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SECTION OF ENGLISH

Students' Readiness for Autonomous Learning in the EFL Classroom

Case Study of 2nd Year LMD Student at Dr. Taher Moulay University

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English for the Requirement of Degree of Master

Presented by: Supervised by:

BENISSAD Karima   **Dr. GRAZIB Mohamed**

Board of examiners:

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To my dear grandfather Benissad Hassani.

To my family, teachers and friends

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Abstract

Due to the emergence of learner-cantered approaches to education, learner autonomy has gained momentum. Interestingly, in practice it is not always clear how to support learners in becoming autonomous as there is a little research referring to the practical implementation of learner autonomy in the context of education.

After discussing with EFL teachers, and attending classes as an observer with EFL learners, it has become evident that those later face certain difficulties in taking charge of their own learning. That is why, this present investigation aimed to first understand the reasons behind these hindrances and then to explore some of the teaching aspects related to the development of learner autonomy through reviewing some of the studies on the issue. But before, and most importantly, the study aimed to assess students' readiness for learner autonomy in four different areas: (1) Learners' motivation level in learning English, (2) Learners' use of metacognitive strategies in learning English, (3) Learners' responsibility perception of their own and their teachers' in learning English and (4) Learners' practice of English in the outside class activities.

Accordingly, the practical side of this research was a case study conducted on second year LMD EFL students at Dr. Taher Moulay University of Saida. It utilized a mixed method between qualitative and quantitative one based on questionnaire administered to 110 students. Results indicated that learners seem to be ready to take more responsibility in many areas of the language learning process. On the basis of the findings, some recommendations were suggested in addition to a frame work of skills that could be used by teachers as a guide to promote autonomy in EFL classroom.

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General Introduction

Due to the development of learner centred approaches in education, a great emphasis has been put on the role of learners. Language classroom has gained a new perspective which views language learning as a collaborative process between teachers and learners. Learners are expected to take more responsibility in their own learning, while teachers are expected to help and assist students to become more independent inside and outside classroom. This prominent shift towards learner centeredness in language education has led to the emergence of the concept of learner autonomy.

Learner autonomy has become a prominent theme in teaching foreign languages. Since its introduction by Henry Holec (1981), who basically defines it as the learners' capacity to take charge of their own learning, the concept has gained the interest of educators as well as researchers in EFL teaching and learning. However, despite the fact that learner autonomy gained momentum, unlike in theory, in practice it has not been studied much. There is a little research referring to its promotion.

In recent years however, there has been a remarkable interest in autonomy in language learning due to the reported success of numerous projects associated with autonomy, and efforts of those who advocated autonomy and considered it as a desirable goal. Many teachers nowadays are finding the notion of learner autonomy attractive, but the idea should be treated with caution. That is to say, before making any attempt to promote learner autonomy, it is important to investigate students' readiness for autonomous learning. Most scholars support the prior investigation of learners' readiness for this responsibility change before designing or adapting activities to promote autonomous learning.

In this respect, this study was designed to investigate learners' readiness to take charge of their own learning. It was carried out at the English department of Dr. Taher Moulay University. It intended to see whether, or not, 2nd year LMd students of English are ready to be involved in autonomous learning. This investigation tried to reach that goal by examining learners' readiness for change through different areas that autonomy implies. These areas are: (1) Learners' motivation level in learning English, (2) Learners' use of

metacognitive strategies in learning English, (3) Learners' responsibility perception of their own and their teachers' in learning English and (4) Learners' practice of English in the outside class activities.

The large and major research question the study aimed to answer was whether students of English at Dr. Taher Moulay University were ready to take on the autonomous role in their learning process. Thus other operational questions lie within the major one. These questions are as follows:

1. Are students of English language at Dr. Moulay Taher University motivated for their learning?
2. To what extent are metacognitive strategies used by the students in learning English?
3. How do students perceive their own and their teachers' responsibilities in learning English?
4. What are their actual practices of autonomous activities outside the classroom in learning English?
5. Is there any difference in students' (motivation level, metacognitive strategies, responsibility perceptions, and the use of outside class activities) in learning English based on their gender?
6. Is there any difference in students' (motivation level, metacognitive strategies, responsibility perceptions, and the use of outside class activities) in learning English based on their age?

The present study includes three chapters:

The first chapter examines the research literature related to the research work; it highlights learner autonomy its definitions, misconceptions, and the origins of the concept, in addition to the promotion of autonomy in EFL classroom, including different approaches aiming at fostering autonomy and the key issues to its development.

Meanwhile, the second chapter deals with introducing the research context, methods and design. The first part of the chapter describes the research general context. On the other hand, the second part is concerned with method, the target population, the process of data collection, as well as instrumentations and procedures used in the study.

The third chapter is based on the analysis of the information gathered from the research instrument (questionnaire). In addition to that, main results are interpreted. Last but not least, this chapter provides some recommendations based on the collected data. In addition to that, suggestions related to how to help EFL learners become more autonomous.

CHAPTER ONE

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will be dealing with learner autonomy, its definitions, misconceptions, and the origins of the concept. In addition to the promotion of autonomy in EFL classroom, including different approaches aiming at fostering autonomy and the key issues to its development. It will also refer to the previous research and studies conducted on the promotion of learner autonomy in formal language learning classroom and the effectiveness of their work in the field of autonomy in language teaching and learning.

1.2 Origins of the Concept

According to Benson (2001) and Gremmo and Riley (1995) it was until the beginning of 1970's that the concept of 'autonomy' was first introduced to the field of education along with the establishment of 'Centre de Recherches et d'Applications en Language' (CRAPEL) which was founded at the university of Nancy, France and was aimed at adult education.

Although autonomy is a recent concept in the field of language learning, it has been long used in other fields such as philosophy and psychology. The development of learner autonomy has also political as well as social roots, but may be the most important reason for the recent growth interest in learner autonomy is the learner's need to keep up with the continuous changes of today's world as a result of globalization, spread of information, the commercialization of education such as the online language courses which makes the learner as a consumer who needs to be able to make conscious choices in his learning process.

1.3 Dominant Philosophies Underlying Autonomy

The notion of autonomy in learning has long been part of a wide range of educational philosophies. There are three dominant philosophies of learning connecting up with learner autonomy: humanism, constructivism, and experiential learning.

Since the early 1970s teachers and language teaching methodologists have been influenced by insights from humanist psychology. Humanism as a philosophy of learning is a paradigm that emphasises the importance of qualities such as self concept, personal assumption of responsibility and affective factors in learning. That is to say, the cognitive side of the learner should not be the only concern of the teacher, but also to exploit students' affective resources as much as possible and to be linked into the learners continuing experience of life.

Similarly to autonomous learning, humanism as an approach of language learning encourages taking responsibility and being independent in learning. Humanist view learning as form of self-realization in which the learners are involved in decision making and are expected to use metacognitive strategies involving self-monitoring, self-evaluation... etc. Hence, the teacher's main roles include counselling and facilitating.

The second philosophy underlying autonomy is constructivism. According to Candy (1991: 252) *"knowledge cannot be thought but must be constructed by the learner."* Thus, learning is considered as an active constructive process. Benson and Voller (1997: 21) defined constructivism as *"the process of learning helping learners to construct their own version of target language; therefore, learners need to be responsible for their own learning"* Hence, Candy (1989 as cited in Benson and Voller 1997) claims that constructivist approaches support versions of autonomy in terms of individual responsibility for decisions taken throughout the learning process. In addition, like autonomy, constructivist approaches value creativity and learners' freedom to think and promote self-directed learning which is a necessary condition for autonomous learning.

The third philosophy underlying autonomy is that of experiential learning which is basically learning by doing. Cohenon (1992 as cited in Kenny 1993) asserts that learners need to manage their own learning by taking responsibility, and he adds that learners need to be producers rather than consumers of language courses which will give learners freedom to use their capacities. For Legulke and Thomas (1991 as cited in Kenny 1993) project work can be a common practice of experiential learning. Moreover, Dewey (1916) sees learning as an adaptive process in which interaction with the environment generates problems that must be solved in order for individuals to satisfy their needs.

1.4 Learner Autonomy Definitions

Since its introduction to the field of language learning and teaching, the concept of learner autonomy gained the interest of educators as well as researchers in EFL teaching and learning. Many teachers nowadays are finding the notion of learner autonomy attractive, but the idea should be treated with caution.

Benson (2001) claims that defining learner autonomy is important since what cannot be defined cannot be researched, either. Because of its broad and abstract nature and as it is one of the trendiest concepts, it is not easy to define autonomy. Many studies and research have been done, much literature has been written to provide appropriate definition to learner autonomy.

The idea of learner autonomy or autonomy in learning was first introduced by Henri Holec (as cited in Benson 2001) *"The ability to take charge of one's own learning"*. Yet, this definition may not be sufficient to fully understand and grasp the meaning of learner autonomy that is why; Benson (2001: 48) provides an elaborated definition by Holec;

> *"To take charge of one's own learning is to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, i.e.:*
> - *determining the objectives;*
> - *defining the contents and progressions;*
> - *selecting methods and techniques to be used;*
> - *monitoring the procedure of acquisition;*
> - *evaluating what has been acquired"*

Other researchers and scholars however, add their own views to Holec's general introduction. Benson (2001: 47) says, *"I prefer to define autonomy as the capacity to take control of one's own learning, largely because the contrast of 'control' appears to be more open to investigation than the contrast of 'charge' or 'responsibility'"*. For more clarification, Benson and Voller (1997: 1-2) identify five different ways in which autonomy has been used;

- *"for situations in which learners study entirely on their own;*
- *for a set of skills which can be learned and applied in self-directed learning;*
- *for an inborn capacity which is suppressed by institutional education;*
- *for an exercise of learner's responsibility for their own learning;*
- *for the right of learners to determine the direction of their own learning."*

According to the same authors, learner autonomy can be divided into three versions which are technical, psychological and political.

- Technical: The act of learning a language outside the framework of an educational institution and without the intervention of a teacher.
- Psychological: The capacity which allows learners to take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Political: The conditions that allow learners to control the process and content of learning as well as the institutional context within which learning takes place.

Little (1991) argues that autonomy can be achieved by all learners, and that it is not a steady stat but rather can vary even within the same individual in different context or at different times. Little's view of autonomy is not limited to the matter of how learning is organized as he sees autonomy as:

> "*A capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. It presupposes but also entails, that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning.*"*(1991: 4)*

Benson (2001) argues that Little's definition was complementary to Holec's, but adds to the cognitive factors involved in the development of autonomy a vital psychological dimension.

In his definition of autonomy Littlewood (1996) offers a clear explanation of the deferent factors that create autonomy. According to him, autonomy depends on two factors: ability and willingness. Each of these factors is further divided into two components as it is shown in (Diagram 1.1). Littlewood claims that ability consists of knowledge and skills that need to be learned, while, willingness consists of motivation and confidence that require a learning environment that encourages learning autonomy.

Autonomy

Ability   Willingness

Skills   Knowledge   Motivation   Confidence
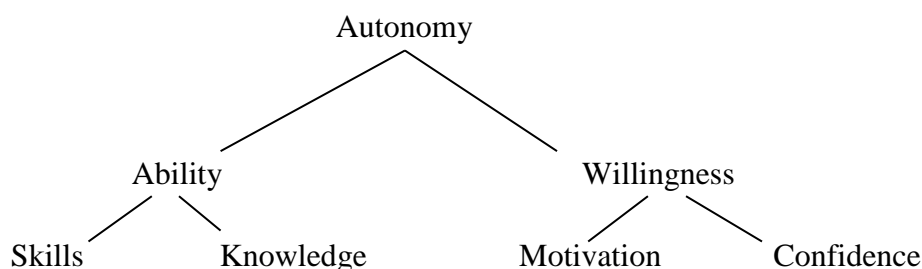
Diagram 1.1 Factors and Components of Autonomy (adapted from Littlewood, 1996)

If a learner is to be successful in learning autonomously, all these four components need to be present simultaneously.

1.5 Misconceptions Related to Learner Autonomy

For a better understanding of the concept of learner autonomy, one should go through the related misconceptions. Little (1990 as cited in Benson, 2001) provides several examples on what autonomy is not;

> *"Autonomy is **not** a synonym for self-instruction; in other words, autonomy is **not** limited to learning without a teacher.*
> *-In the classroom context, autonomy does **not** entail an abdication of responsibility on the part of the teacher; it is **not** a matter of letting the learners get on with things as best they can.*
> *-On the other hand, autonomy is **not** something that teachers do to learners; that is, it is **not** another teaching method.*
> *-Autonomy is **not** a single, easy described behaviour.*
> *-Autonomy is **not** a steady state achieved by learners."*

(little, 1990: 48)

In the above quotation little mentions a number of misconceptions regarding learner Autonomy. Firstly, since autonomy entails various aspects of language learning it is often used interchangeably with self-directed learning, self-instruction, distance learning and individual instruction. These concepts in fact cannot be used synonymously with autonomy but to support and promote learner autonomy. Secondly, it should be noted that unconditional and limitless freedom provided by learning autonomously is just another misconception and that freedom to learner can be restricted by the educators. Thirdly, it should also be taken into consideration that the isolation of the learner is an unwanted result of learner autonomy. As for little (1990) Benson (2001: 2) argues that *"learner autonomy is not a new method but an attribute of the learner's approach to the learning process."*

Pemberton et al (1996) identifies various different terms in the literature on autonomy which are misconceptions used synonymously as learner autonomy such as; Self-instruction, Self-Access learning, Self-direction, Individualized instruction, learner training...etc. Benson (2001) goes further and explained in details the differences and similarities between these concepts and autonomy. According to him, self-access is also referred to as technology based learning that was seen as means of facilitating self-directed learning. While, autonomy may be an outcome of such mode of learning, learners do not become necessary autonomous by simply engage in technology based learning, great deal depends on the nature of the technology and the use that is made of it. He adds that, like autonomy, individualization in learning is associated to the concept of learner centeredness. It is concerned with meeting the needs of individual learners in a form of programmed learning in which learners are expected to work at their own pace through materials prepared and selected by teachers, this leaves the learner in the traditional position of dependency and do not allow him to control his learning which is essential to the development of autonomy. Moreover, learner training is seen by Benson as leading to greater autonomy. It is important in order to carry out effective self directed learning. It helps learners become more engaged in the classroom learning through developing skills related to self-management, self-monitoring, and self-assessment.

By the late 1980's the concept of autonomy in language learning begun to suffer a kind of crisis of identity or a conceptual confusion. Although Holec (1985 as cited in Benson 2007) emphasises that autonomy is a term that describes a capacity of the learner and not a kind of learning in which the learner is totally independent from the teacher. Others begun to use the term to refer to situations in which the learner works outside the conventional language learning classroom in a complete dependence from the teacher. In these terms, Riley and Zoppis (1985 as cited in Benson 2007) describe learners working in self-access centres as working in 'semi-autonomy' or 'complete-autonomy'. Whereas, Dickenson (1987) uses the term 'full-autonomy' to refer to situations in which the learner is entirely independent of teachers. Autonomy escaped the conceptual confusion crisis through the efforts of many educational researchers who assert that autonomy is neither independence nor dependence on the teacher; instead, autonomy could be developed by shift in relationships of power and control within classroom. It is working together with teachers and other learners in a form of interdependence and collaborative learning.

1.6 Reasons for Autonomy

In recent years, there has been a remarkable interest in autonomy in language learning due to the reported success of numerous projects associated with autonomy, and efforts of those who advocate autonomy and consider it as a desirable goal for psychological, practical, and political reasons.

Promoting learner autonomy can be justified on psychological ground which is the most appealing to educationists. According to candy (1988 as cited in cotterall 1995) learners learn more and more effectively when they are involved in making decisions about the pace, sequence, mode of instruction, and content of what they are learning. In addition, learners who are consulted about and involved in taking decisions and making choices about the program are likely to be more motivated, less anxious, and secure in their learning which is important for learners to achieve success.

The philosophical rationale behind autonomy is the belief that the individual has the right to make choices in regard not only to his learning but also to other areas of life. Cotterall (1995) argues that the promotion of independent learners with critical thinking will be vital for their effective functioning in society. Moreover, Crabbe (1993) believes that helping learners become more responsible for their learning will result in prepared learners for the rapidly changing future, and free individuals within happier and healthier societies.

The practical reason for promoting autonomy in education is simply the fact that traditional approaches of teaching are no more practical. Learners need to learn on their own especially as teachers cannot always be available to assist due to large number of students in the classroom, and because not all learners have access to individual educational instruction that demands time and money.

1.7 Important Issues in the Promotion of Learner Autonomy

Since autonomy is a multidimensional and not a simple issue, researchers argue that, before promoting autonomy in language learning and teaching, it is worthwhile to provide a comprehensible idea of what needs to be taken into account while promoting learner autonomy in EFL classroom.

1.7.1 Responsibility

Promoting learner autonomy requires a change in beliefs about language learning on the part of both learners and teachers as corresponding change in roles and responsibilities.

1.7.1.1 Teacher's Responsibility

According to Tudor (1993) the role of the teacher in the traditional modes of teaching was seen in two main roles. The first is that of the knower, the supplier, the source of knowledge, and the one who decides what should be learned and how this should be learned. The second role is that of organizer who sets up the activities, motivates the students, and provides authoritative feedback on students' performance. However, regarding the teacher's role in language programs promoting autonomy, there is a need to adapt a somewhat non-traditional teaching style often described as the "facilitating style" the teacher has to change his attitude and let go some of his authority. He has to move from total control to shared responsibility. According to Voller (1997) as cited in Benson (2001: 171-172)

> "Terms proposed to describe the role of the teacher within this frame work include facilitator, helper, coordinator, counsellor, consultant, advisor, knower and resource,[in a detailed review of literature on teacher roles in autonomous learning, reduces these to three] facilitator, in which the teacher is seen as providing support for learning; counsellor, where the emphasis is placed on one to one interaction, and resource, in which the teacher is seen as a source of knowledge and expertise"

Transferring responsibility from the teacher to the learner involves changes in the program. That is why; designers of the curriculum should take into consideration the new roles and the deferent responsibilities of the learner and the teacher before designing a course for learner autonomy. Cotterall (1995) discusses the content of the English course program and claims that one of the crucial components of this program is the learner/ teacher dialogue which foster learner autonomy through creating a direct relationship between learners and their teachers. Moreover, in order to foster learner autonomy, it would be indispensible to supply learner as well as teacher training together with the program.

1.7.1.2 Learner's Responsibility

In autonomous learning, learners move from a total dependency on the teacher towards an increasing responsibility of their language learning. As it is previously defined by Holec (1981 as cited in Little 1996: 3)

> *"To learn autonomously is to take charge of one's learning and to hold the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, i.e:*
>
> *• determining the objectives;*
>
> *• defining the contents and progressions;*
>
> *• selecting methods and techniques to be used;*
>
> *• monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc.);*
>
> *• evaluating what has been acquired."*

Within such conception, the learner is not simply a passive recipient of thoughts, knowledge, and information instead, he is someone who is able to engage actively in his/her learning, someone who is able to reflect on, take initiative, shape, review, plane, set goals and evaluate his/her own learning. It is very important to note that these are skills that need to be learned. However, learners often initially resist the change towards becoming more autonomous as it requires them to change their behaviour. That's why; Little (1995) argues that autonomy should be introduced as soon as possible to avoid students' resistance to change.

1.7.2 Motivation

Motivation plays a key role in the learner's readiness for autonomous learning. While Dörnyei (2001) believes that autonomy matures motivation and is a prerequisite for it to be maintained and protected, there is some debate on the direction of the connection between learner autonomy and motivation. However, most scholars seem to agree that language learning motivation and learner autonomy goes hand in hand. Ushida (1996 as cited in Dörnyei 2001) states that autonomous language learners are by definition motivated

learners, and that not only autonomous learners become more highly motivated, but also autonomy lead to better and more effective learning.

When it comes to promoting learner autonomy, intrinsic motivation is regarded as a necessary precursor and needs to be supported for the development of autonomy. Many researchers believes that enhancing learners' intrinsic motivation is important in making them welling to take responsibility of their own learning.

1.7.3 Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies are considered to be very influential in the language learning process. Oxford (2003: 2) views learning strategies in general as: *"the specific behaviour or thoughts learners use to enhance their language learning."* Whereas, metacognitive strategies are defined by Benson (2001: 82) as: *"mental operations used by learners in the self-management of their learning."* For learners of foreign languages, the process of learning how to learn is inseparable from the process of learning, as language learners are often exposed to a lot of new words, many confusing grammar rules, in addition to different writing systems. That's why, control over metacognitive strategies is considered to be crucial for learners in order not to lose control over their learning.

According to Wenden (1995, as cited in Benson, 2001) metacognitive strategies allow learners to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning which can lead to more profound learning and improved performance. The effective use of metacognitive skills empowers learners and helps them perform better as they become more strategic and aware. It enhances learning outcomes, facilitating recall, improves the rate of progress in learning as well as the quality and speed of learning. Metacognitively mature learners can think clearly about their learning process, identify one's own learning style, needs and preferences, link newly acquired knowledge to what they have already learned, monitoring mistakes and evaluating their learning, and can easily cope with new situations. When learners reflect upon their learning strategies, they become better prepared to make conscious decisions about what they can do to improve their learning which is an important feature of learner autonomy.

1.8 Levels of Autonomy

Many scholars and researchers on learner autonomy argue that, learners develop autonomy in learning through gradual degree and maybe the most prominent models of levels of autonomy are those of Nunan (1997) and Littlewood (1999).

1.8.1 Littlewood's Model (Reactive and Proactive Autonomy)

Littlewood argues that autonomy is a matter of degree; he identifies tow kinds of autonomy as cited in Benson (2001: 99) proactive and reactive autonomy. *"proactive autonomy is the kind of autonomy we find when learner's determine objectives, select learning methods and techniques, and evaluate what they have learned"*. In this level of autonomy learners take a partial or total responsibility of many learning processes which have been traditionally regarded as teacher responsibility. While, he sees reactive autonomy as *"the kind of autonomy which does not create its own directions but, once a direction has been initiated, enables learners to organize their resources autonomously in order to reach their goal"*.

1.8.2 Nunan's Model

Nunan's model presupposes that autonomy is gradual and learners could be promoted to develop learning autonomously through five levels of autonomy suggested by Nunan (as cited in Benson, 2001) These five stages are: awareness, involvement, intervention, creation, and transcendence.

Level	Leaner Action	Content	Process
1	Awareness	Learners are made aware of the pedagogical and content of the materials that they are using.	Learners identify strategy implications of pedagogical tasks and identify their own preferred learning styles /strategies
2	Involvement	Learners are involved in selecting their own goals from a range of alternatives on offer	Learners make choices among a range of options
3	Intervention	Learners are involved in modifying and adapting the goals and content of the learning programme	Learners modify/adapt tasks
4	Creation	Learners create their own goals and objectives	Learners create their own tasks
5	Transcendence	Learners go beyond the classroom and make links between the content of classroom learning and the world beyond	Learners become teachers and researchers

Table 1.1 Autonomy: Levels of Implementation (Nunan, 1997) taken from Benson (2001: 129)

1.9 Approaches to the Development of Learner Autonomy

There are various approaches and techniques aiming to foster autonomy, and as long as learner autonomy itself is a multidimensional issue diversifies the issue even more. In order to clarify and categories the multitude of theories on the promotion of learner autonomy, Benson identifies six different approaches to foster learner autonomy. But before that, Benson (2001: 110) states that:

> *"Autonomy is treated as a capacity belonging to the learner; it is an attribute of the leaner rather than the learning situation. Most researchers agree that autonomy cannot be 'taught' or 'learned', I therefore use the term "fostering autonomy to refer to process initiated by teachers or institutions and "developing autonomy" to refer to process within the learner".*

Benson has identified different approaches in literature concerning the promotion of learner autonomy
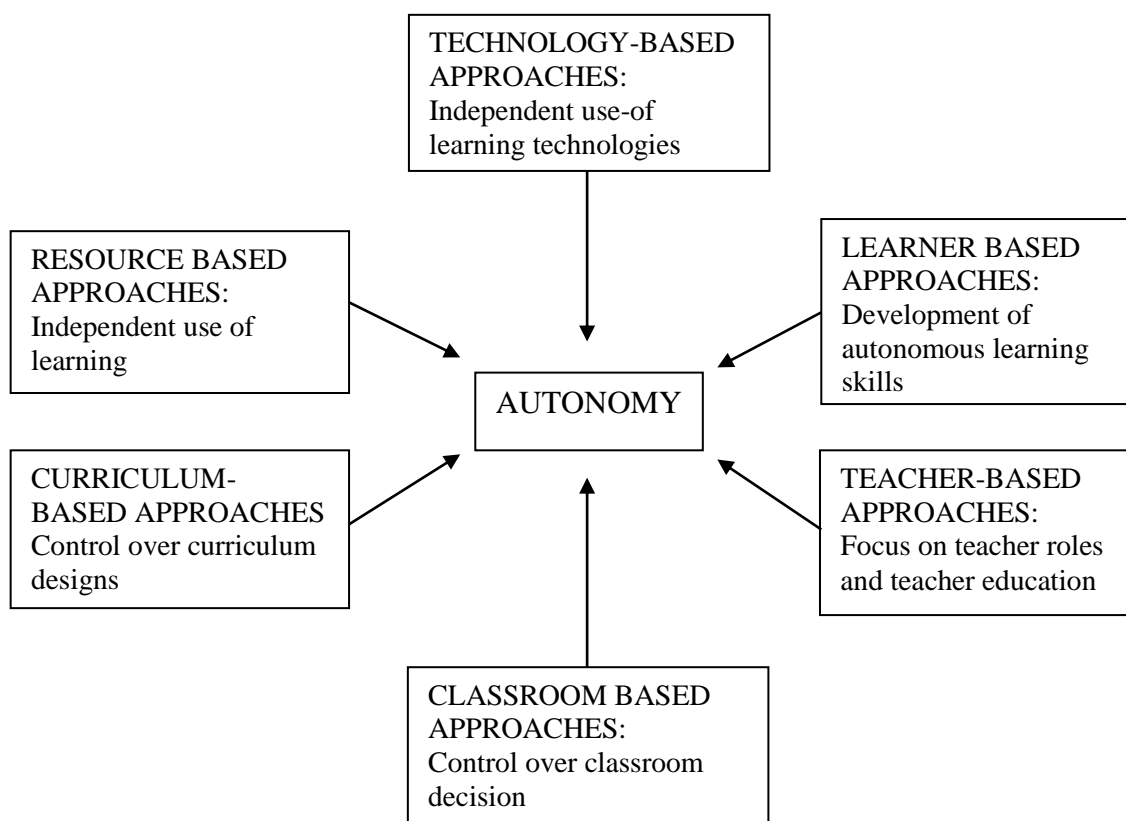
Diagram 1.2 Autonomy in Language Learning and Related Areas of Practice (Benson, 2001: 112)

1.9.1 Resource-Based Approaches

Resource-based approaches emphasize independent interaction with learning materials. According to Benson (2001) resource-based learning provides learners with opportunities to decide on their own modes of study, to exercise control over learning plans, to select appropriate materials, and to execute self evaluation. On their side, learners are expected to develop the skills associated with these activities. While freedom of choice is a crucial factor, resource-based approaches are more effective in offering learners opportunities to develop greater control over their own individual learning. Both, Benson (2001) and Brown and Smith (1996) agree that success in this kind of approaches presupposes that learners already posses some of the skills associated with autonomy to take this amount of responsibility. Self access language learning, distance learning, and self instruction are described by Benson (2001) to be the main areas of practice that have been claimed to foster autonomy in language learning through resource-based approaches.

1.9.2 Technology-Based Approaches

Technology-based approaches emphasize independent interaction with educational technologies. This latter and according to Motteran (1997 as cited in Benson 2001) have a long association with autonomy. The use of technologies was considered vital in the self access centres at CRAPEL in the form of 'sound and video libraries'. This early use of technology-based materials, lead to independent learning and through time to learner autonomy. Benson (2001) stats a number of major and interesting research on technology-based projects and learner autonomy, according to him (2001: 136): *"in many technology based projects it is the interaction with the technology itself that is seen to be supportive of autonomy."* Like resource-based, technology-based approaches in regard to language are supportive as they provide learners with opportunities to self direct their own learning. He adds that the use of technology in education may facilitate interaction which would be difficult to carry out in the traditional classroom.

In the case of Computer assisted language learning, Little (1996) claims that the emergence of personal computers supported and helped the emergence of educational technology. He asserts that in regard to autonomy, much focus is on the claims made for CALL and the potential of new technologies in general and computers in particular in stimulating, mediating, and extending the range and the scope of learning. Benson (2001)

adds that computers can assist learners to take more control over the activity and in developing their cognitive skills. Warschauer and Healey (1998) argue that the role of technology on learner autonomy has grown rapidly with internet which represents a way forward for integrative CALL. Internet provides unlimited range of authentic materials in addition to the opportunity for collaborative learning through internet based activities involving e-mail, on-line discussion, forums, and blogging which offer interactive language learning.

The use of CALL is successful in creating an interactive environment for learner autonomy, decreasing students' dependence on teachers, and increasing their control over their own learning. In addition, it can also support learner motivation by providing the learner with different opportunities and materials to choose from. But, as Benson (2001) asserts, it is very important to note that this cannot be regarded as more than a potential, however, and great deal depends on the way in which technologies are to be used.

1.9.3 Learner-Based Approaches

Unlike resource-based and technology-based approaches to autonomy which focus on providing opportunities for learner control, learner-based approaches emphasize the direct production of behavioural and psychological changes in the learner. It aims to enable learners take more control over their learning. According to Benson (2001) the concept has emerged from learner training, learning strategies, and strategy training. Chamot and Rubin (1994) agree with Benson (2001) that there is a controversy about the use of the term 'learner training' and they propose learner 'education', 'instruction', or 'development'.

Approaches to learner development are classified by Benson (2001: 143) under six categories:

> *"1. Direct advice on language learning strategies and techniques often published in the form of self-study manuals for independent learners.*
>
> *2. Training based on "good language learner" research and insights from cognitive psychology.*
>
> *3. Training in which the learners are encouraged to experiment with strategies and discover what will work best for them.*
>
> *4. Synthetic approaches drawing on a range of theoretical sources.*

5. Integrated approaches treating learner training as a by product of language learning.

6. Self-directed approaches in which the learners are encouraged to train themselves through reflection on self-directed learning activities."

Some of the learner development approaches involve the use of some metacognitive strategies including self-monitoring, self-management, and self-evaluation. Ellis and Sinclair (1989) emphasise the importance of awareness in learner training or development, they specify four main areas that successful learners have to be aware of regarding metacognition, and these are: learner self awareness, subject-matter awareness, learning process awareness, and social awareness.

It is claimed that learners who succeed in integrating learning management techniques and developing an awareness of the effective use of the different strategies are in effect autonomous. Esch (1990 as cited in Benson 2001) claims that such reflective and self modes of training are more effective in promoting learner autonomy. Benson (2001:146) quotes Wenden (1991):

> *"In effect, 'successful' or 'expert' or 'intelligent' learners have learned how to learn. They have acquired the learning strategies, the knowledge about learning, and the attitudes that enable them to use these skills and knowledge confidently, flexibly, appropriately and independently of a teacher. Therefore, they are autonomous."*

However, Benson (2001: 147) argues that the problem that can be faced with learner training by both learners and teachers is: *"changing the learner's view of learning from one of completing tasks set by others to one of constructing knowledge of themselves."* The risk involved in explicit strategy training models is that learners will develop a set of techniques for learning management, without developing the corresponding abilities concerned with control over cognitive and content aspects of their learning. That is why, reflective training models are considered to be more effective in fostering autonomy as they integrate aspects of control and help learners develop awareness for the appropriateness of different strategies to their learning.

1.9.4 Teacher-Based Approaches

Teacher-based approaches emphasize the role of the teacher regarding professional development and teacher education in the practice of fostering autonomy among learners. Along with the development of learner autonomy and the shift in the field of education from the focus on teaching to the focus on learning, the role of teachers in this perspective has been subjected to change from the knower, the supplier, and the source of knowledge within the traditional teaching, to a facilitator, helper, coordinator, counsellor, consultant, advisor, knower, and resource. Voller (1997: 102) groups the functions and qualities associated with these roles under two headings technical and psycho-social support.

The key features of technical support are:

> *"1. Helping learners to plan and carry out their independent language learning by means of needs analysis (both learning and language needs), objective setting (both short and longer term, achievable), work-planning, selecting materials, and organizing interactions.*
>
> *2. Helping learners evaluate themselves (assessing initial proficiency, monitoring progress, and self and peer-assessment)*
>
> *3. Helping learners to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to implement the above (by raising their awareness of language and learning, by providing learner training to help them identify learning styles and appropriate strategies.)"*

However, the key features of psycho-social support are:

> *"1. The personal qualities of the facilitator (being caring, supportive, patient, tolerant, emphatic, open, non-judgment)*
>
> *2. A capacity for motivating learners (encouraging, commitment, dispersing uncertainty, helping learners to overcome obstacles, being prepared to enter into a dialog with learners, avoiding manipulating, objectifying or interfering with, in other words, controlling them)*
>
> *3. An ability to raise learners' awareness (to "decondition" them from preconceptions, about learner and teacher roles, to help them perceive the utility of, or necessity for independent learning)"(ibid)*

Teacher-based approaches are considered generally as no more than a framework for interaction between teachers and learners and their effectiveness depends greatly on their implementation in the classroom by teachers. Promoting learner autonomy depends on

various factors; for McGrath (2000 as cited in Benson 2001) the most important factor for the promotion of learner autonomy is that; the teacher have professional freedom and self directed professional autonomy. Moreover, Scharle and Szabo (2000 as cited in Benson 2001) list three stages of gradual course of learner autonomy development starting by raising awareness, changing attitudes, and transferring roles.

Teacher autonomy is seen by many researchers to be the teacher's ability, freedom, and responsibility to take choices concerning her own teaching. In addition it is the ability to develop appropriate skills, knowledge, and attitude for teaching. Little (1995) asserts that teacher autonomy is a prerequisite for the development of learner autonomy.

1.9.5 Classroom-Based Approaches

Classroom-based approaches emphasize learners' control over the planning and evaluation of classroom learning. These approaches attempt to promote autonomy by evolving learners in the decision, and encouraging them take part in the planning and assessment of classroom learning. Benson (2001) cites several experimental programs in which learners were given the opportunity to make decisions regarding their learning in terms of planning and assessment. Results have shown that, learners tend to be more successful and motivated when they have a greater sense of responsibility over their own learning, and that they are able to exercise control over the deferent aspects of their learning if they are given the opportunity to do so and the appropriate support within a collaborative environment. However, any attempt to transfer control and to change the learner/teacher relationship found within conventional educational system is likely to be constrained by the curriculum if it lacks flexibility in the guidelines through which the teachers can allow learners a degree of control.

1.9.6 Curriculum-Based Approaches

Curriculum-based approaches extend the idea of learner control to the curriculum as a whole. These approaches are often judged effective for the reason that they address the issue of control holistically. Both, 'process syllabus' and 'negotiated curriculum' are curriculum types which aim at fostering learner autonomy.

One clear outcome of research on the field is the success of the process syllabus, which is of great importance in the development of learner autonomy, and in which learners are expected to make the major decisions concerning the content and procedures of learning in collaboration with their teachers. To explain what a process syllabus is Benson (2001: 164) quotes Breen (1987):

> *"The process syllabus focuses upon three processes: communicating learning and the purposeful social activity of teaching and learning in the classroom. It is primarily a syllabus which addresses the decisions which have to be made and the working procedures which have to be undertaken for language learning in a group. It assumes, therefore, that the third process-how things may be done in the classroom situation-will be the means through which communicating and learning can be achieved."*

The process syllabus curriculum enable the learners develop autonomy as learners are given the opportunity to create their own syllabus or adapt the one they have already been using. In addition, it provides the learners with the chance to make their decisions on the content of the materials to study and the way that studying is organized.

Both, Brindley (1984) and Nunan (1988) (as cited in Tudor, 1993) see the curriculum design as a negotiative process between teachers and students. Different from traditional approaches to curriculum where decisions were made by course planers whom Tudor (1993) refers to as 'outside experts' this negotiated curriculum is based on the notion that decisions concerning the content and procedure of teaching can be made at classroom level via consultation between teachers and learners. Nunan (1989 as cited in Tudor 1993: 23) expresses this in the following terms:

> *"While a learner-centred curriculum will contain similar elements and processes to traditional curricula, a key difference will be that information by and from learners will be built into every phase of the curriculum process. Curriculum development becomes a collaborative effort between teachers and learners, since learners will be involved in decisions on content selection, methodology and evaluation."*

Accordind to cotteral (2000: 110) *"The challenge facing course designers who wish to foster learners' ability to 'take charge of learning' is to find ways of supporting the transfer of responsibility for decision-making about learning from teacher to learner."* In all curriculum-based approaches learners' involvement in the decision making is the focal point. One risk in promoting learner control by teachers when the scope of decision making is constrained

by the curriculum is that, the learners will feel that they were given responsibility without genuine freedom. That's why; flexible curriculum in which teachers can allow learners a degree of control over aspects of their classroom learning is needed.

1.10 Conclusion

Despite the general agreement on the value of autonomy in education by its advocators, there is little consensus as to its definition. Defining autonomy can be demanding because of its broad and abstract nature, because it is a multi faceted concept that consists of several layers and because learner autonomy is often misconceived.

Many scholars and researchers have produced different theories on how to promote learner autonomy. There may be numerous ways to promote autonomous learning. Yet, fostering autonomy is not an easy task, what may be needed therefore, is that autonomy should be introduced gradually. Learners do not become autonomous overnight but through gradual levels of learner autonomy. Nevertheless, it might be advisable to give consideration to various factors such as the change of both the teacher's as well as the learner's role from knowledge giver and passive receiver to explorer and director. Other important factors are the learning strategies and motivation which seems to be the key if the class or the teacher is to be successful and as they help the learner become more autonomous.

CHAPTER TWO

CONTEXT DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to give a sufficient detail about the methodology used in conducting this research in addition to the description of the specific context of the study. That's why; in the present section the methodology of the study is described. It is concerned with introducing the overall research design, the research purpose and questions. In addition to that, it describes the sample of the study. Moreover, the details regarding the data collection instrument are addressed and both data collection and data analysis methods are exposed.

2.2 Context Description

This fist part of the chapter provides a theoretical argument on the need for, and the importance of, learner autonomy in the success of the goals of education in Algeria.

2.2.1 General Situation of Learner Autonomy in Relation to the Goals of Education in Algeria

In the few past years, autonomy has become a prominent theme in teaching foreign languages. Since its introduction by Henri Holec (1981), the concept gained the interest of educators as well as researchers in EFL teaching and Algerian education is no exception. In the following paragraphs, we are going to see how important learner autonomy to the success of the educational reforms in Algeria is.

2.2.2 English Language Teaching Situation in Algeria

In the context of globalisation, and due to the fact that the English language is now a necessary requirement for both development and international communication, the growing demand for English as a means of access to modern sciences, technological and economic development led to interesting changes in the Algerian educational system. Nowadays, Algeria is one of the countries giving importance to foreign languages, particularly, English.

Despite the fact that the language of instruction in Algeria is largely either Arabic or French, Algerian decision-makers who are aware of the vital role played and held by the English language, try to implement the use of English at all levels of education. Zughoul (2003: 122) argues:

> "In North Africa, and despite the fact that French has had a strong foothold in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, it has been retreating and losing a lot of ground to English. In fact the tendency of what can be termed a shift from French to English in these countries cannot be cancelled."

Algeria, as the rest of the globe, attempts to implement and therefore, develop the use of English. English is taught as a foreign language, it is a necessary subject matter in the curriculum all over the Algerian schools. The primary goals for teaching English language are to help learners to develop the ability to communicate in the target language with those who speak English. In addition to that, learning English can help in promoting intercultural understanding and developing exchanges of ideas across nations. Thus, integrating English in the educational system in Algeria will help learners to meet the latest scientific and technological developments.

The teaching of English in Algeria begins in the first year of middle school. Then, it is carried out till the end of secondary school. In higher education English is taught either as a major subject in English departments or as an additional but compulsory subject in other departments such as: Political or Economic Sciences, Technology, Biology...etc. Furthermore, English is restricted only to the classroom; it is of no use outside the EFL classes.

2.2.3 Algerian Educational Reforms

Over the last 15 years, the requirements placed upon the educational system in Algeria have been influenced by political as well as economic reforms initiated in early 2000 in the hope of bringing back stability to the country after the period of political unrest in the 1990's. The development of education at present is subject to great changes, as the Algerian government see it as an important element towards any political and economical prosperity.

Following the educational experience of many countries, Algeria has adopted a new educational system called 'the Educational Reform' characterized by redefining education with learner focus. Developing a learner-centred focus requires to understand and to accept that learning is a very individual experience, learners have individual learning styles and are motivated by their own unique values and circumstances, and bring to the learning situation their personal experience and world view.

In this respect, and with the aim to meet the new objectives of education, the implementation of competency based approach was needed. Competency based approach emphasises education for change, focusing on what learners need to know and be able to do so that they can participate in the changing world. It is concerned not only with what students learn, but also how they learn and the context of their learning. Within this approach, students need to be able to use a wide range of tools for interacting effectively with their learning. They need to be able take responsibility for managing their own learning and their own lives in much broader social context and act autonomously. So, though not explicitly mentioned, learner autonomy is indeed implemented in the goals of education in Algeria through such ideas as participatory citizenship, life log learning and self development.

2.2.4 LMD System in the University

The Algerian University has gone through several reforms according to the changing in socio-economic needs of the country as well as those of science and technology. The current system used in the Algerian universities is the LMD system which aims to apply to the international norms, to be in concordance with the new guidelines and global trends in high education, and to follow the evaluation of not only scientific research and educational techniques but the world as well.

The LMD system is made of License with six semesters (three years of study), a Master degree of two years (four semesters) is the second phase, whereas the last period is the doctorate studies of three years of research (six semesters).

Autonomy is supposed to be a defining characteristic of the LMD system. Although not necessarily explicitly stated, learner autonomy is implied at several levels in the official aims of foreign language teaching and learning in Algerian higher education. That is why;

promoting learner autonomy in this context seems relevant and can be of big importance. But before fostering autonomy investigating the learners' readiness for it and for change is of great importance.

2.2.5 The Purpose of the Study

Since learner autonomy is a multidimensional concept with various interpretations, its promotion still requires further research. The intent of the proposed study is to offer an additional viewpoint to the issue by studying whether, or not, students of English language at the University of Dr. Taher Moulay- Saida- are ready to learn autonomously and the extent to which learner autonomy can be promoted in the English department of Saida's University.

In the previous chapter, learner autonomy is defined as students' control over their own learning. However, and in spite of the importance of the issue of autonomy in language learning and teaching, there has been very little research on the ways on which 'control' over learning can be exercised. In the recent literature on learners' readiness for autonomy the four main areas (1) motivation, (2) responsibility perception, (3) metacognitive strategies, and (4) autonomy activities were seen by researchers to be factors that may display control over learning.

According to Benson (2001: 183), *"learners who luck autonomy are capable of developing it given the appropriate condition and preparations."* He adds: *"autonomy is available to all, although it is displayed in different ways and to different degrees according to the unique characteristics of each learner and each learning situation."* Moreover, it is argued that before any investigation which aims at fostering autonomy, it is important to identify students' readiness for learner autonomy in different areas which autonomy implies, these areas are:

- Students' level of motivation in learning English.
- Students' use of metacognitive strategies in learning English.
- Students' perception of their own and their teachers' responsibilities in learning English.
- Students' practice of autonomous learning in the form of outside classroom activities.

2.2.6 Research Questions

In this research, the attempt is to find out the readiness of students of English language at Dr. Taher Moulay University for learner autonomy and how to prepare them for a more autonomous learning. In order to reach these aims, the following research questions are addressed:

1. Are students of English language at Dr. Moulay Taher University motivated for their learning?
2. To what extent are metacognitive strategies used by the students in learning English?
3. How do students perceive their own and their teachers' responsibilities in learning English?
4. What are their actual practices of autonomous activities outside the classroom in learning English?
5. Is there any difference in students' (motivation level, metacognitive strategies, responsibility perceptions, and the use of outside class activities) in learning English based on students' gender?
6. Is there any difference in students' (motivation level, metacognitive strategies, responsibility perceptions, and the use of outside class activities) in learning English based on students' age?

2.3 Methodology

This part of the chapter is devoted to introduce the research methods and design. In addition to that, research instruments and data analysis methods are exposed.

2.3.1 Research Design

The design of the study will be a mixed-method one between qualitative and quantitative.

2.3.1.1 Quantitative Method: consist of rates, percentages, or statistics about the actual readiness of EFL student's for autonomous learning at Dr. Moulay Taher university. For this reason data collected through a questionnaire for students will be quantitatively analyzed.

2.3.1.2 Qualitative Method: provide a description of the nature of the problem addressed. It answers the "why" and "how" questions and provides more details. In the case of the present research it is to answer why is autonomy important for EFL teaching and learning? How to promote autonomy in the classroom context? To this end, a collected information and data from books and journals presented in the literary review will be qualitatively analyzed.

Both quantitative and qualitative data are important to the present investigation. Quantitative data provide us with numerical data that can be measured. Meanwhile, the qualitative method helps to make a clearer picture about the contribution of different theories, approaches and methods in developing the overall EFL students' autonomy. Therefore, a mixed method approach is used in the present work i.e. a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Research Questions	• Literature Review • Previous Studies
Sampling	• Random sampling from 2nd year LMD students at Dr. Taher Moulay University.
Instruments	• Questionnaire for students
Data collection procedure	• Administration of questionnaire to (110) 2nd year LMD students in TD setions within 20 minutes
Data analysis procedure	• SPSS software program is used for the data analysis
Results and suggestions	• Relevant literature • findings of the research

Figure 2.1 Overall Research Design

2.3.2 Sample of the Study

The participants of the study consist of the 2nd year LMD university students at Dr. Taher Moulay University of Saida. 2nd year English foreign language students were selected as participants for two reasons. The first reason relates to the timing of data collection: since the data was collected in the medal of the academic year, students in their 1st year at university might have lacked in experience on English teaching in high educational level. The second reason is that the students of 2nd year LMD are immersed in the learning and teaching practices of their department.

In the selection of the sample 110 informants were selected randomly, in other words 74% of 2nd year LMD students (out of 148) constituted the sample for the present case study. Though it has not been possible to work with the entire 2nd year LMD students, Because of students' absences during the period of data collection, the sample population consists of randomly selected participants this reduces the risks of bias and somehow ensures reliability and objectivity of the research work.

A total of 110 students participated in this study. The subjects displayed variety in gender and age. The participants' age ranged from 20 to 25 years old however, since there were only two 26, one 28 and one 37 years old participants, in data analysis 26, 28 and 37 were treated as uniform group which will be referred to as the over 25 years old. As can be seen in (table 2.1) different age groups were represented in this study. Most of the population were between 20 and 25 years old, where 24.5% of the participants were under 20 years old and only four participants were over 25 years old.

Age

	Valid			
	Less than 20	From 21 to 25	More than 25	Total
Frequency	27	79	4	110
Percent	24.5	71.8	3.6	100.0

Table 2.1 Participants by Age
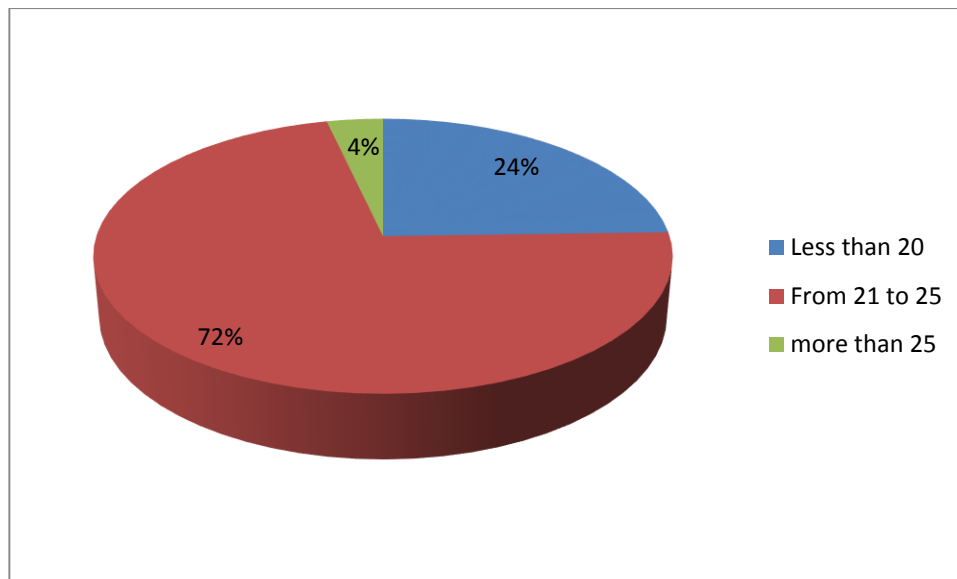
Pie-Chart 2.1 Participants by Age (%)

Moreover the sample population is composed of 23 males and 87 females (see Pie-Chart 2.2).

Gender

	Valid		
	Male	Female	Total
Frequency	23	87	110
Percent	20.9	79.1	100.0

Table 2.2 Participants by Gender
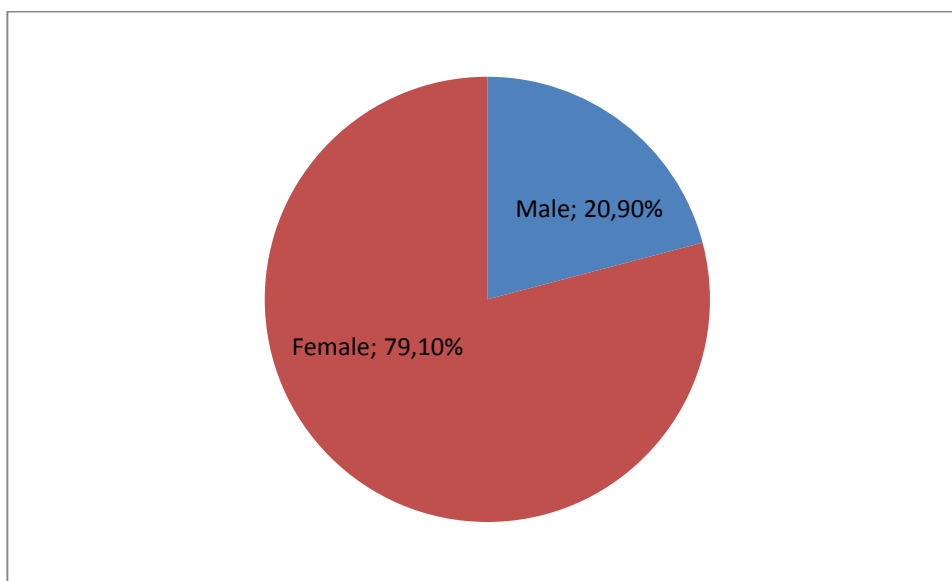
Pie-Chart 2.2 Participants by Gender (%)

To follow up this study, the students involved in the investigation were required to fill a questionnaire that would serve as tool of data collection for the current research.

2.3.3 Research Instruments

Questionnaire for students is used as an instrument in the collection of data, mainly for two reasons. Firstly, a questionnaire can yield a large amount of data when time and resources are limited (Dörnyei and Csizer, 2012) as is the case in this study. Secondly, while for example individual interviews can offer in-depth insights into an issue from a specific point of view, a questionnaire allows for the collection of larger amount of data and, therefore, more generalizable results, which is the aim of this study.

In this study aiming to assess the readiness of language learners for autonomous learning, a questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. The data collection resource was carefully selected, having as purpose to meet specific objectives and answer precise questions. The close ended questionnaire in this study is designed in 3 points Likert scale and it is consisted of 49 close ended questions in four sections: section one (20 items) about learners' motivation; section two (8 items) asked to examine students' use of metacognitive strategies; section three (12 items) focused on students' views of their own and their teachers' responsibilities; section four (9 items) focused on students' actual practice of autonomous learning in the form of both outside and inside class activities.

2.3.3.1 Construction of the Questionnaire

Several steps were followed in the construction of the questionnaire. In the light of the related literature and the combination of two different questionnaires, the data collection instrument used in this investigation was constructed.

2.3.3.2 Related Literature

Literature on learner autonomy in foreign language learning was reviewed in order to identify the areas on which autonomy can be fostered and the related issues to the promotion of autonomy (motivation, choice, support, metacognition, strategies, emotional climate, awareness, responsibility…etc.). As a result of this process the researcher started to draw up lists of areas that the questionnaire might cover and to organize these under headings. One immediate challenge that was faced was that the list of potential issues that could be covered was very long; it was clear from the outset, then, that the researcher would need to be selective about the questionnaire content.

2.3.3.3 Combination of Two Questionnaires

The first questionnaire is developed by Schmidt, Boraie, and kassabgy (1996) a three sections questionnaire about learner motivation and learning strategies. The second is constructed by Spartt, Humphrys and Chan (2002) with four sections aiming to assess students' readiness for learner autonomy in EFL learning. Two sections from the first instrument (motivation and metacognitive strategies) and two sections from the second (responsibility perceptions and outside class activities) were used in this research questionnaire with some modifications.

2.2.3.4 Pilot Study

In order to provide a reliable, practical, and valid research tool, and once the questionnaire has been designed, it was believed that a pilot study was needed before actually employing the research instrument in the final data collection. The questionnaire was piloted with 9% of the sample of the study which is 110 participants involved during the administration of the final draft of the questionnaire. In other words, the pilot study was conducted with 10 students. Some samples of the questionnaire have been distributed to these students with the aim of checking whether the questions are adequate in terms of

clarity. According to the informants answers, some modification have been made on the first draft such as removing some unnecessary items and adding others, remedy to misunderstandings in the questions and refine the difficult wording. After the pilot study and the small modification made on the questionnaire, a final supervisor's opinion was needed before the administration of the final draft of the research instrument.

step 1	• Related literature
step 2	• A combination of two questionairs (Motivation questionnaire + Autonomy queationnaire)
step 3	• Pilot study
step 4	• Revision of the questionnaire regarding the feedback obtained
step 5	• Supervisor's opinion
step 6	• Administration of the questionnaire
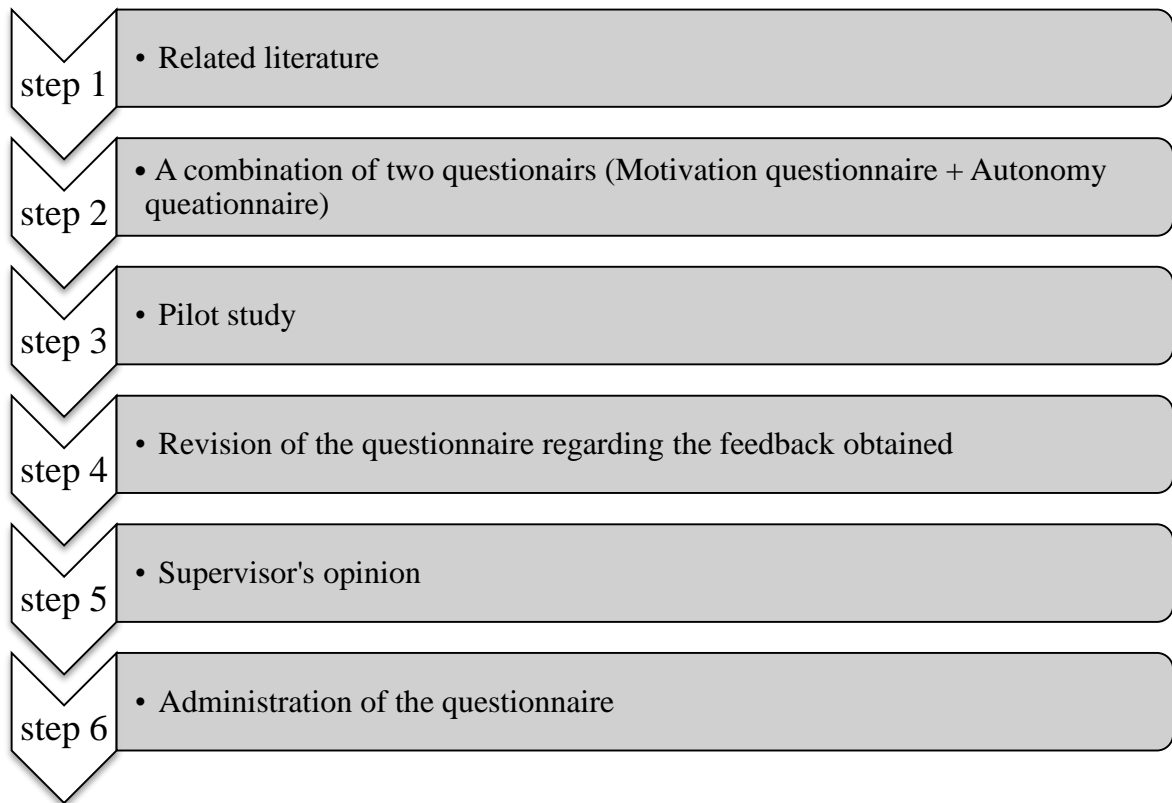
Figure 2.2 Steps Followed in the Construction of the Questionnaire

2.3.4 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure took place in the second week of March with the administration of the final draft of the questionnaire to 110 participants after the necessary permits were obtained. In order to insure an efficient collection of data and an adequate amount of participants, the data was collected during TD sessions with the consent of the teachers. The researcher was present when the participants filled in the questionnaire and this was useful since some clarifications were needed.

To insure confidentiality of the gathered data, the participants' names were not asked and they were informed that their answers would remain anonymous. They were asked to

mention only their age and gender since they were taken into account in the data analysis as it is assumed to have some influence over the students' autonomy

With relatively short close ended questions the participants were interested in filling the questionnaire which can be seen in the fact that none of the participants left the questionnaire unfinished. After the data was collected, all responses were coded into numeric form and entered in SPSS to allow for quantitative analysis. Furthermore, variance analysis was done on the data. Participants' gender and age were looked in order to find out the possible differences between the answers of different participants.

2.3.5 Data Analysis Procedure

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analysed quantitatively by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS. 21.0). SPSS is a computer application that supports statistical analysis of data, it is capable of handling large amounts of data, and can be used to create tables and graphs. SPSS is a widely used program for statistical analysis in social sciences. It is also used by market researchers, health researchers, survey companies, government, education researchers, marketing organizations, and others. SPSS is the acronym of Statistical Package for the Social Science. It is one of the most popular statistical packages which can perform highly complex data manipulation and analysis with simple instructions to generate tabulated reports, charts, descriptive statistics, and complex statistical analysis.

2.3.6 Limitations

This is a particular case study that cannot be generalized as it is conducted on small sample (2nd year LMD students at Dr. Taher Moulay University –Saida-) That is to say; the study is limited to the data collected from 110 students which makes the results hard to be generalized for other levels or other Universities.

Moreover, Students' motivation level, metacognitive strategies, responsibility perception, and outside class activities are the main areas of autonomy upon which this investigation is based. However, these areas are often conditioned and limited by other factors and the learning context.

Another limitation is that the present study deals with learners' readiness for autonomy from the perspective of the students. A questionnaire or an interview for the teachers might have been used to gain more detailed information and it would be useful, but due to the time constraints it could not be realized.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, both the study context as well as the methodology has been described. The first part dealt with general situation of learner autonomy in relation to the goals of education in Algeria. It provides a theoretical argument on the need for, and the importance of, learner autonomy in the success of the new educational reforms. While in the second part, research design, research instruments and data collection procedures have been discussed. In addition to that, methods of data analysis have been identified.

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained from the statistical analyses. First, the results of the study will be reported in the form of percentages and frequencies of the dependent and independent variables, included in the study. This will be done in accordance with the research questions introduced in previous chapter. Then, the results regarding the respondents' readiness for autonomous language learning in terms of their gender and age will be reported. Finally, some possible recommendations regarding the promotion of autonomous learning will be suggested.

3.2 Findings

In the present study, six research questions were explained regarding the readiness of 2nd year LMD students of English at Dr Taher Moulay University for autonomous learning. The results will be presented in the same order with the research questions produced for the study.

3.2.1 Findings Concerning Students' Motivation Level

The first section of the questionnaire aimed to investigate the level of motivation in learning English for 2nd year LMD students at Dr. Taher Moulay University of Saida. In this section, and in order to answer the first research question (Are students of English language at Dr. Moulay Taher University motivated for their learning?) participants were asked to respond to 20 questions about various aspects of motivation in learning English on three-point likert scale (agree, disagree, and neutral). (Table 3.1) reveals the descriptive statistics in the form of percentages (%) and frequencies (f) of students' responses to each item.

ITEM	Agree		Disagree		Neutral	
	F	%	F	%	f	%
1. Learning English is enjoyable for me.	100	90.9	2	1.8	8	7.3
2. I wish I could learn English in an easier way, without going to school.	38	34.5	58	52.8	14	12.7
3. I am trying to do my best to learn English.	90	81.8	3	2.7	17	15.5
4. Even if there is no attendance requirement in the English course, my attendance would be high.	55	50	34	30.9	21	19.1
5. I want to continue studying English for as long as possible.	80	72.7	15	13.7	15	13.6
6. I believe that I will be successful in the English class.	90	81.8	4	3.7	16	14.5
7. If I learn English better, I will be able to get a better and well-paid job.	82	74.5	11	10	17	15.5
8. I want to be the best in the English class.	92	83.6	2	1.9	16	14.5
9. I feel uncomfortable when I have to speak in the English class.	42	38.2	45	40.9	23	20.9
10. I cannot concentrate easily on the English class.	27	24.5	60	54.5	23	20.9
11. I am afraid I will not succeed in the English exams.	48	43.6	51	46.4	11	10
12. I like working in pairs in the English class.	72	65.5	24	21.8	14	12.7
13. I prefer individual work in the English class.	37	33.6	59	53.6	14	12.7
14. Group activities in the English class are not efficient.	26	23.6	63	57.3	21	19.1
15. In the English class, the teacher should be the one who talks more.	31	28.2	61	55.5	18	16.4
16. In an English class, I like activities that allow me to participate actively.	98	89.1	4	3.6	8	7.3
17. The teacher should encourage students to make contributions in the English lesson.	98	89.1	6	5.5	6	5.5
18. If I do well in this course, it will be because I have the ability for learning English.	90	81.8	5	4.5	15	13.6
19. If I do not do well in this course, it will be because I have not tried hard enough.	62	56.4	26	23.6	22	20
20. If I do not do well in this course, it will be because of the teacher.	19	17.3	71	64.5	20	18.2

Table 3.1 Motivation Level of the Students

As can be seen from the data, the majority of the respondents (90.9%) indicated their enjoyment in the process of learning English (Item 1) as it is interpreted in the (Bar-graph

3.1) whereas (52.7%) of them reported their disagreement to the opportunity of learning English without going to school (Item 2). Furthermore, respondents' responses to (Item 3) reflected high determination in learning English as (81.8%) were doing their best to improve their English. However, only half of the participants (50%) showed their positive attitudes towards attending the English course regularly even if there is no attendance requirement (Item 4). Remarkably, (72.7%) of the students reported their willingness to continue studying English as long as possible (Item 5).
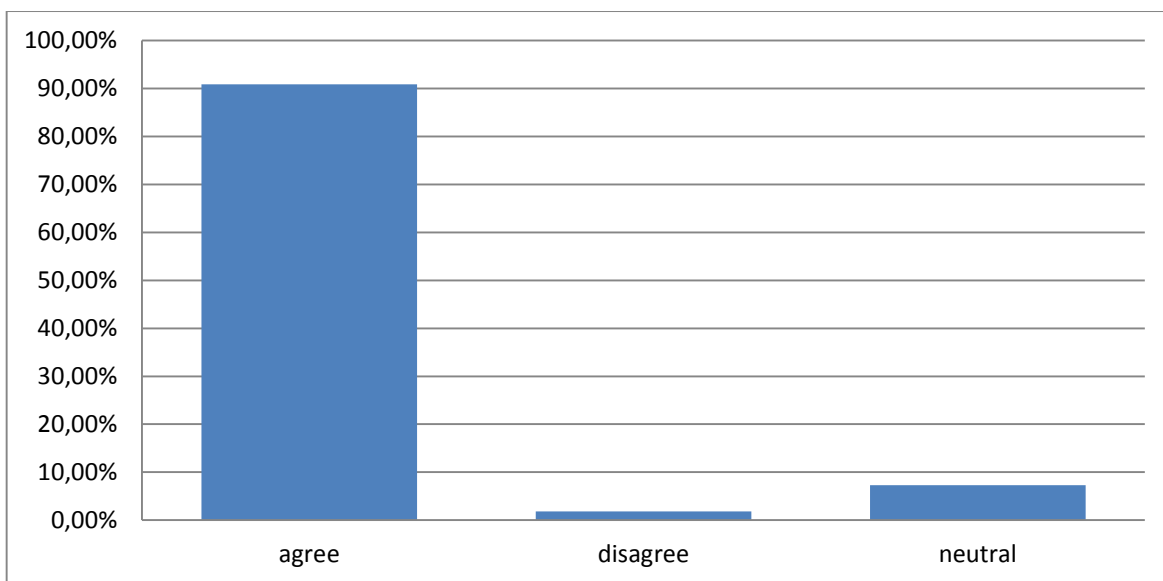
Bar-graph 3.1 Students' Enjoyment of Learning English.

Responses to (Item 6) revealed a high expectation of success in students. Only (3.6%) of the students indicated their disagreement to the belief of being successful in the English class. Also, (83.6%) of the respondents (n=92) reported that they agreed with the idea of wanting to be the best in the English class (Item 8). In addition to the success, another external factor increasing the students' motivation is the opportunity to be able to find a better and well-paid job (Item 7). In fact, (74.5%) of the respondents indicated their agreement to the necessity of English so as to find a better and well-paid job.

Responses to the (Items 9 and 11) reflected considerable anxiety in respondents during the English learning process. For instance, 42 students (38.2%) agreed to feel uncomfortable when they had to speak English (Item 9). Additionally, (43.6%) indicated certain agreements to having test anxiety in themselves (Item 11). On the other hand, not many students reported lack of concentration in the English class. About (24.5%) of the

participants stated their agreement to having concentration problems during the English class (Item 10).
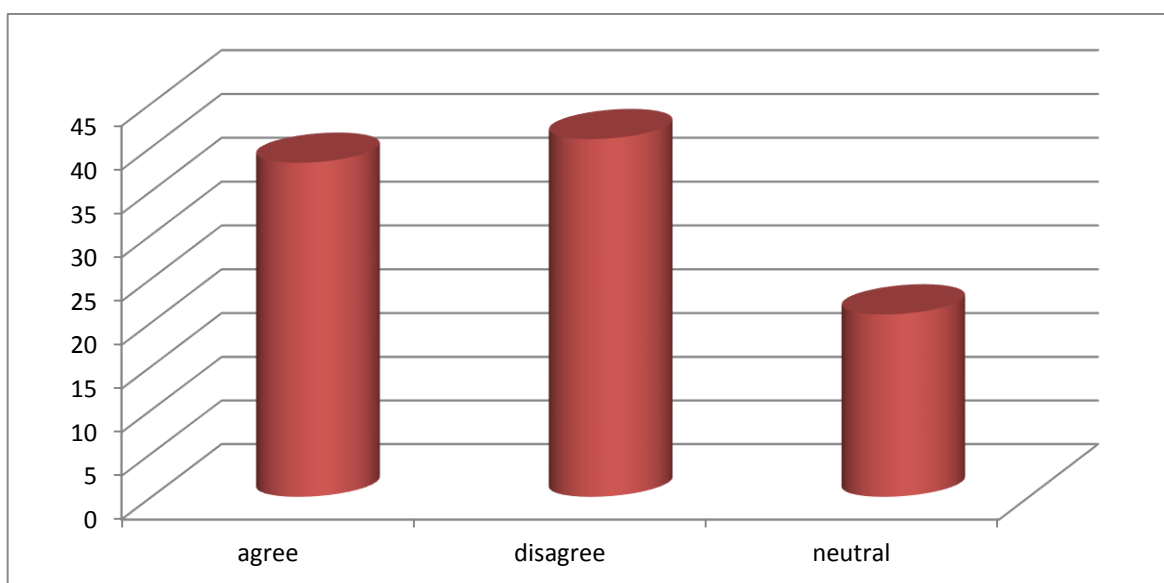
Bar-graph 3.2 Students' Language Learning Anxiety in Speaking English

As for the collective work, the majority of students valued pair work and group work activities (Items 12 and 14). For instance, (65.5%) appeared to be fond of working in pairs in the English class (Item 12). Moreover, 63 respondents (57.3%) agreed with the idea of efficiency of group activities by indicating 'disagree' for the (Item 14). On the other hand, only 14 students were likely to be undecided as to their preference for working individually in the English class (Item 13) which asked for respondents' preferences for working alone in carrying out the tasks in the English class.

In (Item 15), approximately half of the respondents disagreed with the idea that the teacher should talk more than themselves. Students' responses to (Items 16 and 17), which concerned active involvement in the English class, showed clearly that the majority of the respondents perceived the teacher's role as a helper creating opportunities for them to involve in the tasks. Although (89.1%) reported their agreement to (Item 16), which concerned willingness to participate actively in the class, almost all of the students (n=98 or 89.1%) stated that they needed the teacher's encouragement for active participation (Item 17).

Responses to (Items 18, 19 and 20) revealed that majority of students tend to attribute their failure and success to themselves. For instance, it is almost certain that not

trying hard enough caused failure according to more than half of the respondents (n=62) who agreed with the (Item 19). Additionally, respondents did not seem to consider the teacher as an important factor in their failure. Only 19 out of 110 participants attributed their failure to the teacher by indicating 'agree' (Item 20). Finally, approximately three fourth of the respondents (n=90) agreed with the idea of attributing their success to their own efforts.

3.2.2 Findings Concerning Students' Use of Metacognitive Strategies

In the second section of the questionnaire, participants were asked to evaluate their use of a number of metacognitive strategies in learning English. Table 3.2 displays the frequencies and percentages of 110 students' responses.

ITEM	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	f	%	f	%	F	%
21. When I am learning a new grammar rule, I think about its relationship to the rules I have learned.	29	26.4	75	68.2	6	5.4
22. When I study for my English course, I pick out the most important points and make diagrams or tables for myself.	28	25.5	46	41.8	36	32.7
23. I try to find the meaning of a word by dividing it into parts that I can understand.	40	36.4	60	54.5	10	9.1
24. I use new English words in a sentence in order to remember them easily.	49	44.5	53	48.2	8	7.3
25. I try to evaluate my progress in learning English.	63	57.3	41	37.3	6	5.4
26. When studying for my English exam, I try to find out which structures and terms I do not understand well.	71	64.6	35	31.8	4	3.6
27. I learn better when I try to understand the reasons of my mistakes I have done in English.	68	61.8	39	35.5	3	2.7
28. I arrange time to prepare before every English class.	13	11.8	65	59.1	32	29.1

Table 3.2 Metacognitive Strategies Used by the Respondents

(Table 3.2) gives percentages of responses on three-point likert scale (always, sometimes, and never) to eight items in the questionnaire. As can be drawn from the data, participants' responses to the items which reflect organizing learning (Items 21, 22, 23, 24) reveal small distinctions. For instance, (68.2 %) of the respondents reported that they

sometimes think about the new grammar rule's relationship to the rules they had learned before (Item 21) as it is interpreted in the (Bar-graph 3.3).
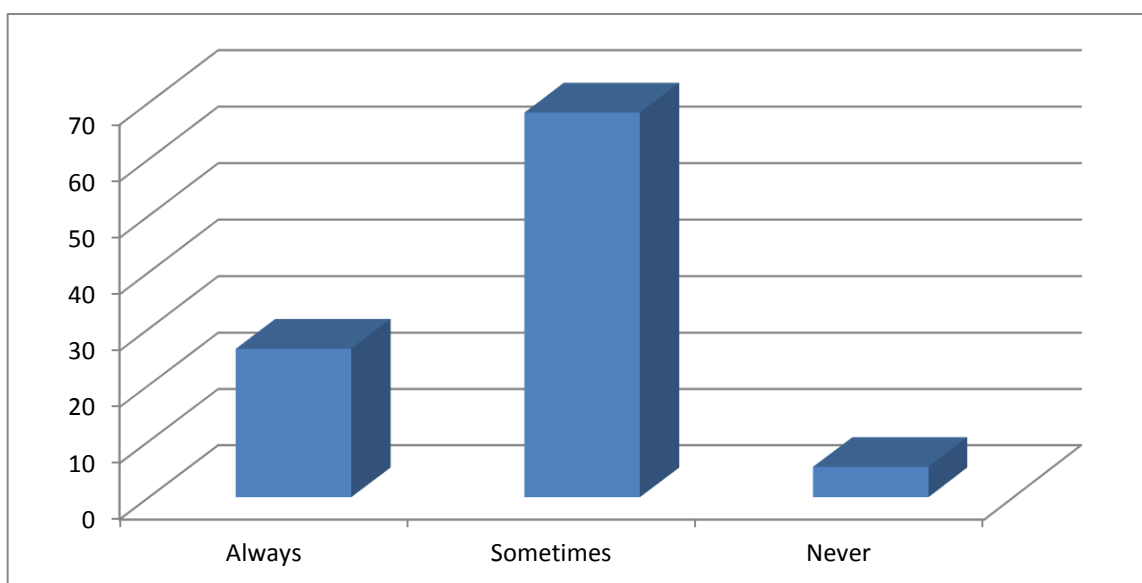
Bar-graph 3.3 Students' Use of Metacognitive Strategies in Learning Grammar.

However, almost one third of the respondents (n=36) indicated that they had never made summaries, diagrams or tables of important points while studying English. On the other hand, students' responses to (Items 23 and 24) reflected moderate organisation of vocabulary learning. In fact, a bit more than half of the respondents showed certain agreement (Items 23 and 24) on using different strategies in learning a new word such as dividing the new vocabulary into parts or using the new word in a sentence. Responses to (Items 25 and 26) indicate that the majority of the students considered the importance of using self-evaluation and self-monitoring strategies in the language learning process. In other words, (64.6%) of the students stated that they had the habit of identifying their problems prior to English exams (Item 26). In addition, only 6 of the respondents had never evaluated their progress in learning English (Item 25).

Finally, the majority of students (n=68) stating that they learned better when they tried to figure out the reasons of their own mistakes (Item 27). However, nearly one third of the respondents reported that they had never arranged time to prepare before English class (Item 28) as it is shown in the following bar-graph:
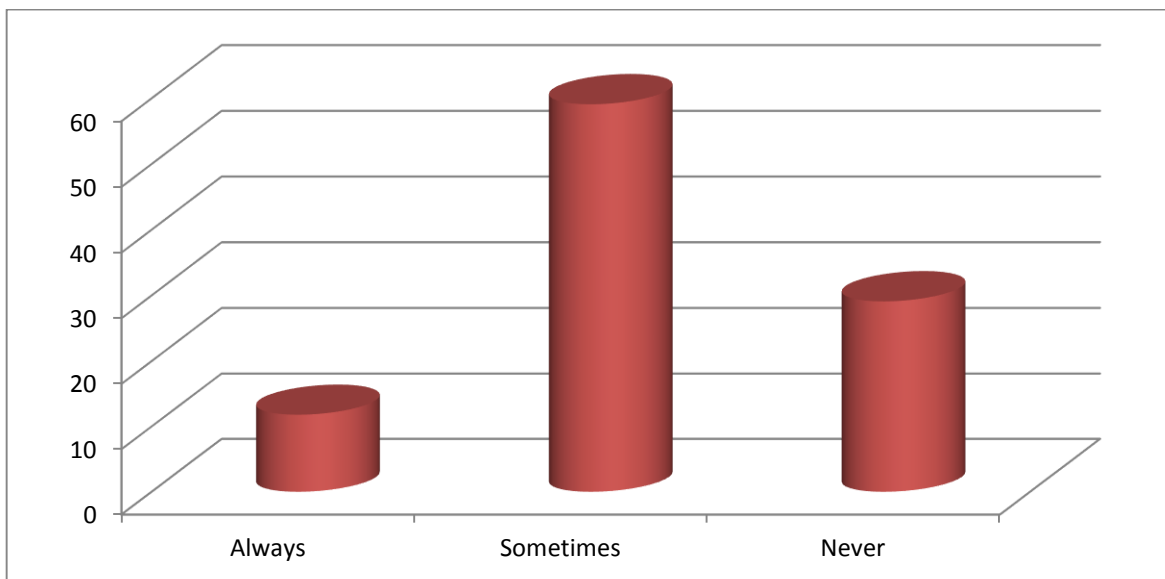
Bar-graph 3.4 Students' Arrangement of Time to Prepare before the English Class.

3.2.3 Findings Concerning Students' Perception of Their Own and Their Teachers' Responsibilities

The third research question aimed to explore students' perception of their own and their teachers' responsibilities in learning English. The data concerned with this question were gathered by Section three, which consisted of twelve items in the questionnaire. Students were asked 'whose responsibility (yours, your teacher's, or both) should it be to...? The percentages and frequencies of students' responses to the perceptions of their teachers' and their own responsibilities are shown in (Table 3.3).

ITEMS	Yours		Your Teacher's		Both	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
29. Stimulating my interest in learning English	50	45.5	7	6.4	53	48.1
30. Identifying my weaknesses and strengths in learning English	56	50.9	20	18.2	34	30.9
31. Deciding the objectives of the English course	33	30.0	55	50.0	22	20.0
32. Deciding what will be learnt in the next English lesson	13	11.8	79	71.8	18	16.4
33. Choosing what activities to use in the English lesson	10	9.1	82	74.5	18	16.4
34. Deciding how long to spend on each activity	30	27.3	54	49.1	26	23.6
35. Choosing what materials to use in the English lessons	25	22.7	58	52.7	27	24.6
36. Evaluating my learning performance	32	29.1	46	41.8	32	29.1
37. Evaluating the English course	22	20.0	58	52.7	30	27.3
38. Deciding what I will learn outside the English class	91	82.7	8	7.3	11	10.0
39. Making sure I make progress during English lessons	58	52.7	28	25.5	24	21.8
40. Making sure I make progress outside the English class	88	80.0	7	6.4	15	13.6

Table 3.3 Responsibility Perception

As can be seen, in seven out of twelve items students were giving more responsibility to their teachers rather than to themselves. These items concern the decisions to be taken on the objectives of the English course (Item 31), the content of English lessons (Item 32), the activities or tasks to be carried out in the English lessons (Item 33), the time limit to be spent on each activity or task (Item 34), the materials to be used in the English lessons (Item 35) and evaluating the learning performance and the English lesson (Items 36 and 37).
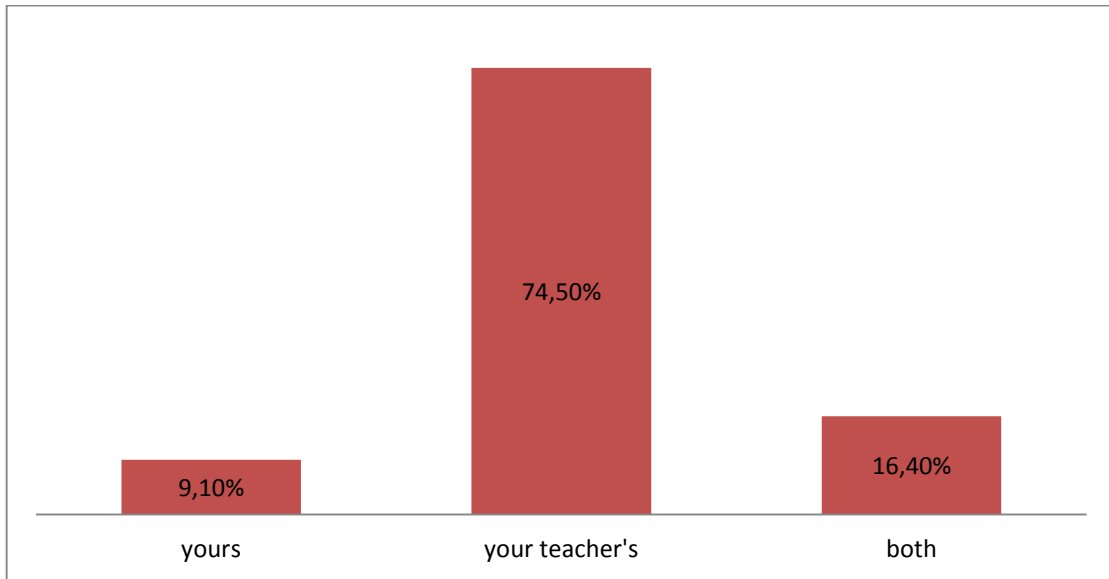
Bar-graph 3.5 Students' Perception of Responsibility in Choosing Activities in the
English Class.

On the other hand, students gave themselves more responsibility than teachers in
three out of seven items (38, 39 and 40). The majority of the respondents (82.7%) reported
that they were able to hand responsibility in decisions related to what will be learnt outside
the English class (Item 38). In addition to this, approximately more than half of the
participants stated their willingness to take responsibility to make sure that they made
progress outside the English class.
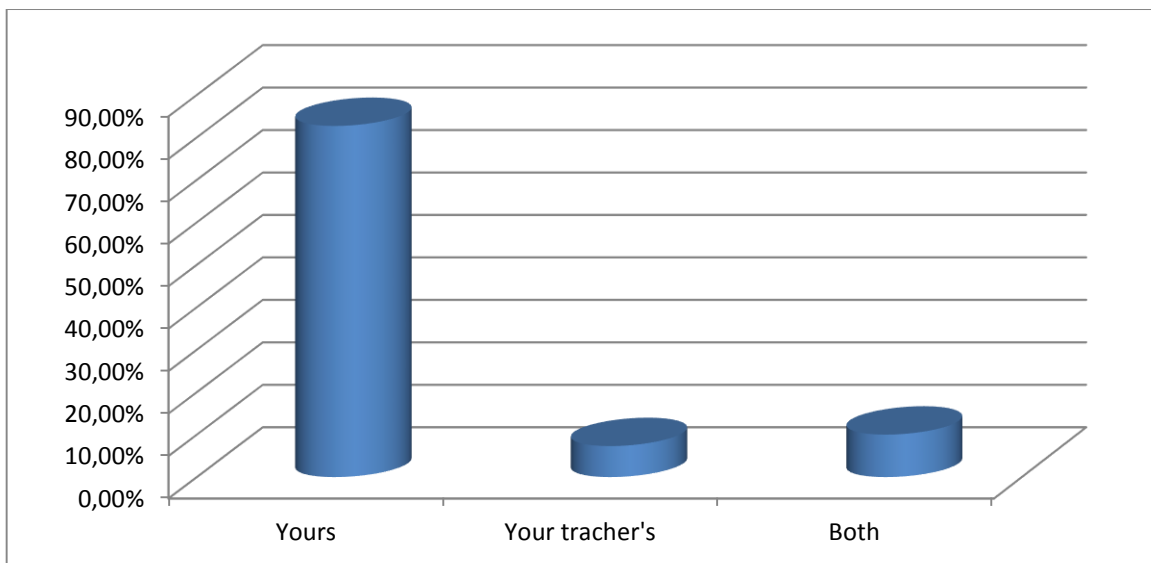
Bar-graph 3.6 Students' Perception of Responsibility in Choosing what to be Learned
Outside the English Class.

However, these students also appeared to have a notion of shared responsibility, particularly in items (29 and 30). For instance, slightly over half of the respondents agreed to share the responsibility with their teacher in stimulating their interest in learning English (Item 29). Similarly, students' responses to (Item 30) reflected great willingness to share the responsibility in identifying the students' weaknesses and strengths in learning English.

3.2.4 Findings Concerning Students' Practice of Outside Class Activities

The fourth section of the questionnaire aimed to identify the outside class activity performance in learning English for the 2nd year LMD students at Dr. Moulay Taher University. In order to investigate the responses to the questions, the data were gathered by nine items on a three-point Likert scale (always, sometimes, and never), in the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics for the outside-class activities are used to portray the percentages, and frequencies of the items.

ITEM	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
41. I do grammar exercises though it is not homework.	8	7.3	66	60.0	36	32.7
42. I do assignments, which are not compulsory (not obligatory).	6	5.5	64	58.1	40	36.4
43. I try to learn new words in English.	69	62.7	36	32.7	5	4.6
44. I use internet in English. (for chat, search…)	64	58.2	35	31.8	11	10.0
45. I watch English movies or TV programs.	74	67.3	31	28.2	5	4.5
46. I read English written materials. (magazines, books, newspapers…)	31	28.1	61	55.5	18	16.4
47. I make use of the self-access center to study English.	28	25.5	65	59.1	17	15.4
48. I talk to foreigners in English.	21	19.1	64	58.2	25	22.7
49. I listen to English songs.	75	68.2	31	28.2	4	3.6

Table 3.4 Outside Class Activities

As shown by the data in (Table 3.4), almost all the respondents (n=106) preferred listening to English songs, the frequency of which changes between always (n=75) and sometimes (n=31) (Item 49). Moreover, (67.3%) of the respondents claimed that they were

trying to improve their English via always watching English movies and TV programs (Item 45). Similarly, responses to (Item 43) indicate that (62.7%) of students were making great efforts to learn new words in English. On the other hand, students' responses to (Item 47) displayed moderate percentage on making use of the self-access centers to study English. Slightly more than half of the students indicated that they sometimes used the self-access centers so as to study English, while (22.7%) reported that they had never used them.


	Always	Sometimes	Never
■ Série1	62,70%	32,70%	4,60%
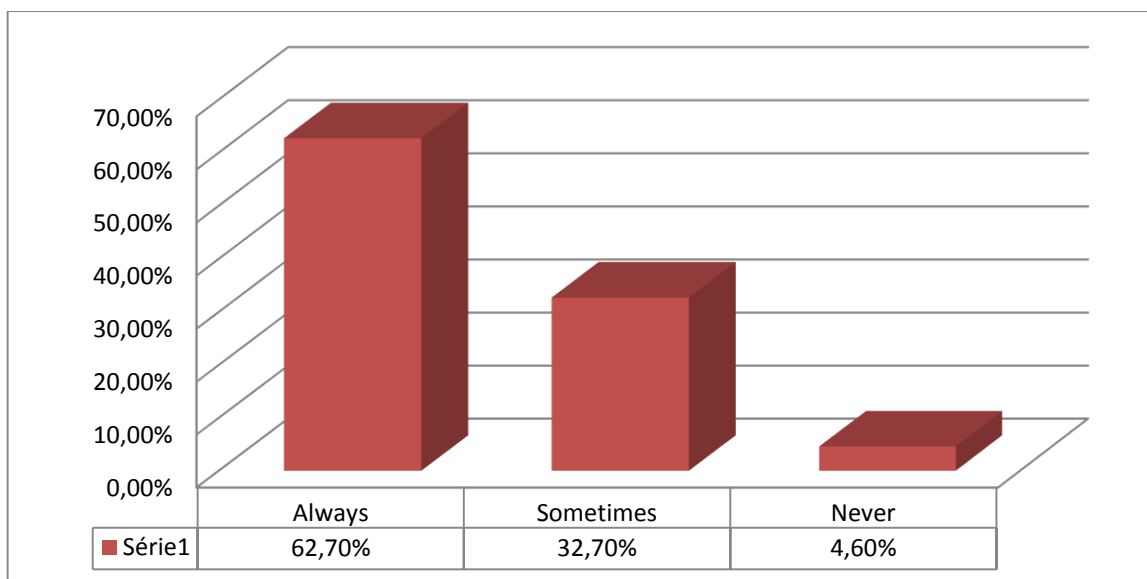
Bar-graph 3.7 Students' Learning of New Vocabulary in English.

Although the majority of students preferred watching movies and TV programs in English, fewer of them reported that they were always reading books, magazines or newspapers in English (Item 46). In fact, only (28.1%) of students indicated that they were spending their free time regularly (always) on reading written materials such as books, magazines or papers in English. Likewise, small percentage of respondents (19.1 %) stated that they always tried to talk to foreigners in order to improve their spoken English (Item 48). Another area, which showed respondents' willingness was the use of Internet in English since approximately more than half of the respondents, reported that they used Internet in English for search, chat,...etc. (Item 44). Finally, respondents' responses to (Items 41 and 42) reflected unwillingness to do optional tasks or extra exercises outside the class in order to improve their English. In fact, (32.7%) of the respondents did not seem to have the habit of doing extra grammar exercises (Item 41) and only (5.5 %) of the students reported that they always tried to do assignments, which were not compulsory.
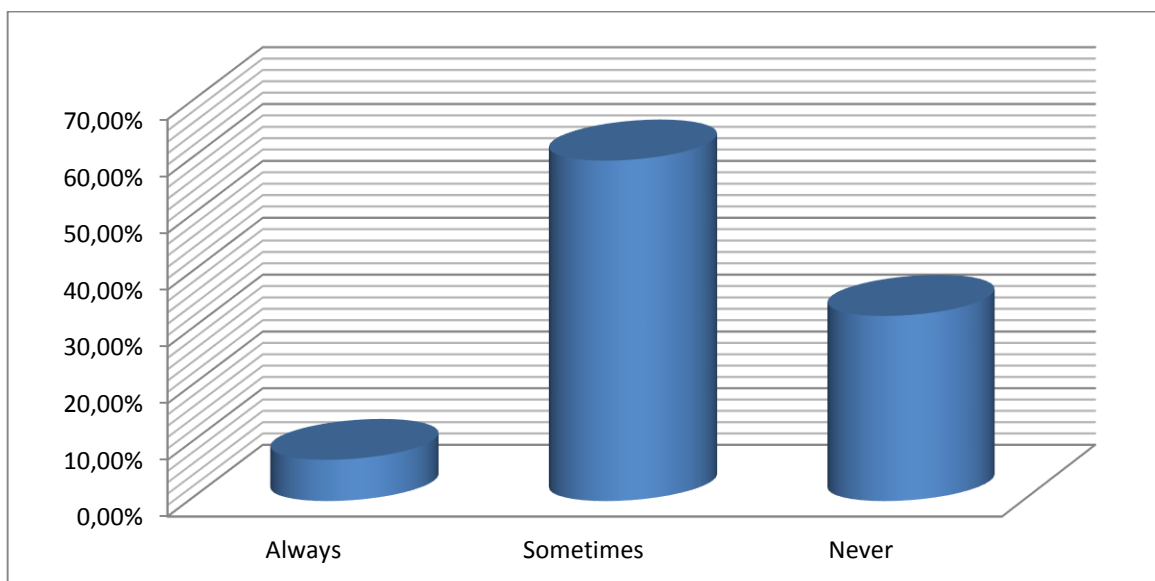
Bar-graph 3.8 Students' Practice of Non Compulsory Grammar Exercises.

3.2.5 Findings Regarding Students' Age

The fifth research question was stated as, is there any difference in learners' (motivation level, metacognitive strategies used, responsibility perception, outside class activities) in learning English based on their age? Accordingly, the hypotheses on which we will be testing are:

- H_0 : (the null hypothesis): There is no significant difference in learners' (motivation level, metacognitive strategies used, responsibility perception, outside class activities) in learning English based on their age.

- H_1 : There is a significant difference in learners' (motivational level, metacognitive strategies used, responsibility perception, outside class activities) in learning English based on their age.

Considering the research question and the hypotheses, the independent variable is age: however, the dependent variables are motivational level, metacognitive strategies used, responsibility perception, and outside class activities.

Independent Variable		Dependent Variables
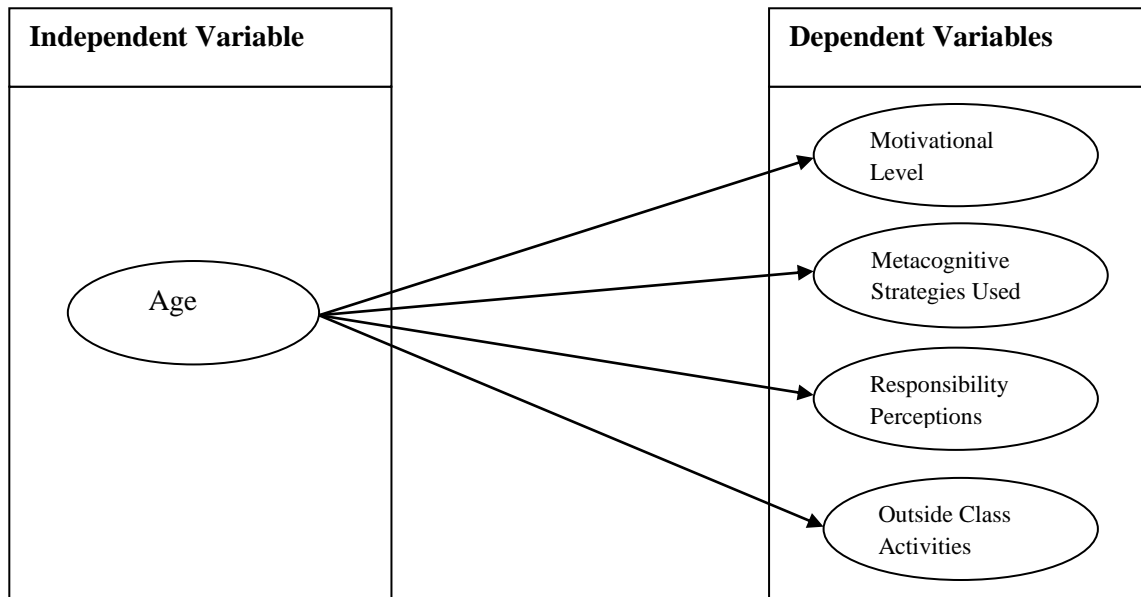
Diagram 3.1 Independent and Dependent Variable

To determine which of the two hypotheses is true, One-way ANOVA was conducted. One-way ANOVA is used when we have one dependent variable and one independent variable with three or more groups or levels. In this research, One-way ANOVA is carried out to evaluate if any significant differences in means between each dependent variable exist across the three groups (less than 21, from 21 to 25, and more than 25 years old) of the independent variable which is age.

The following table shows the output of the One-Way ANOVA analysis and whether we have a statistically significant difference between our group means.

		N	Mean	Sig.
Motivation	Less than 20	27	1.59	0.721
	From 21 to 25	79	1.56	
	More than 25	4	1.61	
Metacognitive Strategies	Less than 20	27	1.69	0.891
	From 21 to 25	79	1.72	
	More than 25	4	1.72	
Responsibility Perception	Less than 20	27	1.85	0.799
	From 21 to 25	79	1.86	
	More than 25	4	1.77	
Outside Class Activities	Less than 20	27	1.81	0.463
	From 21 to 25	79	1.78	
	More than 25	4	1.61	

Table 3.5 One-Way ANOVA Analysis Results

As can be seen the significance level is:

- Motivation: sig = 0.721 > 0.05
- Metacognitive strategies: sig = 0.891 > 0.05
- Responsibility perception: sig = 0.799 > 0.05
- Outside class activities: sig = 0.463 > 0.05

The significance level (sig) for the four dependent variables (motivation, metacognitive strategies, responsibility perception, and outside class activities) is more than 0.05. However, it is known that when using One -way ANOVA analysis and in order to say that there is a significance difference somewhere among our means on our dependent variables based on the independent variable (age), the significance value (sig) should be less than or equal to 0.05. Therefore we can say that in this case study the four dependent variables did not differ significantly regarding age and that is why we keep the H_0 hypothesis or the null hypothesis and we reject the H_1 Hypothesis. That is to say, there is no significant difference in students' (motivation level, metacognitive strategies usage, responsibility perception, and outside classroom activities) in learning English based on the age differences.

3.2.6 Findings Regarding Students' Gender

The sixth research question was stated as, is there any difference in learners' (motivation level, metacognitive strategies used, responsibility perception, outside class activities) in learning English based on gender? Accordingly, the hypotheses on which we have been testing are:

- The null hypothesis:

- $H_0: \mu_{male} = \mu_{female} \rightarrow$ the two population means for male and female are equal there is no significant difference in learners' (motivation level, metacognitive strategies used, responsibility perception, outside class activities) in learning English based on gender.

- The alternative hypothesis:

  $H_1: \mu_{male} \neq \mu_{female} \rightarrow$ the two population means for male and female are not equal there is a significant difference in learners' (motivation level, metacognitive strategies used, responsibility perception, outside class activities) in learning English based on gender.

Considering the research question and the hypotheses, the independent variable is gender however, the dependent variables are motivational level, metacognitive strategies used, responsibility perception, and outside class activities.
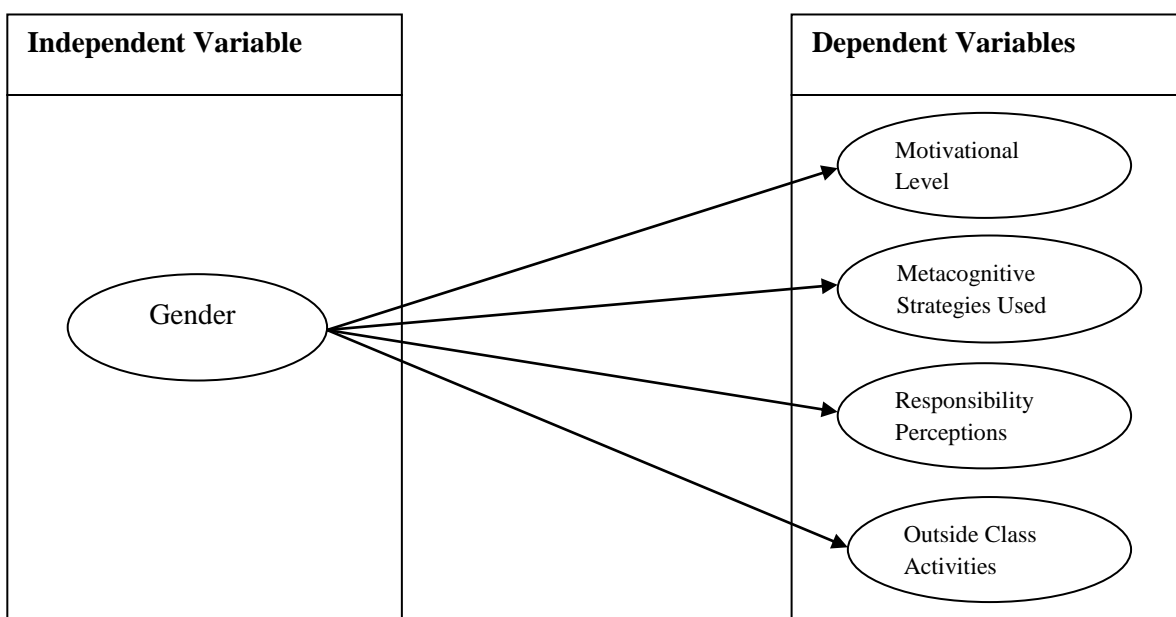
Diagram 3.2 Dependent and Independent Variables

To determine which of the two hypotheses is true, Independent samples t-test was conducted. An independent sample t-test is used to compares the means between two unrelated groups on the same continuous, dependent variable. In this research, t-test is carried out to evaluate if any significant differences in means between each dependent variable exist across the two groups (male and female) of the independent variable which is gender.

The following table shows the output of the Independent t-test analysis and whether we have a statistically significant difference between our group means.

	t-test for Equality of Means			
	Gender	N	Means	Sig (2-tailed)
Motivation	Male	23	1.64	0.056
	Female	87	1.55	
Metacognitive Strategies	Male	23	1.72	0.881
	Female	87	1.71	
Responsibility Perceptions	Male	23	1.88	0.585
	Female	87	1.85	
Outside Class Activities	Male	23	1.77	0.779
	Female	87	1.79	

Table 3.6 t-test Equality of Means Results

As can be seen the significance level is:

- Motivation: $M_{male} = 1.64\ M_{female} = 1.55$ $sig = 0.056 > 0.05$
- Metacognitive strategies: $M_{male} = 1.72\ M_{female} = 1.71$ $sig = 0.881 > 0.05$
- Responsibility perception: $M_{male} = 1.88\ M_{female} = 1.85$ $sig = 0.585 > 0.05$
- Outside class activities: $M_{male} = 1.77\ M_{female} = 1.79$ $sig = 0.779 > 0.05$

Where **M** is mean and **sig** is significance value

The significance level (sig) for the four dependent variables (motivation, metacognitive strategies, responsibility perception, and outside class activities) is more than 0.05. However, it is known that when using independent samples t-test analysis and in order to say that there is a significance difference between our means on our dependent variables based on the independent variable (gender), the significance value (sig) should be less than or equal to 0.05. Therefore we can say that in this case study the four dependent variables did not differ significantly regarding gender and that is why we keep the H_0 hypothesis or the null hypothesis and we reject the H_1 Hypothesis. In other words, there is no significant difference in students' (motivation level, metacognitive strategies usage, responsibility perception, and outside classroom activities) in learning English based on the gender difference. Though we can see a slight difference between the means of male and female concerning motivation, we cannot say that learners' motivational level differ significantly on the level of gender since the significance value is more than 0.05.

3.3 Interpretation of the Findings

The aim of this study was to identify students' learning English at Dr. Taher Moulay University readiness for learner autonomy, and whether, or not, they are ready to be involved in autonomous learning regarding four areas: students' motivational level, students' use of metacognitive strategies, students' perception of their own and their teachers' responsibilities, and students' engagement in outside class activities. That is to say, the main objective of this study was to explore the extent to which autonomous learning can be promoted for English language learners at Dr. Taher Moulay University.

3.3.1 Interpretation of Findings Concerning Students' Motivation Level

From the results it's obvious that the majority of the respondents in this study revealed strong willingness to learn English and to improve it as much as they could. Moreover, they showed a high determination to continue studying English as long as possible. These results can be seen as an important indicator of the student's intrinsic motivation which is an important factor that supports autonomy as claimed by Deci and Ryan (1985) (as cited in Spartt, Humphereys and Chan, 2002). In addition to intrinsic motivation, students scored high in items about extrinsic motivation. Motivated and encouraged by a better and well paid job and the competition to get scholarship, students

did not hide their desire to be the best in their classrooms but at the same time they realize that they have to make more efforts for that.

Participants did not indicate significant concentration problems during the English class. However, significantly a high number of students pointed out that they feel uncomfortable when they have to speak in English and that they feel pressure and stress each time they have to pass exams. This result can be attributed to students' lack of experience in dealing with anxiety and which may be solved by encouragement from the teacher who can help students develop more self-esteem and control anxiety since students expect teachers' encouragement particularly in the activities which requires students' participation.

Remarkably, the majority of participants expressed that they enjoy the learning process more when they work in groups, and they indicated that group activities in the English class are more efficient. This preference may be related to the anxiety experienced by the students when they are asked to present individual work since some learners feel uncomfortable and have difficulties in expressing themselves in English. Although learner autonomy focuses more on individuality and independence, collaborative work does not contradict with autonomy instead, it is to some extent another desirable objective of learner autonomy.

Unexpectedly, students showed awareness and maturity in their responses to the three last questions in the first section. Students appeared to perceive their failures and successes and more importantly attribute them to their own efforts or laziness rather than to their teachers. This results shows self awareness and responsibility which is directly related to learner autonomy.

3.3.2 Interpretation of Findings Concerning Students' Use of Metacognitive Strategies

Generally students tend to use metacognitive strategies in order to facilitate their learning process, and as it is mentioned in the literary review chapter, the use of effective metacognitive strategies help students develop more active and autonomous attitude that enable them to take control of their own learning. That is why; the second section in this

research was aiming to investigate to what extent do student at Dr. Taher Moulay University use metacognitive strategies in their learning process.

From the results we can say that, students frequently used strategies regarding organization of learning such as establishing relationships between the different grammar rules in addition to the organization of vocabulary learning. However, fewer metacognitive strategies concerning picking out the important point and making diagrams and tables were reported to be used by 2nd year LMD students at Dr. Taher Moulay University. Moreover, the present study showed that the majority of the students used self-evaluation and self-monitoring strategies such as evaluating their progress in learning English and trying to find out which structures and terms they do not understand and try to figure out the reason of their mistakes.

Contrary to the previous findings that showed students frequent use of matacognitive strategies (self-evaluation and self-monitoring). Unfortunately, the results revealed that, concerning organizing time to prepare before every English class, which is considered by HO and Crookall (1995) as one of the strongest indicator of learner autonomy. This finding can be attributed to the traditional educational system which promotes teacher dependent learning.

3.3.3 Interpretation of Findings Concerning Students' Perception of Their Own and Their Teachers' Responsibilities

In the third section of the questionnaire, participants were asked to identify their own and their teacher's responsibilities. Students' perceptions of responsibility might give us an idea about students' of Dr. Taher Moulay University readiness for autonomous learning because; giving more responsibility to the teacher might be understood as more dependency to teachers, whereas giving more responsibility to the student might be interpreted as being more ready to behave autonomously.

The results pointed out that students gave more responsibility to the teacher and took least responsibility for themselves. When we examine the findings in detail, we notice that the respondents saw the teacher as more responsible for decisions related to formal language instruction such as deciding the content of the English course, choosing the relevant tasks and activities, selecting the materials and limiting the time for each activity.

These results can be explained by students' dependency on teachers and their traditional belief that the teacher is responsible for everything in the classroom and he is the only one who can take decisions during classroom instruction. However, it is impossible to promote autonomous learning via ignoring the conditions suggested by Holec (1981, as cited in Litle 1996: 16)

> *"To learn autonomously is to take charge of one's learning and to hold the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, i.e:*
>
> *• determining the objectives;*
>
> *• defining the contents and progressions;*
>
> *• selecting methods and techniques to be used;*
>
> *• monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc.);*
>
> *• evaluating what has been acquired."*

In addition, we can see that students gave more responsibility to themselves when it is about engaging in outside class activities (Items 38 and 39). Still, students seem to have some notion of shared responsibility. Giving more responsibility to one part does not mean take it away from the other. This might be good for teachers who want to encourage autonomous behaviour in Taher Moulay University because; it is easier to give more responsibility to students who are aware of shared responsibility between the student and the teacher, then to completely dependent students.

3.3.4 Interpretation of Findings Concerning Students' Practice of Outside Class Activities

The fourth section of the questionnaire aimed to find out the frequency of students' engagement in activities outside class. Being aware of the students' practice of these activities might provide guidance to teachers who want to promote autonomy in their classroom. The results pointed out that; of the nine activities, there were four that students reported they were always trying to learn new words in English, use internet in English, watch English movies or TV programs and listen to English songs. The other activities however appeared to be less widely practiced. According to Spartt Humphreys and Chan (2002: 256)

> *" teachers seeking to promote autonomous behaviour in the form of outside-class activities may have more immediate success if they build on those that students already engage in, rather than on those activities which would require students to change their attitudes or behaviour"*

Being aware of the activities that students are engaged in, teachers may try to create conditions to facilitate the use of these activities in order to encourage learner autonomy. The teacher has also the responsibility to motivate students, and then they will do more outside class activities, low motivation discourage the pursuit of autonomous activities.

3.3.5 Interpretation of Findings Regarding Students' Gender and Age

The two last questions in this research aimed to find out if there is any difference in findings regarding students' motivation level, metacognitive strategies, responsibility perception, and outside class activities based on students' age and gender. When the findings were analysed in terms of age and gender, results did not reveal a statistically significant difference.

The data drawn from the statistics revealed that students' responses to the four sections of the questionnaire did not differ between males and females or between the different age groups. The non normal population distributions of the dependent variables (gender and age) for each group may affect these results since not all the groups were equal.

3.4 Implications for Practice

Findings from the current investigation revealed that 2nd year LMD students at Dr. Taher Moulay University though not completely ready for autonomous learning, they seem to be ready to take more responsibility than they actually do. According to Nunan (2003: 195) *"there are levels and degrees of learner autonomy. In fact, dependence and autonomy are not categorically distinct. Rather, they exist on a continuum."* Students are ready to take more responsibility in their language learning process because they have the notion of shared responsibility and they are already practicing some kind of autonomous learning in the form of outside class activities but it is not enough to reach autonomy. That is why, in order to develop a more appropriate autonomous environment for student, we can consider two main implications for practice: learner training and changes in curriculum to promote autonomous learning.

3.4.1 Learner Training

The introduction of new approach into classroom generally requires behavioural change. In the promotion of learner autonomy, choice is essential in order to help learners assume more responsibility to control their learning and to take decisions. It was suggested that learners need learner training to analyse their needs, work at own pass, identify their learning style, make use of appropriate learning strategies, establish goals, monitor their progress and self-evaluate (Elliss and Sinclair, 1989). Learner training has been described as methods of developing the skills learners need for autonomy.

Nunan (2003: 203) states that: *"partnership between teachers and students can only become a reality if learners have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to play an active role in the planning, implementation evaluation of their own learning."* He proposes a nine step procedure for moving learners along the continuum from dependence to autonomy.

Step 1: Make instruction goals clear to learners

Step 2: Allow learners to create their own goals

Step 3: Encourage learners to use their second language outside the classroom

Step 4: Raise awareness of learning processes

Step 5: Help learners identify their own preferred styles and strategies

Step 6: Encourage learner choice

Step 7: Allow learners to generate their own tasks

Step 8: Encourage learners to become teachers

Step 9: Encouraging learners to become researchers

Table 3.7 Nine Step Procedure for Moving Learners (adapted from Nunan, 2003)

One way to help students reduce their dependency on teachers and increase their autonomy may be to enhance their motivation to learn. Develop students' motivation should be prior to engaging learners in autonomous practices. The teacher could focus on developing intrinsic motivation and use motivating activities in which learner centeredness as a precursor to learner autonomy can be integrated. In choosing activities, teachers should take into consideration the diversity of learning styles and learner preferences

which may give the teacher a wide range of activities to choose from. For instance, Villan (1995) suggested project works to be the more beneficial as it allows students set their own objectives and make a plan for their process.

Dickenson (1987) on effective use of metacognitive skills has developed a check list for learners to use throughout the lesson summarised in the acronym 'GOAL'. [G] stands for goal "what am I supposed to learn?" [O] stands for objective "what is the specific objective of the task?" [A] is act "how am I to do it?" and [L] stands for look "to look at the strategy and the self-assessment "how have I done?". Many other investigations were conducted in order to develop students' metacognitive strategies such as Thanasoulas (2000) who tried to help develop effective learning strategies through the use of dairies, evaluation sheets and self reports. Another one is Fowler (as cited in Benson, 2001) whose study was about the importance of using portfolios to develop self management and monitoring strategies.

3.4.2 Curriculum

Autonomous learning is a new approach to foreign language learning. In order to enhance learner autonomy, the Curriculum Unit will need to go over the course objectives and design tasks or materials. Language courses which aim to foster learner autonomy should incorporate means for transferring responsibility from teacher to learner. According to Cotteral (2000: 110)

> *"The challenge facing course designers who wish to foster learners' ability to take charge of their learning is to find ways of supporting the transfer of responsibility for decision making about learning from teacher to learner"*

Cotteral proposes five principles to guide the design of language courses that aim to enhance learner autonomy

- Learner goals: in any course which aims to promote language learners' autonomy, much importance is given to raising learners' awareness of ways of identifying goals, specifying objectives, identifying resources and strategies needed to achieve goals, and measuring progress. This involves things from the learner like reviewing the lesson beforehand; taking note of the statement at the top of the exercise saying what the exercise is trying to teach.

- The language learning process: in order not to be consumers of language courses, learners should understand their learning process which will help them to manage their own learning.

- Tasks: course which aims to promote language learners' autonomy should contain tasks in which the course provides preparation, practice, and feedback like project work, portfolio, and journal writing.

- Learner strategies: At the heart of learner autonomy lays the concept of choice. That is to say, for the course to promote autonomy it has particularly to extend the choice of strategic behaviours available to learners.

- Reflection on learning: course designers should include activities which prompt learners to reflect on their learning and aim to enhance learners' insight into their learning processes.

3.5 Conclusion

In the current chapter, the researcher has attempted to analyse, present and discuss the findings of the main data gathered through the questionnaire. Considering the results stated above, we can draw the conclusion that students of EFL at Dr. Taher Moulay University are ready to take more responsibility in their language learning process more than they actually do. Therefore, teachers of English should not shy away from involving their students more in the language learning process. Thus, on the basis of the results obtained, the researcher has tried to present some suggestions and recommendations which are supposed to contribute in the promotion of learner autonomy.

General Conclusion

Considering the importance of learner autonomy many scholars and researchers have produced different theories on how to promote learner autonomy. There may be numerous ways to promote autonomous learning. Although everything seems perfect in theory, fostering autonomy in practice is not an easy task. Since learner autonomy is a multidimensional concept with various interpretation, its promotion still requires further research.

The intent of the proposed study was to offer an additional view point to the issue by studying whether, or not, students of English at the University of Dr. Taher Moulay- Saida-were ready to learn autonomously, and the extent to which autonomy can be promoted in the English department of Saida's University. Such study was needed by teachers because teachers can develop more appropriate autonomous environment for their students only if they know their readiness for this concept.

From the findings of the current investigation we can draw the conclusion that 2nd year LMD students at Dr. Taher Moulay University though not completely ready for autonomous learning, they seem to be ready to take more responsibility in many areas of language learning process than they actually do. Students are ready to take more responsibility in their language learning process because they have the notion of shared responsibility and they are already practicing some kind of autonomous learning in the form of outside class activities but it is not enough to reach autonomy.

That is why, in order to develop a more appropriate autonomous environment for student, language teachers should involve their students more in the language learning process. Moreover, autonomy should be introduced gradually. Learners do not become autonomous overnight but through gradual levels of learner autonomy. Nevertheless, it might be advisable to give consideration to various factors such as the change of both the teacher's as well as the learner's role from knowledge giver and passive receiver to explorer and director. Other important factors are the learning strategies and motivation which seems to be the key if the class or the teacher is to be successful and as they help the learner become more autonomous.

This is a particular case study that cannot be generalized as it is conducted on small sample (2nd year LMD students at Dr. Taher Moulay University –Saida-) That is to say; the study is limited to the data collected from 110 students which makes the results hard to be generalized for other levels or other Universities.

Moreover, Students' motivational level, metacognitive strategies, responsibility perception, and outside class activities are the main areas of autonomy upon which this investigation is based. However, these areas are often conditioned and limited by other factors and the learning context.

Another limitation is that the present study deals with learners' readiness for autonomy from the perspective of the students. A questionnaire or an interview for the teachers might have been used to gain more detailed information and it would be useful, but due to the time constraints it could not be realized.

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Appendix: 01

Questionnaire

Dear students, I am gathering information relevant to my research paper. Please help me by carefully reading and honestly answering each question by crossing the right option.

Gender: Male ☐   Female ☐

Age:

Section 1. Motivation

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
1. Learning English is enjoyable for me.			
2. I wish I could learn English in an easier way, without going to school.			
3. I am trying to do my best to learn English.			
4. Even if there is no attendance requirement in the English course, my attendance would be high.			
5. I want to continue studying English for as long as possible.			
6. I believe that I will be successful in the English class.			
7. If I learn English better, I will be able to get a better and well-paid job.			
8. I want to be the best in the English class.			
9. I feel uncomfortable when I have to speak in the English class.			
10. I cannot concentrate easily on the English class.			
11. I am afraid I will not succeed in the English exams.			
12. I like working in pairs in the English class.			
13. I prefer individual work in the English class.			
14. Group activities in the English class are not efficient.			
15. In the English class, the teacher should be the one who talks more.			
16. In an English class, I like activities that allow me to participate actively.			

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
17. The teacher should encourage students to make contributions in the English lesson.			
18. If I do well in this course, it will be because I have the ability for learning English.			
19. If I do not do well in this course, it will be because I have not tried hard enough.			
20. If I do not do well in this course, it will be because of the teacher.			

Section 2. Metacognitive Strategies

	Always	Sometimes	Never
21. When I am learning a new grammar rule, I think about its relationship to the rules I have learned.			
22. When I study for my English course, I pick out the most important points and make diagrams or tables for myself.			
23. I try to find the meaning of a word by dividing it into parts that I can understand.			
24. I use new English words in a sentence in order to remember them easily.			
25. I try to evaluate my progress in learning English.			
26. When studying for my English exam, I try to find out which structures and terms I do not understand well.			
27. I learn better when I try to understand the reasons of my mistakes I have done in English.			
28. I arrange time to prepare before every English class.			

Section 3. Responsibility Perceptions
When you are taking English classes at university, whose responsibility should it be?

	Yours	Your Teacher's	Both
29. Stimulating my interest in learning English			
30. Identifying my weaknesses and strengths in learning English			
31. Deciding the objectives of the English course			
32. Deciding what will be learnt in the next English lesson			
33. Choosing what activities to use in the English lesson			

	Yours	Your Teacher's	Both
34. Deciding how long to spend on each activity			
35. Choosing what materials to use in the English lessons			
36. Evaluating my learning performance			
37. Evaluating the English course			
38. Deciding what I will learn outside the English class			
39. Making sure I make progress during English lessons			
40. Making sure I make progress outside the English class			

Section 4. The Outside Class Activities

	Always	Sometimes	Never
41. I do grammar exercises though it is not homework.			
42. I do assignments, which are not compulsory (not obligatory).			
43. I try to learn new words in English.			
44. I use internet in English. (for chat, search…)			
45. I watch English movies or TV programs.			
46. I read English written materials. (magazines, books, newspapers…)			
47. I make use of the self-access center to study English.			
48. I talk to foreigners in English.			
49. I listen to English songs.			

Thanks for giving your time to complete this questionnaire. Your co-operation is much appreciated.

Appendix 2
Detailed SPSS Results Statistics

1. **One Way ANOVA**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Motivation	Between Groups	0.028	2	0.014	0.329	0.721
	Within Groups	4.524	107	0.042		
	Total	4.552	109			
Metacognitive Strategies	Between Groups	0.020	2	0.010	0.115	0.891
	Within Groups	9.514	107	0.089		
	Total	9.535	109			
Responsibility Perception	Between Groups	0.029	2	0.015	0.225	0.799
	Within Groups	6.991	107	0.065		
	Total	7.020	109			
Outside Class Activities	Between Groups	0.146	2	0.073	0.776	0.463
	Within Groups	10.061	107	0.094		
	Total	10.207	109			

2. **Independent simple t-test**

	t-test for Equality of Means			
		t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
Motivation	Equal Variances Assumed	1.935	108	0.056
	Equal Variances not Assumed	1.558	27.665	0.131
Metacognitive Strategies	Equal Variances Assumed	0.151	108	0.881
	Equal Variances not Assumed	0.132	29.842	0.896
Responsibility Perceptions	Equal Variances Assumed	0.548	108	0.585
	Equal Variances not Assumed	0.494	30.634	0.625
Outside Class Activities	Equal Variances Assumed	-0.258	108	0.779
	Equal Variances not Assumed	-0.210	27.935	0.835