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The Importance of Teacher Autonomy to Become Autonomous Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, at educational environments, students are asked to become autonomous learners. However, some students need guidance to get started. That sort of guidance might come from teachers.

This is a qualitative study which aims to know if LELI teachers at the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo are to promote learner autonomy, if they are autonomous themselves and how this is accounted for. Eleven teachers were interviewed and fifty four students, nine per each, answered a questionnaire. The results reveal that teachers partially know what teacher autonomy embraces, but they try to foster it as much as they can. This research also tries to raise awareness on the advantages of becoming an autonomous teacher as well as some resources that can be used to do so.

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Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Presentation

Learning is a life-time process in which one never stops learning. Every day, there is always something new to be learned. However, a person learns as much as he/she wants regardless of how much guidance or support he/she receives from others; Novack (1984) states that learning is personal and idiosyncratic process (p.5); hence, learning is an individual process that depends completely on oneself.

Years ago, at schools, students only acquired knowledge provided by the teacher; nevertheless, that idea has changed and nowadays what is asked from students is to be independent of their teachers, which means that they have to look for their own way of learning and complement what is seen in classes. Hence, teacher's role should be a guide who can provide help, but not the one who provides all the knowledge.

For learning a language, specially a foreign language, students usually practice it during classes because their context is not surrounded 100% by the language.

Bell, (2011) claims that:

“Outside of the classroom students have very few opportunities to use English. For some, learning English may not have any obvious practical benefit. Students have limited exposure to English-speaking culture, most often through a distorted lens like TV or music” (p.1)

Therefore, learning a language requires from students practice outside the classroom with the aim of becoming real users of the language. As a result, students are required to become autonomous learners; however, in order to enable that learning mode from students, teachers need to guide them throughout the process and put into practice what they want their students to achieve.

Due to the fact that there is plenty of information regarding student's autonomy and what it embraces (Benson 1998; Borg 2012; Dickinson 1993; Queiroz 2004; Sharle and Szabó 2000), but not so much about their teachers', who also play a role within the learning process. Thus, it is important to know more about autonomy focused on teachers.

Due to the fact that being autonomous is not something to be developed exclusively in students; teachers also need to develop their autonomy and reflection regarding their teaching practice in order to promote learners' growth (Queiroz, 2004). According to Benson (2001) "teacher autonomy can therefore be understood in part as the recognition of one's own professional freedom in the implementation of curriculum guidelines" (p.174) which implies to take initiative and responsibility for what occurs within the teaching practices. In addition, McGrath mentioned in Benson (2001) states "in order to foster autonomy among learners, teachers must be both free and able to assert their own autonomy in the practice of teaching" (p.174).

1.2 Problem

Since we enrolled at the university, teachers said that students needed to be responsible for their own learning that they could not rely exclusively on them and rather needed to take the initiative to learn by themselves because learning is an individual responsibility.

Nevertheless, being told about taking responsibility for one's learning, does not mean that students become autonomous immediately while "some students have the innate capacity for learning; some need stimulus and/or guidance to get started" (Queiroz, 2004, p.42). This sort of guidance within a classroom setting can come from teachers; however, if they are not aware of how to guide their students towards autonomy, they cannot ask them to do so.

1.3 Main research question

The main question addressed in this research is:

- If LELI teachers are to promote learner autonomy, are they autonomous themselves? How is this accounted for?

1.4 Secondary research questions

These are other questions to be answered as a result of the study:

- What is the teacher's perception of his/her own autonomy?
- What does the teacher do in order to be autonomous? and
- What are the resources they use to be autonomous?

1.5 Main objective

The main objective of this research is to know what autonomous teachers do regarding their own autonomy and how their autonomy is reflected on their teaching practice.

1.6 Specific objectives

- To know what teachers do to develop autonomy in themselves.
- To know characteristics of autonomous teachers.

1.7 Importance of the study

The teaching-learning process involves a close relationship among teachers and students; therefore, learner autonomy relies on teacher autonomy. Queiroz (2004) points out that it is the teacher's job "to expose students to a variety of ways to become (more) autonomous, to help them discover how they learn best, how they can cope with situations they might not like but cannot avoid" (p. 2).

Another important aspect is that in order to develop that sense of autonomy, it is necessary to consider that teachers have themselves experienced teacher training, where an exploratory and evaluative approach to learning and teaching have been key elements (Balçikanli, 2010, p. 32). This means that teachers must apply the

reflective and self-managing process that they use for their own learning, as well as their experience as learners who have been asked for the creation of a learning environment where autonomy can be promoted.

Under these circumstances, this study is addressed to help teachers and students become aware of their roles towards autonomy along with some actions that can be taken to develop it. Moreover, the study might lead to further research and preparation for both teachers and students to continue promoting autonomy not only for language learning, but also for other study fields.

1.8 Limitations of the study

There are two main limitations in this research. The first one relates to the fact that some teachers might not be aware of what autonomy embraces neither the teacher's and student's role towards it.

The second one refers to the lack of teacher's awareness regarding their autonomy to the point that some teachers may question themselves whether if they are truly autonomous or not. The main issue of this is that they could have the tools to recognize what is an autonomous behavior or even how to foster autonomy.

Chapter II: Literature Review

2.1 Autonomy

The word autonomy is derived from the Greek roots *autos* (self) and *nomon* (rule) which together mean “being self-ruled or capable of regulating one’s own thoughts, learning and actions” (Oxford, 2003, p. 80).

In the language learning field, autonomy can be defined as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (Holec, 1981, p.3). This can be considered as the degree of responsibility taken when selecting what, how, when and even where to learn. Dickinson (1987) defines an autonomous learner as someone who “is totally responsible for making and implementing all the decisions concerned with his own learning” (p. 11). Thus, an autonomous learner does not blame anyone for the decisions taken with regards to what is being learnt.

Nevertheless, autonomy is not a synonym of individualization or learning in isolation just because an individual takes responsibility for their learning. Benson (2001) points out that to develop autonomy, collaboration and interdependence are also necessary. According to the Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary (2013), collaboration can be defined as the ability “to work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor” and Kohonen (1992) defines interdependence as “being responsible for one’s own conduct in the social context: being able to cooperate with others and solve conflicts in constructive ways” (p.19). Both concepts make reference to the abilities of working with others and also sharing responsibilities within a context. Vigotsky considered the human being as

someone who learns from others and belongs to different cultural contexts, (Palfreyman, 2003, p.4). Consequently, it can be understood that autonomy goes beyond taking charge of our own learning, but it also has to do with the ability of recognizing whenever help is needed and cooperating with others to cope with some situations.

2.2 Teacher Autonomy

According to Thavenius (1999), teacher autonomy can be defined as “the teacher’s ability and willingness to help learners to take responsibility for their own learning”. An autonomous teacher is thus “a teacher who reflects on her teacher role and who can change it, who can help her learners become autonomous, and who is independent enough to let her learners become independent” (p. 160). However, teacher autonomy not only deals with fostering this sense of responsibility, but also students’ independence. Peña (2007) states that teacher autonomy can also be defined as “teachers’ engagement in constant reflection over their teaching, and over their professional development, in such a way that they direct their actions towards enhancing their students’ learning” (p.21)

It can be said that teacher autonomy has to do with the responsibility taken by teachers over the education they offer to their students (Balçikanli, 2010). In addition, Little (2000) states that teachers can develop autonomy on their students only if they are autonomous themselves.

Furthermore, to unpack what teacher autonomy embraces; the concept has been divided into dimensions.

2.2.1 Dimensions of Teacher Autonomy

McGrath's, quoted in Peña (2007), affirms that there are two main dimensions. The first one is ***Self-directed Professional Development/Action*** which is related to the teacher and his/her role as a researcher and reflective practitioner concerned with the management of his/her development and practice, whereas the second dimension, ***The Exercise of Professional Freedom***, refers to the way a teacher might deal with constraints within his/her context that limit his/her autonomy somehow.

However, Smith and Erdogan, also mentioned in Peña (2007), expanded these dimensions claiming that it is important to consider teachers as learners; dividing the dimensions into two and each of them subdivided into self-direction, capacity and freedom:

In relation to professional action:

- Self-directed professional action = 'Self-directed teaching'
- Capacity for self-directed professional action = 'Teacher autonomy (capacity to self-direct one's teaching)'
- Freedom from control over professional action = 'Teacher autonomy (freedom to self-direct one's teaching)'

In relation to professional development:

- Self directed professional development = 'Self-directed teacher-learning'

- Capacity for self-directed professional development = 'Teacher-learner autonomy (capacity to self-direct one's learning as a teacher')
- Freedom from control over professional development = 'Teacher-learner autonomy (freedom to self-direct one's learning as a teacher')

In the first dimension, the teacher's role is perceived as a teacher concerned with their teaching while in the second one, the teacher's role is perceived as a learner.

In addition, Lamb and Reinders (2008), mention that there are four dynamic dimensions that teacher autonomy embraces. These dimensions have an influence based on the relationships teachers have with others, specially their freedom to be creative, to develop and to pursue ideals. The first one is autonomy in relation to the teacher's own internal dialectics with teachers, mentors or other significant people who might support teacher's freedom to be creative and foster autonomy of students. The second one is autonomy in relation to the learners who might support teachers' attempts to encourage autonomy on them. The third one is in relation to the institution where teachers work that influence the decisions made by the teacher regarding creativity or ideals when teaching. Finally, the last one is autonomy in relation to the society that influences teachers' freedom to be creative, to develop and practice ideas and to pursue his or her ideals.

All of these dimensions are interconnected socially and culturally and have an impact on teachers' decisions about what they want to teach, what they are

supposed to teach, and the possible influence their teaching may have on their students within the cultural context they belong to. Lamb and Reinders (2008) also state that teachers' perceptions about their own autonomy are also affected due to the connection among the four dimensions. As a result, teachers might be encouraged or not to develop their autonomy.

2.2.2 Encouraging Teacher Autonomy

2.2.2.1 Motivation

Harmer (2001) defines motivation as "...some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something" (p.51). It might be considered as the force that allows people to pursue something they want same as well as effort they will devote to make it happen.

According to Brown (1994), this force can come from oneself or from other sources and he identifies them as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. ***Intrinsic Motivation*** is the one in which there is no external inducement or rewards to feel pleased in order to achieve what is wanted because it comes from within the individual (Harmer, 2001 p.51). It can be considered as an inner force whilst ***Extrinsic Motivation*** requires regarded outcomes rather than achieving things just for fun. Those outcomes could be to get a better salary, promotions, or other sorts of rewards given by institutions.

The role that motivation plays on teacher autonomy is that a teacher might try to seek to be autonomous because he is interested in improving his/her teaching

practice and students learning, or because he/she is being pushed to be autonomous with the purpose of getting some sort of recognition. Regardless of the reason for which teachers keep developing their autonomy, there are some theories that aim to state what motivates teachers to do so.

Johnson, cited in Suslu (2006), points out that there are three theories teachers' motivation might be based on:

- **Expectancy theory**, states that people change their behaviors at their work because they are expecting to obtain a bonus or a promotion later on.
- **Equity theory** refers to people who aim to move forward if they consider that their efforts are treated with equality. As a consequence, they will try to obtain what they consider they deserve.
- **Job Enrichment Theory** refers to the opportunities people are given at work to show and use their abilities. In addition to teacher's motivation, what they believe also plays a role to enable teacher autonomy.

2.2.2.2 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2009) "as positive or negative evaluative judgments people make about their job" (p.1061). These authors claim that job satisfaction is a main factor influencing the teacher's enthusiasm and

relations to students. It can be also considered as a factor that motivates or demotivates them regarding their teaching practice. However, they also claim that it cannot be measured because circumstances can have a different level of importance for the teacher; as a consequence, teachers might overlook the impact of certain circumstances in their job satisfaction. (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2009).

2.2.2.3 Teacher Empowerment

In the educational environment, the curriculum is designed by specialized people who also set what teachers have to do within their classrooms in relation to the methodology or the approaches they have to work on, as well as the resources teachers should use, and so on. For instance, sometimes teachers are seen as employees who have to satisfy certain institutional expectations; as British Columbia Public School Employers' Association (2009) states, "Teachers are also employees who generally work in a unionized setting and are therefore bound by provisions in the collective agreement." (p.3)

Consequently, teachers might feel stopped in their way to develop their autonomy; however, Zeichner, cited in Carl (2002), states that "teachers must be allowed to make their own decisions" (p.6) to avoid those kind of feeling.

This can be referred as **Empowerment**, which Lagana, quoted on Carl (2002), define as:

“the process of providing people with the opportunity and necessary resources to enable them to believe and feel that they understand their world and have the power to change it” (p. 5).

Hence, empowered teachers have the freedom to make decisions on their work regardless of institutional policies. They may feel more motivated regarding their autonomy. In addition, this empowerment leads to a growth in professionalism as teachers become responsible for their decision making (Carl, 2002).

2.2.2.4 Beliefs

Beliefs are one of the most important aspects of teachers in order to develop teacher autonomy, they allow shaping what teachers do with regards to their teaching practice whether it is right or wrong.

According to Borg (2001) “A belief is a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, it is evaluative in the sense that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore, imbued with emotive commitment. Furthermore, it serves as a guide to thought and behavior” (p 186). Teachers face the responsibility to be autonomous depending on what they think, as Borg states, they may follow those thoughts in order to achieve what they consider is needed for their own practice.

However, Healthier and Andrzejewski (2009) state that “beliefs are a subjective reality” (p.6), meaning that if teachers consider that something is right, they might

continue doing it regardless of anything else. They also claim that it is important to know where beliefs come from because “they are originated in teachers from personal experiences as students, family traditions and values, popular culture, community participation, teacher preparation, observing teachers, professional development and scholarly literature” (p.6). That is why it might be complicated for teachers to change them, due to the fact that their beliefs have been gathered throughout their life.

Nevertheless, teachers are able to change what they believe if they take decisions on the effects that their teaching practice has on the overall teaching-learning process. Once they make the decision of improving their teaching practice, they develop a certain degree of autonomy that contributes to their own teacher autonomy and motivates them to keep developing.

2.2.3 Developing Teacher Autonomy

To develop teacher autonomy, a teacher should be a “(...) reflective and expert practitioner, willing to engage in critical reflection about his/her practices, and committed to innovation by taking action ” (Raya, 2004, p. 32). This means that a teacher must reflect and seek for professional development.

2.2.3.1 Teacher's Exploration in order to gain Awareness

Exploration is the action of analyzing or investigating an unfamiliar area. Gebhard and Oprandy (1999) claim that “the central reason to explore is to gain *awareness* of our teaching beliefs and practices” (p. 4). It is important for teachers to be alert about their performance, to see the effects that can result during students' interaction, and other matters related to their teaching practice. In fact, Gebhard and Oprandy (1999) also state that “an **Exploration** may not merely be of some *thing* that is new, but also of an insight about yourself, about others, or about the bigger context in which our teaching lives are situated.” (p. 4); this allows teachers to become **aware**. According to the Oxford dictionary, **Awareness** can be defined as “knowledge or perception of a situation or fact”. When teachers become aware of what is surrounding their teaching, they might make decisions to seek for improvement and thus, seek to be autonomous practitioners.

There are four avenues to raise awareness (Gebhard and Oprandy, 1999). The first one is by problem solving. The second one is by trying the opposite or adapting random teaching behaviors. The third one is achieved by contrasting what is done and thought, and the fourth one is through clarifying feelings. This awareness can be accomplished by reflecting.

2.2.3.2 Reflection

The process, in which a person recalls experiences thinking deeply on each of them, is called **Reflection**. Richards (n/d) defines it as:

“An activity or process in which an experience is recalled, considered, and evaluated, usually in relation to a broader purpose. It is a response to past experience and involves conscious recall and examination of the experience as a basis for evaluation and decision-making and as a source for planning and action“(p.1)

Through reflection, teachers get to know if what they do is being effective or not. It allows them to question and make decisions about what they are doing and what they should do in order to improve what is necessary.

According to Zeichner and Liston (1996), “if a teacher never questions the goals and the values that guide his or her work, the context in which he or she teaches, or never examines his or her assumptions, then it is our belief that this individual is not engaged in reflective teaching” (p.1).

Zeichner and Liston (1996) define reflective teaching as:

“Looking at what you do in the classroom, thinking about why you do it, and thinking about if it works - a process of self-observation and self-evaluation. By collecting information about what goes on in our classroom, and by analyzing and evaluating this information, we identify and explore our own practices and underlying beliefs. This may then lead to changes and improvements in our teaching.”

The purpose of reflecting over the teaching practice makes teachers responsible, with the power to control their actions, but most importantly, it allows change whenever their classroom needs it (Richards, n/d).

Furthermore, Zeichner K. and Liston D. (1996) claim that the main characteristics of a teacher who is a reflective practitioner are the following:

- Examines, frames and attempts to solve the dilemmas of classroom practice;
- Is aware of and questions the assumptions and values he or she brings to teaching;
- Is attentive to the institutional and cultural contexts in which he or she teaches;
- Takes part in curriculum development and is involved in school change effort; and
- Takes responsibility for his or her own professional development.

(p.6)

Reflection plays within teacher autonomy an important role due to the fact that it allows teachers to consider what the effects of his/her actions are and the effects these have on his/her students for possible improvement. Without **reflecting**, autonomy would not even take place.

2.2.3.3 Professional Development

Richards and Farrell (2008) claim that “development refers to general growth not focused on a specific job. It serves a longer-term goal and seeks to facilitate growth of teachers’ understanding of teaching and themselves as teachers.” (p.4)

Some teachers are motivated to continue their own professional development once their training is over (Richards and Farrell, 2008 p.1). They make decisions about what they need in order to increase what they know; for example, the new trends or theories about teaching or the implementation of new technology in classes. Thus, professional development is closely related to teacher autonomy because teachers have the opportunity to be constantly prepared in their careers and continue with their professional development to suit their students’ needs.

Richards and Farrell (2008) propose a set of guidelines that might help teachers to plan their own path towards their professional development:

- Decide what they would like to learn about their teaching and about the field.
- Identify a strategy to explore the topic they are interested in.
- Talk to people who have taken part in a professional development activity.
- Decide what kind of support they will need.
- Select a colleague or colleagues to work with.

- Set realistic goals and establish a time frame.
- Evaluate what they have learned and share the results with others.

(p.17)

Moreover, Richards and Farrell (2008) also provide some other resources and activities that may contribute to develop autonomy on teachers.

2.2.3.3.1 Workshops

One of the resources proposed by Richards and Farrell (2008), are workshops defined as intensive, short-term learning activities designed to acquire specific knowledge and skills. Their purpose is that teachers apply what was learnt into their classes and their major benefits are:

- They provide input from experts.
- They raise teachers' motivation to maintain the interest in their profession and also increase their motivation about teaching.
- They support innovations because they prepare teachers for oncoming changes and keep them updated about their area of study.

2.2.3.3.2 Self-Monitoring

Self-monitoring is focused on the judgments that teachers make about themselves during their practice. Richards and Farrell (2008), point out that “self-monitoring refers to activities in which information about one’s teaching is documented or recorded in order to review or evaluate teaching”. (p.34)

Teachers need to know how well they are doing and what it is happening in their classes. So, self-monitoring gives them the opportunity to recognize their strengths and weaknesses and to make decisions regarding what can be done to improve (Richards and Farrell, 2008). Autonomy is promoted on teachers because they are resolved to make changes on their own.

2.2.3.3.3 Keeping a Teaching Journal

According to Richards and Farrell (2008) “a teaching journal is an ongoing written account of observations, reflections, and other thoughts about teaching...which serve as a source of discussion, reflection, or evaluation” (p. 68). When teachers become aware of what they do in their classes, they are able to improve their performance depending on what they consider is necessary.

This journal can take several forms such as notebooks, books, or in an electronic mode. All of the possible journal forms help them to question if they should continue working in the way they do or if it is necessary to make adjustments in their practice. As Richards and Farrell (2008) state “a journal offers a simple way of becoming aware of one’s teaching and learning” (p. 70).

2.2.3.3.4 Teaching Portfolios

Another possible resource teachers might use in order to become autonomous are portfolios. A portfolio can be defined as “a collection of documents and other items that provides information about different aspects of a teacher’s work” (p.98). Their use allows teachers to keep track of their performance and helps them to become aware of areas of improvement. Portfolios allow teachers to reflect on different aspects concerned with their teaching. As Richards and Farrell (2008) point out “a portfolio serves as a source of review and reflection.” (p. 99)

However, the main purpose of using a teacher portfolio according to Kaplan (1998), is to self-reflect and improve teaching practice (p.2).

Richards and Farrell (2008) propose that the content of a teacher portfolio should include:

- Evidence of teachers’ understanding of subject matter and current developments in teaching.
 - Evidence of teacher’ skills and competency.
 - Teachers’ approach to classroom management and organization.
 - Documents showing teachers’ commitment to professional development.
 - Information concerning teachers’ relationships with colleagues.
- (p.105)

The Centre For Learning and Professional Development of the University of Adelaide (2005) proposes a diagram (figure 1) to show the process followed to evaluate a teacher portfolio, bringing the possibility of teacher self-assessment:

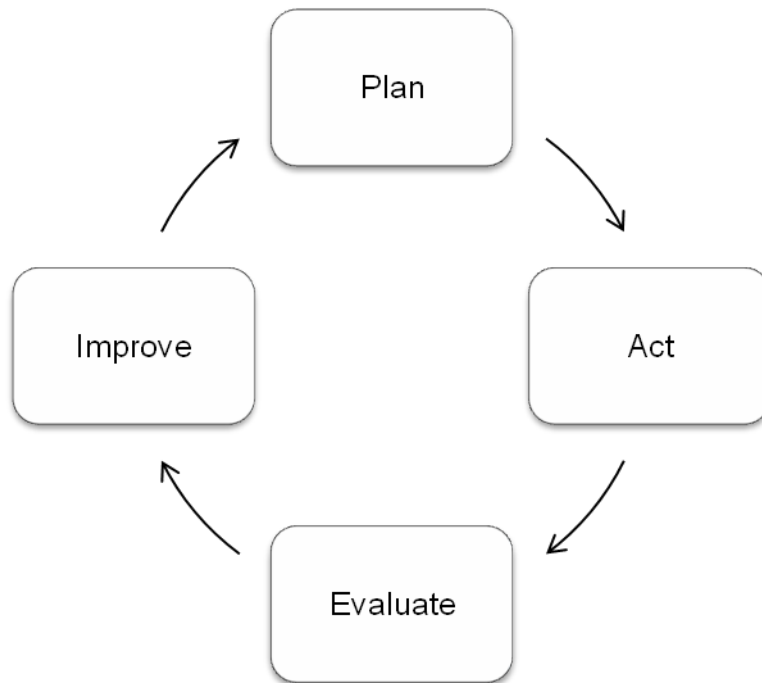


figure 1

2.2.3.3.5 Peer Observation

Richards and Farrell (2008) define **Peer Observation** as “a teacher or other observer closely watching and monitoring a language lesson or part of a lesson in order to gain understanding of some aspect of teaching, learning, or classroom interaction” (p.85). It allows teachers to learn from different teaching styles and get feedback.

Furthermore, Race et al. (2009) point out the following benefits from **Peer Observation**:

- Provides opportunities, both through observing and being observed in teaching sessions, to reflect on and review teaching skills with the assistance of colleagues.
- Helps to learn from each other, towards developing shared understandings of best practices in assessment, learning and teaching.
- Allows teachers to gain from mutual beneficial learning experiences through the processes of observing colleagues and being observed.
- Identifies generic development needs to feed into ongoing and future staff development activities. (p 1)

However, besides possible resources used to promote teacher autonomy, there are still some limitations that do not contribute to the development of teachers' autonomy.

2.3 Constraints on Teacher Autonomy

According to Usma (2007), teacher autonomy might be limited because of “the teaching load, lack of time, salary, excessive school paperwork, external pressures, imposed educational policies, contrived collegiality, lack of collegial and

administrative support, and institutional centralized powered structures” (p. 259). Giving teachers the sense that their freedom in relation to their autonomy is limited; consequently, this decreases their engagement in the decision making about “curriculum design, participation in teacher research, implementation of new methods for teaching, involvement in school transformation, and teaching and assessment practices“ (Usma, 2007, p. 259)

Because of those constraints to teacher autonomy, Short (1994), cited in Usma (2007), claims that “ teacher autonomy can be conceptualized as the perceived and actual capacity to exercise control over teaching and assessment, curriculum development, school functioning, or professional development matters, within the limits of the educational goals accepted by the school community. This enhancement and exercise of autonomy is mediated by the synergistic relationship among personal factors such as teachers’ professional knowledge, skills, dispositions and beliefs that shape performance, and environmental issues such as educational policies, administrative support, teachers’ working conditions, and school stakeholders’ interests and support that may encourage or hinder teachers’ decision” (p. 269).

Even though teachers are under the policies of the institutions, it does not mean that their autonomy cannot be displayed, it depends on their willingness and beliefs to overcome those limitations.

2.4 Teacher Autonomy, Student Autonomy Relationship

The teaching-learning process involves a close relationship among teachers and students. In addition, the relevance of teacher's autonomy is the close relationship it has with students' because according to Barfield, mentioned in Balçikanli (2010), in order to enable students' autonomy, the teacher's role embraces the creation of a classroom environment where autonomy is actually accepted. Because if the teacher cannot provide students with a wide picture about what being autonomous means, his/her students will not assimilate it.

Lamb and Reinders (2008) point out that there are three key components required in the teacher autonomy- learner autonomy relationship. The first one, has to do with the way a teacher learns how to include the his/her freedom to develop himself/herself autonomously as a professional through reflecting. The second one has to do with a commitment to empower his/her learners to create learning spaces so that students can develop their capacity of autonomy. And the last one is about how the teacher introduces principles and other values such as responsibility on decision making, interdependence and collaboration that underpin their autonomy and their student's. Eventually, this can lead to a cyclical link between teacher autonomy and innovation towards the development of learner autonomy (figure 2).

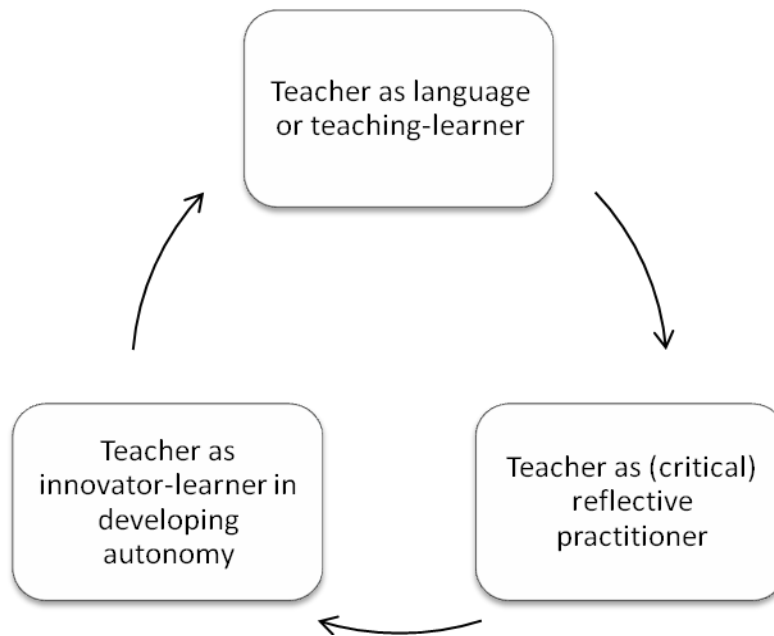


figure 2

Summary

As mentioned throughout this literature review, being autonomous requires being responsible for one's learning, though it does not mean either learning in isolation because the responsibility degree might be shared. In addition, teacher autonomy is not so different from autonomy, the distinction between them is the reflection made by the teacher over his/her teaching practice. Hence, it can be said that teacher autonomy begins when reflecting, without it autonomy may not be developed.

Moreover, resources such as workshops, self-monitoring, teaching journals, teaching portfolios and peer observation, allow teachers to monitor constantly their performance and to keep track of their professional growth, in such a way that they are able to transmit and enable autonomy to their students.

Chapter III: Methodology

3.1 Overview

The aim of this chapter is to describe in detail the procedures selected to gather the information needed to develop this research. The chapter provides an insight of the setting, the participants, the instruments used, the data procedures and the data analysis procedures conducted to address the research question of the study:

If LELI teachers are to promote learner autonomy, are they autonomous themselves? How is this accounted for?

Hence, the main objectives in this study are:

To know what autonomous teachers do about their own autonomy;

To know what teachers do to develop autonomy in themselves, and

To know characteristics of autonomous teachers.

3.2 Methodology

This research is guided by the qualitative approach because it is aimed to know about teachers' perceptions regarding their autonomy. As a result, qualitative research is concerned with an understanding of the reasons why people behave; Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials such as: personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts, which describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. (Richards 2003, p. 11).

Similarly, it was also necessary to know students' perceptions in relation to what they observe in their teachers. *Triangulation Methodology* was used in order to validate this research project.

According to Guion, Diehl, and McDonald (2012), "***Triangulation*** involves the use of multiple perceptions to interpret a single set of data... it [triangulation] involves using different sources of information in order to increase the validity of a study" (pp.1- 2).

Consequently, qualitative research allows an understating of the interaction between people and their context; providing also the opportunity to be flexible and to get plenty of information to be analyzed. Hence, it is intended to get a deep understanding of people's experiences and the meaning they attribute to construct their worlds (Merriam, 2009, p. 14). The qualitative approach was the one that provided the information needed to answer the research question addressed in this study.

3.3 Subjects

The study was carried out at the *Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades (Icshu) of the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo (UAEH)* in Pachuca de Soto Hidalgo. Eleven subjects participated in this research project from 3rd to 8th semesters because they prepare future language teachers and require them to become autonomous. These teachers teach Content-based subjects which are:

- TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- ACADEMIC WRITING
- BRITISH LITERATURE
- TEACHING PRACTICE
- TESTING DESIGN
- ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES
- LEARNING AUTONOMY
- TEACHING OF READING AND WRITING
- TEACHING OF GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY

In total 9 females and 2 males were selected. Among these teachers there were 5 who have a B.A. related to Language Teaching while the 6 remaining have a Master's Degree related to the field as well. Their experience as teachers went from 6 to 30 years plus. Codes were assigned to teachers in order to protect their identities. Thus, **T1** and **T2** have been teachers for around 6 years. **T3** for around 7 years, **T4** for 8 years, **T5** for 10 years; **T6** and **T7** for 11 years; **T8** for 17 years; **T9** for 21 years and **T10** and **T11** for over 30 years. They have taught for different periods of time, and all of them agreed on the fact that they like teaching.

Regarding their students, they were nine students per teacher from 3rd to 8th semester who were asked to participate forming a total of 54 students, and they agreed to participate based on their willingness and time availability.

3.4 Instruments

Data was collected by means of an interview, a questionnaire for teachers and a questionnaire for students. The interview consisted of 25 semi-structured questions due to the fact that these types of questions do not follow a strict order permitting to add more if it was necessary (Taylor and Hermann, 2000). Nevertheless, there were a few closed questions that led to open questions in order not to make assumptions beforehand.

Questions from one to four aimed to know more about the teachers and their professional background as well as the reasons why they became teachers. Questions from five to seven were directed to know what they know and believe about autonomy itself. Then, questions from eight to fourteen had to do with what they know, think, do and motivate them to be autonomous teachers. Afterwards, questions from 15 to 20 were concerned with the role reflection plays within their autonomy. Then, questions from 21 to 24 were related to the responsibility that their teacher autonomy has on themselves and their students. Finally, question 25 attempted to complement anything teachers would like to add in relation to the whole interview. The interview is shown in Appendix 1.

In addition, it was necessary to get an insight of the degree of autonomy that teachers have. Therefore, a questionnaire to measure their degree of autonomy was designed. Even though there are questionnaires which state levels of learners' autonomy (Dickinson 1993 and Nunan 1997), we were unable to find one made specifically for measuring teacher's autonomy.

This questionnaire was adapted from Scharle and Szabó's (2005) questionnaire about the degree of responsibility individuals have (Appendix 2). It consists of twenty statements from which the individual who answers it has to decide whether they agree or disagree with each of the statements, selecting among numbers from 1 to 6; being six complete agreement and 1 total disagreement. Half of these statements (1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20) show characteristics of autonomous teachers while the other half (4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15) does not (Appendix 3). These statements were taken and adapted from a list of characteristics autonomous teachers have according to Mariani (1997).

To get the approximate level of autonomy, it is necessary to add the statements 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 15, 17, 18, 19, and 20 to get a total representing the responses containing high level of teacher autonomy. Whereas statements 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16 are added apart to get a total representing a low level of teacher autonomy. These two final totals are deducted resulting in a number. Thus, if the result ranges from 30 to 50, this teacher has a high level of autonomy. In addition, if the score ranges from 9 to 29, this could be considered as a medium high level of autonomy; from -12 to 8 could be kept in view as an average level of autonomy. Whereas -31 and -11 scores would be regarded as below the average of teacher autonomy and finally from -30 to -50 could be considered as the lowest level or absence of teacher autonomy.

However, from the piloting made to two teachers using both instruments, it was missing to include their student's perceptions about their teachers' autonomy in order to triangulate the data. According to Golafshani (2003), **Triangulation** is

typically a strategy (test) for improving the validity and reliability of research or evaluation of findings

Therefore, an eleven-item questionnaire was designed to point out major characteristics of autonomous teacher's behaviors with regard to the frequency (Never/Sometimes/Always) in which their students perceive them (Appendix 4).

3.5 Data collection procedures

The results drawn by the first piloting of the instruments showed that it was necessary to add some questions that were not considered before as well as the design of the questionnaire for the students' perceptions. The procedure followed consisted of doing the interview and then a questionnaire that measures the level of teacher autonomy was administered. At end, the teachers were asked if they had been influenced by it, and they suggested that it would have been better to answer it at the end of the interview because somehow answering the questionnaire at the beginning did influence them during the interview.

Because of these results obtained in the piloting, the data collection procedure consisted of making appointments with the teachers based entirely on their schedules. The overall objective of the research project was explained to teachers consisting of four sections. In the first one, teachers were asked to sign a consent form that let them know that their identity will remain anonymous and that their quotes would be used only if they allow it (Appendix 4). The second part consisted of the interview to be audio recorded (Appendix 1). The third section was answering the questionnaire (Appendix 2) and finally teachers' permissions were

asked to question some random students to answer anonymously as well as a questionnaire regarding their students' perceptions about their teachers.

3.6 Data analysis procedures

To analyze the data gathered by means of the three instruments, the procedure followed consisted of organizing the interviews within files to be converted to their mp3 versions. Then, each of the interviews was transcribed and teachers were assigned different names to remain anonymous. Subsequently, relevant information was highlighted to create categories.

In relation to teachers' responses (Appendix 2), it was necessary to design a spreadsheet to measure their level of autonomy. Regarding students' questionnaire (Appendix 3), more spreadsheets were designed to get a general overview on students' perceptions about their teachers' autonomous behavior.

Summary

The setting, the participants, the instruments, the data collection procedures and the analysis procedures have been described to provide an insight regarding to the methodology used for this research project. Findings shall be presented in the following chapter.

Chapter IV: Results and Discussion

The following chapter describes the outcomes resulting from the interviews, and questionnaires both administered to teachers and students to answer the research question of the study: If LELI teachers are to promote learner autonomy, are they autonomous themselves? How is this accounted for?

4.1 Teacher's perceptions about Autonomy

Nowadays, the importance to be autonomous is seen in educational environments as a priority; teachers are required to promote autonomy in students; as a result, it is imperative that teachers know what autonomy is.

Holec (1981) defines **Autonomy** as the ability to take charge of one's own learning as **T10** claims:

T10: *"Autonomy is to be in charge of your own affairs, that's autonomy for me."*

However, autonomy is seen as an isolated process by most of the teachers as the following excerpts show:

T1: *"it's to do the things in your own way to do."*

T2: *"Autonomy is to do things by yourself, to organize yourself, to be responsible."*

T5: *“you are able to do something without the help of anyone.”*

T6: *“Autonomy is like the capacity to try to be independent.”*

T7: *“I would like to say the ability ...the ability to do or perform to do things on your own”*

T8: *“Autonomy is when you can do things by your own.”*

T9: *“[Autonomy] is doing things in an independent way and well independently but under some policies, so is autonomy but is disguised.*

T11: *“Autonomy is being able to do the things that you think are right without ... waiting for approval from other people.”*

Nevertheless, Autonomy is not an isolated process; collaboration is required in the process to be autonomous (Benson 2001). It is important that *Autonomy* is understood by teachers as a process which requires collaboration from others; more people can be involved in teachers' work and that does not mean that they are not autonomous. Generally, teachers misunderstand the meaning of autonomy, and tend to consider that if they follow someone or something, they are not being autonomous.

Nowadays, it is very important to become autonomous and /or to develop autonomy in education because of new tendencies which have been changing constantly. **T1** and **T8** expressed it more widely:

T1: *“nowadays we are having a lot of different learning forms of learning, I mean those are through the web and you need to be autonomous to be*

responsible and to be aware what you want to learn because nowadays teacher is not only the person that is in front of the classroom... we have to go beyond we can't only stop there because learning is something that is moving everyday and you can't be like in a comfort zone no, you have to go and search for more"

T8: *"because of technology, because of the context, because of the world's needs."*

Teachers have different thoughts regarding autonomy; due to different aspects such as personal experiences as students, family traditions and values, popular culture, community participation, teacher preparation, observing teachers, professional development and scholarly literature (Healther and Andrzejewski 2009) as it can be seen in the following comments:

T2: *"I cannot say that I prepare to be autonomous"*

T3: *"personally eh I think it is an essential virtue that most of the, most of human beings have or are given, are given by destiny or life"*

T6: *"I think it is very difficult to develop because in our culture we are not educated like that"*

T5: *"I think it's something that we haven't exploited here in Mexico"*

T7: *"I believe that autonomy allows people to be critical thinkers, I believe that if one is autonomous one has the chance to develop some other skills not only... not only one... not only"*

something that is related to our field like some other social skills even!”

T10: *“I believe that everybody, everybody has the possibility to become an autonomous learner, it’s just a thing about taking some decisions”*

Undoubtedly, teachers have their own beliefs about autonomy, and according to Borg (2001), all of them are correct because a belief is a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, it is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual.

4.2 LELI Teachers defining Teacher Autonomy

Teacher autonomy can be defined as the continuous reflection over the teaching practice and professional development to improve the teaching-learning process overall (Peña, 2007) as **T6** defines:

“Teacher autonomy is the capacity to do things by yourself so for example referring to professional development I would like to say it is the capacity to continue learning and improving your teaching by yourself like reflecting on what you need what you need to work on and then do it by yourself.”

Where awareness (Gebhard and Oprandy, 1999) allows teachers to seek for improvement as **T11** states and **T10** agree:

T11: *“teacher autonomy is the person that not only analyze what she or he does in the classroom, he also is aware about what his lacks and strengths are and you have to work in those lacks in order to be autonomous you are reflective and you are aware of the needs of your students, and you can decide on your actions according to that, not on what it is good for you, not on what is good for your students.”*

However, for **T9** and **T3**, teacher autonomy is concerned with the freedom regarding how their classes are going to be:

T3: *“it’s ... freedom to make decisions when planning a lesson according to the kind of students, according to the situation, according to the institution of course, according to your students’ expectations”*

T9: *“you plan your classes, you are free, you just have a syllabus and you are autonomous to cover the syllabus in the way that better fit your needs”*

Whereas for **T2**, teacher autonomy is synonym of

T2: *“working alone in classes reviewing his material in classes alone and not maybe the teacher doesn’t like to cooperate with others that teacher doesn’t like to receive orders doesn’t like to follow instructions for me that is teacher autonomy”, which differs with the definitions provided by Peña (2007) and Thavenius (1999).*

4.3 How LELI Teachers perceive their Autonomy

LELI teachers perceive their autonomy according to what they believe autonomy is; as a result, many of them are not completely sure about if they are autonomous teachers, as some teachers answered:

T1: *"in some cases, yes!"*

T2: *"sometimes, because you know I have to follow instructions from my boss"*

T3: *"I might not consider myself fully autonomous"*

T4: *"Maybe, I try to, you know, we have a programme, we have a curriculum, but I try to use different materials to let my lessons"*

T6: *"No, I would say that probably a certain degree of autonomy, but not completely autonomous... yes I'm autonomous"*

T7: *"somehow, I would say that I do certain activities or certain practices that help or prompt, or at least it's what I believe, that prompt my students to become autonomous, and on my own... regarding my professional development there are things that I do that definitely help me to be autonomous, or help me to develop that autonomy more"*

T8: *"I'm not certain about I'm right or wrong ... or if I'm not definitely an autonomous teacher."*

These teachers do not consider themselves to be completely autonomous despite they know the importance of autonomy in teaching; on the other hand, the rest of teachers do consider themselves autonomous:

T5: *“Yes, because well when I start teaching here, well in Lengua Inglesa, it was different, different subjects and I had to study more and I had to do more research, but I think I still do some research about certain topics.”*

T10: *“I do, definitively”*

T11: *“Yes, very much”*

Being a teacher implies to be constantly updated. As a result, there are some features required to be autonomous.

4.4 Teachers' Autonomy degree

Due to the fact that the instrument for measuring teacher's autonomy level was designed, five levels of autonomy were proposed using as reference Scharle and Szabó's (2005) responsibility questionnaire (Appendix 5).

The high level was considered if the total obtained from the questionnaire ranged between 30 and 50. Medium high level if the total was between 9 and 29. Average level of teacher autonomy if the total was from -12 and 8. Below the average if the total ranged from -31 to -11 and low level of autonomy if the total was from -30 and -50.

From the subjects of this study, none of them had an average, below the average or low level of teacher autonomy. Ten out of eleven had a medium high level and

only one teacher showed to have a high level of teacher autonomy. The total obtained from their questionnaires is presented in the following chart from the lowest to the highest totals:

Teacher	Total Obtained	Degree of Teacher Autonomy
T2	14	<i>Medium High</i>
T5	16	<i>Medium High</i>
T7	17	<i>Medium High</i>
T4	18	<i>Medium High</i>
T3	22	<i>Medium High</i>
T11	23	<i>Medium High</i>
T8	26	<i>Medium High</i>
T1	27	<i>Medium High</i>
T6	27	<i>Medium High</i>
T9	29	<i>Medium High</i>
T10	32	<i>High</i>

table 1

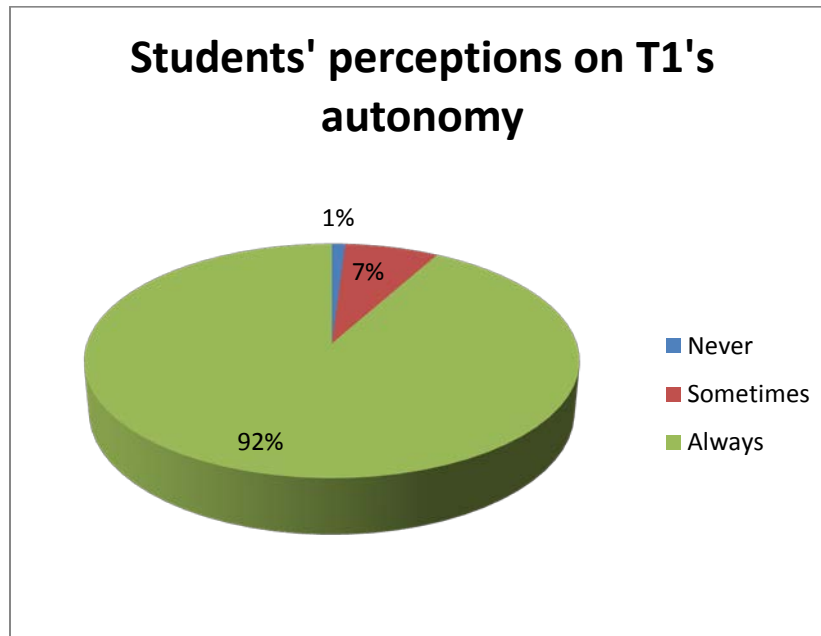
It can be considered that all the subjects had a high degree of teacher autonomy, whether or not they are aware of what it embraces. **T8** concluded at the end of the interview: *“I’m not certain about I’m right or wrong ... or if I’m not definitely an autonomous teacher.”* However, her students have a different perception about this teacher’s autonomy as well as the rest.

4.5 Students’ perceptions on their Teachers’ Autonomy

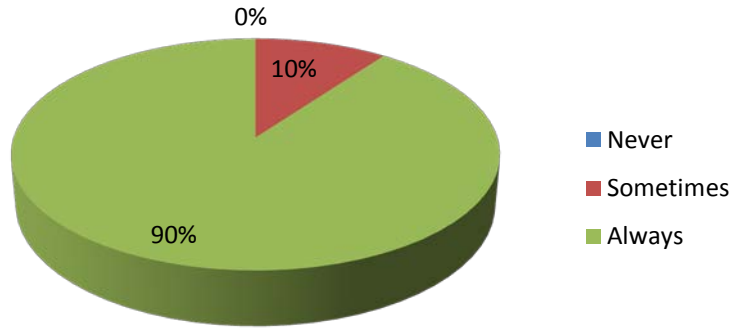
Students were asked by means of an eleven-item questionnaire (Appendix 3) about some attitudes teachers might display in their classes that show their sense

of teacher autonomy. Students' responses were graded by how often they recognized those attitudes in their teachers.

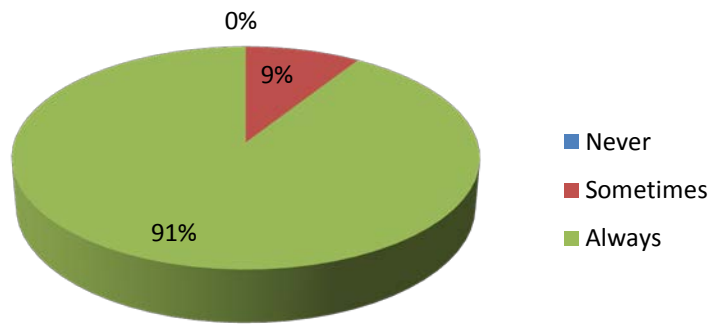
T1, T4 and T5, according to their students' opinions, show a sense of autonomy above the 90% of the times as shown in the following graphs:



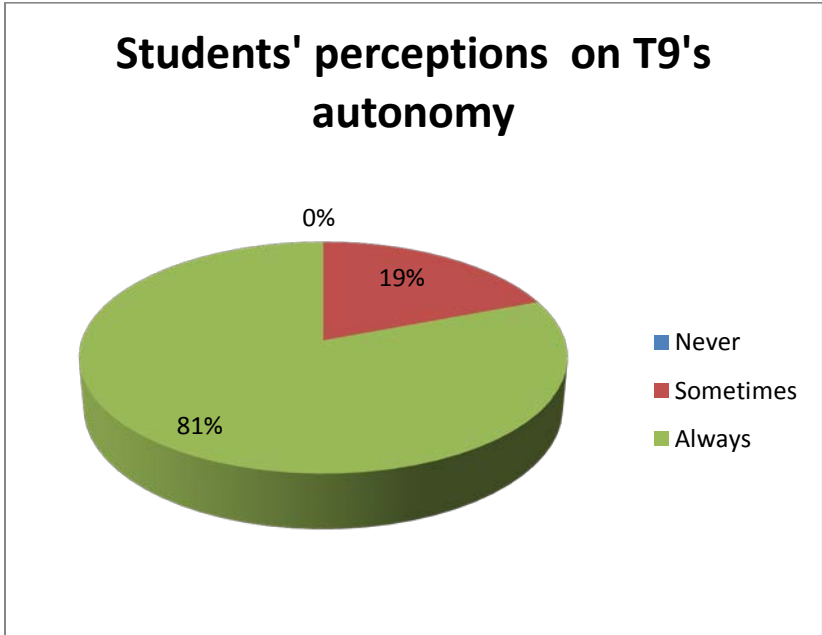
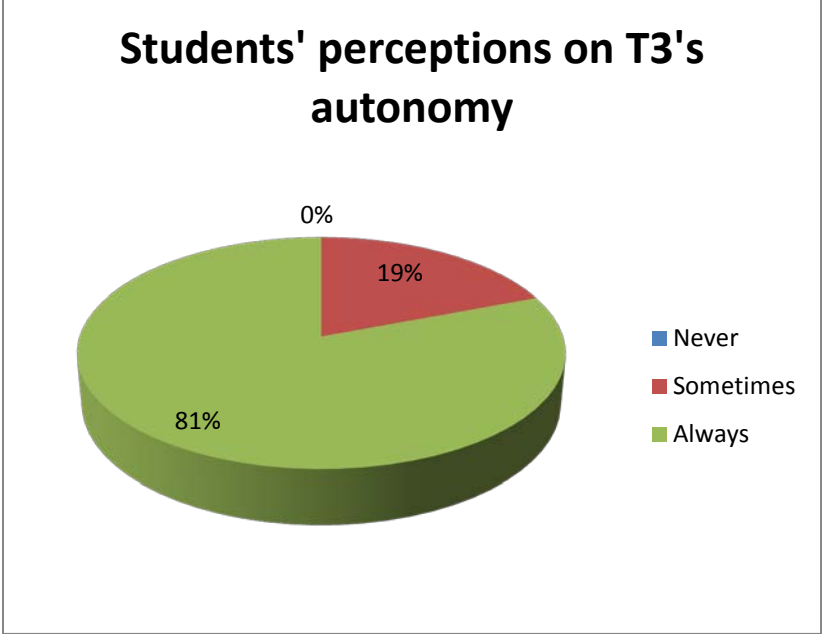
Students' perceptions on T4's autonomy



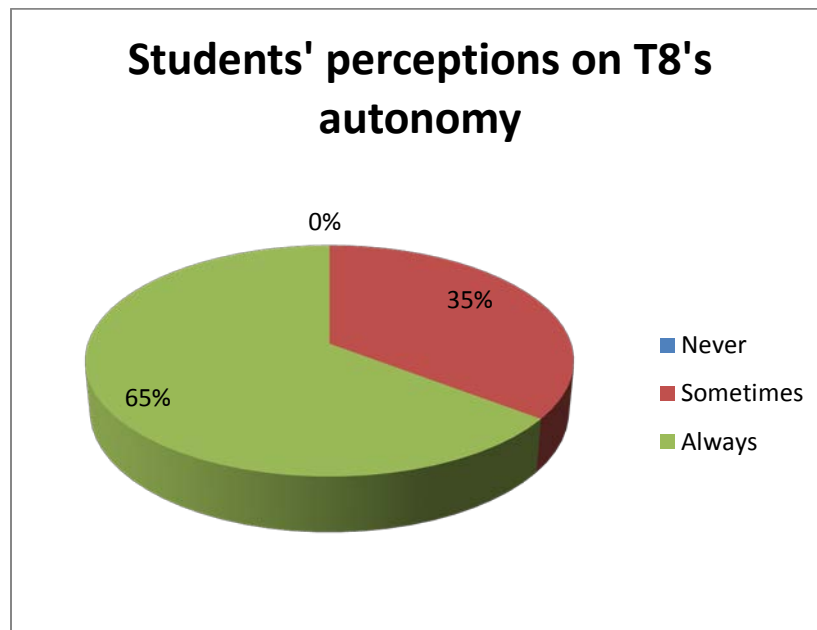
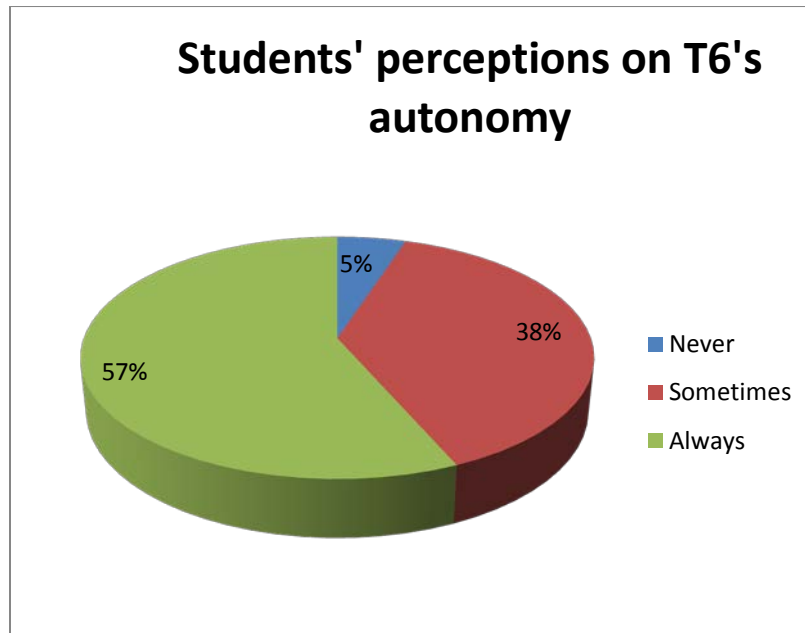
Students' perceptions on T5's autonomy



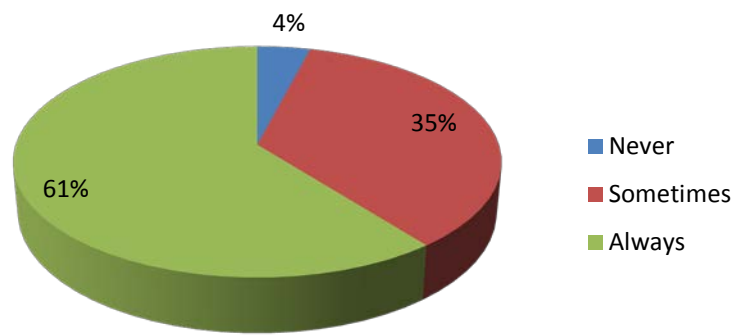
In regards to student's responses, **T3** and **T9** show a sense of teacher autonomy 81% of the time:



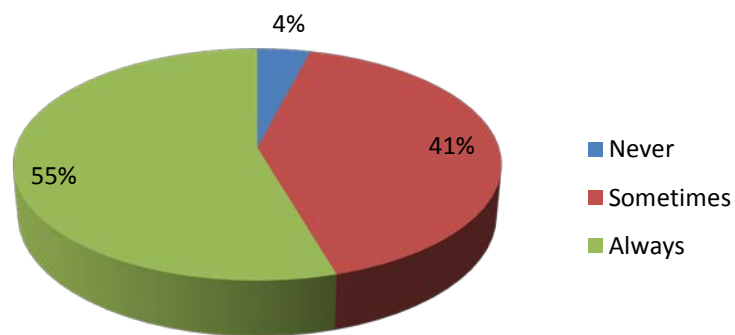
T6, T8, T10 and T11 are above the 50%, but less than the 70% showing autonomous attitudes according to their students' perceptions.



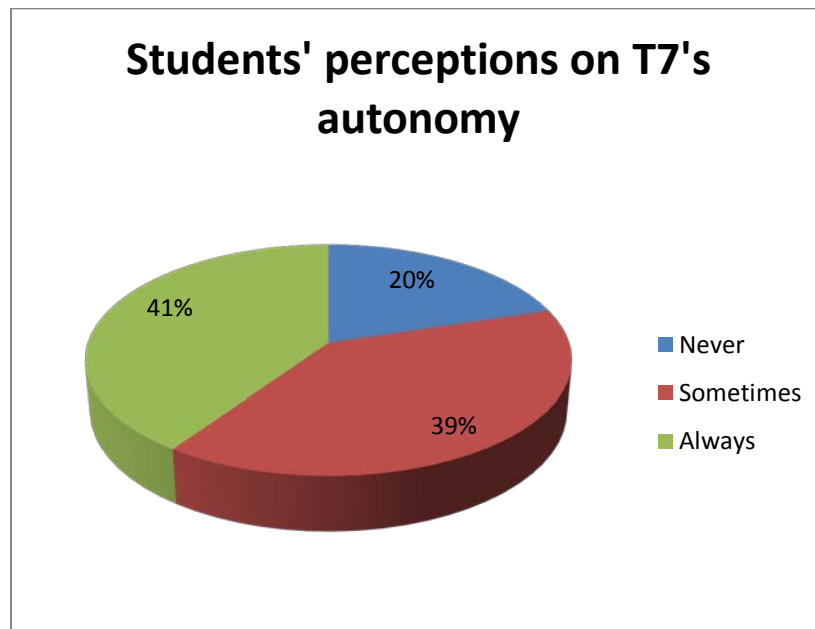
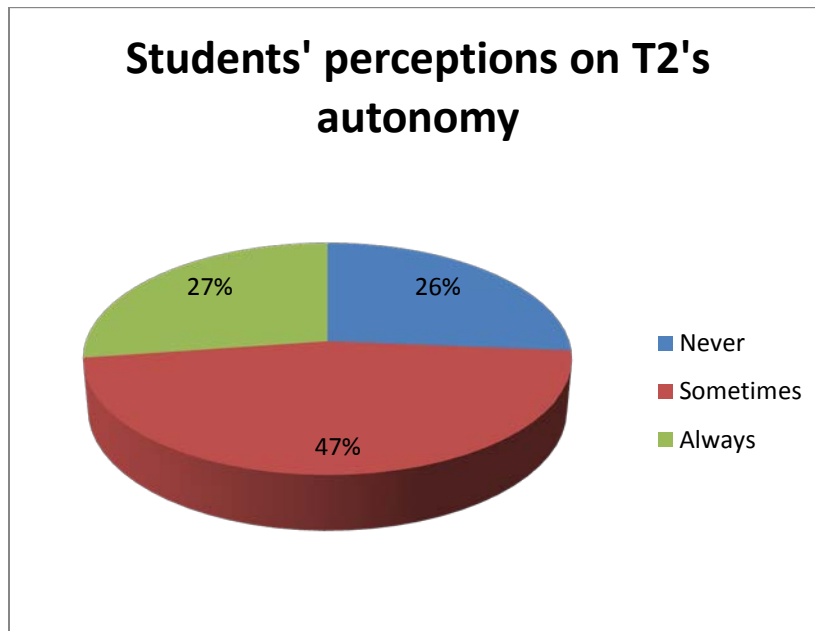
Students' perceptions on T10's autonomy



Students' perceptions on T11's autonomy



Finally, **T2** and **T7** are below the 50% based on students' points of view.



Most of the students agreed that their teachers show autonomous attitudes most of the time.

Contrasting teachers' own perceptions, their degree of autonomy and students' perceptions, the results show:

Teacher	Teacher's perception about their autonomy	Degree of Teacher Autonomy	Students' Perceptions based on the frequency shown by the teacher of autonomous behaviors
T1	<i>"some cases"</i>	Medium High	92%
T2	<i>"sometimes"</i>	Medium High	27%
T3	<i>"not fully autonomous"</i>	Medium High	81%
T4	<i>"maybe"</i>	Medium High	90%
T5	<i>"yes"</i>	Medium High	91%
T6	<i>"no/yes"</i>	Medium High	57%
T7	<i>"somehow"</i>	Medium High	41%
T8	<i>"I'm not certain"</i>	Medium High	65%
T9	---	Medium High	81%
T10	<i>"I do definitely"</i>	High	61%
T11	<i>"yes very much"</i>	Medium High	55%

table 2

As it is shown in table 2, teachers perceive their own autonomy, in some cases, different from their degree of autonomy (**T8**, **T9** and **T11**) or their students' perceptions (**T2**, **T6**, **T7**, **T10** and **T11**), whereas some teachers match in the three parameters of what they consider, what they are and what others think about them (**T1**, **T3**, **T4**, and **T5**).

4.6 Features required becoming Autonomous Teachers

Each of the teachers interviewed had different perceptions on what is necessary to become autonomous teachers; nevertheless, there are some aspects in which they agree.

T1 claims that teachers need to start with themselves *“you have to be autonomous in order to ask your students to be autonomous”* as Queiroz (2004) points out. Whereas **T7** states that teachers need initiative and time investment *“because if you want to be an autonomous teacher, you have to take some time from other activities, even from your personal life to do things outside the... the place where you work”* along with patience (**T2**) and time organization (**T6**).

T6 says that it is necessary to be motivated and show willingness. Furthermore, **T10** highlights that teachers *“need to be very involved, you need a commitment, you need devotion, you really need this awareness of what you really want to do with your life or otherwise do another thing.”* Thus, she also emphasizes a certain sense of responsibility like Balçikanli (2010) claimed.

Regarding attitudes, **T5** and **T9** state that it is necessary to keep a good attitude, an open mind, and to be adaptable, flexible and courageous to face the decisions taken.

Finally, **T10** concludes that teachers need to be aware that *“teachers are not just providers of information, but also examples in their (students) lives, right? Reasons why students get inspired or not.”*

Hence teachers' motivation is a fundamental feature to reach autonomy in teaching.

4.7 Motivations underlying Teacher Autonomy

Motivation is defined by Harmer (2001) as a drive that pushes people to achieve something they want. Moreover, Brown claims that the two types of motivation, **Internal** and **External** are the source of the pushing drive. In relation to **Internal Motivation**, it is the one in which the individual is not pushed by any sort of inducements or rewards to make them feel satisfied to achieve what they want. For instance, **T5**, **T6**, and **T7** are motivated by their own willingness to be prepared, as **T7** states:

T7: "My main motivation is because I believe... I do believe that if we are autonomous, if we learn more than when we are given in courses or what we here from other polices, that's a good way to grow, there's no, I believe, there's no the way to grow to learn more, and we cannot always wait, or we shouldn't wait until somebody teaches me something new like if I can do research and I can do thing by my own, what to way until somebody else teaches me with knowledge, if I can fasten that process doing things by my own"

On the contrary, **External Motivation** does require inducements, rewards or other sorts of external recognition to make people pursue what they want, as it is shown in **T1**, **T3**, **T9** and **T11** responses that claim:

T9: *“My motivation is the results I see in my students, the happy faces I see in my students, is the smiles, is the greeting in the halls, in the hallways I mean, is, is the results after and exam is that things that make me feel successful.”*

In contrast **T10**, who is motivated by both types of motivation, says:

T10: *“I really want to give, the best of me to my students, I really want to be the best influence on them (...) besides the fact that I need to be satisfied with myself because I need to ... I need to ... like hhh to become or try to become a good teacher to grow this level of performance (as teacher) besides that there's a responsibility to give the best of myself to my students and the people I'm working with I mean inside the Academias, and my boss and the headmaster of this B.A. and many people around me because they expect the best from me, that is why I try to be updated in a way”*

Only **T4** was the one who said that her motivation was to *“make students think and maybe own decisions not wait for the teacher to make a decision but giving them the tools... maybe, the skills, make decision and be responsible about what they do,”* in other words to foster autonomy.

However, it is important to point out that from the Motivational theories stated by Suslu (2006), none of the teachers fit within his parameters.

4.8 The Role of Reflection

Teachers are aware about what is needed in order to develop autonomy; they have stated the importance of reflecting on their teaching practice in order to make decisions and grow as professionals.

Teachers agree that *Reflection* has an important role in their teaching practice in order to become autonomous. Richards (n/d) defines Reflection as: “an activity or process in which an experience is recalled, considered, and evaluated, usually in relation to a broader purpose. It is a response to past experience and involves conscious recall and examination of the experience as a basis for evaluation and decision-making and as a source for planning and action”. This assumption is confirmed by **T3, T7, T8, T9, and T10**:

T3: *“[Reflection] is a deep recall, a deep like an activity where I can try to, to see myself.”*

T7: *“Reflection I think is a...is the ... how can I say that... fact or going over that the direction we had made, the way we have done things, and why try to find the answer for like why we did whatever we did, but then we did it”*

T8: *“Definitely, if you have reflected, you are aware of what you are doing.”*

T9: *“Reflection, I would say reflection is like thinking about your practice, thinking about your behavior, thinking about your attitudes, thinking about you”*

T10: *“We have to do reflecting on what we are doing, am I doing the same thing in, but the same work or not? Ah every single student and every single class is completely different and you cannot use the same things over and over again every single course must be different and they, every single course must be better than the previous one all the time.”*

Timing is essential for teachers due to their schedules. Therefore, teachers vary the time they reflect on their teaching practice, T2 states:

T2: *“[I reflect] At night, because at night I have time you know, I work all day and at night is when I prepare my classes, when I read a little bit so is when I reflect and I think what can I do for this level, what can I do for this or that level.”*

But for **T1**, **T5**, **T9** and **T10** reflection is not a process to be carried out in a specific time, as the following teachers claim:

T1: *“[I reflect] at the end, at the beginning.”*

T5: *“When I’m preparing the next lesson it’s when I reflect about the previous one.”*

T9: *“When do I reflect, oh my god, I would say that all times, I’m thinking all the time, thinking, thinking all the time what I shall do, what shall I do.”*

T10: *“I reflect during my classes and after my classes.”*

The importance of reflecting is that it allows teachers to develop autonomy; as **T7** expressed it in the following extract:

T7: *“Reflection is part of any activity that a teacher does... if we do not reflect on what we do, why we are doing things, and what are we doing them the way we are doing them, there is no way to grow, so I think that being autonomous and being reflective... a reflective teacher... it's part of the cycle... it's part of the cycle of growing.”*

4.8.1 Resources used to Reflect

From the participants, **T6** is the only one who doesn't use any particular resources to reflect and **T2**, **T5** and **T11** only reflect in their minds.

In contrast, **T7** attends to seminars whenever her financial situation allows her because *“it's a good way to keep updated with what is going on with the current methodologies, and not only methodologies not everything methodologies, but to learn even about some other areas about our field”* as Richards and Farrell propone (2008).

T8 does not keep a teaching journal (Richards and Farrell, 2008). However, once in a while she writes *“every word even in a loose paper it was positive and the point is that I don't remember where I place it and they are everywhere (...) but well I don't have any of those reflections on a specific place, I don't have it...”*

Whereas **T3**, **T4** and **T10** prefer reflecting through Peer Observation, defined as "a teacher or other observer closely watching and monitoring a language lesson or part of a lesson in order to gain understanding of some aspect of teaching, learning, or classroom interaction" (Richards and Farrell, 2008, p.85). For these teachers, peer observation allows them:

T3: *"to grow up, for me to see things that I really need to continue improving or even modifying things in order to ... to have a better class a better teaching experience in every class"*

In addition, for **T10**, Peer Observation:

"[Peer Observation] would be the best way for reflecting, that would be another advantage to look for professional development when you are observing, when you let somebody observe you that's great and when you know exactly how to observe it is not just being in a class and looking at, but you have to be focused on specific things, devices sometimes there are rubrics"

Peer Observation is a source of feedback that helps them to seek for improvement due to the fact that, according to **T3**, *"it is more than a good mirror because other people can see what you don't do."*

Another source that **T10** uses to reflect is *"Evaluación Docente."* It is a source provided by the Institution in which students answer via online a questionnaire about each of the teachers who give them classes. It is administered almost in the middle of the semester and its purpose is to provide feedback to teachers

regarding their classes, the materials they use, if they promote the use of technology and even their attitude and punctuality. They are graded from 0 to 10. At the end, the Institution allows their teachers know in which areas they need to work on. Moreover, the Institution provides them with courses at the end of each semester to help them cope with the areas of improvement.

And the last type of resource **T1** and **T9** use is to ask their students what they think about their performance because for **T1** *“really like to know what is the opinion of my students so I didn’t do it all the classes but at least one per month and I ask them ok write on a paper what do you like about my classes.”*

In fact, **T9** refers to them as reflective quizzes where she asks for students’ opinion about their class and how they can be improved. She also claims that she administers them when she notices that the pace works in a different way:

T9: *“if apply this quizzes at the beginning of the class they are not objective because they don’t know you, they know the class and probably they don’t like this subject, but they don’t know you, they might start liking that subject through you, yeah? So I do these quizzes after some weeks of practice.”*

She also states that by asking students’ opinion, she makes them reflect as well.

4.9 What should be done to become Autonomous Teachers?

To develop autonomy, teachers have to make decisions about their professional life. Teachers face the necessity to explore in their teaching practice what they need in order to be aware of their performance as Gebhard and Oprandy (1999) claim that “the central reason to explore is to gain *awareness* of our teaching beliefs and practices” (p. 4).

Exploration allows teachers to identify areas that need to be changed; additionally, teachers take actions in order to improve their performance, in the same way, they are developing autonomy. Richards and Farrell (2008) state that “development refers to general growth not focused on a specific job. It serves a longer-term goal and seeks to facilitate growth of teachers’ understanding of teaching and themselves as teachers.” (p.4)

Teachers have done several activities to continue developing their autonomy as the following excerpts show:

T1: *“I always reflect about my teaching.”*

T2: *“I read by myself books about teaching sometimes the same, I search information on internet.”*

T3: *“I reflect on my own teaching, on my own experience.”*

T4: *“I try to do is read a lot to...what else...not to be that to be attach to the programme, to ask students what they need what will be useful for them, what are they working outside, I mean, in a really environment,*

and I try to learn for different... techniques maybe to be updated, but for me the most important is to read... to read a lot because that brings knowledge, and ideas, a new perspective that can be applied in the classroom that is the most important.”

T5: *“I look for sources to read or materials or also asking to somebody that is experienced to give me advice and well to help me and maybe to guide me and then I continue by myself.”*

T6: *“I use the Internet a lot mainly the Internet.”*

T7: *“I always try to analyze.”*

T9: *“I prepare myself because I need to be ready for the things that are coming for the next day, I review my syllabus, I observe my students, I check what we need, I check the outside, so I try to observe.”*

T10: *“I can do many things, studying on myself.”*

Another resource suggested by Richards and Farrell (2008), are workshops, which are a good way to develop autonomy because might raise teachers' motivation to maintain the interest in their profession and also increase their motivation about teaching:

T5: *“Study, may take some seminars or courses.”*

T7: *“I try to learn from different resources; one of them is attended seminars, because it's a good way to keep updated.”*

The selection of resources may depend on teacher's personalities. Teachers **1, 4, 7** and **9** state the following:

T1: *"[I] make some notes there, so I check some notes in order to not commit the same mistakes or to do the same that work."*

T4: *"Books are always there, and they are reliable for me they are the best source."*

T7: *"I check on the books, dictionaries."*

T9: *"Make search in Internet, go to the library and read some books."*

4.10 Teachers' Responsibility regarding students' autonomy

Being autonomous is a process that can be preached with example in order to be a tool for students in their own way. That responsibility is on teachers who are a model in their classrooms as Teachers **6, 8** and **10** state:

T6: *"I think we are trying to make our students autonomous but I think for them or for us to held to be autonomous we have to be autonomous first otherwise it is like the blind guiding the blind."*

T8: *"We cannot foster autonomy if we are not autonomous so that can happen, that can happen."*

T10: *"You preach with your own example."*

Responsibility is defined as “the state or fact of having a duty to deal with something or of having control over someone” (Oxford Dictionaries 2013). Some students need a guide in order to be aware of their learning; therefore, teachers should face the responsibility to help them.

Teachers agree with the fact that they are somehow responsible for students' autonomy. Teachers **5**, **6** and **9** agree with this assumption:

T5: *“Well, very responsible because if we don't ask them or we don't give them like the guidelines to become autonomous, how can they learn to become autonomous if we don't help them. So I am responsible.”*

T6: *“I think we are responsible we need to guide them but I also believe that it depends on the students.”*

T9: *“I think you have a part of responsibility in which you are planting the seed, but you have to plant the seed that is your responsibility and your students have to water the seed...”*

Some activities are done by teachers in order to help students in their process to become autonomous as part of being responsible:

T1: *“I ask them to search more not only what I said is the only thing that it will be true and I also ask them also to prepare project to work with what they know and the new learning that they have acquired and put into the practice and I ask them to reflect on what they have done when I give them the result.”*

T7: *“I always try to encourage them to do things, to look for more not to keep, not to stay with what I tell them or what we read in our text.”*

T10: *“to make them reflect of what learning is or what they need from my subject and what is the important of my subject to persuade them to become more ah not to rely on me but try to ... become more directed, self-directed...I ’m very demanding with my students because I know that they can do”*

Teachers express their commitment with their students to encourage them to develop their autonomy. In addition, they also show their willingness to look for ways to promote autonomy in students.

4.11 The Role of Institution

Teachers are employees of institutions where policies are set so teachers need to follow what is established. Institutions provide training for teachers in order to have better results with students. One of the most common ways to train teachers is through courses which are designed to cover teachers’ needs. This idea is supported by Teachers **4**, **7** and **8**:

T4: *“We are evaluated in each semester, at the end of the semester so according to that evaluation we are sent it to different courses.”*

T7: *“Always have some training courses they are worried about that it is something that they enhance...they encourage ...”*

T8: *“Well I really like this ... courses we are taking right now because they are dealing with technology with eh with researching and with investigations, it is ... the name of that course and English well they are really nowadays the tools to have a better performance of teachers.”*

LELI Teachers are supported by the institution that gives them the opportunity to continue growing in their professional life. Nevertheless, there are two different opinions about whether they are useful or not. Teachers **4**, **5** and **7** expressed the following:

T4: *“The ones that are offered here there [LELI] is a compulsory and it was very helpful...”*

T5: *“That’s good when they [courses] are related to our own needs.”*

T7: *“They are useful because they have let us grow and become better professional.”*

On the other hand, Teachers **2** and **9** have an opposite thought about courses:

T2: *“There are courses but I consider them useless.”*

T9: *“They sometimes they send us to take some training about things that we don’t find useful in our area.”*

As it has been mentioned, teachers have their own beliefs regarding autonomy; although some of them think that courses provided by the institution are useful and

others do not. It is important to point out that institutions develop teacher autonomy and also provide opportunities that allow teachers to grow in their professional life.

4.12 Teachers' constraints to develop their Autonomy

Usma (2007) points out that “teacher autonomy might be limited because of the teaching load, lack of time, salary, excessive school paperwork, external pressures, imposed educational policies, contrived collegiality, lack of collegial and administrative support, and institutional centralized powered structures.”

One of the teachers' constrains to become teacher autonomy is the **Lack of Time**, as they comment in the following excerpts:

T2: *“I feel frustrated because of the time I don't have enough time.”*

T4: *“I don't attend to this course because I don't have the time the schedule is awful.”*

These teachers face the limitation regarding timing arguing they do not have enough time to do certain activities in order to continue developing autonomy.

Another constrain is **Imposed Educational Policies**. It is a reality that teachers have to follow certain polices already set by principals that might limit teachers on certain things they would like to do:

T9: *“if you have to act according to the policies or the agreements and you're not convinced about is where you feel you are limited.”*

Teachers claim they need more freedom about policies that institutions have established in order to develop their autonomy, as Zeichner, cited in Carl (2002), states: teachers must be allowed to make their own decisions (p.6). To develop autonomy on teachers it is necessary to give them certain power in aspects related to them.

The last constrain teachers face regarding their autonomy is the ***Lack of Information about what Autonomy embraces***. It is necessary for teachers to be well informed regarding their autonomy, the resources they can use, and how they can guide their students when fostering autonomy, Teacher **8** and **11** state:

T8: *“Make teachers aware of what autonomous is because right now I was telling you I’m quite certain of it, I’m answering but I’m not certain about it right or wrong if I have one of the many answers or if I’m not definitely an autonomous teacher.”*

T11: *“You have to be well informed you have to work on... the ideas and concepts that you want to transmit, you have to prepare for it.”*

It is essential that teachers become aware of their autonomy. Hence, that they can be prepared for changes in their professional life and also provide the guidance for their students to reach autonomy.

4.13 LELI Teachers' suggestions to overcome their limitations

Teachers perceive autonomy as they have been taught since they were students, they have their own beliefs regarding what it is necessary to become an autonomous teacher and those ideas are expressed in the following excerpts:

T1: *"First own reflection and to peer assessment observation."*

T6: *"To make them conscious of the advantages they could have if they develop these skills to learn by themselves to continue updating so it has many advantages but you know you have to know how to use the resources available."*

T7: *"Talking to teachers to tell them what the advantages are of being an autonomous teacher and how probably their teaching practice and their own personal development."*

T10: *"Definitely this sense of responsibility, it is good to do this activities of self-evaluation these activities are great, the work we do inside the Academias those activities make you reflect on many things, peer observation that's another possibility because if you know exactly what a teacher is doing and he or she is doing differently or ... completely different, completely different to you that would be a great opportunity to grow up and learn from others and to receive this feedback right."*

T11: *"I think it's first of all teaching vocation I think if the teacher...the person really feels they really understand the function of his work."*

These suggestions are based on teachers' experience in teaching. It depends on future teachers or teachers who do not have a clear idea about how they can develop autonomy to take these as guidance. In addition, students may take into account teachers' suggestions in order to reach their own autonomy.

Chapter V: Conclusions

5.1 Overview

Overall, the aims of this study were accomplished since the study provided information to answer the research questions addressed in the project: If LELI teachers are to promote learner autonomy, are they autonomous themselves? How is this accounted for? And what resources they use to be autonomous?

The findings show that teachers do foster autonomy and their students perceived it in different ways. Nonetheless, teachers partially know what autonomy and teacher autonomy embraces. This fact leads to misunderstandings of the teachers' and students' role. For instance, in the teacher's definitions of autonomy, none of them mentioned the concepts interdependence or collaboration, for them autonomy means working alone, by oneself.

In relation to teacher autonomy, some of the teachers are aware of what it embraces, but some others question themselves if they are truly autonomous or not. Thus, teachers are not aware of the degree of responsibility they have to guide their students; as a consequence, they foster autonomy even though they are not prepared for it.

From the research population, 100% of the population mention that it is important to seek for constant improvement; as a result, they rely on reflection and also consider it as the base of autonomy, but from the wide variety of resources available and proposed by authors, the most common resources were reflecting (in their minds) and peer observation. None of the teachers keep a written record, like

a journal or portfolio that allows them to review what they do in their class whenever it is needed.

5.2 Limitations of the study

The conclusions of this research project cannot be generalized because of the approach used that aimed to know teachers' perceptions and beliefs about the subject matter.

In addition, the lack of literature related to teacher autonomy available, limited the study somehow because most of it was directed to learner's autonomy. Thus, the lack of previous studies made difficult the elaboration of the instruments used.

5.3 Further research

The study in this research presents how teachers face autonomy and what they do in order to achieve it. It is important to point out that in our B.A. there are not previous studies concerned with autonomy related to teachers or students. Hence, it is very necessary to continue doing research for both types of autonomy to enable it in wider contexts.

Additionally, studies regarding how teachers promote autonomy might allow a better understating of how autonomy is carried out for teachers and students.

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Appendix 1

Teachers' Interview Guide

1. What's your name?
2. How long have you been a teacher?
3. Do you like teaching? Why?
4. Why did you decide to be a teacher?
5. What is autonomy for you?
6. Do you think that it is important to be autonomous? Why?
7. What are your beliefs about autonomy?
8. How could you define teacher autonomy?
9. Do you consider yourself as an autonomous teacher? Why?
10. What is your motivation to be an autonomous teacher?
11. What do you do in order to be autonomous?
12. What does it take to be an autonomous teacher?
13. Does the institution, where you work, require you to be constantly prepared?
What do you think about it?
14. What are the resources you use in order to be autonomous? Why?
15. Do you consider that reflection is important to be autonomous? Why?
16. How could you define reflection?
17. On what aspects do you reflect on?
18. When do you reflect?
19. How do you reflect?
20. Do you use any particular resource?

21. What is the effect that being autonomous has on your teaching practice?
22. How do you foster autonomy to your students?
23. How responsible do you consider yourself regarding your student's autonomy?
24. What do you think is necessary to foster teacher's autonomy?
25. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix 2

Questionnaire on Teacher Autonomy

Read the sentences carefully. If you completely agree, circle **6**. If you do not agree at all circle **1**.

I like to think and decide about things related to me on my own, instead of relying on others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I like to make my own laws and regulations at my work place	1	2	3	4	5	6
I undertake full responsibility for my actions	1	2	3	4	5	6
I don't like to take risks	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel comfortable if someone tells me what to do	1	2	3	4	5	6
I don't need to reflect about my actions	1	2	3	4	5	6
I get upset if someone gives me advice when I don't ask for it	1	2	3	4	5	6
I can face any challenge easily	1	2	3	4	5	6
I keep a good attitude, no matter what	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel comfortable by working with the things I know very well	1	2	3	4	5	6
I don't like to think about the future, the present is the only thing I have	1	2	3	4	5	6
I only do what I'm asked for	1	2	3	4	5	6
I like to follow instructions	1	2	3	4	5	6
My teaching practice doesn't affect students learning because it's an individual process	1	2	3	4	5	6
I motivate my students to keep learning	1	2	3	4	5	6
I like when people give credit to what I do	1	2	3	4	5	6
I do my best in everything I do	1	2	3	4	5	6
I take advantage of all the resources available to keep learning	1	2	3	4	5	6
I like to do things independently, on my own	1	2	3	4	5	6
I'm aware of the things I need to improve regarding my teaching practice	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix 3

Questionnaire for students

The purpose of the following questionnaire is to know more about some attitudes your teacher might have regarding autonomy. So put a tick where best suits your personal opinion.

	Never	Sometimes	Always
Does your teacher encourage you to be independent from him/her in relation to your learning?			
Does your teacher share responsibility with you for your learning?			
Do you think your teacher is concerned about your learning?			
Does your teacher motivate you to keep learning?			
Is your teacher willing to accept opinions or suggestions?			
Does your teacher face with good attitude the challenges during the class?			
Does your teacher show confidence about the subject(s) he/she teaches?			
If something doesn't work in class, does your teacher look for the way to change it?			
Does your teacher try to do new things once in a while in class?			
Does your teacher bring into the class new resources to improve learning?			
How often does your teacher show interest about your autonomy?			

Thank you for your cooperation!

Appendix 4

Consent Form

I.....agree to participate in this research study.

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me and I am participating voluntarily.

I give permission for my interview with Verónica Sánchez and Carolina Juárez to be tape-recorded.

I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising my identity.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications if I give permission below:

(Please tick one box :)

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview

I do not agree to quotation/publication of excerpts from my interview

Signed.....

Date.....

Appendix 5

Questionnaire on Responsible Attitudes

Questionnaire on responsible attitudes

Read the sentences carefully. If you completely agree, circle 6. If you do not agree at all, circle 1.

As for me...

The reason why I am good (bad) at the foreign language, is because I have had good (bad) teachers. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I know what I should practice more in the foreign language. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I pay more attention to the lesson if we are practicing something I am not so good at. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I want only to survive the language lesson. 1 2 3 4 5 6

Sometimes I learn /read things that the teacher did not give as a task. 1 2 3 4 5 6

I do as little as possible for my homework. 1 2 3 4 5 6

It is important for me to learn the foreign language (not only for my parents' sake or for the marks). 1 2 3 4 5 6

As for most of the others in the class...

The reason why they are good (bad) at the foreign language, is because they have had good (bad) teachers. 1 2 3 4 5 6

They know what they should practice more in the foreign language. 1 2 3 4 5 6

They pay more attention to the lesson if we are practicing something they are not good at. 1 2 3 4 5 6

They want only to survive the language lesson. 1 2 3 4 5 6

Sometimes they learn/read things that the teacher did not give as a task. 1 2 3 4 5 6

They do as little as possible for their homework. 1 2 3 4 5 6

It is important for them to learn the foreign language (not only for their parents' sake or for the marks). 1 2 3 4 5 6

Appendix 6

Teacher Interview Sample

1. What's your name?

My name...

2. How long have you been a teacher?

I've been a teacher for 21 years now.

3. Do you like teaching?

I love teaching, it's my second marriage.

4. Why?

Because it's my career of life, I would say it puts me near people, it makes me feel useful, it makes me feel like kind of do something else than teaching to people because sometimes I get closer to students and we share different things and If I can provide any support besides teaching. That's why I like it, it puts me in touch with people.

5. Ok, why did you decide to be a teacher?

I think that is part of my personality that I need recognition in the things that I do and through students if I do my work well, I can get that part that is like feeding myself.

6. Ok, what is autonomy for you?

Autonomy for me and maybe I misunderstand the concept is doing things in an independent way and well independently but under some policies, so is autonomy but is disguised.

7. Ok, do you think that is important to be autonomous?

I think that is really important, but is not, I would say it again is not a real 100% thing because you can be autonomous in decisions because it doesn't matter what the policies of the school are or what the other people say you will make your decision and you can't say well I did this because of this or because of that, but the one who made the decision was you.

8. Ok, what are your beliefs about autonomy?

My beliefs about autonomy, I think I have just said that is, there are some things or some aspects in your life even professional or personal in which you must agree on the things or policies institutions set, but you can always decide, so if you state under those policies is, you're not really autonomous, but in inside your classroom is where your autonomy may come. You know what the policies are, but you are free to decide what you're going to do in the classroom and this is going to obey also to, to if we are talking about just school things, about the needs of the students about the needs of your syllabus or the needs of your class, even if they can go out just a little bit against of the policies.

9. In somehow, do you feel limited by the policies at your school?

Yes, there are aspects in which you are always going to be limited, there are things that you have to do because, or also because you say we have a meeting with the academy of English and we agreed on to do this, we agreed because it was the majority, but I don't agree, so if it was an agreement you have to be under that agreement but and that's when you're autonomy is limited yeah because if you're autonomous I understand that you make your own decisions, and you don't care about anything else you're convinced on the things you're doing, but if you have to act according to the policies or the agreements and you're not convinced about is where you feel you are limited, that's my thoughts.

10. Ok, how could you define teacher autonomy?

Teacher autonomy ... as just as I told you there are things free to do for example planning the class, planning a class, you don't have an specific format at least well

in this institution because there are other institutions in which you have to obey a format, but here you plan your classes, you are free you just have a syllabus and you are autonomous to cover the syllabus in the way that better fit your needs, but ok the question again because I think I'm going...

11. Ok, how could you define teacher autonomy?

That way, that way as I say you have the syllabus and you are free to teach it this way or the other you just have to go over the syllabus, but then that is teacher autonomy inside the classroom for the syllabus probably, how to work with it in your class, I would say that.

12. Ok, do you consider yourself an autonomous teacher?

Yes.

13. Why?

Because, I think the first thing is because I like what I do, I'm always looking for ways to do it better and when they say ok you are doing in this way, but now you got to do it under this policies I feel like ah, limiting me, I feel autonomous even when I ask for help or support some teachers I just take a little of this and a little of that and I make my own. So I feel I'm autonomous.

14. Ok, what is your motivation to be an autonomous teacher?

My motivation is the results I see in my students the happy faces I see in my students, is the smiles, is the greeting in the halls, in the hallways I mean, is, is the results after and exam is that things that make me feel successful, I would say that.

15. Ok what do you do in order to be autonomous?

What do I do?, well first I prepare myself because I need to be ready for the things that are coming for the next day, I review my syllabus I review, I observe my students, I check what we need, I check the outside, so I try to observe, so I think

this I'm a good observer so I try to observe every single thing that surrounds my teaching and I go.

16. Ok, what does it take to be an autonomous teacher?

What does it take ...

17. I think you have to have an open mind, I think you have to know how to make decisions, I think you have to be adaptable, flexible and courageous.

18. Ok, does, does the institution where you work require you to be constantly prepared?

Yes, yes it requires and they are on us that all the time.

19. Ok, and what do you think about it?

What do I think about it, what do I think? Well sometimes you find it useful and sometimes you find it useless, I mean you know that you are part of a very large institution and you know there are institutional goals and they want to prepare all their the staff to get those goals. Eh we make exams I think diagnostic exams and we got, we the teachers of English we have to make, I don't know how many courses of English to get the level the university wants, how could it be that the university has teachers of English working for several years and now the university says that you need a level of English to teach, how did they get you to work if you didn't have the level? So that's one of the things that I don't understand and then there is another preparation that we should do and I agree with that because I'm missing that, is methods I think investing research methods and technology yeah the most ...technology. but I think that and they sometimes they send us to take some training about things that we don't find useful in our area and sometimes, not the institution but the academic area where I work for they look for things or training that are going to help this specific area and I love it, but there are some others where even when it is training and is preparation and it's updating you could

find things that are more useful in this specific area. I don't mind getting myself trained or prepare, but when they send me to things that like I'm saying ... for example we took some about didactics or things like that and the ones who are teachers, real teachers we know about that but the ones who are in juniors they are biologist, they are lawyers, they are sociologist, they are, sometimes they are not teachers, so they need that preparation but not the teachers, the ones who have the formation of teachers, so why don't you divide them and give those ones what they need and these ones what they need, but those what I mean.

20. Ok, so you say before that you use observation to be autonomous, is there any other eh resource that you use to be autonomous?

Observation... that's it, to be autonomous... probably I don't understand the question.

Kind of like to get to what you want to do within your classroom, do you look for other sources to be, to be like updated or...

Oh, yeah is not only the train that we receive here, you need to make research at home, reading books, checking your syllabus and checking the book you're working with if you're not working with that book, make search in internet, go to the library and read some books, so you got to be prepared, but being autonomous is also that, you are observing and you are reflecting in your conscious about your weaknesses and you know what you need for this class, so you are not going to wait for other teacher of your coordinator to come and tell you, haven't you thought that you could teach in a better way if you study more? You have to be conscious about that's autonomy also self-reflection, auto recognition, I know my needs, ok I know what they need because I'm a good observer but I'm reflective and I know what I need too so and I'm going to provide myself with the things that I need.

21. Ok, about reflection, how could you define it?

Reflection, I would say reflection is like thinking about your practice, thinking about your behavior, thinking about your attitudes, thinking about you, but not only

thinking about you because I might think and say how wonderful person I am oh I really like me, so you're thinking about you, but when you are reflecting you are scanning your personality and saying ok you are doing this right because you are doing this and this wrong, you better work on these things that are wrong and start taking actions on them because that is not an easy thing looking at you and finding your own mistakes and wanting to correct them is not an easy thing and when somebody comes and tells you that you are doing this wrong you just don't like it, so for me is to think about me and to check ok what am I doing, am I doing it right? And if I'm not very sure because of the results, because if the results are sending you messages about the things that you need to work in you then you can ask somebody else to go observe you or about your doubts, do you think I'm o doing this right? And that's not wrong that doesn't interfere with your autonomy, it is improving it because you're finding another way of improvement.

22. Ok, on what aspects do you reflect on?

I reflect on, oh my gosh, I have a friend, I have a friend who says whenever you tell me something even if could be professional, it could be personal, it could be in whatever I do and when someone tells me have you ever thought about doing in this way I start thinking, I start thinking and I have a friend who says, "oh your mouse is running", he says that I have a mouse here in my brain and when I'm thinking he says "oh your mouse is running, you're mouse is running", he says that because I always think about in everything that I do and when I don't see, when I see a board face in my house, in my class or when I see bad results in an exam I start thinking what did I do wrong? How can I improve? Why is this student doing this, and this? I should conference him or her and find it out because probably it's me, and if it's not one student I make surveys in my classes, I make like quizzes, but not grading quizzes, reflective quizzes, what do you thing about this class? How could you think this class could be improved? To get a better result the teacher should... and that is hard because in the way I work I make my students feel confident with me, so I really trust in the things they say and if they say I get bored in your classes they are really serious and objective, if apply this quizzes at

the beginning of the class they are not objective because they don't know you, they know the class and probably they don't like this subject, but they don't know you they might start liking that subject through you, yeah? so I do this quizzes after some weeks of practice and if I see that they, how do they name it?, the pace is working in a different way is when you have to do that because you're going to read those papers and thinking of ways of improving, but you are going to make them reflect about this, the class practice too.

23. So, when do you reflect?

When do I reflect, oh my god, I would say that all times, I'm thinking all the time, thinking, thinking all the time what shall I do, what shall I do? I'm going to tell you what happened today eh no was on this it was on these days I just go to class, a new class for me because one of the teachers couldn't continue with this class, is the first time I take that class, is half of the semester and I said ok I can do it, but then I say why did I say that if I know nothing about the class and this teacher told me, don't worry I'm going to give you because everything is already done so I'm going to give everything to you , I have my rubrics and I would share them with you and you just have to place numbers and everything is going to be ok, and I said ok, so last week I send a message to him and it was saying I'm sorry to bother you but I would like you to share those materials with me because next week, that means today, I'm going to start evaluating and I need the materials so I sent that on Thursday I think and he didn't reply, I was looking on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, he didn't, he was busy but I was stressed yeah and then by Monday I was looking for him here and eh when I found him he said I have just send you what you ask me for and I say thank you, thank you, thank you and he said yes they are in your mail and then I checked till yesterday because Monday's are hard days for me, so I checked it at night and I said good I have it and this morning when I tried I had the rubrics with no functions, so I said how shall I do it, how shall I do it? So I get stressed and I was thinking all the weekend I was thinking how am I going to solve it? If a create a new one, but I had already offer the students that it was going to be the same as the teacher was working with them because you don't want to present

a new plan in the middle of the semester and then I was thinking how can I solve it, how can I solve it? But then I was looking for him but I was very stressed and finally I couldn't work with the rubric, but I'm always probably I was thinking, ok probably I was thinking I should have called him again because he has already set the rubrics to me, then well he said that he was going to share them with me probably he has to send them with functions and then he is going to think that, and you see what I mean I'm thinking and thinking and thinking about the same thing.

Ok.

Sorry long stories.

24. It's ok teacher, so how do you reflect?

How, what you mean.

I mean, you use a particular resource or in a particular way or?

No, I don't have a strategy, well I would say after the results I start to think what happened, that would be my strategy, and then I start looking for ways to improve what was wrong or what I thing was wrong, probably I did some assistants in a better easy to reflect to reflect or maybe doing a checklist or things like that, I don't do it.

25. Ok, so what is the effect that being autonomous has on your teaching practice?

The effect is... I think the first effect is on you on person, you feel comfortable with the things you are doing, another way is you as a teacher are going to be always an example for students, so I think that is a good example, they should know that they should think about on the things they do and how to make them work in a better way.

26. Ok, how do you foster autonomy on your students?

You know I make a lot of questions, I think that is a good way to make them autonomous if, I play jokes, but I think in my jokes there's always a message, so

for example, they are always blaming other class, you know which class they are blaming always, English I is always blaming one of the classes for not doing my homework yeah and then I say, I know what is more important for you than English and then the next day it happens the same they arrive late or they didn't sleep well and it's because they say I have a lot of homework from this class and I say yeah yeah yeah I know, I know your priorities I know that you are placing as priority a class that is not the base of your B.A. but you see I send the message and then I send the second message so their autonomy, is reflection because they are going to think "oh that's right what's the base of my B.A.? English, English need more attention" and probably I will get more, I would get more attention or more accomplishment what is my class duties, my class duties and they are going to start looking for ways to be how can I say to do what I ask and what the other teachers ask, is their decision, they may have priorities and then I say I just have to have numbers that's the way I set things, I'm not going to get mad if you, but it's up to you, yesterday I have another example yesterday one of my students in another B.A. eh I turned in the exams and he said can you give me this, one of his friends' exam and one of his friend's exam is a person you know when you observe your students and you know who knows and who doesn't so this friend of this one had a really well ah he doesn't have good development in any class and he got high scores in the exam and I say maybe I shouldn't have but I said I don't believe this, this is not his result I'm sure I told him just imagine that you are the friend, I'm sure he copied someone, but the other guy was not there and he was looking at me like this yeah and I can bet if I apply an oral exam now on this student and he's going to fail , I promise you he is going to fail, you helped him I was then thinking you see, my reflection again I was thinking where they were sitting and yeah this guy was in front and the back one was in the back, but it was a large class so I must up and down, do you know that law classrooms?

Yeah

Yeah I was in there applying exam and you know how I do it I go everywhere if they have questions so I was up and then I was down , so when you go up the

ones that are down well you're giving them the back you just can walk backwards and you let him copy I don't have an evidence of that but it's up to you why don't you help him in another way, help him but not letting the exam he's not learning I say that. By the end of the class this guy followed me and said can I talk to you, and I say yeah you can talk to me tell me and he said well I allowed this guy copy you are right , he said that and I want to apologize and if you want to penalized us any way just do it I will accepted and I say well just let me trust in you because I think you are responsible an honest person let me still think that you are that kind of person and if you want to help your friend help him, but in another way no in this way. I'm not going to do a thing because I don't have evidence is now that you are saying that , but it's up to you I said I'm going to be a teacher this semester, but next semester I don't know, no I really want you to think of me as a responsible person and committed person, let me think about you like that and you see that way the things change and probably he is going to look for a different way to help the other guy.

Ok.

I would say that.

27. Ok, and how responsible do you consider yourself to be regarding your students autonomy?

How responsible? I think you have a part of responsibility in which you are planting the seed, but you have to plan the seed that is your responsibility and your students have to water the seed yeah you are showing them how far they can get if they are autonomous if they made their own decisions if they reflect if they prepare themselves you are showing them through examples and there's the seed to water it your drop of water as a teacher is another experience and other example, another model, but you student has to gather it through actions, decisions and reflections, I would say that.

28. Ok, so is there any other comment that you would like to share us?

Just to apologize because I make big stories through everything simple question that you are asking.

It's ok

And I don't know if I didn't enrich the goal or the question that you were asking me I apologize as well.

It's ok teacher, thank you for your time.

Appendix 7

Questionnaire on Teacher Autonomy Sample

Appendix 2

Questionnaire on Teacher Autonomy

Read the sentences carefully. If you completely agree, circle 6. If you do not agree at all circle 1.

1 I like to think and decide about things related to me on my own, instead of relying on others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2 I like to make my own laws and regulations at my work place	1	2	3	4	5	6
3 I undertake full responsibility for my actions	1	2	3	4	5	6
4 I don't like to take risks	1	2	3	4	5	6
5 I feel comfortable if someone tells me what to do	1	2	3	4	5	6
6 I don't need to reflect about my actions	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 I get upset if someone gives me advice when I don't ask for it	1	2	3	4	5	6
8 I can face any challenge easily	1	2	3	4	5	6
9 I keep a good attitude, no matter what	1	2	3	4	5	6
10 I feel comfortable by working with the things I know very well	1	2	3	4	5	6
11 I don't like to think about the future, the present is the only thing I have	1	2	3	4	5	6
12 I only do what I'm asked for	1	2	3	4	5	6
13 I like to follow instructions	1	2	3	4	5	6
14 My teaching practice doesn't affect students learning because it's an individual process	1	2	3	4	5	6
15 I motivate my students to keep learning	1	2	3	4	5	6
16 I like when people give credit to what I do	1	2	3	4	5	6
17 I do my best in everything I do	1	2	3	4	5	6
18 I take advantage of all the resources available to keep learning	1	2	3	4	5	6
19 I like to do things independently, on my own	1	2	3	4	5	6
20 I'm aware of the things I need to improve regarding my teaching practice	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix 8

Questionnaire for Students Sample

The purpose of the following questionnaire is to know more about some attitudes your teacher might have regarding autonomy. So put a tick where best suits to your personal opinion.

	Never	Sometimes	Always
Does your teacher encourage you to be independent from him/her in relation to your learning?			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does your teacher share responsibility with you for your learning?			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Do you think your teacher is concerned about your learning?			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does your teacher motivate you to keep learning?			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is your teacher willing to accept opinions or suggestions?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Does your teacher face with good attitude the challenges during the class?			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does your teacher show confidence about the subject(s) he/she teaches?			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If something doesn't work in class, does your teacher look for the way to change it?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Does your teacher try to do new things once in a while class?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Does your teacher bring into the class new resources to improve learning?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
How often does your teacher show interest about your autonomy?			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for your cooperation!