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***EFL LEARNERS' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTION AND THEIR ROLES IN
IMPLEMENTING AUTONOMOUS LEARNING, AND CHALLENGES THEY
FACE: GRADE 10 STUDENTS OF SERBO AND DIBU BIJIT HIGH
SCHOOLS IN FOCUS***

BY: MESELE ELIAS DIGA

**AUGUST, 2024
JIMMA, ETHIOPIA**

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***A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES OF
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DECLARATION

I, hereby declare that this thesis entitled, “*EFL Learners’ and Teachers’ Perception and Their Roles in Implementing Autonomous Learning, and Challenges They Face: Grade 10 Students of Serbo and Dibu Bijit High Schools in Focus*”, has been carried out by me under the guidance and supervision of my main advisor Seifu Zinab (Assis. Prof.) and co-advisor, Selassie Cheru (PhD). The thesis is original and has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma to any university or institutions.

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Date

Signature

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “*EFL Learners’ and Teachers’ Perception and Their Roles in Implementing Autonomous Learning, and Challenges They Face: Grade 10 Students of Serbo and Dibu Bijit High Schools in Focus*” submitted to Jimma University for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in *Teaching English as a Foreign Language*, and is a record of research work carried out by Mesele Elias Diga under our guidance and supervision. Therefore, we hereby declare that no part of this thesis has been submitted to any other university institutions for the award of any degree or diploma.

Main Advisor: Seifu Zinab (Assist. Prof.) sign_____ Date_____

Co-Advisor: Selassie Cheru (PhD) sign_____ Date_____

APPROVAL SHEET

EFL LEARNERS' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTION AND THEIR ROLES IN IMPLEMENTING AUTONOMOUS LEARNING, AND CHALLENGES THEY FACE: GRADE 10 STUDENTS OF SERBO AND DIBU BIJIT HIGH SCHOOLS IN FOCUS

Approved by the examining board As member of the board of examiners of the MA thesis open defense examination, we certify that we have read, evaluated the thesis prepared by Mesele Elias as and examined the candidate .we recommended that the thesis can be accepted fulfilling the thesis requirement for the masters of Art in TEFL

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Table of Contents

Contents	Page
DECLARATION	iii
CERTIFICATE	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTs	I
Table of Contents	III
LIST OF TABLES	VI
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	VII
ABSTRACT	viii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background of the study	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem	2
1.3. Research Objectives	5
1. 3. 1. General objective	5
1.3.2. Specific Objectives	5
1.4. Research Questions	6
1.5. Significance of the Study	6
1.6. Scope of the Study.	7
1.7. Limitation of the Study	7
CHAPTER TWO	9
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	9
Introduction	9
2.1. Definition of Learner Autonomy/Autonomous Learning	9
2.2. Three Perspectives on Learning Autonomy	10
2.3. Components of Learner Autonomy	12
2.4. The Interdependent Nature of Learner Autonomy	13
2.5. Changing Role of the Educator	15
2.6. Limitations to Autonomous Learning Theory	16
2.7. Language Learning Strategies	18

2.8. Language Learning Strategies and Learner Autonomy	20
2.9. Challenges in Implementing Autonomous Learning.....	21
CHAPTER THREE	23
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	23
Introduction.....	23
3.1. Research Design	23
3.2. Research approach.....	24
3.3. Data Types and Data Sources.....	24
3.4. Participants of the Study	24
3.4.1. Sample and Sampling technique	25
3.5. Data Gathering Instruments.....	26
3.5.1. Questionnaires.....	26
3.5.2. Semi-Structured Interview	27
3.6. Validity and Reliability Checks	28
3.6.1. Reliability	28
3.6.2. Validity Test	28
3. 7. Procedures of Data Collection	29
3.8. Methods of Data Analysis.....	30
3.9. Ethical Considerations	30
CHAPTER FOUR.....	32
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA.....	32
1.1. Introduction	32
Part I: Analysis and Discussion of Data from Students' Questionnaires	32
4.1. EFL Learners' Perceptions of Autonomous Learning	32
4.2. EFL Learners' Perceptions of their Teachers' Role in Autonomous Learning	35
4.3. Learners' Practice of Autonomous Learning Strategies inside and outside the Classroom.....	37
Part II. Analysis of Teachers' Responses to the Questionnaires and Interviews.....	40
4.3.EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Autonomous Learning and their Role in AL.....	42
4.3.1. Teachers' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy	43
4.3.2. Teachers' Perceptions of their own and their Students' Role in AL	44
4.3.3. Teachers' view on Autonomous learning Activities inside and outside classroom.....	47

4.3.4. Challenges faced in Implementing Autonomous Learning.....	50
CHAPTER FIVE	54
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	54
Introduction.....	54
5.1. Summary.....	54
5.2. Conclusion.....	56
5.3. Recommendations	58
REFERENCES.....	60
APPENDICES	67

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Table 4.1.EFL Learners' Perceptions of their Ability and Role in Autonomous Learning	32
Table 2 Learners' Perceptions of their Teachers' Role in Autonomous Learning.....	35
Table 3 EFL Students' Practices of Autonomous Learning Activities inside the Classroom	37
Table 4 4.EFL Learners' Practice of Autonomous Learning outside the classroom.....	39
Table 5 Teachers' Perceptions of their own and their Students' Role in AL	45

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AL	Autonomous learning
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to explore grade 10 EFL learners' and teachers' perception and their roles in implementing autonomous learning, and challenges of Serbo and Dibu Bijit high schools in Jimma zone. The study was a descriptive survey design involving a mixed research approaches (quantitative and qualitative research methods). The participants of this study were 276 (146 Male and 130 Female) students of grade 10 that were selected through a systematic random sampling technique, and also 10 EFL teachers purposively selected from the two Secondary Schools. To collect data, 37 close ended questionnaire items and 7 interview items were used from primary sources, students and EFL teachers. A semi-structured interview was also employed to gather information from the EFL teachers. The quantitative data were analyzed by using simple statistical tools such as frequency and percentages, while the qualitative data was analysed qualitatively by narration and by comparing and contrasting with the findings of the quantitative data. The findings of the study revealed that the extent to which EFL students and teachers, at the sampled schools, implemented autonomous learning was below the minimum standard. It could also be inferred from this result that many EFL students at the schools under the study were more teacher-centred as they were much dependent on their teachers during the learning process, resulting in a lack of ability to learn autonomously. This was also true of the EFL teachers at the schools who were still pursuing the teacher-centred approach. Therefore, it is advisable for the EFL teachers to create a positive relationship with their students in order to create a student-centred class with an autonomous environment. The EFL teachers' effort should start with changing the attitudes of their learners' towards the study of English as a subject.

Keywords: *Autonomous learning, Learner autonomy.*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

Learner autonomy, in the field of language learning, is a multifaceted concept that has been defined in different ways. Autonomous learning is one of learning methods that existed since 1981 which was discovered by Henri Holec (1981) the father of learner autonomy. Holec defined learner autonomy as ‘the ability to take charge of one’s own directed learning’ (1981,). Holec’s work on autonomy has laid the theoretical foundation for much later relevant research added to the literature, although the consensus on the definition of this term has not been so far reached (Benson & Voller, 1997; Nguyen, 2011). Hayta and Yaprak (2013) also define autonomous learning as the ability to involve themselves in their own learning process. In this learning method, students are responsible for their own learning process. They learn according to their own needs.

Although the role of the language learners is at the centre of learning, the teachers’ role should not be underestimated and cannot be diminished in the learning process. Teachers play an essential role in negotiating learners’ participation in planning for learning, putting the plans into action, monitoring and evaluating their learning to carry out the learning tasks autonomously (Nguyen, 2014). In most cases, the success of language learning depends on the teachers, how they teach and what learning opportunities they provide to their students by creating various learning contexts as facilitator, counselor, and resource persons (Alonazi, 2017).

According to Dickinson (1987,) learner autonomy refers to “the situations in which the learner is completely responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his learning as well as the implementation of those decisions. For him autonomy means learners’ total responsibility for their learning performed without the investment of a teacher, institution, or specially prepared material

Besides, the ways students learn in terms of theories of cognition and their practical applications are essential to develop strategies to improve the ability to be independent learner. Gorman (1998) states that independent learning encourages learners' motivation, self-confidence and self-reliance and paved the way to understand students by their own interests and give value for self-learning.

Taking these facts into considerations, this paper investigated grade 10 EFL students and teachers implementation of autonomous learning strategies at Serbo and DibuBijit Secondary Schools. Learner autonomy is one of the effective strategies for quality learning outcomes. However, developing learner autonomy can be challenging, where students have extensive experience of teacher-instructed learning. In such contexts, they may not fully consider the ideas of autonomy at once. Teachers, therefore, need to support the students gradually and develop the sense of taking more responsibility among the students by actively involving them in decision making, selecting learning materials

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Learner autonomy in language learning, as elucidated by Cotterall (1995) is the degree to which learners are able to use a set of tactics for taking control over their own learning. The tactics are comprised of the ability to identify goals, select materials and tasks, plan practice opportunities, and monitor and self-evaluate learning progress. These variables of the tactics are also known as meta-cognitive factors that emphasize self-regulated learning skills (i.e., skills for planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning) (Trinh, 2005). Further explaining the definition, Cotterall assumes that students can have various levels of practices of these tactics partly due to their different perceptions about language learning. Noticeably, many researchers assert that autonomy involves some extent of freedom in learn; however, this freedom is believed to be of constraints, and it is not synonymous with autonomy (Benson, 2007). Little (1991) postulates that autonomy is not the same as self-instruction, which is described as situations in which learners work individually or with other students without the control of their teachers during the learning process. This is because there is no guarantee that students who undertake self-instruction can obtain a high level of autonomy. In his definition, autonomy is “a capacity

for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action” (p. 4). Lengkanawati (2017) perceives autonomous learning as learners’ capacity to control their own learning. That is, autonomous learners are able to make their own decisions in determining learning objectives, defining learning contents and progressions, choosing learning methods and techniques, monitoring acquisition procedures, and evaluating learning results.

Autonomous learners plan for their learning by setting the learning objectives and strategies to be used to organize and monitor their learning processes, and evaluate the outcomes independent of teachers’ input (Andrade & Bunker, 2009; Lengkanawati, 2017).

Autonomous learners are responsible, persistent, resourceful, and take initiative in making and implementing language learning decisions without depending entirely on their teachers. Such independence makes their learning more effective than when they actively rely on their teachers (Rao, 2018). It, therefore, decreases teacher dependence and enhances students’ self-reflective ability, which is an effective strategy to learn from success and failures (Crabbe, 1999).

From this brief review, it can be concluded that learner autonomy is an independent learning process where the learners plan their learning, set learning goals, take more learning responsibilities, and self-reflect on the learning process. It is generally believed that the primary purpose of learning any foreign language is to use it for various communicative purposes. Based on what has been said so far, EFL learners need to be more active, participatory, and responsible in language learning in order to enhance their foreign language skills and develop communicative competence. In a country like Ethiopia, where English is taught as a foreign language, particularly in the secondary schools where the researcher is serving as English teacher, the learners’ competence in English is very poor. This may be attributed to various in-schools and out of school factors. However, after teaching at the school for many years, the researcher came to conclude that their lack of competence in communicative English has something to do with the little or no level of implementation of autonomous learning by the students, and

also lack of support from their teachers in that regard. After all, the researcher surely knows that classroom instruction is the only venue where students have contact with English. Once they leave the classroom, opportunities to use English are scarce as they are totally engrossed in their first language surroundings. In addition to this, large class sizes, limited time allocation for English instruction, and lack of teacher's encouragement for students' participation in the classroom activities are unfavourable for promoting autonomous learning and effective language learning strategies in a way that enhance the learners competence in English. Thus, the need to reverse this problem motivated the researcher to conduct a study on *grade 10 EFL learners' and teachers' perception and their roles in implementing autonomous learning, and challenges of Berbo and Dibu Bijit high schools*. Studies held in china indicated that Autonomous Learning refers to the capacity to take charge of one's learning process (Littlewood, 2009). Consequently, learner autonomy is conceptualized as an individual's capability, quality, and mind set (Macaskill& Taylor, 2010). Psychologists in the cognitive area have reached a consensus about the close relationship between learner autonomy and learning achievements (Siew et al., 2016; Shu, 2020). Many previous studies also demonstrated that an individual's levels of autonomy are positively associated with his/her language acquisition (Littlewood, 2009; Carr, 2019; Denovan, 2021). Therefore, a deficiency of autonomous learning ability can be one factor resulting in a moderate English-speaking level. Ushioda (2016) held the opinion that cultivating learner autonomy can not only meet different individuals' learning needs, and generate active and optimistic learning attitudes, but establish a foundation for conducting further effective learning independently and critically. To the best knowledge of the researcher, there are not many empirical studies in Ethiopia with a particular emphasis to learners' implementation of autonomous learning strategies in the context of secondary schools. This indicates the existence of a clear gap in the autonomous learning literature in the context of Ethiopia. To be frank, the researcher, after searching the web for longer time, was able to find only two related studies. To begin with, Tekle (2011) conducted a research on major hindrances to the development of Autonomy among Grade Nine students in learning English in Basso Debre Brihan. Tekle's findings shows that learners related factors (lack of confidence to learn English without a teacher, lack of interest, and commitment to learn English) are the

major problems that affect independent learning. However, this research differs from previous one in that it addressed the overall practice of grade 10 EFL students and teachers in implementing autonomous learning strategies at Serbo and DibuBijit Secondary Schools in KersaWoreda. Similarly, Asaye (2006) investigated elements which ensure learner autonomy in the distance education program of St. Mary's University College. As said above, the current study is different from Asaye's research in that it focused on EFL students and teachers in the context of secondary schools there was not study conducted on autonomous learning of students in English in both representative schools, this caused to practice this strategy

1.3. Research Objectives

1. 3. 1. General objective

The main objective of this study was to investigate grade 10 EFL students and teachers perception and their roles in implementing autonomous learning strategies and thereby identify the challenges they encounter in implementing and developing learner autonomy in EFL.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

This study has the following specific objectives:

- To assess EFL learners' and Teachers' understanding of the concept of 'learner autonomous learning strategies.
- To point out learners' level of engagement in practicing autonomous learning strategies both in the classroom and outside.
- To examine the efforts being made by grade 10 EFL teachers to encourage and/or motivate their students to implement autonomous English language learning strategies inside and outside the classroom.
- To analyse the extent to which the EFL teachers help their students to implement autonomous learning strategies?
- To identify the challenges faced by the EFL students and teachers in implementing autonomous learning strategies.

1.4. Research Questions

This study investigated grade 10 EFL students and teachers perception and their roles in implementing autonomous learning strategies and thereby identify the challenges they encounter in implementing and developing learner autonomy in EFL.

To be more precise, the study attempted to answer the following research questions:

- ❖ How do EFL learners and teachers understand the concept of 'learner autonomy'?
- ❖ What autonomous learning strategies do grade 10 EFL students engage in both inside and outside the classroom, and to what extent was their level of engagement?
- ❖ What are the EFL teachers doing to encourage and/or motivate their students to implement autonomous English language learning strategies inside and outside the classroom?
- ❖ How do the EFL teachers help their students to implement autonomous English language learning strategies?
- ❖ What challenges did the EFL students and teachers face in implementing autonomous learning strategies?

1.5. Significance of the Study

Autonomous learning helps teachers to improve learners' language proficiency. To achieve this, challenges that hinder the implementation of autonomous learning should be identified and solved. Therefore, this study is expected to have a paramount importance with reference to the nature of language teaching and learning in most of the secondary schools which, like the one where I teach, are generally believed to have large class sizes and hence, the teachers play the dominant role in the classrooms, while the students are given less opportunity to be autonomous learners.

The result of this study is expected to identify the challenges that affect the advancement of autonomous learning among the learners and provides the reasons why students have over dependence on their teachers. This in turn, could be very useful information for the

teachers, material designers, policy makers, and/or curriculum developers to consider in planning and selecting the methodology and techniques of teaching in order to make the students more active and autonomous in their learning.

Finally, this study may also serve as a starting point or a reference tool, for those who want to carry out further researches on this or similar area.

1.6. Scope of the Study.

This study was delimited both geographically and conceptually. Though not supported by any empirical evidence, the researcher, rightly or wrongly, believes that EFL learners' practice of autonomous learning in most of government secondary schools in Jimma Zone is very limited. However, the researcher, due to the difficulty of studying a wider geographical area with a larger population, delimited his study to focus only on grade ten students who learn at Serbo and DibuBijit Secondary Schools. In addition, 10 teachers who are currently teaching English in grade ten at the two schools were included in the study

Conceptually, this study was confined to examining the conceptions and roles of EFL Learners' and teachers' implementation or level of practice of autonomous learning strategies and the major Challenges such as problems related to the students, problems related to the schoolteachers' related problems, curriculum and/ or textbook related problems, and also socio-cultural factors etc., that may have the potential to affect the practice of promoting autonomous learning. The data collection instruments to be involved in this study were also limited to the usage of a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview, which means there are no practical observations to determine the degree to which the EFL students at the schools under the study implemented autonomous learning.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

The researcher believes that involving a bigger number of participants from many secondary schools in Jimma Zone would have been important to increase the representativeness of the study and thereby provide more comprehensive findings on the

topic under investigation. However, due to factors such as distance, time and financial constraints, thus, the fact that this study involved only a small number of participants from two secondary schools in Jimma Zone may be seen as the other limitation of the study.

1.8. Organization of the study

This paper is organized into seven chapters with different sections each. The first chapter consisted an introductory part of the paper which explains the background of the speaking strategies, this chapter also consisted of statement of the problem in it, the study gaps have explained. The general objective and the specific objectives have stated. The research questions, delimitation of the study, limitation of the study which explained the problems that setback during the time of study. Meaning of related terms and organization of the study provided. In chapter two the reviewed literature provided with different empirical research forwarded by different scholars have been mentioned, theoretical analysis and experiences have explained. Chapter three comprised the research methodology part that included ,introductions to the, chapter, description of the study area, research methods ,research design, population of the study sampling size and sampling techniques, data sources, data gathering methods, data analysis. Reliability and ethical considerations have stated

.Chapter four contains data analysis of the collected data by different data gathering methods, chapter five incorporated with conclusion and recommendation part. In this part finding reached through the study and possible suggestions enable to solve the existing problems or to improve the situation provided. The last two parts contained references or bibliography and appendixes respectively.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter presented theoretical and empirical literature relevant to this subject of study from different sources and issues associated with autonomous learning of English as a foreign language. It discussed the concept of autonomous learning, the various Perspectives on Learning Autonomy, components of learners' autonomy, the interdependent nature of learners' autonomy, the strategies of autonomous learning as well as other related issues.

2.1. Definition of Learner Autonomy/Autonomous Learning

Learner autonomy in language learning is a multifaceted concept that has been defined in different ways. Holec (1981) defined autonomous learning as 'the ability to take charge of one's own directed learning' (p. 3). Holes further elaborated autonomous learning as the capacity to act with autonomy within certain contexts. He suggests that in the language learning context, an autonomous learner is able to take responsibility for his or her learning, take an active role in selecting learning content and methods, and evaluate his or her progress.

This capacity for autonomy is seen as an on-going process and goal, not an innate skill but something that can be nurtured and improved (Holec, 1981; Little wood, 1999). Most learners, Holec says, "will... not yet [be] autonomous but are involved in the process of acquiring the ability to assume responsibility for their learning" (Holec, 1981, pp. 25-26). This clearly identifies autonomy as a relative, rather than complete notion.

Little (1991) viewed the concept as "a capacity– for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action" , which is actualized in how learners perform their learning and transfer what they have learned to broader environments. Little (1991) claims that learner autonomy is not the same as self-instruction, which is described as situations in which learners work individually or with other students without the control

of their teachers during the learning process. This is because there is no guarantee that students who undertake self-instruction can obtain a high level of autonomy. In his definition, autonomy is “a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action” (p. 4)

Dickinson (1987) defined learner autonomy as “the situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his learning and the implementation of those decisions” (p. 11). For him, autonomy means learners’ total responsibility for their learning performed without the investment of a teacher, institution, or specifically prepared materials. Benson (2001) defined the concept as “the capacity to take control of one’s own learning” (p. 47). Learners are decision-makers who practice different levels of control over learning management, learning content and cognitive processes. Despite the numerous perspectives, there is a compromise that learner autonomy is best conceptualized as the capacity to take control or take charge of one’s own learning (Benson, 2013).

Lengkanawati (2017) perceives autonomous learning as learners’ capacity to control their own learning. That is, autonomous learners are able to make their own decisions in determining learning objectives, defining learning contents and progressions, choosing learning methods and techniques, monitoring acquisition procedures, and evaluating learning results.

2.2. Three Perspectives on Learning Autonomy

After researching for long years, Phil Benson has written extensively on language learner autonomy, in which he organized autonomous learning theory into three different perspectives: the *technical perspective*, *psychological perspective*, and the *socio-cultural perspective* (Benson, 2013b). While he identifies that in practice, autonomy is a combination of all three perspectives (p. 19), they can offer us clear lenses through which to further examine learner autonomy theory.

The technical perspective emphasizes the technical methods and processes designed to improve learning through meta-cognitive, cognitive and social strategies, commonly

referred to as 'learning training' (Dickinson, 1996). Cotterall (1995) goes as far to say that autonomy is defined by the very extent to which learners can demonstrate such tactics and strategies, an interpretation of autonomous learning which firmly points towards technical skills and processes, and the self-management thereof, as indicative of a fully-realized autonomous capacity.

The psychological perspective, with its roots firmly located in Holec's (1981) notion of a capacity to be fostered and nurtured, emphasizes the broader cognitive skills necessary in the development of one's ability to interpret and construct knowledge (Benson, 2011; Little, 2007). Holec argued that through autonomous learning, the notion of universal, 'right' knowledge is replaced with individual, subjective, deeply personal knowledge which is constructed and dominated by the learner (1981, p. 21). This interpretation of learning and autonomy adopts a constructivist approach to knowledge construction (Benson, 2011; Benson, 2013a; Little, 2007.). Within the constructivist paradigm, effective learning occurs through internal understandings, transformations and developments, with external aid (Benson, 2011; Benson, 2013b; Little, 2007). Constructivism values and respects the broader attitudes, interpretations and cognitive skills which permit a learner to take greater responsibility for his/her learning through their individual "negotiation of meaning" (Benson, 2013b, p. 21).

The political perspective emphasizes learner empowerment or even emancipation from the pressures of traditional education institutions, by giving them control over learning content and processes (Benson, 2003, pp. 3-4; Benson, 2011, p. 112; Benson, 2013b, p. 24; Little, 2009, p. 223; Littlewood, 1999, p. 71). Littlewood (1999) argues that this is very important to language learning, as well as learning in the wider sense, since independence, self-fulfilment and freedom from external pressures are necessary to continue learning throughout life (p. 71). This freedom of the individual and subsequent democratization of education was also a pertinent aspect to autonomous learning for Holec, who suggested it is a powerful aspect to both learning and the ability to "act more responsibly in running the affairs of the society in which he lives" (Holec, 1981, p. 1). The rise of autonomous individuals operating within society is a powerful force: "adult education should become an instrument for arousing an increasing sense of awareness

and liberation in man, in some cases, an instrument for changing the environment itself. Here, Holec's idea seems to depict that autonomous language learners may therefore, positively impact not only their current and future learning, but the very society in which they live.

Some years later, these dimensions of autonomy were developed by Oxford (2003) into a distinct model with four perspectives, including 'technical', 'psychological', 'socio-cultural', and 'political-critical', each with a different focus. The technical perspective emphasizes the physical situation of learning where autonomy is enhanced by independent work, for example, in a self-access centre. The psychological perspective is not just confined to learning responsibilities as, compared to that of Benson's; it is extended with the focus on students' emotional and mental characteristics. In the socio-cultural perspective, attention is paid to mediated learning in which interaction is important to students' learning processes. Regarding the political-critical perspective, autonomy is stressed as a medium to gain access to 'cultural alternatives and power structures' and 'to develop an articulate voice amid competing ideologies' (p. 79). Trinh (2005) assumes that autonomous students are ones who possess the ability to take control of the affective (attitudes, willingness, readiness, and self-confidence), cognitive (ability or capacity), and social factors (social skills required for cooperating and interacting with others) in their learning. In this study, learner autonomy is conceptualized from a combination of the technical, psychological, social, and political dimensions.

2.3. Components of Learner Autonomy

To Wenden (1991) a learner who wants to have learner autonomy should have willingness and ability to take charge of their learning. Moreover, two attitudes provided to foster learner autonomy are 'willingness to take on responsibility' and 'confidence in their ability as learners' (Wenden, 1991). To Wenden, the students should be confident and trust in their ability to learn or monitor their own learning. Unless the learners are willing to take responsibility for their learning, their autonomy will not be developed (Borge and Al-Busaidi, 2012). The willingness to take on responsibility can be defined as the learners will do whatever to acquire the language learning as they "see themselves

having a crucial role on their language learning” (Wenden, 1991; Littlewood (1996), the similar idea is presented as *ability* to acquire knowledge and skill, and *willingness* to have motivation and confidence in learning are the key terms for the learners to develop their learner autonomy. This means to be a capable learner, knowledge and skill are required. Moreover, the learners should be motivated and confident in their ability to take responsibility in their learning process. Littlewood (1996) learners who have ability to choose the knowledge and have the necessary skill to carry out whatever alternatives seem most appropriate are keen to have learner autonomy. Furthermore, when learners need to learn language, they will have *attitude* to learn. Then, when they have a favourable attitude of language learning, they will have need or desire to learn it, which is called *motivation*. Obviously, *motivation* is also a vital part of learner autonomy. It can promote responsibility among learners and their capacity to be more confident in their ability to learn.

Therefore, it is obviously shown that learners’ *willingness* to take on their responsibility and learners’ confidence in their *capacity* under ‘attitudes’ can promote learner autonomy (Wenden, 1991). Moreover, this idea meets the same notion of Littlewood’s that *willingness* to take their learning responsibility and *ability* to have knowledge and skill can encourage a learner to have more learner autonomy (Littlewood, 1996). Finally, to Lightbown and Spada (2013), a student who has positive attitudes, which originated from *motivation*, tends to have willingness to take responsibility in learning.

2.4. The Interdependent Nature of Learner Autonomy

Based on what has transpired so far, it seems that learner autonomy is a capacity to take charge of one's learning. However, it is said to be a fallacy that autonomy occurs in isolation from the ideas and experience of others; in other words, autonomous learning does not occur in a vacuum (Boud, 1988, p. 29). Indeed, as Freire (1974) writes: “to be human is to engage in relationships with others and the world” (p. 3), and this holds true for learner autonomy. It is argued that without the interaction with other students and teachers, the capacity for learner autonomy may not even develop due to the inherently social aspect to autonomous learning (Benson, 2011; Little, 1996, p. 81; Little, 2009, p. 223). Indeed, both constructivist and psychological perspectives of autonomous learning value interaction. It is suggested that the oft-perceived image of an autonomous learner working in isolation in order to take charge of his/her own learning

does not accurately represent either the nature of learner autonomy, nor life itself: “as social beings our independence is always balanced by dependence, our essential condition is one of interdependence; total detachment is a principal determining feature not of autonomy but of autism” (Little, 1996, p. 81). This essential condition of humanity helps to explain why learner autonomy may in fact depend upon social interaction, in a state of interdependence, rather than a state of solitude (Brookfield, 1986; Boud, 1988).

This demands that we examine the socio-cultural context of autonomous learning, since it is argued that collaboration and interaction with others are central to a successful capacity for autonomy, and indeed, our lives (Palfreyman, 2003, p. 2). Drawing upon Vygotskian socio-cultural learning theory, Feryok (2013) argues that all higher-level human development, including constructivist approaches to learning, are mediated through social interaction (p. 214). Indeed, Lev Vygotsky's seminal *Mind in Society: the Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (1978) entrenches effective knowledge development within a social context. Vygotsky's notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) characterizes higher-level development as “independent problem solving” and “the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Vygotsky appears to point to what will later become known as learner autonomy, and identifies it as something with *potential*, a capacity to be developed, with facilitators/educators and peers – the social aspect to autonomous learning is recognized.

Higgs (1988) argues that it is this successful interaction between the learner, the teacher, the environment and the task itself which result in autonomous learner; without these social influences autonomous outcomes may very well not prove fruitful (see Figure 1). Little (2005) builds upon this, stating that it is through collaboration and interdependence with others that learners can effectively interpret and produce language, which then in turn become part of “the individual learner's internalized mental resources” (p. 25). It would appear therefore, that while autonomous learning may well involve one's individual capacity, this capacity is not engaged or effectively realized in isolation, but rather through social interactions and interdependence, a dynamic process in which

teachers and learners collaborate to achieve autonomy (Boud, 1988; Feryok, 2013; Higgs, 1988; Little, 2007).

2.5. Changing Role of the Educator

While the interdependent interpretation of autonomous learning theory would confirm the need for an educator, the role of this individual is required to shift from one of teacher to facilitator of the learning program and resource person (Higgs, 1988, p. 41). As Benson (2003) argues, it is the responsibility of the teacher to help create a suitable atmosphere and conditions in which students will feel encouraged to develop the autonomous capacities they possess (p. 305), and as the interdependent understanding of autonomous learning has demonstrated, this does not mean leaving students to their own devices (Benson, 2011, p. 91). Critics agree that the teacher's role in an autonomous learning model is to guide and encourage learners, to facilitate their learning and assist them in the development of learner autonomy (Benson, 2011; Feryok, 2013; Higgs, 1988; Little, 2007). As Little (2007) writes: “few learners will arrive at their first class ready to take complete charge of their own learning; for the most, self-management in learning will be something they have to learn, to begin with by taking very small steps” (p. 23). This reinforces Holec's interpretation of autonomy as a capacity which can grow and develop, and implicates the teacher/facilitator within this 'learning to learn' model. Indeed, as Feryok argues, it is the teacher's responsibility to develop learner autonomy (2013). Little (2007) concurs, claiming that aside from a teacher's responsibilities to achieve linguistic and communicative objectives, assisting learners to become more autonomous is a prime goal (p. 16). Later, he goes on to identify three primary roles for a teacher's involvement in the learning processes; to aid learner involvement, in terms of planning, selecting and evaluating learning experiences; to aid learner reflection; and to assist with target language use (Little, 2009, p. 224). Benson, making reference to Volker, also identified the diverse roles for teachers in autonomous learning models, including the facilitating of learning, a counsellor offering “psycho-social” support, and as a resource of knowledge (Volker, 1997, as cited by Benson 2011).

It seems clear that autonomous learning researchers and practitioners agree that the role of an educator is increasingly diverse and supportive, with a key objective being to create a supportive and suitably stimulating environment within which learners can develop their autonomy and target language use (Higgs, 1988, p. 41). Higgs (1988) concurs with Little's and Benson's interpretation of the teacher's role, emphasizing the importance in nurturing and developing conditions to help learners achieve their potential. The result is an educator who breaks free from the more traditional teacher-centered educational model, instead opting for the role of facilitator, counsellor and resource person, aiding the development of learning environments and strategies which empower and encourage learners to have a greater understanding of the learning processes and their progress (Little, 1996, Higgs, 1988). The art of counselling students may be found in or outside of the classroom, and is, according to Little (1996), an integral part of a teacher's repertoire if they seek to foster learner autonomy. Little argues that is through a combination of learning resources and counselling that learners are able to develop far greater capacities to understand why, what, and how they are learning (p. 84).

2.6. Limitations to Autonomous Learning Theory

While learner autonomy, in theory, seems to hold the possibility for great potential learning, theorists have identified two key areas of resistance – learner resistance and teacher resistance. In the case of the learners, it appears clear that the development of a capacity for autonomous learning has to be made through choice, as Holec identified: “self-direction in learning must remain a possibility offered to and not forced upon learners” (Holec, 1981, p. 34). Clearly, one cannot force a learner to assist with course content selections, to participate in learning training or engage in counselling. The fact that not all learners may have autonomy as their goal, especially in post-compulsory education, is a clear obstacle. Oxford (2008) writes: “independent L2 learning can open the doors to control of responsibility by learners, but learners must actually want that control for responsibility and actively take it” (p. 48). Arguably, students with little prior experience with autonomous learning may well exhibit resistance and reluctance to methods and models which seek to place more responsibility into their own hands (Boud, 1988, p. 39). Little (2007) agrees with this stance, suggesting that when students are

accustomed to a traditional pedagogy with passive learning, they can be very distrustful of a learning model which asks them to set targets, select materials and evaluate their own learning. The result of this is that learner and educator desires may often clash. As Brookfield (1995) claims: “[t]he most hallowed rule of business – that the customer is always right – is often pedagogically wrong. Equating good teaching with how many students feel you have done what they wanted ignores the dynamics of teaching and prevents significant learning” (pp. 15-16). Accepting responsibility for their learning may be the last thing learners’ desire. Often the learner’s primary interest is to pass exams, and it may be challenging for them to “shake their belief” that the teacher’s role is solely to prepare them for these goals (Little, 1996, p. 85). Despite resistance and reluctance, educators ought to persevere and develop opportunities for their learners to develop their autonomy, whether they realize the immediate and long-term benefits, or not.

Perhaps more bizarrely, given the aforementioned beliefs in the value of learner autonomy, it appears that teachers as well as learners can offer resistance. Benson (2011) argues that while many language teachers would prescribe to learner autonomy in theory, in practice they find it to be “somewhat idealistic”). This may well be due to the dramatic change in their role, and teacher identity, from that of “purveyor of information” to “counsellor and manager of learning resources” (Little, 1996,). Little (1996) highlights the challenge this shift in responsibilities may bear upon teachers, in addition to the fear that a facilitative, more supportive teacher may not ‘get the job done’ so quickly in terms of target language and course content. He writes:

It is not easy for teachers to stop talking: after all, if they stop talking they stop teaching, and if they stop teaching, their learners may stop learning. And it is not easy for teachers to let learners solve problems for themselves; for that takes time, and there is always so much ground to cover. Committing oneself to learner autonomy requires a lot of nerve. Indeed, developing learner autonomy may well require “a lot of nerve”, but may also be interpreted as a threat to the role of teachers in general. Powell (1988) identifies an interesting teacher paradox, in which teachers may well complain about their long teaching schedules and frustrating students, but are ultimately very reluctant to reduce their working hours or provide students with greater opportunities for learning outside of

the classroom. Teachers, he argues, are entirely dependent upon students, inasmuch as, they interpret their job to be showing and telling things to other people. If this target audience becomes more autonomous and starts to develop greater control over their own learning, the role of the teacher diminishes (Powell, 1988, p. 109).

2.7. Language Learning Strategies

Language learning is a comprehensive process embracing studying different aspects of a language (Grabe, 1991). Strategies in language learning have been mainly associated with those used to make effective language learning. Wenden (1987) viewed learning strategies as “the various operations that learners use in order to make sense of their learning” (pp. 7-8). Oxford and Nyikos (1989) regard the concept as “operations used by learners to aid the acquisition, storage, and retrieval and use of information” (p. 291). This definition was further elaborated as “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferrable to new situations” O’Malley and Chamot (1990) defined learning strategies as specific actions employed by the learner to facilitate learning, comprehending, and retaining new knowledge. In a similar vein, Oxford (1990) defined the concept as specific actions that the learners use in order to learn faster, easier, more self-directed, more enjoyable, more effective, and more transferable to the new settings. More recently, Ortega (2009) regards learning strategies as conscious perceptual and behavioral actions taken by learners for the purpose of gaining control over their learning. For Griffiths (2008), learning strategies are actions that learners deliberately select to control their learning. Oxford (2017) further elaborated the definition where language learning strategies are regarded as complex, dynamic actions learners select and employ in particular situations to accomplish language tasks and increase their language learning development.

Besides differing views on the definition, learning strategies have also been classified in several ways. According to Oxford (1990), six basic types of L2 learning strategies have been categorized; cognitive, memory, and compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. The first three are direct strategies, which are closely related to the

target language used to manipulate language learning strategies by language learners, and the latter three are indirect strategies, which support and manage language without being directly involved in the target language. It seems that both direct strategies and indirect strategies support each other.

Memory strategies are sometimes known as ‘mnemonics’. Language learners use this kind of strategy to remember the words and recall them when they are needed to be used. Memory strategies enable learners to regain their knowledge as powerful mental tools (Oxford, 1990).

Cognitive strategies are the most popular strategies among language learners to manipulate their learning process and to gain language performance (Oxford, 1990). In addition, Mitchell (2014) defined cognitive strategies as the ways to assist language learners to acquire language skill by organizing and integrating information (Mitchell, 2014).

Many difficulties are found when learners learn language, and compensation strategies will help them to cope with those obstacles. Good language learners will use ‘intelligent guessing’ to propel their learning in a clever way.

Metacognitive are the strategies of how learners process their cognition in their learning (Oxford, 1990; 2003; 2017). O’Malley and Chamot stated that metacognitive strategies refer to the higher executive skills that may entail planning, monitoring, and self-evaluation, whereas cognitive strategies are more direct to individual learning task (O’Malley and Chamot, 1990). These kinds of strategies are also used to overview and self-direct language learning (Rubin, 1987).

The affective strategy is about how learners deal with their emotions, beliefs, attitudes, and motivation when learning language. This kind of learning strategy refers to the identification of one’s mood and anxiety level, feeling towards the reward and good performance of L2 proficiency (Oxford, 2003).

The social strategy is about how learners convey language and communicate with others. This issue is also about the socio-cultural context such as age, gender, sex, social level,

and so on. To Chamot (1987), social strategies are the cooperative skill of language learners working with their peers or native speakers to deal with error and retain feedback, in order to improve their L2 proficiency. Thus, social strategies will underpin the interaction and communication activities.

2.8. Language Learning Strategies and Learner Autonomy

The interest in both language learning strategies and learner autonomy is mainly driven by a desire to understand the characteristics of good language learners because good language learners are supposed to take conscious actions to improve and control their language learning (Oxford et al., 2014). Thus, understanding the characteristics of good language learners is important because once the characteristics are understood; teachers can explore the potential for learner training and approach their students with helpful well-designed tasks to help their students become better language learners (Sewell, 2003).

As stated before, in the context of foreign language learning, learning strategies refer to “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferrable to new situations” (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989, p. 8). On the other hand, learner autonomy is defined as the capacity to take control or take charge of one’s own teach (Benson, 2013), which is manifested in how they go about their learning and transfer what they have learned to wider contexts (Little, 1991).

It has long been suggested in the literature that there is a close link between learning strategies and learner autonomy. Dickinson (1987), for example, maintains that learning strategies are central factors in the promotion and development of learner autonomy because appropriate strategy use allows learners to take more responsibility for their learning. According to Rubin (1987), students who use effective learning strategies have a better capacity to work beyond the classroom on their own when the teacher is not available to give directions input for their learning. In a similar vein, Oxford et al. (2014) stated that the use of language learning strategies promotes language learning as a cognitive process whereby learners take full control of their learning process.

Cotterall(1999) asserted that if learners lack learning strategies training, they will have difficulties in the classroom that foster autonomous learning. In an EFL context, Wang (2016) found that after strategy training, the learners increasingly become conscious that they should be responsible for their learning and know how to perform autonomous learning. Thus, understanding learners' strategy use and autonomy is of great importance as it could provide teachers with fruitful information before any interventions to develop students' language learning strategies and to foster learner autonomy are carried out.

2.9. Challenges in Implementing Autonomous Learning

Yunus and Arshad (2015) also explored 35 teachers' perspectives on autonomous learning practices in their classrooms in Malaysian public secondary schools. Their study found that teachers were very positive in implementing autonomous learning among students. Similarly, Duong (2014), who explored EFL teachers' understanding of learner autonomy and related instructional practices in the Thai context, found that teachers had a theoretical understanding of learner autonomy and their roles in autonomous learning. However, they struggled to implement the strategies to support learning autonomy.

Studies have also suggested that implementing autonomy in EFL lessons is challenging because learners often lack the attitude and skills to become independent learners. Shahsavari's (2014) study revealed that learner autonomy is necessary to learn language expeditiously; however, the learners did not take responsibility for their learning. When asked to take a more active role, the students thought that the teachers who asked them to be more responsible were not dynamic and experienced. Similar findings were also reported in Bekleyen and Selimoglu (2016) and Alhaysony (2016), Khalil and Ali (2018). All three studies found students lacking the skills and attitude to learning independently because they believed their teachers were more responsible for teaching than making them learn independently.

Challenges in incorporating autonomous learning in EFL classrooms due to the lack of skills in learners were also highlighted by Alonazi (2017). The author concluded that while teachers lacked pedagogical ideas, implementing autonomous learning was challenging due to learners lacking related skills. Similar results were also reported by

Dogan and Mirici (2017). They explored the EFL instructors' cognizance and practices on learner autonomy in nine geographically distinct public Turkish universities. Based on the data collected from 96 EFL instructors using questionnaires and interviews, the researchers concluded that the instructors were highly positive towards the values of autonomous learning. However, they could not implement autonomous learning due to the learners' inability to become self-dependent and more responsible in their learning.

Furthermore, research also suggests that the competencies in English language and cultural factors can result in negative attitudes in students towards autonomous learning. For example, in the study by Khalil and Ali (2018) in Egypt, the students expected their teachers to spoon-feed them because they lacked competencies in English despite being more positive about autonomous learning. A study based in Indonesia by Cirocki, Anam, and Retnaningdyah (2019) found many students were unaccustomed to learner autonomy and had low motivation to learn English. Therefore, their teachers believed that they were not ready to learn independently. Regarding the perspectives of the students in learner autonomy, Asiri and Shukri (2020) revealed the negative perspectives of the students towards learner autonomy; they were completely dependent on their teachers and did not have the habit of learning by themselves. Similar result was found in Dunog (2021) too. The researchers carried out the study in Vietnamese context in order to investigate the Vietnamese EFL learners' perceptions and practices of autonomous learning. The result showed some practice of learner autonomy. However, it was not satisfactory because many students were found more teacher-centered. They also lacked the ability to learn independently. Based on the review above, we conclude that learner autonomy is critical in building confidence in learning and gaining success. However, studies suggest neither the teachers nor the students seem autonomous in their teaching and learning practices in many EFL contexts

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter addresses the overall methodology used in this research. It consists of brief discussion of the research design, research approach, research population and sampling methods, sample size determination, data type and source, methods of data collection, and data analysis, as well as ethical consideration.

3.1. Research Design

Research design is the way to arrange the study and collect the data based on research problems (Kothari, 2004). The choice of which design to apply depends on the nature of the problems posed by the researcher aims. AgainEssays (2018, p. 17)also indicated that the nature and objectives of the problem to be studied and the means of obtaining information were the most important factors to be considered in order to choose the appropriate research design. Thus, this study employed a descriptive survey design. According to (Koul, L., 2008), a descriptive survey design is helpful to understand present conditions and point out present needs. It's useful in showing immediate or current status of a phenomenon. Similarly, Copper and Schindler (2003) stated that descriptive research design involves what, when, where, why and how of a phenomenon. This method is relevant for this study given the nature of the study needed wider description and investigation of facts and views about the current practice of autonomous learning.

3.2. Research approach

This study made use of both qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed research approach). quantitative research method involves a numeric or statistical approach to research design. qualitative research is also specific in its surveying as it builds upon existing theories. As a result, data is used to objectively measure reality (Leedy&Ormrod, 2001). On the other hand, qualitative research involves purposeful use for describing, explaining, and interpreting collected data. It can also be described as an effective model that occurs in a natural setting that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from being highly involved in the actual experiences (Creswell, 2003; Denzin& Lincoln, 2005).

Spratt, Walker and Robinson (2004) suggested that, combining quantitative and qualitative methods sounds like a good idea. Using multiple approaches can capitalize on the strengths of each approach and offset their different weakness. Moreover, this approach was important in complementing the limitations of each method by another; hence the researcher employed mixed research approach to investigate EFL students' and teachers' implementation of autonomous learning in two selected secondary schools of Jimma Zone

3.3. Data Types and Data Sources

This study used both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected from EFL students of grade 10 at Serbo and Dibubijiti Secondary Schools, as well as English teachers that are currently teaching in the schools. The Secondary data was gathered from the academic literatures, and other written sources such as books, journals and articles.

3.4. Participants of the Study

The participants of this study were grade 10 students at the two secondary schools under the study who are registered for the academic year 2015 E.C. and also English language teachers who were assigned to teach there in two secondary schools. Currently, there are 895 grade 10 students at the two secondary schools; 466 grade 10 students at Serbo secondary school, and 429 grade 10 students at DibuBijit Secondary School. Moreover,

there are 10 English teachers (6 at Serbo and 4 at Dibu Bijit Secondary Schools) who are currently teaching grade 10 students at the schools. All of the teachers in the two schools are male. Out of the total 895 students at both schools, 276 (146 male and 130 female) or about 31% of them were selected as a sample through a systematic random sampling technique.

3.4.1. Sample and Sampling technique

Sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individual selected represents the large group from which they were selected. According to Kothari (2004) sampling is defined as the selection of any part of an aggregate or totality on the basis of which a judgment or inference about the aggregate or totality is made. In other words, it is the process of obtaining information about an entire population by examining only a part of it. A sample design is a technique or the procedure the researcher would adopt in selecting a sample from a given population. There are different types of sample designs based on two factors, the representation basis and the element selection technique. On the representation basis, the samples probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Kothari, 2004). So, this research focuses on the representation base to employ probability sampling techniques.

A Purposive sampling technique has been employed to select the two schools. The two schools were deliberately selected to be the setting of the study because the schools are relatively near to the work place of the researcher and are accessible to collect data for the study. There are eight sections of grade 10 in Serbo and 6 sections in DibuBijit High Schools.

At the time of data collection for this study, there were totally 895 students at the two sampled secondary schools. Out of 895 students 31% (276 students) were taken as target population. The sample size determination was based on Yamane's formula with confidence level 95% and confidence interval (error margin) 5%. The derivations above show that Yamane's formula is applicable only when estimating a population proportion using a confidence coefficient of 95% (Yamane, 1967).

Thus,
$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where, n = is the sample size

N = is the population size (895)

e = error tolerance (0.05) the error of 5percentage points

$$n = \frac{895}{1 + 895(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{895}{1 + 895(0.0025)} \quad n = \frac{895}{3.2375} \quad n = 276.44$$

Thus, 276 students were selected as a sample for this study.

In order to ensure better representation, a systematic random sampling technique was employed to choose a sample of students from all 14 sections of grade 10 in the two schools (Serbo and Dibu Bijit Secondary Schools). There are 10 English teachers at the two sampled schools, and all of them were purposively included in this study.

3.5. Data Gathering Instruments

Close-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interview were used to gather the necessary data for this study.

3.5.1. Questionnaires

According to Best and Kahan (1989), questionnaire enables a researcher to collect data from large group of individuals within a short period of time; it is easy to administer to a large number of subjects in one place at a time.

Standardised questionnaire items were as used to collect primary data from grade 10 EFL students and teachers at the secondary schools of SerboandDibuBijit. Hence, two versions of questionnaires were developed - one for teachers and the other for the students (see appendices A and B).

The questionnaire for students has four sections. The first section (8 items) focuses on examining learners' perceptions of their ability in autonomous learning and their role in it. The second section (5 items) addressed students' views on their teachers' responsibility in autonomous learning. The third section (5 items) evaluates Students' Practices of Autonomous Learning Activities inside the Classroom; whereas, the fourth section (7 items) aims to measure the Learners' Practice of Autonomous Learning activities outside the classroom, respectively. The teachers' questionnaire has one section and it comprised a total of 12 items dealing with the various aspects of autonomous learning practices.

The questionnaire items were arranged on a five point likers scales ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree and/or (Strongly disagree, agree undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree).

3.5.2. Semi-Structured Interview

On the other hand, semi-structured interview also used to get the views and opinions of the respondents. Interview is useful tool to generate comprehensive information about the phenomena being studied (Creswell, 2003). Semi-structured interview was appropriate tool for this study because it is flexible enough to enable the researcher to gather detailed information on pertinent issues that cannot easily be captured using closed-ended questions. In other words, the semi-structured interview enables the researcher to get in-depth response from the informants with regards to grade 10 EFL students' and teachers' implementation of autonomous learning at the secondary schools of Serbo and Dibu Bijit.

The semi-structured interview was used to gather data from the sampled English teachers at the secondary schools under the study. To this end, a semi-structured interview questions with seven items were prepared based on the review of literature. The seven interview questions were grouped into five components, namely: 1) Teachers' perception of the concept of autonomous learning, 2) Teachers' perception of their students' ability in autonomous learning, 3) Teachers' perception of their own and their students' role in

autonomous learning, 4) Teachers' strategies to promote autonomous learning, and 5) Challenges encountered in promoting autonomous learning.

3.6. Validity and Reliability Checks

3.6.1. Reliability

Reliability refers to whether or not the research been carried out in such a way that if another researcher were to look into the same question in the same setting, he/she would come up with essentially the same results (Blaxter, *et al.*, 2006. Reliability of questionnaires can be inferred by a second administration of the instrument, comparing the responses to those of the first. Reliability may also be estimated by comparing responses of an alternate form with the original form (Best & Kahn, 1989 :).

Before administrating instrument of data collection, the current researcher has tested the reliability of the questionnaires as it gives chance to comment on and check its clarity. To this end, the questionnaires were first checked by the researcher's advisor. Then, researcher has also discussed the objective of the questionnaires with 4 other well-experienced language teachers so as to help contextualize the linguistics in line with the social and cultural norms of the study areas. Then, the reliability of the questionnaires was further checked through a pre-test.

3.6.2. Validity Test

Validity refers to the extent to which the instrument measures what the researcher(s) actually wish to measure (Kothari, 2004). Validity has to do with whether the methods, approaches and techniques you used actually relate to, or measure, the issues you have been exploring (Blaxter, *et al.*, 2002).

In order for a study to be regarded as valid, the researcher has to ensure that the research instrument has both face and content validity. According to Kumar (2005), face validity is the ability of an instrument to measure what it is supposed to measure and/or the establishment of a logical link between the questions and the objectives of the study. For

a research instrument or a questionnaire to have content validity, the items and questions must cover the full range of the issue being measure (Kumar, 2005).

Therefore, the researcher has prepared two sets of questionnaires after a thorough reading of other related literature so that the questionnaires may cover a wide range of issues related to the various aspects of autonomous learning and also the challenges that may hinder its proper implementation.

The validity of the questionnaire was further strengthened after being reviewed by five well experienced EFL teachers at the schools under the study. Then, the questionnaires had undergone further evaluation by the research advisor, and based on the suggestions given, the questionnaires were improved. The revised questionnaire were administered to ten students and five English teachers (they were not included in the actual data collection) to find out whether the language in the questionnaire are comprehensible and to check if they needed any assistance to complete the survey. Based on the suggestions from the teachers and students, technical jargons were changed into plain English. In order to avoid any language barrier that may hamper the students' ability to respond, the researcher translated the questionnaires into Afan Oromo and checked by Afanoromo teacher `

3. 7. Procedures of Data Collection

In order to create a smooth atmosphere for the data collection, the researcher contacted and discussed with the principals and vice principals of the two sampled secondary schools on the objective of the study. After getting their approval, the researcher contacted the grade 10 students and their EFL teachers at both schools. Then, the researcher explained about the objective of his study and asked them for their voluntary participation in the study.

Following this, the researcher personally distributed the two sets of questionnaires to the two respondent groups- students and teachers. Similarly, he conducted one-on-one and/or face-to-face interview with the participant-teachers in which he asked for their response to each item of the interview, on the way asking them for more clarification, since the

semi-structured interview questions were meant to do this purpose right from the start. The process of data collection was conducted from April 15-20, 2023.

3.8. Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected from the respondents was analysed based on the nature of the data. Since, the current study used both quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher adopted a mixed method of data analysis. Accordingly, the quantitative data gathered through close-ended questionnaires were analysed by using simple statistical tools such as frequency and percentages.

It must be noted here that the questionnaires for both respondent groups (students and teachers) was basically designed on a five point-Likert scale that ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree. In other words, the respondents were provided with the five alternatives to respond to each question. These were SA=Strongly Agree, A= Agree, U= Unsure/Undecided, D=Disagree, and SD= Strongly Disagree. However, due to the absence of a significant variation in the informants' response, and also out of the need to simplify the task of data analysis, the researcher amalgamated/merged the five measurements under three categories, i.e., agree (for strongly agree and agree); disagree (for strongly disagree and disagree) and unsure/undecided.

Qualitative data collected through a semi-structured interview with the EFL teachers was analysed qualitatively by narration and by comparing and contrasting with the findings of the quantitative data. In other words, the qualitative data were there to complement the quantitative data. Based on the data findings of the study, conclusions were made and recommendations forwarded.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

In the process of conducting this study, the researcher observed certain ethical standards before, during and after data collection. Accordingly, he focused on ethical guidelines relating to confidentiality and anonymity, informed consent and privacy of respondents. To begin with, the researcher contacted the study participants and asked for their

voluntary participation in filling the questionnaires. He told them that they have the right decline their involvement if they felt any form of uneasiness due to their involvement in the study.

After getting their consent, he informed them that they don't need to write their names so that their anonymity may be maintained. He also distributed and collected the questionnaires, particularly to the students in a group form so that it may not be possible to detect who filled which questionnaire paper, meaning to keep the anonymity of the respondents. He ensured them that their response to the questionnaires would remain confidential and needed only for the purpose of the study. The researcher also explained the possible benefits of the study to the respondents so that they could make an informed decision before they could fill the questionnaire.

Thus, all the information gathered from the informants was treated with confidentiality without disclosure of the respondents' identity. In addition, the researcher made no modification or change to the informants response, and instead he presented them the way they appear. Finally, the researcher also made sure that all sources that are used in this study were duly acknowledged

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

1.1. Introduction

The main objective of this study was to explore grade 10 EFL students' and teachers' perception and their role in autonomous learning strategies and thereby identify the challenges they encounter in implementing and developing learner autonomy in EFL. In doing this, the study aimed at finding out the learners' perceptions of their own roles and that of their teachers' on the one hand, and then the teachers' perceptions of autonomous learning and the role they could play in implementing autonomous learning, on the other hand. So far the necessary data have been collected through questionnaires and interview. Thus, this deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data.

Part I: Analysis and Discussion of Data from Students' Questionnaires

4.1. EFL Learners' Perceptions of Autonomous Learning

Table 4.1. EFL Learners' Perceptions of their Ability and Role in Autonomous Learning

No	Statements	SA		A		U		D		SD		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
	I am interested in learning English.	14	5.07 %	-	-	28	10.14 %	16	60.8 %	66	23.91 %	276	100 %
	I learn English because it is prescribed in the course of study.	13	4.71 %	221	80.07 %	29	10.14 %	14	5.07 %	-	-	276	100 %
	I make my learning plan according to my learning needs	-	-	10	3.62 %	-	-	20	7.2 %	66	23.91 %	276	100 %
	I can select learning materials, outside class, for	-	-	13	5.07 %	-	-	20	7.31 %	62	22.46 %	276	100 %

	my study and homework.												
	I can complete my English homework and assignments on my own	-	-	14	5.07 %	-	-	76	28 %	185	67%	276	100 %
	I can identify my mistakes and weakness by myself.	-	-	14	5.07 %	-	-	76	28 %	185	67%	276	100 %
	I am responsible for evaluating my work for mistake.	-	-	14	5.07 %	-	-	76	28 %	185	67%	276	100 %
	I think I should be self-dependent in learning English.	-	-	14	5.07 %	-	-	76	28 %	185	67%	276	100 %

Key: SA=Strongly Agree, A= Agree, U= Unsure, D=Disagree, and SD= Strongly Disagree

Source: Own Survey, June2023

Autonomous learners have more positive beliefs and are more confident in learning. They have intrinsically motivated approaches to learning the target language (Cirocki, 2016). They establish a personal agenda for learning (Little, 1994); enhance innovative thinking and problem-solving skills by directly participating in the learning program (King, 1995). They plan their learning, set learning goals, take more learning responsibilities, self-reflect on the learning process, and evaluate their outcome. With this in mind, the EFL learners were asked 8 questions which were meant to measure their motivation to learn English as well as their perception of autonomous learning and their ability to engage in it. Their responses were presented in table 4.1 below.

As it can be seen from the results (Table 4.1above), the majority of the respondents 234 (84.785%) have indicated that they learn English not because they were interested in it but because it is prescribed in the course of their academic study; 28(10%) of them remained unresponsive on this issue, while only 14(5.7%) of the informants have shown

their agreement to have interest in learning English, though it is also part of their academic study. This shows that the majority of students did not find English as an interesting school subject. Whatever their reason may be, the learners' lack of interest in learning English not only affects their ability to practice autonomous learning, but also has a very serious implication for their entire academic career is widely accepted that autonomous learners are ready to take significant responsibility (Boud, 2012) and take charge of their learning (Dam, 2008; Holec, 1981). However, the learners in this study did not seem to have control over their study, and they entirely depended on their teachers. This can be seen from the learners' responses to items 3, 4 and 5 (in table 4.1 above) in which 266(96.37%) of the informants have shown their inability- to make learning plan according to their learning needs; 266(95.28%) of them could not select learning materials outside class, for their study and homework. Similarly, 261 (94.56%) of the informants could not complete their English homework and assignments on their own, and identify their mistakes and weakness by themselves. The fact that only 5% of the informants have agreed that they could do these things by themselves indicates that with few exceptions, the greater majority of students did not have positive understanding about autonomous learning, nor did they participate in self-study or in autonomous learning practices.

The informants' response to the last two items (7 and 8 in Table 4.1) also shows a similar trend with the above analysis. Accordingly, only 14(5.7%) of the respondents believed that they should be responsible for evaluating their works for mistakes and also be self-dependent in learning English. This being said, however, 261 (94.56%) of the informants perceived that teachers were responsible for evaluating the students 'works for mistakes and that there could be no self-dependent learning.

This indicates that with few exceptions, the vast majority of the students in this study did not have either little or no understanding about autonomous learning, nor did they participate in self-study or in autonomous learning practices. This reveals that the greater majority of the EFL students have an over-reliance on their teachers. To put it differently, these students have lower self-esteem about themselves because they fully believe that

they could not learn by themselves through practicing various autonomous learning activities.

4.2. EFL Learners' Perceptions of their Teachers' Role in Autonomous Learning

Table4.2. Learners' Perceptions of their Teachers' Role in Autonomous Learning

No	Statement	SA		A		U		D		SD		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	It is impossible to learn English without a teacher.	168	60.86 %	97	35.14 %			11	3.9 8%	-	-	276	100 %
2.	Teachers have to be responsible for making students understand English.	168	60.86 %	97	35.14 %	11	3.98 %			-	-	276	100 %
3.	I prefer my teacher to explain the text in Afaan Oromo	83	30.07 %	180	65.21 %	11	3.98 %			-	-	276	100 %
4.	I like my teacher to teach me everything in the class.	221	80%	42	15.21 %	13	4.71 %			-	-	276	100 %
5.	It is my teacher's task to evaluate my strength and weaknesses.	180	65.21 %	83	30.07 %			11	3.9 8%	-	-	276	100 %

Key: SA=Strongly Agree, 2A= Agree, U= Unsure, D=Disagree, and SD= Strongly Disagree

Source: Own Survey, June,

EFL learners' perceptions of their roles in autonomous learning practices have been addressed in the previous pages. As one can recall from their responses the greater majority of the student have shown their inability to complete their learning tasks by themselves; evaluate and correct their mistakes, and believe that they should and could not be self-independent in learning English. Therefore, it seems unrealistic to think those EFL learners' perceptions regarding the role of their teacher and their own in learning

might be all the same. In this regard, the following five items, in Table 4.2 below, were designed to measure the students' perception of their teachers' role in autonomous learning of English. FL learners' perceptions of their roles in autonomous learning practices have been addressed in the previous pages. As one can recall from their responses the greater majority of the students have shown their inability to complete their learning tasks by themselves; evaluate and correct their mistakes, and believe that they should and could not be self-independent in learning English. Therefore, it seems unrealistic to think those EFL learners' perceptions regarding the role of their teacher and their own in learning might be all the same. In this regard, the following five items, in Table 4.2 above, were designed to measure the students' perception of their teachers' role in autonomous learning of English

The literature highlighted that autonomous learning occurs when the learners took the initiative to practice independent learning activities. However, the participants of this study seem to have played little or no role in autonomous learning, but instead they were highly dependent on their teachers. This is evident from the responses of study participants to items raised under Table 4.2. Accordingly, on the above Table item 1, 265 (96.01%) of the study participants have shown their agreement to the statements that they could not learn English without their teacher, and believed that it is the responsibility of the teachers to make students understand English. In the same token 263(95.28%) of the students expected the explanation or translation of the text in English into the local language (Afan Oromo); wanted their teachers to teach them everything in the class, and also believe that their teachers should be responsible for evaluating the learners' strength and weaknesses. This means, the majority of the students lack the habit of learning by themselves and therefore, wanted their teachers to teach them everything in the class.

4.3. Learners' Practice of Autonomous Learning Strategies inside and outside the Classroom

Table 4.3. EFL Students' Practices of Autonomous Learning Activities inside the Classroom

No	Statement	SA		A		U		D		SD		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	I preview before the class (i.e. see summary, lessons etc).	-	-	13	5.07 %	40	14.49 %	166	60.14 %	57	20.6 5 %	276	100 %
2.	I make active participation in English classes	-	-	14	5.07 %	28	10.14 %	174	63.04 %	61	22.1 0 %	276	100 %
3.	I am not afraid to ask questions in English whenever I find it necessary	-	-	14	5.07 %	-	-	174	63.04 %	88	31.8 8 %	276	100 %
4.	I note down new words and their meanings.	-	-	14	5.07 %	-	-	179	64.85 %	83	30.0 7%	276	100 %
5.	I make notes and summaries by myself after the class	-	-	-	-	14	5.07 %	179	64.85 %	83	30.07 %	276	100 %

Key:SA=Strongly Agree, 2A= Agree, U= Unsure, D=Disagree, and SD= Strongly Disagree

Source: Own Survey, June 2023

As stated in the literature review, there are various learning strategies which language learners could use in autonomous learning. These strategies require learners to involve in various activities in the class and also away from class. For example, in EFL taking notes, actively participating in the teaching learning process, questioning for clarification, initiating conversations with English speakers, listening to the radio or watching TV program in the language or spending extra time in studying the language, etc. are some of autonomous learning strategies. The student-respondents were asked about their level of engagement in various autonomous learning strategies both in the EFL classroom and outside the classroom. Tables 4.3 and 4.4 present the percentages of students' responses concerning their level of engagement in several English language learning activities inside and outside the regular English class.

Items 1-4 under Table 4.3 were administered to find out the learners' own efforts in autonomous learning in the English classes. Under item 1, the EFL students were asked

to rate whether they make preview before the class. Accordingly, 77% of the students have indicated that they don't make preview before classes; 18% of them have shown their neutrality on this issue, and only 5% of the respondents have agreed that they make previews before English class. This clearly shows that the greater majority of the students did not preview before class.

Item 2 table 4.3, was aimed at finding out whether or not EFL learners make active participation in English classes. The results show that only 5% of them have shown their agreement, whereas, 235 (85.14%) of them have disagreed to it, meaning they don't make active participation in English classes; 28(10.14%) of them didn't respond, while the rest 14(5.07%) of the respondents agreed that they make active participation in EFL class.

The next item 3 was aimed at knowing whether or not the EFL learners were not afraid to ask questions in English whenever they wanted. To this, 262 (94.92%) of the informants have disagreed or said that they were afraid of asking questions in English language; while only (5.0714%) of them have shown their agreement that they were not afraid to do that.

Item 4 table 4.3, shows the EFL learners' classroom practice of writing down new words and their meanings as a part of their autonomous learning activities. Accordingly, only 14(5.07%) of the EFL learners have agreed that they practice it in the classroom, while 262(94.92%) of them disagreed to it. This tells that the vast majority of EFL learners under the study did not develop the habit of writing down new words and their meanings. No doubt that the learners' lack of this habit signifies their poor understanding of autonomous learning and this in turn has a negative impact on their independent learning.

Item 5 was designed to investigate whether or not the students made notes and summaries of their lessons in English class. Accordingly, 262(94.92%) of the respondents indicated that they don't make notes and summaries by themselves, while the rest 14(5.07%) did not tell whether they make notes and summaries by themselves after the class. This is self-evident that the students were totally disengaged in one of the most crucial activities of autonomous learning.

To sum up, the vast majority of study participants made little or no practice of autonomous learning activities inside the EFL class, and their failure of using these opportunities of independent learning in the EFL class undoubtedly affects their overall learning of EFL.

Table 4.4.EFL Learners' Practice of Autonomous Learning outside the classroom

N o	Statements	SA		A		U		D		SD		Total	
		N _o	%	N _o	%	N _o	%	N _o	%	N _o	%	N _o	%
1.	I study English outside the class on my own	-	-	14	5.07 %	35	12.6 8%	157	56.88 %	71	25.72 %	276	100
2.	I do all the non-compulsory exercises in my textbook	-	-	14	5.07 %			202	73.18 %	61	22.10 %	276	100
3.	I attend the English language extracurricular activities	-	-			14	5.07 %	202	73.18 %	61	22.10 %	276	100
4.	I read English Books, newspaper/magazines (short stories, essays, novels, etc) to improve my English.	-	-	14	5.07 %			202	73.18 %	61	22.10 %	276	100
5.	I watch English TV News or Listen to Radio transmissions	-	-			14	5.07 %	202	73.18 %	61	22 %	276	100
6.	I watch movies in English Language	69	25%	102	36.95 %			50	18%	56	20.28	276	100
7.	I communicate with friends in English using social media	-	-	-	-	14	5.07 %	202	73.18 %	61	22 %	276	100

Key:SA=Strongly Agree, 2A= Agree, U= Unsure, D=Disagree, and SD= Strongly Disagree

Source: Own Survey, June2023

The seven items shown in Table 4.4 above were designed to measure the autonomous learning activities that the learners used outside their regular English classroom activities. Analysing their responses to item 1, 228 (82.60%) of the respondents do not study English on their own outside the class; 263 (95.28%)of them do not do non-compulsory English assignments (item 2); do not engage in English extra-curricular activities (item3); do not read English books, newspaper/ and magazines; do not watch English TV News or Listen to Radio transmissions(item 4); and also do not communicate with friends in

English using social media (item 7). The irony here is that 171 (61.95%) of the informants have replied that they watch English movies (item 6).

This clearly tells that the greater majority of the students have no habit of engaging in various autonomous learning activities outside English classes and therefore, without engaging in these activities, it seems impossible to develop the ability of independent learning through. Even though majority of the respondents have reported to watch movies in English Language, that doesn't seem to materialize in enhancing their skills in English, which means they watch the movies just for amusement without understanding the messages of the movies as conveyed by the actors.

To sum up, the analysis made above (Tables 4.3 and 4.4) indicate that the majority of students that participated in this study lacked a positive views about their autonomous learning abilities and also their English learning activities both inside and outside the classroom.

Part II. Analysis of Teachers' Responses to the Questionnaires and Interviews

In this section, EFL teachers' responses to the questionnaires and interview were analysed and interpreted. For a matter of convenience, the researcher combined teachers' responses to the questionnaires and interview so that each one can corroborate the other.

I. Teachers' Profile

Table4.5. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

No	Items	Category	Frequency	%
1.	Sex	a)Male	10	100%
		b) Female	-	-
		Total	10	100%
2.	Age	a)20-25	1	10%
		b)26-35	6	60%
		c) 36-45	2	20%
		d)46-55	1	10%
		e)56 and above	-	-
		Total	10	100%
3.	Qualification	a) BA/BED Degree	6	60%
		b) MA/MED Degree	4	40%
		c) Ph D	-	-
		Total	10	100%
4.	Years of Total years of experience in teaching English language	a) <5		
		b) 6-10	3	30%
		c)11-15	4	40%
		d) 16-20	3	30%
		e)Above 21		
		Total	10	100%

Source: Own Survey, June, 2023

Table4.5 above indicated the overall profile of EFL teachers that participated in this study. Accordingly, a total of 10 EFL teachers (6 from Serbo and 4 from Dibubijit Secondary Schools) responded to the survey. Thus, the response rate to the questionnaires was 100%.

As shown under item 1 of table 4.5 below, all (100%) of the respondent-teacher were male, which means, teaching, in the two schools, under the study, is still being considered as a male territory.

The age distribution of the respondents' (item 2) reveals that the majority of the respondents (60% and 20%) were in the age group of 26-35, and 36-45 years respectively. Similarly, 10 % of the respondents were in the age category of 20-25years, while the rest 10 % were in the age group of 46-55years. This mean, 70% of the

respondents were in the age range 20-35 which means they are found in the young and productive age group, and thus, able to shoulder the responsibility of engaging in the teaching of EFL and also the proper practice of autonomous learning, though whether they were doing it or not is to be seen in the course of the study

The academic qualification of the respondents' (item 3) depicts that 60% of the teachers were BEd/BA degree holders, while the remaining 40% were MA degree holders. This shows that almost all of the respondents have the necessary academic qualification to perform their duties including the practice of autonomous learning.

The respondents' level of teaching experience (item 4) shows that 30% of them have been in the teaching profession for 6-10 years; 40% of them have teaching experience of 11 -15 years; while the other 30% of them have been in the profession for 16-20 years.

With the minimum teaching experience of the respondents being 6 years, it is possible to say that 100% of them have accumulated wealth of experience in teaching English, which may also help them for the proper implementation of autonomous learning. The combination of these demographic and academic characteristics of the respondents indicates that they could give a reliable data for the study.

4.3.EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Autonomous Learning and their Role in AL

In the previous section, the overall students' view with regard to autonomous learning has been discussed. However, the data analysis could not be meaningful unless it involves what the EFL teachers think about autonomous learning and the challenges of implementing the various activities of AL. But before all, it is important to clarify what the teachers understand from the very concept of autonomous learning itself. To this end, semi structured interview sheet with seven questions was employed in order to investigate how teachers viewed autonomous learning. Among the ten EFL teachers involved in this study, only six of them responded to the semi-structured interview. The interviewed teachers were represented by the letter T accompanied by code number

starting from 1 (meaning T1, T2,) The first of the seven questions presented to the teachers was aimed at examining how the teachers viewed or understood the concept of autonomous learning. Their responses are presented below.

4.3.1. Teachers' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy

The teachers provided numerous definitions of AL that revolve around the following ideas:Autonomous learning is a student-cantered learning where students can learn independently without being “fed” by the teacher.Students’ ability to search by themselves and depend on themselves in finding extra materials,Students’ involvement in activities that enable them to find information and educate themselves and raise their self-esteem,Students’ ability to investigate, and construct their own learning,Learner’s dependence on him/her-self for the learning process. Sometimes it is totally self-learning. Other times, there is supervision and monitoring from the teachers. Generally, it is student-cantered process,Students’ ability to take responsibility, fully or partially, of their own learning which involves planning, evaluating, and monitoring their language learning.

To sum up, the teachers’ perception of the concept of autonomous learning is more or less in line with what has been discussed in the literature. To put it in a single statement, the teachers defined autonomous learning as a process where students can learn on their own with the teacher as a facilitator or guide. This means, the teacher still has a role in the way of implementing autonomous learning in English language teaching.

The second question was about the teachers’ perception of who the autonomous learners are. Here are the responses of the teachers to the question. The interviewed teachers were represented by the letter T accompanied by code number starting from 1 (meaning T1, T2,).

T1 said, “Students can be said autonomous learners if they have a quick response to the teacher’s instruction and know what to do.”T2 said “autonomous learner is the one who is self-sufficient in his/her learning and does not shy away from challenging the teacher whenever he/she finds it necessary.”

T3 argued that autonomous learners are those students who can learn independently without being “fed” by the teacher

T4 believed that autonomous learners are those who are continuously constructing and investigating their own knowledge regardless of their proficiency level.

T5 defined autonomous learners as students who can independently set their learning goals, plan and evaluate their learning.

T6 described autonomous learners as those who can manage the learning process on their own particularly in terms of setting their goals and identifying materials and resources to support their learning.

From the analysis of their response, it is clear that the teachers perceived autonomous learners as those students who are motivated to learn, show their personal efforts through their performance, understand their needs and collaborate effectively with the teacher to achieve their goals, learn both within and outside the classroom, know how to use resources independently, and learn by active thought. Also, students can reflect their autonomy through rich argument, negotiation, and self-confidence.

4.3.2. Teachers’ Perceptions of their own and their Students’ Role in AL

In order to create an autonomy-supportive learning environment, teachers’ role in language teaching is identified as a facilitator, counsellor, a resource (Voller, 1997), material developer, manager, and evaluator (Gardner & Miller, 1999) in promoting student learning autonomy.

Table 4.6. Teachers' Perceptions of their own and their Students' Role in AL

No	Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
1.	Students can learn English without their teacher.		10%		10%	80%	100%
2.	Learners have the opportunities to work independently	-	-	10%	50%	40%	100%
3.	I encourage my students to read English Books/magazines/newspapers etc. outside the classroom.	40%	50%	10%	-	-	100%
4.	Learners have the ability to work independently.			10%	40%	50%	100%
5.	Learners select the tasks and activities they do.	-	-	-	80%	20%	100%
6.	Students can evaluate their learning progress independently.	-	10%	-	10%	80%	100%
7.	Students are interested in learning English.	-	10%	10%	80%	-	100%
8.	Teachers set up the learning objectives for their students.	90%	10%	-	-	-	100%
9.	Teachers should select the learning materials for their students.	70%	20%	10%	-	-	100%
10.	Teachers are responsible for checking their students' mistakes.	90%	10%	-	-	-	100%
11.	Teachers should make the plan for their students' learning.	90%	10%	-	-	-	100%
12.	Students have the habit of completing the learning tasks independently	-	-	-	90%	10%	100%

Key: SA=Strongly Agree, 2A= Agree, U= Unsure, D=Disagree, and SD= Strongly Disagree

Source: Own Survey, June2023

The twelve items under table 4.6 above were designed to measure EFL teachers' perception of their students' ability as well as their own and their students' role in the implementation of autonomous learning.

As it can be seen from the teachers' response to items in table 4.6 above, the vast majority of teachers (90%) believed that students cannot learn English without their teacher (item 1); learners have the opportunity to work independently (item 2), but the students don't have the ability to work independently (item3) though their teachers encourage them to read English Books/magazines/newspapers etc. outside the classroom (item5); teachers should select the learning materials for their students (item 9), and 80%

of teachers believed that their students have little or no interest in learning English (item7). On the other hand, 100% of the teachers claim that learners do not select the tasks and activities they do (item5); students couldn't evaluate their learning progress independently (item6); teachers set up the learning objectives for their students (item 8); teachers are responsible for checking their students' mistakes (item 10); teachers should make the plan for their students' learning (item 11), and students do not have the habit of completing the learning tasks independently (item 12),

It is evident from the above analysis that the teachers' perception of their students' ability to engage in autonomous learning is almost in line with what the students themselves have already indicated in the questionnaires presented to them. Both students and teachers seem to share the notion that no learning can be done without a teacher. Perhaps, the slight difference between the two respondent groups was that the teachers have more gloomy perception about their students' ability than the one the students have for themselves. Moreover, these teachers seem to have taken more responsibilities in the overall teaching-learning process of English. Teachers' responsibility ranges from selecting the materials and implementing them in the classroom to evaluate students' mistakes. Under such condition, one may question how English language learning could take place, let alone an autonomous learning one.

Regarding EFL teachers' role, Little(2007) states that:

The teachers who want to promote the development of learner autonomy must do three things: first, they must involve their learners in their own learning, giving them ownership of learning objectives and the learning process. Secondly, they must get their learners to reflect about learning and about the target language. Thirdly, teachers must engage their learners in appropriate target language use, which includes the language of reflection and assessment.

Teachers' role in autonomous learning is further discussed in the interview with the teachers. This is what the third interview item is designed for. It asks the teachers' opinion about their role in AL.

The interviewed teachers strongly believed that the teacher's role in the autonomous learning process is essential and can never be ignored in the sense that autonomous learning never means learning with no teacher. They all agreed that such abilities come from teachers' encouragement and students' motivation. It can be seen as self-learning with the assistance and help of the teacher. In this respect,

T1 said: "It is your teaching, and then you inspire them to search things on their own. Independence comes from encouragement." T2 added: "AL is flexible; it is not one side or one way. You give your students the power to study, and then come to you for help." T3 strongly believed that the teacher should give his/her students the chance to be autonomous and depend on themselves by creating suitable opportunities for them. T1 claimed that he carefully designed tasks that help students develop autonomy. He provided guidelines from the beginning and watched students' progress until the end of the activity and provided feedback and help when needed.

4.3.3. Teachers' view on Autonomous learning Activities inside and outside classroom

The fourth interview question attempted to find out the extent to which EFL teachers encourage their students to engage in autonomous English language learning activities and the types of activities they prescribed for their students to perform both inside and outside the class.

The teachers' response to the interview question in this regard reveals that most of the teachers prescribed various activities as a part of the learners' autonomous learning practices outside the classroom. Among these activities, the top six were reading English Books/magazines/newspapers; watching English TV programs; watching English movies; listening to English songs; practicing using English with friends, and noting down new words and their meanings etc.,

Among the autonomous learning activities the teachers encourage their students to perform inside the classroom, the major ones were involving in reading practices during reading class; asking their teachers when they don't understand; noting down new

information; taking opportunities to speak in English and motivating students to take part in classroom performances in the form of presentations, both individually and in groups

On the whole the autonomous learning activities teachers prescribe to their students both inside and outside the classroom can be summarized by the response of one teacher (T2) on this issue:

I know students should work independently. So, I assign them some independent learning tasks such as reading English magazine, newspaper, watching English movies and share them in the class. I also assign some writing tasks based on the textbook as well as from other referential materials, but rarely students do the tasks, instead they request me to dictate the answer.

The above stated responses of EFL teachers ‘indicate their deliberate efforts to make their students engage in various activities for English language learning. Here, even though the teacher-respondents seem to have a fairly good understanding of the activities they should employ in promoting autonomous learning, the problem is their perception, as stated in their response to the questionnaires above, that the students are incapable of autonomous learning. To put it differently, although some autonomous learning practices are viewed as ideally desirable, they are sometimes practically unachievable even when the teachers have positive perception about AL and their students’ ability to engage in it. Yet, it would be worse when the teachers, as seen in this interview, and also their students, equally believe that the latter could not learn independently, there would be little or no chance for autonomous learning to take place.

Regarding the fifth interview question, whether or not the teachers believe that those autonomous learning activities (they prescribed) inside and outside the regular English class have created opportunities for students to develop their autonomy and thereby improve their language acquisition. In their response, all of the interviewed teachers replied ‘yes’ to the first part of the question, saying that those AL activities truly created opportunities for their students to develop their autonomous learning skills. But none of the teachers responded affirmatively to the second part of the question, which means

those autonomous learning activities have no significant effect on the students' language acquisition. i.e., the students did not perform those activities in a way that could enable them in their language learning. The rationale behind their response was the same; their students were incapable of learning by themselves. Here are some of the words of the interviewee regarding the reasons for their students' inability to be autonomous learners.

T6 Students' base for learning English is impoverished. They were not taught to be self-dependent. Instead, they were spoon-fed by the teachers since the early grades, so they came to the secondary school level with the same habit and expectation of getting the readymade answer.

T1, the vast majority of the students expected us (teachers) to dictate exam-oriented notes and answers so that they could know them and pass the exam easily. In addition, the Students do not have the habits of selecting learning materials; they even do not have the textbooks (an English book is shared between two students). They expect everything to be explained and dictated from their teachers

Similarly, T3 stated this; Students do not practice by themselves. They are just habituated to read the ready-made answers and they request me to provide the answers too. If I dictate the short notes and answers of sample test questions, some of the students seem reading those notes at least for the examination purposes. If I do not dictate students neither read the textbooks nor do they prepare the notes based on their textbook. At least I have to make them pass the exam.

T5, Students did not have proper exposure to English language and learning platforms like libraries and the learning centres...students are poor in vocabulary as well as in reading and writing skills.

In general, the interviewed teachers have pointed that the combined effects of the above stated factors was the major reason why the various autonomous learning activities teachers prescribed to their students seems to have been fruitless.

4.3.4. Challenges faced in Implementing Autonomous Learning

The two successive interview questions (number 6 and 7) presented to EFL teachers were designed to elicit information on what the teachers view as challenges hindering their implementation of autonomous learning in their respective schools.

Accordingly, the teachers gave a number of responses regarding the challenges of implementing autonomous learning and the mechanisms to overcome those challenges. Here are some of the responses to the challenges hindering the proper implementation of autonomous learning of English in the schools under the study.

All participants affirmed that language classrooms in the context of their localities are typically teacher-centered and that the students' role is secondary. One challenge, as reported by T6, is the idea of spoon-feeding; some students come to class thinking that if the teacher does not spoon-feed them, then he/she is not doing his/her job.

The participants also believed that fear of losing points/grades is a major challenge that prevents students from developing autonomy because there is a common belief among students that they will lose marks if they do not give exact answers. Some students believe that the teacher is always correct and that providing an answer that is different from the teacher's answer will result in losing grades.

T5 affirmed that students lacked even the slightest degree of autonomy and they usually need more monitoring and follow-up from their teachers. The biggest source of problems in this regard was the students' upbringing starting from their early school life.

In addition, the students' extremely poor ability in English, owing to their lack of proper exposure to the language, is another major challenge that hampered the learners' ability to learn autonomously. This affects their confidence to speak in the target language. Lack of confidence hinders their overall motivation to learn English and thereby obstructing their effort to develop the habit of independent learning.

T2 said, the socio-economic and cultural factors of our locality don't promote autonomous learning. For instance, parents are not used to keep track of their students' progress, in terms of reminding them to complete their assignments in time and/or to study for exams. There are also traditional beliefs among students and their parents that the teacher is mostly responsible for the teaching and learning process.

Additionally, the participants stated that large class sizes or overcrowded classrooms in their respective schools reduced their opportunities of providing tasks that develop autonomous learning. This is because the teacher can hardly understand students' personalities, preferences, and needs in large classes and give them equal chances.

In general, the various responses given by teachers regarding the challenges encountered in the implementation of autonomous learning could be compounded into problems related to the students, the teachers, the school and the curriculum.

I) ***Problems related to the students***

- A. Learners' lack of proper exposure to the English language and hence, their poor ability in the language
- B. The learners were accustomed to the idea of spoon-feeding since their early school experience and hence, they did not develop independent learning skills,
- C. Lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes or losing grades/ marks

II. ***Problems related to the school***

- A. Large sizes or overcrowded classrooms can definitely reduce opportunities of providing tasks that develop autonomous learning.
- B. Classroom Environment (physical setting),
- C. Lack of conducive school environment to promote autonomous learning
- D. The school culture promotes the idea of content coverage within the limited time frame rather than how the students were taught.

III. Teachers' related problems.

- A. heavy work load;
- B. low expectations of students' autonomous learning skills

IV. Socio-Cultural Factors

The traditional belief that teachers are there to teach students

Students get little or no support from their parents regarding their overall learning activities.

Parents do not follow up and help their children encourage their students to be autonomous learners

IV. Curriculum and/ or textbook related problems

The English text books are overloaded with content but not accompanied by corresponding period allotment to cover the contents. In this regard,

T4 said this, the text book is overloaded by contents and it is difficult to cover the entire portion even through the teacher-cantered teaching approach. This in turn hinders the teacher's chance of engaging in the implementation of autonomous learning practices.

Similarly, T6 mentioned that every EFL teacher rushed to cover the portion of the text book in time, which, if not done, has an implication on his/ her performance appraisal grade.

T1 said, the minimum, the teacher who did not cover the text book in time, should expect the chance of being reprimanded by the bossing front of the whole teaching staff during the general meeting of the staff.

Even more was, said T3, that the text books lack adequate individual and/ or group exercises that promote the learners autonomy in English.

Thus, it can be said that the curriculum, expressed in English text book was regarded as a challenge in the implementation of autonomous learning in the schools under the study.

The last question presented to the interviewed teachers was their recommendation on the mechanisms that could be used for promoting independent learning of grade ten English. Here are some of the solutions forwarded by the teachers:

Teachers should provide help to their students, but they should also resist the desire to spoon-feed the students.

Raising students' awareness on the importance of autonomous learning as a key factor in successful language learning, and also encourage them in many different ways such as praising good performance and appreciating all efforts.

Raising parental awareness on the significance of developing autonomy in the minds of their kids from childhood

Creating a positive relationship between teachers and students in a way that creates a student-centered class with an autonomous environment

Providing guidance is supportive in making students more autonomous in their learning.

Decreasing the number of students in class can also be very helpful as teachers can manage the classroom and get to know their students well.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study examined the level of implementation of autonomous learning of English by grade 10 EFL students and teachers perception and their roles at the two Secondary Schools in Jimma Zone; and thereby identified the challenges they encounter in implementing and developing learner autonomy in EFL. So far, the necessary data have been collected, analysed and interpreted. Thus, this section presents the findings of the study, the conclusions made and the recommendations forwarded based on the findings of the study.

5.1. Summary

The objective of this study was to investigate grade 10 EFL students and teachers' perception and their roles at Serbo and Dibu Bijiti Secondary Schools were being engaged in autonomous learning Strategies and thereby identify the challenges they encounter in implementing and developing learner autonomy. A total of 276 students and 10 teachers who teach English participated in this study. Students selected using systematic sampling while ten teachers selected using purposive sampling method. Because teachers who teach English in grade 10 are suitable for the research objectives, and make the students' result fruitful and achieve their goals successfully. 70% of the respondents were in the age range 20-35, while the other 30% were between 36-55 years of age. 60% of the teachers were BEd/BA holders, 84.78% of the students have indicated that they learn English not because they were interested in it but because it is prescribed in the course of their academic study. 96.37% of the students have shown their inability to make learning plan according to their learning needs; almost all of the teachers also confirmed this 90% of the teachers claimed to have encouraged their students to read English Books/magazines/newspapers etc. outside the classroom. 61.95% of the students have reported that they watch English movies.

Almost 95.28% of the students could not select learning materials outside class, for their study and homework. Similarly 94.56% of the students could not complete their English homework and assignments on their own, and identify their mistakes and weakness by themselves. Most of the teachers pointed out that they make the plan for their students' learning; set up the learning objectives for their students; select the tasks and activities their students should do and also identify and correct their students' mistakes. Additionally, 94.56% of the students perceived that teachers were responsible for evaluating the students' works for mistakes and that there could be no self-dependent learning, Majority of the teachers also shared a similar view. 96.01% of the learner perceived that they could not learn English without their teacher, and thus, believed that it is the responsibility of the teachers to make them understand English. 90% of the teachers also shared a similar view.

95.28% of the students expected the explanation or translation of the text in English into the local language (Afaan Oromo); wanted their teachers to teach them everything in the class, and also believe that their teachers should be responsible for evaluating the learners' strength and weaknesses. 77% of the students have indicated that they don't make preview before classes; 18% of them have shown their neutrality on this issue, and only 5% of the respondents have agreed that they make previews before English class. 85.14% of the students have shown that they do not make active participation in EFL class, while only 5.07% of them indicated that they do it. 94.92% of the students said that they were afraid of asking questions in English language; while only 14(5.07%) of them responded the other way around. 94.92% of the students indicated that they don't make notes and summaries by themselves. 82.60% of the students do not study English on their own outside the class; 95.28% of them do not do non-compulsory English assignments; do not engage in English extra-curricular activities; do not read English books, newspaper/ and magazines; do not watch English TV News or Listen to Radio transmissions; and also do not communicate with friends in English using social media. 90% of the teachers claimed to have encouraged their students to read English Books/magazines/newspapers etc.

5.2. Conclusion

First, the greater majority of the students in the two secondary schools lacked motivation to study English. Whatever their reason may be, the learners' lack of interest in learning English not only affects their ability to practice autonomous learning, but also has a very serious implication for their entire academic career. When students lack motivation, they have little or no opportunity to develop skills to become independent learners, nor could they set goals to enhance their language learning.

Secondly, the greater majority of students did not have positive understanding about autonomous learning. They did not seem to have any control over their learning and instead they were highly dependent on their teachers for almost all aspects of their learning. This in turn seems to have affected their chance of becoming autonomous learners.

Thirdly, the majority of the learners did not take part in any form of autonomous learning both in and outside classroom. They were extremely poor in their usage of English language. They lacked self-confidence on their ability to learn English independently; they were largely dependent on their teachers whom they expect to teach them everything in the classroom. Due to their lack of confidence in their ability, the students in this study made little or no effort to use the opportunity of speaking in English both in and outside the classroom.

Fourthly, the student-participants of this study could not evaluate their works nor could they identify whether or not they made mistakes, nor could they correct themselves even if they were told to correct the mistakes they made. This study also revealed that the vast majority of the students were incapable of completing their learning tasks, such as homework and assignments, by themselves, and instead, they needed their teachers' help in all aspects of their learning.

Fifthly, they did not have habit of reading English books, newspapers, magazines, and watching TV programs in English language. In addition, the students in this study could not plan, monitor and evaluate their learning on their own, and instead expect their teachers to plan and set learning objectives for them.

The EFL teachers participated in this study seem to have a fairly sufficient understanding on the concept of autonomous learning and the best strategies which they could prescribe to their students so that their students could learn by themselves. However, as indicated by this study, the teachers' good understanding of autonomous leaning alone didn't help any good in changing their teaching behaviour. Even worse is that almost all of the sampled teachers believed that their students could not learn English without the teachers, whom they said were responsible for many aspects of the students' learning, including, planning, setting learning objectives, selecting materials, evaluating the students' works for mistakes, and evaluating the learners' progress.

As to the major challenges encountered in promoting autonomous learning of English at the sampled schools, the findings of this study identified several problems such as ;learners' lack of

proper exposure to the English language and hence, their poor ability in the language ,the learners were accustomed to the idea of spoon-feeding since their early school experience and hence, they did not develop independent learning skills ,lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes or losing grades/ marks ; heavy work load over teachers ; low expectations of students' autonomous learning skills; Students get little or no support from their parents regarding their overall learning activities and English text books are overloaded with content but not accompanied by corresponding period allotment to cover the contents were major problems that hinder to promote autonomous learning in English at the two schools under the study.

To sum up, grade 10 EFL students' perceptions of their abilities to learn autonomously is found out to be extremely low given that the greater majority of the students considered themselves to be incapable of autonomous learning. The EFL teachers' perception of their students' ability in autonomous learning was found out to be as bad as their students' perception of themselves or even more. This result is in line with those that of Truong's et al. (2019) research, which revealed that EFL students perceived themselves to have limitations in their abilities to learn in autonomous ways. Also, Ramadhiyah and Lengkanawati (2019) found that the students in their study had an agreement on the important role of learner autonomy, but they regarded themselves as not autonomous learners.

The overall conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that the extent to which EFL students and teachers, at the sampled schools, implemented autonomous learning was below the minimum standard. It could also be inferred from the results of this study that many EFL students at the schools under the study were more teacher-cantered as they were much dependent on their teachers during the learning process, resulting in a lack of ability to learn autonomously. This was also true of the EFL teachers at the schools who were still pursuing the teacher-cantered approach. In other words, there was little or no autonomous learning of English in those schools.

5.3. Recommendations

Developing learner autonomy can be challenging, where students have extensive experience of teacher-instructed learning. In such contexts, they may not fully consider the ideas of autonomy at once. It requires teachers' commitment, determination and outlook to shift their role from instructing and controlling over the learning process. Therefore, it is advisable for the EFL teachers to create a positive relationship with their students in order to create a student-cantered

class with an autonomous environment. The EFL teachers' effort should start with changing the attitudes of their learners towards the study of English as a subject.

They should work relentlessly to enhance their students' motivation and involvement in learning English. Benson's (2001) statement in this regard emphasize that 'the link between autonomy and motivation is well-established at a theoretical level'. This, in turn, can help in raising the students' self-esteem and motivation. Indeed, affective variables can play a significant role. For example, the more confident and motivated students are, the more likely to develop autonomous learning

The teachers need to motivate students to get better practice of their English skills outside of the classroom and encourage students to take notes of important points during class in order to help them focus and better understand the lessons.

Additionally, teachers must change their pedagogical practices. Instead of dictating answers, they could encourage students to work individually, in pair and group to find answers. While they can provide model answers, they could motivate their students by providing positive feedback to build their confidence and to encourage them to complete their tasks.

On the part of the learners, autonomous learning also requires their personal responsibility for their own learning, to readily engage in and persist in with their commitment at learning tasks and manage their own learning experiences in different ways. Therefore, the students should be aware of the significance of employing autonomous activities both inside and outside the classroom so that they can become more autonomous not only in their perceptions but also in their actual practices. In addition, the learners are expected to be more active in the learning process and not to be too dependent on their teachers.

Teachers need a suitable classroom setting, like less population in class can help the teacher to communicate with each student and can focus to keep an eye on each student, then the teacher can easier to develop learners' autonomy in his/her classroom. Therefore, it is advisable for the school authority and other concerned bodies to create a classroom environment that helps in the proper implementation of autonomous learning. Decreasing the number of students in class can also be very helpful as teachers can manage the classroom and get to know their students well.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Questionnaires for students (table 4.1- 4.4)

No	Statements	SA		A		U		D		SD		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	I am interested in learning English.												
2.	I learn English because it is prescribed in the course of study.												
3.	I make my learning plan according to my learning needs												
4.	I can select learning materials, outside class, for my study and homework.												
5.	I can complete my English homework and assignments on my own												
6.	I can identify my mistakes and weakness by myself.												
7.	I am responsible for evaluating my work for mistake.												
8.	I think I should be self-dependent in learning English.												
9.	It is impossible to learn English without a teacher.												

10	Teachers have to be responsible for making students understand English.												
11	I prefer my teacher to explain the text in Afan Oromo												
12	I like my teacher to teach everything to me in the class.												
13	It is my teacher's task to evaluate my strength and weaknesses.												
14	I preview before the class (i.e. see summary, lessons etc.).												
15	I make active participation in English classes												
16	I am not afraid to ask questions in English whenever I find it necessary												
17	I note down new words and their meanings.												
18	I make notes and summaries by myself after the class												
19	I study English outside the class on my own												
20	I do all the non-compulsory exercises in my textbook												
21	I attend the English language extracurricular activities												
22	I read English Books, newspaper/magazines(short												

	stories, essays, novels, etc.) to improve my English.												
23	I watch English TV News or Listen to Radio transmissions												
24	I watch movies in English Language												
25	I communicate with friends in English using social media												

Appendix B

Questionnaires for Teachers (table 4.5- 4.6)

Table4.5. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

No	Items	Category	Frequency	%
5.	Sex	a)Male		
		b) Female		
		Total		
6.	Age	a)<25		
		b)26-35		
		c) 36-45		
		d)46-55		
		e)56 and above		
		Total		
7.	Qualification	a)Diploma		
		b)BA/BED Degree		
		c) MA/MED Degree		
		d) Ph D		
		Total		
8.	Years of Total years of experience in teaching English language	a) <5		
		b) 6-10		
		c) 11-15		
		d) 16-20		
		e) 21-25		
		f) Above 26		
		Total		

Appendix C

Table 4.6. Teachers' Perceptions of their own and their Students' Role in AL

No	Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
1	Students can learn English without their teacher.						
2	Learners have the opportunities to work independently						
3	I encourage my students to read English Books/magazines/newspapers etc. outside the classroom.						
4	Learners have the ability to work independently.						
5	Learners select the tasks and activities they do.						
6	Students can evaluate their learning progress independently.						
7	Students are interested in learning English.						
8	Teachers set up the learning objectives for their students.						
9	Teachers should select the learning materials for their students.						
1	Teachers are responsible for checking their students' mistakes.						
1	Teachers should make the plan for their students' learning.						
1	Students have the habit of completing the learning tasks independently						

Appendix D

Interview Questions for Teachers

1. How do you understand autonomous learning in learning English?
2. Who are autonomous learners?
3. What do you think is a teacher's role in such learning should be?
4. What kinds of activities have you used in your classroom teaching to foster Learners' autonomy in your students?
5. Have these activities created opportunities for students to develop their autonomy and thereby improve their language acquisition,? How and why?
6. Have you noticed any challenges faced by your students that hindered their autonomy? If yes, what are the challenges? Please write your response in the space provided under I, II, and III below. You can add more if you wish.
7. What do you think should be done to overcome those challenges thereby promote autonomous learning of English at your school?