A BRIEF VIEW OVER AUTONOMOUS LEARNING
TO MAKE LEARNERS AWARE OF WHAT THEY CAN DO TO IMPROVE
THEIR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

This research project refers to the importance that represents Autonomous Learning in the process of teaching and learning English language, especially at the moment to aware students of the great strength that Autonomous Learning has, with the aim of improving the English language learning. Through this project the readers will know the origin, concept and the theory of Autonomous Learning; its levels of control as well as the importance of motivation and responsibility on it. The main objective was focused on the analysis of the students' opinions about in what extent they were familiarized with Autonomous Learning concept. It is expected through this research contributes successfully in the language investigation field. In addition, the awareness of the students into Autonomous Learning is a desirable goal and an excellent alternative for students to develop on them responsibility, commitment and control over their own learning.

RESUMEN

El presente trabajo de investigación titulado 'A brief view over Autonomous Learning to make learners aware of what they can do to improve their english language learning' hace referencia a la importancia que representa el Aprendizaje Autónomo dentro del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma inglés, especialmente al momento de hacer que los estudiantes sean conscientes del mismo, con el fin de mejorar su aprendizaje y nivel en el idioma objeto de estudio. A través del proyecto de investigación, los lectores podrán informarse sobre el origen, concepto y teoría de Aprendizaje Autónomo, sus niveles de control, la importancia de la motivación y responsabilidad como temas relevantes dentro de dicho aprendizaje. Cabe anotar que el objetivo principal estuvo encaminado hacia el análisis de las opiniones de los estudiantes de la licenciatura en Educación Básica Lengua Castellana e Inglés, sobre el aprendizaje autónomo y en que medida dichos estudiantes estaban familiarizados con el tema. Se espera que la realización de este trabajo de investigación haya contribuido a enriquecer el gran campo investigativo de la pedagogía en idiomas, además del hecho que el aprendizaje Autónomo representa una meta alcanzable en el campo de la enseñanza del idioma inglés y una excelente alternativa que permita a los estudiantes tomar consciencia de su rol, desarrollando un espíritu responsable, activo recursivo y comprometido con el control sobre su propio aprendizaje.

CHAPTER I

1. PROBLEM

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

In the learning and teaching process of English as a foreign language, it is a major importance to consider the challenge that students face at the moment in which they achieve learning language goals, specially, when students make their best effort in order to fulfill the objectives that this process requires. In this context, it is very common to notice that learners erroneously assume that teacher is the only one who must give them all the information and instruction they need for developing their abilities in the language learning, in this case the learning of English as a foreign language. Moreover, there are relevant facts that can affect this process such as the lack of responsibility, motivation and collaboration between both learners and teachers, another important factor that affects language learning is the passive role that students have had during the development of the target language both in and outside the classroom.

For those reasons, it is important that this research should clarify the fact that the learner – and teacher too- could improve their knowledge not only by means of the school or university's schedule time. It is necessary to emphasize in a strategy called *Autonomous learning* which with discipline and effort will reinforce, and the most important, enhance the knowledge learned in those places above mentioned as well. For

--this reason, this research focuses on *autonomous learning so to make learners aware of what they can do by themselves to improve their English language learning*. Taking into account what we have mentioned before, it is necessary to drawn on a qualitative approach, to carry out this investigation. We also expect other researchers to find possible applications about the use and implementation of *autonomous learning* in various fields of teaching and learning process.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

As well as a teacher of English needs to be responsible with their students, and be autonomous with the profession, a student who in the future will become a teacher needs to develop responsibility and autonomy too. However, when it is talked about autonomy in language learning it is referred to a student who behaves accordingly on what he /she needs to do to become successful toward his/her language learning. It is a student who makes decisions about his/her own learning and the most important, enjoys doing it. Therefore, it is very important to focus on what a student does by him/herself to improve the English language learning. For achieving this goal the student needs to be aware about Autonomous Learning. Scharle claims that "in order for learners to be actively involved in the learning process, they first need to realize and accept that success in language learning depends as much on the learner as on the teacher" (Scharle (2000:4)). Then Autonomy involves not only responsibility and dedication on the part of the teacher, but on the part of the student too. It is at this point where Autonomous Learning can

--become in a good strategy that students can adopt for reinforcing their knowledge in their learning process, and through motivation, responsibility, collaboration and an active participation in the classroom to achieve students' goals. Now to define all the ideas above mentioned it is necessary the following statement.

Does autonomous learning raise awareness on what the students of sixth and eighth semester from the program of Licenciatura en Lengua Castellana e Inglés may do by themselves to improve the learning of English language in FL settings?

1.2.1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.2.1.1. How much do the learners of sixth and eighth semester from the program of Licenciatura en Lengua Castellana e Inglés know about the concept of "*autonomous learning*"?

1.2.1.2. How long do the students of sixth and eighth semester from the program of Licenciatura en Lengua Castellana e Ingles dedicate themselves to study outside the classroom?

1.3. JUSTIFICATION

According to Benson, the development of autonomy implies better language learning (Benson (2001:1)). At this point, this research about Autonomous Learning is developed with the aim to introduce the importance of this concept and its theory as a practical strategy viable and efficient and as an excellent alternative for who are interested in the English language learning. Moreover, it is the vital importance that the student recognize and make aware of what he/she can do by their own to improve their English language learning, due in part to that the time that a student invert in class it is not enough to reinforce their knowledge already acquired, it is necessary to show that *autonomous learning* becomes a prominent theme in the practice of teaching-learning languages where with the aim of a specific applied strategy students will have more opportunities to improve their English language learning. *Autonomous Learning* can provide an effective learning, if learners can develop autonomy, they can be responsible, better language learners and they can use the language for making the difference in a social context. On the other hand, the promotion of Autonomous Learning not only like a particular way for teaching-learning language but as an approach, is an excellent mean for achieving important goals in the field of language education. Moreover, when students acquired autonomy, he/she becomes an active learner, who has responsibility over their learning, developing motivation and therefore develop self-confidence and as result they will be better students. Other point that Autonomous Learning offers to the students, it is that with

--this help students take advantage of all kind of resources that the university offers, as well to achieve that students in a future, become a successful teachers who will develop autonomy with their students too. In addition, as it was said before this research could serve as a basis to develop other kinds of research that involves other relevant aspects of language related with *Autonomous learning.*

1.4. OBJECTIVES

1.4.1. GENERAL OBJECTIVE.

- To determine to what extent the students of sixth and eighth semester from the program of Licenciatura en Lengua Castellana e Inglés are familiarized with the concept of Autonomous Learning.

1.4.2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES.

- To make students aware of the great strength that autonomous learning has to reinforce the learning of the English language in FL settings.
- To give a general basic view in order to indicate how to foster Autonomous Learning in English language learning.

1.5. DELIMITATIONS

1.5.1. CONCEPTUAL DELIMITATIONS

- AUTONOMOUS LEARNING. The situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his/her learning and the implementation of those decisions. (Dickenson, 1987:11) cited by Benson (2001: 13)).

- AUTONOMOUS LEARNER. One who has acquired strategies and knowledge to take some responsibility for his/her language learning and is willing and self-confident enough to do so. (Wenden (1991)).

- LEARNER TRAINING. Learning activities to help language learners improve their skills as learners; it includes learners to use strategies knowledge about the languages learning process, and attitudes development to support autonomous use of the strategies and knowledge.

- LEARNING STRATEGY. Specific mental steps or operations that learners implement to learn.

1.5.2. GEOGRAPHICAL DELIMITATIONS

- The present research will be applied at the University of Nariño sede Panamericana in the city of Pasto.

1.5.3. POPULATION

- The population chosen to carry out this research will be students at University of Nariño from sixth and eighth semester of licenciatura en Educacion Básica Lengua Castellana Inglés.

1.6. LIMITATIONS

Some of the limitations that we could find might be:

- Truthfulness in the student's answers at the moment of developing the questionnaires.
- The different academic activities that could interfere at the moment of developing the questionnaires.

CHAPTER II

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW.

2.1.   HISTORY OF THE CONCEPT OF AUTONOMY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

The concept of autonomy within the field of language education was in part a response of the political changes in Europe in the late 1960's. Autonomy's concept was recognized by first time through the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project, which it was established in 1971. A result of this project was the establishment of the *Centre de Recherchers et d' Applications en Langues* (CRAPEL), at University of Nancy in France. The father of autonomous language learning was *Yves Chalôn* who coined by first time the term *Autonomy.* He died in 1972; consequently, the leadership of CRAPEL was passed to *Henri Holec* who is a prominent figure within the field of autonomy today. This Centre was focus on the needs to develop the individual's freedom by developing abilities which will enable learners to act more responsible in running the affairs of the society in which learners live. Moreover, Holec's project 1981 reported to the council of Europe is a key early document on autonomy in language learning. Through the history the concept of autonomy has been related, as well, with language education, education reform, adult education, psychology of learning and political philosophy in the twenty century. Benson has showed this connection as follows:

- Educational reform ➜ freedom in learning (Related to learner's responsibility).

- Adult education ➜ self-directed learning (Capacity to conduct one's own education) (Candy (1991:22-3)).

- Psychology of learning ➜ constructivism (As an approach in which knowledge cannot be taught but must be construct by the learner) (Candy (1991:252)).

- Political philosophy ➜ personal autonomy (An individual has the right to be free to exercise his/her own choices) (Crabble, (1993:443)).

In the history of autonomous learning, additionally, it is very important to consider some concepts related to this field that helps to clarify and support this relevant study, for instance: *Self-directed concept*: Benson argues that self-directed is the learning in which the objectives, progress and evaluation of learning are determined by the learners themselves (Benson, (2001:8)).On the other hand *Self-access*: refers to a resource centre of learning training. The first self-access at CRAPEL where based on the idea that access to a rich collection of second language materials would offer the learners the best opportunity for experimentation with self-directed learning and the role of the teacher as counsellor (Benson, (2001:9)). *Learning training*, as well, provides learners with the ability to take on more responsibility for own learning. Learning training is a resource to help learners to engage more actively in classroom learning, and some of the best learner training materials have been developed for classroom use. Another concept is *individualization* which refers to the form of programmed learning, a mode of instruction

--in which learners were expected to work their way, at their own pace, through materials prepared by teachers. (Dickenson cited by Benson, (2001: 11)).

2.2 AUTONOMOUS LEARNING THEORY

On the other hand Holec (cited by Benson, (1983)) claims that autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's own learning, and in language education there are four main reasons for using this word: (1) for situations in which learners study on their own, (2) for a set of skills which can be learned an applied in a self-directed learning, (3) for an inborn capacity for the exercise of the learner's responsibility for their own learning, and (4) for the right of the learners to determine the direction of their own learning.

Little, claims that autonomy is a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails, that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and the content of his/her learning. The capacity for autonomy will be displayed both in the way the learners learn and in the way he or she transfers what has been learned to a wider context (Little, (1941: 4) cited by Benson (2001: 49)).

On the other hand, there is another point of view about autonomy taken from Dickenson who defines it as the situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all

--of the decisions concerned with his/her learning and the implementation of those

decisions (Dickenson (1987:11) cited by Benson 2001:13).

As it was seen before, Holec's and Little's definitions are complementary each

other and consequently is originated a vital element in autonomous learning: *the content*

of learning. In short Holec`s definition points to a management of learning and Little adds

a psychological dimension.

Benson finally defines autonomy as the capacity to take control of one's own

learning, largely because the construct of 'control appears to be more open to

investigation that the construct of charge or responsibility'. Autonomy is a

multidimensional capacity that will take different forms for different individuals and even

for the same individual in different contexts or at different times (Benson, (2001: 47)).

For an adequate description of autonomy in language learning it is important to

recognize three levels in which learner may exercise control, this control maybe

observable through behaviours in learning contexts.

2.3. LEVELS OF CONTROL IN AUTONOMY LANGUAGE LEARNING

2.3.1. Control over learning management**:**

This level can be defined in terms of behaviours that learners employ in order to manage the planning, organization and evaluation of their learning. (Benson, (2001: 76)). Through a learner management is possible to describe behaviours, such as learning strategies, involved in autonomous learning, in this way these behaviours are associated with the idea of control. In order to measure those behaviours above mentioned, O' Malley proposed three categories to process information over the learning strategies: *Cognitive, metacognitive,* and *social/affective strategies.* (O'Malley & Chamot (1990) cited by Benson (2001: 81)). *Cognitive strategies* are operations carried out directly on the material to be learned. *Metacognitive strategies* make use of knowledge of cognitive process to regulate learning process; these strategies involve 'thinking about the learning process planning for learning, monitoring the learning task, and evaluating how well one has learned'. *Social/affective strategies* concerns to the ways in which learners interact with others and at same time control themselves for enhancing their learning.

2.3.2. Control over cognitive processes:

According to Benson (Benson, (2001: 86)) control over cognitive process is understood as a matter of psychology rather than directly observable learning behaviours,

--although it will be inferred from the observation of these behaviours. In order to study deeply this level of control Benson suggests focus on some areas of research such as: attention, reflection and metacognitive knowledge. *Attention* refers to the neuroanatomical level, exerted by the voluntary reactivation of areas that perform the task automatically. Nevertheless at the functional level, people are able to regulate how much processing specific aspects of stimuli will receive. (Tomlin & Villa, (1994:189)) cited by Benson (2001: 88)). *Reflection:* it is a distinctive characteristic of Autonomous Learning and may also be a key cognitive process underlying self-management in learning. To Little (1999) Reflection in a collaborative or individual means the continuous effort to understand, what, why, how and with what degree of success the learners are learning. (Little (1999) cited by Karlsson & kjisik (2006:4)). In addition Harris (1990:113) argues that reflection is a generic term in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to a new understanding and appreciation. Finally *Metacognitive knowledge:* refers to the process of planning, monitoring and evaluation of language learning. (Bialystock, 1994 cited by Benson (2001: 97)).

2.3.3. Control over learning content:

According to Littlewood, (1999) there are two types of autonomy that develop in somehow the control over learning content, firstly *proactive autonomy* which refers to the kind of autonomy where learners determine objectives, select methods and techniques, and evaluate what they have learned. In other words, learners enjoy of their individuality

--due to themselves have participated in the control over the learning content; and secondly *reactive autonomy* which learners organize their resources autonomously in order to achieve these goals. This latest autonomy can stimulate learners to learn without being pushed, to take the initiative to do past examination papers or to organize study groups to complete an assignment (Littlewood (1999:75) cited by Benson (2001:99)). Control over learning content as well, involves the learner in a social interaction regarding the right to determine and implement their own learning goals.

2.4. VERSIONS OF AUTONOMY AND PHILOSOPHIES OF LEARNING.

Benson, (2001) defines autonomy in language learning through three versions; the first one is called *the technical version of autonomy*. This version is defined as the act of learning a language outside the framework of an educational institution and without intervention of the teacher moreover, this version emphasis on learner strategies and learning training. This first version corresponds with positivism that constitutes the dominant approach to issues of knowledge and method. Positivism support conceptions of language as a direct representation of objective reality. In the positivism the notion of the new knowledge is discovered through the *Hypothesis testing,* model used in applied linguistics. Swain (1998:67) argues that hypothesis, formulation and testing are a way that serves in the language learning process. Swain claims through examples that new knowledge has been created through a search of learners existing knowledge. This search began with learners own output. Thus *hypothesis, formulation* and *testing* help to the

--learner to use his/her own output as a way of trying out new language forms, for testing such hypothesis the learner first use his/her own internalized knowledge and if it is possible learners can obtain useful information for testing their hypothesis from other source. Then if external feedback appears, learners have also modified or reprocessed their output. (Swain, (1998:67-68)).

The second one, is called *Psychological version,* in which, autonomy is defined as a capacity –a construct of attitudes and abilities- which allows learners to take more responsibility for their own learning. The approach to issues of knowledge and learning terms of the construal of experience, and construction of meaning. (Halliday, (1979). Learners in the constructivism approach are responsible for their own learning, creativity, interaction, and engagement with the target language and negotiation of meaning. Benson & Voller (1997: 18-23)).

Finally the third one is called *the political version of autonomy* in which the concept of autonomy is defined in terms of control over the processes and content of learning. The approach to issues of knowledge and learning that corresponds with this version is the critical theory in which autonomy depends of political and social ideologies. Therefore, learners can become more critically aware of the social context of their learning and the constraints it implies, and the potential for social change implicit in language learning. (Benson & Voller (1997: 18-24)).

2.5. MOTIVATION AND AUTONOMOUS LEARNING.

Motivation refers to the moving force that energizes behaviour. Motivation has two components, its aim, direction or goal and its strength. Moreover motivation can be defined through biological and psychological needs. Such as needs for dominance, power, achievement and relatedness to others. (Woolfolk A. (1998:437).

The concept of motivation is a vital and useful tool in autonomous learning process, due to this mechanism allows learner feel the desire of achievement a particular or several goals and even enjoy what he /she does in the learning process. Also motivation according to Brown (Brown, 1987) quoted by Naranjo and Ordoñez (2001)), is a key concept in the learning process. Also motivation can be used to encourage and minimize factors that can be possible problems for developing the process.

The social-psychological approach to motivation in relation to language learning has been developed by Gardner; in his model motivation is defined as the learner's orientation with regarding to the goal of learning a second or a foreign language. Following Gardner's model, motivation includes three relevant aspects: effort, desire and affect. *Effort* refers to the time spent studying the language and the drive of the learner. *Desire* indicates how much the learner wants to become proficient in the language. Finally *affect* illustrates the learner's emotional reactions with regarding to language study (Gardner (1982) taken from http://iteslj.org/Articles/Norris-Motivation.html).

However, Dickenson (1995) (cited by Benson, (2001: 69)), claims that autonomy and motivation have a link; this link is the cognitive motivation. This one is the most promising model of motivation for this purpose. It is defined with what learners are prepared to learn and with how much effort the learners are prepared to exert in order to learn it. Moreover the cognitive motivation is defined in two theories of motivation: firstly the intrinsic/extrinsic motivation theory. Deci & Ryan (cited by Dickenson (1985:169)) claims that people who are intrinsically motivated in doing an activity are doing it for its own sake rather than because of external pressure or promise of reward for doing it. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, refers to learning situations where the reason for doing a task is something other than an interest in the task itself; for this reason a learner can feel pressure to do a task rather than wants to do it. (Deci & Ryan, (1985:35)). At this point learners can develop this first process if they perceive the learning environment to be "informative rather than controlling".

Secondly the attribution theory of motivation relates motivation to the reasons the learner believes are responsible for his/her success or failure. For this reason attribution theory has an important application for the promotion of autonomy.

Carnegie project (1984:173) claims that motivation can be enhanced when learners to exert personal control over their learning and to take responsibility for it. The means used by this project to enhance motivation are very similar to aspects of learning preparation for autonomy. Attribution theory relates to learning autonomy in that it

--provides evidence to show that learners who believe that they have control over their learning, that by accepting new challenges they can increase their ability to perform learning task and so increase their intelligence, tend to be more successful than others (Dickenson 1992: 172).

In summary, motivation in autonomous learning can help learners to take responsibility for their own learning, being able to control their own learning and recognizing their efforts and strategies as a tool for improving their language learning process.

2.6. RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTONOMOUS LEARNER

Responsibility may be understood as being in charge of something but with the implication that one has to deal with consequences of one's own actions. Both autonomy and responsibility require active involvement, and they are very much interrelated (Scharle & Szabó (2000:4)). In order to foster learner autonomy it is necessary to develop a sense of responsibility and also, encourage learners to take an active part in making decisions about their learning. For these main reasons learners must be actively involved in the learning process. Learners need to realize and accept that success in this language learning process depends as much on the learner as on the teacher. In other words, learners must develop a responsible attitude, learners are responsible when they accept the ideas that their own efforts are crucial to progress in language learning and behave

--accordingly. Also learners are responsible when they are willing to cooperate with the teacher and others in learning group for everyone's benefit. Learners can use the cooperation when they may ask about the purpose for the activities and give suggestions of how to improve an activity. Moreover responsible learners are consciously monitors of their own process, and make an effort to use available opportunities of their benefit, including classroom activities, and homework.

There are some steps for developing responsibility and autonomy : (1) *Motivation* is a prerequisite for learning and responsibility development alike to encourage intrinsic motivation, learners can be more able to identify the goals of learning and that makes more willing to take responsibility for their outcome. (2) *Self-confidence* contributes to the development of responsibility. The learners must believe that they are capable of managing their own learning and they can rely on themselves not only on the teacher. (3) *Self-evaluation*: helps learners as a tool to discover weak and strong points and plant the directions of language learning progress. At this point learners feel responsible for reaching learning goals. (4) *Learning strategies*: it serves as a tool to improve one's language competence and learners can really only be responsible for their competence. Teachers also can help learners to show the use of some strategies for improving an expanding their own abilities. (5) *Cooperation and group cohesion*: cooperation encourages the learners to use and create opportunities for feedback from peers. (6) *Sharing information with the learner*: teacher can share relevant information about the

objectives, activities and goals in the language learning process. (Scharle & Szabó (2000: 1-9)).

Additionally, successful language learning entails learner motivation, cooperation and empathy. Naturally, this approach places emphasis on learner development. There are number of stages in the learner development process. The uppermost stages include raising language awareness (how learners can contribute to their own learning). Changing learning strategies (self-monitoring responding to peer, etc) and finally, assuming responsibility for their own learning. The last stage implies transferring some traditional teacher's roles to learners which allows them to become more independent. (Kavaliauoskiene, (2002) http://iteslj.org/learners Kavaliaouskiene-autonomy2html.).

Besides, the basis of learner autonomy is that the learner accepts responsibility for his or her learning. This acceptance of responsibility has both, socio-affective and cognitive implications: it entails at once a positive attitude to learning and the development of a capacity to reflect on the content and process of learning with a view to bringing them as far as possible under conscious control. Learners who accept responsibility for their learning are more likely to achieve their learning targets; and if they achieve their learning targets, they are more likely to maintain a positive attitude to learning in the future. (Little, (1995: 175-176)).

On the other hand, Littlewood (1996) summarize the components, domains and levels of autonomy in a diagram that clearly shows the importance of Autonomy in foreign language learning, and relates the above mentioned:
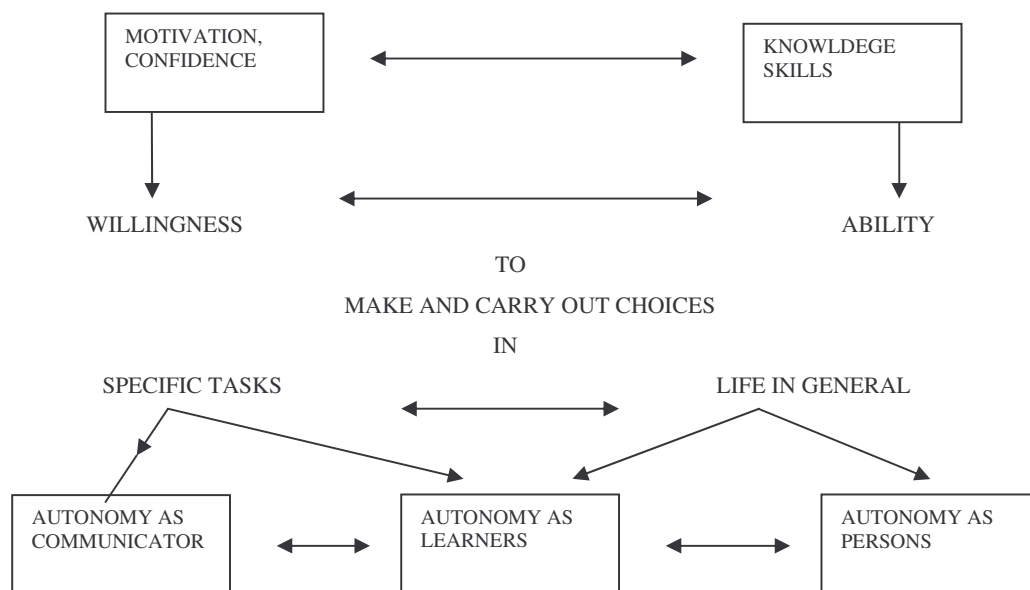
*Figure 1.*Components and domains of autonomy in foreign language learning. From "Autonomy an anatomy and a framework," by W. Littlewood, 1996, p.430.

2.7. ROLE OF AUTONOMOUS TEACHER

When teachers first moved from classroom to self-access centre they recognized that their role had become a facilitating one. However, the facilitator's job has evolved over the years, the teacher in the self-access centre guided and advised learners on the location and choice of materials and gave language support where needed (taken from Sturtridge cited by Volley (1997:75)).

According to Freire the 'banking model' of teaching and learning in which knowledge is transmitted from teacher to learner presupposes that knowledge is neutral.

--So Freire claims that the role of the teacher is to present knowledge in the form of problems that engage students in dialogue and reflection with the purpose of transforming them. (Freire (1970) cited by Benson (2001: 29)).

The role of the teacher plays an important part in the autonomous language learning due to the amount of work students put into self-access depended on the attitude of the teacher towards it and that effective use of the self-access centre depended principally on the extent to which each teacher viewed self-access work as valuable (Littlejhon (1985:259) cited by Benson (2001:121)).

Terms proposed to describe the role of the teacher within this framework include: *facilitator, helper, coordinator, counsellor, consultant, adviser, knower and resource.* Voller (1997) in a detailed review of literature on teacher roles in autonomous learning reduces all these to three: *Facilitator:* in which the teacher is seen as providing support for learning. *Counsellor:* where the emphasis is placed on one-to-one interaction. And *Resource,* in which the teacher is seen as a source of knowledge and expertise. (Voller (1997). cited by Benson (2001: 171-172)).

Moreover, Voller (1997:101) claims that the ideal of the teacher as a facilitator of learners, as a helper whose role is to facilitate learning, is perhaps the most commonly used term in discussions of Self-directed, individualized and autonomous learning, both in adult learning and language learning contexts; Voller also considers the role of the teacher as a counsellor. The characteristic of the teacher as a counsellor has been suggested for situations where learning contracts are used. (Knowels (1986) cited by Voller (1997:103))

--use the terms *counsellor* and *consultation* to describe the teacher's role in individualized language study programmes. The term *Counsellor* has also been used in communicative language learning (Curran, (1997) cited by Voller (1997:103)). The teacher as a *Resource.* has some implications with other terminology (for instance teacher as resource being an expert or knower) but it could be argued that the difference in terminology depends on the context in which Self-directed learning is to take place: the teacher as *expert* is more appropriate to classroom or group learning situations, and the teacher as resource as applicable to Self-access situations.

On the other hand, Both & Riley offer three suggestions in order to training teachers and counsellors for Autonomous language learning. Voller urges them to keep in mind these fundamental principles. (1) That language learning is an interpretative process and that Autonomous Learning requires a transfer of control to the learner; (2) that teaching for Autonomous Learning must be based on negotiation; (3) that it is necessary to self-monitor the teacher's strategies. (Both & Riley cited by Voller (1997:95)).

2.8. ROLE OF AUTONOMOUS LEARNER

Dickenson in an interview performed in 1992, talks about qualities and characteristics of being autonomous learner, he claims "It seems to me that they (Learners) are able to identify what's been taught", also says: "They (Learners) are able to formulate their own learning objectives, not necessarily in competition with the teacher,

--but more often in collaboration *with* the teacher. They are people who can do, select and implement appropriate learning strategies, they can monitor their own use of learning strategies and the most important for Dickenson they are able to identify strategies that are not working for them.

Autonomous Learners, on the other hand, can make their own choices and have the responsibility in the planning and organization in the language learning process. Thus learners can take control of their own level of learning and designing with the aim to achieve their learning goals successfully. Also an Autonomous Learner has typical characteristics. For instance: an ability to concentrate, an ability to correct one-self, an ability to choose task based one's language ability and awareness of how to learn and how to progress. . (Kavaliauoskiene, (2002) taken from http://iteslj.org/techniques/ Kavaliauoskiene-autonomy.2html.

The learner capable of Autonomous Learning will characteristically:

- Be methodical and disciplined
- Be logical and analytical
- Be reflective and self-aware
- Demonstrate curiosity, openness and motivation
- Be flexible
- Be interdependent and interpersonal competent

- Be responsible and persistent

- Have knowledge about and skill at, learning processes.

- Develop and use criteria for evaluating.   Candy (1991:59-66)

2.9. SOME MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT AUTONOMOUS LEARNING

Due to the research focused on Autonomous Learning and its relevant characteristics principally, it is important to consider some possible misconceptions that both teachers and students must avoid regarding to the broad concept as is Autonomous Learning.

First of all, it is important to clarify a difference between autonomy and the concepts of individualization, due to both concepts are very closely associated but in fact they have different meanings. Individualization refers to a programmed learning in which learners were expected to work their way at their own pace through materials prepared by teachers. In other words, individualization refers to a mode of instruction. (Benson, (2001: 11)).

On the other hand, autonomy describes a capacity of the learner, the responsibility of the learner toward his/her learning and finally as a situation in which the learner works under their own direction outside the conventional language-teaching classroom. Researchers on autonomy were aware that in order to develop autonomy, learners needed to be freed from the direction and control of others (Benson, (2001: 13)). It is important do not confuse a

--responsible learner as role models (or teacher's pets), but as learners who accept the idea that their own efforts are crucial to progress in learning, and behave accordingly.

A responsible learner is not aspiring to please the teacher, or to get a good mark. He/she is simply making an effort to learn something. When it is spoken about responsible learners, they do not have to be especially keen on team work, but, they are willing to cooperate with the teacher and others in the learning group for everyone's benefit Autonomous Learners do not mean that they always obediently follow instructions; they may ask about the purpose of the activity first, or even they come up with suggestions o how to improve an activity. About adapting new teacher role, this one must assume in certain point a role of facilitator or counsellor, there is a deviation from the traditional teacher role. However, the change in the roles as teacher should be gradual, rather than abrupt and dramatic. (Scharle & Szabó (2000:3-4).

Between other discussions, autonomy is erroneously seen as learning in isolation, learning without a teacher or learning outside classroom. Actually, autonomy refers to the learner's broad approach to the learning process, rather than to a particular mode of teaching.

Similarly, autonomy is often seen as necessarily implying particular skills and behaviours and particular methods of organizing the teaching and learning process. Benson (2001) explains that autonomy is a legitimate and desirable goal of language education among

--the claims made for autonomy; Benson describes three stand out as being equally important to theory and practice:

- The concept of autonomy is grounded in a natural tendency for learners to take control over their learning. As such, autonomy is available to all, although it is displayed in different ways and to different degrees according to the unique characteristics of each learner and each learning situation.

- Learners who lack autonomy are capable of developing it given appropriate conditions and preparation. The conditions for development of autonomy include the opportunity to exercise control over learning. The ways in which we organize the practice of teaching and learning therefore have an important influence on the development of autonomy among our learners.

- Autonomous Learning is more effective than non-autonomous learning. In other words, the development of autonomy implies better language learning.

  Taken from: Benson, Te*aching and researching autonomy in language learning* (2001: 2)

Benson also makes an explanation of autonomy in his 3rd chapter called *Defining and describing autonomy*, in which recognize that autonomy is not an approach enforcing a particular way of learning. It is rather, an *educational goal* (Benson, (2001: 57)). And

--finally Benson and Voller in their book *Autonomy and independence in language learning* claim that there are three more misconceptions to be avoided: first the reduction of Autonomous Learning to a set of skills, second the avoidance of language learning specific issues and third the belief that Autonomous Learning means (as it was said before) learning in isolation. (Benson & Voller (1997:165)).

3. BRIEF DIRECTIONS FOR FOSTERING AUTONOMOUS LEARNING.

Before start to consider fostering Autonomous Learning in the learners, it is necessary to notice, first that success in learning depends on they have a responsible attitude, motivation and that they need to practice by their own. Nevertheless, there is no a perfect student just like that, but, each student has personality traits, preferred learning styles and cultural attitudes, and all those factors set limits to the development of autonomy. In addition, another factor that possible limits this development is that people or parents oppose to implementation of Autonomous Learning, they may fear the loss of their authority or maybe they fear that it leads to disorder, lack of respect for adults or less efficient teaching. Scharle & Szabó (2000) as well, recommend some steps to follow to prevent or deal with strong negative reactions on the part of students or community in general.

- Think about who may respond negatively to the changes you propose and why.

- Try taking the view point of any potential opponents and think about how you could lower their apprehension or aversion.

- Accept the validity of other teaching methods, and be ready to compromise.

- Share information about what you are doing or planning to do with your superiors, colleagues, parents, and your students.

- Involve your colleagues as much as possible by sharing your problems and discussing your experiments with them.

- Be receptive to suggestions and criticisms   (Taken from Scharle & Szabó (2000:6-7)).

Moreover, according to Benson (2001) there are some approaches, as well, to the development of autonomy they can be classified under six broad headings:

- *Resource-based approaches:* Emphasis independent interaction with learning materials.

- *Technology-based approaches*: Emphasis the direct production of behavioural and psychological changes in the learner.

- *Classroom-based approaches*: Emphasis learner control over the planning and evaluation of classroom learning.

- *Curriculum-based approaches:* Extend the idea of learner control to the curriculum as a hole.

- *Teacher-based approaches:* Emphasis the role of the teacher and teacher education in the practice of fostering autonomy among learners.

   (Benson, (2001: 111)).

3. METHODOLOGY

For developing this research a qualitative design has be chosen and it is oriented toward the use of questionnaires with the students of Lic. Educación Básica Humanidades Lengua Castellana e Inglés from the sixth and eighth semester at University of Nariño.

3.1. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population chosen to carry out this research is the program of Lic. Educación Básica Humanidades Lengua Castellana e Inglés.

The selected sample were the students of sixth and eighth semester from licenciatura en Educación Básica Humanidades Lengua Castellana e Inglés. From sixth semester were sixteen students, five men and eleven women, with an average of age of 19 to 25 years old. And from the eighth semester were seventeen students, seven men and ten women, with an average of age of 21 to 23 years old. They had a medium stratus and it is important to feature that these students agreed to collaborate voluntarily in the questionnaires of the research.

3.2. INSTRUMENTS

With the purpose of recollecting information required and determine in what extent the students of sixth and eighth semester from the program of Licenciatura en Educación Básica Humanidades Lengua Castellana e Inglés are familiarized with the concept of Autonomous Learning, it was necessary to apply semi-structured questionnaires to the students. In a first stage, it was given to the students of sixth and eighth semester a questionnaire which contains six open questions that will the base of the current research.

3.2.1. QUESTIONNAIRE # 1.

UNIVERSITY OF NARIÑO
FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES
LICENCIATURA EN EDUCACIÓN BÁSICA: LENGUA CASTELLANA E INGLÉS

Questionnaire carried out in: University of Nariño VIPRI

Questionnaire directed to: Students of Licenciatura en Lengua Castellana e Inglés

Shift: Night.

The present questionnaire has an objective the gathering of valuable information in the field of the teaching-learning of a foreign language (English). The information that you as student of this institution can give, will be of great help for the diagnosis and later development of this investigation project. Thank you for your collaboration.

1. What do you know about Autonomous Learning?

    _____

    _____

2. Do you think Autonomous Learning helps you to improve the learning of English language? Yes__ No___   Why?

_____

_____

3. How many hours do you dedicate daily to improve your English outside classroom? Between:

0 ➔ 1 hour

1 ➔ 2 hours

3 ➔ 4 hours   why do you choose that time principally?

_____

_____

4. Do you think that responsibility is an important value for your own learning?

Yes__ No__

Why?

_____

_____

5. According to the following statement, choose the best option that defines Autonomous Learning to you.

   a. Autonomous Learning means to study alone without the help of the teacher ___
   b. Autonomous Learning means to study alone but with the guidance of the teacher. ___
   c. Autonomous Learning means to study English through different didactic materials. ___

6. What do you do for your own responsibility outside class for improving your English level?

_____

_____

Please, check (X) the following box   with your information.

GENDER: Male ____   AGE: ____

                     Female ____

THANK YOU FOR COOPERATION!

After recollecting the answers of the first questionnaire, the following step was to analyse

and interpret the students´ answers, in order to design and apply another questionnaire.

This latest questionnaire was done with the aim of verifying the information given by

students in their first questionnaire.

3.2.2. QUESTIONNAIRE # 2

UNIVERSITY OF NARIÑO
FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES
LICENCIATURA EN EDUCACIÓN BÁSICA: LENGUA CASTELLANA E INGLÉS

QUESTIONNAIRE # 2

Questionnaire carried out in: University of Nariño VIPRI

Questionnaire directed to: Students of Licenciatura en Lengua Castellana e Inglés

Shift: Night.

The present questionnaire has an objective the gathering of valuable information in the field of the teaching-learning of a foreign language (English). The information collected in this second questionnaire will help us to determine the diagnosis and the development of this investigation project. Thank you for your collaboration.

1. Autonomous learning, according to the latest answers, means learning by the own means of the student. Do you agree with this statement?

Yes____,　No____, Partly ____

_____

_____

2. One of the factors that affect the practice of Autonomous Learning is the time, and the few hours dedicated to study English at night program. What possible alternatives you as student can apply for solving this problem?

_____

_____

3. List some of the main characteristics that an Autonomous Learner should have.

_____

_____

4. Do you think it is necessary the help of the teacher in the Autonomous Learning.Why ?

_____

_____

5. Do you think that cooperation between students and teacher is an important key into Autonomous Learning? Explain your answer.

_____

_____

6. Do you think that Autonomous Learning can become an English learning method in the University in the future?

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR COOPERATION!

CHAPTER IV.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

Some of the general answers given by the students from the questionnaires above

mentioned were classified as follow, in order to show the more relevant students`

opinions.

- ❖ Autonomous Learning is when the student look for new alternatives in the learning process.
- ❖ Autonomous Learning refers to a student who can learn by his or her own means.
- ❖ Autonomous Learning is to learn individually a foreign language.
- ❖ Autonomous Learning is when each person handles appropriately the study of English.
- ❖ Autonomous Learning refers to check the topics seen in class.
- ❖ Autonomous Learning is a kind o learning that can be achieved through motivation.
- ❖ Autonomous Learning is the ability that the students have to handle their own learning.
- ❖ Autonomous Learning is understood as the hours that a student dedicated outside class to improve his /her knowledge.
- ❖ Into an Autonomous Learning the responsibility is a key component for learning.
- ❖ To practice Autonomous Learning is necessary that the student be motivated.
- ❖ If the student has responsibility can put in practice all the knowledge that he /she has learned in class.
- ❖ Autonomous Learning is what students do by their own decision and with self-resources without   the help of a teacher.
- ❖ Responsibility in the learning of the English should be "our daily bread".
- ❖ Although Autonomous Learning could be studied alone it is necessary the guidance of a teacher.

- ❖ The student to improve English level reads books and watches English news.
- ❖ The students study grammar and vocabulary.
- ❖ The students use to do his / her personal schedule time for studying.
- ❖ The students use to check and correct pronunciation.
- ❖ The students look for technological aids such as: chat, messenger, internet and web pages.
- ❖ The students use to practice English alone in front of the mirror.
- ❖ The students use to practice English talking to the native speaker, friends and classmates.
- ❖ It is necessary in the autonomous learning the time that the student can dedicate for learning English.
- ❖ It is impossible dedicate extra hours to study because the work does not permit it.
- ❖ Autonomous Learning is a strategy for learning.

In order to illustrate in a better way these students' answers, an analysis was done to determine the following results for both semesters in questionnaires 1 and 2.

4.1. QUESTIONNAIRE # 1

VI SEMESTER NIGHT

In this semester, the students that participated were sixteen in total, eleven woman and five men with ages between 19 to 25 years old.

To the question:

What do you know about Autonomous Learning?

Seven students answered that Autonomous Learning refers to an individual learning of English language. Six students answered that Autonomous Learning is an individual --

--learning with the guidance of the teacher's knowledge. Two students claimed that it is learning without the guidance of the teacher and finally one student said it is learning outside classroom.

To the question:

Do you think Autonomous Learning helps you to improve the learning of English language? Yes__ No___ Why?

Sixteen students said 'Yes', nevertheless, in this question was asked the reason why they choose this option. The reasons they gave were: six students said yes because Autonomous Learning helps students for reinforcing topics of the English language learning such as grammar, vocabulary and ability of the language. Five students said yes because Autonomous Learning helps in the learning process because the hours of English class at the university are not enough for achieving their goals. Three students said yes because Autonomous Learning can be a tool for improving English knowledge; however, students need the teacher for solving any doubts. And finally two students said yes because the teacher is not the only one who can give all knowledge that a student requires.

To the question:

How many hours do you dedicate daily to improve your English outside classroom?

Eight students said that they dedicate for studying from one to two hours. Four students dedicate from cero to one hours. Three students dedicate from three to four hours. And finally one student dedicates more time for studying English. The principal reasons they gave for choosing this time were: eight students said that it is the unique time available for studying English due in part to work. Four students said that is not enough the time chosen, it is important to dedicate more hours for improving English language learning. This fact depends on the motivation and commitment with the learning process. And finally for four students the time chosen is enough for improving the English language learning.

To the question:

Do you think that responsibility is an important value for your own learning? Yes__ No__ Why?

Sixteen students said 'yes' and they gave the following reasons: seven students said that responsibility is the most important value for English learning process. Five students said that if a student has responsibility can improve his/her knowledge. Moreover he/she could be a good teacher in the future. And finally four students said that responsibility and motivation are important steps for developing a good language learning process.

To the question:

According to the following statement, choose the best option that defines Autonomous learning for you.

Thirteen students said that Autonomous Learning means to study alone but with the guidance of the teacher. Two students said that Autonomous Learning means to study alone without the help of the teacher. And finally, one student said that Autonomous Learning means to study English through different didactic materials.

To the question:

What do you do for your own responsibility outside class for improving your English level?

Ten students said that they listen to music, reading English magazines, and watch movies in English. Besides, three students said that they used to learn grammar and vocabulary. Study with friends and classmates for improving speaking, to practice dialogues. Two students said that they use internet, chat and web pages, as useful tools. And finally one student said that to improve his/her English used to speak with the native speaker and use other resources (Video/ audio)

4.2. QUESTIONNAIRE # 2

VI SEMESTER NIGHT

To the question:

Autonomous learning, according to the latest answers, means an individual learning with the guidance of the teacher. Do you agree with this statement?

Six students said 'yes', on the contrary two students said that they do not agree with the statement and the reasons they gave were that the teacher is who must give all the information in the classroom, moreover they said too, that they needs the pressure from the teacher to achieve a particular goal. On the other hand, eight students said that they are in partly agree with the statement, because it is necessary a teacher as a guide to avoid mistakes in the learning process, as well as, although students can do autonomous learning by their own means the teacher is who can guide them toward language learning, also, it is necessary to look for other sources of learning. And finally they said that students have to take advantage of their free time.

To the question:

One of the factors that affect the practice of Autonomous Learning is the time, and the few hours dedicated to study English at night program. What possible alternatives you as student can apply for solving this problem?

Six students proposed to start classes one hour earlier and finish them one hour later, another six students proposed to remove subjects that are not related with foreign language learning and to intensify the English language class and finally four students proposed to implement workshops, exercises or classes on Saturday.

To the question:

List some of the main characteristics that an Autonomous Learner should have.

Six students said that a learner should have values as responsibility, perseverance, motivation and commitment. Four students said that a student should have interest for the learning and to value his/her career. Two students said that a student must have a searcher spirit and curiosity toward learning. Other two said a learner should value the time and distribute it correctly to enhance the English language learning. And finally two said that as student it is important to have self-confidence.

To the question:

Do you think it is necessary the help of the teacher in the Autonomous Learning. Why?

Ten students said that the teacher helps as a guide to solve doubts and correct mistakes, other two said that the teacher is who has the knowledge that the students need. And finally two students said that the teacher gives opportunity and fields of investigation.

To the question:

Do you think that cooperation between students and teacher; is an important key into Autonomous Learning? Explain your answer.

Seven students said that cooperation is important to interchange knowledge and to interact English language. As well five students said that Cooperation is important to socialize knowledge. Three students said that cooperation allows students an efficient --

--communication, confidence to solve doubts and to correct mistakes. And finally one student said that cooperation is a synonym of team work.

To the question:

Do you think that Autonomous Learning can become in an English learning method in the University in the future?

Ten students answered 'yes' and the reasons were that the student participates in the development of his/her English language learning, with the help of the teacher, Because Autonomous Learning generates responsibility that makes that a student involves in the English language learning. Nevertheless six students answered 'no' because the students need to be conscious what autonomous learning needs, such as responsibility, discipline and interest, the students do not have the initiative to implement it and the students need a guide to initiate this process.

4.3. QUESTIONNAIRE # 1

VIII SEMESTER NIGHT.

In this semester, the students that participated were seventeen in total, ten woman and seven men with ages between 21 to 25 years old.

To the question:

What do you know about Autonomous Learning?

Ten students said that it is an individual learning by own means without the help of the teacher, four students said that it is a learning style supported by strategies that allows the student go beyond the teacher's explanation, and finally three students said that it is an English learning outside the classroom.

To the question:

Do you think Autonomous Learning helps you to improve the learning of English language? Yes__ No___   Why?

Fifteen students said 'yes' and seven of them argued that Autonomous Learning can enhance perseverance and responsibility, six students said that Autonomous Learning will help to reinforce points such as: grammar, vocabulary and other. And finally two students said that Autonomous Learning is necessary but students need the guidance of the teacher.

To the question:

How many hours do you dedicate daily to improve your English outside classroom?

Nine students said that they dedicate from one to two hours, five students said that they dedicate from cero to one hour, three students said that they dedicate from three to four. The reasons they gave were nine because it is the unique time available for studying English due in part to work, five students said that it is important to dedicate more hours--

--for improving English language learning. It depends on how much students enjoy doing that. Finally three students said that the time chosen is enough for improving the English language learning.

To the question:

Do you think that responsibility is an important value for your own learning? Yes__ No__   why?

Seventeen students said that 'yes' and they gave the following reasons: six students, because from responsibility depends the future performance of a teacher, six students said that responsibility and motivation are important steps for developing a good language learning process, and five students because this value can provide reliability for the English language learning.

To the question:

According to the following statement, choose the best option that defines Autonomous learning for you.

Fourteen students said that Autonomous Learning means study without the help of the teacher; two students said that Autonomous Learning means study alone but with the guidance of the teacher, and finally one student said that Autonomous Learning means to study through different didactic materials.

To the question:

What do you do for your own responsibility outside class for improving your English level?

Ten students said that they use to listen to music, reading English magazines, watch movies in English, four students said that they learn grammar and vocabulary, study with friends and classmates for improving speaking, and practice dialogues. Two students said that they use to speak with the native speaker and use other resources (Video/ audio). And finally one student said that he use to translate lyrics from English to Spanish and create music and lyrics too.

4.4. QUESTIONNAIRE # 2

VIII SEMESTER NIGHT

To question:

Autonomous learning, according to the latest answers, means individual learning by the own means of the student without the help of the teacher. Do you agree with this statement?

Twelve students said 'yes'; on the other hand two students said 'no' because Autonomous

Learning needs the guidance of a responsible teacher and for three students that statement

--was in partly and the reasons were that students and teacher together must foment

autonomy in the classroom, and the student is the direct responsible of his/her learning, to

get this result, the student must have a high motivation for a correct implementation of

Autonomous Learning.

To question:

One of the factors that affect the practice of Autonomous Learning is the time, and the few hours dedicated to study English at night program. What possible alternatives you as student can apply for solving this problem?

Eight students said that is recommendable to extend classes, to give extra-class activities,

to reinforce the knowledge already acquired. Four students said that they needed more

priority to English classes than other subjects, three students asked for a more

personalized education in the program. And finally two students asked for give options

rather than solutions to the students

To the question:

List some of the main characteristics that an Autonomous Learner should have.

Nine students said that an Autonomous Learner should have an admirable sense of

responsibility, discipline and motivation; five students said that a good learner needs to

have interest, be recurrent, and be creative, to have curiosity toward knowledge; and three

students said that an Autonomous Learner must have aptitude for being a future teacher.

To the question:

Do you think it is necessary the help of the teacher in the Autonomous Learning. Why?

Fourteen students said 'no' because students in Autonomous Learning can learn individuality looking for their own means of information without a teacher who controls this process, two students said that it is necessary a teacher who force students with their learning process. Teachers can solve some possible doubts and help with difficulties. And one student said that it is necessary a teacher as a guide and not as a policeman.

To the question:

Do you think that cooperation between students and teacher; is an important key into Autonomous Learning? Explain your answer.

Nine students said that cooperation it is important because it helps to get better results in the English language learning. Five students said that cooperation help to balance the information management. And three students said that cooperation reinforces the knowledge between students and teacher. For this reason there is a feedback and better result.

To the question:

Do you think that Autonomous Learning can become in an English learning method in the University in the future?

Ten students said 'yes' and the reasons they gave were that the student should study independently if he/she really wants to success, Autonomous Learning can become in the complement to improve the learning of each student, the students need to look for more information to enhance the knowledge, because it can provide originally strategies for learning. Seven students nevertheless said 'no' and the reasons they gave were: Because it is not possible to work without the help of the teacher, because the learning could become an informal education, there is not Autonomous Learning because the students need the guide of the teacher, and it is not possible due to Autonomous Learning is something personal. It depends on the responsibility and interest of each student for English language learning.

As it is possible to see, all the information have been processed in order to determine and identify step by step how much do the learner know or believe to know about Autonomous Learning. After all this process it was possible to establish essentially the following *categories.*

5. AUTONOMOUS LEARNING & INDIVIDUALITY.

81,25 % that corresponds to 13 students of the sixth semester said that Autonomous Learning is an individual learning that needs the guidance of a teacher, nevertheless a 82,35 %, it is mean 14 students of the eighth semester said that Autonomous Learning refers an individual learning by their own means without the help of the teacher. (*See Figure 2.*) It is useful to clarify that the students are confused with the concept of autonomy and individualization. The last one is understood as the form of programmed learning, it is mean a mode of instruction in which learners were expected to work their way and at their own pace through materials prepared by teachers. (Dickenson) cited by Benson, (2001: 11)). On the other hand autonomy refers to a capacity (rather than an instruction) of the learner, the responsibility of the learner toward his/her learning and finally as a situation in which learner works under their own direction outside the conventional language teaching classroom. Benson defines autonomy as the capacity to take control of one's own learning. (Benson, (2001: 97)).
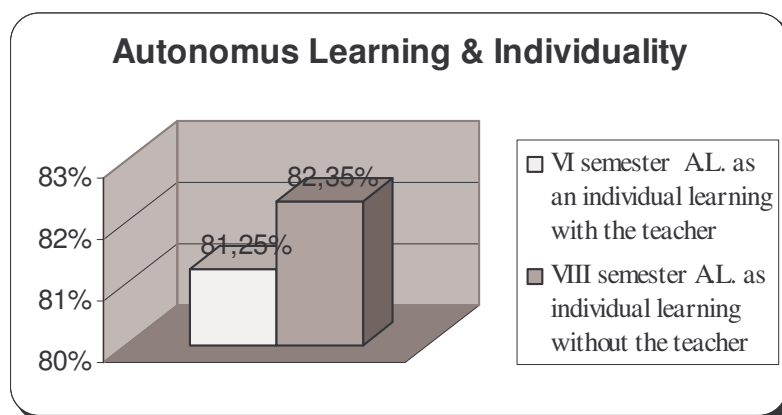

Figure 2. Autonomous Learning & Individuality.

6. AUTONOMOUS LEARNING, TIME & ACTIVITIES

According to the activities and time, the students' answers showed that it is very common the lack of dedication on the part of the students toward their learning due to the majority of them, a 50 % of the students from sixth semester (8 students) and 52, 94 % (9 students) from eighth semester have to work during the day reducing his/her hours of studying from 0 to 2. *(See figure 3.).* Nevertheless for some students the few time that they have for studying it is enough to achieve a good English level. It is important to notice that there are students who enjoy learning the English, and for this reason they dedicate more time for getting their learning goals.
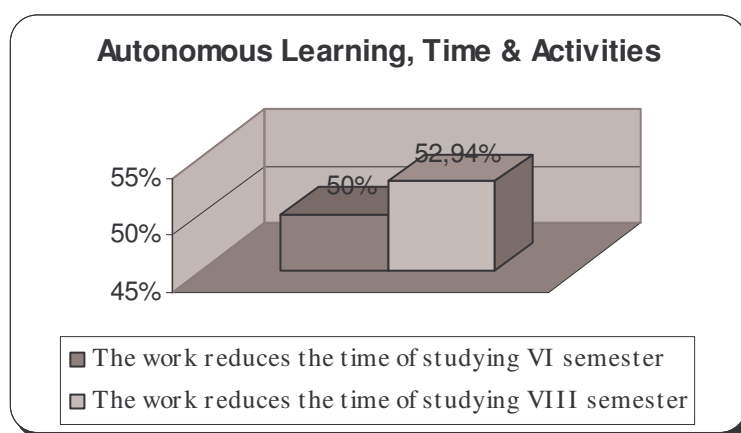

Figure 3. Autonomous Learning, Time & Activities.

Regarding to the extra-class activities that students do in both semesters, students mentioned that some of the preferred activities were; listen to English music, read English books and magazines, and watched English movies too, all these activities are done by the majority 62,5 % (10 students) from sixth semester and a 58,52 % (10 students) from the—

--eighth semester. *(See Figure 4.)* On the other hand, they claimed that they learn through grammar exercises, and vocabulary. An original answer has was a student who said that he/she used to practice English in front of the mirror as well as some other students investigate by themselves through web pages, chat rooms, messenger and E-mail in this a part also was possible to notice that some students make use of the resource center as well as the native speaker and finally take extra-English courses.
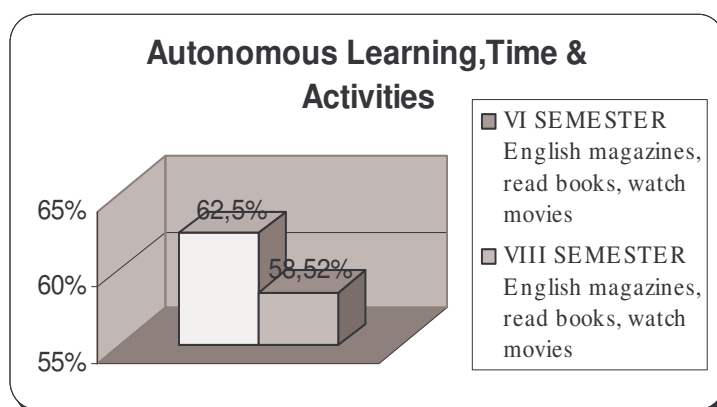

Figure 4. Autonomous Learning, Time & Activities.

The lack of time between students is a fact that limits too much to the students in the process to adopt Autonomous Learning as it was seen in the students who their work do not allow them to take control of their own learning since for achieving autonomy in the language learning, Benson claims that the learner must exercise control of his/her learning and this control can be observable through behaviours in learning contexts, Benson also argues that it is necessary a control over learning management in which learners can plan, organize and evaluate their learning. Also Littlewood (1999) has recourses to a type of –

--autonomy called proactive autonomy where students determine objectives, select methods techniques and evaluate what they have learned. Taking into account all these factors, a student who has not the enough time for studying, hardly will adapt Autonomous Learning into his /her language learning.

On the other hand a student who in somehow is beneficiated with an available time and enjoy learning English or help themselves with some aids are willing to adopt Autonomous Learning.

7. AUTONOMOUS LEARNING & ITS COMPONENTS.

In both questionnaires it was possible to enquire about students' motivation, responsibility and the role of the student. The result illustrated that for 100% of the students from sixth semester and 100% of the students from eighth semester claims that responsibility and motivation are essential components within Autonomous Learning. *(See Figure 5.)* They recognized that with an appropriate responsibility depends their performance as a students and future teachers. According to the students a person who applies an Autonomous Learning should have qualities such as: responsibility, motivation, commitment with the career and the most important to have vocation to perform the English profession.
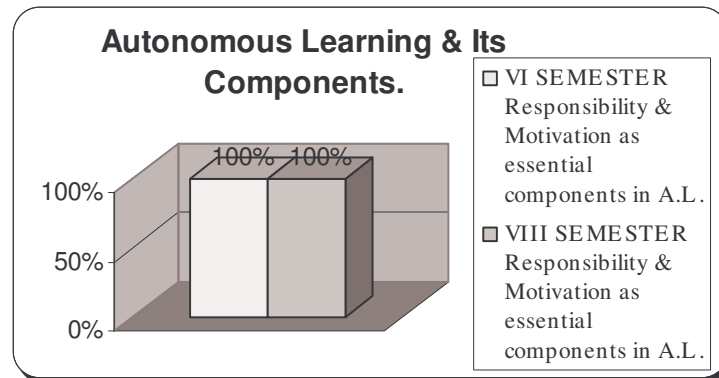
Figure 5. Autonomous Learning & Its Components.

Moreover the students were asked about cooperation in the Autonomous

Learning, 43,75 % (7 students) from the sixth semester and 52,94 % (9 students) from the

eighth semester agreed that cooperation become an important fact at the moment to

interchange knowledge student-teacher and student-student. *(See Figure 6).* A key element

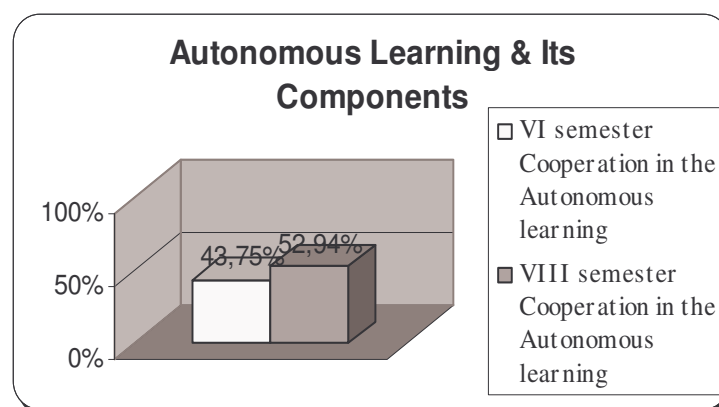within cooperation is the team work, as well as feedback.

Figure 6. Autonomous Learning & Its Components.

Responsibility and motivation are important, according to (Scharle & Szabó (2000:4)). Learners need to realize and accept that success in this language learning process depends as much on the learner as on the teacher. In other words, learners must develop a responsible attitude, learners are responsible when they accept the ideas that their own efforts are crucial to progress in language learning and behave accordingly. Also learners are responsible when they are willing to cooperate with the teacher and others in learning grave for everyone's benefit. Learners can use the cooperation when they may ask about the purpose for the activities and give suggestions of how to improve an activity. Moreover autonomy is erroneously seen as learning in isolation, learning without a teacher or learning outside classroom. Actually, autonomy refers to the learner's broad approach to the learning process, rather than to a particular mode of teaching. Taken from: Benson, Te*aching and researching autonomy in language learning* (2001: 2).

CONCLUSIONS

After knowing and analysing the students' opinions during the research process the following conclusions could be suggested.

- Students recognize important characteristics that Autonomous Learning has, nevertheless, the students have not a clear concept about Autonomous Learning.

- A relevant aspect seen in the research was the fact of the students' answers, about the Autonomous Learning were referred mostly toward an individualization concept rather than a clear Autonomous Learning concept.

- Extra-class activities and the time that students dedicate show that there is a degree of responsibility, motivation and cooperation. These aspects are very important in Autonomous Learning. It is important to notice that these activities are developed for the students due to their interest for English language learning rather than a conscious knowledge about Autonomous Learning.

- Most of the answers' students claimed that they cannot dedicate the sufficient time for an extra-class activities because of their work duties. Consequently, the students assume a passive role and this fact difficult the implementation of Autonomous Learning.

- Autonomous Learning should be taken principally as a desirable goal in language education. Through the practice of Autonomous Learning students can be more responsible as well as develop motivation, cooperation and commitment toward the learning in order to get better result during this process.

- Through Autonomous Learning the students can take control of the planning of the learning process. In this way, students can generate spaces where they can take advantage over the English language learning through reflection, motivation and attention.

- Finally, Autonomous Learning must be taken as a process that deserves time and effort on the part of the students, and it cannot be carried out without the help of the teacher. Because his/her work consist to guide to the students through the learning process. In this way, students and teachers can develop an active role that involves the commitment of taking control over the learning.

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