be part of this project and helped me find interesting answers. I would not have done without your help!

I would like to acknowledge my readers Dr. Benjamín Gutiérrez Gutiérrez, Dr. Josué Cinto Morales and Dra. Ma. del Carmen Castillo Salazar, for your feedback and ideas that made this project so important. Thank you for reading my thesis.

And finally, to my professors during the two years of the master's program! Thank you for all the knowledge you shared with me.

## RECONOCIMIENTOS

Primero que todo, quiero agradecer a SECIHTI por la gran oportunidad que me brindó de tener una beca que me ayudó a crecer en muchos aspectos de mi carrera y de mi vida.

Quisiera reconocer la ayuda de la doctora Leticia Araceli Salas Serrano, ya que, sin sus ánimos y porras, yo no hubiese tomado la decisión de aplicar para entrar a la maestría. Gracias por sus incansables consejos y por ayudarme a sentirme capaz y merecedora de haber podido ser parte de este programa.

A mi directora de tesis, la doctora María Amelia Xique Suárez quisiera agradecerle su ayuda, la confianza que puso en mi para poder trabajar en este proyecto juntas. Gracias por su paciencia y por su infinita ayuda. Siempre le estaré agradecida.

Quiero agradecer a mis compañeros Irais, Alex y Aldo, quienes participaron y decidieron formar parte de este proyecto, ayudándome a encontrar respuestas interesantes. ¡No lo habría logrado sin su ayuda!

Quisiera reconocer a mis lectores el Dr. Benjamín Gutiérrez Gutiérrez, Dr. Josué Cinto Morales y la Dra. Ma. del Carmen Castillo Salazar por su retroalimentación e ideas para hacer de este proyecto algo muy importante. Gracias por leer mi tesis.

Y, por último, ¡a mis maestros durante los dos años de maestría! Gracias por todos los conocimientos que compartieron conmigo.

## ABSTRACT

This research project aims to explore the relationship between learner autonomy and English as a Foreign Language (EFL), emphasizing their relevance in fostering an effective and sustained language acquisition process. The research delves into how autonomous learning practice contribute to students' linguistic development by encouraging self-regulation, independent engagement with English language outside the classroom, and the use of personalized learning and study strategies.

Through qualitative data derived from surveys and interviews with EFL teachers, this project examines how autonomy is interpreted, implemented, and supported in real educational scenarios, as well as the educational approaches used to promote independent learning attitudes. By analyzing the participants' experiences, this study highlights the ways in which autonomy empowers students by increasing motivation, responsibility, goal-setting abilities, and exposure to meaningful language input.

The findings reveal that technology, reflective learning, and context-based materials are important tools to foster autonomy, while obstacles such as low motivation, time constraints, digital distractions, and dependance on the teacher guidance may delay its development. The study also identifies pedagogical implications, noticing the crucial role teachers play as facilitators and guides in helping students develop the necessary skills to become autonomous.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title page	.....	i
Dedications	.....	iii
Acknowledgements	.....	v
Abstract and Key Words	.....	vi
Table of contents	.....	vii

### CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction	.....	12
1.2 Origins of the research	.....	15
1.3 Statement of the problem	.....	16
1.4 Aim of the study	.....	17
1.5 Research questions	.....	18
1.6 Contribution and justification of the study	.....	18
1.7 Outline of the thesis	.....	19

### CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction	.....	21
2.2 Learner Autonomy	.....	21
2.2.1 Learner Autonomy in EFL backgrounds	.....	24
2.3. Second Language Acquisition Process	.....	26
2.3.1. Hypothesis Testing and Error Correction	.....	27
2.3.2. Output Production	.....	28
2.3.3. Implicit and Explicit Learning	.....	29
2.3.4. Sociocultural Interaction	.....	29
2.4. Skill Acquisition Theory	.....	30
2.5. English as a Foreign Language	.....	34

### CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design	.....	36
3.2 Subjects	.....	36
3.3 Instruments	.....	37
3.4 Procedure and Data Collection	.....	38
3.5 Data analysis	.....	40

### CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction	.....	41
------------------	-------	----

4.2 Research questions	41
4.3 Results	42
4.3.1 Results from the survey	42
4.3.2 Results from the interviews	49
4.3.3 Participant 1's Interview	49
4.3.3.1. Theme 1: Definition and Understanding of Learner Autonomy	49
4.3.3.2. Theme 2: Challenges in Promoting Autonomy	50
4.3.3.3. Theme 3: Influence of Students' Characteristics	50
4.3.3.4. Theme 4: Teaching Strategies to Promote Autonomy	51
4.3.3.5. Theme 5: Indicators of Growing Autonomy	53
4.3.3.6. Theme 6: Barriers to Learner Autonomy	53
4.3.3.7. Theme 7: Teacher's Role in Fostering Autonomy	54
4.3.3.8. Theme 8: Benefits of Learner Autonomy	55
4.3.3.9. Theme 9: Necessity for Further Development	55
4.3.3.10. Conclusion for Participant 1's Interview	56
4.3.4. Participant 2's Interview	56
4.3.4.1. Theme 1: Definition and Understanding of Learner Autonomy	57
4.3.4.2. Theme 2: Challenges in Promoting Autonomy	57
4.3.4.3. Theme 3: Influence of Students' Characteristics	58
4.3.4.4. Theme 4: Teaching Strategies to Promote Autonomy	59
4.3.4.5. Theme 5: Indicators of Growing Autonomy	60
4.3.4.6. Theme 6: Barriers to Learner Autonomy	61
4.3.4.7. Theme 7: Teacher's Role in Fostering Autonomy	62
4.3.4.8. Theme 8: Benefits of Learner Autonomy	62
4.3.4.9. Theme 9: Necessity for Further Development	63

4.3.4.10. Conclusion for Participant 2's Interview	64
4.3.5. Participant 3's Interview	64
4.3.5.1. Theme 1: Definition and Understanding of Learner Autonomy	65
4.3.5.2. Theme 2: Challenges in Promoting Autonomy	65
4.3.5.3. Theme 3: Influence of Students' Characteristics	66
4.3.5.4. Theme 4: Teaching Strategies to Promote Autonomy	67
4.3.5.5. Theme 5: Indicators of Growing Autonomy	68
4.3.5.6. Theme 6: Barriers to Learner Autonomy	69
4.3.5.7. Theme 7: Teacher's Role in Fostering Autonomy	70
4.3.5.8. Theme 8: Benefits of Learner Autonomy	71
4.3.5.9. Theme 9: Necessity for Further Development	71
4.3.5.10. Conclusion for Participant 3's Interview	72
4.4. Discussion of the Results	73
4.5. Conclusions of the Chapter	74

## CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction	75
5.2 Summary of the study	75
5.3 Answers to the research questions	76
5.4 Summary of key findings	79
5.5 Contributions of the study	80
5.6 Limitations of the study	81
5.7 Directions for further research	82
5.8 Final conclusions	82
5.9 Reflections	83

<b>REFERENCES</b>	85
-------------------	----

## APPENDIXES

Appendix 1 – Letter of Confidentiality	90
Appendix 2 – Survey of General Information on Teaching English	92
Appendix 3 – Questionnaire for the Open-Ended Interviews	93

## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

Considering new developments focused on education, especially in English Language Teaching such as teaching languages apps, interactive videos for students, online language courses after a pandemic hit, fostering learner autonomy is not merely a trend but a necessary evolution in language education, given that it allows students to see by themselves how capable they are in achieving language proficiency. By prioritizing this point of view, educators can better equip their students for successful language acquisition and empower them to become lifelong learners, capable of navigating the complexities of communication in an increasingly interconnected world. (Holec, 1981).

To grasp the concept of autonomy fully, it is essential to delve into the definition provided by Henri Holec, a prominent figure in the study of autonomy in education: “the ability to take charge of one’s learning” (Holec, 1981, p. 3). This observation highlights the significant role that autonomy plays in the process of acquiring a foreign language, much like it does in various other fields of study and practice.

When learners take ownership of their educational journey, they tend to be more motivated and committed, which can lead to a more effective and sustained language acquisition process. (Little, 2007; Ushioda, 2011). The interplay between autonomy and language acquisition underscores the importance of encouraging learners to become independent and initiative-taking in their educational pursuits,

thereby enhancing their overall ability to communicate effectively in a foreign language. (Benson, 2011; Holec, 1981).

Research conducted by Phil Benson in 2011 indicates that students who engage in autonomous learning tend to cultivate more effective learning strategies, demonstrate increased motivation, and attain superior academic results compared to their peers who depend primarily on teacher-led instruction (Benson, 2011). Despite these advantages, the integration of learner autonomy within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom presents significant challenges, such as teacher beliefs and attitudes, learner readiness, educational culture, institutional constraints, lack of resources and training and assessment practices to mention a few, especially in environments where conventional, teacher-centered teaching methods prevail (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012).

Therefore, it is crucial to research several strategies that can effectively encourage autonomy among EFL learners, as well as to evaluate the influence of these strategies on their overall language acquisition process. By understanding how to foster autonomy in language learning contexts, teachers can better support their students in becoming autonomous learners who take charge of their educational journeys.

Through this research, the concepts of learner autonomy and EFL will be frequently discussed and will become the main ones. Delving deeply into these concepts provides valuable insights into their significance and the potential implications they hold for enhancing effective language learning practices. By thoroughly examining each aspect, it can be better understood how they contribute to

the overall process of acquiring a new language, as well as how they can be applied to develop more effective teaching strategies.

This research not only highlights the importance of these concepts in the context of language learning but also encourages educators and learners alike to consider their practical applications. A comprehensive understanding of these ideas can lead to improve language acquisition outcomes and a more enriching educational experience. Understanding learner autonomy is crucial, as it empowers students to take charge of their educational journeys, fostering a sense of independence and motivation.

Simultaneously, examining the role of EFL provides insight into the unique challenges and opportunities that arise in diverse linguistic contexts. Together, these concepts will be key to this research, highlighting their critical role in enhancing the overall experience of learners engaged in the process of second language acquisition, along with the different techniques that teachers must achieve autonomy.

Additionally, the significant concerns will be addressed that arise concerning the topic, discussing how these apprehensions influence decision-making and the broader implications for society. By providing comprehensive analysis, we aim to illuminate the complexities of the subject matter and offer insights into the motivations and concerns that are at the forefront of current discussions.

## 1.2 Origins of the research

The origins of this study stem from the growing recognition of the importance of learner autonomy in EFL education. As a teacher working in EFL contexts, I have observed that traditional teacher-centered approaches often limit students' active engagement and responsibility for their learning processes. This led to an interest in exploring alternative strategies that could better support students in becoming more autonomous learners.

Building upon the insights and information the main objective is to foster a more vibrant and engaging learning environment. One of the main goals for further research is to create a space where students can thrive, collaborate, and grow as autonomous learners, ready to tackle the complexities of language learning with confidence and enthusiasm. This research is particularly pertinent given the diverse challenges that teachers face in fostering learner independence, as well as the evolving pedagogical demands of the contemporary language teaching background. Lastly, the findings of this study aim to contribute to the ongoing discussion on learner autonomy, offering practical recommendations and strategies that can be employed by teachers to support their student's journey toward becoming more autonomous language learners.

Another crucial factor that contributes to the origin of this study is how well self-regulatory behaviors would work in an EFL classroom. By examining approaches that prioritize learner agencies and self-regulatory behaviors, this research draws on concepts defined by Astrid Mairitsch, Giulia Sulis, Sarah Mercer, Désirée Bauer, and Junhong Xiao, and these concepts are learner agency as a complex dynamic system,

socially distributed nature of learner agency and self-regulated learning (SRL) and its interconnection with agency.

Therefore, they conceptualize learner agency as the sense of autonomy and empowerment that individuals experience regarding their educational journeys (Larsen–Freeman et al, 2021; Xiao, 2014). Learner agency refers to how individuals actively shape their learning processes, making choices and taking control over how, what, and when they learn. This sense of ownership is crucial for fostering intrinsic motivation and ensuring learners are more engaged and invested in their education.

Self-regulatory behaviors, on the other hand, encompass a wide range of activities and strategies that learners employ to manage and enhance their own learning experiences. These behaviors can involve the adaptation of personal beliefs, attitudes, and thoughts that allow learners to foster a mindset conducive to continuous growth and development (Code, 2020). Furthermore, learners may adjust their learning strategies and actions to better align with their objectives, which in turn influences the processes through which they acquire knowledge and develop new skills. Together, these concepts highlight the importance of empowering learners to take an active role in their educational journey, promoting deeper and more effective learning outcomes.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

Even though the advantages of fostering learner autonomy in EFL classrooms are widely acknowledged, a substantial number of educators still adhere to traditional, teacher-centered methodologies. These conventional approaches often

restrict students' opportunities for independent learning. Consequently, many students may find themselves lacking the essential skills and intrinsic motivation required to take ownership of their educational journeys, which can impede their language acquisition and hinder their overall academic achievements. There remains a notable lack of understanding regarding specific strategies that can successfully cultivate this autonomy, as well as how these strategies influence students' language proficiency.

This research aims to fill this gap by investigating the various techniques employed by EFL instructors to encourage learner autonomy and assessing how these methods impact the language learning outcomes of their students. Through this exploration, the study hopes to provide valuable insights that can inform teaching practices and enhance the overall effectiveness of language education.

#### **1.4 Aim of the study**

The primary aim of this study is to explore the strategies used by teachers to promote learner autonomy in EFL classrooms and evaluate their effectiveness in enhancing language acquisition.

By examining the future obtained strategies, the study aims to assess their impact on students' language acquisition process through a series of instruments such as surveys and interviews, and then analysis to find impact and usage of strategies. Research indicates that promoting autonomy can lead to higher motivation, better learning strategies, and improved language outcomes (Benson, 2011; Little, 1991). However, the effectiveness of these strategies in various EFL contexts remains

underexplored, particularly in environments where traditional, teacher-centered methods are prevalent (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012).

### **1.5 Research questions**

This research will be focused on addressing the following key research questions, which are central to exploring the main themes of the study:

1. What specific strategies do English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers use to promote learner autonomy in the classroom?
2. How does the implementation of autonomy-promoting strategies in EFL classrooms correlate with students' progress in language proficiency?

### **1.6 Contributions and justification of the study**

This research has the potential to significantly influence the language acquisition process for learners, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The various strategies and techniques that EFL teachers employ in their instructional practices will be thoroughly examined and evaluated throughout this study. The insights gained from this research will be instrumental in identifying innovative approaches that have yet to be explored, as well as enhancing the effectiveness of existing methods.

Eventually, the goal is to foster a greater sense of autonomy among students in their language-learning journey. By equipping learners with the tools and strategies needed to take charge of their language acquisition process, this research aims to

create an educational environment where students feel empowered and motivated to engage with the language more independently.

The implications of these findings could be transformative, as they not only aim to improve teaching practices but also seek to cultivate a deeper, more initiative-taking engagement with language learning among students.

### **1.7 Outline of the thesis**

The outline of this research project is as follows: chapter 1: the introduction, where the introduction, origin of the research, aim of the study, research questions, contribution and justification of the research, conclusion of the chapter, and keywords are presented. Then, chapter 2: Literature Review, where the existing research related to the topic will be summarized and critiqued, highlighting gaps that the study will address throughout it.

Chapter 3: Methodology comes next, where the research design, data collection methods, and analysis procedures will be described. Then chapter 4: Results, where the data or outcomes from the instruments applied will be presented after being analyzed, and finally chapter 5: conclusion, where the results will be represented, implications discussed and related to the literature review and research questions, along with the list of references of the different sources that will be used in this research.

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

In Chapter 2, the structure with different theories will be shown, giving the readers a wider explanation of the most important perceptions, definitions, and ideas that create the foundation of this research project. Specifically, this chapter aims to focus on the most relevant, on learner autonomy, emphasizing the relationship and significance within the English language classroom context.

### 2.1 Learner Autonomy

The researcher David Little defined in 1991 the concept of learner autonomy as: “gathering various key components, including the ability to separate oneself from conventional learning frameworks, engage in critical reflection, make well-thought-out decisions, and take independent actions regarding one’s learning process.” (Little, 1991, p. 4).

What can be implied from the definition above is that learners do not only absorb information, but they must make sure they take responsibility for their language acquisition processes in an active way. They can assess these processes by enabling them to appreciate their strategies, whether they are strong or weak, set personal goals, and create approaches, strategies, and techniques that fit their learning styles.

Throughout the years, the concept of learner autonomy has become incredibly important in the journey of obtaining a second language, especially English as a Foreign Language. There is a research study conducted by Borg and Alshumaimeri in

Commented [BG1]: las introducciones a un capítulo jamás llevan epígrafes o numeración

2019 which highlights that learners can be autonomous, improve their motivation, and engage with the different learning resources they are given. This empowers students to improve their decision-making skills and learn strategies related to goal-setting skills, self-evaluation, and problem-solving without any assistance. (Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2019).

The definition of learner autonomy is highlighted by several studies, and a strong connection between autonomous learning practices and a language proficiency process can be found. This connection is seen when learners exercise their independence in practical settings, such as project-based or self-directed activities (Ciekanski, 2017). Better facilitation can be seen through interaction with the content, encouragement towards students to take risks, pursue personal interests in a meaningful way, and understand the English language more deeply.

In the process of ongoing development of this concept, there have been quite important advancements such as Technology-Enhanced Learner Autonomy, Autonomy In Online and Blended Learning Environments, Peer Collaboration in Autonomous Learning, Task-Based Learning for Autonomy Development, and Autonomy and Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) to mention just a few. These concepts will be described below.

Encouraging learner autonomy in English language classrooms has its complications, especially in backgrounds where teacher-led instruction is the preferred instruction by teachers. As mentioned by Jiménez Raya and Vieira in their research done in 2015, the beliefs that teachers have, and the typical institutional practices can play a significant role in either easing or blocking the growth of

autonomy among students. Several teachers face challenges when it comes to giving up control over the learning process and transitioning to a student-centered teaching approach. (Jiménez Raya & Vieira, 2015).

Furthermore, students used to individualized education may have a certain resistance toward the idea of independent learning at first because it demands them to take more responsibility in their learning processes (Rivers, 2018). Such opposite views exist in the context of relevant research in which the focus is on the importance of giving teachers and students autonomous language training and supporting resources in the classroom. (Ghafari, 2020). This integration is important for making the teaching and learning processes more student-centered and effective in promoting language learning.

Previous research studies have assessed the concept of learner autonomy in a diversity of educational settings, especially regarding its relevance to distance or online education and technology in education. A 2023 research study conducted by Mote Neeraja and Suresh Kumar on EFL students at the end of the pandemic showed that the improvement of the learner's autonomy has had a significant impact on motivation and different strategies regarding learning. This information proposes that the use of methods such as autonomous learning can improve the language learning processes, chiefly when the students are given learning materials such as self-based apps. (Neeraja & Kumar, 2023).

Another research conducted by Damar Prawiti and Budi Waluyo on English as a foreign language (EFL) students mentions that including technological resources such as Kahoot, Quizizz, Google Forms, etc. can promote learners' autonomy by

facilitating self-directed learning, improving listening, and reading skills. The research showed that the integration of the resources made students self-regulate their study time and offered them continual feedback, which enhanced their performance and motivation toward the language content. (Pratiwi & Waluyo, 2023)

Lastly, some studies focused on various forms of distance learning highlighted the positive sides of using learner-centered and self-directed approaches in the context of online education. This approach, which is distance learning, is assisted by diverse types of technologies including interactive platforms and learning systems that are adaptive and have been demonstrated to promote a wide range of beneficial results such as active learning, personalized learning experiences, and improved critical thinking skills. (Saleem et al., 2022; Kang & Keinonen, 2018).

### **2.2.1 Learner Autonomy in EFL Backgrounds.**

Learner autonomy in EFL education plays a critical part in empowering students to be responsible for their learning processes. This concept aids students to become more functional participants in the educational process rather than just passive receivers of information.

According to researcher Phil Benson (2011), some ideas and components that allow learner autonomy are highlighted. Among them are the capacity to make well-thought-of decisions regarding their learning processes, the ability to keep track of and assess the progress made, and the ability to evaluate their language acquisition process. This broad conception of learner autonomy helps to guarantee its relevance in the EFL context “because it encourages students to take the initiative and

responsibility in those efforts whenever they seek to acquire a foreign language.’ (Benson, 2011).

Lately, a wider focus has been positioned on the technological side of the quest for learner autonomy in EFL, and other educational backgrounds. Mobile-assisted language learning and the integration of web-based and interactive apps such as Duolingo, Kahoot, Quizizz, and Google Forms are trending now. The main purpose of these apps is to allow students to be part of the practice and self-evaluation to promote the continuous development of autonomous learning skills (Pratiwi & Waluyo, 2023).

Furthermore, the research findings of Saleem et al. (2022) focus on the impact of student-centered technology apps in the context of online learning. This research study discusses such technologies as they not only encourage critical thinking and give chances for personalized learning; they are also quite important in the development of English language skills, which are indispensable in encouraging learner autonomy.

Conversely, Phil Benson (2001) conducted an impressive analysis of the idea of autonomy and its relationship to language education. The findings of his research draw attention to the importance of self-directedness in attaining success in learners of EFL. It is evident from Benson's findings that EFL learners with a high degree of self-directedness can succeed, especially where they can make decisions on some critical aspects of their learning processes like goal setting and self-assessment. His findings are extensive and suggest that, rather than being an advantage to the

language learner, autonomy is a characteristic that develops over time and is a key factor in language ability.

### **2.3 Second Language Acquisition Process**

Previous and current research in the field of second language acquisition depends on a wider range of theoretical frameworks, particularly those established in cognitive, social, and interactionist theories, for example, input processing, hypothesis testing and error correction, output production, implicit and explicit learning, and sociocultural interaction. All these processes and stages of second language acquisition provide what we can refer to as the language acquisition process (Krashen, 2003; Swain, 1995; Ellis, 2008 & Lightbown & Spada, 2013)

Before focusing on these elements, a proper baseline of the language acquisition process must be laid. Such basic knowledge will provide the necessary base to further unite the difficulties of the processes through which people can learn new languages and the several factors influencing such complex and dynamic processes.

What Lourdes Ortega (2019) discusses in her book regarding second language acquisition summarizes well the difficulties and bright side of the complete process, especially the cognitive, social, and behavioral mechanisms that work together to master a second language. Over time, as students use constancy with the language and its use, they begin to acquire the various easy and more difficult rules and structures. The more advanced the second language acquisition process is, internalization allows the student to move beyond the limits of memorizing

vocabulary and grammar and allows them to flow with the language in more normal circumstances (Ortega, 2019).

Another element to focus on when learning a second language is the importance of practicing to achieve proficiency in the language. According to DeKeyser (2018), deliberate practice is not only adequate but necessary for learners who want to master the new intricacies associated with learning a second language. He discusses certain aspects of the acquisition of skills where he indicates that it is not just enough to understand a given language, but there can also be a stage that entails being fluent in that language due to constant usage.

In the research, which is focused on skill acquisition theory, in which the concepts will be elaborated in the sub-sections below, DeKeyser (2018) makes the argument that there are practical opportunities for students to properly develop their language skills through practice and focused activities. This theory postulates that learning how to use a second language is up to a student's desire because the process is cyclic and dynamic. Constant practice is what is needed to achieve the desired level of proficiency, which is the primary concern of every student.

### **2.3.1 Hypothesis Testing and Error Correction**

Another important stage that students must go through while acquiring a second language is the stage called: Hypothesis Testing and Error Correction, and it could be considered as an autonomous stage students must put into practice for their learning processes. During this phase, students could formulate hypotheses about the language rules and structures they are trying to understand, experimenting with their

use in different contexts and situations. As they communicate, they inevitably make errors, which serve as valuable learning opportunities.

Rod Ellis (2015) contends that this process is integral to the notion of interlanguage, which is the linguistic system that language learners engender during their movement toward full control of the second language. Interlanguage is construed as being dynamic and ever-changing. It does not represent the language that the person has acquired already, nor does it closely correspond to the language which is being aspired to. It is rather in between the two sides, the input, and the use of the language. The interlanguage of learners is in constant flux, that is, because of engagement with the language and responding to feedback, which means the target norm is progressively achieved in the interlanguage. Thus, it is of foremost importance to understand the complete process that the learners go through, and the reasons why that may vary the degree of success towards fluency. (Ellis, 2015)

### **2.3.2 Output Production**

Communication in any form, speaking or writing, is a crucial element in the process of acquisition of a second language. This idea has been explained in Swain's Output Hypothesis, which was proposed in 1985 and encapsulates the scenario that when students are trying to create and produce the language, they are not just performing what they are familiar with but trying some of their knowledge previously acquired. Such a production is a valuable tool for the students to realize the inadequacy of their comprehension. (Swain, 1985). As a result, expression in verbal

form not only helps to strengthen what students get into their minds but also opens doors to deeper learning.

### **2.3.3 Implicit and Explicit Learning**

There exist two main processes in the acquisition of a language: implicit learning and explicit learning. Implicit learning happens automatically, allowing students to learn the use of grammatical and lexical devices with no teachers. This can be done by simply hearing or seeing a language, for example, in gestured speech, songs, or videos, and comprehending the use of appropriate grammar and words. In contrast, explicit learning is when one engages in the language actively and intentionally to learn something. This method often entails learning the system of language, including grammar, syntax, and vocabulary, with the aid of a teacher or on one's own. (DeKeyser, 2018).

### **2.3.4 Socio-Cultural Interaction**

Sociocultural Theory is a psychological theory first talked about by Lev Vygotsky in the early twentieth century, and it suggests that the main way a child learns a language is through social interaction, thus emphasizing that the presence of other people in the learning environment is advantageous to the child. (Vygotsky, 1978).

As mentioned by James Lantolf and Steven Thorne (2016), the present theory integrates the concept known as 'scaffolding,' which is the level of support that the instructor, classmates, or native speakers give to the learners. As noted, by Lantolf

and Thorne (2006) while students are engaged in speaking or using language, they are given feedback and support which aids in the development of their skills and self-esteem. Hence, students not only get a chance to use the language but also learn the language in a contextualized manner which adds value to the learning.

It is equally important to ensure that certain elements such as, for example, the inclusion of game elements and other play-based activities are observed in the classroom to maximize the educational experiences of the students. This way, a teacher can design a space that enables active and interest-driven learning in the process of teaching. In other words, effective and playful methods of learning are beneficial while teaching, since they bring the level of understanding of the subject matter to a much deeper level, while also improving retention.

Kendra Cherry (2024), an educator, and psychologist states that Vygotskys theory puts a lot of stress on the importance about playing in the process of learning. He maintained that students could enhance their capabilities and knowledge of the environment around them through play and fantasy. It is in this aspect that it comes out completely that play is not only considered as an activity during off time, but it is also important in the development of the brain. When integrating this concept into the teaching and learning process, it becomes paramount for the teachers to ensure there is a range of play activities for the students. (Cherry, 2024).

A research study completed by researchers Gorden et al. (2013) explains, among others, the importance of play in the learning environment. In this study, the authors present a wide array of activities to be used by teachers with their students, thereby drawing attention to the many dimensions of play in learning. Some of the

activities include drama, crafts, writing, and games focused on skills such as listening, reading, etc. They also discuss science and discovery as well as sports-related activities.

## **2.4 Skill Acquisition Theory**

There is a theory that is useful to understand the language acquisition process by the students over time as well as the teachers, and it is called the Skill Acquisition Theory. This is a theory that was postulated by psychologist John Anderson in 1982 and provides a detailed view of how people experience various phases of learning a certain skill. It demonstrates the flow of the developmental progression of the three main phases: the cognitive phase, the associative phase, and the autonomous phase.

As noted by John R. Anderson (1982) and Robert DeKeyser et al. (2015) the first stage is the cognitive stage of learning in which the learner is primarily concerned with acquiring the declarative knowledge of facts and concepts. Here students think thoroughly about every step of the way in how to perform the activity.

At the turn of students' experience into the associative stage, they begin to enhance their skills through practice and repetition. This stage is important for helping students to start noticing, and most importantly correcting, mistakes as they learn what the task entails. This is the phase when students come to a level of ability that allows them to do things with truly little focus or conscious thought. This is the level of advancement whereby the skills that have been practiced become automatic and ordinary leading to the completion of the tasks in an extremely fast and precise

manner without any conscious thought being directed towards it. (Anderson, 1982; DeKeyser, 2015).

In the context of acquiring a new language, Skill Acquisition Theory (SAT) reinforces the idea that practice is necessary for students to develop their language skills to the level of automaticity. DeKeyser (2007) asserts that practice, specifically repetitive and organizational practice, not only facilitates retention and recall but also plays a key role in converting what is known about language – or declarative knowledge – into language use – or procedural knowledge as it is used in real-time. This shift is particularly important, as it enables learners to engage with various aspects of the language optimally and effectively at hand, thereby enhancing overall language fluency and accuracy (DeKeyser, 2007).

The Skill Acquisition Theory offers profound insights across various dimensions of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Below, we will delve into some of these significant implications. Even though explicit learning is a principal factor, especially in the initial stages of learning a language, implicit learning becomes equally important as one progress toward fluency. Studies like the one conducted by Shintani and Ellis (2013) prove that this theory is in a synergetic relation with teaching methods that are based on explicit instruction with a lot of communicative practice. (Shintani & Ellis, 2013).

Also, feedback is an essential factor in the enhancement of the transition from a passive state to an active one, thus aiding the effort to apply the knowledge correctly. Moreover, Li (2010) found out that the feedback given instantly is

beneficial to the process of proceduralizing, particularly in complex grammatical forms. (Li, 2010).

Finally, practice is considered a necessary factor in the development of procedural knowledge in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). As Bygate and Samuda (2005) note, performing task repetition increases both fluency and accuracy levels, which also supports the concepts of Skill Acquisition Theory that considers practice as a requirement for reaching automaticity. (Bygate & Samuda, 2005).

From empirical research conducted in 1997, Robert DeKeyser affirms that the oral accuracy and fluency of language learners can be improved through structured grammar practice. This statement demonstrates the possibility of the learners moving from registration of knowledge - where learners are aware of the existence of language rules and structure but do not employ them - to the utilization of these language rules and structures in real time. The conclusion drawn by DeKeyser's research is, therefore, that instruction on grammar in a step-by-step method encourages not only the preservation of the learned language rules but also their practical application in interactions. (DeKeyser, 1997)

In a study done by Nina Spada and Yasudo Tomita in 2010, the effects of explicit grammar instruction on language learners were rigorously explored. It was established that learners' performance in the language increased when they were taught grammatical structures in straightforward and unambiguous forms. (Spada & Tomita, 2010).

In a different study by Yuichi Suzuki and Robert DeKeyser (2017), the research was directed at Japanese learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Those

students were subjected to certain stimulus materials several times and were also systematically correcting their errors, meanwhile, more progress was observed in their ability to proceduralize the language skills they were learning. This was seen as providing evidence for the Skill Acquisition Theory (SAT) which asserts that repetition is the primary factor in the development of skills. The researchers noted that because of practice and feedback, the learners more easily acquired the language structures, and this eventually resulted in enhanced fluency and automaticity of the language. This research exemplifies the role of exposure and correct feedback in learning a language, confirming that without a doubt practice is essential for bettering oneself in an additional language. (Suzuki & DeKeyser, 2017).

## **2.5 English as a Foreign Language**

Due to the increased global expansion of English, it has become important for people who want education, better jobs, or economies. Hence in most countries of the world, English has been included as an essential subject in primary or secondary schools. This is because it has been appreciated that English is not only a means of communication but also a key to other advanced opportunities in education, business, and networking. As a result, there has been a great need for quality EFL programs and therefore, the teachers and the policymakers have found ways of producing innovative ideas and materials to improve English language teaching in different contexts. (Crystal, 2003).

Linguistically, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) gathers several methods and practices involved in teaching and learning the English language to individuals

whose primary language is not English. This educational framework is designed to support non-native speakers in acquiring proficiency in English, facilitating their ability to communicate effectively in several contexts. EFL education plays a crucial role in promoting linguistic development, cultural understanding, and academic success for students in English-speaking environments.

There are several concepts that keep English as a Foreign Language trendy and some of them are the integration of blended learning approaches and technology integration, the flipped classroom model, task repetition, and interaction in EFL.

Blended Learning and the Role of Technology: Angle interaction plus resolution to include the digital offerings has brought about what is known as blended learning in EFL contexts. It is made up of some degree of classroom instruction together accompanied by using online materials. Research conducted by Ann Chenoweth and Kimmaree Murday (2003) demonstrates how the use of technology in the instruction of EFL enhances the students' language abilities and promotes or engages the students' participation. (Chenoweth & Murday, 2003). Moreover, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) was also used for the ability to control a high degree of learning within a fleeting time which was more effective than traditional learning in improving vocabulary and speaking among students (Burston, 2014).

Flipped Classroom: The flipped classroom approach, in which students focus on physical strain during classwork while studying the instructional content beforehand has successfully been realized in EFL. Research claims that it promotes learner independence and enhances performance since students arrive in class ready to engage (Hung, 2015).

Interaction and Task Repetition in EFL: There is evidence that such a strategy as task repetition promotes language learning by consolidating the long-term memory of certain linguistic patterns and increases fluency and accuracy in performance as well (Bygate & Samuda, 2005). What is more, the actual practice of grammar forms is important as well as the communicative aspects in the target language learning situations.

In the field of English as a Foreign Language, there are several theories such as Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS), Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), and Hymes' concept of communicative competence, which are theories that will be explained in a deeper way below.

## CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Design

The main objective of this research project was to explore the concept of learner autonomy, specifically focusing on the strategies employed by EFL teachers in their classrooms and the outcomes associated with this autonomous learning. This research seeks to identify effective strategies promoting self-directed learning and the challenges learners and teachers might face when developing autonomy. This study follows a qualitative research method, analyzed through a thematic analysis to gain a more comprehensive understanding of learner autonomy and the possible strategies that come out of this research project.

This research has been organized into five comprehensive chapters, each dedicated to exploring various aspects of the study in detail: an introduction, literature review, methodology, results, and conclusions.

### 3.2. Subjects

This study was employed by selected participants currently teaching English as a foreign language. The target was three master's degree students (two male participants and one female participant) from BUAP who also work as full-time English teachers, focusing on adult teaching. They were selected through a personal request, so they could provide valuable insights into learner autonomy's learning and teaching aspects, seen from their own experiences. The criteria for selecting participants included:

- Current enrollment in the MEI master's degree program at BUAP.

**Commented [BG2]:** hace falta un introducción y hay que desarrollar la estrategia metodológica que utilizaste ( método, enfoque, diseño de investigación. propósito, técnica e instrumento)

**Commented [BG3]:** esto no tiene sentido

**Commented [BG4]:** sería bueno que explicarás por que ellos y no otros

- Active engagement in self-directed learning activities for adult students.
- EFL teaching that is focused on adult students.
- Willingness to participate in surveys, interviews, and classroom observations.

A couple of designated participants, who also work as English as a Foreign Language teachers, participated in the piloting phase of the study, collaborating closely with the researcher to validate the effectiveness and reliability of the instruments used in the research. These individuals played a crucial role in providing feedback and insights that helped the researcher refine the tools and methodologies employed in the study.

Subsequently, the chosen participants were asked to sign a formal confidentiality agreement, a document in which they acknowledge and consent to the terms outlined. By signing this letter, they agreed that all information and data collected through the various instruments used during the research will be strictly kept confidential and will not be disclosed or shared with unauthorized parties.

### 3.3. Instruments

The primary tools employed in this research included surveys, and according to Don Dillman, Jolene Smyth and Leah Christian “a survey is a systematic method for gathering information from a sample of individuals to describe the attributes, behaviors, or opinions of the larger population” (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014, p. 3). The survey that was used in this research was designed to gather basic, surface-level information from participants. This survey allowed the researcher to collect

**Commented [BG5]:** Cómo validaste este instrumento? veo que hay un instrumento cuantitativo que no explicas y una guía de entrevista que tampoco explicas y la otra es que si buscas explorar las estrategias de aprendizaje autónomo por qué no se hizo observación

qualitative data that can provide a general overview of the participants and the expected results.

In addition to the surveys, the research also utilized open-ended questionnaires and interviews, and according to Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion, Keith Morrison “open-ended questionnaires allow respondents to answer in their own words, providing rich, qualitative data and deeper insights into their thoughts and experiences.” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). This instrument was particularly valuable for eliciting more profound answers, as it encouraged participants to express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in their own words regarding learner autonomy.

By combining these two tools, the research aimed to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the topic, capturing key information about learner autonomy and the teaching experience of the participants through the surveys and the strategies about learner autonomy revealed through interviews and open-ended questions.

### 3.4. Procedure and Data Collection

The instruments used are two: a general survey to gather general information about the participants and the concept of learner autonomy, and an open-ended questionnaire used as an interview tool to obtain a full perspective on learner autonomy and the strategies that teachers employ in the EFL classroom. The study collected data through multiple methods:

The first instrument was a survey, which was distributed to participants before assessing their attitudes toward learner autonomy, strategies they use, and perceived

**Commented [BG6]:** acá solo explicas que hiciste respecto a la entrevista pero no mencionas que procedimiento seguiste con los datos cuantitativos

challenges in a broad and overall sense, along with personal information used to identify each participant.

The second instrument was an open-ended interview conducted with the selected participants to gain deeper insights into their experiences with autonomous learning and the instructional strategies they employ. Since these were interviews with open-ended questions, participants were able to express everything they wanted regarding the concept of learner autonomy, and everything that comes with it.

The interviews were scheduled to take place via video conferencing, allowing for the sessions to be recorded seamlessly. By recording the conversations, it becomes simpler to review the content in detail, ensuring that no essential information is missing and that the analysis can be conducted more thoroughly and consistently. (See Appendix).

During each session with each participant, they were encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings about autonomy more overtly, allowing a deeper and better understanding of their perspectives, and allowing the researcher to comprehend how this concept might help students in the EFL classroom.

The format of the interviews allowed them to discuss certain experiences they have shared regarding the concept of autonomy, and this approach fostered a more nuanced conversation, making the data collected even richer.

### **3.5. Data Analysis**

Through a qualitative approach and a thematic analysis, the study involved a thorough examination of the interview transcripts, along with the obtained

information from the surveys. This analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, "a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). This method enables the researcher to identify and interpret recurring themes, notable challenges, and effective or ineffective strategies related to the concept of autonomous learning. By delving into the nuances of the data, the research aims to uncover the complexities and dynamics that characterize learner autonomy within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom.

Through the integration of these qualitative methods, the research aims to yield a comprehensive understanding of how learner autonomy emerges and evolves within EFL classrooms. By focusing on these aspects, the study seeks to contribute valuable insights to the field of language education and inform teaching practices that promote greater autonomy among learners.

## CHAPTER IV: THE RESULTS

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings obtained from the data collection instruments used in this study, namely a survey to get general information on the participants and the concept of learner autonomy, and an open-ended interview where more specific information was obtained.

The aim of this chapter is to describe the results related to the ideal strategies employed by EFL teachers to foster learner autonomy in EFL classrooms, recommendations, and general overviews of this concept.

Descriptive analysis was used to present quantitative data gathered from the survey, while qualitative data from the open-ended interviews were analyzed through thematic analysis.

### 4.2 Research Questions

As established in Chapter 1 of this study, two research questions were developed to conduct the study. The research questions are the following:

1. **What specific strategies do English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers use to promote learner autonomy in the classroom?**
2. **How does the implementation of autonomy-promoting strategies in EFL classrooms correlate with students' progress in language proficiency?**

**Commented [BG7]:** este capitulo debe estar ordenado de manera lógica y coherente si tienes un apartado cuantitativo y resultados cualitativos, esperaría que triangularas pero eso no se aprecia y por otro lado eso dependera de tu método que usaste pero que no mencionas

**Commented [BG8]:** esto no va

**Commented [BG9]:** cuál es el propósito de poner esto no mencionas nada que pueda ser significativo

### 4.3 Results

This section aims to present a comprehensive overview of the responses gathered through both research instruments. To facilitate a clear understanding, the information will be systematically organized into two main sections: first, the data obtained from the survey, and second, the insights derived from the open-ended interviews. This structured approach will enable a detailed analysis of each response within its appropriate context, allowing for a more thorough interpretation of the findings.

In addition, selected quotations and excerpts from the responses provided in both the survey and interview instruments will be included to support and illustrate the key points discussed within each concept found in the interviews. This textual evidence will serve to highlight specific themes, patterns, and notable insights that emerged during the data collection process.

To ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, their real names are not disclosed. Instead, pseudonyms will be used: Participant 1, Participant 2, and Participant 3. This confidentiality measure is essential to respect the privacy of the individuals involved and to adhere to ethical research standards.

#### 4.3.1. Results from the survey

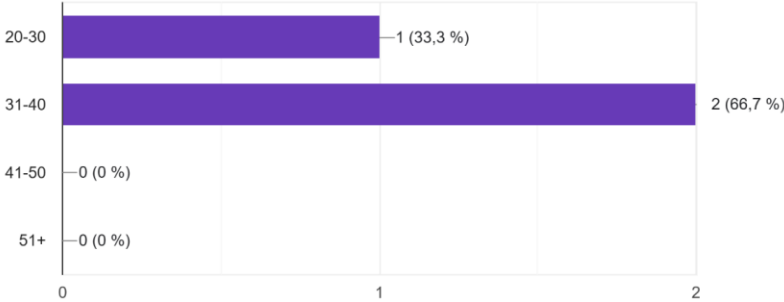
This survey had nine questions where general information about the participants was obtained such as age, gender, high level of education and years of teaching experience. The following questions were broad questions about the concept of learner autonomy, how it has been implemented in their classrooms and a couple

**Commented [BG10]:** cada gráfico debe tener una presentación y una interpretación no solo es ponerlos por ponerlos

of learner autonomy strategies they have used as well. The results gathered from the survey will be presented and displayed below.

**AGE**

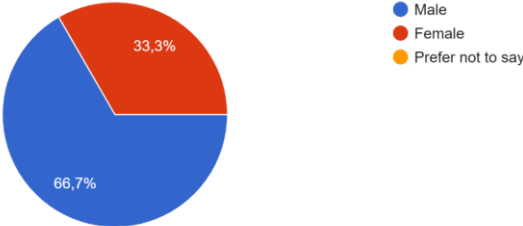
Age  
3 respuestas



The ages of the participants range from 20 to 40 years old.

**GENDER**

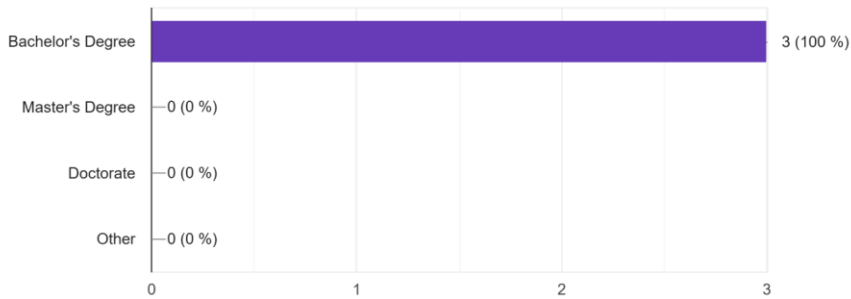
Gender  
3 respuestas



As shown in this pie chart, the participants were two males and one female.

### Highest level of Education:

3 respuestas

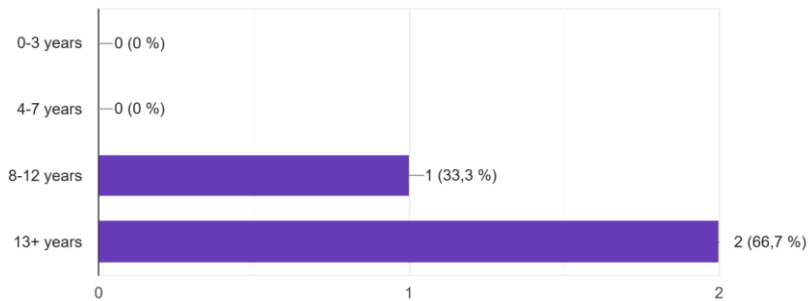


The three participants have a bachelor's degree in English Language Teaching, and they are taking a master's degree nowadays.

### YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

#### Years of Teaching Experience

3 respuestas



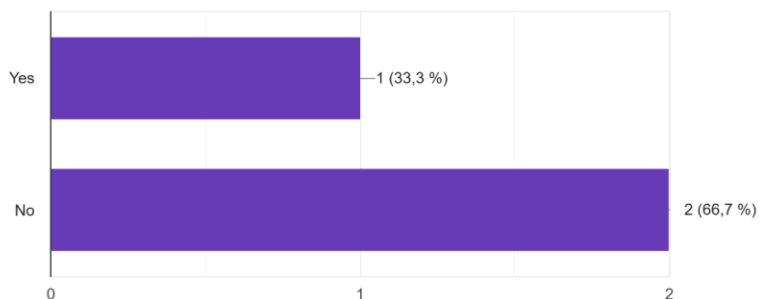
The years of teaching experience range from 8 to 13+ years.

From question five to nine, the questions are related to the concept of learner autonomy in the EFL classrooms.

**- HAVE YOU EVER RECEIVED TRAINING REGARDING LEARNER AUTONOMY STRATEGIES IN THE EFL CLASSROOM?**

Have you ever received training regarding learner autonomy strategies in the EFL classroom?

3 respuestas

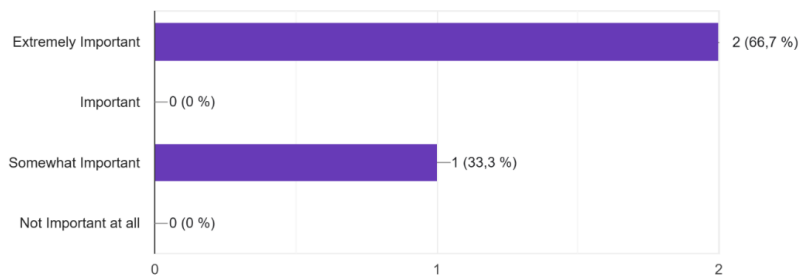


Two of three participants have received training regarding learner autonomy, one has not.

**- IN YOUR OPINION, HOW IMPORTANT IS LEARNER AUTONOMY IN THE EFL CLASSROOM?**

In your opinion, how important is learner autonomy in the EFL classroom?

3 respuestas



Two participants think learner autonomy is extremely important in the EFL classroom, while one thinks it is somewhat important.

**- DO YOU THINK STUDENTS SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR LEARNING PROCESS? JUSTIFY YOUR ANSWER**

Joel (Participant 1)	Demetria (Participant 3)	Kevin (Participant 2)
“If we know what kind of strategies work for us while learning, it will be easier to study. If we identify these strengths, we can set our goals and use diverse resources.”	“I consider it important to guide students in their learning process through different resources. Once they know the process, they could take their strategies to make it easier and faster.”	“Yes. It is a both sides process and their progress rely on how much effort they put in their language acquisition process outside of the classroom, especially for learners with few hours of class a week.”

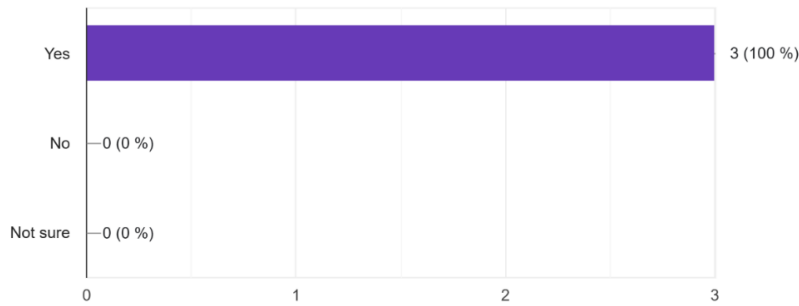
In this chart, it is seen that most of the participants think that the usage of diverse resources in the EFL classroom can help students to set goals and find strengths, while another participant thinks that students are responsible for their language acquisition process outside the classroom.

**Commented [BG11]:** de donde salió esto. si bien hay una descripción no hay interpretación de nada y tampoco ligas con marco teórico

**- HAVE YOU IMPLEMENTED SPECIFIC STRATEGIES TO ENCOURAGE LEARNER AUTONOMY?**

Have you implemented specific strategies to encourage learner autonomy?

3 respuestas



All the participants have implemented specific strategies to encourage learner autonomy.

- **IF YES, BRIEFLY MENTION ONE OR TWO STRATEGIES YOU HAVE USED.**

Joel (Participant 1)	Demetria (Participant 3)	Kevin (Participant 2)
“One is about identifying what and how to learn something. It is essential that we plan before studying since it will give us a guideline for our goals. The second one is to become both a teacher and a learner. Everything we learn must be put into practice and one way of doing that is by teaching	“The use of AI tools, online dictionaries, mnemonic tips, and web pages for different skills when learning a language.”	“Using a platform for extra exercises, personalizing material to their needs and abilities.”

someone else. The more we teach what we have learned, the better we get in that field.”		
---	--	--

In this chart, it is seen that participants have used diverse strategies for enhancing and encouraging autonomy in the classroom, such as identification of how and what to learn something, becoming a learner and a teacher to get better in a certain field, the usage of AI tools, online resources such as dictionaries, and the usage of platforms through personalization of material for certain needs and abilities that students may require.

**4.3.2. Results from the interviews**

The interviews were conducted through online sessions with the participants, giving them enough time and an environment where they could express themselves in the most open way, giving greater details about their journey with learner autonomy in EFL classrooms.

**4.3.3. Participant 1’s interview**

The first interview that was examined by using thematic analysis is Participant 1’s interview, during which he shared his own personal understanding and interpretation of the concept of learner autonomy. In this interview, Participant 1 provided a detailed explanation of how he perceives the concept itself, offering his own definition based on his own experiences and insights.

Additionally, he discussed several situations from his own teaching experience that have shaped his perspective on this topic, reflecting on the different encounters and learning moments he has had that relate to the idea of having autonomy in the EFL classroom.

#### **4.3.3.1. Theme 1: Definition and Understanding of Learner Autonomy**

**Question:** How would you define learner autonomy in your own words?

**Key insight:** Participant 1 defines learner autonomy as the ability of students to translate into tangible steps towards language learning (especially outside the classroom).

*“For me, it is how they translate their level of motivation into steps to achieve their goal.”*

**Interpretation:** For him, the concept centers on real-world application, highlighting the importance of self-directed engagement through diverse resources such as music, TV, magazines, books, or everyday activities. He values authentic and informal teaching and learning settings in the EFL classroom.

#### **4.3.3.2. Theme 2: Challenges in Promoting Autonomy**

**Question:** What challenges have you encountered in promoting learner autonomy in an EFL classroom?

Through the analysis of this theme, there were three challenges that Participant 1 talked about that were identified by the researcher: **time limitations of adult learners, lack of consistency in extra work engagement, and individual differences in willingness or ability to engage outside the classroom.**

*“Some of them even just take one session a week... it is not because they do not want to learn, but because they only find time once a week.”*

**Interpretation:** The tension between students’ professional or personal responsibilities and academic demands restricts their autonomy, making the teacher’s role in customizing learning even more essential.

#### **4.3.3.3. Theme 3: Influence of Students’ Characteristics**

**Question:** Do you believe learner autonomy varies depending on students’ background, age, or level of education, as well as English proficiency? How so?

Participant 1 talked about different variables affecting learner autonomy, such as **age, motivation, background, and lifestyle**.

Regarding age, he mentioned that young learners may appear autonomous but are often supervised or forced by parents. For motivation, he mentioned that more motivated students, regardless of their English level, engage better, and for background and lifestyle, he mentioned that adults that work or study may struggle with time to focus on learning a language.

*“It is not the level of English, but the motivation towards the language.”*

**Interpretation:** Participant 1 sees the concept of learner autonomy as situational (depending on the specific context or circumstance) and motivational (influenced by the student’s internal drive, interests, or goals), not merely developmental (that it grows progressively over time as skills are gained). For him, the student’s personal context deeply influences their autonomy.

#### 4.3.3.4. Theme 4: Teaching Strategies to Promote Autonomy

**Question:** Which of the following strategies do you frequently use to encourage autonomy?

- Encouraging self-assessment and reflection-
- Providing choices in learning activities.
- Teach students how to set personal learning goals.
- Using technology and online resources for self-study.
- Assigning project-based learning tasks.
- Other:

Please describe some specific activities or tasks you use to develop autonomy in your students.

Throughout Participant 1's teaching journey he has been able to use a wide array of strategies to promote autonomy in the EFL classroom. Some of these strategies are **technological and online tools, contextualized worksheets tied to students' work fields, tailored self-study materials, and reflection and review routines**, to mention a few.

On the other hand, there are a few strategies that have been avoided or minimally used by him, and these include **formal self-assessment tools, choice in tasks from the start, and explicit goal-setting sessions with students**.

*"I adapt material to connect with whatever their job or area of work is... students appreciate that."*

**Interpretation:** Participant 1 uses personalization and relevance as a primary element to boost autonomy in his students. He focuses on scaffolded independence or autonomy (a guided way of autonomy where students are encouraged to take responsibility within a structured and supported framework) rather than open-ended freedom.

#### 4.3.3.5. Theme 5: Indicators of Growing Autonomy

**Question:** How do you assess if your students are becoming more autonomous learners?

Participant 1 has noticed throughout his years of teaching English that there are signs or indicators of a growing autonomy in his students' processes. Some of these signs are **decrease in repeated questions, timely completion of independent tasks, and ability to connect classroom content to real-life use.**

*“If they have fewer questions or do not need to review repeatedly, I see that as progress.”*

**Interpretation:** For him, autonomy is measured through observable behavior like engagement and reduced dependency on the teacher making students move independently and taking responsibility on their language acquisition processes.

#### 4.3.3.6. Theme 6: Barriers to Learner Autonomy

**Question:** In your experience, what are the main obstacles preventing students from becoming autonomous learners?

During his teaching journey he has seen barriers as well regarding learner autonomy, some of which are **students' lack of time, teachers' time constraints in preparing personalized materials, and limited training or resources for autonomy-focused teaching.**

*“It is time consuming to design materials for each students' individual needs.”*

**Interpretation:** He has identified external and structural obstacles for both teachers and students. He thinks that promoting autonomy is seen as a shared challenge between the two groups (teachers and students).

#### **4.3.3.7. Theme 7: Teacher's Role in Fostering Autonomy**

**Question:** What role do teachers play in fostering learner autonomy? Is it a key role?

He has built a system of personal beliefs regarding the role he has played as a teacher and the importance of fostering autonomy in his EFL classroom. Some of these beliefs are **scaffolding, curating tools and material, and proving motivation to his students.** These beliefs help the teacher create a safe environment for the learners.

*“You are a key component of the students' choices of materials or tools.”*

**Interpretation:** While autonomy implies independence, Kevin sees his role as a teacher as essential in equipping students to be fully autonomous.

#### 4.3.3.8. Theme 8: Benefits of Learner Autonomy

**Question:** Have you noticed any improvements in your students' learning outcomes when they take more responsibility for their learning processes? Please justify your answer.

While being an English teacher focused on adult students and at the same time, applying learner autonomy in the classroom, Participant 1 has observed diverse outcomes such as **faster language progress, greater connection between learning and real-life application and increased learner satisfaction and engagement.**

*“I definitely have seen a faster progress, more connections between topics and real-life applications.”*

**Interpretation:** He thinks that autonomy leads to deeper and more meaningful learning, and a possible successful language acquisition process, especially when it is aligned with students' goals.

#### 4.3.3.9. Theme 9: Necessity for Further Development

**Question:** What advice or additional training do you need to promote learner autonomy in your EFL classrooms?

As an English teacher, he has noticed there are some empty gaps and necessities that need to be filled by working on professional development. Some of them are **training in using technology for autonomy, also strategies to avoid overwhelming students, and better understanding of learners' preferences for self-study.**

*“Technology advances amazingly fast. I would like to get to know each of these tools in detail and keep learning about diverse strategies.”*

**Interpretation:** He is aware of the need for ongoing professional development for English teachers to keep his practice effective and relevant.

#### **4.3.3.10. Conclusion for participant 1’s interview**

In conclusion, participant 1 defines learner autonomy as the process of transforming motivation into concrete steps for language learning, particularly beyond the classroom.

He identifies time limitation and individual differences as the main challenges but emphasizes the effectiveness of contextualized materials, technology, and personalized strategies.

For participant 1, the teacher plays a key role in scaffolding and providing relevant tools while motivated students who engage independently tend to make faster and more meaningful progress.

#### **4.3.4. Participant 2’s interview**

For the second interview conducted with participant 2 and using thematic analysis, the participant shared her personal views and interpretation regarding the concept of learner autonomy. Throughout the conversation between the participant and the researcher, she offered her own definition of the concept, drawing from her individual experiences and reflections.

Participant 2 also spoke about moments from her teaching experience that have influenced how she understands learner autonomy, highlighting key experiences and situations that have contributed to her perspective on fostering independence in the EFL classroom.

#### **4.3.4.1. Theme 1: Definition and Understanding of Learner Autonomy**

**Question:** How would you define learner autonomy in your own words?

**Key insight:** Participant 2 defined the concept of learner autonomy as the students' initiative to study independently, using self-selected tools to understand new concepts and content.

*“The student looks for his or her own tools to learn something new.”*

**Interpretation:** Her definition highlights self-direction and tool-seeking behavior, aligning autonomy with independence in acquiring both conceptual and procedural knowledge.

#### **4.3.4.2. Theme 2: Challenges in Promoting Autonomy**

**Question:** What challenges have you encountered in promoting learner autonomy in an EFL classroom?

For participant 2, there have been several challenges throughout her teaching journey that have not been the ideal way to promote learner autonomy. Some of these challenges are the **low value placed on English by students, a cultural context lacking autonomy across subjects, students' tendency to wait for teacher-**

provided answers, and poor use of suggested tools unless exams are happening soon.

*“Most of the students want all the answers provided by the teachers... even if I recommend tools, they do not use them.”*

**Interpretation:** Participant 2 sees learner autonomy as undermined by external motivation from external elements such as school, family, and study habits. Also, she mentions that exam-driven study habits, and a lack of broader academic independence and discipline may destabilize students’ language acquisition process.

#### **4.3.4.3. Theme 3: Influence of Learner Characteristics**

**Question:** Do you believe learner autonomy varies depending on students’ background, age, or level of education, as well as English proficiency? How so?

For participant 2, along her teaching journey there have been quite a few influences shown in students regarding their ability to be autonomous; some of these influences are **early exposure to autonomy that supports long-term independent learning, lack of prior contact with technological tools that create barriers and frustration, and lower proficiency that can limit effective use of online materials and resources.**

*“Some students were not aware of strategies related to technology; they are amazed and try to use it, but for some, it is difficult.”*

**Interpretation:** Participant 2 has noticed that student background, digital literacy, and English level shape how easily autonomy can be developed. Also, she has noticed that students with early or tech-related exposure tend to adapt more quickly.

#### 4.3.4.4. Theme 4: Teaching strategies to promote autonomy.

**Question:** Which of the following strategies do you frequently use to encourage autonomy?

- Encouraging self-assessment and reflection-
- Providing choices in learning activities.
- Teach students how to set personal learning goals.
- Using technology and online resources for self-study.
- Assigning project-based learning tasks.
- Other:

Please describe some specific activities or tasks you use to develop autonomy in your students.

Through her teaching experience she has gotten, participant 2 has been able to use different strategies in her EFL classrooms. Some of these strategies are **self-assessment and reflection via independent tasks and corrections, usage of technology and AI tools (e.g. Duolingo, Chat GPT, etc.), tracking students' progress based on individual goals, project-based learning methodology and**

**personalized materials based on students' learning goals and objectives, such as certifications.**

*“They develop their own texts in paragraphs, they can check it in Chat GPT or other apps, and later they can do it by themselves.”*

**Interpretation:** Participant 2 emphasizes guided usage of digital tools and resources to transition students into autonomy. She has scaffolded independence through practice, review, and tool familiarization.

#### **4.3.4.5. Theme 5: Indicators of Growing Autonomy**

**Question:** How do you assess if your students are becoming more autonomous learners?

In her different EFL classrooms she has taught in, she has observed there have been several indicators that show a growing autonomy among her students. Some of these indicators are **increased student feedback about tools' usefulness, improvement in performance in follow-up tests and tasks, greater fluency and speed in skill-based tasks, and ability to reflect on mistakes and progress.**

*“I perceive if they have been studying by themselves when I see improvement in fluency, speed or understating,”*

**Interpretation:** She has used formative assessment and performance comparisons to assess growth in her EFL classroom. There have been observable

learner behaviors (e.g., skill fluency, task completion, etc.) that serve as the main indicators.

#### **4.3.4.6. Theme 6: Barriers to Learner Autonomy**

**Question:** In your experience, what are the main obstacles preventing students from becoming autonomous learners?

Meanwhile, there have been good indicators of growing autonomy in her students, participant 2 has also identified barriers that might prevent this autonomy from happening. Some of these barriers are **unmotivated students (e.g., those who are being forced by parents or institutions to learn English), teachers who only provide resources without guidance and students who get easily overwhelmed by excessive or unfiltered information.**

*“I have had students that have told me that some teachers just tell them to “use this page,” but they do not share more or follow up with them.”*

**Interpretation:** She sees the lack of teacher follow-up and students’ disinterest as the main barriers. What is needed is clear support, motivation, and filtering of resources in order to keep fostering autonomy in the EFL classroom.

#### **4.3.4.7. Theme 7: Teacher’s Role in Fostering Autonomy**

**Question:** What role do teachers play in fostering learner autonomy? Is it a key role?

As an English teacher, participant 2 considers that a good teacher has to have key components to fulfill the desired skills of their students. Some of these key components are **not just providing tools, but guiding and monitoring students, follow-up to ensure tools are being used effectively, and responsiveness to students' feedback on what actually works.**

*“You should guide them. You should follow the process.”*

**Interpretation:** She frames the teacher as a facilitator and a mentor, emphasizing on ongoing interaction rather than a one-time delivery of resources.

#### **4.3.4.8. Theme 8: Benefits of Learner Autonomy**

**Question:** Have you noticed any improvements in your students' learning outcomes when they take more responsibility for their learning processes?

During her teaching journey, she has been able to implement learner autonomy in her EFL classrooms, and she has observed several improvements in her students such as **better performance in listening, writing and tests. Also, students have become more critical of diverse teaching tools and teaching strategies and learning becomes more sustained and self-initiated.**

*“They improve because they understand that language is not learned in two hours a week.”*

**Interpretation:** Participant 2 connects autonomy with long-term retention and transfer of skills. She believes that students who engage beyond class time make significant strides in their learning process.

#### **4.3.4.9. Theme 9: Need for Further Development**

**Question:** What advice or additional training do you need to promote learner autonomy in your EFL classrooms?

Participant 2 believes that certain aspects of the concept of learner autonomy require further development in order to yield improved outcomes. Some of these needs include **more training regarding AI tools and their integration in the EFL classroom, strategies to help students categorize and organize digital information and support for teachers to help students use AI tools as more than a dictionary.**

*“We also can be lost among a lot of information, so I need to guide my students in categorizing and organizing it.”*

**Interpretation:** Participant 2 calls for AI literacy training focused on helping both students and teachers navigate digital complexities and not just access them.

#### **4.3.4.10. Conclusion for Participant 2’s Interview**

In conclusion, participant 2 describes learner autonomy as the student’s capacity to independently seek out tools and strategies to acquire new knowledge. She highlights cultural attitudes, low motivation, and overreliance on teachers as

major barriers but also stresses the role of technology, reflection, and personalized resources in fostering autonomy.

According to her, the teacher's role goes beyond providing tools to actively guide, monitor, and adapt strategies, which helps learners improve their outcomes and sustain progress over time.

#### **4.3.5. Participant 3's interview**

For the last conducted interview with participant 3, he shared his personal perspectives and interpretations regarding the concept of learner autonomy. In his answers, he provided his own definition of the concept, emphasizing learners' responsibility for their own learning process.

He also discussed specific challenges he encountered in promoting autonomy, such as students' difficulty maintaining focus, the impact of distractions, and differences in learner characteristics like age, proficiency, and educational background.

Drawing from his teaching experience, participant 3 described the strategies he has implemented to encourage independence, the indicators he has observed when students become more autonomous, and the teachers' role as a motivator and role model in the EFL classrooms.

##### **4.3.5.1. Theme 1: Definition and Understanding of Learner Autonomy**

**Question:** How would you define learner autonomy in your own words?

**Key insight:** Participant 3 defines learner autonomy as the ability of learners to take responsibility for their own learning process.

**“It is the ability that the learner has to take responsibility for their own learning.”**

**Interpretation:** His definition centers on ownership and accountability, placing emphasis on learners being initiative-taking in directing their own progress.

#### **4.3.5.2. Theme 2: Challenges in Promoting Autonomy**

**Question:** What challenges have you encountered in promoting learner autonomy in an EFL classroom?

Through his teaching journey, participant 3 encountered and faced several challenges regarding promoting autonomy in the EFL classroom. Some of these challenges are **autonomy, which often requires working alone, which not all students enjoy, distractions during self-study (especially when students are alone), short attention spans, leading to insufficient sustained focus, and students often lack the habit of concentrating for extended periods.**

*“Usually, they just study alone for 20 minutes and then they abruptly stop... becoming autonomous requires working on one task for one hour without stopping.”*

**Interpretation:** Participant 3 views attention management and focus as core obstacles to autonomy. For several students, the challenge is not willingness but the discipline to work independently without interruption.

#### 4.3.5.3. Theme 3: Influence of Learner Characteristics

**Question:** Do you believe learner autonomy varies depending on students' background, age, or level of education, as well as English proficiency? How so?

For participant 3, there have been some sorts of influence towards his EFL students that can help them to foster learner autonomy. Some of the influences he has observed are that **cultural background affects the relevance of learning content and vocabulary, age influences attention span meaning that adults are generally more likely to focus on class, while children require more behavioral management.**

Also, that **educational level correlates with ability to focus and engage independently, and English proficiency impacts autonomy, meaning that advanced students manage self-study better, while beginners struggle without guidance.**

*“For advanced students it is easier to study alone, and for novice students, it will be really hard to study by themselves.”*

**Interpretation:** Participant 3 sees autonomy as strongly shaped by learner maturity and age, educational experience, and language proficiency.

#### 4.3.5.4. Theme 4: Teaching Strategies to Promote Autonomy

**Question:** Which of the following strategies do you frequently use to encourage autonomy?

- Encouraging self-assessment and reflection-

- Providing choices in learning activities.
- Teach students how to set personal learning goals.
- Using technology and online resources for self-study.
- Assigning project-based learning tasks.
- Other:

Please describe some specific activities or tasks you use to develop autonomy in your students.

During his time teaching English as Foreign Language, participant 3 has used a handful of strategies, and some of the strategies that have worked for him **are self-assessment and reflection to identify and correct mistakes, offering choices in learning activities based on student preferences, personal learning tailored to students' necessities such as an upcoming certification or job / school requirements.**

For participant 3, **integrating technology is quite important for immediate feedback and motivation, also learning style identification to help students adapt strategies, and the usage of occasional project-based learning in specific contexts, mostly high school, or university levels.**

*“If they reflect on what they have written or said, they can fix mistakes in the future.”*

**Interpretation:** Participant 3's strategies combine reflective practice, personalization, and tech-based feedback to encourage to take initiative.

#### 4.3.5.5. Theme 5: Indicators of Growing Autonomy

**Question:** How do you assess if your students are becoming more autonomous learners?

Throughout participant 3's teaching journey, he has been able to see several indicators that show a growth of autonomy in their students. Some of these indicators are **that students manage more complex tasks than their current level, the use of advanced vocabulary, phrasal verbs, and idioms beyond their syllabus, and the ability to reflect on and assess improvements in their own language use.**

*"I encourage my students to reach a C1 level and then reflect on the new structures they use."*

**Interpretation:** For participant 3, progress in autonomy is measured by students' willingness to push beyond their comfort zone and to evaluate their own growth.

#### 4.3.5.6. Theme 6: Barriers to Learner Autonomy

**Question:** In your experience, what are the main obstacles preventing students from becoming autonomous learners?

On the other hand, participant 3 has found several barriers during his teaching journey that have created several limitations for his students. These barriers are

**technology-related distractions (for example, constant use of social media, phone notifications or calls, the need to search for everything on the internet, etc.).**

Other barriers he has faced are the **students' inability to sustain attention on a single task for extended periods, and their habit of multitasking instead of focused study.**

*“Students cannot really focus on one task because they always want to watch something in class or scroll down on social media.”*

**Interpretation:** Participant 3 sees digital distraction as the primary modern obstacle to autonomy, even when students are motivated.

#### **4.3.5.7. Theme 7: Teacher's Role in Fostering Autonomy**

**Question:** What role do teachers play in fostering learner autonomy? Is it a key role?

As an English teacher himself, participant 3 has been able to find distinct characteristics a teacher might have in the role of fostering autonomy in the EFL classrooms. Some of these characteristics **serve as a role model for knowledge, preparation, and positive learning behaviors, providing motivation through both intentional and implicit behaviors, and encouraging students by demonstrating competence and engagement.**

*“If my teacher says I can become an autonomous learner, I know I can do it.”*

**Interpretation:** Participant 3 views teachers as possible inspirational figures whose competence and attitude can either motivate or discourage learners. He believes not all teachers possess these characteristics.

#### **4.3.5.8. Theme 8: Benefits of Learner Autonomy**

**Question:** Have you noticed any improvements in your students' learning outcomes when they take more responsibility for their learning processes? Please justify your answer.

Along his teaching journey, and by applying different resources and approaches to foster learner autonomy, participant 3 has found and observed several benefits such as **greater self-questioning and awareness during learning tasks, more responsibility in applying recommendations, and better outcomes among motivated university-level students.**

*“They are continuously thinking and working in class. Once they get asked to write, for example, an essay, they follow my recommendations.”*

**Interpretation:** Participant 3 thinks that autonomy leads to more reflective, responsible, and active learning behaviors, though benefits may vary depending on motivation level.

#### **4.3.5.9. Theme 9: Need for Further Development**

**Question:** What advice or additional training do you need to promote learner autonomy in your EFL classrooms?

Participant 3 gave out some professional recommendations for colleagues that want to start working on fostering learner autonomy, and for a further development, and these recommendations are **encouraging students to use diverse resources instead of relying on one textbook or website, and also, incorporating a variety of input sources (such as books, interactive resources and tools, movies, TV shows, specialized materials) to broaden exposure.**

*“If you explore a variety of resources you will have more options for practice.”*

**Interpretation:** Participant 3 likes to promote resource diversity as a means to deepen learning and provide multiple paths for autonomous engagement from and for students.

#### **4.3.5.10. Conclusion for Participant 3’s interview**

In conclusion, participant 3 views learner autonomy as students’ ability to take responsibility for their own progress while recognizing that distractions, limited attention spans, and differences in background and proficiency can hinder their language acquisition process and development of it.

He highlights the importance of self-assessment, technology, and personalizing goals as strategies to foster autonomy, and emphasizes the teacher’s key role as both a guide and a role model. Overall, his insights underscore that promoting autonomy requires balancing student responsibility with teacher support and several learning resources and tools.

#### 4.4 Discussion of results

The following chart contains the summarized answers of the participants for an easier and quicker revision.

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
<b>Theme 1: Definition and Understanding of Learner Autonomy</b>	Motivation + Action beyond the classroom	Independent tools to acquire new knowledge	Responsibility for one's own learning
<b>Theme 2: Challenges in Promoting Autonomy</b>	Lack of time, inconsistency, individual needs	Low motivation, reliance on teachers, cultural norms	Dislike of solitary study, distractions, short attention span
<b>Theme 3: Influence of Learner Characteristics</b>	Age, motivation, context matter more than level	Affected by background, tech familiarity, proficiency	Age, culture, education, and proficiency affect autonomy
<b>Theme 4: Teaching Strategies to Promote Autonomy</b>	Personalization, tech tools, authentic tasks	AI use (ChatGPT), self-assessment, personalized projects	Self-assessment, choices, personal goals, tech integration
<b>Theme 5: Indicators of Growing Autonomy</b>	Reduced dependency, timely task completion	Better fluency, tool feedback, task performance	Tackling harder tasks, advanced vocabulary use, reflection
<b>Theme 6: Barriers to Learner Autonomy</b>	Limited time for students & teachers, training gaps	Unmotivated students, poor teacher follow-up, info overload	Tech distractions, multitasking habits
<b>Theme 7: Teacher's Role in Fostering Autonomy</b>	Scaffold, motivate, provide tools	Guide, follow-up, adapt strategies to student needs	Role model, motivator, source of competence and inspiration
<b>Theme 8: Benefits of Learner Autonomy</b>	Faster progress, real-life application	Sustained learning, improved test performance, initiative	More responsibility, reflection, improved outcomes

<b>Theme 9: Need for Further Development</b>	Tech training, peer exchange, learner profiling	Training in AI + digital information management	Training students to use varied resources
--	---	---	---

**4.5 Conclusion of the chapter**

Based on the information presented throughout this chapter, it becomes clear that some educators who teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL) employ a variety of strategies and approaches within their classroom settings to foster learner autonomy and therefore obtain better results.

## CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Introduction

Commented [BG12]: esto no va

This chapter offers an in-depth discussion of the key findings presented in Chapter 4, establishing clear links between the data collected and the research questions that served as the foundation of this investigation. Finally, the chapter concludes with recommendations for future research directions.

The analysis and interpretation of the results are firmly rooted in the broader context of prior research, which was thoroughly reviewed in Chapter 2. This background provides a solid foundation for understanding how the current findings align with or diverge from existing knowledge in the field.

Throughout this chapter, the results are examined in relation to the relevant literature, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of their significance within the broader landscape of language education. This approach not only helps to contextualize the findings but also highlights their potential implications for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers involved in English language teaching and learning autonomy.

### 5.2 Summary of the study

This research project aimed to explore how four English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers understand, apply, and foster learner autonomy in their classrooms. The idea for this project emerged from the necessity to identify effective strategies that support students in becoming autonomous and independent learners of a foreign

language, in this case English, and particularly in contexts where this language is not used naturally outside academic and work situations.

The main focus was to examine teachers' perceptions about the concept of learner autonomy, their teaching practices, barriers and challenges, and reflections regarding the development of autonomy among their students.

A qualitative methodology was employed, using as tools a survey and semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions with three EFL teachers teaching adult learners in mixed academic settings. The data collected from the interviews were analyzed by using thematic analysis, allowing patterns and repeated concepts to emerge directly from the participants' answers.

These interviews were conducted individually and explored different definitions of learner autonomy, some strategies used to foster independence in the EFL classrooms, some challenges teachers have faced, their role as teachers in fostering learner autonomy, and perceived outcomes in learners.

Overall, this study provides insight into real classroom experiences, highlighting different approaches influenced by motivation, technological resources, and students' characteristics.

### **5.3 Answers to the research questions**

The following section answers each research question using evidence such as the data obtained from the interviews along with literature.

- *What specific strategies do English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers use to promote learner autonomy in the classroom?*

The findings indicate that participants employ several strategies designed to foster autonomy. A recurring strategy among the teachers that participated is the use of technology-based tools, such as language learning apps, online resources, digital worksheets, and AI like ChatGPT or pronunciation apps. These tools have allowed students to practice at home by obtaining immediate feedback and engaging with English language in real contexts.

The participants also incorporate self-assessment and reflective practices, encouraging their students to check written work by themselves, decipher and analyze mistakes, and monitor their own personal journey. Participants have described this as a core element for learners to develop responsibility towards their learning processes.

Another strategy is the creation of personalized materials, often adapted to learners' goals and interests, often making them contextualized depending on what students desire to learn. With this, teachers foster relevance and motivation which may turn into autonomous learning.

Overall, the answers show that EFL teachers foster autonomy through a combination of use of technology, reflective strategies, personalized teaching, and goal/interest-oriented learning, emphasizing independence inside and outside the classroom.

- ***How does the implementation of autonomy-promoting strategies in EFL classrooms correlate with students' progress in language proficiency?***

Through all interviews, participants talked about students that tend to engage autonomously showing a faster and more noticeable improvement in language proficiency compared to those who only rely on the teacher's directions and

instructions. This progress is evident when students practice at home using different study strategies, digital tools, and real exposure of English language.

Participants associated autonomy with the increment of linguistic complexity, including advanced grammar structures, idiomatic expressions, and specialized vocabulary. According to them, learners who practice independently have shown greater fluency, accuracy and confidence in speaking and writing assignments.

Autonomous learners have shown higher levels of metacognitive awareness, reflection of their learning processes, and initiative-taking in problem-solving. This has contributed to improved performance, sustained long-term learning and autonomous language development according to the participants.

Also, participants noted slow progress among learners who faced challenges such as lack of motivation, limited time, dependency on the teacher, and digital distractions. These students often need repetitive explanation and might struggle to move beyond basic content.

To summarize, the results show a clear correlation between autonomy practices, and language proficiency. With adequate support, tools, guidance and relevance, autonomy becomes a core element in accelerating progress and improvement in the EFL classrooms.

#### **5.4 Summary of key findings**

The findings of this project reveal that learner autonomy in EFL contexts is shaped by a combination of strategies, students' characteristics, and core factors inside and outside the classroom. All the participants agreed that autonomy involves

taking responsibility for their own learning process through engagement, self-regulation, and the use of English language outside the classroom.

A key finding is that technology plays a significant role in developing autonomy, given that teachers rely on digital resources most of the time, such as educational platforms and apps, online exercises and worksheets, multimedia input, AI tools to expand the content beyond the classroom. These tools give instant feedback, foster exposure, and allow students to customize their learning experiences focusing on their personal goals and interests.

Another important finding relates to the importance of personalization and relevance. Participants revealed that adapting or designing materials based on students' contexts, goals and interests strengthens motivation and encourage them to use English in real contexts and in an independent way. Students can assess themselves to support that autonomy by monitoring their progress themselves and recognize the areas they need to work on.

This study also identified a lot of challenges that might limit the development of autonomy, such as digital distractions, limited time, low motivation, dependence on the teacher, and not being familiar with diverse study strategies. These obstacles highlight the necessity for guidance, resources, and training to become more independent.

Finally, the findings show that students who are autonomous have shown a greater linguistic progress, demonstrating fluency, complexity in grammar structures, a wider vocabulary range and most importantly confidence, by using English in the real world. On the other hand, these findings show that students who rely solely on

the teachers' instruction show slower progress and grammar, fluency, and confidence difficulties.

### **5.5 Contributions of the study**

This study's contributions to the field of ELT offers a qualitative perspective on how learner autonomy is understood and fostered by EFL teachers. Firstly, it provides insights into educational settings where English language use may be limited outside the classroom.

This study highlights practical strategies that extend beyond theory, educational frameworks, and curriculum, including the use of technology, personalization of materials, and tailored teaching strategies to fit the needs of the students.

Additionally, it contributes to the pedagogical understanding of learner autonomy by identifying obstacles such as time constraints, digital distractions, and learner dependence on the teacher's teaching. This information reinforces the necessity for teachers to not only provide independent learning tools, but also to teach students how to engage with them and use them in a correct way. This research also highlights the role of the teacher as facilitators, motivators, and role models, creating a thriving autonomy.

Finally, this study proposes implications for teacher education, suggesting that professional development should include training in technology, digital resource evaluation, and strategies to achieve metacognitive awareness. These contributions may help future curricular design, teacher training programs, and further research on

the concept of learner autonomy in digital, face to face and hybrid learner environments.

### **5.6 Limitations of the study**

Overall, while the study provided valuable insights, these limitations highlight areas where future research could improve by allowing more time for broader analysis, utilizing additional instruments and participants, and acquiring the necessary skills to manage data coding more effectively.

Furthermore, the data analysis phase presented its own set of challenges. The researcher faced difficulties in managing and interpreting the data because they were unfamiliar with the coding process involved. This lack of prior experience in coding complicated the analysis, making it more complex and time-consuming than initially anticipated. As a result, this learning curve impacted the efficiency and potentially the accuracy of data interpretation.

### **5.7 Directions for further research**

Future research should consider potential obstacles and variances in attitudes among both teachers and students such as investigations could explore effective strategies for training educators to confidently apply this concept in diverse classroom contexts, as well as methods to motivate and support students in embracing greater autonomy. Understanding the factors that influence acceptance, and implementation will be essential for developing practical frameworks and best practices that can be tailored to different educational environments.

Ultimately, recognizing the novelty of this approach and the possible resistance or indifference from various stakeholders will be key to advancing its adoption and ensuring that its benefits are fully realized in the realm of EFL education.

## **5.8 Final conclusions**

The results of this study show that learner autonomy is a multifaceted concept that has to rely on both learner responsibility and teacher guidance and support. Teachers promote autonomy through strategies that emphasize self-regulation, independent learning, and personalized instructions, with technology as a core tool to expand learning outside the classroom.

When students are engaged with their learning process, they tend to give out better results and a more rapid progress, developing greater fluency, accuracy, confidence, and capacity to apply the English language in real situations.

However, this process is not challenge free, given that there are factors such as lack of motivation, academic competition, professional demands, limited time, and experience with autonomous learning,, and digital distractions. These constraints show the importance of an intentional teaching design and continuous scaffolding to close the gap between dependence and autonomy.

Finally, this project concludes that autonomy is a dynamic process shaped by motivation, resources, and good pedagogical guidance. When both students and teachers actively participate in this process, learner autonomy becomes a pathway full of transformation to a sustained and proficient English language development.

## 5.9 Reflection

Conducting this study gave me the chance to explore the concept of learner autonomy in a wider way, by seeing it as a classroom reality shaped by different teaching approaches and students' characteristics. Through the participants' reflections and answers, it became clear that promoting autonomy requires a change from traditional teaching to more flexible, modern, and learner-centered practices. The findings also revealed that autonomy is contextual most of the time, influenced by cultural attitudes regarding learning, levels of digital literacy, and the degree of institutional support for autonomous learning.

Personally, this research reinforces the importance of designing learning contexts where learners are encouraged to take initiative regarding their language acquisition processes, and where teachers function as guides and facilitators rather than only knowledge providers. By hearing the participants' descriptions about the impact of personalized materials, guided reflection, and technological strategies and tools, I could see the value of creating learning experience that goes beyond the classroom.

Finally, this study highlighted areas for professional development, focusing on helping students navigate the different digital resources in a critical and purposeful way. As autonomy becomes more and more tied to technology, further research must address access to tools, but also necessary skills.

## REFERENCES

- Anderson, J. R. (1982). Acquisition of cognitive skills. *Psychological Review*, 89(4), 369–406.
- Aoki, N. (2021). *The impact of online learning on learner autonomy*. *Language Teaching Research*, 25(4), 561-580.
- Benson, P. (2001). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning*. Pearson Education.
- Benson, P. (2011). *Teaching and researching autonomy* (2nd ed.). Routledge
- Benson, P., & Reinders, H. (2011). *Beyond the language classroom: The theory and practice of informal language learning and teaching*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Borg, S., & Al-Busaidi, S. (2012). *Learner autonomy: English language teachers' beliefs and practices*. British Council.
- Borg, S., & Alshumaimeri, Y. (2019). Language learner autonomy in a tertiary context: Teachers' beliefs and practices. *Language Teaching Research*, 23(1), 9-38.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Burston, J. (2014). MALL: The pedagogical challenges. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 27(4), 344–357. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2014.914539>
- Bygate, M., & Samuda, V. (2005). *Integrative planning using task repetition*. In R. Ellis (Ed.), *Planning, and task performance in a second language* (pp. 37–74). John Benjamins.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Multilingual Matters.
- Cao, Y., & Philp, J. (2020). *Exploring learners' agency in language learning through task-based interaction*. *Journal of Second Language Teaching & Research*, 8(1), 32-49.
- Ciekanski, M. (2017). Promoting learner autonomy: A path for the future. *ELT Journal*, 71(3), 322-331.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Chenoweth, N. A., & Murday, K. (2003). Measuring student learning in an online French course. *CALICO Journal*, 20(2), 285–314.
- Cherry, K. (2024). *What is Sociocultural theory?* Very well Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-sociocultural-theory-2795088#citation-19>
- Code, J. (2020, February). Agency for learning: Intention, motivation, self-efficacy, and self-regulation. In *Frontiers in Education* (Vol. 5, p. 19). Frontiers Media SA.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge.

- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press
- Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power, and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire*. Multilingual Matters.
- Cummins, J. (2008). BICS and CALP: *Empirical and theoretical status of the distinction*. In B. Street & N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education* (Vol. 2, pp. 71–83). Springer.
- DeKeyser, R. M. (1997). *Beyond explicit rule learning: Automatizing second language morphosyntax*. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 19(2), 195–221. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263197002040>
- DeKeyser, R. M. (2007). *Practice in a second language: Perspectives from applied linguistics and cognitive psychology*. Cambridge University Press.
- DeKeyser, R. M. (2015). Skill acquisition theory. In B. VanPatten & J. Williams (Eds.), *Theories in second language acquisition* (pp. 94–112). Routledge.
- DeKeyser, R. (2018). *Skill Acquisition Theory and the Role of Practice in L2 Development*. In *The Routledge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 94-109). Routledge.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2014). *Internet, phone, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method* (4th ed.). Wiley.
- Ellis, R. (2008). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2015). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Gass, S. M., & Mackey, A. (2007). *Input, interaction, and output in second language acquisition*. In B. Vanpatten, & J. Williams (Eds.), *Theories in second language acquisition* (p. 175-200). London: LEA.
- Ghafari, S. (2020). *Teachers' perceptions of autonomy in EFL education: Barriers and Enablers*. *Journal of Language and Education*, 6(3), 88-102.
- Gordon, K., Garcia-Nevarez A., Roundtree, WJ., Valero-Kerrick, A. (2013). *Play and the Learning Environment in Early Childhood Education: Becoming a Professional*. Sage Publishing.
- Holec, H. (1981). *Autonomy and foreign language learning*. Pergamont
- Hung, H. T. (2015). Flipping the classroom for English language learners to foster active learning. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 28(1), 81–96. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2014.967701>
- Hymes, D. (1972). *On communicative competence*. In J. B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics* (pp. 269–293). Penguin.
- Jiménez Raya, M., & Vieira, F. (2015). *Enhancing autonomy in language education: A case-based approach to teacher and learner development*. Gruyter Mouton.

- Kang, H., & Keinonen, T. (2018). *Learner-centered education in distance learning: An analysis of engagement and skill development*. *Journal of Interactive Learning Research*, 29(1), 123-145.
- Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Longman.
- Larsen-Freeman, D., Driver, P., Gao, X. & Mercer, S. (2021). *Learner agency: Maximizing learner potential*. Accessed 24 January 2023 at <https://elt.oup.com/feature/global/expert/learner-agency?cc=ca&selLanguage=en>
- Li, S. (2010). *The effectiveness of corrective feedback in SLA: A meta-analysis*. *Language Learning*, 60(2), 309–365. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2010.00561.x>
- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How Languages are Learned* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Little, D. (1991). *Learner autonomy 1: Definitions, issues, and problems*. Authentik.
- Little, D., & Dam, L. (2017). *Language learner autonomy: Theory, practice, and research*. Multilingual Matters.
- Littlewood, W. (2007). Communicative and task-based language teaching in East Asian classrooms. *Language Teaching*, 40(3), 243–249. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444807004363>
- Mackey, A., & Goo, J. (2007). *Interaction research in SLA: A meta-analysis and research synthesis*. Oxford University Press.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage.
- Nagy, W., & Townsend, D. (2012). *Words as tools: Learning academic vocabulary as language acquisition*. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 47(1), 91–108. <https://doi.org/10.1002/RRQ.011>
- Neeraja, M., & Kumar, S. (2023). *A study on EFL learner autonomy in post-pandemic period tertiary level*. *International Journal of Advanced Research and Innovative Ideas in Education*.
- Ortega, L. (2019). *Second Language Acquisition*. Routledge.
- Pratiwi, M., & Waluyo, B. (2023). *Integrating digital tools to enhance learner autonomy among EFL students in language skills*. ERIC Database.
- Rivers, W. (2018). *Shifting towards learner autonomy: Challenges in implementing autonomous practices*. *Language Learning Journal*, 46(2), 173-187.
- Saleem, T., Zhang, X., & Giannakos, M. (2022). *A student-centered approach using modern technologies in distance learning: A systematic review of literature*. *Smart Learning Environments*, 9(4), 45-60.
- Savignon, S. J. (2002). *Interpreting communicative language teaching: Contexts and concerns in teacher education*. Yale University Press.
- Seidlhofer (Eds.), *Principle and Practice in Applied Linguistics* (p. 125-144). Oxford University Press.
- Shintani, N., & Ellis, R. (2013). *The comparative effect of direct written corrective feedback and metalinguistic explanation on learners' explicit and implicit knowledge of the English indefinite article*. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 22(3), 286–306. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2013.03.011>

- Spada, N., & Tomita, Y. (2010). *Interactions between type of instruction and type of language feature: A meta-analysis*. *Language Learning*, 60(2), 263–308. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2010.00562.x>
- Suzuki, Y., & DeKeyser, R. (2017). *Effects of distributed practice on the proceduralization of morphology*. *Language Teaching Research*, 21(2), 166–188. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168815617334>
- Swain, M. (1995). Three functions of output in second language learning. In G. Cook & B. research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), 837–851. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410383121>
- Tracy, S. J. (2010). *Qualitative quality: Eight “big tent” criteria for excellent qualitative*. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), 837–851. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410383121>
- Ushioda, E. (2011). *Motivating learners to speak as themselves*. In G. Murray, X. Gao, & T. Lamb (Eds.), *Identity, motivation, and autonomy in language learning* (pp. 11–24). *Multilingual Matters*.
- VanPatten, B. (2015). *Input Processing in Adult SLA*. In B. VanPatten & J. Williams (Eds.), *Theories in Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 113-135). *Routledge*.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. *Harvard University Press*.
- Xiao, J. (2014). Learner agency in language learning: The story of a distance learner of EFL in China. *Distance Education*, 35(1), 4-17.
- Zimmerman, B. J. (2000). *Attaining self-regulation: A social cognitive perspective*. In M. Boekaerts, P. R. Pintrich, & M. Zeidner (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation* (pp. 13-39). *Academic Press*.
- Zimmerman, B. J., & Schunk, D. H. (2011). *Handbook of self-regulation of learning and performance*. *Routledge*.

## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1. Letter of Confidentiality for research participants.

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research study. Your participation is greatly appreciated. This letter is to formally inform you about the confidentiality procedures that will be followed throughout the research process.

This study, conducted by Andrea Sarai Vázquez Luna as part of her master's research in English Language Teaching at the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP), focuses on learner autonomy in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom.

All information collected from you during interviews, surveys, and any other forms of participation will be kept strictly confidential. Your name and any identifying details will be anonymized and replaced with codes or pseudonyms in all written documents, reports, or publications related to this study.

Only the researcher and the thesis advisor will have access to the original data, which will be securely stored. Data will be used solely for academic purposes and will not be shared with third parties.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any point without any consequences. If you choose to withdraw, your data will not be used finally.

By participating, you acknowledge and agree to the terms of confidentiality outlined in this letter.

Thank you once again for your valuable contribution.

Sincerely,

Andrea Sarai Vázquez Luna

Master's Student, BUAP

Please, sign here:

-----

Participant's Signature

Name:

Date:

## Appendix 2. Survey on General Information on Teaching English

### General Information on Teaching English

Objective: To collect basic personal and professional information from participants related to their experience in teaching English and their general views on learner autonomy.

\* Indica que la pregunta es obligatoria

Name \*

Tu respuesta

Age \*

- 20-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51+

Gender \*

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

Highest level of Education: \*

- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctorate
- Other

Years of Teaching Experience \*

- 0-3 years
- 4-7 years
- 8-12 years
- 13+ years

Have you ever received training regarding learner autonomy strategies in the EFL classroom? \*

- Yes
- No

In your opinion, how important is learner autonomy in the EFL classroom? \*

- Extremely Important
- Important
- Somewhat Important
- Not Important at all

Do you think students should be responsible for their learning process? \*  
Justify your answer

Tu respuesta

Have you implemented specific strategies to encourage learner autonomy? \*

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

If yes, briefly mention one or two strategies you've used. \*

Tu respuesta

### **Appendix 3. Questionnaire for the open-ended interviews.**

**Questionnaire:** In-depth information on Strategies for Learner Autonomy in EFL classrooms.

**Objective:** To explore the different strategies English as a foreign language teachers use to foster learner autonomy in their students and to see if they are viable.

#### **Section 1: Understanding and Implementing Learner Autonomy**

- How would you define learner autonomy in your own words?
- What challenges have you encountered in promoting learner autonomy in an EFL classroom?
- Do you believe learner autonomy varies depending on students' background, age, or level of education, as well as English proficiency? How so?

#### **Section 2: Teaching Practices and Strategies**

- Which of the following strategies do you frequently use to encourage autonomy? Highlight all that apply.
  - Encouraging self-assessment and reflection-
  - Providing choices in learning activities.
  - Teach students how to set personal learning goals.
  - Using technology and online resources for self-study.
  - Assigning project-based learning tasks.
  - Other:

- Please describe some specific activities or tasks you use to develop autonomy in your students.
- How do you assess if your students are becoming more autonomous learners?
- In your experience, what are the main obstacles preventing students from becoming autonomous learners?
- What role do teachers play in fostering learner autonomy? Is it a key role?

### **Section 3: Reflection and future perspectives**

- Have you noticed any improvements in your students' learning outcomes when they take more responsibility for their learning processes? Please justify your answer.
- What advice or additional training do you need to promote learner autonomy in your EFL classrooms?