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THE ROLE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN PROMOTING EFL LEARNERS' AUTONOMY

A Case Study of Master One Students of English at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

A Dissertation Submitted for the Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Master

Degree in Science of Language

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Dedication

To the best Dad and Mom, the world ever knows surely.

To my lovely sisters Sara and Ahlem whose words of encouragement for

tenacity and fight still ring in my ears.

To my brothers Chamso, Mohemed, seif, and said who helped me stay

patient throughout these years of study.

To my dear uncle Djamel who have been my idol and my

emotional anchor through not only my graduate studies but my entire life.

To my adorable brothers' wives and sisters' husbands each one by his and

her name.

To my dearest young angels babies in my life 'my sweet lovely young nephews

and nieces Youcef, Sirin, Lina, and Manal. And to the little wonderful heroes Kousai

Sirin, and Louai.

To all my dearest cousins and friends.

To the best friend, I have ever known Souad.

To all the members of my family Medjenah and Saker.

I dedicate this work.

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Abstract

The present research is intended to investigate the effective role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in promoting learners' autonomy as well as in improving their learning skills. This work aims at showing that ICTs can be best pedagogical means to develop and foster learners' autonomy. In order to provide a precise study, we have focused on ways to foster autonomy in improving the writing skill ,which is one of the important skills in language learning. Thus, we hypothesize that integrating ICT tools may enhance learners' autonomy in improving their writing skill. To prove this hypothesis, a questionnaire has been administered to master one students Department of English at Biskra University and a written interview administered to teachers of written expression to gain more information about their opinions towards using the three ICT tools namely word processor, email, and the internet autonomously to improve the students' writing skill. Results have shown that master one students are aware of the concept of autonomy and its' importance in the learning process, but they still need the assistance of their teachers to obtain better results. Results revealed also that teachers use varied activities in class to develop students' writing and they encourage them to rely more on themselves to enhance their learning. By doing this research, we hope that learners will be familiar with the concept of autonomy and become more aware of its' importance in fostering their learning process. We hope also that teachers will recognize the significant role of ICT in helping learners to be autonomous inside and outside the classroom.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

EFL: English as Foreign Language.

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

CRAPEL: Centre de Recherches et D'applications en Langue

DVD: Digital Video Disk

UNESCO: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

CALL: Computer Assisted Language Learning

CMC: Computer-Mediated Communication

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General introduction

Most learners in different levels of education have tended to limit their work to what is taught in the classroom and have been very dependent on teachers' instructions only. As a result, without teachers' feeding many learners have felt disoriented, lost confidence and failed to determine their goals in learning. Therefore, language teaching is not seen as an ability to teach but as an ability to make learners learn. By doing this, the learners become autonomous and maintain effective learning. Thus, learners are expected to have responsibility and take charge of their own learning. However, this does not mean that learner autonomy aims at establishing a "teacher less" learning. On the contrary, the teachers' role is necessary for fostering this kind of independent learning and helps learner become aware of the value of self -regulated learning outside the classroom; so that they acquire the habit of learning continuously and maintain it after they have completed their formal studies. With the advent of new technology, vast amounts of sources have been introduced to improve learner autonomy. ICT that is an acronym that stands for information and communication technology plays a major role in fostering this ability; many studies had shown that classes that are using different types of computing and networking materials perform better, in which the learners interact more during the course and play an active role in the learning process. Therefore, this view raises the importance of investigating the effects of ICT on developing learners' autonomy.

1. Statement of the Problem

The serious problem that faces teachers in lecturing is how to get learners engaged in the learning process inside the classroom and even outside. At the level of mohamed khider university teachers find groups who never did their homework, who did not learn from their mistakes, who did not use the target language in pair or group work, and who did not use opportunities to learn outside the classroom and so on. Such behaviors often

emerge from one common reason which is learners' over-reliance on the teacher. The solution lies in looking for the best way to promote learner autonomy. Hence, ICT tools can be the best choice to provide the learners with means to control his or her learning. This study attempts to investigate the effectiveness of integrating ICT in promoting EFL Learners' autonomy.

2. Research Questions

- Does the use of ICT tools have any effect on EFL learners' autonomy?

- How do learners perceive themselves as autonomous learners?
- What is the value of ICT tools as learning aids for the autonomous language learner?
- Does learning English through different kinds of ICTs foster learner's autonomy and develop their writing skill?

3. Research Hypothesis

In this work, the following hypothesis is going to be investigated:

- Integrating ICT tools may enhance learners' autonomy to learn English as a foreign language.

4. Purpose of the study

The objective of this research is to foster learner self –regulated language learning process through the use of ICT tools. It aims to encourage the use of information and communication technologies inside EFL classrooms and tries to list the benefits as well as the advantages of such materials and their influence on learners' autonomy.

5. Significance of the Research

This study is significant to both teachers and students of English. Actually, it attempts to shed the lights on the importance of integrating information and communication technologies as a strong motivator in improving learners' autonomy. This latter plays a major role in the process of language teaching and learning.

6. Methodology

6.1. The Choice of the Method

This research has been conducted through the descriptive method as an appropriate way of investigating our hypothesis which states that using the technology of ICT would help learners to improve their sense of responsibility and enhance their learning process. The use of ICT would improve learners' autonomy if we help them recognize the importance of fostering autonomy and show them the effectiveness of ICT tools in empowering this ability. Consequently, using the descriptive method can surely provide us with valuable findings and serve our main purpose.

6.2. Population and Sample

First year master students and teachers of English, at the University of Biskra, make up the entire population of our present study. We dealt with a randomly selected sample of forty (40) students precisely those who are specialized in science of the language, from a total population of about 170 students. A final sample which consisted of thirty students (N=30) those who handed in their answers. The choice of the master one students was based on the consideration that at this level, master one students already have a well background and a considerable experience in university in terms of independency and autonomy in learning. And most importantly master one students are required to write research proposals and will write research papers next year. In addition to students' sample, we have chosen a sample of five teachers of written expression module.

6.3.Data Gathering Tools

To collect data and confirm our hypothesis, two data gathering tool will be used: a questionnaire and a written interview. The questionnaire will be handed out to a sample of thirty students of master one in order to collect information about how they actually learn and whether they understand and apply autonomous learning. Furthermore, we want to know their level of readiness to adopt such a skill in their learning. In addition, we want to investigate their attitude towards the use of ICT tools to learn English as a foreign language in general, and to develop their learning skills more particularly. Concerning teachers' interview, it will be conducted with five teachers of written expression module.
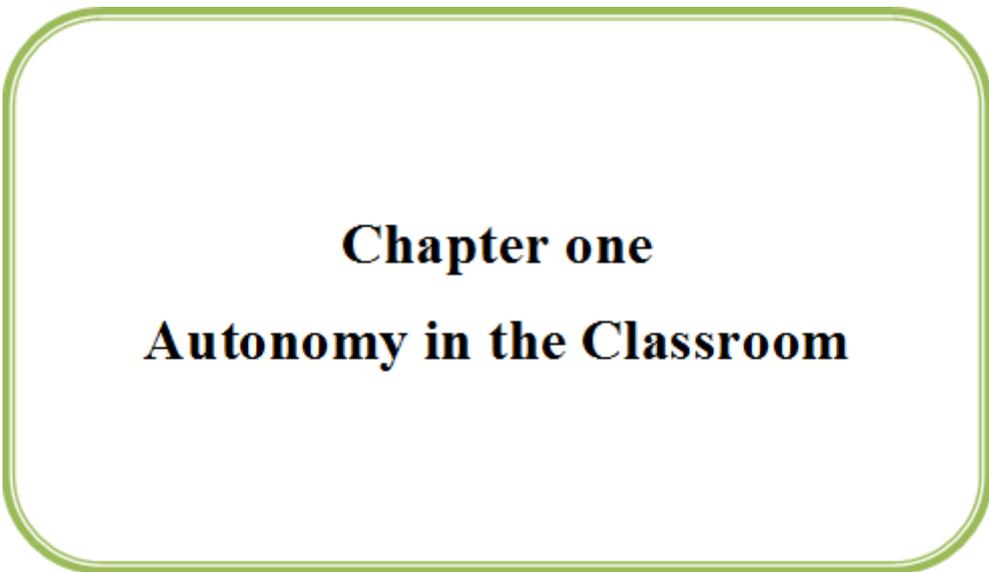
Chapter one
Autonomy in the Classroom

Introduction

The ability to recognize the different needs, identify and overcome problems, make decisions without interference or help from others, have always been a desired goal for all human beings. Studies and researches have improved the possibility of acquiring and promoting this ability. The field that stands as an evidence for the existence of such a skill is known as autonomy. Autonomy is a term that carries multiple dimensions and covers many areas, which are related to different aspects of life. According to Benson (2001: 24),

"autonomy is a precondition for an effective learning". Hence, this claim makes us eager to know more about autonomy.

This chapter attempts to define autonomy and misconception of autonomy is also elaborated. Additionally, a deep look into the history and the origins of autonomy has been illustrated. Furthermore, characteristics of the autonomous learner and the significance of autonomy in learning are also discussed. Finally, levels of autonomy and levels of control are illustrated as well.

1.1. Conceptions of Autonomy

Initiating with definitional matters, Holec's definition (1981) cited in (Borg, & Al-Busaidi, 2012: 4) has been a major and still an influential definition of autonomy. He considers autonomy to be "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" in which he treated autonomy as learner quality. This definition implies that autonomy means the responsibility of the learner towards his/her learning.

Another major definition emerged on the basis of Holec's work (1981) was reported by Little (1991) cited in (Benson, 2001: 4) who claims that autonomy is "the learner's psychological relation to the process and content of learning- a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action". In this definition, Little has placed an emphasis on the psychology of the learner which Holec has neglected. In addition, according to him autonomy represents an ability of independent performance that will be manifested in the way learners learn along with how they use the learning outcomes outside the institutional context. It also involves psychological qualities which learners ameliorate in order to have an active role in the learning process.

In another view, Benson (2001: 47) defines autonomy as "the capacity to take charge of, or responsibility for, one's own learning". In addition, he defines it as a "Multidimensional capacity that will take different forms for different individuals and even for the same individual in different contexts or at different times".

This indicates that autonomy stands for a desire for independence in all different aspects of life without being confined to a specific field. Moreover, autonomy is not a steady state as most people describe it which will be displayed through diverse shapes and according to the various needs and criteria's of the individuals.

A more elaborated definition of learner autonomy is also put forward by Dickinson (1994) cited in (Hadi, 2012: 21) in which he describes autonomy as "an attitude towards learning in which the learner is prepared to take, or does take, responsibility for his own learning". According to him autonomy refers to the situation in which the learner is responsible for the decisions concerned with his or her learning and the implementation of these decisions.

As have been concluded by many authors there is no agreement on one specific definition of autonomy in education. It is a multifaceted concept whose meaning has been discussed from many perspectives. In other words, there exist so many definitions and interpretations of autonomy through studies, which have been clarified and analyzed starting from the evolution of autonomy in theory and practice. However, According to Littlewood (1999) cited in (Kharaghani, 2013: 791), all of the definitions of autonomy have included some common central features. First, students should take responsibility for their own learning. This is both because all learning can only be fulfilled by the students themselves, also because they need to develop the capability to continue learning after ending their formal education. Second, taking responsibility involves learners in taking

ownership (partial or total) of many processes which have usually belonged to the teacher, such as setting learning objectives, selecting learning methods and evaluating development. While the literature has revealed a great number of definitions of learner autonomy, this lack of clarity has created some misconceptions that need to be banished.

1.2. Misconceptions of Autonomy

Little (1991) has represented five major misconceptions about autonomy; It is stated that "the most widespread misconception is that autonomy is synonymous with self-instruction" (3). Self-instruction, however, means learning without a teacher (Little, 1991) or learning without direct control of a teacher. In this sense, autonomy is not limited to learning without a teacher. On the contrary, Little has distinguished this term from the concept of learner autonomy in that there is greater interdependence between teacher and learners in learner autonomy (ibid).

The second misconception is what is termed the organizational fallacy emergence; in the assumption that in classroom context autonomy requires the teacher to abandon his control. This assumption has two principle sources. The first one is a belief that autonomous learners make the teacher redundant; the second source is a belief that any intervention on the part of the teacher may destroy whatever autonomy the learners have managed to attain. In contrast, autonomy does not entail an abdication of responsibility on the part of the teacher; it is a matter of letting the learners gets on with things as best they can.

Another misconception is that learner autonomy is synonymous with the teaching method that the teacher is the only controller in the classroom (ibid); that is to say that teachers have all the control and students are passive receivers of lessons taught.

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Furthermore, the fourth misconception is that "learner autonomy is a simple, easily described behavior" Little (1991: 3). It is true that autonomous learners can be recognized by their behaviors, but these behaviors take numerous forms depending on many factors. For instance, their age, how far they have progressed with their learning, and what they perceive their immediate learning needs to be.

The final misconception which is related to the preceding one; "autonomy is mistakenly believed to be a steady state achieved by certain learner" (ibid). In fact; autonomy is usually to be a hard to attain and its stability cannot be guaranteed. However, it is an ability available to all learners to promote. Also learners who show autonomy in one area may not be autonomous in another area.

In brief, the five misconceptions mentioned above can be summarized as follows; first, that autonomy may mean learning without a teacher. Secondly, that teacher have to give up all initiative and control. Thirdly, that autonomy is a method. Fourthly, that autonomy is an easily described behavior. Fifth, that it would be a steady state achieved only by gifted learners.

1.3. Origins and History of Autonomy

As an attempt to construct a clear understanding of the field of autonomy, it is more proper to have a deep look into its historical background. It is common that autonomy is related to the educational field. However, the concept of autonomy has deeply rooted in other different domains. The concept of autonomous learning has been given a great importance since the 1970's, and it goes back to almost three decades as stated by Benson (2001: 7)"the theory of autonomy in language learning is essentially concerned with the organization of institutionalized learning. As such, it has a history of approximately three decades."

It is generally agreed that the concept of autonomy first entered the field of learning and teaching through the council of Europe's Modern Languages Project which was founded in 1971 Autonomy in language learning has become a necessity since then. Later on, this project has been put into practice and has been turned into a center for language researchers and applications. The council of Europe's modern language project can be considered as the center in which the theory of autonomy in learning process was created for the first time in 1971; as a result for this project, the "Centre de Recherches et D'applications en Langue" (CRAPEL) has been brought to light. (Benson, 2001: 8). Yves Chàlon, who is considered as the father of language learning autonomy, was the founder of the CRAPEL center. It was created at the University of Nancy in France. After his death in 1972, Henri Holec took the leadership of CRAPEL.

One of the published works that have witnessed a major success was the seminal report made by Henry Holec who was considered as an active member in CRAPEL center at that time. His work had a magnificent contribution to the development of autonomy in language learning context. In the context of published works of autonomy in 1981, Benson has stated that the project of Holec that was reported to the council of Europe in1981 is considered as" a key early document on autonomy in language learning". The important document which has had an enormous impact on research in the field of autonomy from its early existence to the present time is "the Journal Mélange Pèdagogique" published at CRAPEL. (08).

To conclude, the history of autonomy as a multidimensional field has certainly provided many pieces of evidence that are related to different aspects of individuals' life and has enriched the educational process. Moreover, it has enlightened the path for the new educators and researchers who have benefited from valuable documents, works, and researches.

1.4. Characteristics of Autonomous Learner

There is a wide range of attributes associated with the term "autonomous learner" stated by many researchers. However, autonomy is not a readymade product to be used. Therefore, it could be achieved only if such characteristics are met where only the most essential characteristics will be demonstrated in this study.

1.4.1. Self-management in Learning

The study of autonomy has been a major area of interest in foreign language teaching and learning, including some practical studies investigated how adults continue their learning. Self-management permits learners to use their directive skills; and monitoring their own learning according to the needs they require.

Benson (2001: 76) states that "Control over learning management can be described in terms of the behaviors that learners employ in order to manage the planning, organization, and evaluation of their learning". In this case, learners need such materials relying on to manage their learning, for management over learning is considered a vital element leading to a successful autonomous learning. Therefore, it is one of the key themes in the field of foreign language learning.

1.4.2. Learner Agendas in the Classroom

Learners comprise specific needs and goals, for they have different perspectives and different background. In other words, learners are likely to continue coming to class if those goals will be achieved. The focus on the relationship between learning and instruction in the classroom settings has been one of the most interesting and revealing areas of debate which has been suggested that even in the classroom learners have a

tendency to follow their own agendas rather than those of their teacher. In this respect, Nunan (1995) as cited in (Benson, 2001: 65) said:

I should like to argue that the principal reason for the mismatch between teachers and learners, which gives rise to a disparity between what is taught and what is learned, is that there is a mismatch between the pedagogical agenda of the teacher and that of the learner. While the teacher is busily teaching one thing, the learner is very often focusing on something else.

That is to say what the teacher gave is not always what exactly the learners need or want. Thus, self-agenda in the classroom situation is very convenient for maintaining satisfactory results.

Corder (1967) and Dakin (1973) argued that "though the teacher may control the experiences of the learner is exposed to, it is the learner who selects what is learned from them". In this case, the teacher is considered only as an observer and learners by themselves construct the language lessons. According to Ellis (1994) language learning takes place in the classroom according to learners' construction, and to which they are exposed to. However, the teacher may provide much of the input, and the learners who decide what is processed and learned cited in (Benson, 2001: 66-67).

In short, autonomous learners are actively and creatively involved, as a manifestation of their positive attitudes toward themselves as learners and toward language learning activities, in the process of planning, conducting, and evaluating the learning process they encounter.

1.5. Levels of Autonomy

Hadi (2012: 10-14) recommended a fascinated inquiry of levels of autonomous learning; according to her "in the late 1990's a number of researchers claimed that the notion of autonomy is a matter of levels". According to this view there are numerous models of autonomous learning levels.

First, according to Nunan (1997), there are five main stages that learner goes through in order to foster autonomy inside and outside classroom successfully and they are namely awareness, involvement, intervention, creation and transcendence.

Second, Littlewood (1997) proposed three-stage model involved dimensions of language acquisition, learning approach, and personal development. In the first dimension; autonomy involved an ability to operate independently with the language and use it to communicate personal meanings in real, unpredictable situations (autonomy as a communicator). In the context of classroom organization, it involves learners' ability to take responsibility for their own learning and to apply active strategies (autonomy as a learner). And in a broader context, it involves a higher and a greater generalized autonomy as individuals (autonomy as a person).

Third, Macaro (1997) proposed to some extent a similar three-stage model including autonomy of language competence, the autonomy of language learning competence, and autonomy of choice and action.

Finally, Scharle & Szab o's (2000) proposes three phase model involving; raising awareness, changing attitudes, and transferring roles.

The above-mentioned classifications are summarized in the table below:

Nunan's model (1997)	LittleWood's model (1997)	Macaro model (1997)	Scharle & Szab o's (2000)
- Awareness. - Involvement - Intervention. - Creation. - Transcendence.	- Autonomy as a communicator - Autonomy as a learner - Autonomy as a person.	- Autonomy of language competence - Autonomy of language learning competence - Autonomy of choice and action.	-Raising Awareness -Changing attitudes -Transferring roles.

Table1: Levels of autonomy cited in (Hadi; 2012: 12).

In this study, more emphasis is placed on Nunan's levels of autonomous learning. The five stages in this level, their contents and processes are summarized in the following table.

Level	Learner action	Content	Process
1	Awareness	Learners are made aware of pedagogical goals and content of the material they are using	Learners identify strategy implications of pedagogical tasks and identify their own Preferred style/strategies
2	Involvement	Learners are in involved in selecting their own goals from a range of alternatives on offers	Learners make choices among a range of options
3	Intervention	Learners are involved in modifying and adapting the goals and content of the learning program	Learners modify /adapt tasks

| 4 | Creation | Learners create their own goals and objective | 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 2: Nunan's Model, levels of implementation (Nunan, 1997: 195; Benson, 2001: 129)

To sum up, it is apparent that Nunan's levels of autonomous learning are ranged from making students aware of the learning goals and materials to making links between the content of classroom learning and the outside world in general.

1.6. Significance of Autonomy in the Learning Process

Autonomous learning has become a prominent goal that must be achieved which entails promoting learners' independence and helps them to achieve great progress in their learning process. According to kumaravadivelu (2003) supporting learners to be autonomous means providing them with more opportunities to be successful. Thus, this view indicates the great influence of autonomy on language learners.

Autonomy permits learners to control their own learning giving them the opportunity to express themselves and showing their mental abilities. As suggested by Benson autonomous learners are educated individuals who have the ability to take the charge and contribute not only to their learning process but also in their social life (2001: 01). Therefore, it is not necessary that autonomous learners restrict themselves only to instructions, methods, or materials given by teachers inside the classroom; instead, they take the charge and promote their learning process by themselves. They choose the appropriate tools and materials and decide whether it is effective for their learning or not.

As a conclusion, the theory of autonomy in learning has contributed to an immense extent in enhancing individuals' learning capacities, particularly that the need for independent, developed learners has been ranked high. Promoting such ability will give chances for learners to figure and realize that there are more opportunities and possibilities which will help them to solve their learning problems and empower their skills. Furthermore, promoting autonomy will also help learners to achieve the goals they have maintained for themselves or at least to own confidence in order to set their own goals and make efforts to do this in real life.

1.7. Levels of Control

The emergence of autonomy field brought a magnificent contribution to foreign language teaching and learning; most importantly showing learners how to control over their learning in order to achieve better results both inside and outside the classroom. In order to achieve learning goals, three levels of control should be attained. Benson (2001: 50) has argued that in order to have a full understanding of the concept of autonomy in language learning, we should consider three main levels where learner's control is practiced they are learning management, cognitive processes, and learning content. Furthermore, to make use of these levels, we should be aware that these levels complement each other and cannot be applied separately. In other words, these three levels are incorporated and involved; each level cannot be accomplished without the others (ibid). They are classified as follows:

1.7.1. Control over Learning Management

Learning management is identified as one level at which control can be exercised over learning. According to Benson (2001:76)" Control over learning management can be described in terms of the behaviors that learners employ in order to manage the planning, organization, and evaluation of their learning". In this sense learner' behavior is the key

factor in such level. In other words, this level can be identified as a sort of control in which learners practice certain behaviors in order to manage their learning objectives, patterns, and outcomes. In an effort to grant a valuable study for learning management level, three main areas must be discussed.

1.7.1.1. The Adult Self-directed Learner

The main focus in this area of study is learning outside the educational institutions in which individuals ameliorate their learning process without being necessarily involved in formal learning for a long time. Therefore, outcomes have been demonstrated in forms of questionnaires or scales to recognize the extent learners own and exercise learning autonomy or to perceive the extent they think they have such ability. Benson (2001: 78) has mentioned two famous examples that made a turning point in the field of self-directed learning. The most known scale in this area is self-directed learning readiness scale (SDLRS), (Brocket & Hiemstra, 1991; Candy, 1991). The other example refers to a questionnaire developed by Gugliemino, L. M. in 1997. (ibid) example refers to a questionnaire developed by Gugliemino, L. M. in 1997. (ibid)

1.7.1.2. Learning Strategies

Cohen (1998: 4) has defined learning strategies as "processes which are consciously selected by learner" (Cited in Benson, 2001: 80). Hence, it is clear that these strategies represent a major phase for achieving control over learning management. This area has witnessed many noticeable developments which have had great influence on the whole process of autonomy due to many studies. Among these developments, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) would be the first focal point in this study which consists of learners' active involvement in cognitive, metacognitive and social/ affective strategies which will be illustrated in the table below:

Learning strategies	Definitions
A-METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES	Express executive function and involve planning, monitoring and evaluating learning activities
Planning	
Advanced organizers	Previewing the main ideas and concepts of the material to be learned, often by skimming the text for the organizing principle
Directed attention	Deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task and to ignore irrelevantly distracters
Functional planning	Planning for and rehearing linguistic components necessary to carry out an upcoming task
Selective attention	Deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of input, often by scanning for key words, concepts and/or linguistic markers
Self-management	Understanding the conditions that help one learn and arranging for the presence of those Conditions
Monitoring	
Self- monitoring	Checking one's comprehension during listening or reading, checking the accuracy and/ or appropriateness of one's oral or written production while it is taking place
Evaluating	
Self- evaluation	Checking the outcomes of one's own language against a standard after it has been completed
B-COGNITIVE STRATEGIES	Limited to specific learning tasks and involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself
Resourcing	Using target language reference materials such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, or textbooks
Grouping	Classifying words, terminology or concepts according to the attributes or meaning
Deduction	Applying rules to understand or produce the second/foreign language making up rules based on language analysis

Imagery	Using visual images (either mental or actual) to understand or to remember new information
Keyword method	Remember a new word in the second/ foreign language by: (1) identifying a familiar word in the first language that sounds like or otherwise resembles the new word, (2) generating easily recalled images of some relationship with the first language homonym and the new word in second/ foreign language.
Elaboration	Relating new information to prior knowledge, relating different parts of new information to each other, or making meaningful personal associations with the new information
Transfer	Using previous linguistic knowledge or prior skills to assist comprehension or production
Inferencing	Using available information to guess the meaning of new items predict outcomes or fill in missing information
Note taking	Writing down key words or concepts in abbreviated verbal, graphic or numerical form while listening or reading
Summarizing	Making a mental, oral or written summary of new information gained through listening or reading
Recombination	Constructing a meaningful sentence or larger language sequence by combining known elements in a new way.
Translation	Using the first language as a base for understanding and/ or producing the second/ foreign language
C-SOCIAL/ AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES	Related to social mediating activity and transacting with others
Question for clarification	Eliciting from a teacher or peer additional explanation
Cooperation	Working together with one or more peers to solve a problem, pool information, check a learning task, model a language activity, or get feedback on oral or written performance.
Self- talk	Reducing anxiety by using mental techniques that make one feel competent to do the learning task

Table 3: O'Malley and Chamot (1990) definitions and classifications of language learning

strategies cited in (Hadi, 2012: 34)

The second remarkable development is Rebecca Oxford (1990) taxonomy that has provided six different strategy groups, they are:

Direct Strategies: they are strategies that deal with target language directly.

This group is composed of three:

- **Memory Strategies**: this kind of strategies provides help for memorize and get back the knowledge that has been stored.

- **Cognitive Strategies**: its main objective is to provide more illustration and more practice on the side of language.

- **Compensation Strategies**: it refers to a sort of strategies that make use of the limited background knowledge of learners concerning the target language.

Indirect Strategies: they are strategies that focus on helping learners to control their own language learning without being necessarily involved in the target language. This group contains also three types:

- **Metacognitive Strategies**: for making learning process.

- **Affective Strategies**: for controlling emotions, attitudes.

- **Social Strategies**: for learning in relation to interacting with others (Cited in

Kumaravadivelu, 2003: 135).

The following diagram can best reveal these strategies:

Direct strategies

Indirect strategies

I. Memory strategies
- A. Creating mental linkages
- B. Applying images and sources
- C. Reviewing well
- D. Employing action

II. Cognitive strategies
- A. Practicing
- B. Receiving and sending messages
- C. Analyzing and reasoning
- D. Creating structure for input and output

III. Compensation strategies
- A. Guessing intelligently
- B. Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing

I. Metacognitive strategies
- A. Centering your learning
- B. Arranging and planning your learning
- C. Evaluating your learning

II. Affective strategies
- A. Lowering your anxiety
- B. Encouraging yourself
- C. Taking your emotional temperature

III. Social strategies
- A. Asking questions
- B. Cooperating with others
- C. Empathizing with others

Figure1.1: Oxford's Strategy System (Cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2003: 136)

1.7.1.3. Profiling the Autonomous Learner

Several attempts were made by many researchers in order to profile autonomous learner. Candy (1991) cited in (Benson, 2001: 85), for example, has proposed a list which contains more than 100 competencies. These competencies are classified under 13 headings; they are mentioned below, candy has Stated that learners who have the ability to be autonomous, will consequently:

- Learner have to follow a certain method and be disciplined.

- Learner have to be rational and analytical.

- Learner have to have reflectiveness and self-awareness.

- Learner have to show curiosity, openness, and motivation.

- Leaner ought to be flexible.

- Learner have to be interdependent and interpersonally competent.

- Learner have to be determined and responsible.

-Leaner should have dare and creativity.

- Learner have to show confidence and have a positive self-concept.

- Learner have to be independent and self –sufficient.

- Learner constantly have to seek for information to develop his skills.

- Learner have to knowledgeable and skillful.

-Learner have to improve and use criteria for evaluating.

1.7.2. Control over Cognitive Processes

The major goal in this area of study is essentially concerned with the psychological factors that affect the process of learning in one way or another. As was stated by Benson (2001: 87) this level of control is more related to learning psychology rather than learning behaviors. However, it may be described in terms of observation reached from learner's behaviors. In this line, researches have figured out that cognitive processes are based on three different factors. Cognitive process is best explained in the area of research which is concerned with attention, reflection, and metacognitive knowledge (ibid).

1.7.2.1 Attention

Attention is the behavioral and cognitive process of selectively concentrating on a discrete aspect of information, whether deemed subjective or objective, while ignoring

other perceivable information. Bialystok (1994: 160) stated that in relation to cognition which is rooted in "mental representations", there should be a method to direct attention towards a certain representation, that is related to a" particular purpose" (ibid: 89). For more explanation, attention should be considered as a mental capacity, which needs a sort of direction, as well as an appropriate orientation that is associated with a limited aim to be achieved.

1.7.2.2. Reflection

Additional important phase in the cognitive process of learning is to perform actions that are related to different aspects of life. Louden (1991: 149) has described reflection as "a mental process which takes place out of the stream of action, looking forward or (usually) back to actions that have taken place" (ibid: 91). In the field of autonomy in learning, reflection represents a crucial role; indeed, "in an environment where autonomy plays a major role in institutionalized learning, reflection should be one of the main principles from the start" (Little, 1997: 94). On this light, Louden (1991) has argued that the process of reflection is described in terms of four forms:

- Introspection: deliberate contemplation of a past event at some distance from the stream

of   action.

- Replay and rehearsal: where events are reworked in our heads repeatedly.

- Inquiry: where there is a deliberate and explicit connection between thinking and doing.

- Spontaneity: tacit reflection, which takes place within the stream of experience.

1.7.2.3. Metacognitive knowledge

The concept of metacognitive knowledge which is totally related to the field of autonomy in language learning. It was first suggested and added as a new dimension to the literature of autonomy in language learning by Wenden (1995) in order to provide more clarification for the level of cognitive process (ibid: 95). Moreover, it has been proved that

the means in which metacognitive knowledge works may take three different forms. The Diagram below represents the psychological factors that affect the educational process in terms of autonomous mode of learning.
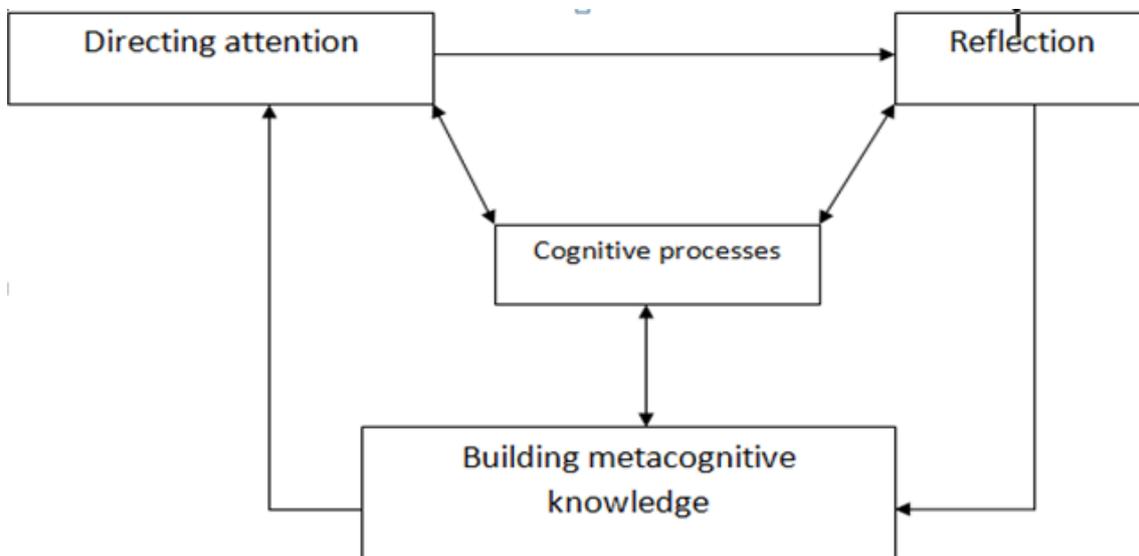
Figure 2: Control over cognitive processes, the psychology of autonomous learning cited in Benson (2001:86)

1.7.3. Control over Learning Content

Considering the two major levels of control that have been previously discussed, this level tends to study the goals that learners want to achieve from language learning and to uncover purposes which stand behind these wants. "Control over the content of language learning thus implies a capacity to evaluate one's broad learning purposes and their relationship to language acquisition" (Benson, 2001: 101). By taking control over learning management, cognitive processes, and learning content, learners will be able to identify learning needs, develop learning capacities; and most importantly, they will be absolutely considered as autonomous learners. To conclude, we have displayed a suggested a diagram which represents the three different modes of control of learning and clarifies the levels of control over learning process (ibid: 50).
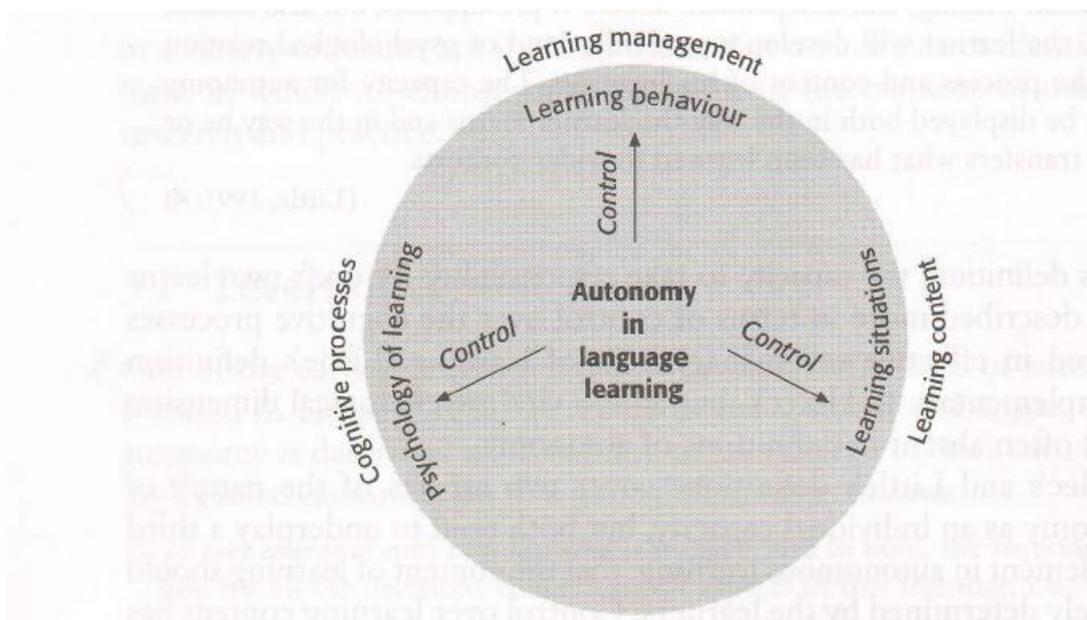
Figure 3: Defining Autonomy: The capacity to take control over learning cited in Benson (2001:50)

Conclusion

By the end of this chapter, we can deduce that autonomy is a multidimensional concept which has been manifested in many fields and has been related to different aspects of individual's life. Moreover, it has proved its effective role in the educational process, especially in language learning. Therefore, we have attempted to shed light on autonomy as a necessary skill that demands more interest and research. We have also provided a deep look into the history of autonomy in education. Additionally, characteristics of autonomous learners, as well as teachers' and learners' perspectives of autonomy, are discussed. Finally, levels of autonomy and levels of control are also elaborated.
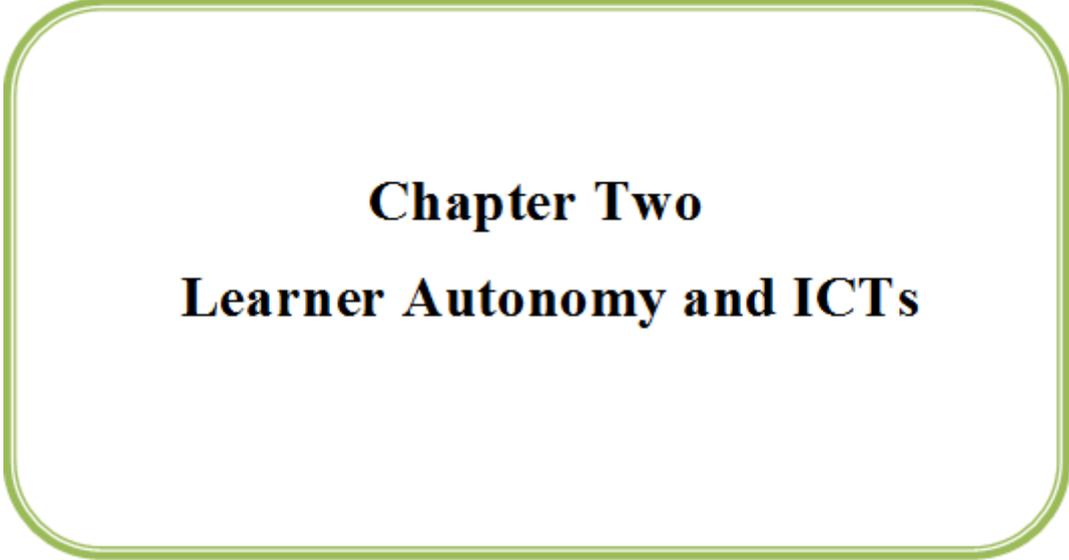
Chapter Two

Learner Autonomy and ICTs

Introduction

In recent years, the need for more developed, open-minded, independent individuals has been increased especially with the rise of challenges to cope with new world concepts such as globalization, digital age. These changes have had a great influence on the field of education. The hope to improve the effectiveness of the educational field and promote learning and teaching processes in order to meet new technologies have motivated researchers and thinkers to provide learners -who have faith in their abilities- with tricks to make more efforts to enhance their learning abilities. With the advent of new technology, ICT provide the opportunity to promote autonomous learning, for it has all the necessary technical potential to act as a tool for the development of this ability.

This chapter attempts to clarify the relationship between ICTs and learner autonomy. In this vein, the current section underlines the use of ICTs as a contributing factor in developing learners' autonomy to improve the writing skill. Thus, it focuses first on defining the term Information and Communication Technology. Second, a great consideration is devoted to providing information about the historical perspective of integrating ICTs into education. Then, some advantages of the integration of ICTs into education are listed also. In addition, the impact of using ICTs on changing teachers' and learners' role is also illustrated. The final and most important subsection of this chapter attempt to explain how the three ICT tools namely word processor, the internet, and e-mail are used by learner autonomously to improve their writing.

2.1. Definition of ICT

The term ICT is largely used among learners and teachers for it is compatible with many of the assumptions of the learning and teaching process. It has become a well-known and relatively uncontroversial tool to the learning and teaching process. Henceforth, an

immense focus should be dedicated to its definition in order to understand its benefits. There are many definitions given to the term ICT. However, ICT or ICTs are simply an acronym that stands for information and communication technology or technologies where the computer plays a major role. ICT can be defined as "a diverse set of tools and resources used to communicate and to create, disseminate, store and manage information" Sheridan (2002: 81). So literally ICTs include all kind of information technologies which contain any communication device or application, encompassing radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems and so on, as the various services and applications associated with them such as video conferencing and distance learning (ibid).

ICT has been recognized as an effective tool to the learning and teaching process and it is totally unlike the traditional learning and teaching ways. It promotes meaningful understanding of teachers input in the classroom which creates a successful learning environment. Anderson (2012:4) confirm this saying that "the term ICT is plural, referring to a great many technologies and it is an all-encompassing term that includes the full gamut of electronic tools by means of which we gather, record and store information, and by means of which we exchange and distribute information to others." In this sense ICT contains a variety of tools that permits explaining, processing, exchanging information in a fast and easy way.

ICT are often associated with the means and the processes that are used to store, transmit, display and exchange certain information. These tools include the 'old' ICTs of radio, television and telephone, and the 'new' ICTs of satellite and wireless technology , the internet and telecommunications in the forms of personal computers, scanners, digital cameras, phones, faxes, modems, CD and DVD players and recorders, digitized video,

radio and TV programmes, database programmes and multimedia programmes. UNESCO (2003) cited in ((Paas, Creech, 2008: 4).

UNESCO (2002:13) conclude that ICT is related to the concept of informatics technology, it assimilates communication into technology. In other words, ICT is the combination of informatics technology with other, related technologies, specifically communication technology.

In fact, information communication technology (ICT) takes many forms and definitions According to different scholars and share the same contribution and goals. Each of these goals emphasizes the role of using a computer (hardware) and its application (software) to promote interdependence of learning among learners and to meet the learning needs of the individual learners.

2.2. Historical Overview of ICT in Education

The 1980's has been recognized as the initiative shift in the use of information technology (IT) in education. Teachers had to cope with the speed of technology development and not just the potential of technology. In the 1980's the National Microelectronics Education Programme has been launched by the new conservative government in order to assist local education authorities. This whole programme was mainly based on promoting understanding of the appropriate ways to meet the learners' needs. Two years later in 1982, this program established Special Education Micro-Electronics Sources Centers (SEMERCS) for the purpose of providing software peripherals and the training to support students (Florian & Hegarty, 2004:23).

The period of the late 1980's, witnessed a great development at the level of technology which in return did not only offer a support to learning but also gave the opportunity to learners to be independent and pave the way for an easy access to the curriculum. Information technology (IT) addressed those who have learning difficulties

and disabilities which helped in providing an understanding of these problems this is why measures had to be taken in order to disseminate information technology (IT) in all educational spectrums. In the intervening time, the government invested a huge amount of money to do research concerning the integration and development of ICT in the educational spectrum (Florian & Hegarty, 2004:26).

In the 1990's, the Information Technology in schools lasted until 1993, and gain a £90 million to support the training for ICT use in schools. However, new priorities emerged to develop the national curriculum which seemed to consume the energies of teachers in schools by spending an enormous amount of time adapting and integrating their requirement to the new curriculum. Yet information technology was not designated a "core subject" which made this project fail even after various revisions starting from 1994 to 1997. Another priority was to construct an IT infrastructure in which hardware and software will be integrated into schools (Florian &Hegarty, 2004:27-28).

In due course, in March 1997, Dennis Stevenson reported that in spite of the increasing number of initiatives (projects on using ICT in schools) the "state of ICT in our schools is primitive and not improving" (as cited in Florian & Hegarty, 2004: 29). Stevenson's report emphasized the necessity of using ICT and promoted a 5-10 years strategy to ensure its fundamental usage in schools that includes a range of actions. Furthermore, Stevenson, in his report, described the National Grid for Learning, one of the government initiatives, as a "mosaic of interconnecting networks". Hence, it had three components: Infrastructure (computers, printers, and connectivity – including cabling, internal networks, and the internet), Content (documents, textbooks, and resources), and Practice which involves how people helped to learn in the classroom and schools (Florian & Hegarty, 2004: 30).

2.3. The Advantages of ICT Use in Foreign Language Teaching

ICT provide teachers with remarkable sources for successful teaching process as well as learners with unique learning outcomes that prepare them forward beyond the learning instructions' by adapting it, the learners can build a set of marketable skills and develop self-confidence they need to manage their own career. Anderson (2012: 5) asserts that ICT is regarded as based education; an important unit in developing new ideas, in program content and curriculum and in the creation of materials and methods of learning and teaching. Additionally, it encourages the team works either in peers or small groups that allow the exchange of different ideas and improve the level of the sense of self-correctness.

ICT has proven that it affords both learners and teachers with many advantages as Kennewell & Beauchamp (2003) suggested in their research. They viewed that ICT help learners to:

- Pave the way for an easy access to wide range of up-to-date information sources from within and beyond the school.
- Enable users to process information and develop high-quality reports.
- Allow users to comprise graphics and images to represent relationships.
- Giving the opportunity to exchange and test ideas for themselves.
- Providing activities which are equal to those carried out by professionals and academics in the domain.
- Cooperate in teamwork.
- Possibility for independent work.

It offers teachers the following:

- Integrating a wide range of up-to-date information sources from within and beyond the school.

- Provide teachers with high-quality material to facilitate the teaching process and promote a cooperative interaction among learners.

- Help the teacher to organize his input before presenting the teaching materials.

- Direct learners' through different types of activities which help to organize their work to achieve the target goal.

- Increase the collaboration with colleagues in other schools at any time.

<div align="center">(Cited in Kennewell, 2004: 15)</div>

Eventually, from the above mentioned key advantages, it appears that the integration of ICT in teaching and learning has produced some significant positive gains towards teachers and learners. Therefore, these benefits could be summarized into two main categories; ones for teachers and the other for learners.

2.3.1. Benefits of ICT to Learners

ICT affords high-quality courses through greater cooperation between a planning, preparing and presenting the resources with the teacher. Through it, learners can develop a set of desired skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving and the main advantage that is the development of learners' autonomy, which is the core of this research. Additionally, ICT addresses the psychological side that increases crucial factors like motivation, self-confidence, and social awareness. Lastly, it represents a varied limitless source for extended learning that secures more time for effective learning and efficient self-assessment.

2.3.2 Benefits of ICT to Teachers

ICT demonstrates a limitless source for teachers in order to plan and prepare their lesson effectively before presenting it in the classroom. It save time for any adjustments and updates, and it also assists sharing information and resources. Moreover, ICT provides teachers with a high-quality material to smooth the progress of the teaching process and

promote a cooperative interaction among learners. Finally, it increases opportunities for collaboration among teachers in other schools at any time.

2.4. The Impact of ICT on Learners' and Teachers' role

In a short time, ICT have deeply changed how people communicate and do business. It has produced significant transformations in industry, medicine, agriculture and most importantly in the field of education. According to UNESCO (2002:13) "ICT have the potential to transform the nature of education where and how learning takes place and the roles of students and teachers in the learning process". In other words, ICT have had a noticeable effect on schools, on teaching and learning in terms of learning through projects and problems, inquiry and design, discovery and invention, creativity and diversity, action and reflection that is more appropriate in the present time instead of learning through facts, drill and practices, rules and procedures in earlier days (ibid). The major feature of this learning transition is from teacher centered to learner focus paradigm. This shift in the emphasis can create a more interactive and engaging learning environment for both teachers and learners. Henceforth, this new environment also involves a change in roles for both teachers and learners.

2.4.1. Changes in Teachers' Role

The integration of ICT into learning and teaching processes has changed drastically the role of teachers from traditional instruction to the virtual learning environment. As Anderson (2012:6) confirmed "the changing role of teachers is aptly summed up in the quip that teachers have moved from being "sages on the stage" to becoming "guides on the side". This entails that teachers' role has changed from the only knowledge transmitter into a guider and facilitator of information in the teaching process. Therefore, the teacher should motivate, engage learners and create an autonomous learning environment. The following table to demonstrate clearly how the teachers' role changed:

Changes in Teachers' Roles		
A shift from		To
knowledge transmitter; primary source of information teacher controlling and directing all aspects of learning		learning facilitator, collaborator, coach, knowledge navigator and co-learner teacher giving students more options and responsibilities for their own learning

Table 2.3: The use of ICT in instruction brings about changes in teacher roles cited in (Anderson, 2012: 6)

This table illustrates how the teachers' roles have changed due to the implementation of ICT in their classroom; from knowledge authority to guider and facilitator of knowledge, from learning controller to creator of the learning environment and from didactive/ expository to interactive/experiential. In this sense, teachers are expected to create a new flexible and open learning environment with interactive and experiential learning style.

2.4.2. Changes in Learners' Role

As the implementation of ICT has affected teachers' role, it has changed learners' role as well. As Anderson (2012: 6) asserts that:

Students in classrooms where ICT are regularly found are likely to participate in virtual excursions and be active researchers, searching the web for information to complete individual or group projects, communicating via email, blogs and social networking with students and teachers in other schools, and reaching conclusions on the basis of evidence gathered.

In other word, learners are expected to collect, select, analyze, organize, extend, transform and present knowledge using ICT in authentic and learning paradigm. The major shifts in learners' role have been described in the table below:

changes in Students' Roles		
A shift from		To
passive recipient of information reproducing knowledge		active participant in the learning process producing knowledge learning collaboratively with others Autonomous Learner
learning as a solitary activity Dependent Learner		

Table 2.4: The use of ICT brings about changes in student roles cited in (Anderson, 2012: 4)

As it is displayed in this table, ICT provides powerful tools to support learners' independence and autonomy, for they will have more responsibilities of their own learning as they seek out, find, synthesize, and share their knowledge with others. In addition, Learners become more active members during the lesson and being creators of the target language rather than just passive recipients.

So generally, the integration of ICT into teaching and learning permits the move from a reproductive model of teaching and learning to an independent, autonomous learning model that promotes initiation, creativity and critical thinking with independent research. ICT should help teachers and learners to communicate and collaborate without boundaries, make learners autonomous and allow teachers to bring the whole world into classroom activities.

2.5. The Use of ICT to Learn Autonomously to Improve Writing Skill

For many years, autonomy has been a desired goal of education that encourages learners to have more responsibility in their learning. While there are many ways to foster autonomous learning; ICT can be the best choice to promote this ability, for it represents a various and easily accessible amount of sources that provides learners with the means to

control his or her learning. Lu, Hou, and Huang (2010) cited in Ballén (2014: 4) asserts that "students are prompted to apply individual decision-making techniques as a result of being actively involved in ICT learning experiences". In addition, Castro Sánchez and Chirino Alemán (2011) support this idea by suggesting that ICT contributes to transforming a teaching environment into a more student-oriented one (ibid). In this sense, ICT has all the necessary technical potential to act as a tool for the development of autonomous learning to improve and to master the four skills so they can use the language actively. Writing one of the four skills is a very crucial skill that has always been the concern of teachers and learners of the academic field and even the higher education institutions. Therefore, ICT has several applications that support writing skill by which learners can have self-access to them and improve this skill by their own willingness. Overall, according to Macalister and I.S.P. Nation, ICT integration comprises two notable fields: the Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and the Computer- Mediated Communication (CMC). However, The CMC seems to be a sub-category of CALL (Macalister & Nation, 2012: 93).

2.5.1. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL).

CALL is a field of applied linguistics that is specialized in using technology for language teaching and learning. After that, the field expanded and developed in parallel with the occurrence of computers, multimedia, and the internet. On the other hand, CALL comprises both English Language Teaching (ELT) software and the web 2.0 tools (blogs, wikis, podcast, forums, and word processors…) that are involved in teaching and learning. This diverse application of CALL has provided a number of terms utilized to refer to the use of technological tools in the language classroom such as CMC (Robinson, 2013: 106).

2.5.1.1. Word processor

Word processing programs have made a major difference to many users, in terms of addressing all writing problems and deficiencies of the traditional tools where the only way for learners to correct their spelling mistakes was a dictionary. As Kenning (1996) cited in (Benson, 2001: 138) presents it "there is a prima facie case that by encouraging users to consider their text critically and try and make improvements, word processors are intrinsically supportive of cognitive and metacognitive autonomy". In this sense, the use of word processors enables users to learn autonomously and improve their writing skill. In addition, word processor facilitates text manipulation and control over text creation and interpretation which support the growth of metacognitive skills and metalinguistic awareness (ibid).

Word processor is a powerful tool that provides users with various advantages for instance; it enables easy drafting and editing. Users can remove written text around the page easily, using facilities such as delete, cut, copy and paste. It also helps learners who find difficulties in making comprehensible written production, which in return make the correcting phase easier for the teacher. In addition, word processor contains utilities that will auto-correct or auto-complete words that are problematic for poor spellers; provide different colored text and/or backgrounds; spelling and grammar support; a text highlighting tool; thesaurus; a facility for recording short notes. Moreover, it helps the learners to accomplish stages in the writing process such planning (pre-writing), composition (writing), and re-writing (editing, revising, and proofread). By planning, learners can use brainstorming and mind mapping software on the computer. By composition, learners can start writing directly (the first draft) without paying attention to spelling mistakes unless the draft is finished; thus, they move to the re-writing stage where

the learner revises, edits, and proofreads his work without re-writing the whole paper (Galloway, 2007: 55-58).

The figures below represents the facilities grammar and spelling mistakes corrector:

Figure 2.1: Correcting grammar mistakes cited van Huss, S. Forde, C. & Woo, D. (2011: 107)

Figure 2.2: Correcting spelling mistakes cited in Van Huss, S. Forde, C. & Woo, D. (201:107)

In conclusion, word processor program is characterized by numerous advantages that scaffold and support the writing process. With the advanced options permeated in such word processors including spelling and grammar checks and thesaurus and dictionary

options, learners will be motivated and develop self-awareness of their weakness in writing. With the use of spell-check, for example, students "can be more aware of errors, and provide a chance for self-correction," (Arbaoui, 2014). Self-correction is considered as a crucial point in meaningful learning. In this respect, the word processor encourages learners to revise, edit, and proofread their written productions. Thus, it provides learners with the necessary facilities to improve their writings autonomously.

2.5.1.2. The Internet

The Internet is the most important tool; it serves us in all the domains. This term is broad in fact. Hence, a great emphasis should be devoted to defining it according to the purpose of the user. According to Mills (2006: 45) in his book of using the internet for active teaching and learning cites that:

The Internet is a global network of networks through which computers communicate. It is an infrastructure consisting of computers, cables, wires, and other telecommunications devices plus the protocols to allow these computers to easily communicate with each other. The Internet has had a profound effect on almost every aspect of our lives, changing the way we do business, communicate, and even educate ourselves.

In this sense, the term internet has a crucial impact on all our daily life aspects particularly education. In another word, the way of teaching and learning materials changes greatly through using the internet. In fact, writing is one of the most important aspects that learners attempt to enhance by having independent access to the internet.

From the perspective of autonomy, the internet has a great impact in enhancing this ability for provides learners with all necessary means to improve their writing skill. Benson (2001:139) states "the potential of the internet in regard to autonomy may also lie in its capacity to facilitate important elements within larger projects". A good example of these projects, where the internet plays a major role as an autonomous source for learners to

improve their writing skill, is the one that Warschauer (1996) described. A project for learners of English for science and technology in Mexico where learners first have to search the World Wide Web for articles of their specialty read them, and then write their own first draft online. The teacher has to comment on them and provide them with critical feedback as well as the readers can send their comment through email. Next, they can take this assistance into account in editing their articles for republication on the Web through blogs or for submission to scientific journals (ibid). Benson comments on this project saying "this project adopts process approach to writing, which supports autonomy by placing control over learning content into the hands of the learners" (140). In this sense, the internet represents a fundamental aspect and provides learners with the essential sources for practicing and improving their writing skill namely by using information resources and email.

2.5.1.2.1. Information Resources

As it was mentioned in the project previously, learners need to read first about the topic in order to be able to write their own first draft. According to Mills "One of the greatest features of the internet is that it offers students relatively inexpensive access to a wealth of information across a vast range of fields" (2006: 91). Through the internet, learners can get mostly access to four main needed websites: virtual libraries, digital libraries, encyclopedias, and electronic and online journals. These websites provide unlimited information to learners who will select the required ones:

The virtual libraries are often controlled by librarians. These libraries, in fact, identify electronic resources, referred and reviewed by professionals, particularly librarians. Some examples of these libraries include The Librarians' Index to the internet (http://lii.org/) and Infomine (http://infomine.ucr.edu/) library. The former is a searchable,

interpreted subject directory that contains thousands of internet resources chosen and assessed by librarians for their usefulness to consumers of public libraries. This directory offers a well-organized point of access for reliable and trustworthy internet resources. While the latter is a virtual library that is concerned with the providence of online resources that are relevant to faculty, learners, and research staff at the university level. These internet resources include useful databases, electronic journals, electronic books, online library card catalogs, articles, directories of researchers, and many other types of information (Mills, 2006: 91).

Digital library, or digital collection tends to exploit the electronic information technologies in order to digitize primary sources, bring them together (form collections), and display them online. Some examples of digital libraries comprise The National Science Digital Library (NSDL; http://nsdl.org) and The Library of Congress (http://memory.loc.gov/). The first in fact consists of resource collections and services (e.g. downloading, commenting) to promote educational science at all levels. NSDL provides online sources for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education in order to develop science literacy through access to resources. The second digital library contains over 100 collections (resources) (Mills, 2006: 92).

Through online encyclopedias, learners can easily conduct a research on topics that seem unfamiliar to them. An example of online encyclopedias may incorporate Encyclopedia.com (http://www.encyclopedia.com/) and Encyclopedia Britannica (http://www.britannica.com/). The first encyclopedia is a good website that helps students to begin a research on any topic. It is a free Internet service that offers more than 57,000 regularly updated articles from the Columbia Encyclopedia (sixth edition).Each article is provided with links to newspaper, magazine articles, pictures, and maps. The second encyclopedia helps learners to have free access to articles by using keyword search

(writing your keywords), by browsing alphabetically, or by choosing a subject (Mills, 2006: 94).

Learners can also rely on electronic journals when they are asked to write assignments. Mills explained that these online journals embrace journals, magazines, newsletters, and any other type of sequential publication that is available on the World Wide Web. There are a number of electronic journals that are accessible presently, and new others are always being added (Mills, 2006: 96).

As a conclusion, learner through this wide collection of websites can develop his own search ability of information, think critically, and decide which appropriate information should be included. That is to say, learners can effectively improve their written productions if they possess more information about the topic being discussed through getting constant self- access to the web resources.

2.5.1.2.2. Email

Email is one of the most popular uses of the internet and presents many opportunities, to enhance learning process particularly writing skill. Nowadays, it is noticeable that the majority of the learners have personal electronic email using them whether to texting others or saving them to see its content later on. The application of emails enables users to send and receive messages, store, and forward emails, attach a document file. It also enables communication between learners and other learners, teachers and target language native speakers. Email application provides diverse and exciting language learning environment in which it is perfect for developing the ability of personal written text production (Beatty, 2003: 70).

Email can be used as a good tool to help learners develop the habit of writing, in case they write assignments through emails, Brown and others (2005: 127) acknowledge that:

Many email systems support spell-check facilities, which can allow you to type really fast and ignore most of the resulting errors, then, correct them all just before sending your message. This also causes you to re-read each message, which can be very useful for encouraging you to add second thoughts that may have occurred to you as you went further in your assessment of the task.

In this sense, email helps its' users to avoid spelling mistakes using the spell-check. This option encourages also learners to read more their messages before sending them. As result of this re-reading, they may add, delete, or adjust ideas, See the figure.
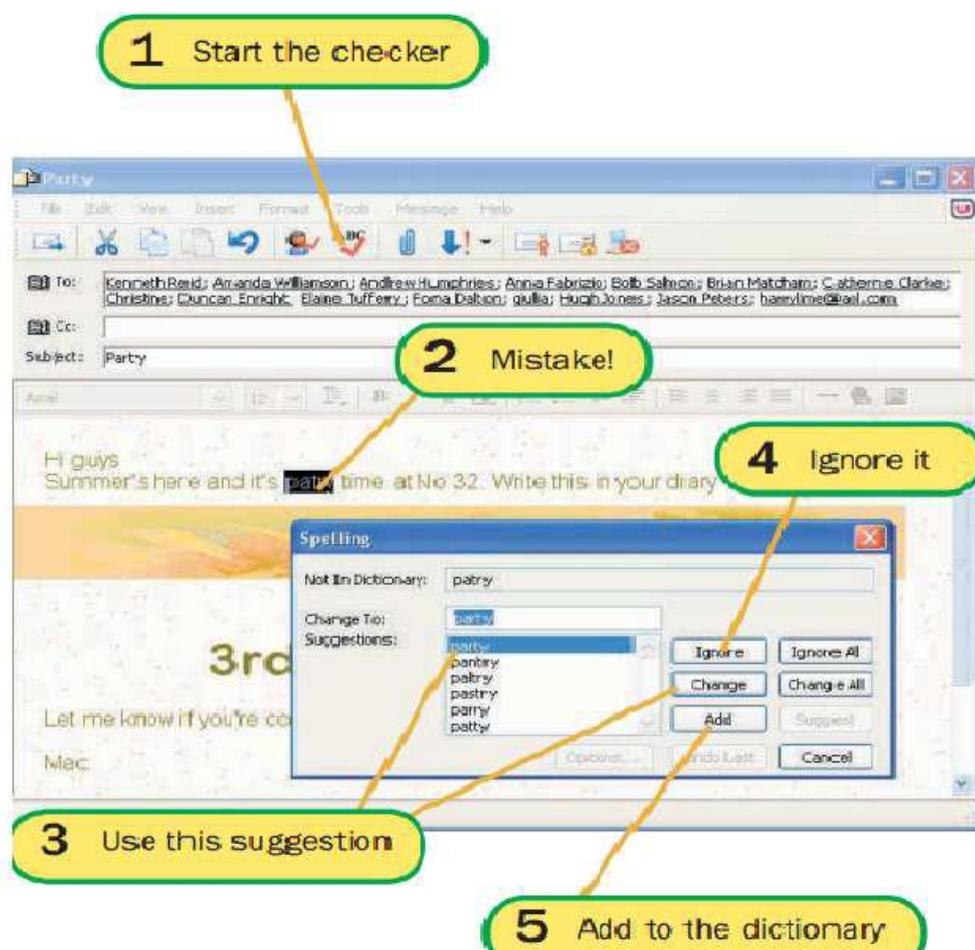
Figure 2.3: the spell checker of e-mail (McBride, 2006: 85)

To conclude, like the word processor, email provides nearly unlimited benefits and facilities for improving the writing skill, in addition to the editing options, it offers to the users. It provides the option of spelling and grammar-check, which make the writer aware of the mistakes. In addition, learners can send their last draft to their teacher and classmates to get instant feedback after chances of revising and editing it. Thus, email represents additional sources for learners to control over their learning particularly and improve their writing autonomously.

2.6. Conclusion

The integration of ICT has been significant for the development of language teaching and learning as well as for the development of autonomy to improve the writing skill. It provides learners with enormous advantages and sources by which learners can enhance language skills particularly writing. This chapter emphasized the point how the integration of ICT tools impact the learning process and changing it from teacher-centered to learner- centered learning environment. Therefore, the current section has involved an attempt to provide an insight about writing growth through the autonomous use of ICTs particularly word processor, the internet, and e-mail. In other words, learners can utilize word processor to avoid grammatical mistakes. The internet can be also exploited in order to select the appropriate resources related to the topic that is under discussion. As well, e-mail can be used after the writing process to receive a quick feedback from teachers.
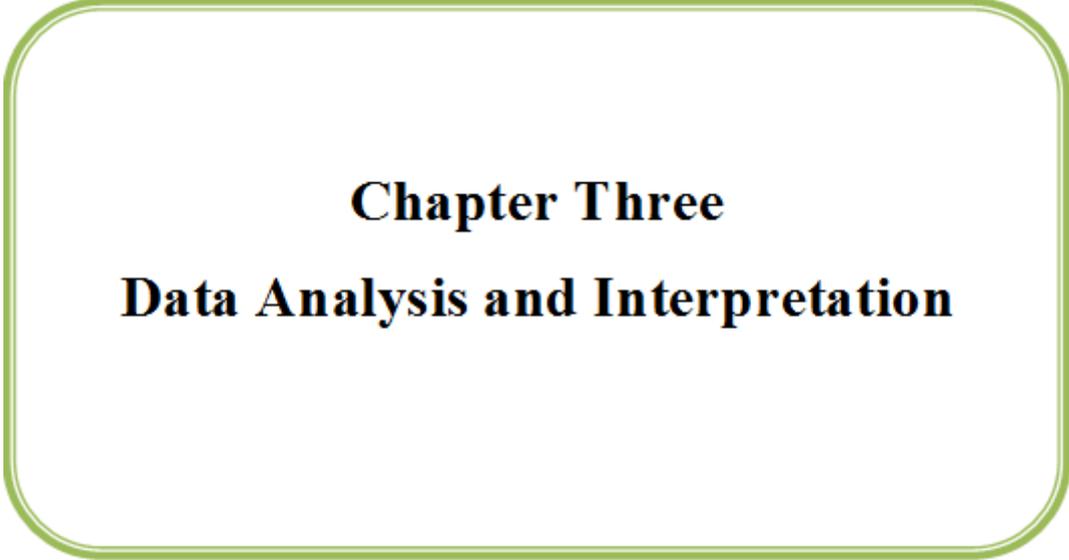
Chapter Three
Data Analysis and Interpretation

Introduction

The present chapter aims at collecting data concerning students' awareness of the concept of autonomy and its significance and importance in the learning process. It also indicates their opinions about considering ICT tools namely the internet, word processor, and email as an effective mean in enhancing their writing skill. Additionally, this chapter investigates teachers' views and opinions about improving learners' autonomy through the use ICT as well as their evaluation of students' level of readiness for fostering autonomy in the learning process. Throughout this chapter, we will try to analyze the data that have been collected from both teachers' interview and students' questionnaires, taking into consideration our research questions and our stated hypothesis which establish the positive impact of using ICT tools precisely internet, word processor, email in enhancing students autonomy and its impact in developing their writing skill.

3.1. Research Design and Methodology

3.1.1. Choice of Method

The method that has been used in this research is the descriptive method. This choice is based on the major different points and views that are discussed and are best illustrated by that kind of method. Opinions which have been collected in this research can display in a very effective way phases in which the autonomy process passes through; definition, origins and the positive impact of this new concept of the learning process in university and especially in language learning. Moreover, this method provides a great help in proving the effective role of ICT in promoting learners' autonomy and improving their learning language skills. To give a precise and concise view about the issue, we have chosen the writing skill due to its significance in the process of language learning. Also to prove that autonomy enhancement should be considered as a central goal for learners to be

achieved in order to improve their learning skills and to take the initiative for their language learning progress.

3.1.2. Sample of the Study

The population of our investigation is first year master students at the University of Biskra department of Foreign Languages Section of English, precisely those who are specialized in science of the language. The students who responded to the questionnaire were chosen randomly among the total number of 170 students. The choice of the master one students was based on the consideration that at this level, master one students already have a good background and a considerable experience in university in terms of independency and autonomy in learning. And most importantly master one students are required to write research proposals and will write research papers next year. This means that students are certainly asked first of all to develop their writing skill, and second to start exploiting the ICTs(especially the internet and word processor) while making their written productions. In addition, the questionnaire was handed in by the researcher. 30 questionnaires were returned from the 40 initially planned and this represents our sample.

For the teachers' interview, our target sample consists of five teachers of written expression module from the department of English at the University of Biskra. There is no possibility for covering the whole population, for this reason, we have chosen our sample. Those teachers have different degrees as well as different years of working experience at the department of English, were so helpful and kindly accepted to respond our written interview.

3.1.3. Data Gathering Tools

The key purpose of data gathering tools is based on the principal aims of our research. First, the study aims at describing, identifying and understanding how autonomy affects positively learners' progress and level in English at the university level. Second, it

aims at proving that learners are not aware of their learning needs, problems and that they need more help to improve their level and take the initiative role in learning. Third, it aims at showing the positive impact of using ICT tools in enhancing learners' capacities and improving autonomy as a skill by itself. On that base, we have used two gathering tools: a questionnaire, given to learners, and a written interview conducted with teachers in order to imply their different opinions and attitudes towards promoting autonomy through the use of ICT.

3.2. Students' Questionnaire

A. Aim of the Students' Questionnaire

A questionnaire has been administered for first year master students of English section to collect data about their background knowledge about autonomy, attitudes towards classroom activities, to evaluate their level in writing skill and to know about their opinions on using ICT tools namely the internet, word processor, and email to improve their writing skill outside the classroom.

B. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire involves 19 questions divided into three sections. The questions include close-ended questions and multiple choice questions where students have to explain and justify their choice.

Section one: Background information (Q1 to Q2)

Consists of two questions that aim at gathering personal information about the students: choice of studying English (Q1), and whether he/she heard before about the concept of learning autonomy (Q2).

Section two: Autonomy in the classroom (Q3 to Q8)

Includes questions about learners' attitudes towards the significance of autonomy in language learning (Q3), their perceptions about themselves as autonomous learners or not

(Q4), determining the extent of their' reliance on the teacher (Q5), and their opinions about who is responsible for the learning progress (Q6). (Q7) attempts to specify the nature of responsibilities teachers give to their students in order to raise their sense of responsibility inside the classroom. (Q8) as well attempts to investigate whether students depend only on the information which has been given inside the classroom.

Section three: ICT and learners' autonomy (Q9 to Q19)

This section deals with the students' autonomous role in using ICT tools to enhance their writing skill (Q9) and how often they use them (Q10). How students perceive their level in this skill (Q11), whether they use them to improve their writing skill (Q12), and how they see the relationship between the uses of the three main ICT tools to enhance their writing skill in which they are: the internet in order to collect information and which type(s) of websites students exploit (Q13 to Q15). Email as a source of receiving quick feedback from the teachers (Q16 to Q17). Finally, word processor in typing their written productions, this part of questionnaire tries to realize whether students prefer to write through this software directly or use pen and papers when formulating their essays. Also to ensure whether students notice that this software helps them in correcting their written mistakes or not, and how they learn from this help (Q18 to Q19).

C- Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

Section one: Background information

Question one: Students' choice to study English

Option	Number	Percentage
Optional	27	90%
Imposed	03	10%

Table 3.6: Students' choice to study English
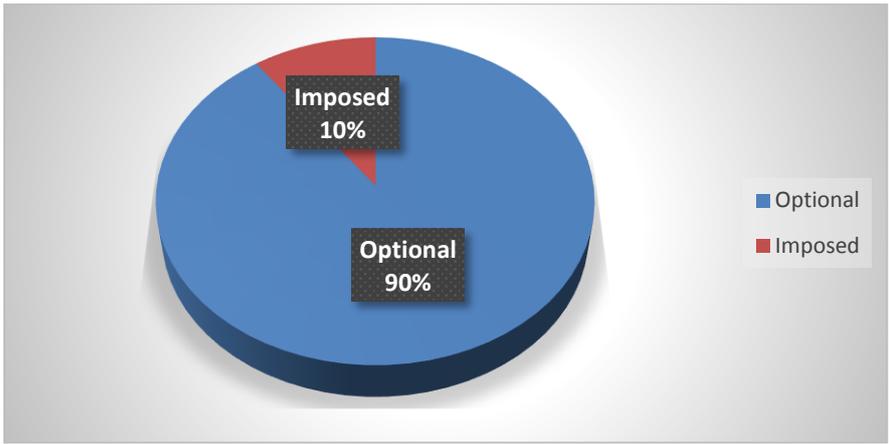
Figure 3.7: Students' choice to study English

The results above show that (90%) of the whole sample has chosen consciously and personally to study English at university because they like to learn this language. As result, they have more willingness language and motivation to study the English language. However, (10%) confessed to have been imposed to choose that branch.

Question two: Have you heard before of the term 'learner autonomy'?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	18	60%
No	12	40%

Table 3.7: Students' awareness of the concept "Learner Autonomy"
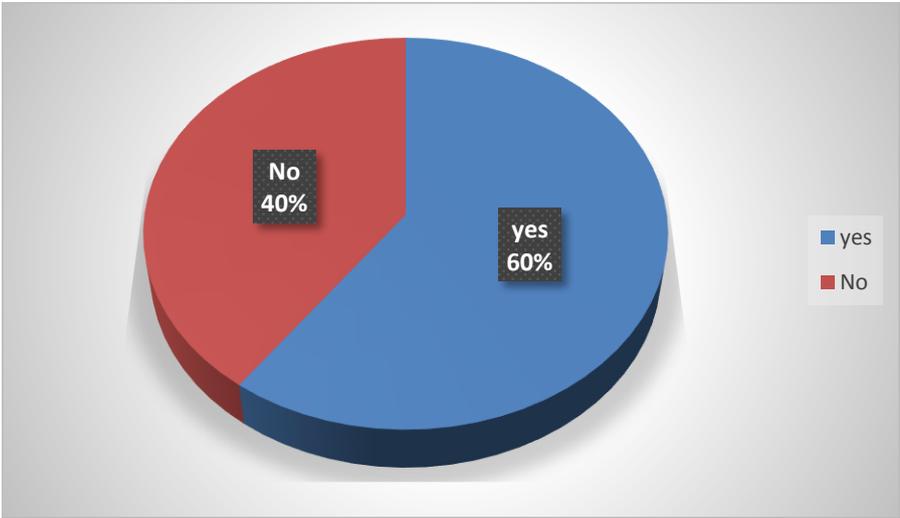
Figure 3.8: Students' awareness of the concept "Learner Autonomy"

The figure above shows the percentage of the students that have not heard before about the concept "Learner Autonomy" which is (40%). Whereas, (60%) revealed to know about this concept. This means that the majority of students in the university are aware of the concept autonomy.

Section two: Autonomy and language learning

Question three: Learner autonomy gives you the opportunity to direct your own learning do you think that is important?

Option	Number	Percentage
Not important	03	10%
Too important	27	90%

Table 3.8: Students' opinion about the significance of autonomy
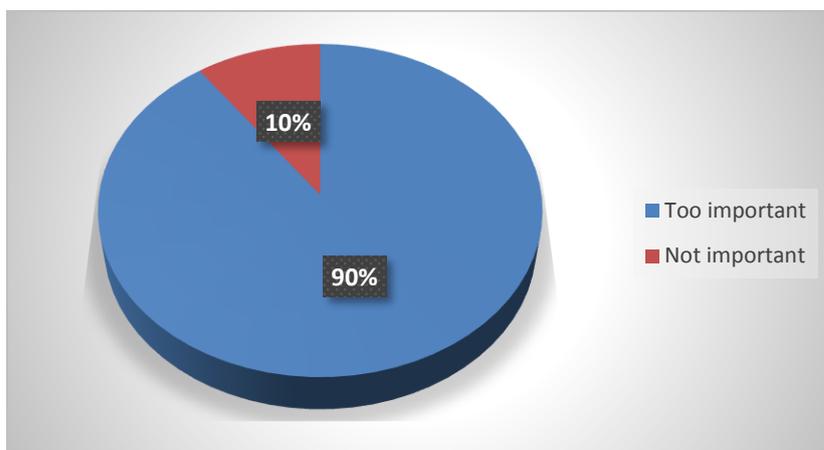
Figure 3.9: Students' opinion about the significance of autonomy

The majority of the participants and with a percentage of (90%) agree with the idea saying that learner autonomy is very interesting in our classes thinking that this is the time to shift the responsibility to students so as to direct their own learning. However, only (10%) of the participants who consider autonomy as not important.

Question four: Do you consider yourself autonomous in learning English

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	18	60%
No	12	40%

Table 3.9: Students' perception of themselves as autonomous learners
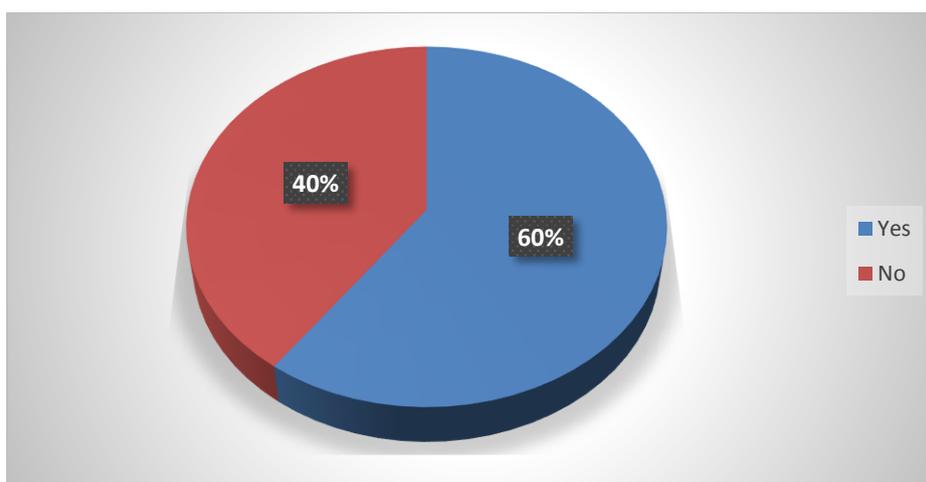
Figure 3.10: Students' perception of themselves as autonomous learners

The results above show that (60%) of our sample are autonomous in learning which means that they do not rely completely on their teacher but they search for information by themselves outside the classroom. (40%); however, do not consider themselves autonomous and dot not try to enrich their learning relying on themselves.

Question five: To what extent do you depend on your teacher in your learning?

Option	Number	Percentage
Totally	08	27%
Partially	22	73%

Table 3.10: The Extent of students' reliance on their teacher
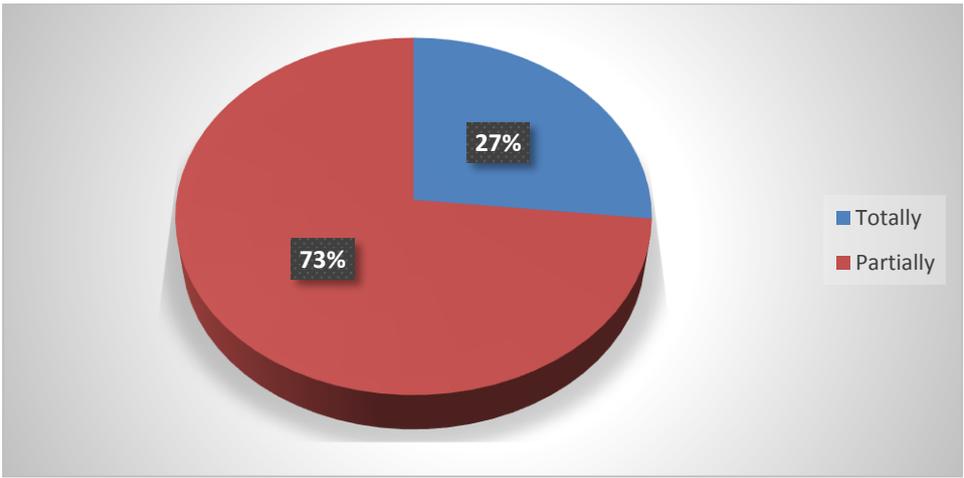
Figure 3.11: The Extent of students' reliance on their teacher

The results above show that more than the half of students (73%) do not depend just on their teacher, which means that they depend more on themselves or on their classmates. This has a relation to their style of learning where they are not satisfied by what is given from the teacher and they rely on themselves in their process of learning or they depend on their mates, in fact, they prefer to absorb, analyse, and interpret information by themselves. However, (27%) confessed to depend totally on the teacher, where they believe that he is the one who is responsible for delivering information, explaining, assessing and correcting.

Question six: Does your teacher let you take some responsibilities inside the class?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	19	63%
No	11	37%

Table 3.11: Teachers' giving responsibilities
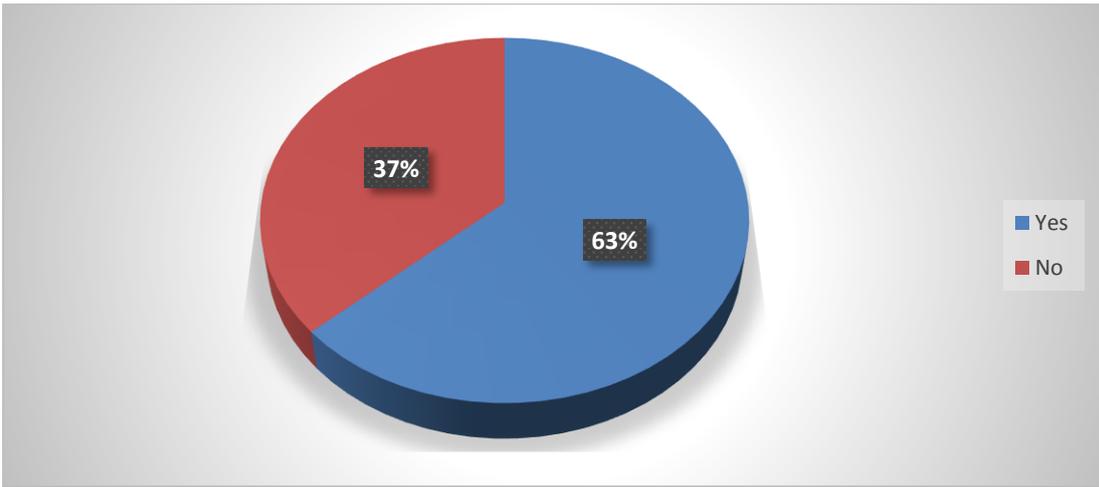
Figure 3.12: Teachers' giving responsibilities

From the answers of the participants, (63%) of them claimed that their teachers give them the responsibilities inside the classroom and make them participate and involve in the process of teaching-learning. However, (37%) do not see that are given some responsibilities by the teacher inside the classroom, so the teachers should be aware enough about the importance of providing learners with some freedom and autonomy in order to offer a suitable environment for better achievements of the students.

Under this question, students were asked also to determine which type(s) of responsibility teachers give them. The results are shown as follows:

Option	Number	Percentage
1	4	18%
2	5	32%
3	3	13%
2+3	3	14%
All	7	32%

Table 3.12: Teachers' reasons for giving responsibilities
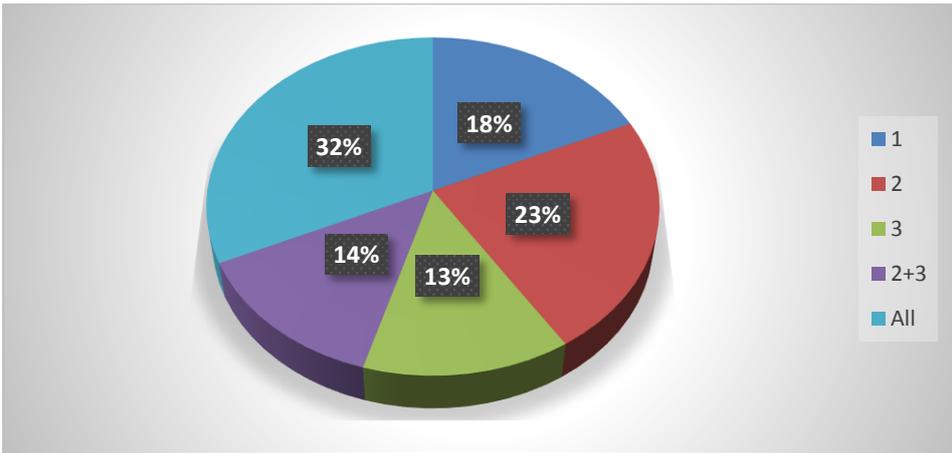
Figure 3.13: Teachers' reasons for giving responsibilities

(32%) of students said that their teachers give all the responsibilities to students in the classroom in: letting them correct and evaluate themselves, decide about the method to use, and decide on the kind of topics and activities to use. (18%) of students have selected "letting them correct and evaluate themselves",(23%) "decide about the method to use", (13%) "about the kind of topics and activities to use". Nevertheless, only (14%) have chosen "the method plus the kind of topics and activities to use".

Question seven: Do you think that learning progress is?

Option	Number	Percentage
Teachers' responsibility	2	7%
Learners' responsibility	3	10%
Shared responsibility	25	83%

Table 3.13: Students' opinion about who is responsible for learning
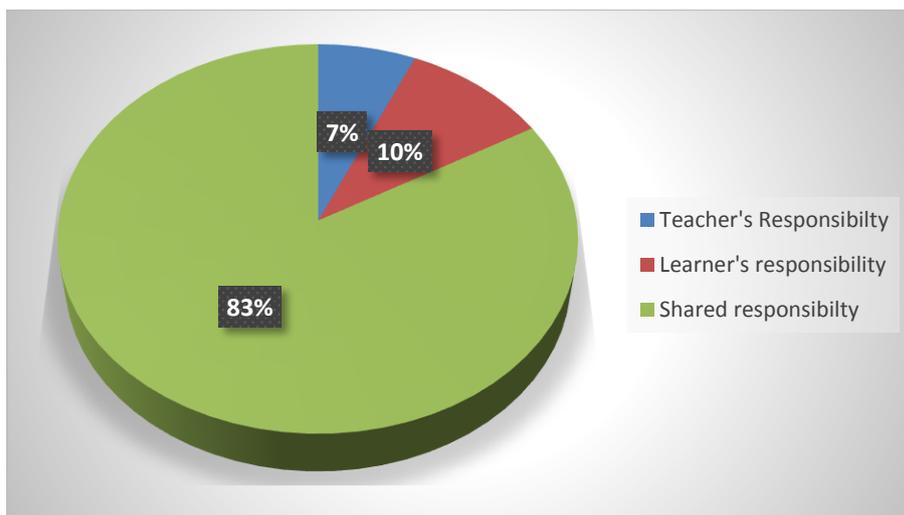
Figure 3.14: Students' opinion about who is responsible for learning

(83%) of our sample think that the learning process is a shared responsibility between teachers and students and that both sides must collaborate together to achieve good results. (10%) of students think that they are the ones responsible for supervising and controlling their own learning and only (7%) indicate that the learning process is the teachers' responsibility.

In this question, students in fact were asked to justify their answers. Therefore, the Following reasons explain their choices:

- Students who choose the first option due to:
    - Students regard the whole learning process as the teachers' reasonability for they are more knowledgeable than students and are best learning guiders.
- Students who choose the second choice due to:
    - Students are responsible for their learning process because they are supposed to be not only learners but also researchers who always seek for more knowledge inside and outside the classroom.
- Students who choose the third choice because:

- The whole learning process is both teachers' and leaners' responsibility simply because they complete each other. Teachers should guide and facilitate the lesson and learners must practice and try to expand their knowledge.

Question eight: In your learning process, do you depend only on information which has been given inside the classroom?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	12	40%
No	18	60%

Table 3.14: Students' reliance on the given information in the class
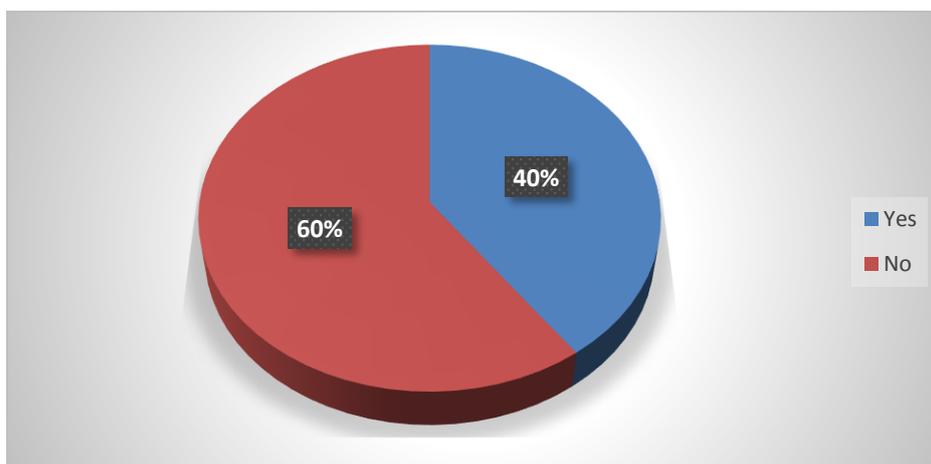
Figure 3.15: Students' reliance on the given information in the class

(60%) of students declared that they do not depend only on the information delivered inside the classroom. It means that they depend on both themselves and their teachers in learning the language. (40%) of them said that they depend entirely on the information in the classroom and do not try to search for further data outside the formal setting.

Under this question, students were asked also to determine which kind(s) of sources they get access to in order to gather information n writing. The results are shown the following table:

Option	Number	Percentage
ICT Tools	15	50%
Libraries	02	07%
No answer	13	43%

Table 3.15: Sources that help students to gather information outside the classroom
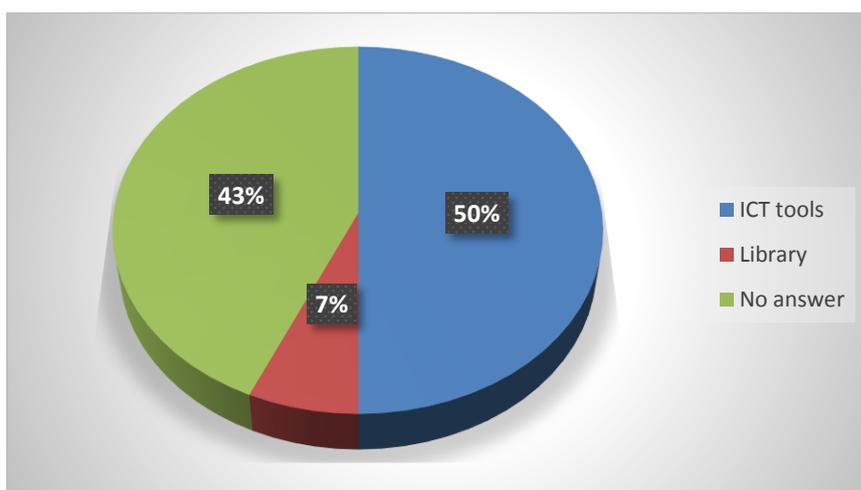
Figure 3.16: Sources that help students to gather information outside the classroom

We can notice that (50%) of students prefer to use ICT tools outside the classroom in order to learn and to collect extra information; (07%) of them prefer using the library. Therefore, we can notice that the majority of students prefer ICT tools to help them learn outside the classroom.

Section three: ICT and Learner Autonomy

Question nine: Do you depend on ICT tools namely the internet, word processor, and email outside the classroom for learning?

Option	Number	Percentage
yes	28	93%
No	02	07%

Table 3.16: Students' dependence on ICT tools outside the classroom
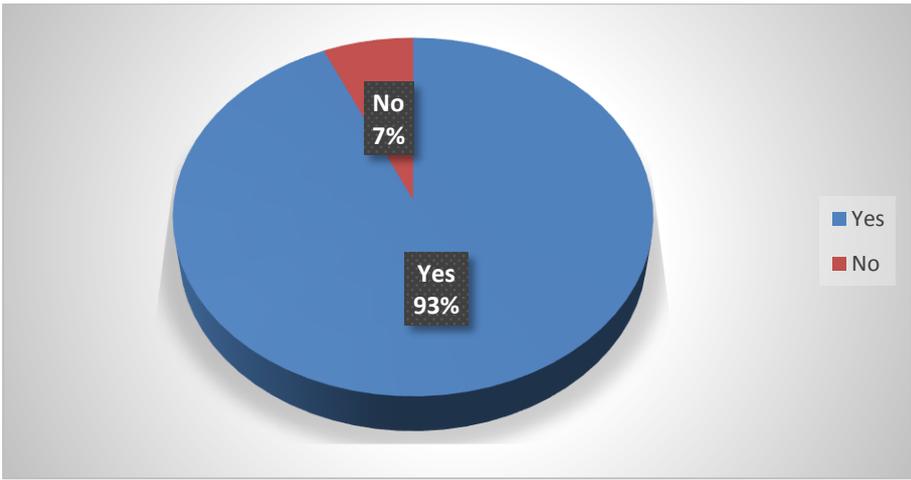
Figure 3.17: Students' dependence on ICT tools outside the classroom

It is clear that (93%) of our sample use ICT tools outside the classroom precisely internet, word processor, and e-mail maybe because they enjoy using it, or they find it more motivating to learn the language. However, (7%) do not use these ICT tools because of different reasons.

Question ten: How often do you use ICT tools?

Option	Number	Percentage
Always	09	30%
Sometimes	19	63%
Rarely	02	07%

Table 3.17: Students' frequency of using ICT tools
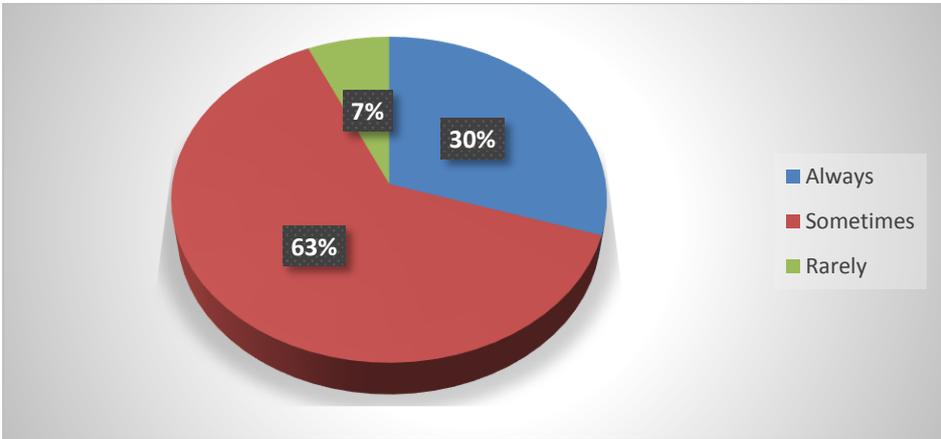
Figure 3.18: Students' frequency of using ICT tools

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(63%) of the students declared that they sometimes use ICT tools; (30%) of them use it always, and (07%) use it rarely. These results are mainly related to the availability of this tool.

Question eleven: How do you evaluate your level in writing?

Option	Number	Percentage
Good	02	07%
Average	25	83%
Poor	03	10%

Table 3.19: Students' level in writing skill
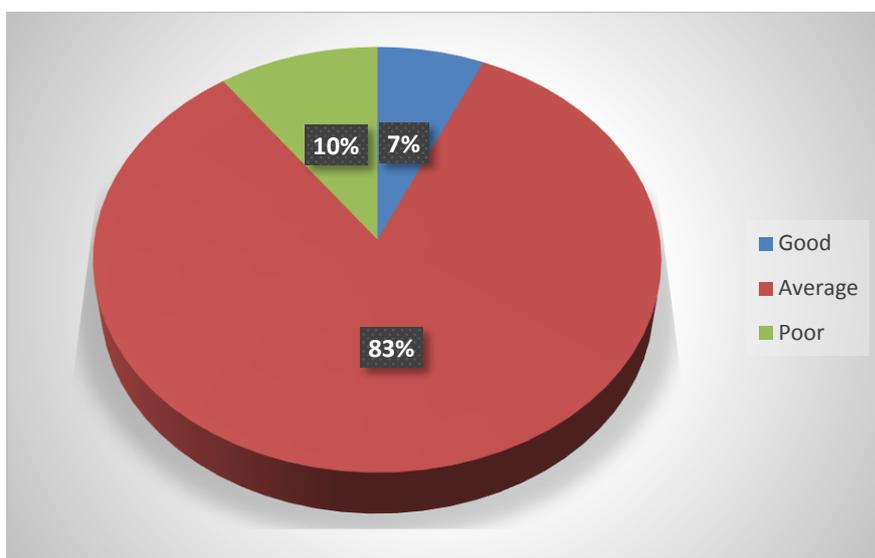
Figure 3.19: Students' level in writing skill

The majority of the students (83%) evaluated their level in writing as 'average'; (10%) said to have a 'good' level, and (07%) have a 'bad' level. This means that students need to develop more their level in writing skill.

Question twelve: Do you use ICT resources with your own willingness to improve your writing skill?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	26	87%
No	04	13%

Table 3.19: Students' use of ICT tools to improve the writing skill
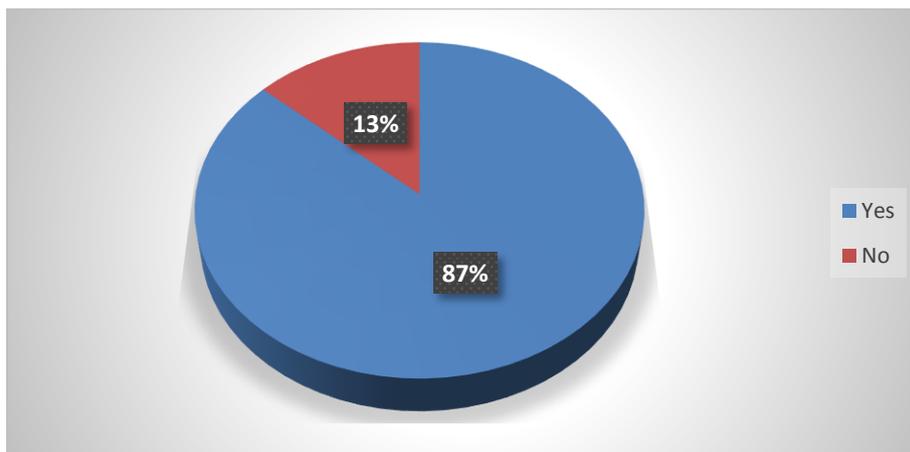
Figure 3.20: Students' use of ICT tools to improve the writing skill

(87%) of students declared that they do not depend only on the time devoted to written expression courses in the classroom to improve their writing; on the contrary, students by their own willingness tend to have access to ICT resources outside the classroom in order to improve the writing skill. However. (13%) of them said that they depend entirely on the information in the classroom and do not try to search for further data outside the formal setting.

Question thirteen: During the writing process, do you face difficulties?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	28	97%
No	01	03%

Table 3.20: the difficulties students face in the writing process
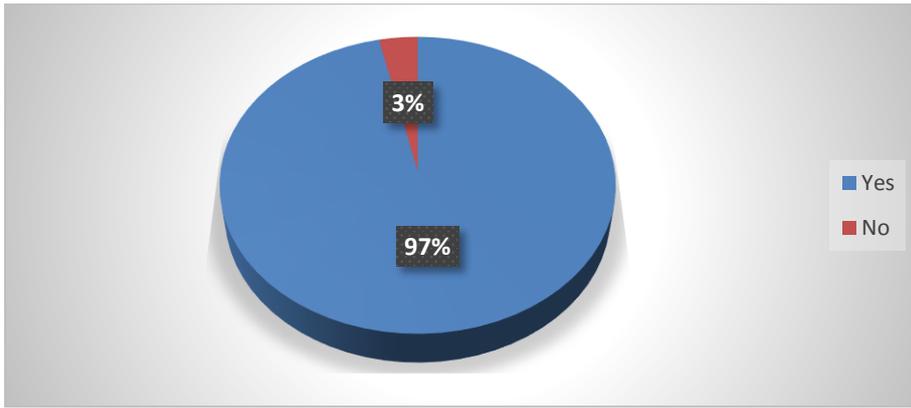
Figure 3.21: The difficulties students face in the writing process

From the answers of the participants, (97%) of them admitted that during the writing process they face problems; however, only (03%) do not see any difficulty when having a written activity. This means that students should do their best to overcome the difficulties they face for better achievements of in writing.

Under this question, students were asked also to determine at which level(s) in writing they find difficulties. The results are shown in the following table:

Option	Number	Percentage
Grammar	03	10%
Punctuation	03	10%
Vocabulary	06	21%
Spelling	01	04%
Ideas	12	41%
No answer	04	14%

Table 3.21: Students' levels of difficulties
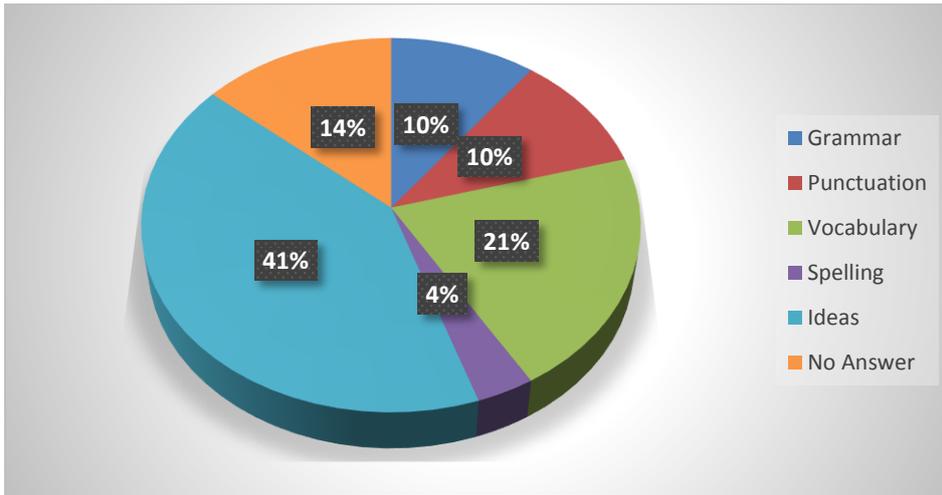
Figure 3.22: Students' levels of difficulties

From the result above, we see that the majority of students (41%) emphasized that "lack of ideas" is the main problem that students face during the writing process. This means, when formulating any written production, students should take into account the significance of the process of generating ideas to produce a worthy content. In the other hand, (21%) of them consider "lack of vocabulary" as a problem. However; (10%) of the students regard "grammar" as the main problem; As well as, another (10%) of them mentioned that "punctuation" is the level of difficulty.

Question fourteen: When you have a written home assignment, do you rely on the internet (e.g.: using online libraries, encyclopedias, and electronic journals) when generating ideas before writing about a particular topic?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	25	83%
No	05	17%

Table 3.22: Students' reliance on internet for generation ideas
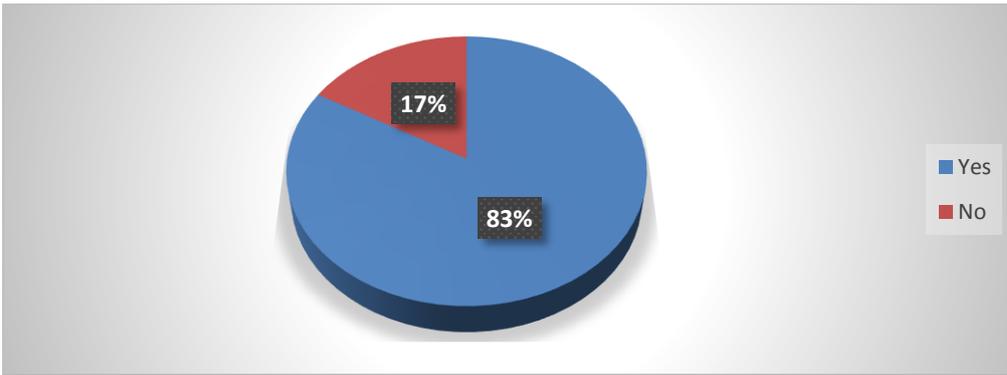
Figure 3.23: Students' reliance on internet for generation ideas

The results provided in the table above show that (83%) of the students do use the internet during the process of generating ideas. Whereas, (17%) of them declared the opposite. These data helped us to ensure that students do use the internet in order to collect information and read more about the topics they discuss.

Under this question, students were asked also to determine which type(s) of websites they use. The results are shown in the following table:

Option	Number	Percentage
Online Libraries	02	07%
Electronic Journals	01	03%
Encyclopedias	05	17%
All of them	17	56%
No answer	05	17%

Table 3.23: Types of web-sites students' use
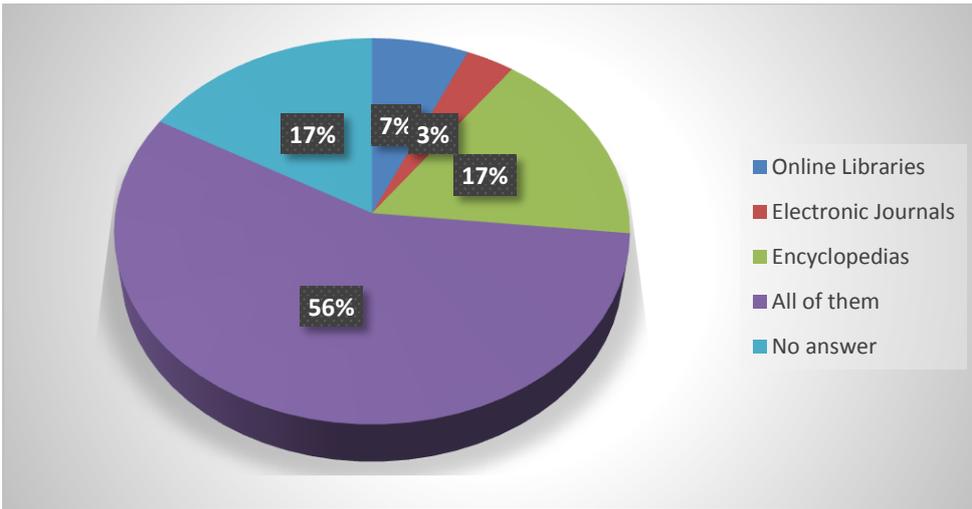
Figure 3.24: Types of web-sites students' use

From the about results; we found that (56%) of the students prefer to all types of web-sites in the process of generating ideas. That is to say; these data insured to us that the majority of students use all online libraries, encyclopedias, and electronic journals which in turn help them to generate ideas and understand more about the topic they discuss; whereas, (17%) of the students tend to use only encyclopedias. (7%) of the participants prefer to use online libraries and (3%) of them prefer to use electronic journals.

Question fifteen: Do you think that reading online books, encyclopedias, and electronic journals can enrich your background vocabulary to produce worthy content when writing your essays?

Option	Number	Percentage
Agree	10	34%
Strongly agree	17	59%
Disagree	02	07%
Strongly disagree	00	00%

Table 3.25: Students' attitudes towards the use web-sites in the process of generating ideas
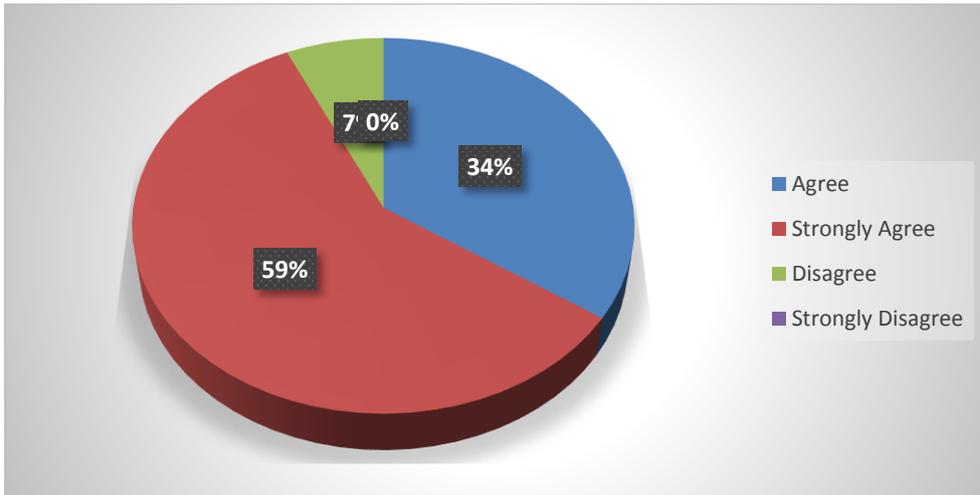
Figure 3.25: Students' attitudes towards the use web-sites in the process of generating ideas

The graph above shows that the majority of the correspondents (59%) strongly agree on the positive effects of reading online books, electronic journals, encyclopedias in enriching students' background vocabulary in order to produce a worthy content. That is to say, students agree that they may produce worthy content if they understand and read more about the topic (before writing). On the other hand, some students (43%) agree on the previous point but not necessarily. That is to say, reading about the topic using internet web-sites is not the only source that may help students to provide worthy content. Only two students disagreed with this point. This means that he/she views that this is not an important step which enables him/her to provide worthy content.

Question sixteen: Do you think that writing through the word processor directly is better than using pen and paper?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	20	67%
No	10	33%

Table 3.25: Students' attitudes towards the use of word processor during the writing process
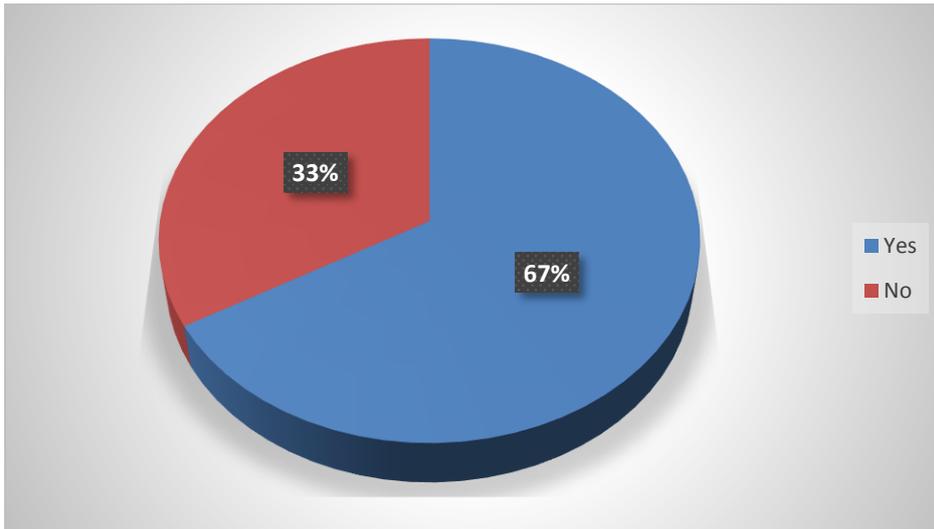
Figure 3.26: Students' attitudes towards the use of word processor during the writing process

According to the data displayed above, it seems that the majority of the correspondents (67%) consider writing through the word processor as the best mean rather than the use of pen and papers when formulating their written productions. In contrast, few students (33%) said that they favor the use of pen and paper rather than the word processor.

Under this question, students were asked also to determine the reason that makes the word processor as the best mean for writing. The results are shown as follows:

- Students who choose "yes", it is because:

  - It is time and effort consuming

  - It is most motivational and innovative way for writing

  - It auto-correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling mistakes

  - It enables them in editing ideas easily unlike pen and paper

- Students who chose "no", it is because:

  - Doing mistakes and correcting them using pen and paper help the students realize their mistakes and memorize them

  - Students think that the word processor correct the mistakes quickly so they don't pay attention to the nature of the mistake they make

Question seventeen: Do you learn more about the mistakes you make when the word processor helps you in correcting them?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	27	90%
No	03	10%

Table 3.26: Learning from the word processor's feedback
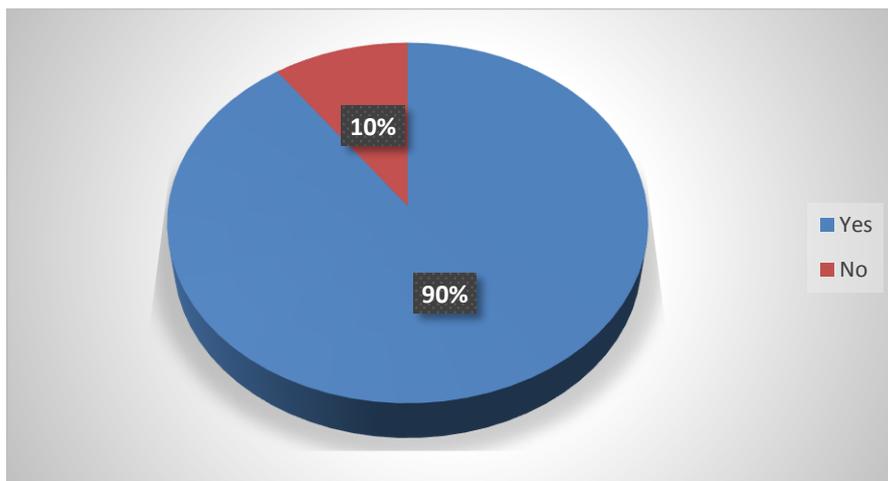
Figure 2.27: Learning from the word processor's feedback

The data provided above shows that the majority of the correspondents (90%) who use the word processor learn from the mistakes that this software corrects. In addition, Students were asked to explain how they learn from this correction and their answers are summarized in the following points. First, the word processors' correction makes students more cautious in writing since it constantly corrects their mistakes. In other words, it trains them to correct their mistakes each time, i.e. Learning through training. Second, it helps them to detect the mistakes that they cannot discover when using pen and paper. Third, it assists them to learn from the suggestions and alternatives the word processor provides them with when correcting any mistake. Fourth, the suggestions and choices the word processor provides make students think, analyze, and choose the appropriate solution. Fifth, it helps them to learn from their mistakes in a short time and without waiting for the teachers' feedback (it provides them permanent feedback).Sixth, it is easier than checking

other printed sources such as dictionary (no time consuming). On the other hand, only three students said that they do not learn from the word processors' correction. Only two students provided his/ her justification. The first student stated that he/ she used to ignore what is the mistake that the word processor highlights or, he/ she directly chooses from the options (that the word processor provides when correcting any mistake) without analyzing them. The second student mentioned that the word processor does not address all types of written mistakes.

Question eighteen: Do you think that submitting your work through e-mail is a more innovative way to receive constructive feedback?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	16	57%
No	10	36%
No answer	02	07%

Table 3.27: students' attitudes towards receiving the teachers' feedback through e-mail
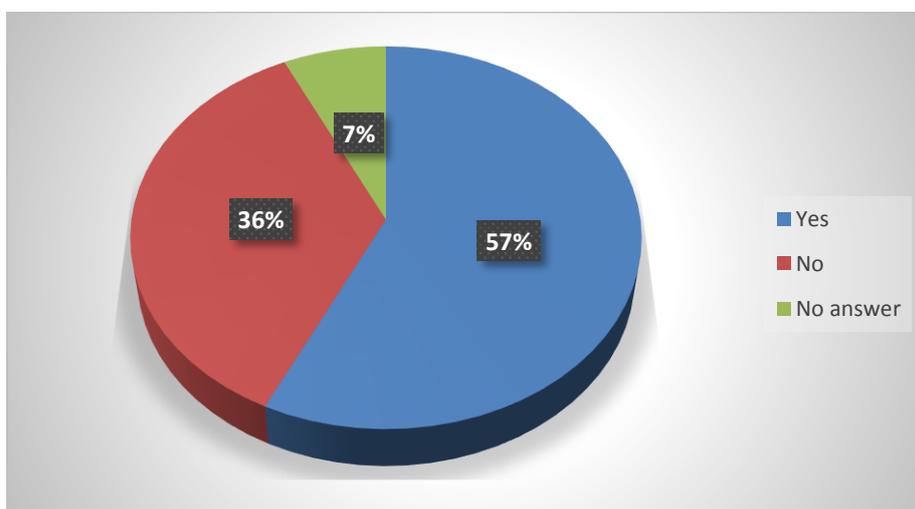
Figure 3.28: students' attitudes towards receiving the teachers' feedback through E-mail

From the table above, it is clear that (57%) of students do support receiving teachers' feedback through email and that it's an innovative way to receive feedback. (57%), however, do not agree with this idea.

Question nineteen: Do you agree that teacher's feedback sent through e-mail can help learners to learn more about their weaknesses and develop their writing?

Option	Number	Percentage
Agree	21	70%
Disagree	09	30%

Table 2.28: Learning from the teachers' feedback sent through e-mail
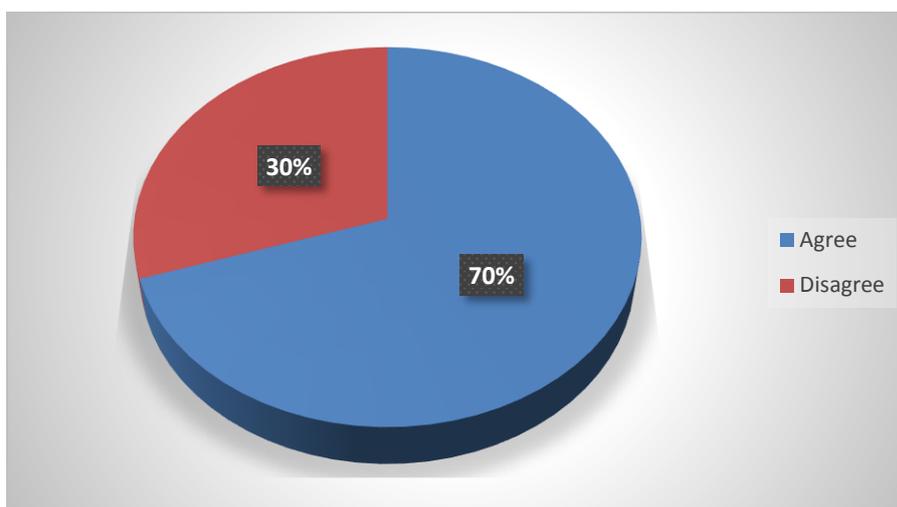
Figure 3.29: Learning from the teachers' feedback sent through e-mail

As it is noticed in the table, (70%) of the respondents said that they prefer to receive immediate feedback from their teachers through E-mail. On the other hand, few students (30%) disagreed with this current point i.e., they favor to meet the teacher and make direct interaction with him/her. Their disagreement in fact was followed by three main justifications. First, through direct interaction (face to face), students can express their intentions clearly and convince their teacher. Second, students do not check their e-mail constantly. Third, there are those who do not use e-mail at all.

d-   Interpretation of the Results

From the study reviewed, it is found that all of the students were very helpful with us and answered the questions given to them. We also noticed that master one students are aware of the concept of autonomy and its' importance in the learning process, but they still need the assistance of their teachers to obtain better results. After analyzing the questionnaire addressed to first year master students, we remark that the majority of the

students are unsatisfied with being only as receivers. On the contrary, they have the willing to break down this traditional notion in which they view teachers as the only delivers of knowledge rather than themselves and this is the cornerstone of learner autonomy. The majority of the students declared that they see themselves as autonomous learners, for they rely partially on the teachers' instructions and they get access to ICT resources for further information.

Moreover, most of the student confirmed the effectiveness of using the three ICT tools; the internet, e-mail, and word processor in developing and promoting their level in writing. They confessed that they face difficulties in the writing process and the majority believe that the process of generating ideas is the main problem. Henceforth, the findings reveal that the majority of students do emphasize the point that the use of the internet during the process of generating ideas provides them with much more ideas. In another word, the internet can be one of the strategies that assist students in generating ideas. Furthermore, the majority of students assert that the use the word processor helps them to discover and learn more about their written mistakes. It assists and encourages them to modify their own ideas without re-writing the whole paper. Finally, students believe that using the e-mail to receive feedback from their teacher after the writing process can help them to strengthen their weaknesses and learn more about the writing skill.

3.3 Teachers' Written Interview

a- The Aim of Teachers' Interview

The teachers' written interview is submitted because we seek to answer the questions about the teachers' awareness of the notion of 'learning autonomy' and the role of the teacher to make students autonomous inside the classroom, and also we want to identify the importance of ICT on learners' autonomy and its effectiveness in improving their writing skill. We aim as well at investigating the role of the teacher in encouraging

students to use ICT tools outside class and to take some responsibilities over their learning process and education.

b- Description of the Written Interview

Five interviewees were asked to answer fifteen open-ended questions related to their perception of the concept learner autonomy and their attitudes towards the role of ICT in enhancing this ability to improve students' writing skill. This interview is divided into three main sections the first section includes three questions, the second section includes three questions as well, and the third section includes nine questions.

Section one: Background information (Q1 to Q3)

This section is structured to obtain general background information about the teachers starting by asking them about their qualification (Q1). Passing to know about their experience because it helps to provide different opinions which are based on their experiences in the field (Q2). Moreover, whether they heard the term 'learner autonomy' in order to help us finding out their opinions and background knowledge about that concept (Q3).

Section two: Autonomy and language learning (Q4 to Q6)

The second section aims at getting the teachers' opinions about our university students if they are autonomous learners or not (Q4), and whether our university students possess autonomy in which the researchers viewed it as "an acquired capacity"(Q5). (Q6) attempts to discover if the learning responsibility has shifted from teacher-centered to learner-centered.

Section three: ICT and learner autonomy (Q7 to Q14)

The main objective of this section is to know the teachers' attitudes towards the context of autonomy (Q7). It seeks also to identify the teachers' encouragement of the students' responsibility outside the classroom (Q8). As well as, this section seek to determine the

effectiveness of the technological materials in promoting what is called 'learner autonomy'. (Q9) This section attempts to discover teachers' evaluation of their students' level in writing skill (Q10), and also attempts to ensure whether the three main ICT tools which they are internet, word processor, and email can be effective in enhancing students' ability for better writing (Q11). (Q12) seek to discover teachers' opinion about whether the internet can facilitate for students the process of generating ideas in order to produce a worthy content. (Q13) aims at getting teachers' opinion about whether the word processor can be used autonomously by students in order to produce well written production and make them learn more about their mistakes according to the various functions the word processor provides. (Q14) tries as well to understand whether the teacher's feedback sent through e-mail can help students to learn more about their weaknesses and develop their writing.

c- The Analysis of Teachers' Written Interview

Section one: Background information

Question One: What are your qualifications?

We can say that the sample is highly qualified, three of the interviewees have the Magister degree and two have received a Ph.D. degree.

Question Two: For how long have you been teaching English?

The aim of this question is to find out whether the teachers who were given the interview are qualified and experienced enough in teaching the English language. So as far as teaching experience is concerned, the majority of teachers who were asked, have been teaching the English language for 12 to 22 years. This shows that they are well experienced within the field of English teaching, and they have started early their teaching carriers, which will ensure the fact that, normally they know a lot about the teaching process and the appropriate method that should be used in.

The other participants affirmed that they have been teaching the English language from 5 to 8 years, this demonstrates that they are still working on bettering their teaching process and gaining more experiences as well as qualification.

__Question Three: Have you heard of the term "learner autonomy"? If 'yes', what can you say about it?__

The aim behind asking such question is to find out teachers' opinion and background knowledge about the concept. From the analysis, we have found that all the teachers' answers were similar; and they define it as the students' responsibility for his/her learning.

Section two: Learner autonomy in the classroom

__Question Four: Can we consider our university students' as autonomous learners? Why?__

Autonomous learners are those students who are not satisfied with only what is given to them; they always look for further information. We ask teachers if their students have this attribute and the reply was as follows. Most of them are not satisfied and at the same time they do not do much to change the situation. Other teacher said that students do not look for extra effort outside the class since they prefer to stick to the lesson only and described them as 'mere consumers'. Moreover, whenever they required undertaking research or grouping work, the results are not satisfactory.

__Question Five:__ *__The concept of learner autonomy has many areas of debate concerning its definition. However, almost researchers viewed it as "an acquired capacity".Do you think that your students possess it?__*

Discussing autonomy as an acquired capacity, we have asked teachers if their students possess it or not. The majority of them agreed that there is a small number of students who acquire that capacity depending on their motivation and level of awareness

but unfortunately the majority of them want to receive everything and have nothing to produce .Another teacher indicated that students do not take any kind of personal initiative learning to improve their level of proficiency.

Question Six: ***As a teacher do you think that learning responsibility is shifted from teacher-centered to learner-centered?***

Learner autonomy means taking responsibility and this latter means learner dominated while the learning process is taking place. We have asked teachers about this point. All of them replied that at the level of our university (local situation) the teaching learning processes still teacher−centered although they see that teaching paradigm changed from teacher-center learning into student-center learning. They see their actual student still relying on them and they do not trust themselves enough; however, they agree that they are not satisfied with what is given to them (according to what they claim in previous answers). This is due to many reasons such as: the lack of motivation, overcrowded classes, lack of resource materials…

Section three: ICT and learner autonomy

*Question Seven: **Do you think that autonomy should be promoted only inside the class? Justify please.***

The main objective of this question is to know the teachers' attitudes towards the context of autonomy. From the answers proposed, we can notice that all the interviewees "disagree", they think that students do not have to promote autonomy just inside the classroom but also outside it by searching and learning the language by themselves. One of the teachers' believe that learner autonomy should be the students' objective as a life-long skill.

Question Eight: What should teachers do to enhance learners' sense of responsibility towards their learning outside the classroom? Please give examples

The aim behind this question is to identify the various activities the teachers use to enhance their students' sense of responsibility outside the classroom. All the responses were positive, teachers use activities to make the learners responsible for their learning outside the classroom. Their answers are summarized as follows:

- Teacher 1: Implementing real-life tasks.

- Teacher 2: Giving students non-graded assignments and make them aware that autonomy is not only for study but also for it should be a long-life goal.

- Teacher 3: Encourage students to use media (watch TV, listen to songs/ videos) in order to see how language is used in real-life situations.

- Teacher 4: Asking students to book report, do further readings.

- Teacher 5: Sensitize them to the importance of learning out of the class.

It is clear that each interviewee gives a different view and opinion about what he/she can do to increase the sense of responsibility outside the classroom. All of them have given positive opinions which really can help learners in many ways in the learning progress.

Question Nine: Is the availability of technological materials (inside the class and outside) necessary for promoting learner autonomy? If 'yes', how?

From the answers proposed, we can notice that the majority of the interviewees "agree". They support the importance of the availability of technological materials in promoting students' autonomy not only inside the classroom but also outside. However, only one teacher who disagree with that. We have asked teachers to explain how and most

of them believe that technology facilitates tasks for learners, where they use it outside the classroom to understand the ambiguity of the lessons. One of the teachers declared that the teacher just organizes things and students have to evaluate, think of the material (video, listening recording…).They are responsible for listening, asking questions, answering and evaluating the material. Another teacher confirm this that saying these materials extend the student's knowledge about the target language culture far from teachers' help, where they became in touch with native speakers through a different kind of social media as Skype, Facebook and others. While the others stress the importance of equipping a classroom with technological materials in order to develop their independency in learning because it integrates student into reality and field of practice, then they will be more motivated toward their learning.

Question Ten: How do you evaluate your learners' writing skill?

From the analysis we have found that all the teachers' answerers were similar; saying that the majority of the students have a medium level in writing, poor for few, and good for some.

Question Eleven: Do you think that ICTs namely internet, word processor, and email are effective in enhancing students' ability for better writing?

The analysis of the teachers' answers to this question has revealed that the interviewees strongly agree that ICTs namely internet, word processor, and e-mail can be the best tools for students to improve their writing skill.

Question Twelve: Do you think that learners need to use the internet in order to understand the topic through the use of online libraries, encyclopedias, and online journals; so that they can facilitate the process of generating ideas to produce worthy content?

This question is about whether students need to have access to the internet and use online libraries, encyclopedias, and online journals in order to understand the topic; so they can facilitate the process of generating ideas to produce a worthy content. So we have found that all of the teachers answered positively, they believe that students should use the internet before writing. In another word, there should be a session devoted to reading where students can use the internet to read more about the topics they will write about later on. The teachers justified their answers by saying that the internet helps students to understand more about the topic they discuss, provide worthy content, help to avoid the repetition of the same ideas, and develop their limited background knowledge (increase their reading culture).

Question Thirteen: ***Since the word processor corrects mistakes (grammatical, spelling and punctuation) and contains translation and dictionary tools, do you think that learners can use this tool autonomously to produce well-written production and learn more about their mistakes? If no, please explain why?***

As far as the results obtained by this question, we intended to know the teachers' opinion about the effectiveness of word processor in enhancing students writing and making them learn more about their mistakes. From the analysis of teachers' answers, we have found that the majority of teachers affirmed this. They justified their answers saying that the functions the word processor possess grammatical, spelling, punctuation, and translation/dictionary tools that save time and effort, help students reduce their mistakes and learn more about them. In addition, one of the teachers think that word processor can help students produce better ideas because writing is not only a matter of language; meaning function and context are also important. Moreover, when students write through the word processor, they can easily make the necessary modifications in their ideas when they read their written productions repeatedly through this software.

Question Fourteen: Do you think that teachers' feedback sent through e-mail can help Learners to strengthen their weaknesses and develop their writing (in case your student use e-mail)? Please explain more

The aim of this question is to investigate whether teachers feedback sent through e-mail can help students strengthen their weaknesses and develop their writing. From the analysis of the teachers' answers, we noticed that the majority of the teachers agree with that and declared that the feedback that is sent through e-mail affects positively on students' writing. In another word, teacher's comments on the written assignments of students help learners to learn more about their mistakes and style. As well as, this feedback pushes students to correct and address their weaknesses (both grammar and style), but it must be well elaborated, explained, detailed, and clear. Only one teacher who disagree; he believes that we are a bit far from using technology daily, for some students using e-mail is a privilege and for others it is difficult to manage.

d- Discussion of the interview results

The analysis of teachers' interview reveals that Information and Communication Technologies are considered as effective tools that promote learners' autonomy and encourages them to develop their written production. The teachers' answers demonstrated that all of them affirmed that, all the data collected from the second section showed that learner autonomy is too beneficial for students so as to build up and improve their levels. However, students are not taking advantages of that right and duty at the same time. Teachers show that learning autonomy is a process which encourages taking responsibility, higher order thinking, curiosity, and self-reliance, but students are not ready to make the first move to acquire knowledge instead of absorbing it from the teacher and forgetting it after taking tests.

Undoubtedly, teachers are doing their best to promote autonomy among students through the use of different activities to motivate students and make them interact positively in these different activities. Lastly, it encourages them to become self-dependent. They also confirmed that the availability of technological materials became one of teaching learning process necessities because according to them it meets the students' needs and it works with nowadays generation where it motivates them to learn and raise their self-esteem.

In the third section, teachers were asked about their students' level in writing and the answers were not satisfactory. However, they emphasized the effectiveness of the three ICT tools namely word processor, the internet, and email in enhancing the students' writing skill. First, most of the teachers through this part of questionnaire stressed that the use of the internet during the process of generating ideas affects positively students' written production. It helps students to generate ideas, understand the topic before writing, and avoid the repetition of ideas. Secondly, Teachers emphasized as well the effectiveness of the word processor in enhancing students writing, for it helps students reduce their mistakes and learn more about them. Thirdly, the analysis of this section revealed that the feedback that is sent through email affects positively on students' writing.

In sum up, the interview devoted to the teachers shows that most of them consider the use of ICTs (word processor, internet, and e-mail) provides learners with more motivation and independence to practice and develop the students' writing proficiency.

Conclusion

Finally, we can say that both teachers and students were very helpful with us while conducting this research, and they agree with us that the subject under study has a great amount of interest in respect of language learning and teaching. We must acknowledge that time limitation was the main challenge obliging us to orient the interview to teachers with a written form instead of recording; fortunately, all of them answered us very clearly which added a kind of reliability to our study.

Suggestions and Recommendations

As far as teaching the English is concerned, in this part we would like to give some suggestions and instructions to be taken into consideration on the part of the teacher and students for the sake of developing learner' autonomy and improve their writing skill:

➢ Autonomy indicates not only that learners attempt to take control of their own learning from time to time but that they possess the capacity to do so systematically.

➢ Fostering autonomy does not entail that teachers simply leave learners to their own devices, but they actively encourage and assist them in taking control of their learning in ways that will be effective in terms of goals.

➢ Learning autonomy can be enhanced inside and outside the classroom; therefore, students should consider this point.

➢ The Practice of activities for self-dependence inside or outside the classroom is beneficial.

➢ Learner-centered classrooms provide ideal conditions for developing learner autonomy.

➢ The teacher have to raise students' awareness towards the important role of autonomous learning that play in improving the students learning skills.

➢ Integrating ICTs in our language classroom and encouraging them to use it outside the classroom has a very considerable amount of interest to enhance autonomy among students.

➢ Teachers may exploit ICT tools with students in order to increase the time allocated to practice outside the class. Therefore, they can make students learn more about the writing process independently.

General Conclusion

The investigation carried out in this study has attempted to confirm our hypothesis; students are not autonomous learners until they use ICT as a learning aid in an appropriate way outside the classroom. In the theoretical part of the study, we have tackled three different variables: autonomy, writing, and ICT. Indeed, first, we have clarified the importance of autonomy in learners' daily life as an essential psychological aspect for any learning success. Second, we have focused on the writing skill in the learning and teaching processes. Finally, we have dealt with the use of the three ICT tools; word processor, e-mail, and the internet in improving learners' writing and we have stated the former's relation to autonomy.

To examine those variables and prove their close relationship, we have conducted a descriptive research using the questionnaire for students and an interview for teachers as a valuable data gathering tools. One has been administered to master one students and another to teachers of written expression in Mohamed kheider University. Based on the results we obtained from the questionnaire and the interview, we have noticed that the majority of master one university students are not autonomous learners.

We have also concluded that ICT has a positive impact on learning. Moreover, many students have an interest in using ICT hence; all of them appreciate learning with it. Furthermore, we found that the three ICT tools; the internet, word processor, and e-mail have a positive impact in improving learners' writing skill since it increases the time allocated to practice outside the class. Therefore, it can make students learn more about the writing process independently. In addition, we found a constant practice in writing through the word processor can help students to discover and learn more about their written mistakes; this software encourages students to modify their own ideas through the

permanent reading of their written productions. Moreover, receiving feedback through email can assist and encourage students to discover and address their weaknesses and strengthen them. And most importantly using the internet in the pre-writing stage helps students to generate ideas, understand the topic before writing, and avoid the repetition of ideas. These three ICT tools represent an independent source for students to improve their writing skill. As a result, ICT increases the degree of participation and interaction as well as it enhances learners' autonomy to improve their writing skill.

Finally, based on our field work results about promoting learners' autonomy through the use of ICT, we can affirm that integrating ICT in the teaching-learning process is beneficial because of its advantages and positive impact on autonomy and language development. Although the research has achieved it aims, there are some difficulties and limitations. First, the study is specified with first year master students at the University of Biskra; the result of our main research may not be generalized on all the learning levels. Second, we have chosen a representative sample randomly to answer the questions, because it is difficult to work on the whole population. Third, lack of free references on the subject especially chapter one.

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Appendices

Appendix One: Students' Questionnaire

Dear Students:

      This questionnaire is an attempt to gather information needed for the accomplishment of a master dissertation. We would be so grateful if you could answer the following questions about your attitudes towards the Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools for Promoting Students' Autonomy and Developing their Writing Skill. Your answers are very important for the validity of the research we are undertaking. As such, we hope that you will give us your full attention and interest.

      Please answer the questions and tick the corresponding square. You can give more than one answer where necessary. I thank you in advance for your cooperation and the time devoted to answer the questionnaire.

Sincerely yours,

Miss A. *MEDJENAH*

Section One: Background information

1. Choice of English:
   Optional ☐   Imposed ☐

2. Have you heard before of the term 'learner autonomy'?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

   - If "yes", what can you say about it?

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Section Two: Autonomy in the Classroom

3. Learner autonomy gives you the opportunity to direct your own learning; do you think that is important?

   Not important ☐   Too important ☐

4. Do you consider yourself autonomous in learning English?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

5. To what extent do you depend on your teacher in your learning?

   Totally ☐   Partially ☐

6. Does your teacher let you take some responsibilities inside the class?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

   - If "yes", it is because:

   - He lets you correct/ evaluate yourself ☐

   - He lets you decide on the method to use ☐

   - He lets you decide on the kind of topics/ activities to use ☐

7. Do you think that learning progress is?

   -Teacher's responsibility ☐

   -Learner's responsibility ☐

   -Shared responsibility ☐

   - Please justify your answer:

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8. In your learning process, do you depend only on information which have been given inside the classroom?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

- If "no", what other sources do you use?

ICTs ☐   Library ☐

Section Three: Leaner Autonomy and ICTs

9. Do you depend on ICT tools namely the internet, word processor, and email outside the classroom for learning?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

10. How often do you use ICT tools?

    Always ☐   Sometimes ☐   Rarely ☐

11. How do you evaluate your level in writing?

    Good ☐   Average ☐   Poor ☐

12. Do you use ICT resources with your own willingness to improve your writing skill?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

    If no, please specify others?

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13. During the writing process, do you face difficulties?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

    - If "yes" at which level:
    - Grammar ☐
    - Punctuation ☐
    - Vocabulary ☐
    - Spelling ☐
    - Ideas ☐

14. When you have a written home assignment, do you rely on the internet (e.g.: using online libraries, encyclopedias, and electronic journals) when generating ideas before writing about a particular topic?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

    - If "yes", what type(s) of web-sites you have used:
    - Online libraries ☐
    - Electronic journals ☐

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- Encyclopedias ☐
- All of them ☐

15. Do you think that reading online books, encyclopedias, and electronic journals can enrich your background vocabulary to produce worthy content when writing your essays?

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

16. Do you think that writing through the word processor directly is better than using pen and paper?

Yes ☐ No ☐

- Please justify your answer

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17. Do you learn more about the mistakes you make when the word processor helps you in correcting them?

Yes ☐ No ☐

- Please explain how?

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18. Do you think submitting your work through e-mail is a more innovative way to receive constructive feedback?

Yes ☐ No ☐

19. Do you agree that teacher's feedback sent through e-mail can help learners to learn more about their weaknesses and develop their writing?

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐

If Disagree, please explain why.

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Thank you for your collaboration

A written interview for teachers

Dear Teachers,

This interview is an attempt for gathering information needed for the accomplishment of a master dissertation. We would be so grateful if you could answer the following questions on your attitudes concerning the Use of ICT for Promoting Learners' Autonomy to learn English and to develop their Writing Skill.

Your input is very important and greatly appreciated.

Section One: Background Information

1. What is your qualification?

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2. For how long have you been teaching English at university?

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3. Have you heard before of the term 'learner autonomy'? If your answer is 'yes', what can you say about it?

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Section Two: Autonomy in the Classroom

4. Can we consider our university students as autonomous learners? Why?

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5. The concept of leaner autonomy has many areas of debate concerning its definition. However almost researchers viewed it as ″an acquired capacity″. Do you think that your students possess it?

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6. As a teacher. Do you think that learning responsibility is shifted from teacher-centered to learner-centered?

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Section Three: Learner Autonomy and ICTs

7. Do you think that autonomy should be promoted only inside the class? Justify please.
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8. What should teachers do to enhance learners' sense of responsibility towards their learning outside the classroom?

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9. Is the availability of technological materials (inside the class and outside) necessary for promoting learner autonomy? If 'yes', how?
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10. How do you evaluate your learners' writing skill?

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11. Do you think that ICTs namely internet, word processor, and email are effective in enhancing students' ability for better writing?

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12. Do you think that learners need to use the internet in order to understand the topic through the use of online libraries, encyclopedias, and online journals; so that they can facilitate the process of generating ideas to produce worthy content?

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13. Since the word processor corrects mistakes (grammatical, spelling and punctuation) and contains translation and dictionary tools, do you think that learners can use this tool autonomously to produce well-written production and learn more about their mistakes? Please explain more

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14. Do you think that teachers' feedback sent through e-mail can help Learners to strengthen their weaknesses and develop their writing (in case your student use e-mail)? Please explain more

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Thank you for your collaboration

ملخص

هذه الدراسة وهي مجمل ثلاث فصول تهدف الى البحث في الدور الفعال لوسائل الاتصال والتكنولوجيا في تعزيز استقلالية التعلم لدى الطالب او ما يسمى " التعلم الذاتي" وبالتالي تحسين مهاراتهم ومستواهم التعليمي على حد سواء. ونعرض من خلال هذا البحث رؤية عن إمكانية استعمال وسائل الاتصال والتكنولوجيا كوسيلة تعليمية فعالة لتطوير قدرة التعلم الذاتي للطلاب. من اجل تقديم دراسة أكثر تفصيلا وفعالية ركزنا على طرق لتعزيز الاستقلالية التعلمية لدى الطلاب لتحسين مهاراتهم الكتابية التي هي واحدة من اهم المهارات في تعلم اللغة. وبالتالي قدمنا فرضية تنص على ان استخدام وسائل الاتصال والتكنولوجيا يعزز التعلم الذاتي للطلبة لتحسين مهارتهم الكتابية. ولإثبات هذه الفرضية قمنا بتوزيع استبيان لطلبة سنة أولى ماستر بجامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة ومقابلة كتابية للأساتذة للحصول على آرائهم حول استخدام الانترنت ومعالج النصوص وأيضا البريد الالكتروني ذاتيا من طرف الطلاب من اجل تحسين مهارتهم الكتابية. النتائج بينت ان طلاب سنة أولى ماستر يعون معنى مصطلح التعلم الذاتي واهميته في عملية تعلم اللغة ولكن ما زلوا بحاجة الى مساعدة الأساتذة من اجل الحصول على نتائج أفضل. واظهرت النتائج أيضا ان الأساتذة يستخدمون تمارين مختلفة لتحسين مهارات الطلاب الكتابية ويشجعونهم للاعتماد على أنفسهم أكثر لتحسين مستواهم التعليمي. نأمل من خلال هذا البحث ان المتعلمين سيصبحون أكثر دراية وأكثر وعي لأهمية التعلم الذاتي لتعزيز هاته القدرة في تعليمهم. ونأمل أيضا ان الأساتذة يقدرون الدور الفعال لوسائل الاتصال والتكنولوجيا في تعزيز التعلم الذاتي لدى الطلاب داخل الفصول الدراسية وخارجها.   .