University of Southampton

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Modern Languages and Linguistics

The Use of a Process Model to Introduce and Develop Autonomous Learning among Mexican University Students

By

Secundino Isabeles Flores

ORCID ID 0000-0001-5293-3783

Thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

February 2022

University of Southampton

Abstract

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Modern Languages

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The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact an adapted model, designed according to levels of implementation, has on the fostering of autonomous learning among a group of Mexican university students who have been taught with teacher-centred methods through their academic life. This research was conducted to have a better understanding of how to introduce and develop this approach among learners who have been teacher-dependent in their learning.

Although autonomous learning has been explored extensively in different educational settings, this has not happened in Mexico. Some studies regarding this approach to learning have been conducted in this country; however, few have been done in relation to its introduction and promotion. Existing literature indicates that the previous has been achieved by different researchers around the world through the use process models. Considering the previous, an existing model was adapted to implement during this investigation to foster autonomous learning among students who had previously learnt with teacher-centred methods.

The main research questions of this research are: what evidence indicates that there has been a development of autonomous learning among participants? And, what are the opinions of participants about learning autonomously? To answer these questions action research was conducted during one semester in one of the classes taught by the teacher/researcher at a public Mexican university. Qualitative data was collected through three instruments: learner diary, a

questionnaire, and participant interviews. This information was organized and analysed by using N-vivo 12, coding and thematic analysis.

The results showed that participants developed autonomous learning skills and adopted learning practices which are common in this approach. Furthermore, it was found that the levels of implementation included in the model made relevant contributions to foster autonomous learning. Moreover, it was discovered that the participants had positive opinions regarding the introduction and development of this approach to learning.

The findings obtained led to several conclusions. First, process models can be employed to foster autonomous learning among Mexican university students who are accustomed to learning with teacher-centred methods. Although this involved a drastic change for many subjects, they were able to adapt to the new approach to learning at some point during the treatment. Second, autonomous learning needs to be introduced gradually when it is implemented with learners who are used to being teacher-dependent in their learning. The use of this strategy gives learners the opportunity to develop the skills needed and adopt the learning practices this approach requires. Third, the levels of implementation provide some steps that guide the introduction of autonomous learning, lead learners to acquire the knowledge they need, and provide opportunities for students to exercise their autonomy along the learning process. Finally, once subjects had adapted to learning autonomously, they welcomed this approach and preferred it over teacher-centred methods.

The significance of this study is that it increases our understanding of how to introduce and develop autonomous learning among learners who are used to learning with teacher-centred methods. In addition, more knowledge was generated regarding how different components that have been used in models contribute to promote this approach. Finally, it was possible to learn about the perceptions Mexican university students have about autonomous learning and the suggestions they give to foster this approach to learning.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Secundino Isabeles Flores

Title of thesis: The Use of a Process Model to Introduce and Develop Autonomous Learning among Mexican University Students

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission.

Signature: .....Date: 8 of February 2022

Acknowledgements

There are several people I want to thank because they somehow gave me the support I needed throughout this long but pleasant journey. First of all, I want to thank my tutor Alasdair Archibald not only for guiding me through my research and the writing of my dissertation, but also for helping me to become more critical, analytical, and reflective; as well as to develop other academic skills. Without a doubt, his patience and support were crucial for me to finish this project.

I also want to thank Maria for all her support. Not only was she willing to assist me whenever I asked her to help me with something related to my research, she also took care of everything that was needed at home and the kids during those moments when I was lost in my thoughts, my research, or the writing of my thesis. Furthermore, I thank Santiago and Nicolas for understanding that I could not spend as much time as they wanted me to with them because I was working on my research project. They were very patient and tried their best to be quiet whenever they saw me working. I love you, thank you for being so good.

There were other people who also assisted me somehow along this process: Raphael, Damara, Marcela, Elizabeth, Paulina, and Jessica. Their encouragement, advice, and chats motivated me to get to the finish line. Finally, I want to say that I am grateful with my family because they taught me during my upbringing through example that I could reach any goals I set for myself as long as I was determined and work hard.

I dedicate this work to my father, who passed away while I was doing my PhD studies, because he has always been an inspiration to me to be better and work hard at whatever I do. Moreover, this is to my children Santiago and Nicolas who I love more than anything in the world and gave me the energy and desire to keep working to reach this personal goal.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The interest in autonomous learning has increased considerably in the past decades. This has occurred in the field of education (Pershukova, Nikolska and Vasiukovych, 2020), although it has been more prominent in language learning (Al-Busaidi and Al-Maamari, 2014; Yildirim, 2012). Al-Saadi (2011) explains that since Holec introduced the concept of autonomy in language learning in 1981 in his report *Autonomy and Foreign language learning,* autonomous learning has gained a great deal of attention from scholars. In addition, the implementation of learner-centred approaches in language learning has contributed to the growth of interest in this approach (Benson, 2001). Since its introduction, many scholars have researched it (Finch, 2002). According to Bajrami (2015) and Yagcioglu (2015), the number of studies conducted on autonomous learning has escalated substantially in universities and schools in the last decades. The acceptance of this approach has made its introduction one of the primary objectives of education (Pershukova, Nikolska, and Vasiukovych, 2020). Benson (2016) contends that it is necessary to promote autonomous learning to have students learn how to learn and develop the skills needed to become lifelong learners. Al-Busaidi and Al-Maamari (2014) argues that autonomous learning enables learners to take responsibility of their learning in and outside the classroom. These trends have also impacted the education system in Mexico. The Ministry of Education in this country currently encourages the use of learning approaches that focus on increasing learner responsibility and developing lifelong learners in all schools in Mexico (Azamar-Alonso, 2015). The same phenomenon has occurred at the University of Colima where this study took place. Its latest educational policies highly recommend the employment of approaches that help students become lifelong learners, construct their own knowledge, and learn how to learn in all its high schools, undergraduate, and graduate programs (Universidad de Colima, 2017).

Although autonomous learning has been employed for many years, researchers and teachers are still trying to find appropriate ways to implement it in the classroom. Warni & Supraptiningsih (2019) affirm that one of the main issues teachers and researchers are concerned about is learning how to foster autonomous learning among students from different settings, and distinct social and cultural backgrounds. This concern was shared by the author of this study and led to the conduction of this investigation. The objective of this study was to learn how to introduce and develop autonomous learning among a group of Mexican university students who were being trained to be language teachers. This investigation was conducted in one of their pedagogical courses in which they learnt about teaching approaches and methods that can be employed to

teach English. Most of the literature reviewed for this research belongs to the field of language learning. This is because more knowledge has been generated regarding the promotion of autonomous learning from the studies that have been conducted in this area than in any other one (Al-Busaidi and Al-Maamari, 2014). The results obtained provide useful information regarding the implementation process, what was necessary to do so, and what has helped the fostering of this approach. Although these findings belong to a different area, many of them can be used to promote autonomous learning in adult education. Reviewing what had been done in language learning was useful to introduce and develop autonomous learning among the participants of this study. In addition, any knowledge regarding language learning obtained from this investigation would be beneficial for the researcher and learners since they are involved in this area. A more thorough explanation regarding why this type of literature was used in this study is included in the next chapter. Through this research it is expected to learn more about what helps the fostering of autonomous learning among Mexican university students, as well as how they feel about the implementation process and learning with this approach.

1.1 Background to the study

The University of Colima established in 2013 that the teaching approaches to be employed at this institution should be student-centred oriented (Universidad de Colima, 2013). Consequently, some of the teachers from the School of Languages; the institution where the researcher works, received training regarding how to use some of these approaches: cooperative leaning, task-based learning, and learner-centred learning. After some time, they started to employ these approaches in their classes. However, they had no guidance or feedback during the planning or implementation process. Through informal conversations the author of this study had with students, he learnt that it was complicated to adapt to these approaches that involved autonomous learning because throughout their academic life they had been taught with teacher-centred methods. They found it difficult to make the transition from teacher-centred to student-centred learning. This led them to have negative feelings towards learning with the approaches their teachers were using and their class performance and scores declined. Although they eventually adapted to learning with such approaches, some students struggled considerably and took a long time and effort do so.

I considered it was necessary to explore how to appropriately introduce and foster autonomous learning in my teaching context to prevent negative feelings among learners, improve their class performance, and increase their willingness to learn with student-centred learning approaches. I was also interested in promoting autonomous learning because I believed that learning can be enhanced when students develop the abilities needed to do it autonomously. My educational

background, as well as my learning and teaching experiences have made me conclude that students who are autonomous are better learners, can learn more than what is expected, and develop the capacity to learn what they need to in and out of school. I have identified the previous from my learning and teaching experiences; however, I had never done any formal studies to support these observations. My graduate studies gave me the opportunity to formally explore the fostering of autonomous learning in my context.

The strategy used to create the program implemented involved the review of existing literature on how to foster autonomous learning. This initially resulted in a collection of different ideas, tips, suggestions, and guidelines. Nevertheless, I was looking for an organized and comprehensive system that could guide me along the introduction and development of this approach. I had already implemented some of such suggestions in some of the classes I had taught; nevertheless, I felt that using them in isolation was not enough to promote autonomous learning. Another reason to employ a comprehensive and systematic method was the fact that I intended to create a program that could be used by other teachers to foster autonomous learning.

Different scholars affirm that the promotion of autonomous learning depends considerably on the context and the learners where this happens. Hu & Zhang (2017) and Yildirim (2012) affirm that the cultural background, instrumental motivation, and the education system of the learning context has a significant impact on the promotion of this approach to learning. Considering this, I searched for literature regarding how to foster autonomous learning among Mexican university students. I found that little research had been done regarding the promotion of this approach in Mexico, and no studies have been conducted on this issue at the university where I worked. This led me to explore how autonomous learning had been fostered in other parts of the world, the strategies, processes, and methods that have been employed, as well as any information related to the promotion of this approach to learning.

The results of some studies conducted by several researchers showed they had been successful at fostering autonomous learning among students with process models (Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Reinders, 2010; Murray, 2006; St. Louis, 2006; Nordlund, 2001; Scharle and Szabo, 2000; Bertonldi, Kollar & Ricard, 1988; Nunan, 1997). These findings made me decide to select this approach. I analysed these models to have a better understanding of them, as well as how they worked, their components, how they sequenced the implementation process, how they were implemented, the resources that were required to do so, the context in which they were used, and the characteristics of the students these models have been implemented with. A second goal of this analysis was to select a model that would be the basis for the program to be implemented in this study to foster autonomous learning. Due to the limitations and features of the context and

the researcher, it was necessary to adapt the model chosen. The selection of the model was based on two main aspects. First, it had to include as many of the elements the analysis had shown were relevant for the promotion of autonomous learning. Second, it had to be a model that were appropriate to the learners and the context where the study was conducted, while doing as few changes as possible so that its essence would not be lost. The adaptations made to it are found at the end of chapter three, and a full description of the model in appendix A1.

In conclusion, this investigation emerged from the interest I had to solve a problem the students at the school where I worked reported having, as well as my personal interest. This led to reading and researching about autonomous learning; what it is, how it works, as well as how to introduce it and foster it. This evolved into creating a program used in this study which had as a goal to generate more knowledge about how to implement and develop autonomous learning among Mexican university.

1.2 Context of the study

1.2.1 The School

This study was conducted at the School of Languages from the University of Colima in Mexico. This school is in the City of Villa de Alvarez in the state of Colima. The school offers a BA in language teaching. Its purpose is to help students acquire the knowledge and develop the skills needed to teach English or French as foreign languages. This is done by having teacher trainees take the classes included in the program, participate in local and national language teacher conferences, and have students do their practicum in local public elementary schools during their junior and senior years. The school encourages teachers to use student-centred teaching approaches. Trainees are asked to work individually, in pairs, or small teams. In addition, it is common to see them doing projects, creating materials, playing games, oral presentations, doing microteaching, singing songs, and participating in other events like plays, musicals, and demonstrations, the school or teachers organize to have students apply the knowledge they have acquired in their classes. The school is known for the implementation of current teaching practices and that are different from the ones employed in other schools.

1.2.2 The BA Program

The program has three main areas of knowledge: linguistics, pedagogy, and research in language teaching. All the classes are face-to-face. It is a four-year program that includes mandatory classes through the whole program and offers some electives in the last two years. Students are required to take English and French as foreign language classes while they are enrolled and are expected to graduate with at least a B2 level in English and B1 in French; according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. English classes are taken according to learners' language level. These go from A2 to C1. French classes are given to the whole class. These start at an A1 level and increase to B1 in the senior year.

The classes related to language teaching begin in the second year and continue until the end of the program (see appendix A.6). In these, students learn about teaching methods and approaches for language teaching, teaching materials design, language assessment, and the like. During the third year, students take Practicum, which requires them to teach in a local public elementary school in the afternoons. They teach three one-hour classes per week during the fall and spring semesters. Prior to start teaching students are given the syllabus for the class they are going to teach so that they can create the lesson plans and teaching materials needed. These are revised by the teachers in charge of Practicum and corrections are made if necessary. By the time students start teaching all the lesson plans and materials are ready to do so. Teachers observe some of the lessons taught by students and give them feedback to improve their teaching practices.

During the last two years of the program, students take a research class every semester (see appendix A.6). In addition to learning about this topic, students are guided to organize, create, and conduct a study on a topic they are interested related to language teaching and learning. They are expected to finish their research project during their senior year and present the findings of their investigation at a teachers' conference organized by the school. Researchers from other universities and speakers are also invited to give talks, workshops, and present the results of their investigations at the event.

1.2.3 The Class

This study was conducted in one of the classes taught by the researcher: Teaching Methods I. It is a compulsory class learners take during the third semester. In this class students learn relevant information regarding language learning theories, lesson planning, as well as different teaching methods and approaches for language teaching (see appendix A.7 for the Syllabus and A.2 for the Course Outline). This class was taught in English in three face-to-face classes a week. It was

mandatory for learners to attend at least 80 percent of the face-to-face sessions each term to be able to take the final exam. The class is taught during the Fall semester from mid-August to mid-December. The course book used was Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching by Jack Richards and Theodore Rodgers. There were other articles and readings students were given to read and discuss in class. The syllabus for the class was reviewed by the teacher who was going to teach the class some weeks before classes began. This is done with all the classes to suggest some changes if they believe are necessary. These are presented to a committee of teachers appointed by the school to be considered for approval. This committee decides whether such changes are made or not. After this period, teachers cannot make any changes regarding the content to be learnt; however, they are allowed to decide how students learn and how they are assessed, if they follow the guidelines provided by the school.

1.2.4 The Learners

Most students attending the BA at the time this investigation took place were from public high schools from the state of Colima, few from other states in Mexico, and few from local private schools. They were between 18 and 25 years old. Most of them were native Spanish speakers. Their EFL levels ranged from A2 to C1. Students from private schools usually have a higher English level (B1 or B2) than those from public ones (A2). This is because the former take more EFL classes and some content classes in English. The participants of the study had similar characteristics. In addition, they were used to learning with teacher-centred methods; this was stated by them during informal conversations and the interviews. It is common for students from this context to have been taught through their academic life with this type of methods. They were accustomed to being teacher-dependent and having their learning controlled by their teachers. Most students had a low socioeconomical level. Few of them had a laptop or desktop computer at home, and often this was usually shared with the rest of the family members and only some had internet access at home. This information was relevant for the researcher because it let him know that it was not advisable to ask students to conduct many activities that required the use of internet at home, this was because many of them lacked the tools to complete this type of tasks. When these were assigned, some learners had to stay at school when classes were over to use the computer lab.

There were 27 students enrolled in the class where this investigation was conducted; however, only 13 accepted to participate in the study and signed the consent forms (See appendix B.5). The program created was implemented as part of the teaching practices selected for this class.

Therefore, all the students were asked to complete the same tasks, learn with the same approach, and comply with the same requirements, whether they had accepted to participate in the study or not. Nevertheless, only the information from those who signed the consent forms was used in this investigation. There was not a control and experimental group because the researcher was teaching the class Teaching Methods I to only one group. Had he taught it to the two groups enrolled in the BA, the previous would have been possible. In addition, the class could not be divided in two groups because the school would not allow it. Most participants were interested in teaching EFL once they graduated from the program. Moreover, the majority of them wanted to become language teachers, although some wanted to become translators.

1.2.5 The Facilities

The School of Languages has eight classrooms, a language laboratory, a self-access centre, and a computer laboratory. Classrooms have a basic standard set up for classes to be taught with a classroom focused rather than a technology one. There is wireless internet connection on campus; however, it is not powerful enough for all students to use it. When they need to use the Internet, they must go to the language or the computer laboratory. Nevertheless, these rooms are used to teach classes; therefore, internet access on campus is sometimes limited. The self-access centre offers language learning services to students from all the university, while the computer lab is used by the students from the Schools of Languages, Tourism, Economics, Philosophy. Therefore, having access to these facilities is often limited or restricted. The humanities library is located on this campus and offers services to students from all the university, especially to the ones attending the schools previously mentioned. Books are lent for no more than three days, and some of them are kept on reserve. Students are required to buy the coursebooks for most of their classes, and most teachers provide them with additional bibliography needed for their classes electronically. The school offers students the opportunity to learn with the facilities of a standard set up.

1.3 Theoretical background

Process models have been used for over two decades to promote autonomous language learning in different contexts (Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Reinders, 2010; Murray, 2006; St. Louis, 2006; Nordlund, 2001; Scharle and Szabo, 2000; Bertonldi, Kollar & Ricard, 1988; Nunan, 1997). An analysis of these models showed that they include levels of implementation. This approach was suggested by Nunan (1997). He believed it was best to introduce autonomous learning gradually

through stages (Egel, 2009) or levels of implementation (Onozowa, 2010). These help to introduce and develop autonomous learning because they give learners time to adapt to the new learning approach and progressively develop the skills needed to be able to learn accordingly (Spiro, Henderson, and Clifford, 2012). Although Nunan did not do a study to apply this approach to promote autonomous learning and explore how effective it was, other researchers have done it (Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Murray, 2006; St. Louis, 2006; Nordlund, 2001; Bertonldi, Kollar & Ricard, 1988) and have obtained results which indicate that this structure contributes to promote autonomous learning.

The analysis conducted to the models that have been used to promote autonomous showed that they included the following levels of implementation: awareness raising, establishing learning goals, planning learning, monitoring learning, assessing learning, and reflecting on learning practices. Regarding awareness raising, scholars agree that learners need to be conscious of what autonomous learning is and what this implies to their learning practices (Abdelrazeq, 2018; Darsih, 2018). Students also need to be conscious of their strengths, weaknesses (Cohen, 2003), their needs (Iimuro & Berger, 2010), the roles they and their teachers play in this approach (Cotterall, 1995; Ajideh, 2009), and other aspects such as the methods, resources, and strategies that help them learn (Azin, Biria & Golestan, 2018; Zulaihah & Harida, 2017). The second level involves students in taking part in the selection of their learning objectives (Boggu & Sundarsingh, 2019). In language learning, it is suggested to consider students' needs to improve the skills they need to develop. Learners may not select all their learning goals; however, involving them in this decision-making process somehow contributes to foster autonomous learning. In the next level, students are asked to participate in the planning of their learning. Learners make choices regarding how they are going to learn (Reinders, 2010), when, as well as which learning materials, strategies, tasks, and techniques are going to be used during the learning process (Warni & Supraptiningsih, 2019). In the fourth level, students are required to monitor their learning. The purpose of the previous is to identify the problems they had during their learning process; which helps them make changes and take the necessary actions to avoid in future learning endeavours (Ajideh, 2009; Nunan, 1997), to regulate their learning, notice what assisted their learning and what did not, and increase their commitment and persistence to learn (Hu & Zhang; 2017).

The last two levels of implementation happen at the end of the learning process. In the assessment of learning level, students can participate in the decisions made regarding the selection of the assessment instruments to be employed, when the assessment periods are going to be, the deadlines for assignments, whether the expected content was learnt, among other aspects. The results of a study conducted by Warni & Supraptiningsih (2019) led them to conclude that it is possible to involve students in the decisions made regarding their learning. The last level

of implementation demands from students to reflect about their learning. Reflection is defined in this study as a thinking process which makes students review their learning, analyse it, evaluate it, and draw conclusions about it. This definition takes elements from the ones provided by Clara (2015), Illeris (2007), Learning Development Unit (2004), and Boud, Keogh, & Walker (1985). Reflection involves reviewing what learners did to learn. This type of reflection is called on-action, which means it take place after a learning experience has occurred (Ottesen, 2006). In the next step, learners analyse what worked well and what did not. This includes learning strategies, practices, activities, materials, resources, modes of working (individually or with somebody else), and anything else relevant to the learning process. Next comes evaluating the learning experience. This is concerned with deducing why some things worked and why some did not, what caused them to have positive, average, or negative results. The last step are the conclusions. Here students summarize what they learnt from the experience and reflecting on it. Conclusions are drawn to be considered the next time students take part in a similar learning experience to apply what they learnt and improve the learning process.

Based on the results obtained from the use of process models to promote of autonomous learning in language learning, it was decided to employ a process model to foster this approach in this study. Because of the limitations of the research context, it was not possible to adopt any of the models that were examined. Instead, an existing model was adapted to match characteristics of the setting where the research took place. The model selected to be adapted was the one created by Reinders (2010). Two criteria led to its selection. First, it included most of the levels of implementation the analysis done to the models showed were necessary for the introduction and development of autonomous learning. Second, it required few adaptations to make it suitable for the research context. A more elaborate explanation for the selection of Reinders' model is included in the next chapter.

1.4 Research rationale

The researcher discovered through informal talks with his students that they were having difficulty learning with the student-centred approaches their teachers were using. These were cooperative learning, task-based learning, and learner-centred learning. Students also expressed that they were used to learning with teacher-centred methods. Nevertheless, the approaches they had to learn with included learning practices which were very different from what they were accustomed to. Moreover, they mentioned that teachers did not inform them what the approaches they were using were about, what these required them to do, or how to adapt to the new learning practices. Consequently, the use of student-centred learning approaches produced negative feelings among students. They informed the researcher they were stressed, anxious, and

upset because they felt lost through their learning process; they were unsure about what they had to do, how, and what role they and their teachers played in their learning. They were not given enough time or assistance to learn how to learn according to the approaches involved autonomous learning. Therefore, students' performance in class worsened and their scores lowered considerably.

The researcher hypothesized that if students were able to learn autonomously, they would adapt more easily to learning with any of the student-centred approaches their teachers were using. Achieving this goal involved finding a suitable way to introduce and develop autonomous learning among the students. Literature indicates that the previous has been achieved through the employment of process models in different learning contexts (Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Reinders, 2010; Murray, 2006; St. Louis, 2006; Nordlund, 2001; Scharle and Szabo, 2000; Bertonldi, Kollar & Ricard, 1988; Nunan, 1997). Although this has been done in language learning, the researcher believed that it was likely that similar results could be obtained when employed in teacher education. Therefore, it was decided to use the same strategy to foster autonomous learning among the participants of the study and apply the findings form fostering autonomy in language learning to this study which involved autonomy in adult education. To reach this goal, Reinders' model was adapted taking into consideration the suggestions given in existing literature, the characteristics of the learning environment, and those of the participants.

It was necessary to carry out an investigation to determine whether the model adapted and employed in this study successfully introduces and develops autonomous learning among the participants. There were different reasons for this. First, the model adapted was created to promote autonomous language learning; however, in this study the goal was to foster autonomous learning in adult education. By conducting this research, data was going to be collected to establish if the previous was possible. This could also increase our understanding of how to foster this approach in a different type of context, which is a major concern among scholars nowadays (Pershukova, Nikolska, and Vasiukovych, 2020). In addition, the results of this investigation can generate knowledge regarding how the levels of implementation and the elements of the treatment assist in the promotion of this approach to learning. This research can also increase our understanding of how to foster autonomous learning among a group of learners from a context where little research on this issue has been conducted. This is a topic that concerns scholars. Warni & Supraptiningsih (2019) contend that learning how to introduce and develop autonomous learning among students from different learning settings, social and ethnical backgrounds is one of the principal objectives of researchers and scholars have nowadays. Finally, because the participants of the study have been taught with teacher-centred methods throughout their academic life and they must adapt to being more autonomous in their learning, more can be

learnt about what can help students during the transition from teacher-centred to autonomous learning.

1.5 Aims and research questions

The main objective of this study is to investigate the impact an adapted process model, designed according to levels of implementation, has on the fostering of autonomous learning among a group of Mexican university students who are used to learning with teacher-centred methods. To achieve the previous two aims and research questions were created; each of these with two subsidiary aims or questions. These will guide this investigation, the data collection, and the data analysis. In this section, the previous are included and short descriptions of their purposes are described.

1.5.1 Aim 1: To explore for evidence that indicates there has been a development of autonomous learning among participants

One of the main purposes of this investigation is to establish the extent to which the model used contributes to the fostering of autonomous learning among the participants of the study. The model employed in this study is different to any other because it is an adaptation of a theoretical framework that has been used a reference by scholars, due to its solid structure and components. Furthermore, the model was designed to be implemented among a group of learners who have been taught with teacher-centred methods through their academic life; therefore, learning autonomously involves a significant change in their learning; from teacher-centred to learner-centred. These features resulted in a new model that requires the examination of its impact to establish how suitable it is to introduce and promote autonomous learning among a group of learners who are used to learning through teacher-centred methods. Achieving this aim would make it possible to bridge theory and practice because it would generate evidence regarding whether a model that is theoretically sound to promote autonomous learning is as solid when it is implemented among a group of learners.

1.5.1.1 Subsidiary Aim 1: To investigate how the elements of the model contribute to introduce autonomous learning.

The model used in this investigation was designed including different components; some can be found in models that have been employed by researchers to introduce autonomous learning in the past, others emerged from the theoretical frameworks, and few derived from the adaptations made to make the model appropriate to the context where the study was conducted. Learning

about how each element of the model contributed to promote autonomous learning get help to have a better understanding of the impact it has on this issue. Therefore, it is necessary to know how each level of implementation assisted to reach the goal of this model, or how useful were the materials used to help students take control of their learning and monitor this process such as the self-study guides, the action plan, the course outline, and assessing rubrics. Furthermore, it is essential to examine if the support given to participants was appropriate and enough to guide them during the adaptation process, to answer any questions they had or when needed advice, as well as to develop the skills and acquire the knowledge needed to be more autonomous in their learning. This knowledge is useful because it would increase the understanding regarding what is essential for the fostering of autonomous learning.

1.5.1.2 Subsidiary Aim 2: To investigate how the levels of implementation contribute to foster autonomous learning.

Structuring a model to introduce autonomous learning using levels of implementation is an approach that has been employed by several researchers who have successfully introduced autonomous learning in the past two decades. Although positive results have been obtained from the employment of this approach, little research has been conducted to examine the contribution each level makes in the promotion of this approach to learning. Due to the fact that such design is used in this study, it will be possible to explore the contribution each level makes in the promotion of autonomous learning. Examining this issue can help us learn more about why structuring a model considering the levels of implementation is advisable.

1.5.2 Aim 2: To explore the opinions of participants about learning autonomously.

It is essential to know participants' opinions regarding learning with the approach introduced to know how they feel about it, as well as whether they acknowledge they benefits this approach to learning offers. Participants are the best source of information regarding the usefulness of the approach in their learning. In addition, collecting subjects' opinions about this approach can help to notice any other issues they believe are relevant but were not considered by the researcher. The collection of participants' perceptions about learning autonomously can help to establish if they eventually welcomed learning in this way, and if they became more autonomous in their learning.

1.5.2.1 Subsidiary Aim 1: To investigate the perceptions of subjects about the fostering of autonomous learning in this study.

The introduction of autonomous learning was planned considering existing literature on this issue: guidelines, suggestions from researchers who investigated this topic, as well as anything else that was found relevant for the introduction of autonomous learning. This resulted in an implementation process created for the context where this investigation takes place. Nevertheless, it is necessary to gather participants' opinion about the appropriateness of such process to established how suitable the process employed to introduce autonomous learning is. Furthermore, information can be generated regarding what helped to introduce this approach to learning and what did not according to the perceptions of participants. These findings can help to have a better understanding regarding how to introduce autonomous learning in a context.

1.5.2.2 Subsidiary Aim 2: To explore the opinions of participants about autonomous learning and how these developed along the treatment.

Subjects were used to learning with teacher-centred methods prior to their participation in this study. Because of this, adapting to learning autonomously can be a drastic change which they may not easily accept. Therefore, it is likely they will not welcome this change at first. However, it is possible that as they learn about autonomous learning, how it works, the benefits it brings, and they experience learning with this approach, they may change their perceptions about learning with this approach. Consequently, it is necessary to examine what their opinions about autonomous learning are at the beginning of the treatment, if they change throughout, and what they are like at the end of it. Such exploration can show if there is a development in their opinions, if they remain the same, and how they feel about it after learning in this way for one semester. This information can help to get a better understanding regarding how students feel through the adaption process to learning autonomously.

1.5.3 Main Research Question 1: What evidence indicates that there has been a development of autonomous learning among participants?

Autonomous learning is going to be fostered by using a process model that was adapted to make it suitable for the setting where the study is going to be conducted. This resulted in a model that has never been implemented; therefore, it is unknown whether it helps to introduce and develop autonomous learning, how, why, to what extent, and which aspects of this approach fosters. Answering this question can generate information regarding these issues and about the impact the model used in this research has on the promotion of autonomous learning overall.

1.5.3.1 Subsidiary Research Question 1: How do the elements of the treatment contribute to the development of autonomous learning?

The model was designed considering the aspects of the original model, those included in other models that have been used for the same purpose, as well as the guidelines and suggestions found in existing literature regarding the fostering of autonomous learning. Because elements from different sources were grouped to create the model used in this investigation, it is necessary to know which elements contributed to foster autonomous learning among the participants of the study, how they did, why, and to what extent they helped to reach this goal. By answering this question, more insights can be obtained regarding what helps to promote this approach to learning, as well as to discover which components are essential to reach this objective.

1.5.3.2 Subsidiary Research Question 2: How do the levels of implementation contribute to foster autonomous learning?

Using levels of implementation to structure models for the fostering of autonomous learning is a principle that has been employed by different researchers. Although there is no general agreement regarding which levels have to be employed, researchers seem to share the opinion that using levels of implementation assists the introduction and development of autonomous learning. What has not been researched enough is the contribution each level makes to reach such aim. This research will explore this issue to get a better understanding of how each level helps students to adapt to autonomous learning.

1.5.4 Main Research Question 2: What are the opinions of the participants about learning autonomously?

Autonomous learning is going to be a new approach for participants, it is the opposite to the teaching methods they are used to learning with. In addition, it involves a drastic change in their learning practices. Because of this, it is essential to know how students feel about learning through this approach. By asking participants' opinions, it will be possible to know if they accepted this way of learning, how difficult it was do adapt to it, what helped them to do so, whether they believe it helps them learn and why, if they would like to continue learning with this approach, as well as any other benefits they may acknowledge from learning autonomously. In addition, it might be possible to learn more about how appropriate the implementation process actually was. Based on his observations, the researcher can have an opinion about the suitability of this process; nevertheless, the subjects' comments can generate more reliable data about this issue. Gathering participants' opinions about this approach can generate useful findings about the

topics this investigation is going to explore, as well as other ones which were not considered by the researcher but are relevant to the subjects.

1.5.4.1 Subsidiary Question 1: What are the views of the subjects about the fostering of autonomous learning in this study?

One of the main concerns of this investigation is to ensure that autonomous learning is introduced appropriately. This is because learning according to this approach involves a drastic change for most participants. If this change is not implemented properly, it can cause a negative reaction among participants and even rejection. Asking participants how they felt about the introduction of autonomous learning can help to establish if this process was appropriate; if they were given enough time to adapt to it, if the pace with which different aspects of autonomous learning were introduced was correct, if enough assistance was provided during the transition period, as well as any other issue related to the introduction of this approach that can inform the researcher how to improve this process. These findings can further our understanding about what needs to be done to and how to introduce autonomous learning among participants who are used to learning with teacher-centred methods.

1.5.4.2 Subsidiary Question 2: What are the opinions of the participants about autonomous learning and how these developed along the treatment?

Fostering and adapting to autonomous learning takes time. If participants were used to learning through methods that were opposite to learning autonomously, it is likely that at the beginning of the treatment their opinions are going to be different to what they express at the end of it; if subjects adapted to this approach to learning and welcomed it. Therefore, it is necessary to ask participants their opinions about autonomous learning at different stages of the treatment to establish if these changed along the way. If they did, it would be necessary to explore why this happened and what caused these modifications in their points of view. Furthermore, by answering it would be possible to know if they would like to continue learning with this approach, why, as well as anything they have to say about autonomous learning. If their responses are positive, these could be used to establish the appropriateness of the model employed in this investigation. If they were negative, useful information could be generated to make improvements to the treatment. Therefore, whichever they opinions are, these will be useful some way or another.

1.6 Thesis layout

This thesis includes six chapters. The first one is the introduction. The second chapter includes relevant information about autonomous learning found in existing literature. The third one is the methodology. The results obtained in each data collection instrument are included in the fourth chapter. The fifth discussed the findings and provides the answers to the research questions. The conclusions, practical implications and suggestions for further research are found in the sixth chapter.

The introduction includes a description of the background and the context of the study, the theoretical background, it discusses the rationale for conducting this investigation, and provides the aims and research questions.

Chapter two discusses autonomous learning and relevant issues related to the fostering of this approach. Autonomous learning is defined first. Secondly the reasons for introducing and rejecting autonomy are explored. Next, the factors to consider when introducing autonomous learning and guidelines to do so are examined. After that the levels of implementation to introduce this approach to learner. Then, different approaches to foster autonomous learning are discussed. Finally, the reasons for using a process model in this study are provided and the adaptations made to Reinders' model are described.

Chapter three describes the model implemented and the methodology selected for this study. Moreover, it presents the research questions that guided this investigation. Each question includes a short discussion about why they were selected for this study. After that, the researcher explains why qualitative research and action researched were used in this investigation. The data collection instruments are discussed next, along with an explanation of how they help to collect the data needed to answer the research questions. Finally, the researcher describes the data collection process and explains the reasons for selecting the data analysis methods employed in this study.

Chapter four includes all the findings obtained from each data collection instrument. These are presented one instrument at a time, whether they were used to answer the research questions or not to have full perspective of all the results found. Those that were useful to answer the research questions were selected and used in the next chapter. Quotes from participants are provided to support the findings included here.

Chapter five presents the findings obtained in this investigation. Here the themes found across instruments are examined and discussed. In addition, this chapter includes the answers to each of the research questions that guided this research.

Chapter six addresses the conclusions reached in this investigation, the limitations of the study, it discusses topics for future research and explains the practical outcomes that emerge from this study.

Chapter 2 Autonomous Learning

2.0 Introduction

Autonomous learning has been studied extensively in the past decades (Bajrami, 2015; Yagcioglu, 2015). Researchers have explored its meaning, components, effects, requirements, implications, learning practices, and everything else related to it. Although this approach has been used for some time, one issue that scholars are still interested in is how to foster it (Warni & Supraptiningsih, 2019). This is the main issue this investigation explored. Most of the literature included in this chapter was taken from autonomous language learning, although this investigation is related to adult education. An explanation of this discrepancy is included next, as well as the discussion of topics related to autonomous learning.

2.1 From language learning to teacher education

Most of the literature about autonomous learning emerged from autonomous language learning because this approach has been employed and researched in language learning more than in any other area (Yildirim, 2012). Consequently, more is known about how to introduce it and develop it from the studies conducted in this field than in any other one. When literature was reviewed for this study, plenty was found regarding autonomous language learning. The author considered this knowledge could not be ignored because; although it belonged to a different area, it provided useful information related to how autonomous learning has been introduced, what has helped and hindered this process, and what the results have been of its introduction. This knowledge could be used or adapted to design the program to implement autonomous learning in this study.

The discrepancy between the purpose of the study and the literature reviewed had some benefits. First, it gave the researcher the opportunity to apply what has been done in language learning to teacher education. Prior to this study, no research had been conducted at the research site to examine if the findings from autonomous language learning could be used to foster this approach among language student-teachers. Although this was not the purpose of the investigation, the results could be employed to establish if what has helped to promote autonomous learning in EFL had similar effects among would-be language teachers.

In addition, because the participants were student-teachers receiving training, any information they received about language learning was helpful for their teacher development. By participating

in this study students learnt about autonomous learning and experienced learning with it. The latter helps to understand its principles and why this approach should be implemented (Kelly, 2012). This contributes to have student-teachers employ this approach when they start teaching (Öztürk, 2019). Fabela-Cárdenas (2012) suggests providing student-teachers with the knowledge and the abilities necessary to promote autonomous learning and create autonomous learning experiences during their training to increase the likelihood of using this approach when they begin to teach. This can be achieved in teacher training programs since the role would-be teachers play here resembles that of learners (Kelley, 2012). Therefore, using EFL literature with language student-teachers contributed somehow to their teacher development either by learning about autonomous learning, experiencing it, or through any findings about this approach presented to them during the intervention.

2.2 Defining autonomous learning

Autonomous learning became more known with the report done by Holec in 1981: *Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning*. Nevertheless, this approach did not originate then. Personal autonomy is a concept that Kant developed in the 1930's to refer to the capacity people have to make rational decisions on their own (Schmenk, 2005). Dearden (1972) also explored this concept and defined it as an intrinsic capacity that anyone can exercise when they make decisions, reflect, judge, plan, reason, and explain their thoughts or actions. Furthermore, John Dewey established the groundwork for learner autonomy (Benson, 2001). He argued that the purpose of learning should be not only the transmission of knowledge but the creation of a learning environment where students can learn in collaboration and a continuous growth in learning is promoted. Freire (1970) affirmed that learning is done by learners not provided to them. He added that reflection is vital in learning because it leads to raising awareness about actions and their consequences. Holec (1981) used what had been done in this area and transferred it to language learning. Learner autonomy in foreign language learning emerged from the work he and other researchers did (Schmenk, 2005). The following section explains how autonomous learning has been defined.

2.2.1 Autonomous learning definition

Autonomous learning has been defined as taking charge of one's learning at every stage of this process (Lengkanawati, 2017). Holec (1981) explained that this is achieved by having students make their own decisions about their learning. Such decisions are setting their learning objectives, creating their own learning plans according to their needs and abilities, selecting the content and progressions, choosing learning materials, selecting methods and techniques, monitoring the procedure, and evaluating their learning (Wejira, 2019; Zulaihah & Harida, 2017; Islam, 2011).

Allowing students to make these decisions is vital for students to become autonomous learners (Lengkanawati, 2017; Bhattacharya and Chauhan, 2010; St. Louis, 2006; Ho and Crookall, 1995). Nunan (1997) and Littlewood (1996) explain that in autonomous learning students are not only in charge of the decisions made, but they are also responsible for performing the actions that emerge from such decisions. This indicates that autonomous learning happens when students perform the actions that result from the decisions they made, not just from making their own decisions. When autonomous learning is a novel approach to learners and it is first introduced, learners are not expected to take full control of their learning immediately. This is done gradually to give them time to adapt to it (Bocos, Radut-Taciu & Chis, 2015). Cotterall (2000) defines this approach as taking responsibility of certain features of one's learning, at different moments of this process. This implies that students may take charge of some aspects of their learning during the early stages of implementation and increase these as they gain experience and adapt to this approach. Autonomous learning is a process not a product (Hand, 2006; Thanasoulas, 2000), one in which learners take charge of their learning gradually.

There are misconceptions regarding what autonomous learning is. Some believe it means learning in isolation (Littlewood, 1996), without the guidance, and giving students complete freedom in their learning (Thanasoulas, 2000). This has caused some people to criticize learner autonomy because, based on such misconceptions, it is argued it promotes individualization, meaning students learning by themselves (Benson, 2001). Learning is individualized in the sense that it is adapted to the characteristics of learners (Nunan, 1997); when they make decisions and consider their strengths; but does not remove the guidance and assistance from the teacher (Abdelrazeq, 2018). In addition, cooperation is common in this approach (Hu and Zhang, 2017; Islam, 2011). Cabrera-Ruiz (2009) explains that it has a collectivist culture; learners can work together to complete difficult tasks, help one other, as well as interact and encourage each other in or outside the classroom (Zulaihah & Harida, 2017). Moreover, in autonomous learning students can make decisions about their learning individually or collaboration (Karababa, Eker, & Arik, 2010), and work in either way to achieve their learning goals. This is a relevant aspect of this approach to learning that is often unknown or misunderstood.

All the definitions reviewed were but most of them were not appropriate to the context of this study. This was because they stated that autonomous learning means students taking control of their learning by making all the decisions about it, except for Cotterall's (2000). This was not possible in this study because of the school policies of the setting where the study was conducted. Moreover, making decisions about their learning was a practice learners had not done before. This led the researcher to create a definition of autonomous learning for this study. Considering the literature reviewed, the features of participants, and the context where the study was

conducted; autonomous learning in this study was defined *as students taking control of their learning by being involved in the decisions made about it and performing the actions that resulted from these choices by working individually or in collaboration with others*.

It was established that learners would take charge of their learning through their involvement in the decisions made because they were asked to gradually make their own decisions. Students made few and simple decisions (see appendix A1) at the beginning of the intervention, and the rest were made by the teacher. The number of decisions made by students and their difficulty increased as the intervention progressed. This is the reason why it is said that learners were involved in the decisions made. They did not make all the decisions about their learning, as mentioned in the definitions reviewed. Learners had little or no experience in making decisions about their learning. Therefore, by making few and simple decisions at the beginning of the study, learners began to develop their decisions-making skills. As these improved and learners gained experience, they were asked to decide more aspects of their learning. Towards the end of the intervention, learners made most of the decisions about their learning. However, there were certain aspects students were not able to choose such as learning objectives, content, some rules, and some deadlines. Therefore, because during the intervention some decisions were made by the school, some by learners, and some by the teacher, the definition states that students were involved in the decisions made.

The definition used in this study is connected to the psychological perspective because the learning practices performed by students were identified (Oxford, 2003). In addition, it shares with Lengkanawati (2017) and Holec (1981) the principle of taking charge of one's learning by having students making their own decisions, and with Cotterall's (2000) in relation to taking control of some aspects of learning at some stages of this process. Furthermore, the definition shares with Wejira (2019), Zulaihah & Harida (2017) and Holec, (1981) the type of decisions learners can make, and with Nunan (1997) and Littlewood (1996) the idea that students must perform the actions that result from their decisions. Finally, it matches the definitions by Hu and Zhang (2017) and Cabrera-Ruiz (2009) which state that student can learn by themselves or in collaboration.

2.3 Rationale for fostering autonomous learning

Changes in education have resulted in a greater effort to foster autonomous learning among students (Hermagustiana & Anggriyani, 2019; Benson, 2016). Moreover, researchers have found different reasons which indicate that having students learn with this approach benefits them in different ways in and outside the classroom. This has been found mainly in language learning;

nevertheless, these findings can be applied to other areas as well. The reasons to promote autonomous learning are discussed next.

2.3.1 Changes in society

Modern life requires people to acquire new knowledge frequently to overcome the changes in society (Onozawa, 2010). However, it is not always possible to be taught what is needed to adapt to such changes for different reasons (Chia, 2005). According to Trim (1976), new skills need to be developed to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. The recent and numerous changes that have occurred lately have made it essential to develop independent learning skills in life in general (Manzano-Vázquez, 2018; Lamb & Reinders, 2005). Autonomous learning helps to develop these skills (Wejira, 2019; Karababa, Eker, & Arik, 2010; Holec, 1981) and become lifelong learners (Benson, 2016). Once students have developed the abilities to learn on their own inside the classroom, they should be able to transfer this knowledge to learning what life demands from them. Darsih (2018) argues that it is possible to use the independent learning skills developed in the classroom to cope with the challenges students face in life. This suggests that fostering autonomous learning in the classroom can help people deal with the changes in society because it provides them with the skills needed to learn something on their own whenever innovations in life demand it.

2.3.2 Lack of time to learn

As time passes by, new findings emerge and the amount of knowledge needed to learn increases in all areas; nevertheless, class time remains the same. Consequently, there is not enough time to learn everything that is needed. Pershukova, Nikolska, and Vasiukovych (2020) affirm that there is a mismatch between what needs to be learnt and the time allotted to do so inside the classroom nowadays, this requires students to learn on their own. These researchers state that such discrepancy has made education shift towards the fostering of autonomous learning. Therefore, to overcome time limitations, learners need become autonomous, use their own strategies (Hu & Zhang, 2017), and work independently outside the classroom to learn what they need (Abdelrazeq, 2018). Because new knowledge emerges constantly in all fields, but class time remains the same, it is necessary to promote autonomous learning so that students can learn without depending on a teacher to do so.

2.3.3 Learning improvement

It has been suggested to employ autonomous learning because it enhances learning. There is a connection between academic success and how autonomous students are (Confessore & Abdullah, 2012; Oxford, 2003). Autonomous learning has shown to help students to reach their goals in language learning. Al-Busaidi (2012) contends that students who make their own decisions regarding their language learning improve their language development considerably. Dam & Legenhausen (2010) affirm that success in foreign language learning depends, to some extent, on the promotion of autonomous learning. Moreover, students who are more autonomous are also more successful in their learning (Sakrak-Ekin & Balçıkanlı, 2019; Lowe, 2009). In a study by Hu and Zhang (2017) as participants became more autonomous their EFL development increased. Although these findings refer to language learning, it is likely that similar results could be obtained in other areas if autonomous learning were introduced. The endless access students have to learning activities online contribute to learning autonomously (Abdelrazeq, 2018), and this can be done in any field of knowledge. Wejira (2019) explains that learning is enhanced because students participate in the establishment of learning goals, their preferences are considered, and they are involved in the decisions made regarding their learning process. These practices contribute to develop a sense of ownership and commitment to learning, which makes learning more meaningful and improves classroom performance regardless of what students are learning.

2.3.4 Fostering of lifelong learning

In 1998, UNESCO highlighted the importance of fostering lifelong learning (Cabrera-Ruiz, 2009). This trend in education requires students to be more autonomous to learn, study, read, and reflect. There is a connection between autonomous learning and lifelong learning. Dam (2011) explains that this approach contributes to embed in learners the desire to continue learning for the rest of their lives. It gives them the opportunity to learn in and outside the classroom (Al-Busaidi, 2012). Moreover, it helps students to learn how to learn and assists them in the acquisition of useful strategies for planning, organizing, and monitoring their own learning (Cabrera-Ruiz, 2009). In language learning, fostering lifelong learning is essential because it causes students to continue improving their foreign language skills when they are no longer inside the classroom (Abdelrazeq, 2018). Nevertheless, it is very likely that the skills learners develop and the knowledge they acquire through autonomous learning can contribute to make students lifelong learners in any area of knowledge.

2.3.5 Motivation to learn increases

Autonomous learning enhances learners' motivation to learn (Shawwa, 2010; Ryan and Deci, 2000). Such phenomenon is the result of different factors. One is the involvement of students in the decisions made regarding their learning. When learners can decide how to learn, it is likely they select something they like or are competent at doing. This increases their interest in their work because they feel confident to perform well and it is more pleasant (Dörnyeri, 2001; Littlejohn, 2001). In other words, learners become motivated to work and learn. The results of a study by Hsu & Wang (2011) indicated that learners' motivation enhanced from learning at their own pace and having freedom in the learning process. Üstünlüoglu (2009) found in the study he conducted that respecting students' ideas, involving them in the decision-making process, learning to set goals, and showing students how to take responsibility of their learning played a crucial role in effective learning and increased learner motivation.

The support learners receive in autonomous learning is another factor that positively impacts motivation. Constant assistance and encouragement increase students' desire to learn (Nunan, 1997). In the study conducted by Iimuro & Berger (2010), they discovered that monitoring learners' work and giving them feedback periodically motivated them to complete their work every week. They concluded that these two aspects benefit especially low-level students because it encourages them to study consistently and continuously. Motivation also increases because autonomous learning improves learners' academic performance (Hu and Zhang, 2017; Siew, Confessore & Abdullah, 2012). The success learners obtain motivates them to continue working and trying to learn. When students' academic performance improves, their intrinsic motivation to learn increases (Lamb 2004). It works in both directions; success increases motivation, and the latter also enhances the former.

2.3.6 Enhance learner responsibility

In the past decade, trends in education have strived to have students take responsibility of their learning (Borg and Alrabai, 2017) because when they do so, they can reach their learning objectives more easily (Morrell & Scott, 2018; Chan, 2016; Henri, Nguyen, 2014). Students become more responsible when they learn through autonomous learning (Zulaihah & Harida, 2017; Dam, 2011; Karababa, Eker, & Arik, 2010). This has gained a great deal of attention from scholars (Al-Busaidi and Al-Maamari, 2014) who have become more interested in implementing and studying this approach (Hermagustiana & Anggriyani, 2020; Morbedadze, 2015). Students become responsible learners when they are given freedom to organize their learning (Darsih, 2018). However, this is not enough, after students have made their decisions, they must conduct the practices that emerged from such decisions. They must do the actions needed to complete

tasks, monitor their work to meet the deadlines, comply with task requirements, and assess their learning (Al-Saadi, 2011). Therefore, giving learners the opportunity to control their learning can make students more responsible of it.

2.3.7 Learners become independent

Giving students control of their learning leads to learners becoming independent and building self-reliance (Ajideh, 2009). Wang and Peverly (1986) stated that autonomous learners have the capacity to learn independently and assume an active role in their learning. The results of a study conducted by Boggu & Sundarsingh (2019) showed that after using autonomous learning during the intervention, subjects felt more independent and took ownership of their learning. Independence in learning has several advantages. It can save time because students do not have to wait until they are provided with the knowledge or the solutions to problems (Cotterall, 1995). A teacher may not always be available to help students learn what they need; nevertheless, if they have developed the abilities to acquire new knowledge on their own, they can learn in advance any topics they are interested in, expand on the topics to be learnt, investigate other topics, finish their work earlier, and manage their time better (Chia, 2005). Furthermore, autonomous learning promotes learning independence because it allows students to become aware of the pace they work well at, and do it at such speed (Shawwa, 2010). In a study done by Murray (1999), it was found that using autonomous learning resulted in students learning at their own pace, making the learning process more enjoyable, and decreasing the level of anxiety while learning. Autonomous learning gives learners independence in the pace they learn at; some may do it faster than others, but they are all able to learn (Zulaihah & Harida, 2017). These findings emerged from autonomous language learning; however, independence in learning can be developed regardless the topics students are learning.

2.3.8 Learning skills are developed

Autonomous learning helps learners to develop the abilities they need to learn on their own. One of these is being able to make appropriate decisions about learning (Bhattacharya & Chauhan, 2010). In this approach students are required and assisted to establish the learning goals, choose the content, tasks, and learning procedures (Yamashita, 2015; Nunan, 1997), how they are going to learn, when, whether they do so individually, in pairs or small teams; the learning resources, techniques, methods, pace and strategies they use (Al-Saadi, 2011). Students become competent at making their own decisions about their learning from performing this practice frequently (Nunan, 1997) and develop the ability to monitor their progress (Yamashita, 2015; Holec, 1981). This enables learners to be aware of how much work they have completed, what they still need to

do to reach their goals and identify the difficulties they have had along their learning process (Ajideh, 2009).

Students also develop the ability to assess their progress and learning in general (Dam, 1995; Holec, 1981). This can be done individually or with a partner, although it is suggested to use the latter when learners have no experience with self-assessment (Tassinari, 2018). By conducting self-assessment learners become conscious of how well they learnt the expected content and what they need to reinforce (Al-Saadi, 2011). Moreover, autonomous learning helps students to develop thinking skills. Autonomous learners can think critically (Wejira, 2019; Little, 1991), reflect critically about their learning (Bhattacharya & Chauhan, 2010), develop analytical skills (Morbedadze, 2015), as well as notice and discovery abilities (St. Louis, 2006). The development of these skills contributes to managing learning efforts more properly (Karababa, Eker, & Arik, 2010), establish the changes needed to improve learning (Barcelos & Kalaya, 2011), rationalize actions, become aware of other learning strategies students can employ, transfer what they learnt in the classroom to real-life settings, appreciate their learning efforts (Al-Saadi, 2011) and change their attitude towards autonomous learning (Cotterall, 2000). These skills are developed gradually and are independent of the content students learn through autonomous learning.

2.4 Criticism to the development of learner autonomy.

There are some views that oppose the notion that developing learner autonomy produces positive outcomes. Fostering learner autonomy in schools and in the educational field has been questioned (Vazquez, 2015). Llaven-Nucamendi (2014) asserts that criticism comes from psychology, the educational field, and from those who suggest that it is pedagogically inappropriate in certain cultures. Hibbs (2017) criticizes it from a theological standpoint and explains why promoting autonomy means rebelling against God. The latter is farfetched for the author; therefore, it will not be addressed in this section, only the former ones will be discussed.

Behaviourists have objected learner autonomy because behaviourism does not acknowledge the existence of self-determination (Llaven-Nucamendi, 2015). According to Ryan and Deci (2006) this is an internal process that leads to making decisions on our own, which results in the completion of actions. This goes against the belief that behaviours are the result of inner mechanisms produced in the brain, not by our will (Pinker, 2002). However, studies have shown that people are not always aware of what makes them act in a certain way (Wilson, 2002). This may suggest that self-determination does not exist. Nevertheless, Llaven-Nucamendi (2014) asserts that autonomous and controlled behaviours can result from implicit and non-conscious reasons and that these are not the same when reference is made to autonomous and controlled motivation. Ryan and Deci (2006) explain that autonomy of actions cannot be fully explained by analysing

conscious and non-conscious deliberateness. They contend that some behaviours can be considered autonomous while others imposed or unwanted; nevertheless, autonomy is present when people use their capacity to reflect, accept or reject an urge or any other unwanted behaviour and they decide to perform it or not.

Learner autonomy has also received criticism because some believe that some learners may get overwhelmed when they are provided with too many choices (Schwartz, 2000). However, giving learners options is vital when learners cannot make their own decisions or do not know what to choose. The number of choices given depends on different factors such as the learner, the context, and the learning task (Llaven-Nucamendi, 2014). These elements can be considered to prevent the provision of too many choices that can overwhelm learners.

Another argument against learner autonomy is the belief that it cannot be the goal of education (Hand, 2006; Laurillard, 2002). Researchers are not against it as an approach to learning, but to having it as the goal of education. Hand (2006) gives two arguments to support this view. First, he contends that autonomy is a process and is achieved when different factors combine, but it should not be the goal of education. Second, this author disputes whether it is appropriate to help learners make their own decisions and have them depend on their own judgement rather than the expertise of a teacher. Researchers agree that learner autonomy is a process and that because learners may not get to be fully autonomous, it is not the goal of education. In this study, learners are not given full control of their learning because of the school limitations, and they are not expected to become fully autonomous.

Criticism to learner autonomy has also emerged from the misconception that it involves the withdrawal of teachers and their support. This relates to the idea that autonomous learning is teacher-less learning. Nevertheless, it is not possible to replace the teacher with anything (Milton, 1997) because they provide the support and guidance learners need during this process (Farmer, 2006; Laurillard, 2002; Pennycook, 1997). Llaven-Nucamendi (2014) explains that rather than opposing having a teacher, there is a concern about teachers providing the appropriate and enough support when autonomous learning is implemented.

Objection to autonomy is also based on cultural appropriateness (Vazquez, 2015). Adopting autonomous learning may be more difficult for some students due to their ethnic and educational background (Riley, 1988). This author argues that learners from cultures that are not familiar with learner-centred practices will likely find it more difficult to adapt to this way of learning. In addition, some consider that autonomy, independence and individualism are values from Western cultures; therefore, it is problematic to implement them in non-Western educational settings (Cross and Gore 2003). However, the results of studies conducted in different non-

Western countries have shown that learners from these countries appreciate freedom and the opportunity to take charge of their learning (Ruan, 2006; Littlewood, 2000). Three points need to be addressed in relation to this issue (Llaven-Nucamendi, 2014). First, fostering learner autonomy does not mean teachers will leave behind their professionalism and values. Second, autonomy can be adapted to the culture where it is introduced. Finally, teachers may already be using teaching practices that promote learner autonomy unintentionally. Cultures perceive autonomy in different ways. They seem to value independence and individualism in their own ways; therefore, it is possible to introduce this approach in different learning contexts. Studies have shown that autonomy is relevant in most cultures, and people from different cultures appear to have some similarities in the way they understand autonomy (Kim, 2004; Chirkov, Ryan, Kim & Kaplan, 2003). In addition to the criticism presented here, there are some difficulties when autonomous learning is going to be introduced that need to be considered.

2.5 Challenges in the introduction of autonomous learning

There are some issues that make the introduction of this approach difficult. Al-Saadi (2011) explains that, unfortunately, basic education often does not foster autonomous learning skills among learners; which could lead them to take control of their learning. The following are some factors that cause difficulty in the implementation of this approach.

2.5.1 Resistance to change

Autonomous learning may be rejected in contexts where students are used to learning with teacher-centred methods because it involves a new way of learning. Teacher-centred is defined as a learning environment where the teacher controls learning, explains everything to learners, pinpoint mistakes and corrects them, instructs students how to learn and which resources to use to do so, checks and marks learners' work (Alrabai, 2017). Students in these settings are used to an unbalanced power relationship, with little involvement in what, how, when, or even why they learn (Nordlund, 2001). Because of this, the transition from teacher-dependent to learning autonomously may be troublesome for some. St. Louis (2006) argues that going "from teacher-dependent to teacher-independent is sometimes difficult for students who have been immersed in an educational system which has been predominately controlled by the teacher, who must now give up control and help these students become independent, self-sufficient, individuals" (p. 2). Therefore, autonomous learning represents a drastic change for students in nearly every aspect of their learning. Clarke (1994) defines change as going from the known to the unknown. In this case, learners stop doing what they have done in the past to learn (the known) to do something considerably different (the unknown).

Most people reject accepting and adapting to a change because they are creatures of habit, they prefer familiar patters, stability, predictability, doing the same things they have done for years (Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu, 2013; Kanter, 2012; Clarke, 1994). Change involves doubt, uncertainty, and walking into the unknown. Autonomous learning requires learners to move out of their comfort zone, to play new roles, to use different learning strategies, tasks and activities. Al-Saadi (2011) asserts that most students dislike the idea of overseeing their own learning. The process to develop autonomous learners is not easy because teachers and learners exchange roles (Pershukova, Nikolska, and Vasiukovych, 2020), and it is uncommon to find students who are willing to take responsibility of their learning easily (Little, 1995). Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu (2013) explain that it is natural to experience negative feelings such as fear and anxiety when a change is introduced, and things must be done differently. Boohene & Williams (2012) state that although changes are implemented to generate an improvement, a negative reaction and resistance to change is natural to emerge. Teachers who introduce autonomous learning are likely to face resistance from learners if these are used to learning with more teacher-centred approaches.

2.5.2 Teacher beliefs and context limitations

The implementation of autonomous learning relies considerably on the teacher and their beliefs about learning. The latter impact what they do in the classroom; therefore, whether learner autonomy is fostered depends on the perceptions teachers have regarding how desirable and feasible is to implement it (Alibakhshi, 2015). Phipps and Borg (2009) explain that teachers' beliefs are influenced by their past experiences and can impact what they do in the classroom more than their teacher training courses, and their pedagogical decisions. Teacher readiness is crucial for the implementation of this approach (Lin & Reinders, 2018) because they need to change their roles drastically if they are used to teacher-centred teaching. This can be problematic for many (Djiwandono, 2015) because instead of being the main source of knowledge and a figure of authority, they become facilitators that guide students throughout their learning (Yan, 2012). If teachers are not willing or ready to adopt this role, they will put little effort into it (Lin & Reinders, 2018) and the implementation of autonomous learning may fail. To avoid this, teachers need to be willing to change the roles they play, know how to foster it, and have the skills needed to overcome all the difficulties that are faced during the implementation process (Barfield et al., 2001; Camilleri, 1999).

There are other problems teachers face while introducing autonomous learning. In a study conducted by Alibakhshi (2015), it was found that two thirds of teachers mentioned that it was difficulty to promote autonomous learning because they lacked the resources they needed. More than half of them mentioned they did not have autonomy in the design of the course,

establishment of the course objectives, and the selection of the learning materials. Furthermore, half the teachers expressed they did not have the experience needed to introduce this approach. These factors caused to have a low number of teachers who attempted to implement autonomous learning in their classrooms. Teachers will likely face these and other obstacles when trying to introduce this approach. If this is the case, they will have to find a way to overcome these problems to reach their goals.

2.5.3 Learner beliefs and cultural background

Learner beliefs can cause difficulty in the promotion of autonomous learning (Al Ghazali, 2020; Alibakhshi, 2015). Cotterall (1995) affirms that beliefs have a significant impact in learning, that is why they need to be considered when a new approach is going to be introduced. Negative beliefs about autonomous learning can result in the use of inappropriate learning strategies and a mismatch between what students expect and what teachers do in the classroom (Chan, 2001). Learners may believe it is the teacher's job to decide how they are going to learn, to transmit their knowledge, to control learning, or question why they make decisions about their learning if there are experts who can do them. These attitudes and beliefs can make learners reject the implementation of autonomous learning.

Learners' cultural background is another factor that may affect the implementation of autonomous learning. This is because some cultures favour certain habits and behaviours which contradict those needed in this approach to learning. For instance, studies have shown that although Asian students are persistent, diligent, and motivated to learn, they are passive and reluctant to work individually, which makes them depend on the teacher for their learning (Permatasari & Arianti, 2016; Pham, 2016). Wiraningsih, & Santosa (2020) explain that in some cultures the teacher is a central and powerful figure in the learning process. This prevents students from asking questions when they have doubts, show themselves individually or take control of their learning. Moreover, knowledge has been transmitted through generations from teachers to students in some countries (Nunan, 2003; Hu, 2002); therefore, asking teachers and learners to change the roles they play involves a change in their values and traditions (Lu, Jiang, & Throssell, 2013). Promoting autonomous learning in these contexts involves a change in the learning practices and cultural aspects of learners, this change increases the difficulty of reaching such goal.

2.6 Factors to consider in the implementation process

Fostering autonomous learning is complex. Sometimes teachers believe they have found a way to introduce this approach; nevertheless, they encounter many problems during this process (Everhard, 2016). Different factors affect the fostering of autonomous learning. Research in the implementation of this approach in language learning have produced findings that should be considered by anyone who intends to reach this goal. These factors are discussed next.

2.6.1 The context

The context and its characteristics need to be considered when autonomous learning is going to be implemented. The results of a study conducted by Hu & Zhang (2017) found that the cultural background, instrumental motivation, and the education system of the setting impact considerably the promotion of this learning approach. Therefore, it is vital to acknowledge the cultural background, socio-political and educational conditions of the environment, the needs of the learners, and institutional limitations of the context when trying to promote this learning approach (Yildirim, 2012; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008; Chan, 2001; Ho & Crookall, 1995). Because the cultural context can shape the expectations and outcomes of this approach (Benson, 2001), it is possible that learners from different settings can be considered autonomous according to their learning environment and conditions (Holliday, 2003). Therefore, the goal should not be to have autonomous learners according to what Western cultures define them, but in agreement with the perceptions and conditions of the context where the approach is implemented, even if it is different from that of other cultures (Yildirim, 2012). The context, the resources available, and limitations should be considered to establish what autonomous is and how to introduce this approach to learning.

2.6.2 Learner readiness

Students' readiness to learn through autonomous learning is an issue that needs to be considered before this approach is introduced (Chan, 2001). Exploring learners' readiness involves knowing their beliefs and attitudes towards learning, how willing they are to change the former and their learning practices (Abdelrazeq, 2018). Knowing this helps to determine how much support and time students will need to adapt to a new way of learning. Some may not need much help; nevertheless, the majority will if they are not used to making choices and taking responsibility of their learning (Nordlund, 2001). In addition, teachers can know how practical the implementation of autonomous learning is, and they can more appropriately select the strategies to be implemented (Boggu & Sundarsingh, 2019). All learners can become autonomous (Yildirim, 2012),

however, knowing their level of readiness would help teachers to establish the starting point to introduce this approach.

2.6.3 The knowledge and experience of the teacher

Teachers play a vital role in the fostering of autonomous learning. The findings of the studies conducted by Abdelrazeq (2018), Azin, Biria & Golestan (2018) and Darsih (2018) showed that learners consider that teachers are essential to achieve the previous. Teachers should know how to guide learners to become autonomous and create an appropriate classroom environment for the implementation of this approach (Öztürk, 2019; Azin, Biria & Golestan, 2018). Moreover, guidance and feedback from teachers are necessary to have students better organize their learning (Hermagustiana & Anggriyani, 2019), to help them reflect on their learning (Nordlund, 2001; Dickinson, 1992), make informed decisions, and develop self-awareness (Abdelrazeq, 2018; Tassinari, 2016;) once the approach has been introduced. Having experience learning autonomously is also vital. Pershukova, Nikolska, and Vasiukovych (2020) argue that teachers must be autonomous themselves to introduce this learning approach more efficiently because when they are autonomous, they understand what it is like learning according to this approach and have developed the abilities needed to learn accordingly (Alrabai, 2017; Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2017). Knowledge, experience, and commitment in the teacher are important factors to foster autonomous learning.

Teachers are essential, especially when autonomous learning is introduced among individuals who are used to learning with teacher-centred methods, because they need the teachers' guidance, assistance, and support to overcome the difficulties they encounter as they start to implement independent learning practices, and to develop the skills needed to learn autonomously (Hermagustiana & Anggriyani, 2019; Öztürk, 2019). In addition, teachers are needed because they latter provide learners with structured tasks or research assignments and suggest learning resources that can help them complete these independently (Darsih, 2018). Moreover, because making decisions about their learning may be a new practice for many, teachers are essential to provide them with choices, to assist, or advise them as they make them (Yan, 2012). This researcher also affirms that students need teachers to help them raise awareness about themselves and their learning, which can be useful to make better decisions.

Furthermore, when students have had no experience learning autonomously, they rely on the teacher to help them set their learning goals, plan their learning, develop the necessary skills and their own learning strategies, overcome difficulties, meet unexpected challenges, and interact with learning materials to become self-directed (Zhao & Huang, 2019). The teacher is also vital to provide learners with the required support to conduct their independent learning endeavours, to

assist them during this process, and to self-evaluate their learning (Zhao & Huang 2019; Nguyen, 2012). Teachers do not solve students' problems, or tell them which learning strategies they should use, but guide them so that it is the students who do it. Finally, when necessary, teachers can suggest learning materials, suggest organization, record-keeping and planning procedures, self-assessment tools and techniques, give feedback, help to find solutions, and aid students with anything they require it during their learning process (Alonazi, 2017). Learners depend on the teacher when autonomous learning is first introduced to assist them in all the aspects of their learning mentioned above. As students develop the skills needed and adapt to the new learning practices, reliance on the teacher decreases, although this may not fully stop.

Because teachers provide students with choices to help them make decisions, to conduct learning activities, to select learning materials, and the like; learner autonomy has received some criticism. It has been argued that learners cannot be autonomous if the teachers select the choices the former choose from (Schwartz, 2000). This is true, nevertheless, it is a strategy employed when autonomous learning is first introduced to assist students in different aspects of their learning (Little, 1999). Nunan (1997) contends that learner autonomy has degrees of realization because students have different capacities regarding taking control of their learning. Moreover, Benson (2001) affirms that learners should not be asked to take more responsibility they can cope with. Because of this, it is natural that the teacher provides learners with choices during the first levels, when they are not yet ready to make their own decisions about their learning. Autonomy in learning involves teachers helping students learn how to learn, providing them with resources so that they can learn on their own, assisting them to develop learning strategies, and anything they need to become autonomous learners (Fedi & Bouhass, 2018; Thavenius, 1999). Little (1999) argues that it is possible to promote autonomy in the classroom while the teacher maintains control of different aspects of the learning process. Autonomy is a process (Thanasoulas, 2000); therefore, it is possible that at the beginning some aspects are controlled by the teacher.

2.7 Guidelines to implement autonomous learning

There are no magic formulas, recipes, or set of instructions that explain how to promote autonomous learning (Everhard, 2015) because of the differences found from one context to another. Nevertheless, studies conducted in language learning have produced some guidelines that should be considered when autonomous learning is implemented regardless of the area or context it is implemented in. These are discussed next.

2.7.1 Gradual introduction

Autonomous learning involves a change for learners, a drastic one for many. Changes are usually not welcomed nor easy to adapt to because humans like stability and predictability to continue performing the practices they are used to doing (Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu, 2013; Kanter, 2012). It is not advisable to implement autonomous learning quickly because learners need time to adapt to the new learning practices and everything it involves (Bocos, Radut-Taciu & Chis, 2015; Martin, 1999). The adaptation process is neither easy nor fast (Nordlund, 2001). Students cannot be expected to take control of their learning in a short period of time. Radut-Taciu, & Chis (2015), Nordlund (2001), Brajcich (2000), and Cotterall (1995) agree that autonomous learning should be introduced gradually because this approach can be confusing and stressful. They suggest the implementation of simple practices at the beginning of this process; then, gradually increase their complexity. Reinders (2010) recommends to occasionally introduce practices peculiar of this learning approach, and once learners have adapted to these, implement new ones. Yildirim (2012) recommends continuing this process until the entire framework has been implemented. Therefore, autonomous learning should be introduced gradually.

2.7.2 Training learners

Some researchers suggest training learners to help them develop the abilities they do not possess to learn autonomously such as making their own decisions about their learning, monitoring their progress, evaluating their learning outcomes, and thinking critically about their learning (Wejira, 2019; Hu & Zhang, 2017; Tassinari, 2016; Üstünlüoğlu, 2009). Based on the results of the study done by Abdelrazeq (2018), it is recommended to have training sessions to help students learn how to perform practices common in autonomous learning such as: monitoring learning, setting objectives, and self-assessment. Cohen (2003) adds the following: awareness raising, problem solving skills, and experimenting. It is important to emphasize that training learners does not mean they are going to be trained to be autonomous. The purpose of learner training is to develop or refine the skills they need in this approach (Cohen, 2003; Wenden, 1998; Gremmo & Riley, 1995). This contributes to acquire the metacognitive and cognitive strategies that enable students to learn autonomously (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Hu & Zhang (2017) suggests having training sessions for both teachers and learners so that they all become aware of the roles they are going to play in this learning approach.

2.7.3 Support

Learning autonomously represents a drastic change for many learners (Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu, 2013; Kanter, 2012). Clarke (1994) explains when a change is introduced people face ambiguity, stress,

unfamiliarity, and they must take new risks; however, receiving assistance gives them psychological comfort and makes them feel safe. Students need to know that they have someone they can turn to if they need help, to motivate them during the learning process, and for assurance that what they are doing is correct (Dickinson, 1995). Learners need support when autonomous learning is implemented to understand this new way of learning and develop the competencies this approach requires them to have (Reinders, 2010; Chia, 2005). The latter affirms more help is needed at the beginning of the introduction process because it is then when learners have the most questions. Reinders & Cotterall (2000) found from a factor analysis that the most important determinant of success in a self-access centre was the degree of preparation and assistance the students had received. According to the results of their study, Spiro, Henderson and Clifford (2012) found that autonomous learning involves a balance between freedom and support. Learners need to be freedom to learn but guided and provided with the assistance they need to learn on their own.

2.7.4 Planning the implementation process

The implementation of autonomous learning needs to be planned carefully because it may involve drastic a change for learners. It is possible to introduce a change if its introduction is planned and organized well (Clarke, 1994). One suggestion Nordlund (2001) gives is providing learners with frameworks, structures, and the scaffolding to motivate them to take control of their learning. Martin (1999) recommends creating two plans to introduce this type of change. One that includes the procedure, elements, learning practices, and every practical aspect of the implementation process. A second plan should contain the changes learners are expected to make to become autonomous, considering where they are when the introduction process begins, then move forwards towards reaching the goal set. Morrish (1976) explains that plenty of time should be spent planning the implementation because this type of change affects the organization of the classroom, the roles teachers and learners play, the learning practices used and the assessment process. Autonomous learning includes many elements to be considered during the planning process. Teachers need to plan how each level of implementation is going to be introduced (Nunan, 1997), the elements that are going to be part of in each level, whether learners are going to be trained and how (Abdelrazeq, 2018), the support learners are going to be provided with (Reinders, 2010), the learning resources students are going to have access to (Cabreara-Ruiz, 2009), among other things. Therefore, planning is essential when autonomous learning is considered to be introduced.

2.8 Approaches to fostering autonomous learning

Fostering autonomous learning has become one of the central goals of education in the last decades (Pershukova, Nikolska and Vasiukovych, 2020; Jing-yuan, 2007). Teachers and researchers have implemented a variety of individual practices to reach the same goal such as self and peer evaluation exercises, learning logs, diaries, project work and portfolios among others (Murray, 2006). This researcher believes that it is necessary to move beyond implementing isolated practices and find approaches that are more holistic. One of these has been the use of learner-centred methods (Benson, 2011) which require students to take charge of their learning to some extent. These teaching approaches include practices that contribute to the fostering of autonomous learning. Although their main objective is to assist students to learn, they have also helped to develop autonomous learning. Another approach that has been employed has been the use of process models. These have been used to introduce and develop autonomous language learning in different learning contexts (Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Murray, 2006; St. Louis, 2006; Nordlund, 2001; Bertonldi, Kollar & Ricard, 1988), and have been successful at it. In this section, these two approaches are discussed, as well as their appropriateness in this study.

2.8.1 Teaching approaches

Teaching approaches such as student-centred learning, cooperative learning, and task-based learning foster autonomous learning by involving students in the decisions made regarding their learning process, by having students interact with others to construct their knowledge, by asking students to work independently using the materials and resources they are provided with or they choose to use (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), and by involving them in the evaluation of their learning (Wejira, 2019). The construction of their own knowledge is an aspect common in these teaching approaches. They are constructivist-based. According to constructivism, knowledge is acquired by generating it rather than through its transmission (Applefield, Huber, and Moallem, 2001). This is the main pillar of constructivism (Fernando & Marikar, 2017). These researchers explain that knowledge is not passively received or imposed on the learner but actively constructed by them. According to Christie (2005) construction of knowledge is achieved through experience, problem solving, authentic tasks, and assessment or through exploring, questioning, and analysing tasks and experiences (Applefield, Huber, and Moallem, 2001). Moreover, Sjøberg (2010) affirms that although knowledge is personal, learners build it by interacting with the world around them, as well as by communicating and collaborating with others, which is what researchers called social constructivism (Amineh & Asl, 2015). These researchers also state that social constructivists believe that learning is an active process which requires learners to discover knowledge by themselves; therefore, guessing, intuitive thinking, problem solving and reflecting

should be encouraged and promoted. By sharing, comparing, and debating with others, learners can construct and refine their knowledge (Applefield, Huber, and Moallem, 2001).

Even though learners construct their own knowledge, the role of the teacher is essential in constructivism. Teachers act as facilitators of learning helping and guiding students throughout the learning process (Fernando & Marikar, 2017). In addition, teachers consider what students already know and enable them to apply their knowledge, engage them in learning, provide realistic and meaningful learning situations (Amineh & Asl, 2015). Thus, the teacher rather than transmit knowledge guides learners to actively construct their knowledge. The previous requires learner to be involved in their learning by choosing information, creating hypotheses, and making decisions to connect prior with new experiences. These can be found in student-centred approaches. Some of these are discussed next.

2.8.1.1 Cooperative learning

Cooperative learning requires students to work in small groups or pairs in order to reach their learning objectives. Research indicates that there is a positive interdependence among students in this approach which leads them to reach their goals by collaborating with each other (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Autonomous learning does not mean learning in isolation. From a sociocultural perspective, it is a social agency which involves interaction among learners to help each other; where more knowledgeable ones help others to learn (Little, 2000). Peer assistance and learning in groups are elements of cooperative learning which contribute to have students manage their learning (Nakai, 2016). There is an interdependence between cooperative learning and autonomous learning. The latter involves collaboration in learning and the former fosters independent learning (Wang, 2012). Students are not fully autonomous in cooperative learning. Some of the activities they conduct may be teacher-led; nevertheless, students can oversee making some decisions such as who they will work with, where they work to complete the task, when, and whether they only use the resources and materials provided or look for more. If they are given choices to show the product of their learning, they may choose which option they do. Allowing learners to make these decisions helps them to begin to develop this skill and to give them a small portion of the control of their learning; which are relevant features of autonomous learning (Lengkanawati, 2017; Bhattacharya and Chauhan, 2010; Nunan, 1997).

The findings of an investigation conducted by Wang (2012) in which cooperative learning was introduced in a classroom; showed that most learners enjoyed learning by interacting and helping one another and appreciated the fact that the teacher rather than a teacher was a facilitator during the learning process. According to the results of another study conducted by Hu and Zhang

(2017), teamwork helped students become less teacher dependent to complete difficult tasks, which motivated them to learn. They also found that collaboration helped to create a positive learning environment and contributed to foster autonomous learning. Wejira (2019) explains that cooperative learning activities allow learners to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning. Dickenson (1993) adds that this type of learning activities helps students to develop the capacity to regulate their learning and take responsibility of it.

2.8.1.2 Task-based learning

Tasks-based learning (TBL) is an approach in which learners perform meaningful tasks to reach their learning goals (Harmer, 2015; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Van den Braden, 2006); learning by doing as Skehan (2003) defined it. The tasks can be either pedagogical; performed inside the classroom, or real-world related. This teaching approach has some features that contribute to the fostering of autonomous learning. Structured tasks give students some control of their learning (Darsih, 2018). This approach includes activities that allow learners to direct part of their learning such as choosing learning materials, assisting others, making their own decisions, and keeping time (Alrabai, 2017). Ghufron & Nurdianingsih (2019) add that TBL helps students to develop their thinking skills and has students work in teams to reach their goals. These activities lead to having students develop responsibility and become more autonomous in their learning gradually and systematically (Wejira, 2019; Hu and Zhang, 2017; Morbedadze, 2015; Al-Saadi, 2011).

Research shows that TBL shares some practices with autonomous learning. Student involvement is one of them. The results of a study carried out by Carless (2002) shows that a high degree of student involvement took place when group activities were used in TBL. These findings resemble those obtained by Ruso (2007), who found that task-based learning increased student involvement and improved students' learning. Another aspect TBL and autonomous learning have in common is the role the teacher plays in these approaches. After the task is explained, the teacher lets students manage their own interactions; nevertheless, teachers monitor learners and intervene or help students when needed, as they perform their tasks in pairs or small teams (Harmer, 2015; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). As it happens in autonomous learning, the role of the teacher in TBL is that of a facilitator of learning (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). Finally, TBL helps to raise learners' awareness because it makes them analyse how they can apply what they learnt inside the classroom in their lives (Larsen-Freeman, & Anderson, 2013; Robinson, 2011). Awareness raising is a vital component of autonomous learning (Darsih, 2018; Tassinari, 2016). Students become conscious of different aspects that are connected to their learning for instance what this approach is about, their strengths, and weaknesses (Abdelrazeq, 2018; Cohen, 2003).

2.8.1.3 Student-centred learning

Student-centred learning (SCL) has some elements in common with autonomous learning, which contribute to foster the latter. Trinidad (2019) argues that in the former learners take control of their own learning. They are actively involved at every stage of their learning process by establishing their learning goals, identifying, and developing learning strategies that would help them to reach their goals; selecting the content to be learnt, their learning materials, methods and techniques; creating their study plans, as well as monitoring and assessing their progress (Alrabai, 2017). In other words, they take control of their learning (Karababa, Eker, & Arik, 2010). This does not make learners autonomous; nevertheless, by performing this practice, learners experience one aspect of autonomous learning (Lengkanawati, 2017).

Another element from SCL that contributes to foster learning autonomously is the gradual development of learner responsibility (Al-Saadi, 2011). Weimer (2002) affirms that in SCL students become responsible of their own learning. This is achieved by replacing lectures for active learning; having students participate in self-paced learning programs and working in cooperative group (Nanney, 2004). In addition, the high level of learner involvement found in SCL (Jones, 2007; Huba & Freed, 2000) results in learners taking more responsibility of their learning (Slunt & Giancario, 2004). A distinctive characteristic of student-centred learning is the fact that there is a great interdependence and collaboration between the teacher and learner, and among learners (Singh, 2012; Lea, Stephenson, & Troy, 2003; Huba & Freed, 2000). Jones (2007) explains in SCL students share their learning experiences, brainstorm ideas, react to the comments of others, work together to reach their goals, helping one another, collaborate, learn from each other, consider others' contributions, and ask for help when they need it. Huba & Freed (2000) contend that in student-centred learning there is a culture of collaboration, cooperation and support; a relationship of respect between teacher and learner develops which contributes to holistic growth and development.

Independent learning is a feature from SCL that helps to promote autonomous learning. Jones (2007) states that students become less teacher dependent in SCL because they are encouraged to learn on their own and find solutions to the problems they encounter along their learning process (Nanney, 2004). Regarding this issue, Signh (2012) explains that learners are provided with opportunities for independent learning, working, and learning from one another, and with the help of the teacher. This is not done without support. Teachers make sure learners have access to what they need to learn in this fashion. Students are provided with the conditions and resources they need to construct their own knowledge through inquiry, communication, critical thinking and problem solving (Huba & Freed, 2000). Although students are not autonomous in

SCL, these practices contribute to make students less teacher dependent, which is a feature found in autonomous learning that introduces them to learning according to this approach.

Finally, learner assessment in SCL resembles that of autonomous learning. Students are assessed individually according to their learning goals and levels of knowledge or proficiency; using different assignments, tasks, resources, considering students' strengths, needs and interests in SCL (Andrade, Kristen, & Brooke, 2012). This is what Andrade & Valtcheva (2009) refer to as individualized assessment. Some other assessment practices used in autonomous learning and SCL are self-assessment, peer assessment, formative tests, and portfolios (Andrade, Kristen, & Brooke, 2012). These contribute to foster autonomous learning because it gets students familiar with the type of assessment employed in autonomous learning.

These three teaching approaches include elements from autonomous learning which contribute to develop it among learners (Alrabai, 2017; Hu and Zhang, 2017). However, because they were causing negative reactions among the participants, as mentioned in the Background of the Study and Research Rationale, it was necessary to look for another option to introduce and develop autonomous learning among participants. Existing literature indicates models have been used to reach this goal. These will be discussed next.

2.8.2 Process models

Process models have successfully foster autonomous learning in a variety of educational settings (Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Murray, 2006; St. Louis, 2006; Nordlund, 2001; Bertonldi, Kollar & Ricard, 1988). They are both process models and models of teaching. This means they were created to introduce autonomous learning and help students learn content. In the following section these are defined.

2.8.2.1 Definition of process models

In this study, a process model refers to a model of teaching that helps to teach something and includes the sequence to be followed to foster autonomous learning. According to Eggen & Kauchak (2006), a model of teaching describes how teachers structure their teaching to make it more systematic and efficient. It is a plan created to guide teachers' instruction in the classroom (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2014). This includes teaching strategies and materials employed systematically to reach the target objectives. Wilson & Cole (1996) contend that models of teaching help to create, organize, arrange, and deliver teaching and learning experiences. This researcher adds that they include theoretical or instructional frameworks regarding teaching techniques, group work, classroom management, content development, the role of the learner

and teacher, the design of learning materials, the teaching-learning process, and guidelines to develop educational experiences. Teaching models guide instruction from beginning to end, according to specific theoretical and philosophical principles, and include a description of all the elements needed to make teaching efficient.

Models of teaching have several components. They have an objective that gives direction to what is done in the classroom and how (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2014). The objective also defines the type learning experiences to be created and employed, the materials selected, the teaching and learning strategies to be used, as well as other essential aspects of the teaching process. Another component is the description of the conditions needed to successfully implement it (Pateliya, 2013). This refers to the resources usually found in a school, as well as any other requirements such as special skills teachers should have, equipment, media, learning materials, and facilities. The lack of the appropriate conditions required by the model can decrease its efficiency. They also have syntax. This is the sequence of steps to be followed to organize it, and a description of how the model progresses (Maheshwari & Maheshwari, 2013). This element informs the teacher how the model was put together, what the model is like, and the path that must be taken to implement it. The social system is another component of this type of models. Joyce, Weil & Calhoun (2014) explain that this system specifies the rules of engagement of the model as if it were a mini society. The social system is concerned with how the interactions between students and teachers should be conducted, the relationship between them, the rules of the classroom, and the behaviours expected from students. Finally, each model has what Maheshwari & Maheshwari (2013) refer to as application. This is a description of how students can transfer what was learnt inside the classroom to other life experiences.

On the other hand, process models explain the process to be followed to implement something and how it should be done (Rolland, 1998; Sommerville, 1996). They have been used because they provide a roadmap which gives teachers stability, control, organization, and guidance to reach the established goal (Tsui & Karam, 2006). They provide instructions, suggestions, and other relevant information regarding how to implement a change. In addition, process models inform the teacher the resources and conditions required, was well as any other special materials that may be needed to successfully implement a change (Davis, 2009). Finally, these models explain the norms and behaviour patterns expected from students while the model is implemented (Rolland, 1998). In other words, a code of conduct is created to inform learners about the desired behaviours from them and their consequences. In conclusion, a process model in this investigation includes the steps to be taken to reach a goal, their sequence, the guidelines to be considered during the implementation process, the behaviours expected from students, the resources and conditions the setting needs to have so that the objective of the model can be

achieved. In the next section, the results of the analysis conducted to models that have been created to foster autonomous learning are presented.

2.8.2.2 Analysis of process models

Process models have been used to promote autonomous learning in different settings; although this has been done in language learning, the results were analysed to get a greater understanding of how they have helped to achieve their objective. Eight models were examined; five were part of studies done by researchers who explored their effectiveness to promote autonomous language learning in the contexts where they were conducted (Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Murray, 2006; St. Louis, 2006; Nordlund, 2001; Bertonldi, Kollar & Ricard, 1988), and three that have been used as references to promote autonomous language learning but have not been implemented (Reinders, 2010; Scharle and Szabo, 2000; Nunan, 1997). The results of this analysis are presented next.

2.8.2.2.1 Learner support

It was found that most of the models provided learners with some type of support during the introduction of autonomous learning. Chia (2005) asserts that assistance is especially necessary at the beginning because it is when learners have the most questions and need the most help. This was given through personal tutors who met with learners individually and regularly to help them in their learning and during the transition to motivate, to encourage them to use new learning strategies, and to receive feedback during the tutorials (Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Nordlund, 2001; Bertoldi, Kollar & Ricard, 1988). In addition, some students were able to attend resource centres where they had access to a large assortment of learning materials that helped them during their learning process. The tutors from the centre also assisted learners by suggesting resources, learning strategies, explaining how they could use them, and answering any questions they had about the work they did there or anything else students requested assistance with (Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Reinders, 2010; St. Louis, 2006; Nordlund, 2001; Bertonldi, Kollar & Ricard, 1988). Nordlund (2001) offered further assistance by creating different support groups students could join to receive extra help in the development of certain aspects of their learning. Here, learners received feedback from peers and counsels regarding their learning, resources and strategy use.

2.8.2.2.2 Student involvement in the decisions made about learning

Learners were involved in the decisions made regarding their learning in all the models analysed. During the planning stage, students established their learning needs, selected strategies, materials, learning activities, and tasks they chose to complete, and decided whether they wanted

to attend the resource centre or join the discussion groups created (Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Reinders, 2010; Murray, 2006; St. Louis, 2006; Nordlund, 2001; Scharle and Szabo, 2000; Bertonldi, Kollar & Ricard, 1988; Nunan, 1997;). According to Wejira (2019) and Holec (1981) defining content and progression, determining objectives, selecting methods and techniques, monitoring the learning process are essential in autonomous learning. Reinders (2010) suggests giving learners options to choose from whenever they make decisions about their learning, and have students gradually decide what, when, and how they want to learn. Nevertheless, this is not enough to make informed choices (Lengkanawati, 2017). To achieve this, learners need to be provided with relevant information and choices consistent with their values (Marteau, Dormandy, & Michie, 2001). Chi (2016) argues that informed decisions are made when students know all the options available, become aware of the advantages and disadvantages of each choice, consider all the alternatives they have, and use this knowledge to make their final decisions. This is how learners should make decisions; nevertheless, this is not how decisions are usually made (Bekker, Thornton, Airey, Connelly, et al., 1999).

One reason why people have difficulty making informed choices is not being allowed to make their own decisions in the past (Ahmed, 2012), so they do not know how. This can result in being afraid to make incorrect decisions or take risks. Moreover, sometimes learners are not given enough time to decide, which can lead to making inappropriate decisions that produce negative results (Chi, 2016). In addition, students may not have enough information and select based on what they know, which may not be the best option. The opposite may happen as well. People may be provided with too much information, which they cannot understand or process and choose something without really considering its implications (Bekker, Thornton, Airey, Connelly, et al., 1999). Furthermore, it is possible that individuals get overwhelmed by the number of choices provided or the complexity of the decision to be made, they simply do not want to participate in the process, or they do not like any of the choices. Whichever may be the reason, it seems safe to say that making informed choices goes beyond just providing learners options to choose from.

Choice selection depends on having access to information and can considerably affect the decisions made (Chi, 2016). Lack of information can result in not knowing all the options learners have or their implications; consequently, they are not able to make informed choices. Not possessing the capacity needed to compute and process all the information available is another factor (Baxter, Glendinning, and Clarke, 2008). These researchers comment that this overload of information for some people leads to making decisions without considering it, thus informed choices are not made. The way information is presented is also relevant (Long and Curtis, 2015). If it is not clear, people will not use it to make choices or wrong decisions may be made because

they are based on misunderstood data. People also make decisions based on the benefits and drawbacks they think the options available have (Chi, 2016). Two choices may be very similar; nevertheless, if people believe one has more advantages that the other, they will likely choose it even though there are the same. Finally, people's emotions; tiredness and stress, as well as aspects of the choice to be made such as type of decision, seriousness of the outcome, familiarity with the decision, and level of certainty, play an important role in choice selection (Bekker, Thornton, Airey, Connelly, et al., 1999).

One suggestion to help individuals make informed choices is to clearly explain the information people need, providing appropriate choices and informing people about the implications of each option (Chi, 2016). Baxter, Glendinning, and Clarke (2008) explain that there is no point in increasing the number of options if not enough information is given about these. People need to compare the advantages and disadvantages of each choice to make informed decisions. Another recommendation is to divide the decision-making process into a series of steps learners can follow more easily but lead to the same outcome (Chi, 2016). The purpose of this is to prevent overwhelming learners with information by having them take gradual steps to reach their goals. Ahmed (2012) suggests two steps to make informed choices. The first is to select the option that seems to be the best. This involves evaluating all the options then choose the best alternative. The second step is to check the choice made to make sure its implications and conditions have been considered and such option is the best. Since making decisions is a skill, it can be improved; nevertheless, it is necessary that individuals analyse the outcomes of their choices to establish how appropriate they were (Ahmed, 2012). This author suggests that the previous decreases the fear to take risks and increases confidence to make informed choices.

2.8.2.2.3 Use of resources available

The models were created considering the resources available in the contexts where they were implemented. Some students used materials and received support from the self-access language centres or resource centres (Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Nordlund, 2001; Bertonldi, Kollar & Ricard, 1988). Other facilities available were employed by students such as a computer laboratory to work with certain software, web applications, or online resources to assist their learning (Reinders, 2010; St. Louis, 2006); some of which were purchased by the researchers (St. Louis, 2006; Bertonldi, Kollar & Ricard, 1988). In some cases, researchers had the help of counsellors that met with students in one-on-one sessions weekly to guide them, help them, and give them feedback (Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Nordlund, 2001; Bertonldi, Kollar & Ricard, 1988). Nordlund (2001) created different support groups according to the needs of the learners, which they could join receive assistance to develop certain skills.

2.8.2.2.4 Levels of implementation

One of the most relevant findings was the use of levels of implementation found in all the models examined. Egel (2009) and Nunan (1997) suggested to introduce autonomous learning through phases, or levels of implementation (Onozowa, 2010). They make learners to gradually acquire the knowledge and skills they need and slowly adapt to this way of learning (Spiro, Henderson, and Clifford, 2012). Dang (2012) and Onozowa (2010) explain that this structure results in learners conducting behavioural and cognitive actions that lead them to reach their learning goals and develop the competencies they need to be more autonomous at each stage of their learning process. Each level of implementation found is discussed next.

2.8.2.2.4.1 Raising learners' awareness

Learner awareness was raised in most of the models analysed. However, there was no agreement regarding what learners became conscious of. Some focused on their strengths and weaknesses (Reinders, 2010; St. Louis, 2006); learning styles, professional and linguistic needs, their past learning experiences, and learning strategies employed (Bertonldi, Kollar & Ricard, 1988). Others helped students to become aware of what autonomous learning was, how it worked, and what it implied for them (Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Reinders, 2010; Nordlund, 2001); their learning strategy use (Reinders, 2010; Murray, 2006; St. Louis, 2006;); autonomous learning behaviors, (St. Louis, 2006); pedagogical goals, and materials used (Nunan, 1997). However, there is a general agreement that raising learners' awareness is a key aspect of autonomous learning (Abdelrazeq, 2018; Darsih, 2018; Tassinari, 2016; Cotterall, 1995;).

It is necessary that learners become aware of what autonomous learning is, and what changes it implies in their learning (Abdelrazeq, 2018; Ajideh, 2009). This concept may be given different meanings; therefore, it is important to define it before it is applied in the classroom (Nguyen, Tangen, & Beutel, 2014). Informing learners about what the change entails is vital because it can decrease the level of uncertainty among learners, it helps them to get prepared for the new learning practices, and it contributes to increase learners' readiness for change (Darsih, 2018). It is suggested to raise learners' consciousness about their strengths and weaknesses to make better choices about their learning (Cohen, 2003). For instance, if they discover they are competent at working with others and this helps them learn, they will likely and easily select to work in pairs or teams. Moreover, learners should gain awareness about the most appropriate methods, resources, and strategies for them (Azin, Biria & Golestan, 2018; Zulaihah & Harida, 2017). When this is achieved, learners can plan their learning more efficiently and quickly because they already know what assists their learning. Furthermore, students need to know the roles they and their teachers play in autonomous learning (Ajideh, 2009; Cotterall, 1995;). This knowledge enables

them to know what is expected of them during the learning process, and how teachers can assist them. Learners need to become conscious of several issues; however, not all of them must be addressed at once. Cotterall (2000) explains that awareness raising will develop as students get more experience learning with this approach.

2.8.2.2.4.2 Selecting learning objectives

In all the models, but one (Scharle and Szabo, 2000), learners were able to select or adapt their learning goals. This was done considering their needs. Because the goals were linguistic, learners had the opportunity to decide which language skills or areas of knowledge they wanted to focus on to improve to increase their EFL proficiency. When learners determine their own objectives, they get more motivated to work to achieve them because they chose what they intend to learn, can select the learning strategies they prefer, and attempt to find their own means to reach the goals they set (Boggu & Sundarsingh, 2019). When students are allowed to set their learning objectives, they can learn what they need and expand or refine areas they need to improve (Darsih, 2018). In addition, this practice contributes to sharing with learners the control of their learning, which is one of the main pillars of autonomous learning (Zulaihah & Harida, 2017).

2.8.2.2.4.3 Planning learning

Learners were given the opportunity to plan their learning in five of the models examined. This was done by having learners develop their study plans (Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Nordlund, 2001;), and select learning materials (Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Reinders, 2010; Murray, 2006; St. Louis, 2006), learning activities (Murray, 2006), and learning strategies (Reinders, 2010). According to Reinders (2010), planning learning means establishing what is going to be done to learn, how learning is going to happen, and when. Learners may also select the learning materials, tasks, strategies, methods, and techniques to be employed during the learning process (Warni & Supraptiningsih, 2019). It is essential to allow students to participate during the planning of their learning (Lengkanawati, 2017). Reinders (2010) suggests providing learners with choice to help them make these decisions, which it is advisable when this approach is first introduced. Because students may be permitted to make several decisions, it is suggested to have them make a few choices at first, and as they gain experience, increase the number and complexity of decisions they make (Yildirim, 2012). Wejira (2019) argues that involving learners in this type of decisions means sharing with them the responsibility of their learning, which is what autonomous learning is about.

2.8.2.2.4.4 Monitoring learning

Students were asked to monitor their learning in all the models but two (Bertoldi, Kollar, & Ricard, 1988; Nunan, 1997). St. Louis (2006) and Nordlund (2001) explain that this practice involved having students record anything they did during the learning process, state what they have learnt and the areas they needed to improve. Ajideh (2009) and Nunan (1997) add that the purpose of monitoring learning is to identify the problems students had during the learning process to make changes and prevent them in the future. Different instruments were used for this purpose: report sheets, learning logs or diaries, counselling sessions, progress reports, small support groups, and study logs (Iimuro & Berger, 2010; St. Louis, 2006; Nordlund, 2001). Monitoring learning also helps students to raise awareness about their learning choices and practices (Ajideh, 2009). It enables students to be conscious regarding the activities they have completed from their learning plan, those they still need to do, and how much time they have left to complete the unfinished tasks. This contributes to have students regulate their work and learning, and it increases motivation, commitment, and persistence to learn (Hu & Zhang, 2017). Because students have different learning plans and they do different activities and tasks, they need to monitor their own learning to make sure they will be able to reach their learning objectives.

2.8.2.2.4.5 Assessing learning

Learners were involved in the assessment process in three of the models examined. This included the assessment of learning (Reinders, 2010) and external resources (Murray, 2006), and self-evaluation (Nordlund, 2001). Students need to take control of their learning at every stage of this process in autonomous learning (Lengkanawati, 2017; Karababa, Eker, & Arik, 2010). Assessment is part of such process, that is why it is suggested to allow students to participate in the choices made regarding their assessment. The results of a study by Warni & Supraptiningsih (2019) revealed that teachers believed it is possible to involve learners in these decisions. This practice contributes to have students take charge of their learning. Nunan (2003) contends that teachers could share control of classroom by engaging learners in the evaluation process. Based on the findings of the study conducted by St. Louis (2006), it was established that when students were allowed to select the value of the areas they were going to work on and the deadlines for the graded assignments, they managed their time more effectively and became more responsible of their learning. These improvements resulted from the fact that learners were more careful with the work they did and were more committed to their learning. Although this level was not found in most of the models, some include it and literature indicates that it is relevant (Zulaihah & Harida, 2017); therefore, it is important to consider it when fostering this approach.

2.8.2.2.4.6 Reflecting on learning practices

Two models included reflection as the last level in their models (Reinders, 2010; Nordlund, 2001). The former required students to assess the language learning strategies used and the learning activities they did. The latter asked students to reflect on what they did to learn. In this investigation, reflection is defined as a thinking process which makes students review their learning, analyse it, evaluate it, and draw conclusions about it. This definition takes elements from the definitions provided by Clara (2015), Illeris (2007), Learning Development Unit (2004) and Boud, Keogh, & Walker (1985). This type of reflection is called on-action, which means it takes place after a learning experience has occurred (Ottesen, 2006). It has four phases. In the first one a learning experience is selected and revised. The next step involves analysing what worked well and what did not. This includes learning strategies, practices, activities, materials, resources, modes of working, and anything else relevant to the learning process. The third stage is about evaluating the experience. This is concerned with deducing why some things worked and some did not, as well as what caused them to have positive or negative results. The last step are the conclusions. Here students summarize what they learnt from their experience and reflect on it. Conclusions are drawn to be considered in future learning experiences, to apply what was learnt and improve learning.

Although only reflection was included in only two models, existing literature highlights its importance. Reflecting about every stage of the learning process is an essential aspect of autonomous learning (Tassinari, 2016). This researcher states that the purpose of reflection is to have students analyze their learning experiences, beliefs, and perceptions about learning. By doing so, learners identify what helped them learn, what caused them problems in their learning (Reinders, 2010; Scharle & Szabo, 2000), establish how effective were their learning practices, strategies, and tasks; as well as to lead them to find solutions to the problems they encountered and think of the changes they need to make in their learning practices to enhance them (Reinders, 2010; Nordlund, 2001). Tassinari (2012) explains that reflecting about different aspects of the learning process leads to raising awareness about it, which is necessary to make informed decisions and changes in the learning practices used.

2.8.2.2.4.6.1 Reflective learning

Reflective learning is defined as an ongoing process (Ashraf, 2017) that makes learners focus on their learning experiences, analyse why they did what they did, what were the consequences of their actions, and what they learnt from their learning experiences so that they make better and more informed decisions in the future (King, 2002). Colomer, Pallisera, Fullana, Burriel, & Fernandez (2013) state that this approach involves reflecting on all sources of knowledge

available to get a better understanding of a situation. Gray (2021) explains that by having learners reflect on their learning experiences, they can develop the ability to evaluate their learning and find areas they need to develop. It is essential to develop the ability to reflect among learners, not only about their actions but also their thoughts and emotions (Colomer, Serra, Cabanate, & Bubnys, 2018). Reflection makes a significant difference in learning because it contributes to raise awareness regarding different aspects of an experience; both positive and negative (Boyd & Fales, 1983). Becoming aware of what deters learning helps to prevent repeating such actions or behaviours; thus, the learning process is improved.

Reflective learning promotes deep learning, connects theory and practice, expands students' critical evaluation skills, increases their involvement in their learning, and contributes to develop lifelong learners (Griggs, Holden, Lawless, and Rae, 2018; Henderson, Napan, and Monteiro, 2004). Moreover, students become more responsible of their learning, increase their personal growth and metacognitive awareness, develop their thinking processes, notice the relation between effort put in and results obtained, and become conscious of their motives and actions (Gray, 2021). In addition, Colomer, Serra, Cabanate, & Bubnys (2018) affirm that reflective learning makes students become aware of their mistakes and learn from them. These authors also argue that students develop agency, higher cognitive processes and can determine problems, find solutions, compare, and contrast. The results of a study conducted by Colomer, Pallisera, Fullana, Burriel, & Fernandez (2013) showed that through reflective learning students were able to know what they needed to learn, evaluate their learning plans and learning, raise awareness about their learning process, as well as to find strategies to overcome difficulties while learning and to improve this process. Overall, these researchers concluded that students had positive opinions about the implementation of reflective learning.

Reflective learning includes six steps (Gibbs, 1988). The first one is description. Here learners are asked to describe their learning experience. The second one is feelings. This step requires learners to analyse how they felt and what their thoughts were like during their experience. The third step is evaluation. Students determine what helped them learn and what did not. What comes next is analysis. Here learners examine why some actions, strategies, activities, materials and resources worked well and why some did not. In the fifth step students generate knowledge from their experience, which is used to create conclusions about it, as well as to establish what can be done to improve it. The last stage is called action plan. Here learners state what their learning is going to be like from then on, considering what they learnt and concluded from their experience.

There is a clear connection between reflective learning and autonomous learning. Both approaches favour the development of knowledge and have students reflect as part of the

learning process (Boggu & Sundarsingh; 2019; Griggs, Holden, Lawless, and Rae, 2018; Henderson, Napan, and Monteiro, 2004; Boyd & Fales, 1983). By reflecting on their learning, students become aware of what helps them learn. When they apply such knowledge in other experiences, they become more independent in their learning, which is a feature of autonomous learning (Shawwa, 2010). Another aspect these two approaches have in common is student involvement in their learning and having them take more responsibility of it (Gray, 2021; Lawless, and Rae, 2018; Borg and Alrabai, 2017; Griggs, Holden, Cabrera-Ruiz, 2009; Henderson, Napan, and Monteiro, 2004;). These aspects are significant because they enable learners to make decisions about their learning.

2.9 Overview

The fostering of autonomous learning is one of the main concerns of education nowadays (Pershukova, Nikolska, and Vasiukovych, 2020). Research has shown that this approach benefits learners in different ways (Vasiukovych, 2020; Boggu & Sundarsingh, 2019; Wejira, 2019; Darsih, 2018; Tassinari, 2016; Pershukova, Nikolska, and Morbedadze, 2015; Al-Busaidi and Al-Maamari, 2014; Dam, 2011). However, there are also some challenges, aspects, and guidelines to consider in the introduction of this approach (Abdelrazeq, 2018; Bocos, Radut-Taciu & Chis, 2015; Rajaee, 2013; Chia, 2005; Nunan, 1997). One strategy that has been used to achieve the previous in language learning has been the use of models. The results of the studies which employed them showed that they are useful to foster autonomous learning (Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Louis, 2006; Murray, 2006; Nordlund, 2001; Bertonldi, Kollar & Ricard, 1988). One element found in these models that has contributed to achieve their goals is the use of levels of implementation (Onozowa, 2010; Reinders, 2010; Egel, 2009; Scharle & Szabo, 2000; Nunan, 1997). These levels enabled a gradual introduction of autonomous learning, which allows students progressively adapt to learning with this approach (Henderson and Clifford, 2012). Other useful elements were the support students were given to adapt to the new way of learning, their involvement in the decisions made about their learning, and the use of the resources available in each context. Based on the findings from the studies that used models to promote autonomous learning and the results of the analysis made to these models, it was concluded that the employment of a process model was appropriate to use in this study to reach such goal. The next step was the selection, creation, or adaptation of the model to be implemented. This issue is discussed next.

2.10 Selection of the model to be adopted

A second analysis was conducted to the models reviewed to select one that could be adopted in this study. Adoption in this study means implementing the model as it was created, without removing or adding anything. Two main criteria were considered for the selection of a model to

be adopted: it included all or most of levels of implementation and whether the elements it required were available at the setting where this research was going to be conducted. The former was considered because the results of the first analysis and existing literature indicated the relevance of each level to gradually foster autonomous learning. The latter was a criterion because choosing a model that required something the researcher could not provide or was not available for learners would significantly affect the introduction of this approach. This agrees with what Warni & Supraptiningsih (2019) argue; the features of the setting and learners must be considered whenever autonomous learning is going to be introduced in a classroom.

Each model had some advantages which helped them reach their goals in the settings they were employed. They all included some or most of the levels of implementation that helped to promote autonomous learning. Moreover, some of them employed different strategies to assist students during their learning and the introduction process. This facilitated adapting to the new way of learning and the development of skills needed to learn autonomously. Furthermore, every model allowed students to make decisions about their learning, some more than others and at different stages of their learning process. This contributed to give learners control of their learning. Finally, researchers took advantage of the facilities and human resources available to provide learners with support and guidance while autonomous learning was fostered. Nevertheless, there were several factors which prevented the adoption of any of the models examined.

2.10.1 Reasons for not adopting any of the models analysed

None of the models examined could be adopted because of the following reasons. The models by Nunan, Bertoldi, Kollar & Ricard, St Louis, and Iimuro & Berger did not involve learners in the assessment of their learning, nor made them reflect about it. Reinders (2010) affirms that when the previous happens autonomous learning is not fully fostered. Involving learners in the decisions made regarding the evaluation of their learning is essential to foster autonomous learning (Tassinari, 2016; Yamashita, 2015). Assessing their learning is one of the responsibilities learners need to assume (Holec, 1981). In addition, the researcher believed that reflection is necessary because it helps students to notice what helped them learn, what did not, and what changes they need to make to improve their learning. The knowledge that emerges from this practice can be used to improve their decision-making and problem-solving, which can lead to enhancing their learning (Boggu & Sundarsingh, 2019). These and other drawbacks found in these models led the researcher not to adopt any of them.

One reason not to use the models by Bertoldi, Kollar & Ricard, Nordlund, and Iimuro & Berger was because they required the provision of different types of assistance the researcher could not offer. One was the support from several tutors to meet with each learner weekly to help them with anything related to their learning or adapting to autonomous learning. This investigation was done by the researcher without the support of any colleagues; therefore, it was impossible to assign tutors to each of the participants. It is true that learners need a great deal of support to assume responsibility for their learning (Reinders, 2010); nevertheless, such support is given according to what is possible in each learning setting (Yildirim, 2012). It was beyond the bounds of possibility for the researcher to provide this type of assistance because he did not have a group of tutors to help him, nor enough time to meet with each learner weekly because he was teaching full-time while this investigation was done. Another type of support the models by Bertoldi, Kollar & Ricard, Nordlund, Iimuro & Berger gave learners but was impossible for the researcher to provide, was access to a wide assortment of learning materials from a resource centre. Although one existed at the research setting, the request to allow participants to access it was denied by the university. Adopting any of these models without providing the support they required could hinder the possibility to reach their goals.

One major problem found in the models by Murray, St Louis, Nunan, and Scharle & Szabo was that not enough support was given to learners. They were provided with little assistance or guidance during some stages of the learning and implementation processes. They did not include a well-planned support system that continuously guided, assisted, or provided learners with the scaffolding needed. When autonomous learning is introduced, learner support is essential because they are asked to carry out practices they likely had never done before. It is at the beginning of the introduction process when support is needed the most (Clarke, 1994); however, it is necessary throughout. Chia (2005) explains that when this approach is introduced, students require help to understand how to learn according to it and develop the competencies it requires. The participants of this study needed assistance to adapt to autonomous learning and during their learning because this approach is new to them; however, none of these models provided learners with enough support.

Some models required giving students access to software or online services that were purchased by the researchers (St. Louis, 2006; Bertonldi, Kollar & Ricard, 1988), or continuous access to a computer laboratory to use such software or apps (Reinders, 2010; St. Louis 2006). However, due to the lack of financial resources for this project, the researcher was unable to buy the former. Regarding the latter, students from three different schools regularly use such facilities during the morning and some classes are taught there; thus, learners did not have free access to use its resources. One could argue that the online tools and websites could be accessed via Wi-Fi;

unfortunately, this type of internet connection is very slow and sometimes non-existent; therefore, the researcher did not consider using it.

The models by Nunan, Scharle & Szabo, and Reinders had never been implemented in a learning setting to introduce autonomous learning. They include elements that are appropriate to reach their goals and have been referenced in some of the literature published on this topic; however, there are no studies that indicate how effective they are at promoting autonomous learning. This prevented the adoption of any of them to be implemented in this study. In addition, Zorro, Baracaldo, & Benjumea (2006) instead of adopting Nunan's model created their own, suggested that it was best to adapt one. Adapting a model leads to making it appropriate to the learning context and limitations of the context to be implemented. There is not a universal framework that can be applied in any setting because each model is adapted to the context where it is going to be introduced; its education system, characteristics, and the cultural background of the learners (Hu & Zhang, 2017). Due to this principle and because none of the models analysed could be adopted to be implemented as they were created, the researcher decided to adapt one of these models to be used in this study.

2.10.2 Selection of the model to be adapted

The criteria employed for the selection of the model to be adapted was the same used before for the selection of a model: it included all or most of the levels of implementation used to promote autonomous learning and most of the elements required for this process were available at the research setting. It is necessary to consider the cultural background, educational conditions of the environment, the needs of the learners, and institutional limitations of the context autonomous learning is going to be promoted (Warni & Supraptiningsih, 2019; Yildirim, 2012; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). The model selected to be adapted was the one created by Reinders because it includes the six levels of implementation found: raising awareness, setting goals, planning learning, monitoring progress, assessing learning, and reflecting about their learning. The only other model with the same number of levels is the one by Nordlund (2001). They include reflection as the last level of implementation; nevertheless, Reinders' is the only one in which reflection matches the definition of this concept used in this study - reflection is defined as a thinking process that makes students review their learning, analyse it, evaluate it, and draw conclusions about it. The inclusion of most of the levels contributes to gradually introduce autonomous learning, which was a must considering learners' educational background and readiness. Furthermore, the focus of reflection in Reinders' model and the researcher were almost the same: learning practices, their success on the completion of tasks they did, the learning problems they encountered and how they solved them, and what helped them learn.

In addition, Reinders' model was chosen because it did not require the assistance from counsellors or tutors, access to a resource centre, or creating support groups as Nordlund's does. These could increase the amount of support given; nonetheless, it was not possible for the researcher to provide these types of support. Less support is included in Reinders' model; however, it is enough to slowly introduce autonomous learning. Moreover, this model gives learners options to choose from whenever they make decisions about their learning, which is a useful strategy to introduce autonomous learning (Lengkanawati, 2017) the researcher wanted to employ to make the decision-making process easier. Furthermore, Reinders' model makes students gradually decide what, when, and how they want to learn. This is one of the most important guidelines in the introduction of autonomous learning (Radut-Taciu, & Chis, 2015; Nordlund, 2001; Brajcich, 2000). The researcher considered that progressively asking learners to make their own decisions would be helpful because it would prevent overwhelming learners, give them time to adapt to the new way of learning, and develop the skills needed (Bocos, Radut-Taciu & Chis, 2015; Martin, 1999).

Reinders' model was selected to be adapted although it had not been implemented in a classroom and it was created to develop autonomous language learning. Nevertheless, this gave the researcher the opportunity to employ it and attempt to foster this approach in a different area of knowledge and a new context. Moreover, changes were made to the model considering what was needed to make it appropriate to foster autonomous learning in adult education, the context, existing limitations, and learners. The changes made to the model selected are discussed next.

2.10.3 Adaptations made to the model selected

One of the changes made was not allowing learners to select their learning goals. This was because they were established in the course syllabus and could not be changed, adapted, or ignored. Participants had to learn what was included in the program. This did not apply to learning materials or resources. Although these had been selected by the school and the teacher, students could use others, provided they helped to learn the expected content. Learners had freedom regarding the learning materials they wanted to use.

Some changes were done in some of the levels of implementation. Reinders' model required raising awareness regarding needs, strengths, weaknesses, and strategy use. The model used in this study removed needs because learners were not going to develop their language skills and could not select their learning goals. However, it added becoming conscious of what autonomous learning was, students' learning styles, preferences, and preferred learning tasks. Moreover,

learners participated more in the decisions made regarding the assessment of their learning. It was planned to gradually involve them more in these decisions so that towards the end of the intervention, they were able to select most of the previous. Finally, the model originally asked students to reflect about their success in tasks and the problems they encountered. The current model added reflecting to establish what helped them learn, what did not, why, and which changes they needed to make to improve their learning (Yamashita, 2015). This was done to raise awareness about their learning, the decisions they made, and helped them make better informed decisions about their learning in future learning endeavours.

Reinders' model required giving learners access to a computer laboratory to use online learning materials and activities. Because access to such facilities was restricted, the researcher decided to either book the computer lab so that students could use the facilities during such time or gave students plenty of time to complete tasks that required access to internet. The latter gave learners enough time and opportunities to find a computer with internet access on campus, use a cybercafé, work at home, or anywhere else where they could do it online. A complete description of the model is included in appendix A1 (Treatment: Description of the model used).

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology used in this study. First, the researcher provides a description of the program implemented. Second, the research questions that guided this investigation are presented. This is followed by the rationale for using qualitative and action research. After this, the data collection instruments employed by the researcher are described, along with the rationale for selecting them. Next, the process followed to collect data is explained. Finally, the methods selected to analyze data are discussed, as well as the reasons for choosing these.

3.1 Description of the program used.

The purpose of the program was to have student-teachers acquire theoretical knowledge regarding language teaching methods and approaches. This was planned to be accomplished by using the teaching practices that had been selected by the teacher, which were connected to the adapted model. The objective of the research was to explore the usefulness of such model to foster autonomous learning. The implementation of the adapted model and guidelines found in the literature regarding the fostering of this approach were conducted to reach the latter. The program had two goals: to help students learn the content of the class and to foster autonomous learning.

At the beginning of the semester everything about the class, where the study took place, was presented to students. They were also explained that an investigation was going to be conducted, what it involved, and were invited to participate. Those who accepted signed the consent forms. Students were also told that they were all going to perform the same practices because these had been selected to help them learn the class content. Because autonomous learning was new to participants, the teacher explained what it was, how learning occurred, what their and the teacher's role were going to be, how assessment happens, and how it was going to be implemented. In the next session, participants were given a link and some questions to answer which intended to have them analyse their strengths and weaknesses, learning preferences and styles, and the optimal conditions for them to learn. The purpose of these activities was to raise awareness about these issues. Through these activities learners experienced the first level of implementation of the model being used: raise awareness.

In the following sessions students participated in the selection of some of the class rules, the order in which they wanted to learn some topics, and the value of two graded assignments which together were worth 25% of their final score. The first two were chosen by all the students in the class while the last was selected by each one. During the first term the content of the class was often learnt through activities that made students work independently. Cooperative learning, task-based, and guided learning activities were employed. The teacher provided students with learning materials, instructions, and the tasks to complete. Learners selected to work individually, in pairs, or small groups, who they worked with, and whether they did it in or outside the classroom. Sometimes they were allowed to make other choices like choose the materials they wanted to use to present the work done, and to choose the task they wanted to complete. This is congruent with the definition given by Cotterall (2000) of autonomous learning: taking control of some aspects of their learning at some stages of the learning process. Similar learning activities were conducted in the last two terms. They were intended to be less teacher-dependent every time. Eventually, learners were told the topics they needed to learn and were provided with learning materials to do so, although the latter optional to be used. Students decided how, when to learn, and which resources they employed.

During the second and third term students participated more in the decisions made regarding their learning (see appendix A.1). In addition to the ones from the first term, they chose whether to attend face-to-face sessions, which assignments they submitted, when they worked on and submitted them, among others. In addition, during the third term self-study guides were implemented to help students learn the class content. Each one included the instructions, the content to be learnt, and some options for tasks to be completed. Students could select any of these or did any other they preferred. They could work at home, at school, individually, or collaboratively. The purpose of using self-study guides was to give students more control of their learning. Students were guided on what to learn, were given scaffolding to do it, but also freedom to use anything other resources and selected how they were going to learn. The second level of the model, planning learning, was implemented through having students make decisions about their learning and assessment.

Because learners were often working independently, they were asked to monitor their work and learning. When students worked inside the classroom the teacher was able to check their progress. When they did it outside, students had to meet with the teacher before the session was over to inform him about their progress. If necessary, learners were given more time in the next sessions to complete their work. Sometimes they were asked to work at home to avoid being behind schedule. At the beginning of each term, learners were provided with the course outline (see appendix A.2) to let them know which topics were going to be learnt in each session. It also

included the assigned readings, deadlines, instructions for graded assignments, rubrics, and assessment period. The information included in the course outline was intended to help students monitor their work. Learners monitored their learning more during the last two terms (see appendix A.1). In addition to what they did during the first term, learners created a work plan in which they established how and when they were going to complete the learning activities, tasks, and assignments for each term. It also included the deadlines they set for themselves to submit their work. Each week, the teacher asked students at random about their progress. They reported what they had done, as well as their plans to be able to submit everything they wrote in their work plan on time. These activities belonged to the third level of the model; monitoring learning.

After students completed some tasks; for example, an oral presentation, the teacher met with the presenters to ask them how they did, and what they could do to enhance their performance the next time they had to present. This was done with most of the assignments students submitted to have them self-evaluate their work. In addition, learners were shown the rubrics that were going to be used to assess them and were asked to self-assess their work using the rubrics before submitting their final drafts. Moreover, students were asked to keep a diary to have them analyse and self-evaluate the work they did. Students started to submit a weekly entry during the third week. They were provided with some questions to help them write their entries (see appendix B.1); in case they did not know what to write about. They could answer any of the questions given or address any other issues they wanted to discuss. The teacher read the entries and sent comments through email. These actions were done to have students self-assess their work and learning during the intervention, which is the fourth level of implementation of the model used.

At the end of each term participants were asked to reflect about what they did, how they did it, who they worked with, which practices were useful, and which were not to. They were given some questions to help them reflect about these issues. Each term they were given more to choose from (see appendix A.5). These questions also intended to have students analyse their decisions, practices, and outcomes. The last level of the model, reflection, was implemented through these activities. However, this was also connected with the first level because by reflecting awareness was raised about learners' decisions, learning practices, tasks they were skilful at doing, and other aspects related to them and their learning. The last and first level of the model were connected at the end of the first and second.

The model used in this study resembled the amount of support given in Reinders'. It provided learners with choices to help decision-making, questions were answered, feedback was given during face-to-face tutorials or email, students also received assistance from classmates and other teachers. In addition, access was granted to the computer lab during some classes to enable

learners to use online resources and materials necessary to complete tasks or anything else they needed.

The pedagogical goals were achieved. Most students learnt the expected content and obtained high marks in the class, between 8.5 and 10, out of 10. To assess whether autonomous learning was fostered, data was gathered with the questionnaire and interviews at the end of the study. In addition, because learners' comments had been collected during the intervention through the entries they wrote in their diaries, this information was also used for research purposes. The researcher kept a diary, but its information was not used. The data collected from the learners' diaries, the questionnaire, and interviews was analysed to report the findings and answer the research questions of this investigation.

The program included the process model used to introduce autonomous learning. The latter was implemented through its levels and the framework created to gradually institute it. The first level was raising learners' awareness about this approach, their strengths, weaknesses, and other issues previously mentioned. The second step was involving students in the decisions made regarding the planning of their learning. The next was having participants monitor their learning. The fourth level was involving learners in the assessment of their learning. The last was having them reflect about their learning practices. This process was coupled with a framework that was part of the model and established how features of autonomous learning were introduced, as well as other elements that can help reach such coal. Rolland (1998) and Sommerville (1996) explained that a process model also contains instructions, suggestions, and other relevant information regarding how to implement the change. Graduality was a key element of the process due to learners' educational background and their readiness to learn autonomously. Learners were not expected to suddenly become aware of all the aspects they needed, make all the decisions about their learning and their assessment, or reflect about every aspect related to their learning practices. The framework created determined which decisions learners made in each term regarding the planning and assessment of their learning, the issues they reflected about, what learners became aware of, and which tools or scaffolding was used to promote autonomous learning. In summary, the model employed in this investigation included the process to be followed to implement autonomous learning and the framework that explained what had to be done to make such implementation gradual.

The process model implemented is connected to action research because the latter intends to cause a change in the context where it happens (Johnson, 2012; Manfra, 2009; Stringer, 2008). Holter & Frabutt (2012). Hine & Lavery (2014), explains that this process includes the following steps: planning a change, applying such change, monitoring the effects of such change, reflecting

on its effects, planning further action: then, repeating the cycle again. These elements are found in the model implemented. Its purpose was to introduce a change in learning. This was done by following the process included in the model and other guidelines obtained from existing literature about this issue. In addition, the introduction was planned, conducted, monitored, reflected about, and planning for further action was as done by the researcher. Because he was concerned with the fostering of autonomous learning in his teaching context, the previous cycle was improved and repeated in the following years although no data about this was included in this investigation.

Another aspect of action research found in this study is that this type of research is conducted in real-world contexts (Baskerville & Wood-Harper, 2016; Denscombe, 2010) and it involves the introduction of a treatment in a learning setting, not only to solve problems that emerge in the classroom, but to improve learning, student behavior, or teaching practices (Johnson, 2012; Singler, 2009; Nolen & Vander Putten, 2007; Tripp, 2005). The intervention was implemented in the setting where the researcher worked. Furthermore, the purpose of this model was to foster autonomous learning to solve a problem the researcher had identified through informal conversations with learners, and improve students' learning as it is suggested by literature.

Action research is conducted by a teacher, a tutor, a practitioner, or an educator (Nolen & Vander Putten, 2007) in classrooms or schools (Mills, 2014; Hine, 2013; Deemer, 2009; Singler, 2009; Stringer, 2008; Tomal, 2003; Ferrance, 2000). In this case the researcher was also the teacher, and this investigation was conducted in one of the classes he taught at the school where he worked. This enabled the researcher to observe what happened throughout the study and collect data directly from participants. It is important to mention that the study was part of what he had planned to do in such class during that school year. Therefore, all the students in the class experienced what the teacher introduced; nevertheless, data was collected only from those who had agreed to participate in the study.

3.2 **Objective**

The main objective of this study was to investigate the impact an adapted model had on the fostering of autonomous learning among a group of Mexican university students who were used to learning with teacher-centred methods.

3.3 Research questions

This investigation was designed considering two main research questions, each included two subsidiary questions. These are discussed next, as well as the instruments used to collect data to answer each of them.

3.3.1 Main research question 1

What evidence indicates that there has been a development of autonomous learning among participants?

Obtaining data that answered this question helped to establish if the purpose of the study was reached. The opinions of participants were considered, as well as autonomous learning participants conducted.

3.3.1.1 Subsidiary question 1

How do the elements of the treatment contribute to the development of autonomous learning?

The purpose of this question was to gather information to determine the contribution each component of the intervention made to promote autonomous learning.

3.3.1.2 Subsidiary question 2

How do the levels of implementation contribute to foster autonomous learning?

The researcher wanted to know if and how each level helped to promote autonomous learning because this is an issue that has not been explored enough, by answering this question more could be learnt about this it.

3.3.2 Main research question 2

What are the opinions of the participants about learning autonomously?

The researcher wanted to know how participants felt about learning with the approach introduced to establish if they welcomed or rejected it, and if they wanted to continue learning with it.

3.3.2.1 Subsidiary question 1

What are the views of the subjects about the fostering of autonomous learning in this study?

The information gathered to answer this question helped to establish if and how appropriate were the process, strategies, and resources employed to introduce this approach to learning.

3.3.2.2 Subsidiary question 2

What are the opinions of the participants about autonomous learning and how these developed along the treatment?

Data was collected to answer this question to know whether participants' views about this approach changed as the intervention progressed.

The following table shows the relationship between research questions and data collection instruments.

Question	**Instrument that collected data to answer the question**
Main research question 1 ***What evidence indicates that there has been a development of autonomous learning among participants?***	Learners' diaries. Through participants' comments regarding being more autonomous in their learning, adopting learning practices from this approach, or performing actions that indicate they have taken control of their learning. Questionnaires and interviews. From participants responses regarding whether they believed they became more autonomous in their learning, and if so, why they have such perception (actions, practices, and the like that indicate they are more autonomous).
Subsidiary question 1 ***How do the elements of the treatment contribute to the development of autonomous learning?***	Questionnaire and interviews. They included items that inquired about the usefulness of such elements to establish whether and how these assisted the development of the approach to learning.
Subsidiary question 2 ***How do the levels of implementation contribute to foster autonomous learning?***	Questionnaire and interviews. They had questions that asked students their opinions about each of the levels of implementation, as well as how much they thought each one helped to promote autonomous learning.
Main research question 2 ***What are the opinions of the participants about learning autonomously?***	Questionnaire, interviews, and learners' diaries. These gathered participants' opinions about autonomous learning, and whether they wanted to continue learning with this approach.
Subsidiary question 1 ***What are the views of the subjects about the fostering of autonomous learning in this study?***	Questionnaire, interviews, and learners' diaries. The first two included questions to collect participants' opinions regarding the introduction of autonomous learning, as well as the usefulness of the strategies and scaffolding employed. Some questions from the diary asked about the effectiveness of the instruments used to promote this approach.
Subsidiary question 2	Questionnaire, interviews, and learners' diaries. They included questions to obtain participants' opinions about this approach.

What are the opinions of the participants about autonomous learning and how these developed along the treatment?	

Table 1: Relationship between research questions and data collection instruments

3.4 Qualitative research

Qualitative research was selected to be employed in this study because it investigates the consequences that emerge from implementing a new program or intervention, how students feel about taking part in such program, what happens as such program occurs, and find solutions to social problems (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). Most of these features are found in this research. Its main goals were to explore the outcomes of the intervention implemented and students' opinions about it. Furthermore, the questions qualitative research intends to answer are how? why? and what is? (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). The main and subsidiary questions are of this type. The aims and characteristics of qualitative research, as well as the types of questions it intends to answer, are like those included in this study.

A useful aspect of qualitative research is that it tries to get a complex and detailed understanding of what it investigates (Creswell, 2013). This researcher adds it is necessary to interact, observe, question, and talk directly with the participants of the investigation to learn more about the phenomena being studied and that this can be achieved by placing the observer where the investigation occurs. Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston (2013) state that this type of research allows researchers to "'unpack' issues, to see what they are about or what lies inside, as well as to explore how they are understood by those connected with them (p. 27)". In this study, the researcher was also the teacher; therefore, he was able to observe what happened as the investigation was conducted. Moreover, he had the opportunity to talk to participants, ask them questions, and converse about relevant issues of the study. Because the researcher was also the teacher, it was possible to get a clear understanding of the phenomenon investigated. Denzin & Lincoln (2011) assert that in qualitative research such understanding is vital to study and interpret situations, problems, possible solutions, behaviors, attitudes, and interventions in their natural settings.

Another reason why qualitative research was selected for this investigation was because it uses instruments that enable researchers to gather information from different perspectives about the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2013). This was desired in this study to get a thorough understanding of it. The instruments that are employed to achieve the previous are: interviews, observations, and documents (Creswell, 2013; Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001);

fieldnotes, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000); observations, textual or visual analysis and individual or group interviews (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008); focus groups, life histories, narratives, and analysis of documents and texts (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). In this research it was necessary to get a sound understanding of how autonomous learning could be fostered in the target context, what was needed, and whether the intervention introduced achieved its goal. These objectives could be reached by gathering information using some of the data collection instruments from qualitative research: Learner diaries, a questionnaire, and interviews.

Qualitative research was employed because the study was conducted in the type of the setting where this type of research is usually conducted, in real-world contexts (Creswell, 2013; Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013; Draper, 2004; Malterud, 2001). This study was conducted in one of the classes taught by the researcher and it allowed the researcher to examine what participants thought about autonomous learning and its implementation process, as well as the reasons for having such opinions. Finally, an aspect of qualitative research that led to its use was that it has an open-ended and flexible plan, and the research questions can be changed as the investigation progresses based on the data that is gathered and new findings emerge (Draper, 2004). Charmaz (2004) adds that in qualitative research the research questions created at the beginning of the project may lead to new ones; in directions that were not expected but that are worthwhile to take. These features of qualitative research happened in this investigation. As the study was being implemented and some data was collected the goals of this study were modified slightly and other unexpected issues that emerged were considered. This flexibility contributed to get a better understanding of the issues under investigation and to discover others that were not initially taken into consideration.

In summary, qualitative research was selected to be used in this study because many of its features matched the ones found in the study and helped to explore the issues included in this research. It was conducted in a real learning context (Creswell, 2013; Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013; Draper, 2004; Malterud, 2001) to thoroughly understand issues being studied, to find explanations regarding the process participants go through, and to examine the impact interventions have (Williams, 2011). This was achieved through the direct interaction, observation, questioning, and talking to participants done by the researcher who was at the research site (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research contributed to learn how participants felt about the treatments or process they went through and find solutions to problems (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). In addition, qualitative research provided the data collection instruments that helped to answer the research questions; interviews, observations, (Creswell,

2013; Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001); fieldnotes, conversations, (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000); observations, and individual interviews (Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008).

3.5 Action research

Action research was selected because it is performed in real-world contexts (Baskerville & Wood-Harper, 2016; Denscombe, 2010; Avison, Lau, Myers and Nielsen 1999), and it involves the introduction of a treatment in a learning setting, not only to solve problems that emerge in the classroom, but to improve learning, student behavior, or teaching practices (Johnson, 2012; Singler, 2009; Nolen & Vander Putten, 2007; Tripp, 2005;). These aspects were present in the current study. An intervention was implemented in a class taught by the researcher to deal with an issue and try to improve learning. This is because if more is known about how to foster autonomous learning, teachers could include some of these strategies in their teaching practices to help students adapt to learning autonomously more easily.

An aspect of action research found in this research is being conducted in classrooms or schools (Mills, 2014; Hine, 2013; Deemer, 2009; Singler, 2009; Stringer, 2008; Tomal, 2003; Ferrance, 2000); by a teacher, a tutor, a practitioner, or an educator (Nolen & Vander Putten, 2007). This study was conducted at the school where the researcher/teacher worked. Ferrance (2000) states that no one can better identify, examine, and solve teaching and learning problems than teachers and principals; therefore, it is them who are in charge of doing action research. The researcher, who was also the teacher, noticed a problem that learners were having, explored how to solve it; then created a possible solution that needed to be tested to find out how useful it was at solving the problem

Another distinctive feature of action research found in this study was the introduction of change. According to Holter & Frabutt (2012), Johnson (2012), Manfra (2009), Stringer (2008) and one of the main objectives of action research is to influence or cause a change in the context where it takes place. The main purpose of this study was to introduce a change to modify participants' learning practices. Hine & Lavery (2014), explains that this involves a process that includes the following: planning a change, applying such change, monitoring the effects of such change, reflecting on its effects, planning further action: then, repeating the cycle again. This is very similar to the action research spiral proposed by Kemmis & McTaggart (Burns, 2010) which includes four phases: plan, action, observe, and reflect. According to these researchers, after the first cycle is completed, the plan is revised, changes are made to improve it, it is implemented again, and the cycle is repeated. In other words, the change action research tries to cause is

strategic, it does not happen by accident. In this investigation the process by Hine & Lavery (2014) was implemented.

In conclusion, action research was selected because it shares several elements with the research that could help to reach its goal. This investigation was conducted in a real-life context (Baskerville & Wood-Harper, 2016; Denscombe, 2010), in schools and classrooms (Hine, 2013; Mills, 2011; Stringer, 2008). In addition, the purpose of this type of research and the study was to cause a change in the context where it was done (Hine & Lavery, 2014; Johnson, 2012; Stringer, 2008;). This was achieved by introducing an intervention to solve classroom problems, teaching practices and improve learning (Johnson, 2012; Singler, 2009; Nolen & Vander Putten, 2007,). To measure whether or not the model was useful data was collected using instruments that are common in action research: questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, learners' logs, and the researcher log (Johnson, 2012). All of these factors made action research the most appropriate to assist this investigation to reach its goals.

3.6 Intervention

Prior to conducting the intervention, the researcher followed the established process to obtained approval from the university's ethical committee (ERGO). All the forms required (see appendix A8) were completed by the researcher then revised by his thesis advisor. Once they have been approved by the latter, they were submitted via email to request approval from the university's ethical committee. Sometime later the researcher was informed via email that approval to conduct the investigation had been granted (see appendix A8). The researcher then explained learners what the investigation was about and what it involved. All the students registered in the class were invited to participate; some accepted but others did not. The former were given the consent form to read; if they still agreed to participate, they were asked to sign the form. After this the intervention began. This happened at the beginning of the Fall semester 2016 and continued until the semester ended. The intervention began in the second week of classes in late August and ended in mid-December. There were three terms during the semester, each one was approximately five weeks long. There were no classes during exams' week, which happened at the end of each term. A more detailed description of the model can be found in appendix A1.

A pilot study was not undertaken because the intervention was implemented in a class the researcher had taught before, where he had employed some aspects of autonomous learning. Having taught the class before gave the researcher a sound insight of the characteristics of the learners, the learning the conditions, the content to be learnt, and the problems commonly found. This knowledge and the teaching experience the researcher had enabled him to know

what could be implemented, how, and what was needed to deal with the issues he wanted to address. The intervention and its introduction were planned considering such information. It did not involve the implementation of something alien to the researcher but adding, systematizing, and enhancing what he had done.

In addition, the intervention included some elements from autonomous learning the researcher had previously employed: learning in collaboration, guided learning activities, providing learners with choice, involving them in some decisions made about their learning, assisting learners, and having students reflect on their learning. Although these had been used at random, they helped to gain some experience and knowledge regarding the introduction and development of autonomous learning among the students from this context. This was supported and enriched with reviewing existing literature on this topic. The difference was that conducting this study made the researcher plan, organize, and systematize a formal investigation considering everything this required. The intervention was constructed by acknowledging the experience the researcher had regarding fostering autonomous learning, the characteristics of the learners, features and limitations of the research context, and existing literature on this topic. It had some elements the researcher had not considered before but were useful and appropriate to the context and the learners, as well as some that he had used before, which were supported by existing literature on this issue.

Pilot studies are conducted to identify possible problems the investigation can have, deficiencies in the data collection instruments and research protocols, the recruitment of participants, and to help members of a research team to know the procedures of the investigation (Hassan, Schattner, and Mazza, 2006). Although it is impossible to prevent problems; because the researcher knew the learners, the setting, and its limitations, and had already implemented some of the elements of the intervention, the potential difficulties were few. Moreover, because the researcher was also the teacher, it was possible for him to solve problems rapidly. The support given by the thesis advisor helped to diminish and prevent any issues with research instruments and protocols. Any problems with these during the research were solved with the assistance of the advisor. Regarding the recruitment of participants, this was not necessary because the students enrolled in the class who accepted to take part in the study were the participants. Finally, this investigation was conducted by one person, he was the teacher and the researcher. Because of this, decisions making was not difficult because he made them all, considering the advice and comments he received from his advisor.

Moreover, this was an action research project that did not involve creating something new, which would require conducting a pilot study. It considered the learning conditions, issues, learners, and

existing knowledge to construct and implement a change intended to improve teaching and learning where it was employed (Johnson, 2012; Singler, 2009; Nolen & Vander Putten, 2007; Tripp, 2005), then analyze the outcomes of such change to establish if the intervention had reached its goals. This was done by employing something different, elaborated, and improved to what the researcher had done to solve a problem he had encountered. The intervention involved implementing a change that included aspects that had been used before and new ones suggested by the literature.

The researcher was aware of the consequences of not conducting a pilot study. He had little experience doing this type of investigations, designing research instruments, and analyzing great amounts of data. The pilot study could have given the researcher the opportunity to learn more about these, to have a better understanding and practice in data analysis, as well as other research protocols. This could have facilitated the conduction of the study. Nevertheless, the guidance and assistance from his advisor and the software employed (Nvivo 10) played a major role in overcoming the difficulties found and making the corrections and improvements needed to conduct the investigation properly.

Moreover, because the researcher had previously employed some of the aspects included in the intervention, it was likely that he expected to obtain similar results. Due to this, more attention could have been paid to these aspects, or data could have been analyzed with certain expectations. This would have skewed the results. Fortunately, the software employed helped to organize and analyze the data more objectively, the triangulation of findings done, and the revision and feedback by the thesis advisor contributed to obtain more reliable results.

3.6.1 Description of the intervention

Before the intervention began, students were informed about the study that was going to be conducted, what it was about and implied for them. They also were explained that if they accepted to do so, they would have to sign a consent form and any information collected from them would be used for research purposes only. They were also told that their real names would not be used, participants would be given alias so that it would be impossible for anyone to know what they said about the issues they were asked about. All the data would be stored and locked in the researcher's personal computer, who no one had access to and only the researcher knew the password of it. Learners who accepted, signed the consent forms, which were stored and locked in the researcher's desk.

The intervention began by raising participants' awareness about autonomous learning and the learners themselves. This was done with the help of the researcher explaining what the new

learning approach involved, what implied to them in their learning habits, the roles they and the teacher were going to play, and the gradual introduction of the learning approach. Furthermore, the students were assisted to become conscious of some aspects related to their learning such as learning preferences, learning styles, and strengths and weaknesses. Learners were also presented the course outline and were explained they could use it to keep track of the topics that had to be studied during the term, to remind themselves about the readings they had to do, deadlines they had to meet, tasks they had to complete, instructions, and rubrics (see appendix A.2). During the second term, students were explained what a work plan was, its purpose, what it needed to include, and why they had to do one. They were asked to create their individual work plan using the information they had been given in the course outline to plan the work they were going to do each week during the second and third terms. They were asked to keep it nearby to know where they were in the course.

The second phase included student involvement in some of the decisions made regarding their learning. These were few and the easiest ones they were going to be asked to make (see appendix A.1) during the first term to get them started in making their own decisions. At the beginning of the second and third term students were allowed to make more decisions about their learning. The complexity of the decisions participants made also increased as they got more experience (see appendix A.1). The same was done with having participants decide some aspects of their assessment. This was gradual as well, few and simple decisions during the first term and more and more complex ones during the second and third terms (see appendix A.1). This was a new practice for students that is why it was also introduced gradually. At the beginning of the assessment period, learners were given the opportunity to change the decisions they had made about it if they considered it was necessary. At the end of each term students were asked to reflect about the decisions they had made during the previous term, as well as other aspects of their learning, to raise awareness about these. Another purpose of such reflection was to have students become conscious of the implications of their decisions and make informed decisions in the following terms.

Learning was monitored by students by using the course outline, random meetings with the teacher, and using the work plan they had created in the last two terms. The purpose of these was to have students keep track of the topics that had learnt, be aware of the work they had completed or needed to finish and remember the deadlines to try to have them regulate their work to be able to learn everything they were required to within the time allotted. Each week, during face-to-face sessions, at some point the teacher asked each student about their progress and if they were complying with what they had included in their work plan. Learners informed the

teacher about what they had done and explained their plans to learn what they still had not and to submit assignments on time.

Learners were asked to assess their learning through the informal talks the teacher had with them after they submitted their assignments, when learners used the rubrics given to self-assess their work before submitting it, and through group discussions that sometimes were held in class.

At the end of each term students were asked to reflect about their learning, their decisions, the tasks done, and their practices. The purpose here was to raise learners' awareness about which decisions had been appropriate, what had helped them learn, what did not, who they worked well with, and what changes they needed to improve their learning.

Learners were given support through comments and feedback the researcher made to students when they submitted a draft, when they asked questions, when their progress was checked, and through other types of scaffolding such as the work plan, the course outline, access to the computer lab, and choices given. Relevant aspects of autonomous learning were introduced according to the schedule that had been created (A1) to gradually introduced these.

3.7 Data collection instruments

Three different data collection instruments were selected to be used in this research: a questionnaire, a semi-structured interview, and learners' diaries. It was established that to discover the extent to which the intervention was effective, it was more appropriate to gather information from participants. The researcher kept a diary; however, it was used to create a description of what happened during the treatment, rather than to be employed as a data collection instrument. Its content was used to corroborate findings that emerged from the three instruments mentioned above if necessary. The rationale for the selection of each instrument is presented below.

3.7.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was chosen because it helped to collect information directly from subjects about specific issues the researcher wanted to explore (Brown, 2001). Through questionnaires, participants can express their opinions, attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and preferences about crucial issues related to the investigation the researcher wants to document (Descombe, 2014; Nunan, & Bailey, 2009). The questionnaire used in this study gathered participants' opinions about autonomous learning, its introduction, and other aspects related to the fostering of this approach.

Questionnaires were used in this research because they assisted to gather specific and more general data. They can include two types of questions: closed-ended and open-ended (Descombe, 2014). This researcher explains that “The advantage of open questions is that the information gathered by way of the responses is more likely to reflect the full richness and complexity of the views held by the respondent” (p. 165). Furthermore, Dörnyei (2003) adds that open-ended questions allow respondents to decide how long their answers are going to be, the words they are going to use to respond, and the problems they want to address or points they wish to raise. Open-ended questions (see appendix B.2) were used in the questionnaire employed in this investigation to allow respondents to express their views about the issues they were asked.

Nunan & Bailey (2009) explain that open questions are more helpful to have students express, in their own words, what they want to say. This investigation is based considerably on the opinions of participants. Therefore, it is vital that they can freely discuss their views. Considering the previous, it was decided to use and open-ended questionnaire to collect participants’ views about the intervention and other relevant issues.

One of problem with using questionnaires is that they require more attention, time, and effort from the respondents to answer them (Descombe, 2014). This researcher adds that when a questionnaire is employed it is not possible for researchers to know if the information given by respondents is true. When data is collected through an interview for instance, the researcher may be able to use certain clues like body language, and facial expressions to know if the responses given are genuine; however, the same is not possible when a questionnaire is employed. In addition, long questionnaires decrease the probability of subjects answering the questions truthfully and thoroughly because they may write whatever comes to mind or short meaningless responses to be done with the questionnaire quickly. To prevent this, questionnaire should be as short as possible and only collect data about crucial issues, not about non-essential topics Descombe (2014).

Another problem of using questionnaires when the researcher is also the teacher is related to the truthfulness of the responses obtained. It is likely that because of the power relations there are between the researcher and participants, the latter may be inclined, consciously or unconsciously, to answer questions according to what the former expects to obtain. Although the researcher may ask participants to be honest to give their opinions and inform them that no matter what their responses are these are not going to affect their class performance or scores, it is possible that some responses may still be skewed to some degree. It is necessary to keep this in mind and do something about it when the data is analyzed to try to identify any responses that may not be

truthful. Triangulation can help in this regard, although it is impossible to fully overcome this problem when teachers ask students.

The researcher was aware of these problems; therefore, the questionnaire included few questions to try to prevent that writing extensively caused participants to get bored or tired, which could result in getting responses that were not genuine or incomplete. It was believed that if few questions were included, participants would probably provide insightful responses. In addition, yes/no questions were included in this instrument. These had follow-up questions to have students elaborate on the responses they provided to try to get insightful information. Moreover, in some cases, examples were included after the questions to clarify aspects of the intervention learners were being asked about or to remind them which the questions referred to. Follow-up questions were not added to all the questions to prevent the instrument from being too long. Nevertheless, the researcher paid attention to the responses obtained from these, if they were short or needed elaboration, this could be done during the interview.

Open-ended questions were also used because they lead to collect information regarding unexpected issues that were important to participants. If this happened, they could be explored further during interviews. Nunan & Bailey (2009) suggest administering questionnaires first to get general data or opinions, then use interviews to get more specific information about essential issues for the research. This was done in this investigation. During the interviews, the researcher explored further the opinions participants expressed about autonomous learning and the practices implemented. The questions written for the questionnaire and the interview were checked by a colleague of the researcher who had been previously informed about the study, its purpose, and the intervention, and by the thesis advisor to assure validity and reliability in such instruments. Both were familiar with the research as well as the profile of the participants and the context. Some comments and suggestions were given to improve the questionnaire by both parties. These were discussed individually with each of them. All the suggestions were considered to improve the questionnaire and the questions for the interview. Changes were made until the thesis advisor had approved these instruments.

3.7.2 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews collect people's opinions, feelings, emotions, experiences, more detailed information, and valuable insights about important topics related to the investigation, and explore more complex and subtle phenomena (Descombe, 2014). Interviews helped in this regard because it helped to gathered participants' opinions, experiences and feelings about autonomous learning, the fostering of this approach, and the intervention implemented to answer its research questions. Furthermore, interviews can complement and support the information collected from

the questionnaires or expand on any issues that emerged from the latter (Nunan & Bailey, 2009). An advantage of this instrument was that the interviewer can check for accuracy by paying attention to the interviewee's body language and facial expression when they respond to the questions posed (Descombe, 2014). These benefits from interviews led to its selection to collect data in this investigation.

A semi-structured interview (appendix B.3) was used in this study. It was selected because it helped the researcher to explore experiences, views, beliefs, or motivations from participants regarding relevant research issues, as well as to get a deeper understanding of certain events that occurred during the research process (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick; 2008). These researchers add that semi-structured interviews are useful to learn about issues that are important to participants but might not have been considered as relevant by researchers. Because participants' opinions were going to be gathered, unexpected issues could be obtained from this instrument. In addition, this type of interviews make it possible to expand and elaborate on the responses interviewees produce (Descombe, 2014; Nunan & Bailey, 2009). Semi-structured interviews also gave the researcher the opportunity to expand on key topics that emerged from the responses obtained from the questionnaire.

Interviews can also negatively affect the quality of the information collected. The power relation between the interviewee and the interviewer, their preferences, the rapport and trust between them are all factors that can influence the veracity of the information gathered. As Descombe (2014) explains it; it is likely that interviewees' responses fit with the researcher expectations. On the other hand, the opposite may happen; researchers may get negative comments because the participants dislike the interviewer and purposefully intend to skew the results. In either case, getting biased information prevents achieving an appropriate understanding of the issue being researched. It is perhaps impossible to control all the factors that can lead to collecting biased information; nevertheless, some things can be done to try to prevent this problem.

The interviews were conducted in a comfortable room to try to have a pleasant environment and create a good rapport with the interviewee so that they could feel confident to freely express their opinions; as suggested by Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick (2008). Moreover, to try to prevent the interviewee from eliciting responses the researcher expected, the interviews took place in a room where the former and latter did not interact as teacher and student (Descombe, 2014). This was done to make interviewees feel they did not need to say what the researcher wanted to hear. Furthermore, prior to the beginning of the interview, the researcher reminded participants classes were over; therefore, any responses they elicited would not benefit or negatively affect their class scores in any way. To contribute to the the previous, interviews were

conducted when classes were finished, and students had already been given their final scores. In spite of all the previous, it was possible that some participants and their responses were still affected by the power relationships between the teacher/researcher and participants. It might have been impossible to prevent it, the researcher was conscious of it. This was why attention was paid to students' responses during the data analysis process and findings from this instrument were compared with those obtained from other instruments.

Another problem with interviews was that the use of audio or video recorders may inhibit interviewees to freely express themselves. Speaking in front of a microphone or camera recorder may be daunting for some people (Descombe, 2014). Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick (2008) suggest creating a comfortable environment to make students feel more confident. This strategy was implemented by the researcher to try to prevent interviewees from feeling shy in front of the camera. The video camera was not placed directly in from of the interviewee to try to decrease the fear this may cause. Moreover, the interviewer started the interview by asking random questions about them, their plans, school, and the like. Afterwards, the interviewer began asking easy questions so that the interviewee could feel confident to answer them; then, continued with other questions that require more reflection and elaboration from them. All of this was done having the interviewer listened attentively at all times to what the interviewees were saying, having a neutral body language, nodding, smiling, looking interested, asking clarification questions when necessary, avoiding interruptions, and letting students express themselves as suggested by Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, (2008).

3.7.3 Learner diary

This instrument was created to be used as a classroom activity; however, because relevant information was gathered with it, it was decided to use it as a data collection instrument for the investigation. Lewis, Sligo, & Massey (2005) affirm that diaries contribute towards collecting data that would have been impossible to collect through other means. They add that data diaries allow the researcher to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Diaries have been used for different purposes such as to provide suggestions to overcome difficulties, to give feedback, to increase learners interest, to find out about learners' feelings, to explore how different factors affect learning, to encourage self-assessment, to gather information about what learners do; especially outside the class, to know their points of view about their learning, and to explore how the activities and tasks done in class contribute to success and learning (Helm, 2009; Howell-Richardson & Parkinson, 1988). In addition, Jacelon & Imperio (2005) and Allison (1998) explain that asking students to write a diary is useful to have students reflect about daily activities done in class, especially about the ones they consider

important, and to have them talk about topics of interest for the researcher, to have them express their opinions about events that took place in class, to learn about participants' attitudes and values.

Learner diaries were used as a data collection instrument because they had gathered data about issues students considered relevant but were not considered by the researcher (Lewis, Sligo, & Massey, 2005). In their diaries, participants addressed unexpected topics about the intervention which required further investigation. During the interviews, participants were asked about these, as suggested by Jacelon & Imperio (2005) to obtain richer data about such issues. Moreover, diaries contributed to gather information about learners' feelings, what they did, view about their learning, the activities they did in class, and the practices they adopted (Helm, 2009 , Howell-Richardson & Parkinson, 1988). Finally, they were used to have students reflect about their learning practices, issues they considered relevant from the class and in relation to their learning and have them express their opinions about any issues they believed were important (Imperio, 2005; Allison, 1998).

There are some problems with the use of learner diaries to collect data. According to Allison (1998), participants sometimes do not know what to write about or do not have enough primary data to discuss in their diaries. Another common problem is the unwillingness to write or comply with the requirements of the diary (Lewis, Sligo, & Massey, 2005) or to write in their diary. In a study conducted by Jacelon & Imperio (2005) in which participants were required to keep a diary; students were more willing to write in their diaries than others. Some just made a list of activities they had done in class while others asked questions and made comments to the researcher, few actually reflected about the issues they were asked to. These issues were considered and addressed in this study, what was done is discussed next.

The learner diary used in this investigation was simplified to motivate learners to write. There was not a format learners had to use to write their entries. They could use any they wanted if it included the information requested: their name, date, and the answers to the questions they selected to answer or any other issues they wanted to address. To prevent not knowing what to write about, learners were given some questions they could answer in their diaries (see appendix B.1). These were checked by a colleague who knew the content of the class, the learners, the competencies these were expected to develop, and the approach that was used to teach the class. Providing guidance may prevent the researcher from collecting more natural, uncontaminated raw data (Pearson-Evans, 2006). This is because subjects may focus on discussing the issues they are given but do not address the ones they want. To prevent this, participants were told they could answer any of the questions given or discuss any other issues they believed

were relevant. Despite this, the researcher acknowledged that it was likely that learners included opinions influenced by the researcher. Because it is almost impossible to prevent this, due to the power relationships between the researcher and the participants, the former noted this down to triangulate the data collected from the instruments used and try to obtain truthful information as much as possible.

Writing in a diary was a practice participants were not used to doing. They had to learn how to do it and get the habit of doing it regularly. To help them understand what diary writing was, they were explained what they had to do, when, how many words, and how. To facilitate writing regularly participants were asked to write a diary entry once a week. Asking them to do it more often could negatively have affected the quality of the content they wrote because of the limited amount of time they had due to the workload they had from all their classes. In addition, students were given some time at the end of the last class each week to write in their diaries. If they did not finish, they had two more days to do so and submit their entries. In addition, students were informed that their entries were not going to be marked or corrected as suggested by Howell-Richardson & Parkinson (1988). Diaries were read without being judgmental about what they wrote or made any type of corrections. Some questions were asked based on what learners wrote and comments were made to encourage them to keep writing. In addition, participants were told they could write in Spanish (their mother tongue) or English, whichever language they felt most comfortable to write their entries.

Writing diary entries was a class activity done regularly by all the students from the class, not only by the participants of the study. It was worth a small percentage of the final score because the school required that any practice learners did continuously had to be part of the assessment criteria. Learner diaries was a pedagogical tool the teacher introduced because he wanted students to reflect about their learning. However, because he noticed that relevant data was being gathered through the entries students wrote, he decided to use it as a data collection instrument. All the students registered in the class submitted their entries weekly; however, only the information obtained from those who had agreed to participate in the study was used in this investigation.

3.7.4 Researcher diary

A researcher diary was employed to collect data from the researcher's perspective and record how the treatment unfolded. The information obtained used only when it was necessary to complement the findings that emerged from the other instruments. Data collected from this one was not included in the data analysis if it was not needed. This instrument is employed in different areas such as education, nursing, psychology, sociology, health care and marketing (Toms & Duff,

2002; Platzer, Snelling, and Blake 1997). In research, diaries have been a useful tool to write down observations researchers make as their investigations are in progress (Altrichter & Holly, 2005). Altrichter & Holly, (2005) and Newbury (2001) explain that some of the issues that could be included in diaries are: thoughts and reflections, comments, summaries, notes on methodology, observations, problems, issues, questions, plans of action, and keywords. The researcher diary was employed to write down comments, reflections, observations, problems, and suggestions the researcher wrote as the intervention took place.

Diaries can include different types of information, can help to reach different objectives, and can take different forms (Toms & Duff, 2002). The type of data included in a diary can be as varied as the types of diaries there are (Lewis, Sligo, & Massey, 2005). This feature of this instrument makes it suitable for this research because it helps to record different types of information that may results when the process model is introduced; problems that arise, effects, and any interesting and useful outcomes that can be explored further during the interviews. Altrichter & Holly (2005) and Newbury (2001) argue that research diaries have a twofold purpose: an instrument to record information to help memory and a process that can create new perspectives and make new connections. These researchers explain that diaries enable the researcher to write down what goes on in their minds as the investigation while one is collecting information and when the analysis stage begins. The diary the researcher used had this doble purpose. It not only included reflections, ideas, and thoughts in regard to what was observed, but also recorded what happened and the changes and improvements to be made according to what was observed, so that the next time the intervention was implemented better results could be obtained (Burns, 2010).

3.7.5 Research process summary

Week	Research actions
1	The purpose of the study, length, and implications were explained to learners. Then, they were asked if they wanted to participate. Those who accepted were given the consent forms, were asked to read them and sign them if they agreed to participate in the investigation. The intervention began by introducing aspects of the first level of implementation: awareness raising.
2	The intervention continued by implementing more aspects of the first level; raising awareness, and some from the second level, planning learning (see appendix A1).
3	The intervention continued with the implementation of some more aspects from the second level and adding some from the third: monitoring of learning (see appendix A1). Participants were also involved in some of the decisions made regarding their and the assessment of their learning (see appendix A1). Learners were explained what a learner diary was, how to write their entries, when it had to be submitted and how. Learners were asked to write the first entry in their

	diary answering any questions they wanted from the list given or discussing any other issues they considered relevant.
4	Participants monitored their learning by reporting to the teacher what they had to and were going to do to complete with tasks and assignments given and looking at the course outline to be aware of the topics to be learnt each week. Learners were asked to self-assess their work when they submitted some of their assignments. A diary entry was submitted.
5	Learners were asked to self-assess their work using the rubrics given before they submitted their assignments. A diary entry was submitted.
Exams' week	Participants were given some questions to help them reflect about their learning (see appendix A1) and raise awareness about it.
6	Students were involved in more decisions made regarding their learning as planned for the second term, including the assessment of their learning (see appendix A1). A diary entry was submitted.
7	Participants were asked to monitor their learning as planned for the second term using the work plan and course outline (see appendix A1). A diary entry was submitted.
8	Participants continued monitoring their learning using the tools they preferred. Learners were asked to self-assess their work when they submitted some of their assignments. A diary entry was submitted.
9	Learners were asked to self-assess their work using the rubrics given before they submitted their assignments. A diary entry was submitted.
Exams' week	Participants were given some questions to help them reflect about their learning (see appendix A1) and increase learners' awareness about it.
10	Learners were involved in most of the decisions made regarding their learning as planned for the third term, including the assessment of their learning (see appendix A1). A diary entry was submitted. Learners were explained what self-study guides were, what they included, and how they could use them to organize their learning.
11	Participants monitored their learning using the tools they preferred (see appendix A1). They were asked to report on their learning progress. Learners were asked to self-assess their work using the rubrics given before they submitted self-study guides. A diary entry was submitted.
12	Participants continued monitoring their learning (see appendix A1). Learners were asked to self-assess their work using the rubrics given before they submitted self-study guides. A diary entry was submitted.
13	Learners were asked to self-assess their work using the rubrics given before they submitted self-study guides. A diary entry was submitted.

Exams' week	Participants were given some questions to help them reflect about their learning (see appendix A1). A diary entry was submitted.
	Participants were sent the questionnaire at the beginning of the week and were given a few days to answer it. Learners sent back the questionnaire already answered. The researcher saved the responses from participants in the folder created for it.
	Participants' responses from the questionnaire were analyzed to identify any issues that need be asked about or elaborate during the interviews. Arrangements were made with participants to set up meetings to conduct interviews the following week.
	Interviews were conducted throughout the week according to participants' time availability.

Table 2: Research process summary

3.8 Awareness statement by the researcher

This investigation was conducted in one of the classes the researcher taught; therefore, the researcher played two roles: as a researcher and as a teacher. This had some implications that need to be addressed considering the nature of the investigation. First, the purpose of the intervention was to develop learner autonomy, which involves students making their own decisions, as well as be independent and responsible for their learning. However, this is often confused with learners being obedient to what the teacher instructs them. For instance, students may be asked to complete a task and are provided with the content to be learnt, the materials, the instructions for the task. If students complied with everything they were asked to do, some might consider this autonomous learning; however, it is not. Although students do not learn directly from the teacher, they are not fully autonomous because the teacher established what they were going to learn, how, when, which materials they were going to use, and likely the pace they were going to learn at. This is not autonomous learning because the teacher controls many aspects; however, it could be considered a first step to reach such goal if students control some aspects of their learning (Cotterall, 2000). On the other hand, this situation could be seen as students being obedient. It is possible to confuse obedient learners with autonomous learners. It was essential in this investigation to differentiate the former from the latter to identify actual autonomous learning behaviours performed by participants to have evidence that this approach was promoted among them.

Another implication that has to be addressed is the power relationships between the participants and the researcher in this investigation. Because the researcher was also the teacher it was possible that the subjects felt drawn to provide the responses the researcher expected because

he was someone they respected and did not want to contradict. Participants had previously learnt with teacher-centered methods; therefore, they considered the teacher an authority figure to be obeyed and agreed with at all times. Therefore, when asked their opinions about any aspect of the intervention students could have felt compelled to say it was appropriate. However, this would have skewed the results of this investigation significantly and it would have made it impossible to get a thorough understanding of what was studied. To try to prevent this, the researcher informed participants that the information they provided was confidential and was only going to be used in this research. Second, subjects were clearly explained that their responses did not affect in any way their class performance, scores, or test results; the opinions they expressed would not decrease or increase such scores. It was hoped that this would contribute make subjects feel confident to truly say what they thought about whichever issues they were asked.

Finally, any contact the researcher has with participants related to the investigation was done in an area where he and students did not usually interact. A neutral area was used; where the students did not feel like they were talking to their teacher and the power relationships decreased, to try to have participants freely express what they really thought about the issues they were asked. The researcher was aware that in spite of these actions it was not possible to fully remove the teacher's influence on participants. However, this was kept in mind during the data analysis to try to use truthful information during this process.

3.9 Data collection process

Data collection happened during the Fall semester 2016. The intervention was conducted for one semester because that was how long teachers taught a class at the school where the investigation happened. Because of this, it was not possible to extend the treatment more than that. Data was gathered during the intervention through learners and researcher's diaries, the questionnaire and the interviews were used at the end of it. The description of the data collection process is presented next.

3.9.1 Learner diaries

Learners wrote their diary entries at the end of each week starting on the third one. They were allowed to submit them either handwritten in a notebook, typed in a piece of paper, or in an electronic document. When they did not finish writing their entries during class time, they were allowed to finish them over the weekend and submit them on Monday. The entries of those who did not accept to participate in the study were separated from the ones of the learners who

signed the research consent form. Participants selected the questions they wanted to answer, or the topic related to their learning they wanted to discuss each week. Entries were written in English. Because this was not learners' first language, slips of the tongue, mistakes, and other errors can be found in their responses. The entries received were recorded in a Word document named according to the number of entry. A different document was created each week to compile the entries submitted. This document included the number of entry, date, and participants' entries; each one with the author's fake name. Twelve documents like this were created, each one included the entries submitted each week. Each document was saved in a folder created to store the data collected from diaries. This folder was kept in the researcher's personal laptop nobody had access to because only the researcher knew its password. All the data collected was safely stored and used only for research purposes.

After entries were submitted the researcher read them then replied with some comments or questions related to the responses students had made. 12 entries were submitted through the intervention and most participants submitted most of the entries. A longitudinal examination of this data was not conducted because learner diaries were originally not created as a data collection instrument but as a pedagogical tool the teacher implemented in the class to have students reflect about their learning. However, because the students' responses generated useful information, it became a data collection instrument. Rather than analyzing the outcomes of the diary, the researcher was interested in retrieving any information that contributed to answer some of the research questions. Second, because students were free to decide the questions they answered or issues they addressed, there was a great variety of data obtained. Learners did not address the same issue each week. Some discussed a different topic weekly, and some answered the same question more than once. Nevertheless, the results present information submitted along the intervention.

3.9.2 Researcher diary

The format used for the researcher diary was simple. A Word document with basic required information: date, term, purpose of the session, and a section to write notes (see appendix B.4). This was done to facilitate writing his observations. Some questions were included, which the researcher answered depending on what happened in the classroom. If it was possible some questions were answered; however, the researcher was free to write about any other issues he observed and considered relevant in the intervention, learners, strategies used, methodology, outcomes, learner behavior, learning practices, support given to learners, etc. The main purpose of this instrument was to collect information the researcher could use to analyze the intervention

and the fostering of autonomous learning to make changes and improve these the next time they were implemented.

3.9.3 Questionnaire

The questionnaire (see appendix B.2) was administered at the end of the intervention. Its questions gathered participants' opinions regarding the intervention, the learning approach, the decisions they made, and whether they believed they became more autonomous in their learning. This instrument was sent to all the students taking the class via email. They sent the questionnaire back a few days later including their answers through the same means. The researcher only used the responses of those who accepted to participate in the study. That was the reason why participants were required to write their names on the questionnaires; to separate the responses of those who signed the consent forms from those who did not. Only the information obtained from the former was used in this investigation. Their information collected was saved in a Word document using participants' alias. This document was saved in a folder in the researcher's laptop, which nobody had access to.

3.9.4 Semi-structured interviews

The interviews were conducted at the end of the intervention; after participants´ responses from the questionnaire had been collected and analyzed. This was done to identify issues that needed to be explored further during the interviews. Eight participants were interviewed. Interviewees were selected based on their time availability and acceptance to participate in the interviews. Some participants refused to be interviewed because they did did not want, while others informed the researcher they were very busy with final projects, and they had no time to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted individually at a time that was convenient for the participants. Each interview lasted between 25 to 20 minutes. At the beginning of the interviews, participants were asked in what language they preferred to be interviewed; Spanish or English. Some felt confident to do it in English, whereas others chose to do it in Spanish. They were told they could answer the questions in whichever language they preferred. The researcher employed a semi-structured interview (see appendix B.3).

The questions included in the interview inquired about issues found in the responses obtained in the questionnaire, to expand or confirm findings from this instrument, and other topics that needed to be explored to collect data to answer the research questions. Twelve questions were included in the interview; however, not all of them were asked if the participants had responded them without being asked. However, if participants partially answered them, they were questioned to expand on the information provided. Some of the questions had sub-questions. The

latter was created to follow up on what learners had said. They were asked only if needed, but not all of them were used during the interview. Moreover, if unexpected but relevant issues emerged during the interview, the researcher asked more questions about them to get an insight into these (Descombe, 2014; Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). At the end of the interview, the interviewer asked participants if there were any other topics they wanted to talk about in case there were issues they wanted to address. After interviews were conducted, they ware transcribed in a Word document named with the alias of the participant and saved in a file created for the information collected with this instrument. This information was kept in the researcher's personal computer so that nobody could access it.

Data set	Duration/length	Word count
Questionnaire	The word count of the responses from each questionnaire ranged from 440 to 710.	The word count of all the responses together was 8431 words.
Interviews	Each Interview lasted between 7 and 9 minutes	The word count of each interview ranged from 1800 to 3200 words. The word count of the transcription of all the interviews was 26,436.
Learner diary	Each student entry was between 300 and 450 words	The word count for all the entries submitted is 26,880.

Table 3: Summary of data sets

3.10 Data analysis methods

Data analysis is complex (Pope, Ziebland, & Mays, 2000) because it requires a cognitive effort and attention to get a deep understanding of the topic being researched to be able to continually refine the interpretations made of the data collected; it is rigorous, intense, and long (Basit, 2003). In addition, the selection of the appropriate approach may be troublesome for the researcher (Grbich, 2012) because several can be employed (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Braun & Clarke (2006) explain that the selection of the data analysis method depends on the size of the project, the amount of time the researcher has, the inclination and the expertise of the researcher. Two data analysis approaches were selected for this research. They are discussed next.

3.10.1 Data analysis methods used

Coding and thematic analysis were used to analyse the data collected. A description of these methods is included. In addition, an explanation regarding what was used from each one of the previous, as well as why they were combined is provided next.

3.10.1.1 Coding

Coding is an independent analytical strategy (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) which helps to organize and make sense of the data collected (Basit, 2003), and allows the researcher to create categories prior to the data analysis or as such process is in progress (Pope, Ziebland, & Mays, 2000). Coding was employed in this study because it was unknown what information students were going to provide. Another reason to select this method was because it includes a clear process to follow. Its steps to code data are: transcribing interviews and typing handwritten documents, sorting and organizing data, reading through all data, coding the data by hand or computer, finding themes, interrelating themes, and interpreting the meaning of themes (Creswell, 2013). These steps were useful because the researcher was novice in analysing large quantities of data and considered that this method thoroughly explained what had to be done. Once codes were created, thematic analysis was used identify themes and conduct the rest of the data analysis.

3.10.1.2 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis was used because it is suitable to answer questions that inquire people's experiences, views, and perceptions (Caulfield, 2019), to find commonalities and differences, make sense of the previous, and generate unexpected insights (Braun & Clarke, 2012). It does not involve theoretical and technological knowledge of other approaches, and it is more accessible; especially, to researchers with little experience in research (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis has been used in education (Caulfield, 2019), but can be adapted to the needs of the investigation to answer questions that involve getting an insight of people's experiences and opinions (Braun & Clarke, 2012). It is appropriate for researchers at the early part of their careers, which is the case of the author of this study.

Thematic analysis uses a six-phase framework to analyse data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Next each step is named and described.

1. Become familiar with the data. In this phase the data collected has to be read several times in order to know it very well and become immersed in the content.
2. Generate initial codes. Here codes that represent relevant aspects of the data are created. These might be used to answer the research questions. Coding can be done inductively or deductively. The former means that the codes and themes emerge from the data collected. As a result, if a thematic map is created it is very close to the content. On the other hand, a deductive approach is top down. This means codes are created according to the concepts the research had already selected. The codes and themes

emerge from the concepts chosen; therefore, when they are mapped, they are connected to the data.

3. Search for themes. A theme "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). In this phase the codes created are reviewed to find codes that are similar and that overlap. Themes are created by grouping codes that have something in common. As a result themes describe a relevant pattern found in the data. In addition, during this phase the connection between themes begins to be established to decide which may go together. This step ends with the creating of thematic map that includes the possible themes to be used.
4. Review themes. During this phase created themes are reviewed, modify, developed, refined, and compared to the dataset. Themes can be divided, combined or deleted if necessary, to have a set of themes that answer the research question. A thematic map can be created to ensure the most relevant aspects of the data are included in the themes.
5. Define themes. This is the last time themes are refined. A complete analysis of each theme is done to determine what is unique about each and what their essence is. It is also established here if sub themes are needed and if they are connected with each other. The names of the themes are selected as well. Furthermore, extracts from the data are selected to provide examples and illustrate the points that are being made.
6. Write up. This requires the connection of the analytic narrative and extracts from the date, as well as linking the previous with existing literature. The purpose here is to create a story that accurately represents the data obtained, based on the analysis conducted. The story needs to be clear, but complex, as well as argumentative to answer the research question.

In conclusion, thematic analysis was selected because it matched the characteristics of the research. It is used in qualitative research, it is flexible, and it seeks to obtain the views, experiences, and perceptions of participants. Second, it provides a step-by-step description of the process to follow to analyse the themes. It does the previous more clearly that coding does, this is why the researcher decided to use this method during the second part of the analysis of data. Consequently, the last three phases from thematic analysis were employed to analyse the data: review themes, define themes, and write up.

3.11 Data analysis process

The analysis of data began by following the coding scheme by Creswell (2013). Interviews were transcribed verbatim; because of this and the fact that English was not participants' mother tongue, some mistakes can be found in the transcripts. It was decided not to correct them to keep responses intact. The comments participants made in Spanish were translated to English by the researcher. Diaries had been submitted through email in electronic documents so there was no need for transcription. Data collected from the questionnaire was compiled in one document. The answers to each question from this instrument were placed together, along with the fake names of the participants who elicited such responses. The same was done with the answers from the interviews. Next, all the information was read to notice similarities and differences, which is essential in data analysis (Khandkar, 2009). Data from each instrument was organized and kept separated during this phase.

In Vivo coding, also known as literal or inductive coding (Saldaña, 2013), was used to code all the data. This method was selected because it is appropriate for qualitative research. It is especially adequate for studies in which the voice of the participants is prioritized, it is commonly employed by beginning qualitative researchers (Saldaña, 2013), and it is used in action and practitioner research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). These characteristics are found in this study. Although there were specific questions to be answered, the codes emerged from the content of the data (Caulfield, 2019) rather than from existing concepts to answer such questions. Nvivo 12 was used to facilitate the organization of data and creation of codes. It helped to develop codes, to classify them, to have different layers, as well as to arrange all the data that was used for each specific code. Some screenshots are included below to show how the information was organized. It is important to explain that they are not screenshots of the version of the software that was used during the data analysis. This is because the researcher employed Nvivo 12 when the data was analysed; however, when he tried to get screenshots using such version of the software, he realized his license had expired and was unable to have access to his project. He bought a new license but was informed that Nvivo 12 was no longer available, he was told he could download the latest version of Nvivo and attempt to recover the project he had created. He did as instructed, but it was not possible to retrieve the information using the new version of Nvivo. Consequently, he lost the project and all the information he had analysed. To get the screenshots he was requested, he used the latest Nvivo version. The data was fed to the software, organized, and the codes were created as he had done before. The data analysis was done again to get screenshots of how the software was used through this process. This is the reason why everything that appears in the screenshots is from the current Nvivo version.

First a new project was created in Nvivo and all the data collected from each instrument was imported to the software to use it. There were three files because the data from each instrument was analysed separately.

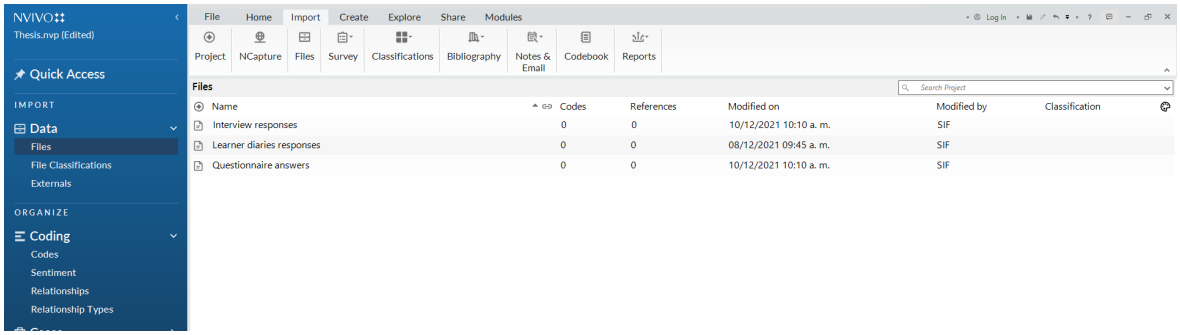

Figure 1: NVivo Project

The data collected from each instrument was reviewed to create the codes. Once a code was created, all the responses that belonged to such code were placed there, using the fake names participants had been previously assigned. When a new code emerged, any comment related to it were added there. This process was followed to code all the data from each instrument. The following screenshot shows the responses to the first question of the questionnaire and the codes that emerged from them. These were: *good opinions about making decisions, negative opinions decision making,* and *good but difficult at first*.

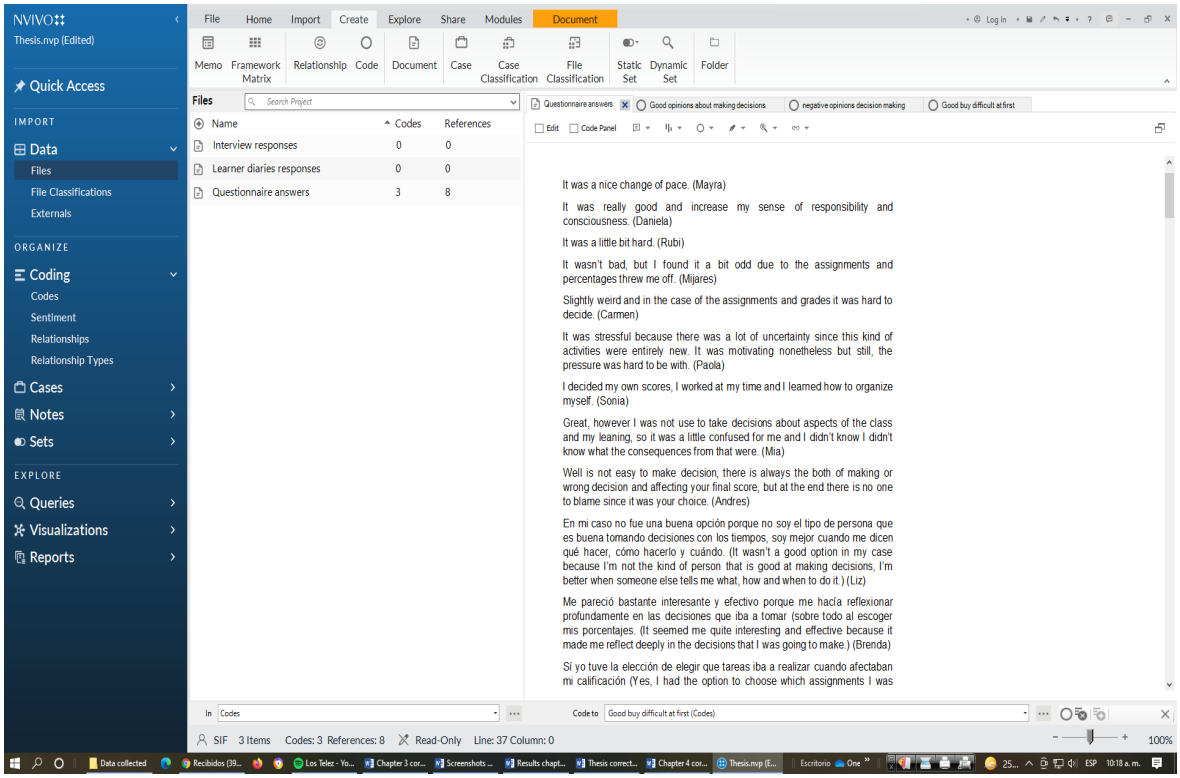

Figure 2: Sample codes

The screenshot below shows how the responses that belonged to the same code, from the first question of the questionnaire, were grouped and placed under the code they belonged, *negative opinions decision making*, along with their authors (using fake names). These quotes from participants were employed to support the findings presented in the results chapter. The same process was done with all the data from the three instruments.

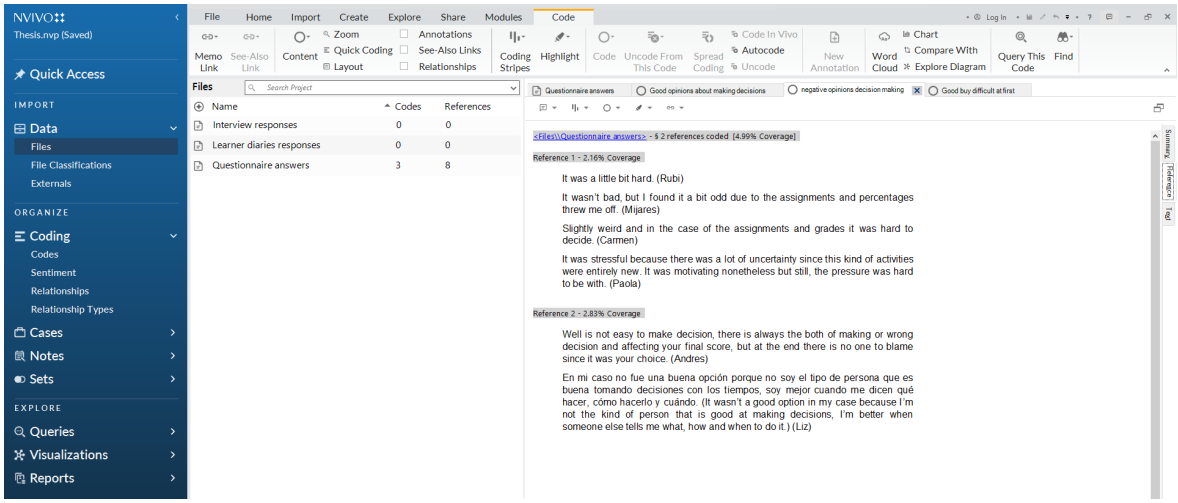

Figure 3: Quotes from participants

Once all the data from each instrument was coded, it was shown to a colleague who was familiar with the research to review the codes. Some changes were made after considering the feedback the researcher was given about the codes. The screenshots below present the codes that resulted from the questionnaire. There were 22. These were organized in six different groups. The first group was *reflecting* and included two codes: reflection a new practice, and reflection helped to assess learning practices. The second was *raising awareness*, it had four codes: what autonomous learning is, strengths and weaknesses of learners, awareness of themselves as learners, and the consequences of the decisions made. *Opinions about autonomous learning* was the third group. There were four codes here: students become more autonomous, positive opinions about, negative opinions, and learners had control of their learning. *Monitoring learning* was the fourth. It included two codes: raise awareness about learning and instruments that helped monitoring. The fifth group was *making own decisions*. It had seven codes: training needed, raise awareness, positive opinions about making decisions, no training needed, making decisions leads to foster autonomous learning, increase learner involvement, and difficult. The last group was *factors that helped to foster autonomous learning*. Three codes belonged here: voluntary attendance to tutorials, support given, and pair and teamwork.

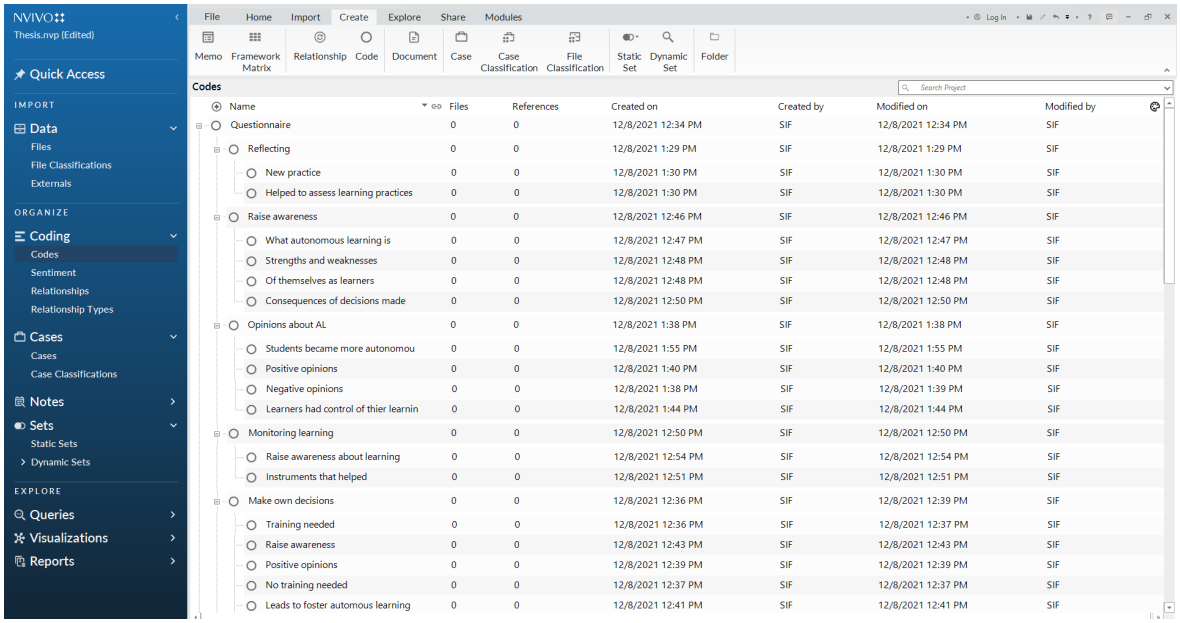

Figure 4: Codes from questionnaire A

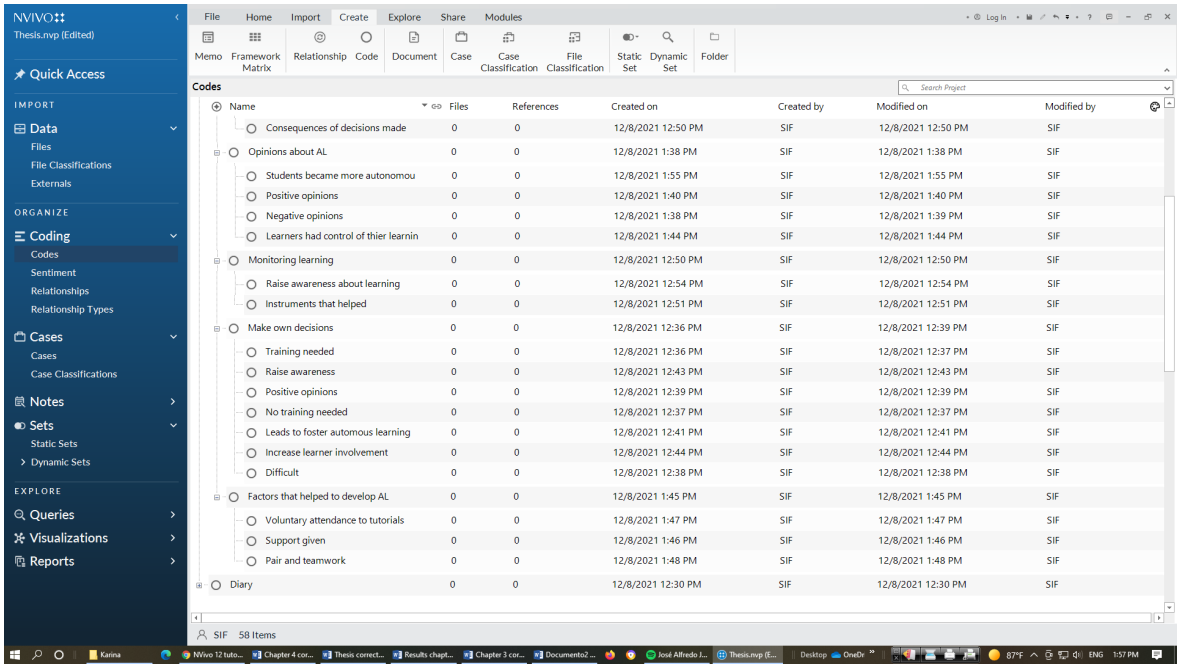

Figure 5: Codes from questionnaire B

The next screenshots display the codes that resulted from the interviews. 27 codes were found in this instrument and were placed in five groups. The first group was *autonomous learning* which had five codes: positive opinions about autonomous learning, continue learning with this approach, having control of learning, students selected how to learn, and working at their own pace. The second was *the introduction of autonomous learning*. Five codes made up this group: positive opinions course outline, feedback, the teacher, the work plan. The next group was *whether students became more autonomous* and had three codes: looked for more information, more independent in their learning, and students made decisions about their learning. The fourth

was *awareness raising*, it included eight codes: became better at making decisions, benefits of pair work, decisions and their implications, how students learn, reflection a new practice, personal attributes, tasks students were good at doing, poor time management, procrastination, and what helped learning. The last group was *making decisions*, there were six codes here: afraid to make wrong decisions, difficult at the beginning, students became better at making decisions, knowing themselves, practice, and making decisions.

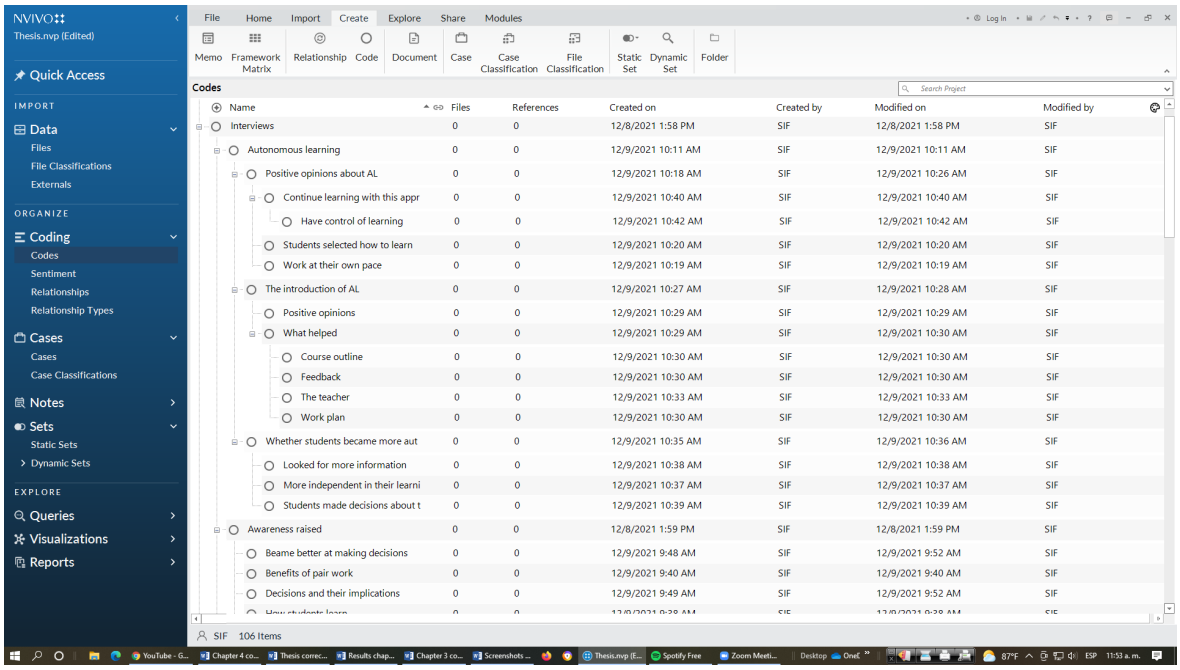

Figure 6: Codes from interviews A

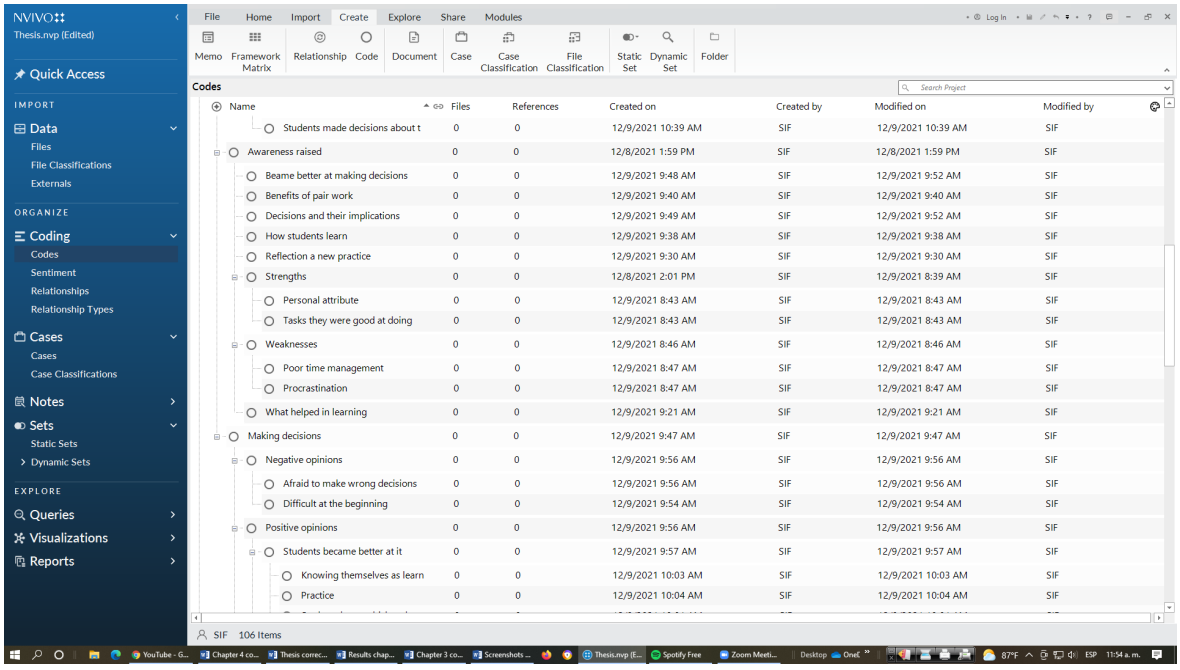

Figure 7: Codes from interviews B

The last screenshots show the codes that derived from learners' diaries. 21 codes emerged from this instrument. These were organized in five groups. *Views of participants about making decisions* was the first and included three codes: learner involvement increases, increase learner independence, and improving learning. The second group was *self-study guides*. This had seven codes: work at their own pace, improve learning, freedom to learn, foster autonomous learning, procrastination, lack of feedback, and for students who were already autonomous. The third group was *comments about decisions*. This had four codes: good decisions, percentages and decisions, good work and decisions made, and bad decisions. The fourth was *changes made to adapt to autonomous learning*. There were five codes in this group: work harder, look for more information, improve time management, attend tutorials, and ask questions. The last group was *changes in learning practices* and it included two codes: time management and effort.

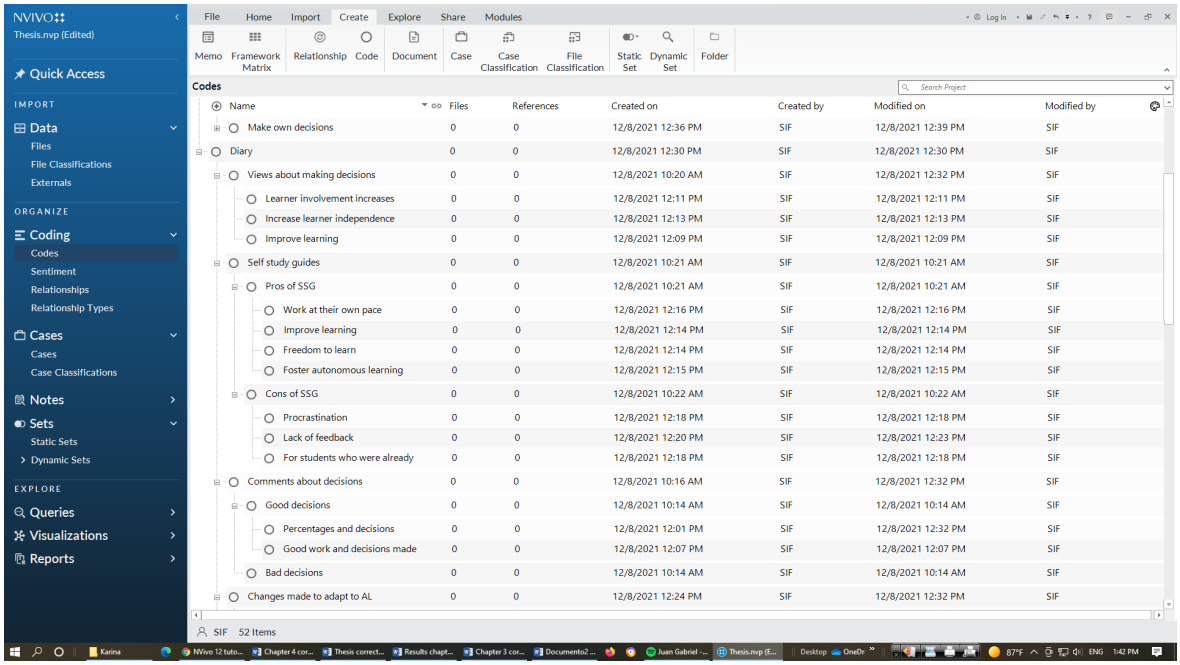

Figure 8: Codes from the diaries of learners A

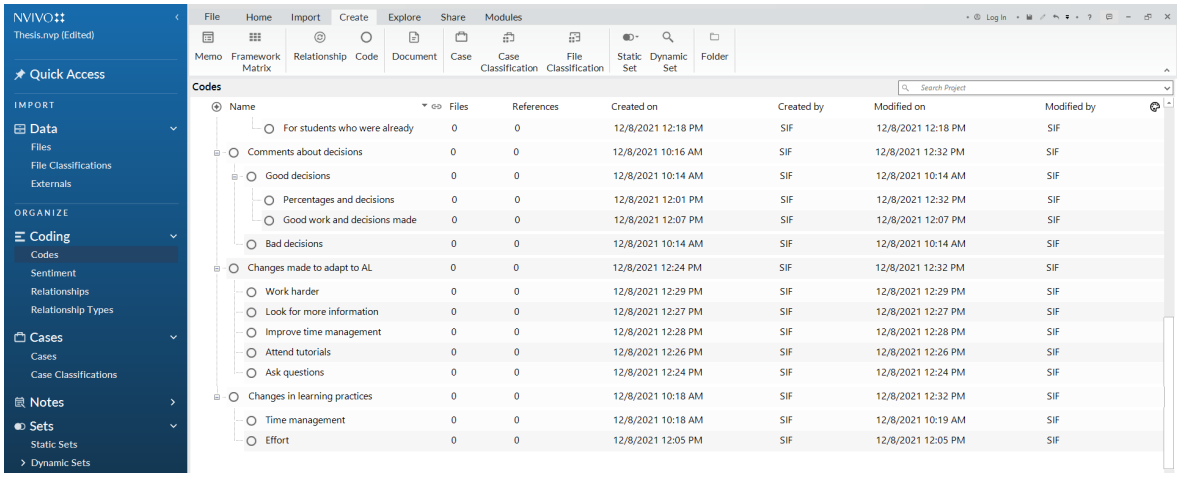

Figure 9: Codes from the diaries of learners B

The next step was to find themes. An inductive approach, the development of themes based on the content of the data (Caulfield, 2019), was employed. All the codes were considered to generate themes, whether these could be used to answer the research questions or not. The thematic analysis framework created by Braun & Clarke (2006) was used from this point on to do the rest of the data analysis. This is discussed at the beginning of the next chapter.

3.12 **Overview**

The objective of this investigation was to explore the impact the intervention had on the fostering of autonomous learning among the participants of the study. To achieve the previous, two research questions were created. The first one looked for evidence that showed how the intervention promoted this approach to learning, whereas the second one inquired the views of participants about learning autonomously. To answer these, qualitative research was done and action research was implemented. Three instruments were chosen to gather data: learner diaries, questionnaire, and semi-structured interview, because they were suitable to collect participants' views, experiences, and perceptions about the treatment, autonomous learning, and the introduction of this approach. The methods employed to analyse data were presented, the rationale for using them was provided, as well as what from each method was employed in this process. The data analysis process was described to show how both methods were used.

Chapter 4 Results

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained from the three data collection instruments employed. First, it explains how the themes from each instrument emerged. Then, the researcher describes how such themes were compared and interrelated across instruments to obtain the main themes. After that, the results from each instrument are presented. Verbatim quotes from participants are included. Because participants were not English native speakers, some mistakes are found in the quotes included. In addition, any comments elicited in Spanish were translated into English by the researcher.

4.1 Generation of themes

The themes were obtained by following the thematic analysis framework by Braun & Clarke (2006). According to these researchers, a theme "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set (p. 82)." The codes found were reviewed to find those that were similar or overlapped. Those that had something in common were grouped to create themes in each instrument. Themes described a relevant pattern found in the data. The inductive approach used (Caulfield, 2019) resulted in the generation of themes per instrument, whether they contributed to answer the research questions or not. All the codes found were included in the Results Chapter. This was done to get and present a complete picture of all the findings obtained. However, those that contributed to answer the research questions were selected and used in the next chapter to answer the research questions. The researcher considered it was more appropriate to have all the findings available to then remove those that were not needed, than to lack or not have enough to answer the research questions because some were discarded earlier. A thematic table was created for each instrument to see which codes were grouped to create the themes in each instrument. They are presented next.

Codes found	Themes created
• A new practice • Reflection helped to assess learning practices	Reflection
• What autonomous learning is	Raising awareness

• Strengths and weaknesses of learners • Awareness of themselves as learners • The consequences of the decisions made	
• Students become more autonomous • Positive opinions • Negative opinion • Learners had control of their learning • Voluntary attendance to tutorials • Support given • Pair and teamwork	Opinions about autonomous learning and factors that contributed to foster it
• Raise awareness about learning practices • Instruments that helped monitoring	Monitoring learning
• Training needed • Raise awareness • Positive opinions • No training needed • Leads to foster autonomous learning • Increases learner involvement • Difficult	Asking learners to make decisions

Table 4: Questionnaire thematic table

Codes found	Themes created
• Positive opinions about autonomous learning • Continue learning with this approach • Have control of learning • Students selected how to learn • Learners work at their own pace • Positive opinions about the introduction • Course outline • Feedback • The teacher • The work plan	Autonomous learning and its introduction
• Looking for more information • Students more independent in their learning • Students made decisions about their learning	Whether students became more autonomous
• Became better at making decisions • Benefits of pair work • Decisions and their implications • How students learnt	Awareness raising

• Reflection a new practice • Personal attributes • Tasks they were good at doing • Poor time management • Procrastination • What helped learning	
• Afraid to make wrong decisions • Difficult at the beginning • Students became better at it • Knowing themselves • Practice • Making decisions	Asking students to make their own decisions

Table 5: Interviews thematic table

Codes found	Themes created
• Learner involvement increases • Increase learner independence • Improved learning • Good decisions • Percentages and decisions • Good work and decisions made • Bad decisions	Views about making decisions and comments about these
• Work at their own pace • Learning is enhanced • Freedom to learn • Foster autonomous learning • Procrastination • Lack of feedback • For students who were already autonomous	Self-study guides
• Work harder • Look for more information • Improve time management • Attend tutorials • Ask questions • Time management • Effort	Changes learners made

Table 6: Diaries of learners thematic table

Once the themes from each instrument had been established, thematic maps were created to see more clearly which themes had emerged from each instrument. These maps facilitated the

comparison and analysis of the themes found in the three instruments. This was done to find correlations, and to discover themes common in all instruments.

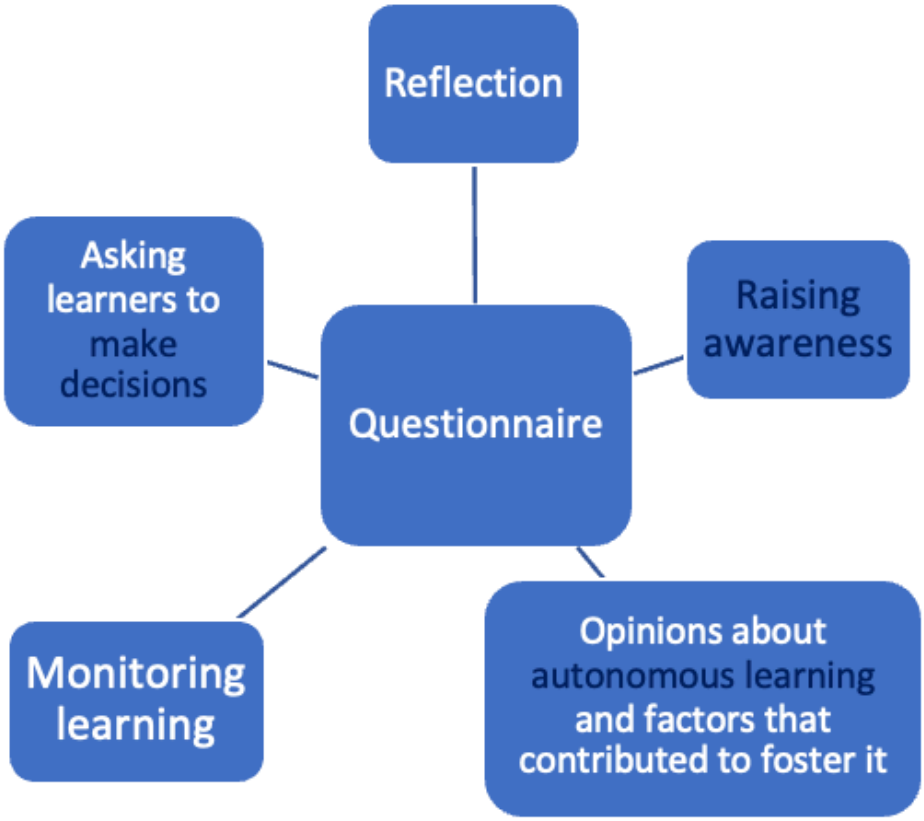

Figure 10: Questionnaire thematic map

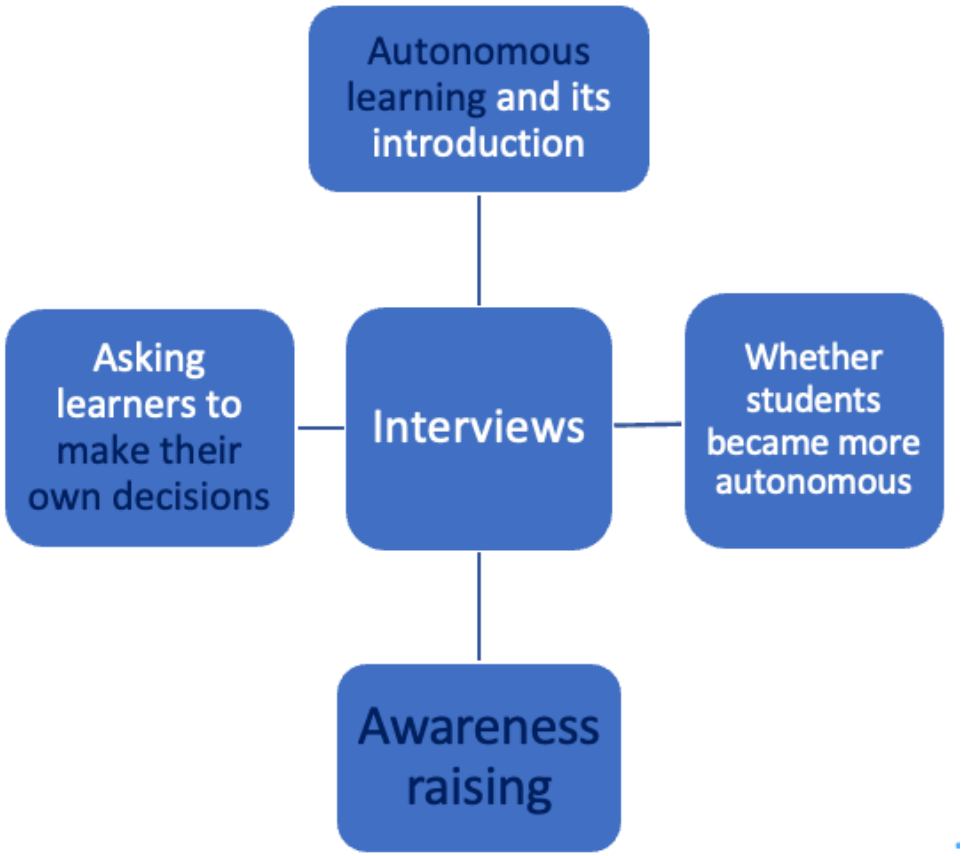

Figure 11: Interviews thematic map

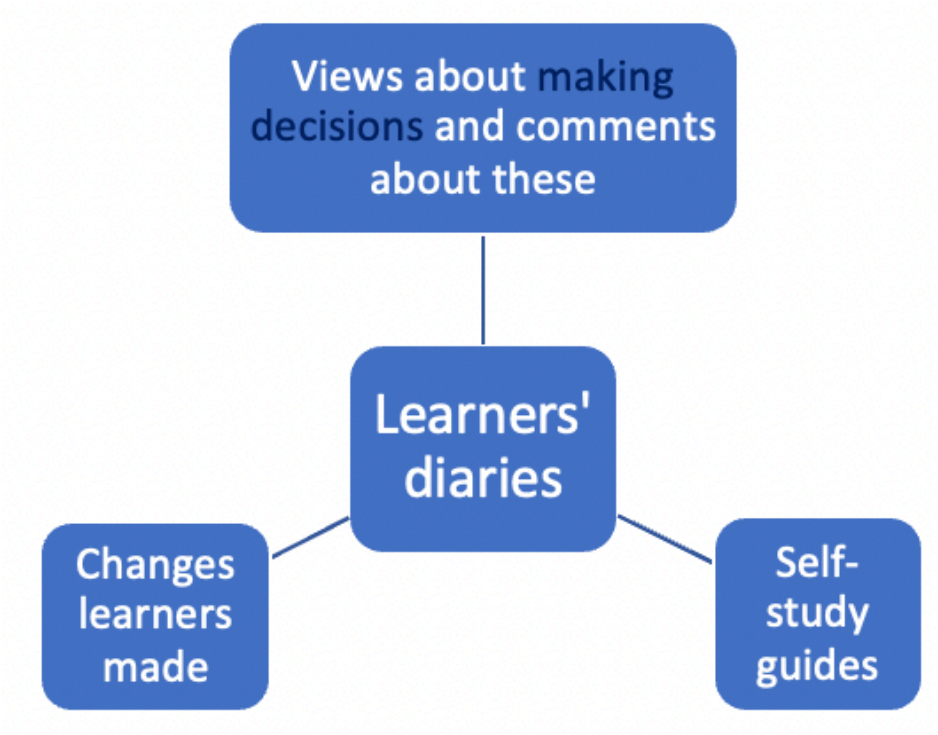

Figure 12: Diaries of learners thematic map

The analysis conducted to the themes found in the three instruments resulted in the establishment of the main themes of the investigation, these were: autonomous learning, making decisions, and awareness raising. They were found in at least two of the three the instruments. Slightly different issues related to these themes were addressed in each instrument, although in some cases they discussed the same ones. The next step was to refine the themes and the data that belonged to them were analysed to establish what aspects of the data the themes included (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Furthermore, it was determined how the broad themes contributed to answer the research questions of the study and whether any sub-themes were needed to do so. Extracts from the data that belonged to these themes were included in the results to provide examples of participants' comments. These themes were included in the discussions chapter, as well as the answers to the research questions. The following are the findings obtained from each instrument.

4.2 Learner Diaries

This instrument collected data during the intervention as participants submitted their diary entries each week. Verbatim comments from participants were included. Because they were not English native speakers, some mistakes are found in the quotes. The following are the results that emerged from learners' diaries.

4.2.1 Changes learners considered to make at the beginning of the intervention

The entries some learners submitted during the first term showed that they realized they needed to modify their learning practices to be able to adapt to autonomous learning. They noticed that what they were used to doing to learn was not as useful in this approach. This is a feature of a change being introduced, learners move from the known to the unknown (Clarke, 1994). Some learners said they had to put more effort in the work they did and their learning endeavours in general after they had experienced learning with this approach for a few weeks. They had previously learnt with teacher-centred methods and were used to being passive in their learning and be told what to do. However, this approach required them to be more active. Others expressed they needed to use other learning strategies to use time more efficiently. Moreover, several participants mentioned they had to organize their time better to have more opportunities to get assistance and finish work on time. They seemed to have discovered the relevance of completing work on time to be able to receive some type of support that could enhance their work. These

findings show that awareness began to be raised about the changes learners needed to make to adapt to autonomous learning.

> "Something that I would change for the next term is making more effort while doing my reflection paper (Sonia)."

> "I think I would change the fact that I underestimated the actual class and how much effort really goes into it (Paola)."

> "I would be smarter on my reading so that it would not be so time-consuming, and understand everything with my own words instead of trying to memorize it from the readings, that way it would be easier to explain and get familiar with it (Daniel)."

> "Also, I would change my time organization, because if I plan my activities during the week I will have more opportunities to receive feedback and improve my performance (Daniela)."

> "I am not good at organizing my times. I think if want to succeed in this course, I need to organize my times in order to complete all my tasks properly (Mia)."

> "I want to change my way of organize my time and go to bed earlier and do my homework at time (Andres)."

4.2.2 Changes students made to adapt to autonomous learning

During the third term, participants wrote about the changes they made to adapt to the new way of learning. Many said they had to be more active in their learning either by asking the teacher or someone else the questions they had about the information they read, the topics they had to learn, the instructions they were given, or the tasks they had to complete. They had to learn by themselves, meaning in collaboration with classmates but without the assistance of the teacher. It appeared that asking questions was not something they did commonly in their previous learning experiences. Moreover, they realized it was necessary to look for more information about the topics they were expected to learn. Even though they were provided with learning materials, they decided to explore those issues some more to get a better understanding of them. Furthermore, some learners conducted online research, while others decided to ask their classmates to help them when they had questions about the content to be learnt. Sometimes they looked for information in Spanish to remove the language barrier. Participants did not seem to have used online materials too much to assist their learning probably because access to Internet was limited because Wifi connection on campus was bad and access to the computer laboratory was restricted.

> "Asking the teacher the doubts that I have in each session (Mia)."

"Make sure that I take more notes and ask any question that I have to understand much better (Brenda)."

"I investigated on my own the things that I could not understand from the guides to have a better perspective of the subject and to carry out my work (Gris)."

"I was looking up online more information about each approach or method that I saw in this term (Blanca)."

"Sometimes I asked my classmates to complete and formulate my ideas or I remove me the doubts about information that I did not understand (Claudia)."

Another change participants mentioned they had to make was to learn to manage their time better. They reported this helped improved their performance in class because it prevented procrastination, they had time to submit drafts to get feedback, they were able to work at their own pace, and spend enough time on their tasks and assignments. In addition, learners put more effort in the work they did to complete and submit all the graded assignments. Not only they worked harder, but they also worked more because getting feedback on a task involved doing it in advance to have time to get feedback and make corrections before the deadline. They declared that to achieve the previous some of them paid more attention to the instructions they were given and followed them closely to make sure they complied with all the requirements established, as well as to manage their time better. These actions from learners show what Nunan (1997) and Littlewood (1996) describe as autonomous learning; students being responsible of conducting the actions that result from the decisions they made.

"I organized my time well to deliver the work on time which I had to deliver, I delivered the drafts to see where I had made a mistake and to correct my mistakes (Mia)."

"As far as I remember, I certainly proud of me organizing the work I had to do and the dead line I selected for each of them as I had plenty of time to work consciously on it (Jenny)."

"I want to add that I organized my time well and the effort I put into each task brought me good results as my written task calcifications (scores) improved (Claudia)."

"I worked hard in my assignments and my study guides (Claudia)."

"I read carefully the study guides and reflection about each and every one, I concentrated on completing the tasks and follow their correct structures (Mayra)."

4.2.3 Opinions about the decisions made at the beginning of the study

Learners' opinions at the beginning of the study were not expressed about the practice of making their own decisions but about how appropriate their choices had been regarding

selecting the worth of graded assignments. The comments some learners made showed that their opinions about these decisions depended on the scores that resulted from these choices. If their scores were high, they considered these decisions correct. If they obtained a low mark; because the assignments were difficult, done for the first time, or any other reason, they considered such decisions as wrong. At this point, decision-making seemed to have been used by learners more as a strategic selection to obtain good grades, rather than an opportunity to personalize and take control of their learning as it was intended. This was probably done because they were concerned more about getting high marks in the class than becoming autonomous learners. Nevertheless, this perspective changed as the intervention continued. Some participants also mentioned that some of their choices had been incorrect because they had not been careful when they made decisions. This is one of the factors that affect making informed choices (Chi, 2016).

> "My right decisions were related with the percent for the lesson plan of the first term, in which I got a good grade (Mayra)."

> "My decisions that were good, they were the fact that I did really good job on the lesson plan which was a plus (Gris)."

> "I think that giving my reflection paper a very high percentage was my downfall, because I didn't think that it was going to be that hard but I was very wrong (Brenda)."

> "My wrong decisions had to do with the percent assigned to the reflection paper. Really, I had not done a work like this, so I didn't know how to do it (Martha)."

> "Wrong because sometimes I do things impulsively, when I have money, time or it's something that I'd always wanted (Liz)."

Some participants believed their decisions were correct during the first term, even though it was the first time they had done this. The criteria to express such judgement appears to be based on the effect making such choices had in them. This practice seemed to have motivated some learners to make a greater effort and some changes in their work habits to get the expected results. This is congruent with the comments have made Dörnyeri (2001) and Littlejohn (2001) who assure that having students learn autonomously increases their interest in their work. These results showed that learners used different criteria to determine if their decisions were right or wrong.

> "I think my decisions were right. I worked hard in the assignments and organized my time at best that I could (Daniela)."

"I believe the decisions I made in the first mid-term were right. Even though I was not used to the way this course works, I tried to do my best in order to achieve a good score (Jenny)."

4.2.4 Outcomes from participating in the decisions made regarding learning

During the third term learners' perspective about making decisions changed. They no longer talked about specific decisions they made in their diaries, but about decision making as a practice that enabled them to choose how to learn according to their preferences. Some of them expressed that making their own decisions increased their engagement in their learning because they were able to decide how they were going to learn. They were motivated to perform the actions that resulted from their decisions, as Nunan (1997) affirms happens in autonomous learning and took ownership of their learning. In addition, students mentioned that this practice made them more independent in their learning because did not depend on the teacher to tell them how to learn. They selected what they thought was best for them and through experience they discovered whether such choices assisted their learning. Making their own decisions helped them learn from their mistakes and discover their strengths and weaknesses as learners. The latter was relevant information that they used to make informed choices (Marteau, Dormandy, & Michie, 2001) the following times they made decisions about their learning. Although some may consider this as strategic selection to obtain good grades, it is an essential element to make informed choices according to Chi (2016) and Marteau, Dormandy, & Michie (2001).

"I think making our own decisions helps us to get involve in our learning process. Getting involved in our learning process helps us to improve our performance in class and probably to gain independence (Mia)."

"Deciding on your own makes you want to do it, and not hate it while you're doing it. To me at least it's crucial to make your own decisions because if you let some influence you, just keep in mind that you will be stuck with that choice not the other person (Daniela)."

"It makes me more independent and like I said previously, learn from my own mistakes, but also get to know myself better and realize what my strengths and weaknesses are (Liz)."

"Your actions and decisions even if they are right or wrong will teach you a lesson, maybe that you do not have to do something again or that you probably need to do it something in a different way or better (Rubi)."

"I do think that making your own decisions helps. I mean if someone tells me to do something or they make up my mind for me, I won't really learn anything because It's something I don't want to do (Gris)."

"I think that making my own decisions help my learning because I know which are my abilities and disabilities. For example, I like that I can put my percentages for my grade because I know that I'm not

> good redacting and I can put a lower percentage for that type of assignment to get a better grade (Claudia)."

4.2.5 Self-study guides

Self-study guides were introduced in the third term to have students learn some topics and promote autonomous learning. The limitations of the context prevented to have participants complete other tasks that required them to be more autonomous in their learning. For instance, they could not do research because the library did not have enough books to get the information they needed. Internet access was limited because Wi-Fi was not very good and access to the computer lab was limited. They were not free to learn what they felt they needed because the school required them to learn the content included in the syllabus. Furthermore, learning with these guides was not optional, and their work was going to be assessed by the teacher. Nevertheless, it gave them some control of their learning because participants could select when to work, the order in which they completed the study guides, whether they worked individually or with somebody else, the place and the pace they worked at, and whether they attended face-to-face tutorials to ask questions about them. Giving learners some control of their learning promotes autonomous learning, it is a step in the process of developing learner autonomy (Thanasoulas, 2000). This was the objective of using self-study guides. Considering the limitations of the context, it was a tool that could be used to promote autonomous learning. According to the comments participants made, study guides did not make them autonomous, but contributed to help them reach this goal. It seemed that working with these guides was relevant in participants' learning experience because it was a topic they wrote about during the third term. The findings related to this issue are presented next.

4.2.5.1 Positive aspects of self-study guides

Learners agreed that self-study guides overall assisted them to learn. They helped them to understand the content expected to be learnt. Because the guides gave learners the opportunity to work at their own pace, participants spent the amount of time they needed to do the activities included in them to learn their content. They did not have to work at the same speed their classmates did, nor did they have the pressure of doing so. Working at the own pace assisted students in their learning and contributed to enjoy this process according to the comments of participants.

> "Also the study guides helped me to understand better the topics because of the questions we answered (Sonia)."

> "I think it is useful for make the topic clear and if we use our own words to answer the questions it will be harder to forget the topic and would be in our mind (Jenny)."

> "I was able to work at my own pace and I was able to complete all the tasks and assignments I was asked to (Sonia)."

> "I enjoyed working with the study guides because I could read at my own rhythm at my house without feeling stressed about having to understand something in a certain amount of time, like in a class when a teacher asks me to read and to answer some questions that I need to deliver within the next hour (Brenda)."

> "I felt that I could have my own time to do them at home and the way that we received feedback of each one of them (Andres)."

Participants also welcomed having freedom in their learning when working with self-study guides. These were posted online at the beginning of the term so that students could download and work with them whenever they wanted. Each guide helped them to learn one topic. When using study guides participants could select the order in which the topics were learnt; whether they worked individually, in pairs, in small teams, at school, or at home; how they completed them; and the pace at which they worked. This freedom also helped to decreases stress and facilitated learning according to the comments learners wrote.

> "I think is cool because students have freedom to choose if going to school or not, we can work like we want and at the time we want (Paola)."

> "I felt freer and I didn't feel as much stress like I usually have at the end of the terms, so yes, I think that is a good strategy and I would like to keep doing this kind of activities (Mayra)."

> "Felt with more liberty than other semesters and was a little bit easy to learn the topic because we had a previous text that explain everything before the class tutorial (Blanca)."

Learning with self-study guides made them more independent and responsible of their learning. Some students indicated that the previous happened because they controlled their learning. They selected when they completed which guide, the pace they worked at, whether they did them individually or in collaboration, and the order in which they did them. These learning materials were introduced in the last term once learners had become more autonomous in their learning because completing them required a fair amount of independent work. Participants seemed to have appreciated not relying on the teacher to learn all the time. They also mentioned they acknowledged that learning depended on them. This made them more responsible because deciding how and when to learn motivated them to work. As stated by Littlewood (1996), participants conducted the actions that resulted from their choices to reach their goals.

> "This method allows to me to become more independent and responsible to get my work done (Carmen)."
>
> "We can share information with our classmates and help each other (Martha)."
>
> "I think that is a good way to encourage us to be independent and autonomous with our learning (Claudia)."
>
> "I also think that it is an excellent way to take responsibility of my work (Mijares)."
>
> "I think is a great way of learning because it gives us the opportunity to be responsible of our learning and we decide if we learn or not (Rubi)."
>
> "I believe that in such a learning process we as students become more responsible of our study as well as help us reason the way in which we must set a time for do whichever activity we must do (Gris)."

Self-study guides enabled learners to personalize their learning. They stated that they were able to tailor their learning according to their preferences, time availability, and strengths. Therefore, participants worked in more comfortable environment, with enough time to plan their learning, using the strategies they considered helped their learning. Some participants seemed to have applied what they had discovered about their strengths and preferences while working with self-study guides, while others develop some skills more.

> "By using the self-study guides, I could take notes on what I learned, making learning very personalized. I would like to keep working this way because I can organize my tasks depending on the day that I could do them (Daniel)."
>
> "I found it quite interesting because I got more time to reflect things in a more peaceful environment, completing self-study guides alone was way more easier than what I thought (Gris)."
>
> "I consider that I learned to appropriately organize my time and deeply think of what I am going to do with the work I have to deliver (Paola)."

The analysis conducted to participants' diaries resulted in finding several positive aspects of the self-study guides employed in the treatment. Nevertheless, they also mentioned several disadvantages they found from working with these guides. These are discussed next.

4.2.5.2 Problems related to learning with self-study guides

Participants considered that self-study guides were suited for independent learners or those who had already developed to some degree the skills needed to learn independently. They acknowledged that someone who had not yet developed such abilities or preferred to learn with teacher-centred methods would find it difficult learning with these materials. As it was explained

in 4.2.5, this learning material was employed to give learners some control of their learning by deciding when, how, where, the pace, and the order in which they completed them. Moreover, learners had to be responsible of conducting the actions that resulted from these decisions to be able to reach their learning goals, as it happens in autonomous learning (Littlewood, 1996). Students completed the guides by working independently or with somebody else. Autonomous learning is a process not a product (Thanasoulas, 2000), in this case self-study guides intended to have students take another step in this process. Even though this learning materials were employed when participants were supposed to have developed to some extent independent learning skills, learning with them was still troublesome for some. This was probably why participants said learning with self-study guides was suitable for independent learners. These results support the notion that learner readiness is relevant when autonomous learning practices are introduced (Chan, 2001, Nordlund, 2001).

> "Another one can be if some students do not like to work independently, it could be hard and stressful to do the tasks (Mijares)."
>
> "If there are students that are not independent would be hard (Carmen)."
>
> "Also, if we do not have experience being autonomy, we could complicate our-self the way that we work and get more stress (Rubi)."

One of the biggest problems learners found from working with self-study guides was procrastination. It was mentioned before that these learning materials gave them the opportunity to plan their learning endeavours, work at their own pace, and do it in the environment they preferred. However, participants mentioned that if they were not responsible enough, they might not perform the actions that emerged from their decisions or do so at the last minute. This resulted in poor quality in the work they did, plagiarism, or not learn what was expected. Some learners experienced some of these consequences because they procrastinated and discussed them in their learner diaries. This might have been because, even though they had experienced autonomous learning for a few months, they still had not learnt to manage their time, or were not disciplined and responsible enough to work continuously to reach their goals. They were not ready to take some control of their learning (Yildirim, 2012). Participants acknowledged that the previous were needed to work well with self-study guides. This indicates that before learners are asked to learn on their own, it is necessary to help them develop their time management skills, have them report constantly on their progress and to assist them during this process to prevent procrastination.

> "Sometimes we are not responsible enough to carry out the self-study guides and we could procrastinate a lot (Sonia)."

> "Sometimes I didn't give it enough importance to the study guides since I had more free time and I wrongfully thought that I would have more time later on which wasn't the case, so at the end I had to do some study guides in a rush because I didn't administrate my schedule correctly (Mia)."

> "Students can easily get distracted with other things (Internet, social medias, pets), students become lazy because nobody is asking them to study or look for the information and they do it at the end of the death line (Paola)."

> "Students work at the last minutes, hence causing sloppy and unorganized work (Andres)."

> "Some students can copy the information from other students without even read about the topic (Brenda)."

> "I would say that is students procrastinating all the work they have until the last moment or just a few a hours before the deadline, which means that they might not completely understand the topic that is to be learnt and just deliver their work just to have a grade, thus they do not comprehend the topic and the objective of students learning is not reached (Martha)."

Another problem learners reported was not having immediate assistance when they did not work in the classroom. Participants were allowed to work outside or at home, and attendance to face-to-face tutorials was not mandatory. Those who chose to the former did not have the opportunity to get help when they were working. They had to contact the teacher through email, attend the face-to-face sessions, or make an appointment to meet with him to get assistance. Not being able to ask questions when they had them caused confusion of the content they were expected to learn, prevented from learning it, or delayed their work until they were able to do so. In addition, learners could not get feedback to have the opportunity to make corrections as soon as they finished their tasks. These led to frustration and discouragement among learners, as well as not fully learning what they were expected if misunderstandings had occurred in the content learnt. Providing more guidance and assistance to learners when they worked by themselves could have helped to answer any questions they had about the content or instructions, especially if they are in the process of developing their autonomous learning skills. However, because many students worked at home and only the researcher was able to assist students when he was not teaching it was difficult to provide support to all of them when they had difficulties. Nowadays, video calls and other tools can be used to assist learners more quickly.

> "Another disadvantage is that if you have a doubt at the moment about any question and the information is not enough you do not have the teacher to solve your doubts and another thing is that you do not have the scaffolding on the part of the teacher (Jenny)."

"If we have a doubt or do not understand certain topic or concept we could get discouraged and frustrated because we do not have someone to explain us clearly (Gris)."

"They can't get feedback from the teachers (Daniel)."

"Students can fall in a stressful mode because no one is helping them out (Mayra)."

"The cons were that sometimes I didn't understand something of the reading or in the questions (Paola)."

"Sometimes we can get stuck or lost in some works and not be enough able to continue by our own (Carmen)."

"If we have a doubt or do not understand certain topic or concept we could get discouraged and frustrated because we do not have someone to explain us clearly (Sonia)."

4.3 Questionnaire

The results that emerged from the questionnaire are presented here. Verbatim quotes from learners are also included. Some mistakes are found in them because participants were not English native speakers. This instrument was administered at the end of the intervention; therefore, it includes learners' views about autonomous learning and the different aspects of the intervention.

4.3.1 Development of opinions about autonomous learning

Participants stated that at the beginning of the intervention they had negative opinions about autonomous learning because they felt confused regarding the role they played. Even though they had been informed the roles they and the teacher were going to play, as well as other aspects about this approach to learning, some did not fully understand the information presented. This caused them to be unsure about what autonomous learning required from them.

"At the beginning was confused (Brenda)."

"At first I admit I felt kind of lost (Jenny)."

"At first, it was chaos for me because I am not that organized and because of that I always had problems with my times and remembering when to do such activities. Nowadays, thanks to this process I have learned how to keep track and control of my own activities (Sonia)."

Nevertheless, learners also mentioned that as the intervention progressed, they adapted to learning with this approach and their opinions changed. Eventually participants welcomed autonomous learning. They experienced and acknowledged the benefits of learning with this

approach. Moreover, they had positive opinions because they were able to choose how they were going to work and were able to do so at a pace that was suitable for them. They also liked selecting the type of assignments they preferred to complete, so they could perform better. They acknowledged that they became more responsible of and independent in their learning. These are aspects of autonomous learners (Lengkanawati, 2017; Bhattacharya and Chauhan, 2010; St. Louis, 2006).

> "Work autonomously was a great experience because it help me to learn meaningfully. Also, I could do my assignments concerning my decisions (number-time) and my own abilities (Claudia)."

> "I think it was a good way to work autonomously because I had the freedom to choose how to work and what to do the teacher only provided me with the information I was able to create my own learning on the subject by doing the extra work I could put into practice my understanding on the subject (Mijares)."

> "I think is really good to work independently, because you go in your own rhythm, you can get relax all the term and at the final get busy with the whole work, or you work normally and at the final you enjoy the rest of the classes, it depends totally on you (Daniel)."

> "At the same time helped me to procrastinated less and be a bit more responsible and get things done (Jenny)."

> "It helped me to make more effort to myself to do the tasks without to have the teacher on my back and it's good because I am these kind of people that if you tell them what to do, they don't want to do it (Mayra)."

4.3.2 Learning in collaboration

Participants said that the support they received from classmates was essential to adapt to the new learning practices. Pair and teamwork helped in this regard. Students stated that working with others gave them the opportunity to work in collaboration, to give and receive feedback from classmates, to know others' ideas, and to make decisions together. Peer support, group learning and collaboration were aspects of autonomous learning (Hu and Zhang, 2017; Nakai, 2016; Cabrera-Ruiz, 2009) participants reported experiencing.

> "Because by working in a team, I could analyze other quietly good ideas and conclude it together (Blanca)."

> "I think that is good work in pairs or small teams, because together we can help us giving and receiving feedback in a positive way, improving our attitudes towards the learning (Claudia)."

4.3.3 Becoming autonomous learners

At the end of the study, almost all the participants agreed they had become more autonomous. They affirmed this because they became more responsible of their learning (Zulaihah & Harida, 2017; Dam, 2011; Karababa, Eker, & Arik, 2010). They were less dependent on the teacher and were able to select the learning activities they preferred. Others stated it was because they gained awareness about the pace they worked well at, why they failed or were successful, and what helped and did not in their learning. Participants' claims that they became more autonomous were supported with the activities they did without being instructed to do so. These were watching videos, asking other students or the teacher to explain more or clarify topics they were having difficulty understanding or get extra help when they needed it.

> "Yes, now I take my own decisions related to my learning and I'm responsible of what I learnt and how I do it (Andres)."

> "Yeah, because now I know how long time takes me doing each task and I can decide what to do and when to do it (Carmen)."

> "Of course I did, I was not like this before, more responsible and aware of how I should do things and now I know why I fail in other classes, because I know what I do right and wrong and of course now I know that I am the responsible of my learning, no one else is, but me (Paola)."

> "I do not depend more on the teacher, I do not have to wait for him to tell me what I have to do neither when, and that is great because I am now more independent (Rubi)."

> "I think I am more autonomous but I think I can improve more, so I need to work more on me, and take more time in my work (Mia)."

> "I did watch a lot of videos when I wasn't clear about something (Jenny)."

> "I was talking to students whom understand the topic, it was very useful because it expanded the knowledge acquired in the class (Blanca)."

> "I needed some extra help so I asked classmates and a teacher, so I could understand it completely (Martha)."

4.3.4 Opinions regarding whether training was needed to make decisions

Participants were asked to progressively make decisions about their learning through the intervention because it was a new practice for them. Despite this, some participants responded that receiving training on how to make decisions could have been useful at the beginning of the intervention because it was a new practice, and training would have provided guidance on making the appropriate choices. Few students admitted they were naturally hesitant regarding making

decisions, so training could have helped them in this regard. Although this practice was difficult at first for the reasons previously mentioned, participants stated that they developed this skill as they performed it along the study.

> "Yes, because I could be more oriented about what I'm going to do with my learning (Claudia)."

> "Yes, but just at the beginning, I'm naturally indecisive because I don't like to choose "the bad" option or to eventually regret it. I feel like after a few months working on it made It progressively easier so, yes.

> "Yes, because now that I have done for 3 terms I think I met myself and I know how to decide in the percentages and in the way that I want to learn) (Mayra)."

On the other hand, there were a few participants who believed training learners how to make decisions was not necessary. They argued they had a good knowledge of themselves, which helped them to make appropriate decisions. Others believed it was better to learn by trial and error. They considered it was better to learn to make decisions by choosing what they thought was best; then, analyse the outcomes of such decisions to reach conclusions regarding how appropriate they had been. They preferred to learn by doing. Training my not be needed; however, it is essential to keep in mind the guidelines the literature suggests helping students make informed choices (Baxter, Glendinning, and Clarke, 2008; Chia, 2006)

> "No, because I am used to make decisions. I think I know myself enough and know my weakness so I made decisions that would not affect me (Gris)."

> "No, because in that way I will not learn to make decisions by my own (Martha)."

4.3.5 The views of students about making their own decisions

At the beginning of the intervention some participants had negative opinions about having to make their own decisions about their learning. They felt it was confusing, uncomfortable, stressful, and difficult. This was expected because it was a new practice for them (Chia, 2016). These feelings were also caused because participants were afraid their decisions were going to be incorrect and lead them to perform poorly in class, and they did not know what the consequences of their decisions were going to be when they made them. These are natural reactions when learners are asked to make choices for the first time (Ahmed, 2012). However, they agreed that they eventually welcomed this practice because they controlled their learning, and it helped them to become more responsible learners.

> "So it was a little confused for me and I didn't know I didn't know what the consequences from that were (Claudia)."

"To make decisions about you own learning is complicated because you won't know how will be your results (Jenny)."

"However, since I decided everything I was afraid of failing in an assignment (Mijares)."

"I was not use to take decisions about aspects of the class and my leaning (Claudia)."

"Besides having a hard time deciding, I feel that it was a good thing and I wish we did that in more classes (Jenny)."

"I felt good choosing and deciding how to work in the class, how you wanted to do the things such as your homework, choosing your grading criteria and so on (Daniela)."

"I found it interesting and at the same time a little fun (Mayra)."

"It was really good and increase my sense of responsibility and consciousness (Martha)."

4.3.6 The contribution making decisions made to foster autonomous learning

According to participants this practice let them take control of their learning, increased their motivation, and made them become more independent learners. They felt they were in charge because they could select how and when to learn. They were able to organize and plan their learning endeavours, as well as to select the learning activities they wanted to conduct and the materials they employed to complete them. Moreover, allowing them to make these choices and select the classmates they wanted to work with increased their motivation to learn because they were working with those they wanted and did tasks they enjoyed doing. In addition, they were motivated to work more because they contributed to establish how they were going to be assessed. This motivation resulted in participants taking ownership of and spending more time and energy in their learning. Moreover, participants affirmed they became more independent in their learning because they did not depend on the teacher all the time to learn, they were able to learn on their own by researching information and asking others. These results are congruent with what some authors say regarding the benefits of having students make their own decisions (Boggu & Sundarsingh, 2019; Hsu & Wang, 2011; Ajideh, 2009).

"You decide how, and when to learn, you have to make decisions for almost everything, this gives you a kind of control of what you are going to learn in a autonomous way (Andres)."

"In addition, you carry the control of your learning and your organization and time (Daniela)."

"You choose that materials, activities, and organizer graphics and so on, it can help you to carry out your works, homework, and so on (Rubi)."

> "Because when I had the option, I obviously chose something I liked and to work with people I know can help me and work as a real team, which motivated me to keep it up and work "por amor al arte" (because they enjoyed it) (Jenny)."

> "It makes me feel engaged because it suppose that when I made the decisions in my assessment and work process, I adapted to my working way (Carmen)."

> "Making my own decisions showed me that I was now responsible for my own work and that I would be the only affected if I did not do things properly (Sonia)."

> "I become very independent and autonomy on my own learning (Daniela)."

> "Yes, because I feel that I did not need the teacher to tell me everything I wanted to know and that I could learn by myself (Carmen)."

> "To search by my own more information or look for other ways to solve the problems (Martha)."

> "Because you depends by yourself there is nobody to help you if you are in a trouble, you need to do your own things, and little by little you become more independent (Daniel)."

Making their own decisions also led participants to gain consciousness about the importance of this practice, of managing their time better, and of taking responsibility of their work and learning. Some participants declared that this practice contributed to make them analyse the different options they had, what these involved, and the consequences conducting them or failing to do so had in their learning. This contributes to make informed choices (Chi, 2016). These findings seem to indicate that allowing participants to make their own choices had several benefits and helped to promote autonomous learning.

> "Aware of the importance of decision making and how I should stop procrastinating and start working because I was the one that made all of those decisions and if I don't do it I really don't have no one to blame (Paola)."

> "Making my own decisions showed me that I was now responsible for my own work and that I would be the only affected if I did not do things properly (Sonia)."

> "Analyze the opportunities and what would happen when changing in learning in other words you take into account the causes and reflect on what to do better (Mijares)."

> "You know that whatever you do or stop doing will affect you somehow and that because of you (Rubi)."

> "I think it helped me to be aware to be organized and control better time (Gris)"

4.3.7 Aspects participants raised their awareness of

Although there was an emphasis to raise learners' awareness at the beginning of the intervention, it also happened in the next two terms, although less intensive. It was found that many participants became aware of themselves as learners. They realized how they learnt, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. According to their comments, this realization happened because they made their own decisions and worked by themselves. Through experience and the reflection participants conducted at the end of each term, they became conscious of the aspects mentioned before. It seemed that these helped them to develop their analytical skills because, although they were provided with scaffolding to reflect, awareness was raised on their own during such periods. Awareness raising was one of the outcomes in this study, as it was mentioned in the literature review (Darsih, 2018; Zulaihah & Harida, 2017; Cohen, 2003).

> "I got to know me a lot more, that's how I think I became more aware, because I got to know myself more (Paola)."

> "I think that you really become aware of that form to work because you go by your own rhythm and only you know when you have to do the task or assignments and only you are the person who can perjudicate (be affected) about your grade (Daniel)."

> "I became aware in my own leaning, still have some problems because at it says you have to work and learn by your own (Andres)."

> "I realized about all the things that I am good at and also the ones that do not match with my habilities (Carmen)."

> "Well I think it helped me to assess my weaknesses and strengths (Mijares)."

> "Therefore, I think it really helped making me more aware of my strengths and weaknesses because when the job was done by myself (Paola)."

> "Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of each technique will allow me to know which will be the best option (Mia)."

Subjects also became aware of what autonomous learning involved. This was because it was explained to them; however, learning with this approach also helped in this regard and to clarify misconceptions about this approach. They used to think that autonomous learning involved working alone, in isolation; however, after participating in the study this misunderstanding was cleared. They also acknowledged that this approach involved becoming responsible of their learning. Gaining awareness about the approach is vital to understand it and facilitate adaptation (Abdelrazeq, 2018; Ajideh, 2009).

"It would not be not true if I say that I learnt about autonomous learning in this class, but of course I became more aware of this (Rubi)."

"And of course, thanks to my teacher because he cleared that working autonomously does not mean that we, as students, are alone, but that we become responsible for our learning (Sonia)."

4.3.8 Monitoring of learning

Learners monitored their learning each term. Several participants agreed that the work plan was what assisted them the most in this regard. This was probably because it included what they were going to do each week, instructions of the assignments they were going to do, deadlines, rubrics, and any other relevant information for each term. In addition, some learners said that feedback assisted them to monitor their learning. Monitoring their work contributed to raise learners' awareness about what they were doing, what they had to achieve by the end of the course, and the consequences that resulted if they did not comply with the work expected. This was not expected, but having participants checked what they were doing helped to them notice if they were doing things correctly, if they had to make changes through this process, or take further actions. Some learners agreed that monitoring their work contributed to foster autonomous learning because they were independent during their learning and were able to make changes if they considered it necessary. Monitoring their learning helped participants identify the problems they had while learning to prevent them in the future and become conscious of the progress, which are the objectives of this practice (Hu & Zhang, 2017; Ajideh, 2009; Nunan, 1997).

"I think the thing that help me the most was the workplan (Daniel)."

"Yes, especially the work plan and deadlines (Mia)."

"In my opinion when using these two tools: drafts and workplan helped me to monitor my work (Blanca)."

"Yeah, because we are very conscious of what we are doing and what we have to achieve at the end of the course, if you do not learn the content you cannot do the tasks so, it is very important to be focus and do what we most do (Carmen)."

"Well, I think it helps because you are in some way under pressure because you said that you will do something and if you didn't do it, that will have consequences, so that helps you to be more autonomous (Daniel)."

"Yes, because monitor makes you noticed if you are working correct or I you have to do some changes (Andres)."

"Yes, because as a student I have more control of what I have to do, and I keep working on what I have to do, so that helped me to me more autonomous (Mia)."

"I believe that it helps to monitor work even autonomous learning because it allows us to develop and practice our skills as linguistic and oral as we create a process by learning for ourselves that is to say we work independently in what we need and if we have doubts we investigate and discuss thoroughly on the subject (Mijares)."

4.3.9 Benefits of reflecting on learning

Learners reflected at the end of each term and based on their comments it seemed to have produced positive results. They responded that reflecting assisted them to notice what helped them learn, what did not, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. They mentioned that knowing the former was vital to make corrections or changes to improve their learning practices and avoid making similar mistakes in the future. Students said that the aspects they became aware of through reflection about themselves and their learning helped them make better decisions about their learning the next time they had to. It provided them with essential information to make informed decisions (Chi, 2016). Finally, some mentioned that reflecting contributed to develop autonomy in learning because it helped them become aware of their needs, select the strategies that seemed appropriate, evaluate the work done to decide what they needed to change to improve their learning. These resulted in better planning of learning and decision making. These results are congruent with the literature reviewed (Tassinari, 2012; Reinders, 2010; Scharle & Szabo, 2000).

"It was totally different from what I was used to doing (Sonia)."

"Yes, because it helped me understand what I did well and correct the mistakes I made. This will allow me in the future to make better decisions, improve what I do well and probably not make the same mistakes (Liz)."

"Yes because makes you realized about your weaknesses and strengths related to autonomous and you correct them in order to become more autonomous (Andres)."

"Yes, because, it helps you give yourself a feedback about your own learning, and you analyze and recognize your errors, your weaknesses, your strengths, your process of your improves in your learning, your skills, your talent, and so on (Daniela)."

"Yes, because it helped me understand what I did well and correct the mistakes I made. This will allow me in the future to make better decisions, improve what I do well and probably not make the same mistakes (Liz)."

"I truly believe that the moments of reflection and the self-assessment did help me a lot as an autonomous learner because it was always focused on my own necessities and once I knew what I was missing, I developed my strategies to improve my work (Sonia)."

"If it helps me learn autonomously because I plan a process when looking for a way to do things, analyzed if they work for me or I change it and evaluate my results in the end (Mijares)."

"Yeah probably when you reflect about your learning I think you become more independent or autonomous because you can see what you did wrong and what you did good, so then you can see where you need to improve and where you are good (Daniel)."

4.4 Interviews

4.4.1 Opinions about the introduction of autonomous learning

At the end of the intervention most participants stated that autonomous learning was introduced properly. Learning practices from this approach were implemented progressively considering that participants had previously learnt with teacher-centred methods. Participants stated that a gradual introduction was appropriate because it gave them the opportunity to adapt to the different practices and requirements of the new learning approach. This is agreement with the suggestion given by Bocos, Radut-Taciu & Chis (2015) and Martin (1999) who affirm that autonomous learning must be introduced gradually.

"Well actually it was really good to introduce because in the university of Colima we don't work like that, we work like only teacher-centered or student-centered so it was really good to have the decisions to make autonomous, to introduce little by little so you could adapt to the process and then make expert in that topic (Brenda)."

"I think yes, the teacher did a very good job introducing autonomous learning because we didn't know the..hay porque le contesté en inglés, ud hizo un buen trabajo. Fue apropiado a la manero que lo hizo, poco a poco, entonces estuvo muy bien introducido (Rubi)." "why am I answering in English. You did a good job. The way autonomous learning was introduced was appropriate, it was done little by little (Rubi)."

In addition, participants stated that the course outline, the work plan, and the assistance they were given helped to introduce autonomous learning. The course outline included which topics they were going to learn, when, the instructions for graded assignments, and deadlines. Having this information helped them organize their work and manage their time better. The course outline and the action plan facilitated the planning of their learning. This was because the former provided information related to the work to be done while the latter a document where they could plan and write down what they were going to do, when, and which resources they were going to use to reach their learning goals. Finally, feedback was relevant because when working independently sometimes learners felt lost or had questions; however, through feedback and guidance students were able to have their questions answered or receive corrections to improve

the quality of their work.

> "Yes because I remember that I watched the course outline and I decided when I was going to read the chapters of the book, so I had my time to read. They were useful when I was lost in the first term they were like the guide so I can know what to do (Gris)."

> "Yeah, I actually paste it on my wall, my course outline and when you change the due date or something like that I went home and clean, clean put it on and for, so don't remember it, don't forget sorry (Martha).

> "I think that the work plan that you gave us that you teach us how to work with that it has been really helpful right now because the teacher don't gave us the deadline we decide when we have to submit the assignment or the lesson plans or that kind of stuff but the work plan has been really helpful in what time should I work with that so the work plan is amazing right now (Paola)."

> "Yes! It really helpful to me because it helped me to organize my time in a better way to it gives me to, gives me the time to give the time to your assignments or other assignments for the other teachers (Martha).

> *"Fue muy útil porque cuando en algunos trabajos me sentí muy perdida y muy insegura, respecto a realmente es lo que tenía que entregar, y con el feedback, una cuando me ponía que estaba bien que por ahí iba, me sentía más segura a la hora del trabajo final, y cuando estaba un poquito perdida me volvía a encaminar por donde teníamos que ir (Blanca)."* "It was very useful because when I felt lost or insecure when doing some tasks; the feedback I was given I learnt whether I was doing things right or not. If I did I felt more confident when I submitted my final work. However, when I was doing tasks incorrectly, feedback helped me to understand what I needed to correct and how things had to be done (Blanca)."

> "So getting feedback was one of the ways to get guidance because we wanted to make sure that what we were doing was right (Jenny)."

4.4.2 Reasons why learners had positive opinions about autonomous learning

Participants explained they had positive comments about autonomous learning because they were able to work at their own pace and manage their time so that they could complete all the activities they planned. If they knew a certain assignment demanded more time to finish it, they made the necessary arrangements to ensure they had plenty of it to complete it. They welcomed selecting how they were going to work, which tasks and assignments they were going to submit, deadlines for graded assignments and to an extent how they were going to be assessed. Although these caused negative feelings at the beginning of the study, they were the aspects of autonomous learning they liked the most. Finally, they stated learning with this approach made them more responsible and autonomous in their learning, as well as gain consciousness about what they do to learn. These are some essential features of autonomous learning (Lengkanawati, 2017; Bhattacharya and Chauhan, 2010; St. Louis, 2006; Ho and Crookall, 1995).

"I personally I really liked it! All my classmates that in general we liked it, I enjoyed the class. I actually was really motivated, at first I was kind of afraid of class, cause teaching methods, but I feel like I did learn a lot during the class. I think it was the realization that working more, like the freedom that you gave us, was like, it was really good (Carolina)."

"Pues me gustó mucho que yo hacía las cosas a mi tiempo y no era tanto como que me dejaran una tarea de un día para otro. Me gustó mucho eso porque hay cosas que tu sabes cuánto tiempo te vas a tardar en ellas y el maestro a veces no toma en cuenta eso porque no sabe cómo aprendes y o cosas así (Andres)." "I liked it a lot because I worked at my own pace and it was not as it happened in other classes in which you are given tasks to do to be submitted the next day. I also liked it because you know how long it takes you to complete certain tasks. Teachers often do not give you enough time because they do not know you or how fast you work (Mijares)."

"I consider actually that it was a better way to learn because I have never had the experiment of learning by myself, it was really good. It's really helpful because we organize, actually I organize my time. I consider better and the ability to make on our own decision and to have to, how can I say, select the time for the working on the assignments it helps you to have more powerful decisions and to be conscious of your decisions so it's amazing the power that gets. It was amazing, for me it was an experience that I will happily have repeated again (Martha)."

"I think it was really good everything like to choose your deadlines and choose what kind of assignments you are going to do because it allows to work well because if the teacher says: ok, you are going to do this and if you don't want to do that, it´s like boring or stressful and if you decide to do the assignments by your own you are like ok; I say, I am going to do that. It something that makes you commit about to do your things. Think all the things were good, I like very much to work autonomous learning (Brenda)."

"I hope you keep working like this because *es una experiencia es muy grata, si nos saca de nuestra zona de comfort, pero está muy bien. ¿Por qué lo digo? nos enseña a ser autónomos, responsables, y ser un poquito más conscientes de lo que realmente estamos trabajando* (Sonia)." "it was a pleasant experience. You took us out of our comfort zone, but it was alright. Why do I say this? Because it taught us to be autonomous, to be responsible, to be a bit more conscious of what we are really working on (Sonia)."

4.4.3 The role the teacher played in fostering autonomous learning

The teacher's actions contributed to introduce and develop autonomous learning. Learners commented he had good rapport with them, his attitude towards assisting participants was appreciated and contributed towards increasing their motivation. It appears the teacher created an appropriate environment, which is vital to promote this approach (Öztürk, 2019; Azin, Biria & Golestan, 2018) Participants declared they liked the activities planned for the class, the freedom they were given, and the assistance provided when needed. A relevant element was the way they were given feedback. Learners found it necessary to be told what they needed to correct, but

truly welcomed the fact that they were praised for their accomplishments and their effort. Feedback had a positive effect in the development of autonomous learning as it has in previous studies (Hermagustiana & Anggriyani, 2019). It encouraged them to keep working.

> "Most of the time we were working cause we were, and I'm telling you I was really motivated in the class. Also, we had the chance to ask you questions, so it was better for us to work there. I really liked the way you explained it and then the kind of freedom that we had, you were approachable, we could ask you, we could do our work and we had resources enough so like it was kind of; Okay yeah, I like this, I'm gonna do it. (Carolina)."

> *"El maestro siempre nos mantuvo motivados de que, si también como nos decía: ese reflection paper está mal, tres o cuatro veces, aparte de eso también te decía, a mira hiciste un buen trabajo aquí super bien. Como que todo ese positive feedback si nos ayudó mucho, al menos a mí me ayudó mucho a seguir a motivada y eso es muy importante. No nada más que te de libertad, ósea te doy libertad pero también te digo que estás haciendo las cosas bien, eso me gustaría que lo siguiera haciendo porque si es motivador (Rubi)."* "The teacher always kept us motivated. Even when he told us that our reflection paper was wrong three or four times, he also would tell us: look you did a great job here. That type of positive feedback helped us a lot, at least it helped me to be motivated and that was important. It is not enough to be given freedom; that is necessary, but also to be provided with guidance to help you do things right. I hope he keeps doing that because it motivates learners (Rubi)."

> "I think that most of my classmates are with me that all your activities were interesting and had point in common, so we were anxious to know what was the goal of that activity, so getting the knowledge and doing the research together or what we were doing by our own it was really amazing. So personally your activities were like, oh my god we're going to today so it was really exciting, it was amazing (Martha)."

> "All the work that we did in class it was really positive for us because motivated us as students to work on our strategies and weaknesses (Liz)."

4.4.4 Becoming autonomous learners

All the participants agreed they felt they had become more autonomous and were more responsible of their learning. They affirmed this was because they did not depend on the teacher to decide how they were going to learn all the time; and often, learnt in advanced what was established in their course outline or their work plan. Some students said they became more independent because, without being required to do so, they looked for more information about the topics they were expected to learn by either researching online or by asking others. They did not restrict their learning to the content found in the materials and resources provided by the teacher. Nevertheless, they also acknowledged the teacher was necessary to sometimes guide them and assist them in their learning. Independence and responsibility are two features found in autonomous learning participants developed during the intervention (Zulaihah & Harida, 2017;

Karababa, Eker, & Arik, 2010)

> *"Sí que soy más autónoma, si porque mejor se oye muy vanidoso. Sí, o sea, ya traía autonomía en otras tareas de mi vida, pero en la escuela estaba muy acostumbradita a atenerme, pero no, cambió totalmente (Blanca)."* "I am more autonomous, it may sound a bit presumptuous but it is true. I was already autonomous in some areas of my life but at school I was used to being dependent, but this class changed that completely (Blanca)."
>
> "Yes (more independent) because you don't have to stay only with the teacher says, you're free to look for another sources, to look for another help, to look for another even books, you don't have to go on the websites an just stay with that information you can go to books, anything but the autonomous leaning I think it's the better way, the student has to learn to make decisions (Martha)."
>
> "I still look for in the internet, I still look for many different articles of the things that we are going to learn, that's basically I do (Gris)."
>
> "*Pues, sí soy más independiente, bueno yo creo que es necesario ser independiente pero al mismo tiempo nadie puede trabajar o estar al cien por ciento solo, sí se necesita un maestro por aquello de las dudas, de saber en base a la experiencia de alguien más cómo reaccionar o cómo actuar ante cierta situación, pero de igual manera yo me siento más independiente (Sonia)."* "Well, I think I have become more independent. I believe this is important; however, nobody can be one hundred percent autonomous. It is necessary to have a teacher who can clear any doubts we may have; someone who can use their experience to guide when students face unknown situations. Anyway, I feel I am more independent now (Sonia)."

Furthermore, most participants considered they developed autonomy in their learning because they took control of their learning, which is one of the main aspects of autonomous learning (Lengkanawati, 2017; Holec, 1981). They were able to decide how they were going to work, when, and who they were going to work with. In addition, if they had questions or needed help, they did not depend on the teacher all the time to have their doubts cleared. They asked senior students who had already taken the class before and had learnt the content they were working on or other teachers. They became more resourceful in their learning.

> "Yeah, I will say I became more autonomous at the end because you gave us the chance to choose like who to work with; like everything, all the activities we had the chance to be going as long as we turned them in on time so it was pretty much good because we had our own planning (Jenny)."
>
> "I think that it helped us and me, especially, to develop my autonomous in all the aspects and in the classes I like, more independent. I like to work in pairs but I know that if I do the work by my own I would get a good grade, and it helped you to develop in the aspects of your daily life, so I think that it's very important (Daniel)."
>
> *"Pregunte a alumnos de otros grados y maestros (Blanca)."* "I asked students who had already taken the class and some teachers (Blanca)."

"Fui a preguntarle a compañeros de grados superiores a mí y preguntar a maestros que ya tenía, que yo sé que tienen más experiencias que otros o que saben implementar bien (Mayra)." "I asked junior and senior students who had already taken the class and some of the teachers I had at that moment; people who are more knowledgeable and experienced than me and did well in the class (Mayra)."

4.4.5 Autonomous learning or teacher-centred learning

Some participants said they would prefer to study EFL or French with teacher-centred methods. They believed autonomous learning was not the best approach to develop foreign languages skills because language learning required more guidance from the teacher. Nevertheless, participants also expressed they would like to continue learning through autonomous learning, or have other teachers use some elements of this approach. This suggestion was given because then they could explore, do research, which could lead them to become more autonomous. They acknowledged that having freedom was important, but they did not want to be completely free, they wanted to be guided.

"I would prefer to have a bit more teacher centered for example with, I don't know, French or English it's a little bit more like, okay I need a little bit more help a little guidance at first but for example not the whole time maybe not, sometimes I would prefer them to be more student centered and more autonomous and some other times I don't want them to be completely teacher centered just a little bit (Carolina)"

"In most of the subjects that we have I would prefer in a more autonomous way cause I feel like it worked like you already kind of helped us find or discover this way of working, now we wanna do it again or at least I wanna do it again, there are a few more clases that I would prefer to have a bit more teacher centered for example with, I don't know, French or English it's a little bit more like, okay I need a little bit more help a little guidance (Paola)."

"Yo creo que sí, si aprendería más si fuera autónomo, un poquito más autónomo porque hay unas clases donde …pues toda la semana es el mismo tema nomas parafraseado entonces, entonces bueno yo creo que podría explorar, yo creo que estas clases te podrían servir como para, ósea estas horas de clase como para que tu hicieras trabajo de investigación (Sonia)." "I believe that I would learn more if autonomous learning was used more. I would like classes to be taught like this because sometimes in some classes teachers keep talking about the same topic the whole week. I think it would be more effective if I were asked to explore. I think we should use class time to do research or inquire about the topics we have to learn (Sonia)."

"Si, yo quisiera que las demás clases fueran más así porque yo podría ser más autónoma; pero si las demás clases también te permitieran serlo porque que tengas control y que la asistencia cuenta y como que tanto control como que te aburren, entonces..la libertad estuvo como muy bien, porque era una libertad como..dentro de lo que cabe controlada (Rubi)." "Yes, I would like classes to employ autonomous learning because if they did, I could become even more autonomous. Classes in which

attendance to every session is mandatory and everything is controlled by the teacher are boring. Having freedom is good, but a type of controlled freedom (Rubi)."

4.4.6 Opinions about being involved in the decisions made regarding learning

Most students declared that making their own decisions about their learning was difficult, stressful, and challenging at the beginning of the intervention. This was because it was a new practice for them. In addition, learners realized that making their own decisions meant taking responsibility of their learning, which is not easy for learners in general (Brajcich, 2000). Negative feelings were generated also because they were afraid to make wrong decisions. This is common in these situations (Chi, 2016). Participants feared their lack of experience and expertise in this practice could have led them to choose options that resulted in performing poorly in class and get low scores. Rather than being concerned about their learning, at the beginning of the study, participants seemed concerned about making decisions that led them to get good marks in the class.

"It was something difficult, you know? Because I was used to the teacher always saying, so you are going to do this and this is going to be your assessment criteria (Daniel)."

"I think that at the beginning was stressful for me because I don't know how to decide, maybe if I decide to give more points to a task I will get a less grade, so confusing, I don't know how to do it (Daniel)."

"Entonces, al principio fue algo como, que si dio un poquito de miedo, que empezaras a, porque tu ibas a tener mucha responsabilidad sobre tu propio aprendizaje (Rubi)." "So, at the beginning it was a bit scary because this meant you were then going to be responsible of your own learning (Rubi)."

"Well, at the beginning it was really stressful for me because especially with the assessment criteria, because I did not know how to make that decisions (Liz)."

"Estresante, yo creo que es una de las palabras, y miedo, miedo a equivocarme (Blanca)." "Stressful, I think it is one of the words I would use to describe this experience, and being afraid; I was afraid to make mistakes about the choices I made (Blanca)."

"*Yo me volví loca en especial sacando porcentajes y después diciendo: ¿y si no me sale bien y le doy un porcentaje muy alto? Si fue algo que me estresó en el momento (Sonia)."* "It drove me crazy when I had to assign a value to the graded assignments because once I did it I asked myself: what if I gave this assignment a really high value? It stressed me out when that happened (Sonia)."

As the intervention progressed, learners changed their opinions about making their own decisions about their learning. They said that during the second part of the semester they felt comfortable with and welcomed this practice. This was because it allowed them to do what they thought was

best, and through experience they learnt to make appropriate decisions. Furthermore, they mentioned that letting them make their own choices made them more responsible of their learning because it was them who decided what to do, so they took ownership of the actions that emerged from their decisions and their learning. Two factors seemed to have helped them: the knowledge they acquired about themselves and learning tasks, and the freedom they had to choose how they wanted to work. The former is vital to have students make informed choices (Marteau, Dormandy, & Michie, 2001) and the second is an essential aspect of autonomous learning (Lengkanawati, 2017; Bhattacharya and Chauhan, 2010; St. Louis, 2006).

> *"Bueno para mi si fue difícil al inicio pero ya, conforme pasó el tiempo ya otra vez fue fácil (Paola)."* "Well, for me it was difficult at the beginning; however, as time went on it became easier (Paola)."
>
> *"Yo opino que sí, pero así mismo he mejorado mucho en la toma de decisiones desde que comencé tomando mis decisiones en cuanto a lo que estudio y como quiero seguir mis evaluaciones (Mia)."* "I believe I have improved my decision making since I started to make my own decisions about what I am going to learn and how I want to be assessed (Mia)."
>
> "But the second term, it's like I have more with the deciding my own criteria, so the second term was easier (Daniel)."
>
> *"Es un factor positivo porque así los estudiantes se dan la tarea de pensar lo que quieren y lo que creen que es mejor para ellos, para cuando ellos tengan que tomar sus propias decisiones ellos estén seguros de lo que quieren y así mismo también tomen rápidas decisiones y las mejores para ellos (Mia)."* "It was a positive practice because students can decide what they want to do and what is best for them. As a consequence, when it is time for them to make their own decisions (in aspects related to their lives) they will be sure about what they want and will be able to make good decisions quickly (Mia)."
>
> *"Pero al final de cuentas me pareció justo, por qué? Porque bueno, uno se hacer responsable…. Se nos está dando la oportunidad de que ya tu digas, bueno yo quiero hacer esto, yo me conozco y creo que este es el porcentaje que le debería de dar, está muy bien (Sonia)."* "But at the end I thought it was a fair practice, why? Because it made us responsible of our learning… we are being given the opportunity to decide what you want to do and say: I know myself so I believe I should assign this value to this assignment. I think this was a good practice (Sonia)."

4.4.7 Reasons why making decisions was easier during the second part of the intervention

Participants reported that making decisions became easier because they developed awareness of what they were skilful at and what helped them learn. For instance, if they knew they were good at giving oral presentations, it was easy to choose this task when they were allowed to decide what to do. It also helped that whenever they had to make decisions, they had plenty of time to do so and took the time they needed to analyse what was best for them. This is one of the

recommendations given to improve the decisions made (Chi, 2016). They did not make careless choices anymore. This was useful because it enabled them to ponder the implications of the decisions they were considering, their advantages and disadvantages, this leads to make appropriate choices (Bekker, Thornton, Airey, Connelly, et al., 1999). If students did not like the possible consequences of the decisions they were considering making, they had time to select other options and conduct the same analysis to select those that were appropriate. Several participants mentioned that the knowledge they gained about themselves as learners and their strengths facilitated making decisions. If they knew, for instance, that they worked well in teams, when they had to choose how to work to learn a topic, working in collaboration was an easy choice to make.

> "I think it was easier because I knew that I was good at writing the reflection paper and also the lesson plan was easy, so it was easy for me to decide, ah what I'm going to do this, this and this because I was good in the previous term (Liz)."

> "It was easier at the beginning of the third midterm because we, I already know how you want to work, making the decisions of this might not working or this could be working, so it was amazing not depending a hundred percent, maybe a twenty percent and eighty percent left was on me or in my class, on my teammates (Paola)."

> "Stressful not anymore actually, I take my time, I think carefully and I take the decisions that I think that are better for me, so it was really helpful doing that (Martha)."

> *"Antes yo tomaba las decisiones más como intuición, no las pensaba era más como de voy por esto porque quiero esto y yo pienso que ahora soy más cuidadosa al tomarlas porque veo que es lo que puede afectar (Mayra)."* "I used to make my own decisions by intuition, I did not think them through. I chose to do things just because I wanted, but now I think things over, I am more careful when I make decisions because I take into consideration their consequences (Mayra)."

> "After practice and all I've come to know myself a little better so I can make better decisions, and having this chance (Mijares)."

> "For me it was like new, but I really like it because I had like the power to decide how I was going to be graded and I like that because if I have like my strengths I want to give more like value to those things than the things I'm not confident so I really liked it (Gris)."

The experience learners obtained from making their own decisions and the knowledge they got about the class facilitated this practice during the third term. Participants stated that the previous happened because they had learnt through trial and error during the first terms what worked and what did not to achieve their learning goals and make the right decisions. This was positively reflected in their class scores. It seemed that reflecting at the end of each term about what they did and the reflections they made helped to raise awareness about which choices were the most appropriate for them.

"He mejorado mucho en la toma de decisiones desde que comencé tomando mis decisiones en cuanto a lo que esto y como quiero seguir mis evaluaciones (Mia)." "I have become better at making my own decisions about my learning and assessing myself since I was allowed to do so (Mia)."

"Yeah it was easier to make decisions towards the end of the school year because I already knew how the things worked. In the last partial, it was like easier, it was easier to decide (Andres)."

"It was easier, cause we knew, we already, since we were working with the class for two or three or four months, I can't recall, we were like okay, so I remember this was easier than this so I might give a little more percentage cause I need to pass or like to kind of accommodate everything and like it was way faster to make a decision (Martha)."

4.4.8 Suggestions made to facilitate making decisions

Some learners said that they learnt how to make decisions by conducting this practice. They highlighted that learning by doing gave them the opportunity to learn from experience to make different choices, analyse its results, and realize which were appropriate. Some participants mentioned that it was hard to make decisions when these were related to completing tasks they had never done before. Not knowing what the task involved caused difficulty to make decisions. Therefore, clearly explaining the requirements of any new tasks and anything else expected could facilitate making decisions about these types of tasks, which is one of the suggestions given by Chi (2016) to have students make informed choices.

"He mejorado mucho en la toma de decisiones desde que comencé tomando mis decisiones en cuanto a lo que estudio y como quiero seguir mis evaluaciones (Mia)." "I have become better at making my own decisions about my learning and assessing myself since I was allowed to do so (Mia)."

"After practice and all I've come to known myself a little better so I can make better decisions, and having this chance helped (Carolina)."

"Nunca había hecho reflection papers, nunca había hecho lesson plans. Siento que lo más difícil era que iba a enfrentarme a un trabajo diferente y no tanto a la calificación que le iba a dar a esos trabajos (Andres)." "I had never written a reflection paper or a lesson plan. I feel that the most difficult part was the fact that I had to complete assignments I had never done before, assigning a value to them was not the stressful part of it, but doing something that was new to me (Andres)."

Few participants expressed that having the opportunity to talk to the teacher about the implications of the choices they made would facilitate making decisions. It seemed like sometimes learners did the previous without thinking about the consequences; however, when they realized what the implications were, it was too late to change them. Becoming aware of what their possible decisions would imply could help learners to decide if they wanted to go ahead and

select such choices. This would involve having the opportunity to change their decisions if they were not satisfied with the possible consequences.

> *"Para mí sería necesario como que… eh no sé, igual no training pero a lo mejor como poder platicar con el maestro de que bueno si vas a hacer las cosas así, tal vez pueda pasar esto o esto, porque por ejemplo, si decidimos sobre nuestros porcentajes de cada trabajo, pues yo no sabia que tan estricto iba a ser para revisar los trabajos o eso. Entonces yo creo que a lo mejor conocer un poquito más al maestro, tener un poquito de background de como trabaja, de que le gusta y cosas así. Eso estaría bien (Rubi)."* "I believe that it would be useful something like; I do not know, not training, but talking to the teacher about the possible consequences of the decisions we make. For instance, if I chose to do to written assignments I did not know how strict the teacher was going to be when marking my papers, if he was going to focus only the content and not the structure and grammar, or if everything was going to be considered to mark my written assignments. I believe that knowing the teacher a bit more, to have some background on how they work, what they expect from students works, and things like that would be useful (Rubi)."

Several participants agreed that some type of training would contribute towards helping participants learn how to make decisions, especially at the beginning of the treatment. They expressed that because this was a new practice for most of them, it would be useful to provide them with as much help as possible to decrease the uncertainty about their decision-making. Some type of training would prevent them from making quick, mindless decisions and decrease unpleasant outcomes from these. Training learners has been suggested by some scholars to help students adapt to autonomous learning (Wejira, 2019; Tassinari, 2016).

> "Well I think yes, it could be maybe training for me because I am not being a really autonomous person I think that I need to, need to make decisions more about my responsibility (Liz)

> "Mmm there should be training, yes because like I said, the first time you don't even know if you are going to do right or wrong. Once you are aware of how good or how not good you are at that, you could give a probably in this case the percentages (Sonia)."

The last suggestion was to have students gradually make their own decisions about their learning. They acknowledged that this approach was employed in this study and was appropriate to introduce this practice. They said that making easy decisions at the beginning of the intervention gave them confidence because it made them feel like it was not difficult to conduct this practice. They agreed that it was appropriate to increase the number and the complexity of the decisions made as they gained experienced and learnt how to make their own decisions. Have them move forward once they had mastered what they were asked to select first (Yildirim, 2012).

> *"Como fue introducido poco a poco, igual era, como que te daba miedito, pero se, ósea ya lo hacías pensando que iba a ser algo bueno para ti si lo hacías bien, porque tú eras super responsable de tu*

aprendizaje, pero creo que estuvo bien que fuera gradual con cositas muy chiquitas, para que te den un poco más de seguridad, de que tus decisiones (Rubi).” “Because it was introduced little by little, it was like a bit scary at first; but then you did it because you knew it was going to be good for you, because you would become responsible of your own learning. I think it was good that it was a gradual process asking students to make few and simple decisions to gain confidence about the decisions you made (Rubi).”

“It was good because at the beginning it was simple the decisions, not the hardest but it was like a chair like to the simple as hard, so it was good to make simple decisions and then as harder, and at the final it was the final grade, so it was good to, goes to the easiest thing to the hardest thing, it helps a lot (Brenda).

4.4.9 Aspects learners became conscious of during the intervention

Participants became more aware of their decisions and the importance of reflecting on these. Previously, it had been mentioned that they welcomed making their own decisions. However, they also said it was necessary to help them analyse their outcomes to establish how appropriate such decisions had been. Some suggested writing down the outcomes of each decision to help them make informed decisions in the future. Furthermore, several learners said they realized that being in control of their learning meant they were responsible of it, and if they learnt or not depended on them because they had decided what to do. They had to accept responsibility of their actions or the lack of these and the impact this had on their learning. On-action reflection, it takes place after a learning experience has occurred (Ottesen, 2006), to raise awareness about the consequences of the decisions they made.

“It made me to get more conscience about my decisions, minimum decisions that helped me in a future (Mijares).”

“Entonces como que aprender un poquito más de tus decisiones, o a lo mejor no se; que al final del semestre escribas algo y ver qué pasó con tus decisiones, algo como una reflexión acerca de eso (Rubi).” “One needs to learn a bit more about the decisions one made. Maybe it is necessary at the end of each semester to analyze and write down what were the results of the decisions one made. Perhaps write a reflection about this (Rubi).”

“Si claro que si, no había tenido la oportunidad; este bueno, tanta libertad de decidir cuánto van a vale mis trabajos, cómo me voy a organizar eda.¿Qué es lo que voy a hacer? ¿Qué no? Y bueno ya eres consciente ahora dices; bueno lo que hagas o lo que dejes de hacer es tu responsabilidad y tienes que aceptar las consecuencias eda, buenas o malas. Entonces si, si a mi me sirvió mucho (Paola).” “Yes, of course it did (helped me to make my own decisions). I had never had the opportunity to decide the value of the assignments I had to submit, how to organize my learning, what I was going to do and not do. As a result, you realize that when you control your learning; if you work or do not work you have to accept the consequences of your actions, whether these are good or bad. You become responsible of your learning. This is why I said that allowing me to make my own decisions helped me (Paola).

Some participants noticed the type of assignments they were good at doing. Becoming aware of this facilitated making decisions, as it was discussed before. If learners knew which tasks they excelled at when they were allowed to select what to do, it was easier to choose any of these. Furthermore, several students became conscious of some personal attributes that assisted their learning such as being disciplined, trying to do their best, and being good at assessing their work. Finally, several participants noticed they preferred to be assessed using alternative assessment instruments such as projects because these helped them demonstrate how much they have learnt, whereas a traditional test did not.

> "I realize I'm kind of good making lesson plans cause I was like, okay yeah, I got the idea fast so like okay, I'm good at this (Carolina)."

> *"Trabajo muy bien haciendo trabajos de reflexión o análisis porque pues pienso en muchas cosas, veo como todos los lados y aprendí pues que cuando…a conocer mis capacidades, conocer mis fortalezas, que trabajo muy bien haciendo esto. Así de, ok si soy buena haciendo reflection papers, pues voy a hacer unos (Rubi)."* "I work very well doing assignments that involve reflecting or analysing because I look at things from different angles; so I became aware of my abilities and strengths, and the fact that I work well doing these types of works. It was like; ok, I am good at writing reflection papers. I realized I am going at writing reflection papers, so I am going to write some (Rubi)."

> *"Ser disciplinada y hacer bien los trabajos siempre fui buena, ya que hacer mi propio work plan es fácil (Mia)."* "I realized I have always been disciplined and at trying my best in all the assignments I have to do and doing my own work plan was easy (Mia)."

> *"Soy bueno evaluándome (Andres)."* "I am good at assessing my work (Andres)."

> "I feel like it was better to do projects or assignments than a test cause in a test you have a certain time and a certain line and all; and I feel like sometimes you don't like express all you know in a test (Carolina)."

Participants gained consciousness about their weaknesses as well. The most common ones were procrastination and poor time management. These were connected because someone who did not manage their time well was likely to procrastinate. Nevertheless, some learners commented they realized the negative impact procrastination had on the quality of their work, and class scores. Raising awareness about these issues was necessary to know which learning practices were not helping them to learn to change them and improve their learning. Raising awareness about strengths and weaknesses is common when autonomous learning is implemented (Cohen, 2003).

> "Mmmm, aprendí que soy muy procrastinadora (Rubi)." "I realize I procrastinate a lot (Rubi)."

> "I discovered my weaknesses and my strengths like if I procrastinate my grade it was like bad (Daniel)."

"No puedo organizar muy bien el tiempo (Paola)." "I do not manage my time well (Paola)."

Participants reported they became aware how they worked well. Few participants stated they realized they do it better under pressure. This may be considered very stressful for some; however, these students welcomed it. This prevented such learners from getting stressed when they worked under pressure because they knew they were going to do well in this learning conditions. Others affirmed they needed to have plenty of time make decisions and work well. Some students said they realized they learnt to work well when they did it in pairs or teams; nevertheless, they also noticed that when they did so, they had to be involved in the work done. This was probably to make sure every team member collaborated as they should.

"I work better under pressure (Brenda)."

"I need to have time; I love time because I distract myself with anything, with a fly I don't know. I need time to do the things and make my decisions better to do the things and all the stuff (Sonia)."

"I discovered that when I work with a pair and another, I need to get more involved in this kind of work because the last midterm I didn't know how to work with a partner and now I discovered that we can do a good job (Liz)."

4.5 **Overview**

All the findings obtained from the three data collection instruments are presented here along with verbatim quotes from the subjects. They are all here to provide a better perspective of the comments, opinions, and experiences from participants regarding autonomous learning and everything else related to the intervention. Nevertheless, not all the results were used to answer the research questions of this investigation. In the following chapter the themes found across instruments are presented the research questions are answered.

Chapter 5 Discussion of findings

5.0 Introduction

The analysis conducted to the findings obtained from this research revealed several relevant issues that need to be addressed. In this section, the researcher discusses relevant aspects participants became aware, the importance of having subjects make their own decisions, their views about autonomous learning, and other significant issues about this approach.

5.1 Raising awareness

All participants agreed they developed their awareness about different issues throughout the intervention. Although, most of the activities to reach this goal were conducted at the beginning of the study, others were done throughout and assisted to raise learners' awareness. These findings are discussed in the following section.

5.1.1 Weaknesses

One of the weaknesses participants became aware of and affected their learning was their poor time management. This was reasonable because they had rarely been asked to control their time in their learning endeavours, it had been their teachers who did it for them. When they were first asked to manage their time, they either did not know how to do it, did it incorrectly, or were not disciplined enough to comply with the decisions and plans they had made regarding time management. Longman & Atkinson (2004) contend that poor time management practices such as not assigning sufficient time to complete tasks or study for exams, and not meeting the established deadlines are the sources of stress and low performance among students. In this case, learners submitted incomplete tasks or missed deadlines to submit assignments. Through trial and error, most participants improved their time management; however, this was more challenging for those who decided to do tasks in a team or with a partner because they had to organize their time in such a way that enabled them to meet with their teammates or partners or find resources and strategies to work with them online synchronic or asynchronously. Enhancing time management contributed to foster autonomous learning since time was used more efficiently to complete the tasks assigned; giving subjects the opportunity to work at their own pace to reach their goals. It also helped to work better by themselves, meaning without depending on the teacher or by working in collaboration with others. This agrees with the research that suggests that managing time properly can result in students being more efficient,

which leads to the achievement of goals and objectives, as well as becoming better at planning (Hellsten; 2012). In addition, raising awareness about subjects' time management helped autonomous learning because those who realized their administration of time was not the most appropriate; and experience its negative effects, concluded that they had to find and implement different strategies to improve their time management to enhance their learning endeavours. How time is employed is more relevant than the amount of time available because a good organization can lead to reach the goals set (Alvarez Sainz, Ferrero, and Ugidos, 2019). Participants improved their time management, although there was not enough information to establish how this was done, except for their comments on how the work plan and course outline helped them in this regard.

Participants also realized they procrastinated when they were given more control of their learning. Procrastination was a consequence of poor time management. This led to working under pressure with a high level of stress. Scher & Ferrari (2000) explains that procrastination decreases the likelihood that students will finish their tasks properly. Quant & Sánchez (2012) content that procrastination not only negatively affects students' performance but their health as well. Procrastination was more frequent when self-study guides were employed to help subjects learn. These learning materials gave participants more control of their learning. Self-study guides can be used to foster autonomous learning (García and Mercedes, 2014); however, if students procrastinate when these are employed, learning will not be achieved (Steel & Klingsieck, 2016); at least not to the level expected, nor will students develop their autonomous learning skills. Based on the findings obtained in this study, it may be advisable to find ways to prevent students from procrastinating with these learning materials are used. One possible solution to prevent this problem could be to closely monitor the work and progress of learners. In this way, the teacher can identify students who are getting behind according to what is appropriate and implement different strategies to prevent procrastination. Once students learnt to work well with these materials, it may not be necessary to keep track of learner's progress as much. In this study, once the participants realized the negative consequences of procrastination, they organized their time better and work continuously to reach their goals throughout the term.

A benefit of gaining awareness about their weaknesses was that participants realized they needed to improve such areas, found ways to do so, and eventually enhanced them. The fact that participants were able to find strategies to strengthen their weaknesses on their own or with some help was relevant because it contributed to have participants develop their problem-solving skills. Armağan, Sağır, & Çelik, (2009) affirm that "Students who have learned problem solving process can be successful in every stage of their lives by using these skills in finding solutions to the encountered difficulties and problems (p. 2678)." Biggs (2001) argues that by developing

students' problem-solving skills they more easily assume responsibility of their learning. Most participants found ways to overcome the difficulties they faced while adapting to autonomous learning, which is an indication that their thinking skills developed.

5.1.2 Strengths

Becoming aware of what participants were skilful at was a relevant benefit for learners because it facilitated making decisions about their learning. For instance, if a student realized he was good at making videos, attractive power point presentations, and artistic posters, when they were allowed to select how to demonstrate their understanding of a given topic, it was easy to choose one of these. Becoming aware of their strengths was relevant to move towards making informed choices. The results obtained in this study suggest that raising awareness about learners' strength contributed to improve and enjoy the learning process. These findings are like the ones obtained by Flint-Taylor, Davda, & Cooper (2014) who found that there is a connection between using personal attributes and becoming resilient in their work and learning.

Participants became conscious of how they preferred to learn. Little (2001) refers to this phenomenon as making explicit unconscious processes. According to this researcher, this helps students to become aware of what worked, what did not, and what to do to improve such practices in the future. This also contributed to make informed and better decisions about their learning. This was because once learners had realized what their learning preferences were, when they were given the opportunity to decide how to learn, they used such information to make choices about their learning. Decision-making was easier and the choices were more appropriate. Mkonto (2015) contends that raising awareness about students' learning preferences helps them realize how they learn, take charge of their learning, and enables them to become independent learners. No data was collected regarding whether raising awareness led to fostering independence in learning in this study, only regarding the aspects participants became aware of.

Subjects became aware of the skills they possessed for learning, the needs they had, and their assessment preferences. This knowledge also facilitated the decision-making process. For instance, if subjects were conscious of the assessment instruments that helped them demonstrate the knowledge they had acquired, it was easier for them to select the ones to be evaluated with when they were given the opportunity to make such choices. All in all, the more aspects students are aware of regarding their learning, their preferences, themselves as learners, their skills, personal attributes, and anything else related to the learning process, the more information they have, which can help them to make more appropriate decisions about their learning. Research has shown that there is a clear connection between raising awareness and developing autonomy (Iimuro & Berger, 2010). The findings of this study agree with these researchers because by raising

awareness of different aspects about their learning, they had more information which contributed to make better choices when they were learning autonomously. In addition, the results confirm the structure included in Reinders' model regarding including awareness raising as one of the first levels of implementation of autonomous learning. They also suggest increasing the number of issues learners should become aware of. These should include aspects about the learner, their learning preferences, and the learning process.

5.2 Participants making decisions about their learning

Involving participants in the decisions made regarding their learning is a theme found across instruments. This practice was present throughout the intervention and was crucial to foster learner autonomy among subjects. The findings regarding this theme, as well as its relevance are discussed in the following section.

5.2.1 Negative opinions about this practice

Participants experienced negative feelings about this practice at the beginning of the intervention. An analysis done to these comments led to the conclusion that there were two main factors which caused negative feelings among participants: the novelty of the practice and the fact that participants did not know how to make their own decisions about their learning. This was a new experience for them. The more teacher-centred were the methods employed to teach them in the past; the greater the change they went through to adapt to learning autonomously. Implementing a change in the classroom requires students to move from the known to the unknown and this causes negative feelings among them (Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu, 2013). Making their own decisions about their learning was a drastic change for most of participants, even though this practice was introduced gradually. Moreover, not knowing how to make decisions stressed students because they did not know what to decide. They lacked background, experience, and the knowledge needed to confidently carry out this practice properly. The findings in this study agree with the results of a study by Ceylan (2015) which indicate that students do not feel competent to make their own decisions, at least not a formal classroom environment. However, the source of negative feelings was not only because participants did not know how to make their own decisions, but it was also because these had a direct impact on their class scores. If some of their choices were incorrect, their consequences could negatively affect their scores. This was a great concern for participants. Perhaps if none of the decisions impacted their learning and performance, negative feelings would not have been generated. Even though most of the choices they had to make at the beginning of the treatment did not significantly affect their class performance, there were a few which did; those were the ones that caused negative reactions.

Had they had the knowledge and expertise to make appropriate decisions about their learning or had they been asked to decide only aspects of their learning which did not affect their class performance at all, negative feelings about this practice would not have been generated. Although making decisions about their learning; and the impact these had, was a major concern for most of them at first, as the treatment went on it turned into a practice subjects welcomed.

5.2.2 Effects of having participants make their own decisions about their learning

Participants changed their opinions about making their own decisions during the second part of the intervention. As they gained experience and learnt how to conduct this process, they felt more confident and felt comfortable at performing this practice. This means they had already adapted to the change introduced; therefore, they did not experience walking into the unknown, as Kanter (2012) and Clarke (1994) define change. In addition, they did not experience the discomfort that results from experiencing change (Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu, 2013). Some subjects learnt to make their own decisions more quickly than others, which means they adapted to the change faster than others. This is a common phenomenon when a change is implemented (Burke, 2008). Eventually, all participants got accustomed to this practice which contributed to generate positive feelings about it and welcome it.

Participants said that making their own decisions about their learning gave them control of their learning. Although participants were not fully autonomous, they were able to decide many aspects related to it. Being involved in the decision-making process allowed them to make choices that were suitable for them and their learning. Thus, instead of all subjects doing the same learning activity, in the same way, using the same materials; they were able to select the learning activities they felt helped them the most to reach their learning goals, doing them in the way they considered most appropriate and by using the materials they found most useful. Giving participants some control of their learning resulted in tailoring learning according to what they felt it was best for them. Based on the results obtained from a study conducted by Ismail & Yusof (2012), they found that giving students the opportunity to decide how to learn leads to creating more learning opportunities and increasing their motivation to learn. In this case, students were more motivated to work and learn because they were doing so in accordance with their likes, preferences and what they felt it was best for them.

Moreover, participants felt that making their own decisions about their learning helped them to be more responsible and become more autonomous in their learning. Subjects stated the former happened because by deciding how they wanted to learn, they took ownership of their learning. In addition, they said that whether they were successful or fail, they had no one to blame but them because they decided how to learn, when, the pace, and the materials. Consequently, if

they did not comply with the decisions they made, it was their fault. When the decisions were made by the teacher; if they failed or performed poorly, they could argue that it was due to the choices the teacher made for them, they could blame the teacher. Nevertheless, in this study because it was them who made decisions about their learning, they could not attribute failure it to anybody but them. This caused them to be more responsible, which also led them to become more autonomous in their learning. By establishing how they were going to learn and doing so according to how they decided to do it, they depended less and less on somebody else to learn. This is what Bhattacharya and Chauhan (2010) and Louis (2006) taking control of their learning, which is a major step towards becoming autonomous learners. These benefits contributed to have participants realize the relevance of making their own choices about their learning.

Involving participants in the planning of their learning and selection of learning materials and strategies are aspects included in Reinders' model and are connected to having students make their own choices about their learning. Although, such inclusion in this study was not to the level suggested by this author, it was done as much as it was possible by the limitations of the context where the research was conducted. Nevertheless, the results indicate that it is vital to involve learners in the choices made regarding the planning of their learning and other relevant aspects.

5.2.3 Factors that facilitated the decision-making process

According to participants, gradually increasing the number of decisions and their complexity helped them to become competent at making choices. When students are not used to making their own decisions about their learning, asking them to make too many at once may be too stressful (Bhattacharya and Chauhan, 2010; Ho & Crookall, 1995). Making decisions about their learning was a radical change for most participants, that is why it was required to introduce it progressively. A change requires a gradual adaptation because the cycle of change involves certain steps that everyone has to take (Bocos, Radut-Taciu, & Chis, 2015). Therefore, once they had adapted to an aspect of the change introduced, they were asked to move forward. Having participants welcome this practice and requesting to keep being allowed to make their own decisions about their learning indicated that the approach used to introduce it was appropriate.

Giving subjects enough time to make their own decisions was another factor that helped. This strategy gave them the opportunity to make a careful selection considering their strengths, weaknesses, personal attributes, learning preferences and any other piece of information they had become aware of, as well as being able to analyse the implications of such decisions. Furthermore, having ample time to make decisions allowed subjects to discuss them with their classmates or the teacher if they felt it was necessary. They provided subjects with a different perspective on their choices which enhanced the decisions making process. The result obtained

resemble those by Ahmed (2012) who found that participants suggested discussing the implications of the decisions they intended to make was an appropriate strategy to have them make better decisions about their learning.

One relevant suggestion given by the subjects to develop their decision-making skills was to have students make decisions continuously. Asking subjects to make decisions about their contributed to develop this skill and get more experience. If the result was positive, subjects realized that such decision was correct; therefore, it was advisable to make it again. If it was the opposite, participants could try to realize why it was not appropriate and learn not to make it again. This accumulation of experiences and knowledge sometimes only happens by trial and error. The strategy employed, learning by doing, made participants get experience in this practice and discover by themselves which decisions were suitable for them and which not. The more knowledge was acquired in this regard, the easier and more appropriate subjects' choices became.

Participants expressed that knowing well the requirements of the learning activities, tasks, and assignments they were asked to complete eased making decisions about their learning. This is considerably more relevant when students are asked to do tasks they had never done before. Providing subjects with all the information they need about the tasks and assignments to be done: their complexity, structure, expected content, length, depth, and any other relevant features, is vital to make informed decisions. Better decisions are made when people have the information they need to do so and a suitable range of options to choose from (Morewedge, Yoon, Scopelliti, Symborski, Korris, & Kassam, 2015). The findings of this study seem to suggest that clearly explaining what tasks and assignments must be like and providing some examples of them can contribute to make the decisions making process easier.

Training participants on how to make decisions was another strategy suggested by some participants; although some expressed, they did not fully agree with this idea and believed training was not needed but rather have them learn how to make decisions through experience. Nevertheless, it may be worthwhile to consider training students on decision making when this practice is first introduced to students who have no background on it. Training on how to make decisions can provide students with some information, advice, and strategies regarding this process which could likely assist in the development of this skill. In addition, it may prevent students from having negative experiences while learning through trial and error. Colakkadioglu & Celik (2016) explain that it was believed in the past that people could not be trained how to make decisions; however, they explained that different studies have been conducted on this issue and have demonstrated that decisions making skills can be taught. Ahmed (2012) claims that making

decision is an ability which can be developed, if there is anything that can be used to assist this development such as training, it should probably be used. Nowadays there are endless decision-making courses and trainings offered by different institutions which affirm they teach how to make better decisions whether these are personal or work related. If there is anything that may help learners to adopt a new practice, it should be employed. If participants can learn how to make decisions more quickly by receiving some training on this issue, it should be given to prevent having them learn everything about it through personal experience.

5.2.4 The impact of reflection on making decisions

Reflection was conducted at different stages of the intervention. During the awareness raising stage participants reflected about different issues that were key for their learning. As a result, they realized what their strengths and weaknesses were, learning preferences, personal attributes, tasks they were good at doing, and other aspects related to themselves or their learning. Whatever participants became conscious of required them to reflect about such issues. Reflection contributed to gain awareness. A relevant finding was that participants highlighted the importance of reflecting about their decisions when these were being made and at the end of a learning period. The former gave participants the opportunity to consider different aspects about themselves and their learning such as preferences and strengths. In addition, it enabled them to analyse the implications of their intended decisions in terms of work, time, and resources needed to comply with such decision; as well as the consequences in case they did not commit to doing what their choices required. This realization helped them decide if the option they chose was the most appropriate; in case it was not, they had the opportunity to consider other choices that were more suitable for them. Reflection is vital to make decisions because it can assist individuals to adjust according to the context and situation (Donovan, Güss, & Naslund, 2015). Osman (2010) explains that self-reflection can decrease the number of mistakes made by adults when they make decisions. Having participants reflect about the decisions they intended to make raised their awareness regarding the implications of such choices. This resulted in participants being more informed about their decisions and what they implied, which contributed to enhance the decision-making process.

Reflecting about the decisions they had made at the end of the learning period enabled learners to establish if these had been correct or incorrect. Larsen, London, and Emke (2016) affirm that reflection “can be used to influence students’ learning from experience, increase their awareness of their thoughts and actions” (p. 285). In this case, reflecting raised participants’ awareness about the consequences of their choices. This knowledge was vital to enhance the quality of the decisions made for several reasons. First, by knowing which choices were not appropriate,

participants were able to stop selecting those; thus, avoiding the negative results that would likely be obtained if such decisions were made again. Second, inappropriate decisions were replaced with other ones or changes were made to obtain more desirable outcomes. For instance, if a subject had paired up with a friend to complete a task, but they did not work well together, and the task had been poorly done; this student could do it on their own the next time they were given a similar task or select a classmate with whom they had worked properly in the past. Finally, realizing which decisions enhanced participants' learning can make the decision process easier because they will know which ones should made again. All in all, reflecting on the decisions made at the end of the learning process can generate knowledge regarding whether those decisions were appropriate, should be repeated, or new decisions ought to be made.

Reflecting at the end of the learning process helped learners to find ways to improve their learning. This played a vital role in becoming better learners and improving their learning practices. If students only reflected about their learning process and awareness was raised about what themselves as learners, their learning process, and their actions; they would acquire knowledge which undoubtfully could assist them to make better decisions in the future. However, taken a step further, it could result in participants discovering strategies to improve their learning practices. Having subjects reflect on their learning process not only assisted participants to establish what they did right and wrong, but also find ways to make corrections and improve their learning. These results agree with Little (2001) who asserts that reflecting can lead to awareness regarding what helped the learning process, what did not, and how learning practices can be enhanced, and Chang (2019) contends that it is necessary to reflect on what has been learnt to review it, improve it, and extend it.

The findings of this study support the structure found in Reinders' model regarding the inclusion of reflection as a level of implementation. This model required students to reflect about their learning process. The results of this investigation showed that doing so can help students become aware of different aspects about themselves and their learning, as well as to improve their learning practices.

5.3 Autonomous learning

The purpose of this study was to explore whether and how much the intervention fostered autonomous learning among participants. Therefore, it was essential to discuss the findings that were generated in relation to this approach to learning. The themes related to this topic are examined in this section.

5.3.1 The opinions of the participants about autonomous learning

At the beginning of the intervention, it was difficult for participants to learn in this way. Learning autonomously was a drastic change for most of them. Nevertheless, as the treatment went on and participants adapted to the change introduced their feelings became positive. At the end of the study subjects stated autonomous learning was a great approach and they enjoyed learning with it. Furthermore, they affirmed that learning was easier than through teacher-centred methods because they were able to make their own decisions, control their learning and do so according to what they felt was more suitable to them. Giving students control of their learning contributes to develop a sense of ownership among them and makes them more committed to their learning (St. Louis, 2006).

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5.3.3 Factors that contributed to the development of autonomous learning

Working in teams was a practice that helped to introduce autonomous learning. By implementing cooperative learning activities participants were required to construct their own knowledge by interacting, learning from, and teaching each other. This approach was welcomed by participants because they selected who the teamed up with. In addition, they helped each other, brainstorm ideas, gave and received feedback from teammates and ideas and suggestions were shared to achieve their learning objectives more easily. The fact that almost all participants chose to work with others at one point or another, showed that working in teams was a practice that was welcomed by participants. These findings agree with what some of the benefits of cooperative learning according to Chamisah (2013), it makes students work together to solve problems and achieved common goals, it promotes active involvement and responsibility of students in their learning. Collaboration and some dependency on the teacher for their learning was common

when cooperative learning activities were carried out. These practices introduced autonomous learning to participants.

Feedback helped participants to adapt to autonomous learning because it was a type of guidance that assisted them to go in the right direction to reach their learning goals. This was especially important when autonomous learning was first introduced because without it, participants might not have known what to do, how to do it, or which learning materials to use. Feedback helped to prevent misconceptions and clarify misunderstandings of the content to be learnt, prevented wrongfully doing the tasks assigned or selected, provided suggestions to improve the quality of participants' work and motivated learners to keep working. Feedback gave students guidance as suggested by Iimuro & Berger (2010), students need guidance as they are introduced to autonomous learning. In this study, feedback provided directions, support, and assistance to have subjects walk more easily along their path for learning.

The employment of self-study guides contributed to make participants learn autonomously to some degree. This happened for several reasons. They gave participants freedom to learn since subjects selected whether to work on them at home or in the classroom; it individually, in pairs or in small teams. They chose to use the learning materials included in them or find others that they considered more suitable for them. In addition, study guides provided participants with the opportunity to work at their own pace since they decided how long and how fast they worked on them. Furthermore, these learning materials made learners more responsible. This happened because they oversaw the decisions made regarding the completion and submission of the self-study guides, and they were responsible of conducting the actions that lead to completing all the work required. The results obtained are congruent with what García and Mercedes (2014) affirm about self-study guides. These are a learning tool which enhances the learning process developing learner autonomy.

5.3.4 Participants becoming more autonomous in their learning

Learners felt they became more autonomous in their learning. One of the reasons given was the fact that they were responsible of their learning. This happened at different levels depending on each participant; nevertheless, all of them considered themselves to be more responsible learners compared to what they were like prior to their participation in the treatment. They believed this because they made decisions about their learning and complied with what these required. In addition, they took ownership of their actions and behaviours. They did not blame other for their mistakes or wrong decisions they made and accepted the consequences of such decisions and their actions. Furthermore, they were able to analyse themselves and their actions to discover what they were doing right and wrong and try to find ways to improve their learning. This

matches existing literature that contends that autonomous learners are responsible of their learning (Xhaferi and Xhaferi, 2011; Benson, 2007; Little, 2002).

Another indication that participants became autonomous learners was the fact that they took charge of many aspects of their learning. This happened during the second part of the treatment. They were able to plan how they wanted to learn; individually, in small teams, or in pairs, by attending face-to-face sessions and tutorials or by working outside the classroom, by setting up meetings with the teacher to ask questions or by doing it at the tutorials or through social media or email. They selected time and the pace they were going to learn at by creating a workplan in which they stated what they were going to do in each class session included in their schedule and establishing the deadlines of the tasks they were going to submit. They chose the learning activities they were going to complete and the learning resources they were going to employ to learn. In addition, eventually they were able to select most of the assessing instruments that were going to be employed to evaluate them and the value of each one of them. According to existing literature, autonomous learners take control of their learning (Ismail & Yusof, 2012; Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Reinders, 2010; Littlewood, 1996; Holec, 1985), this is what participants did gradually during the intervention. Although they did not have full control of it, they became more autonomous in their learning.

Another reason given by participants to state they became autonomous learners was the fact that they did not adopt a passive role in their learning. Throughout the treatment participants were required to learn on their own. Participants were conscious they were going to carry out constructivist-like activities which required them to build their own knowledge by working in small teams, in pairs or by themselves. Sometimes they went ahead of schedule on the learning of some topics included in the syllabus. There were several occasions when participants; without being told to, researched more information about the issues to be learnt, asked classmates or other teacher about it, or used other learning resources to complement and enhance their learning. In addition, the use of self-study guides required them to learn autonomously. These allowed them to work at their pace, as they felt it was best, on their own time, using the resources and learning activities they preferred. Because participants worked and constructed their own knowledge; by working by themselves or with others, they did not limit themselves to learning with the materials given, learnt at their own pace and did so as they preferred to learn indicate that they were autonomous in their learning.

5.4 Research questions

Until now, the results from the data collection instruments were presented in the previous chapter, and the most relevant themes have been discussed in the first part of this one. Next, the answers to the research questions are provided using the relevant findings obtained in this investigation.

5.4.1 Main research question 1: What evidence indicates that there has been a development of autonomous learning among participants?

Participants expressed in the questionnaire and the interviews that they developed their decisions-making skills, this facilitated making their own choices about their learning which Islam (2011) considers vital in autonomous learning. Throughout the intervention, at different levels and amounts, participants made decisions about their learning. Although at first this practice was confusing, eventually it was welcomed and appreciated by all. It was also found from the responses to the questionnaire that participants gradually develop the ability to plan how they were going to learn, to choose they pace they were going to work with, the materials and strategies they were going to use; as well as to select the instruments they wanted to be assessed. The findings from the interviews support the previous. Subjects stated that making their own decisions became easier as the treatment progressed. They affirmed that during the second part of the intervention they felt competent at it and welcomed this practice. Bhattacharya and Chauhan (2010), Louis (2006), and Ho and Crookall (1995) contend that by having students make this type of decisions, they begin to take control of their learning, which is an essential step towards becoming autonomous learners. The fact that participants develop their decision-making skills and were able to decide how they wanted to learn at some point during the treatment is an indication that they became more autonomous in their learning by the end of intervention.

The responses collected from the questionnaires and interviews showed that participants were able to take charge of several aspects of their learning during the second part of the treatment. Lengkanawati (2017), Iimuro & Berger (2010) and Holec (1981), define autonomous learning as having the ability to take control of one's learning. Ismail & Yusof (2012) and Reinders, (2010) affirm that such control can be achieved by allowing students to make their own decisions regarding their learning. The subjects of the study stated in the responses from the two instruments that they felt they oversaw because they were able to select how and when to learn, which activities they want to do, which materials they were going to use, who they worked with, how they wanted to be assessed. In addition, participants also affirmed that having them plan, monitor, and reflect on their own learning contributed to take control of it because they were

able to decide how they wanted to learn, notice what helped them and what did not, as well as to think of strategies to improve their learning and make the necessary changes to achieve such goal. This matches the model by Reinders (2010) and his view that through reflection learners can analyse their learning and identify what caused them problems, as well as lead them to find solutions to such problems, and think of the changes they need to make in their learning practices to enhance them. Reflecting throughout the learning process is an essential aspect of autonomous learning (Tassinari, 2016). The fact that participants were able to plan, monitor, and reflect on their learning shows that they were in control of aspects of their learning, which is an indication that autonomous learning was fostered among them.

The data obtained from the three data collection instruments employed showed that eventually participants did not depend on the teacher all the time to learn or further their knowledge. They were able to learn by themselves some of the topics included in the syllabus. Wejira (2019) and Dickinson (1995) contend that autonomous learning requires students to be independent and more involved in their learning so that they can take charge of it. Boggu & Sundarsingh (2019) and Ajideh (2009) explain that this approach requires students to work on their own without having to depend all the time on the teacher for supervision or direction. During the interviews and in the learner diaries participants declared that during the second part of the treatment they often worked by themselves or with others to learn the topics of the class. This was done mainly by researching information on the Internet or using the learning materials and resources they had been provided with by the teacher at the beginning of the class. They then attended some of the tutorials given by the teacher to refine their knowledge, ask questions they had, or to elaborate on what they had learnt independently. Some subjects mentioned did this to have more opportunities to get feedback and make corrections if these were needed. Hu and Zhang (2017) and Cabrera-Ruiz (2009) explain that in autonomous learning students learn by themselves or by collaborating with others, which is what participants did in this study. In addition, participants expressed in their learning diaries, interviews, and questionnaire that they often went beyond the knowledge they obtained from the teacher and the materials provided by him. They continuously looked for extra information about the topics to be learnt to get a better understanding of them or complement their learning. They did this by researching on online, asking other teachers, or students who had already taken the class. The actions participants reported doing indicated that they took responsibility of several aspects of their learning.

Subjects reported an increase in their responsibility towards their learning. This was found in the comments that emerged from the questionnaire, the interviews, and the learner diaries. Chan (2001) explains that students taking responsibility of their learning is vital in autonomous learning. Cotterall (2000) contends that autonomous learners take responsibility of some aspects of their

learning at different stages during the learning process. Participants explained that as the treatment progressed, they became more responsible learners. They affirmed this because of the learning practices they adopted, which are attributed to responsible learners. They tried to submit all the assignments they had chosen to do, they were intrinsically motivated to do their best effort, they met the deadlines they had set for themselves, they accepted negative results when they knew they had not worked hard enough, and they were interested in learning and using new strategies to become better learners. Furthermore, participants stated they realized that since they had planned how they were going to learn, it was their responsibility to conduct all the actions that were required to achieve their learning goals. Subjects took ownership of their learning and were motivated to do what was necessary to comply with the decisions they had made about their learning. Al-Saadi (2011), Nunan (1997), and Littlewood (1996) argue that autonomous learning requires students not only to make decisions, but also to be responsible for performing the actions that result from such decisions. This is what subjects did during the intervention.

One essential aspect from autonomous learning which all participants reported developing in the questionnaire and interviews was awareness raising. Researchers agree that it is essential that learners gain awareness about different aspects related to themselves and their learning in autonomous learning (Abdelrazeq, 2018; Darsih, 2018; Tassinari, 2016; Cotterall, 1995). This is because the knowledge obtained from this endeavour helps them to make better decisions about their learning (Cohen, 2003). The participants of this study affirmed they became more conscious of different features related to autonomous learning, themselves, and their learning during the treatment. They stated they raised their consciousness of what autonomous learning involved, their strengths and weaknesses, their learning styles and preferences, the tasks they were competent at doing, the people they worked well with, their EFL skills, how they learnt best, their assessment preferences, among other aspects. They also said that becoming conscious of the previous contributed to make better decisions about their learning because such knowledge led them to choose more efficiently what helped them learn, who they worked well with, how they learn well, and which assessing instruments helped them to show what they have learnt. This agrees with what Öztürk (2019), Azin, Biria & Golestan (2018) and Zulaihah & Harida (2017), affirm regarding autonomous learners. They need to become consciousness of their strengths and weaknesses, as well as other aspects related to their learning such as the most appropriate methods, resources, and strategies for them, and the learning tasks. The development of participants' awareness about different aspect related to themselves and their learning suggests that autonomous learning was promoted among them.

5.4.1.1 Subsidiary question 1: How do the elements of the treatment contribute to the development of autonomous learning?

According to the comments participants made in the questionnaire and interviews the work plan they were asked to create at the beginning of each term, the course outline helped them to plan and monitor their work and learning. The latter was provided by the teacher with relevant information about the course while the former included useful information for the subjects such as the assignments they were going to complete, the activities they were going to do each week, the progress they planned to achieve weekly, and the deadlines they established. Subjects agreed that including the previous information in the work plan helped plan how they were going to learn because they wrote down the decisions they made regarding their learning. In addition, they were able to monitor their own work because it reminded them what they had to do and when it had to be done. Hu & Zhang (2017) explains that when students monitor their learning, they can regulate their work and learning, and it increases motivation, commitment, and persistence to learn. Ajideh (2009) and Nunan (1997) add that this practice helps them identify the problems they have during the learning process and make the necessary changes to avoid them in the future. Not enough data was gathered regarding monitoring helping participants find problems they had during their learning.

Based on the responses from the questionnaire and interviews, participants stated that the support and feedback they received on their work, drafts, tasks, and anything related to their learning was crucial for them to be more autonomous. When they began to work independently, support was essential because they had many questions, they were unsure about what to do and how, they needed assurance about what they were doing or needed suggestions. Once they completed some tasks or gained some experience they did not need as much assistance; however, teacher support was still necessary to give participants feedback so that they could correct any mistakes they had made, as well as to give suggestions on how to improve their work. Reinders (2010) and Chia (2005) contend that when autonomous learning is introduced, learners need assistance to understand this new way of learning and develop the competencies required. The latter affirms that more help is needed when this approach is first introduced because it is then when learners have the most questions and doubts about it. The support participants were given during the treatment was vital to guide them in their independent learning endeavours, as well as to help them to overcome the difficulties they encountered as they began to learn on their own.

The responses obtained from the questionnaire and interviews showed that pair and teamwork contributed to foster autonomous learning. Because learners often worked outside the

classroom, and the teacher was not there to teach them nor available to provide them with the assistance they needed, working in collaboration with their peers led to have them give and receive feedback, support each other, make decisions, and construct knowledge together. In autonomous learning, students can choose to work by themselves or with others to reach their learning goals (Karababa & Arik, 2010). When they decide to work and learn with others, they have opportunity to interact, help and encourage each other in or outside the classroom. This is what Hu and Zhang (2017) and Cabrera-Ruiz (2009) mean when they affirm that autonomous learning has a collectivist culture; it permits students to work in collaboration to complete the tasks they need to achieve their learning objectives. Working in pairs or teams outside the classroom gave participants the opportunity to be independent in their learning, which required them to make their own decisions about their learning. These conditions required participants to take some control of the learning of the topics they studied. By doing so, they were learning autonomously (Lengkanawati, 2017; Karababa & Arik, 2010; Holec, 1981).

The comments obtained from participants' diaries indicated that the self-study guides employed in this study contributed to promote autonomous learning. They provide the necessary scaffolding to reach specific learning objectives or competencies because they focus on the facilitation of learning (Garcia-Aretio, 2014). This type of guides optimizes and facilitate the teaching-learning process by promoting cognitive processes in students to help them learn autonomously (Garcia Aretio, 2014). Students expressed that self-study guides gave them freedom in their learning they were able to decide which to download and complete first, when to do so, and whether they did it individually or in collaboration. This assisted participants to organize their time more appropriately, as well as to work at their own pace. Self-study guides gave participants considerable control of the learning of the topics included in them. All in all, self-study guides gave participants independence in their learning and enabled them to make their own decisions about their learning; which are vital aspects in autonomous learning (Boggu & Sundarsingh, 2019; Wejira, 2019; Shawwa, 2010; Benson, 2000; Holec, 1981).

Participants agreed that introducing autonomous learning gradually was appropriate because it gave them the opportunity to adapt to the new way of learning for them. They had previously been taught with teacher-centred methods, autonomous learning was a drastic change for them and needed time to slowly change their learning practices. Bocos, Radut-Taciu & Chis (2015) and Martin (1999) affirm that it takes students some time to adapt to the new learning practices autonomous learning involves; therefore, it is suggested to introduce this approach gradually. In addition to using a progressive implementation, it is advisable to introduce easy learning practices at first; then, gradually increase their difficulty this process continues (Nordlund, 2001; Brajcich,

2000; Cotterall, 1995). The findings of this study match existing literature regarding how to introduce autonomous learning.

5.4.1.2 Subsidiary question 2: How do the levels of implementation contribute to foster autonomous learning?

The intervention of this study included five levels: awareness raising, planning learning, monitoring of learning, assessing learning, and reflecting on the learning process. Raising participants' awareness helped them to gain knowledge about themselves and their what assisted their learning. According to the responses of participants from the interviews and questionnaire, they became aware of what autonomous learning is, their strengths and weaknesses, themselves as learners, their EFL skills, what they needed to learn, the consequences of the decisions they made, and the necessary conditions for them to learn well. Abdelrazeq (2018), Azin, Biria & Golestan (2018) and Zulaihah & Harida (2017), contend that when students become conscious of these aspects, they can plan their learning more efficiently and quickly because they already know which choices to make regarding the materials, the learning strategies, the methods, and the tasks that facilitate learning. Therefore, the contribution awareness raising makes is to help students obtain knowledge that, when considered, can assist them in making more appropriate decisions about their learning; which is essential in autonomous learning (Lengkanawati, 2017; Zulaihah & Harida, 2017).

The second level of implementation, planning learning, gave participants the opportunity to make decisions about their learning. When subjects had already adapted to the approach introduced during the second part of the treatment, they were able to make many of the decisions about their learning. Allowing students to participate in the decision-making process is a cornerstone of autonomous learning (Darsih, 2018) and it is during the planning of their learning that they make a great number of choices (Warni & Supraptiningsih, 2019). Based on the comments participants made from the three data collection instruments, it was found that in the planning of their learning they were able to decide the learning strategies they wanted to use, the resources, the activities and tasks, the type and number of assignments they were going to complete, whether they worked individually or with others, who they worked with, the pace they were going to learn at, as well as the progress they were going to make each week on their learning. This practice leads towards giving them control of their learning; which is what autonomous learning is all about (Wejira, 2019; Ismail & Yusof, 2012; Reinders, 2011; Iimuro & Berger, 2010). Therefore, allowing learners to make their own decisions about their learning, while they plan their learning or at any other stage during this process, contributed to foster autonomous learning. In addition, participants agreed that giving them the opportunity to gradually make this type of decisions

helped to develop this skill and foster autonomous learning. This is congruent with what Yildirim (2012) suggests; to have learners make a few choices first; and as they gain experience at it, increase the number and difficulty of decisions they make about their learning.

Involving participants in the monitoring of their work and learning also helped to foster autonomous learning. The participants commented during the interviews and the questionnaire that this practice helped them to realize what they had done, what they still needed to complete, how much time they had left, and what was required to submit all the work they had selected on time. Subjects agreed that gaining awareness of the previous helped them to be more responsible of their learning because; since they had decided how they were going to learn during the planning stage, the completion of the tasks selected, and the reaching of their learning goals depended on them. Ajideh (2009) argues that monitoring learning raises learners' awareness about their learning choices and practices. In addition, having learners monitor their work led them to gain consciousness about what was easy to do, what caused them difficulty, what assisted their learning, what did not during the learning process. Asking participants to monitor their work and learning resulted in an increase in learner responsibility and awareness about their learning practices; which are aspects that need to be developed for students to become autonomous learners (Azin, Biria & Golestan, 2018, Zulaihah & Harida, 2017; Dam, 2011; Nunan, 1997; Littlewood, 1996).

The fourth level of implementation, assessing learning, allowed participants to make decisions regarding the assessment of their learning. Lengkanawati (2017) and Karababa & Arik (2010) contend that learners should be involved in the decisions made throughout the whole learning process. Assessment is part of this process, that is why it is suggested that students' opinions should be considered during this stage. Nunan (2003) believes that teachers could share control of classroom learning by engaging learners in the evaluation process. The results of the study by Warni & Supraptiningsih (2019) affirm that it is possible to involve learners in the decisions made about their assessment. Participants reported that involving them in the making of these decisions made them more responsible for their learning because since they had made the choices, it was their responsibility to carry out whichever actions that emerged from what they had decided to. Nunan (1997) and Littlewood (1996) explain that in autonomous learning students are not only in charge of the decisions made, but they are also responsible for performing the actions that emerge from such decisions. Therefore, the fourth level allows participants to make decisions about their learning, which gives them control of it, and contributes to make students more responsible of their learning.

The last level of implementation; reflecting on the learning process, helped participants analyse their learning process, what was useful, what was not, how to use their strengths in their learning, the resources that were employed to assist them, the changes they had to make to improve their learning, as well as the decisions they made and their implications; according to the findings that emerged from the three data collection instruments. Learners claimed that reflecting on this issue raised their awareness about themselves as learners and what assisted their learning. Furthermore, they expressed that reflection was useful to find more appropriate learning strategies, to self-correct their work, to make better decisions about their learning, to plan and evaluate their learning more appropriately, as well as to improve their learning overall. Reflection is vital in this approach to learning because it contributes to have students examine their learning experiences, their perceptions about their learning, to establish what assists their learning, to identify what causes them difficulty in their learning, to find solutions to the problems they have, and to enhance their learning (Tassinari, 2012; Reinders, 2010; Nordlund, 2001). Having students reflect during the treatment contributed to have students to develop a skill necessary in autonomous learning; one which leads them to analyse by themselves their learning and all the aspects related to it to enhance it.

5.4.2 Main research question 2: What are the opinions of the participants about learning autonomously?

The comments of the participants from the interviews and questionnaire showed that they were pleased learning in this way. Although at the beginning of the study they felt somewhat nervous and doubtful about it; eventually, participants adapted to the new learning practices and welcomed learning autonomously. When asked at the end of the intervention how they felt about learning autonomously, subjects declared they liked it because they had freedom to choose how they wanted to learn and were in control of most aspects of their learning. Furthermore, they stated they preferred it over teacher-centred methods because they had the opportunity to learn at their own pace; alone or in collaboration, and they were able to accommodate their learning according to their capacities, learning styles and preferences. Islam (2011) explains that students take control of their learning by creating their own learning plans according to their needs and abilities. Wejira (2019) and Zulaihah & Harida (2017) add that learning autonomously involves selecting the learning methods, techniques, materials, and progression of their learning. Based on what students expressed, being able to make these decisions contributed to have learners assign enough time for them to learn the topics they needed to well and complete the assignments they selected without having to worry about how fast or slow their classmates were working. Finally, learners stated they were pleased with learning autonomously because it helped them to develop some skills which assisted them in their learning such as time management, decision making, and

awareness raising. They affirmed that this resulted from having them decide how they were going to learn, enabling them to organize their learning endeavours according to the content to be learnt and the tasks they were going to complete, as well as having them reflect about the decisions made and their learning process. The positive opinions participants had about autonomous learning are likely to have resulted from acquiring the knowledge they needed and developing the skills necessary to do so. These two elements are vital to learn autonomously according to Littlewood (1996).

5.4.2.1 Subsidiary question 1: What are the views of the subjects about the fostering of autonomous learning in this study?

Participants expressed at the end of the treatment through the interviews and questionnaire that they believed autonomous learning was fostered properly. They affirmed that the gradual development of the skills needed to learn according to this approach gave them the opportunity to progressively acquired the different components of this approach to learning. This facilitated the promotion of this approach. Nordlund (2001) contends that adapting to autonomous learning is neither fast nor easy. Bocos, Radut-Taciu & Chis, (2015) agree and state that it takes some time for students to adapt to the learning with this approach and everything that it involves. The comments the participants made agree with what Nordlund (2001), Brajcich (2000) and Cotterall (1995) affirm: autonomous learning should be developed gradually to prevent confusion and stress among students. In addition, learners acknowledged that the support they were provided through the different resources given, as well as the guidance and assistance given by the teacher, decreased the number of difficulties faced during the introduction and development of autonomous learning. Reindeers (2010) and Chia (2005) agree that learners need assistance when autonomous learning is implemented to understand this new way of learning and develop the competencies this approach requires them to have.

5.4.2.2 Subsidiary research question 2: What are the opinions of the participants about autonomous learning and how these developed along the treatment?

The findings that emerged from the questionnaire showed that learners had negative opinions about autonomous learning at the beginning of the treatment because this type of learning was confusing to them and caused them to feel lost and frustrated. They explained that this was because it was a new way of learning for them; since they were used to learning with teacher-centred methods, and they lacked the skills they needed to be successful at learning with this approach. This is congruent with what St. Louis (2006) argues. This researcher affirms that learners who have learnt in a system that is controlled by the teacher find it difficult to become

teacher independent. Al-Saadi (2011), on the other hand, asserts that most students dislike the idea of overseeing their own learning. Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu (2013) explain that experiencing negative feelings when a change is introduced is completely natural. Boohene & Williams (2012) adds that negative reactions and resistance to change usually is experienced from those who undergo such change. It was also found that as the treatment progressed, and participants developed the abilities needed and acquired knowledge necessary, autonomous learning became less difficulty for them. At the end of the treatment, all the opinions learners expressed about this approach to learning were positive. They said it was a "great" approach to learn with. They welcomed autonomous learning because they were able to control their learning, it enabled them to develop the skills they needed to improve their learning, it made learning more meaningful, and they became more independent and responsible learners. Participants expressed they preferred learning with this approach rather than with the teacher-centred methods their teachers had used prior to participating in the study. They stated they wished their future teachers employed autonomous learning in the classes they were going to take in the rest of the program.

5.5 Overview

The global themes found in the data collected across instruments were discussed in this chapter to get a better understanding of participants' opinions, experiences, and views about autonomous learning and the intervention. They showed that they developed skills which are essential to learn autonomously such as awareness raising, decision-making, and reflecting. This discussion, along with the results obtained, were employed to answer the research questions in the second part of this chapter. Evidence provided indicates that autonomous learning was fostered among participants, how each aspect of the treatment and the levels of the model employed contributed to reach this goal. Furthermore, it was found that learners' views towards learning autonomously were positive and the fact that this approach was fostered appropriately overall. These findings were used to conclude the study presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 6 Conclusions

6.0 Introduction

Several conclusions were drawn from answering the research questions, the discussion of findings, and the analysis of all the data collected. Overall, the objective of the treatment was reached. Nevertheless, other conclusions were reached regarding the elements of the treatment that helped to foster autonomous learning and why, the aspects from participants that were developed to learn autonomously and why these were needed, and the opinions of participants about this approach to learning and regarding the way it was introduced. These conclusions, along with the limitations of the study, the suggestions for further research, and the practical implications, are presented next.

6.1 Conclusions

Based on the results of this investigation, it was concluded that the evidence was obtained to indicate that autonomous learning was fostered among participants. Participants were able to take control of aspects of their learning at some point during the intervention, which is how Lengkanawati (2017), Karababa & Arik (2010) and Holec (1981) define autonomous learning. The previous was achieved because learners made many of the decisions about their learning during the study. Darsih (2018) explains that involving learners in the decision-making process is essential to promote autonomous learning. Participants planned their learning; selecting the learning materials and activities, methods, pace, and modes of learning they wanted to use. In addition, they were able to monitor their own learning using the instruments they were provided with as well as other ones they chose to use. Furthermore, they participated in the decisions made regarding the evaluation of their learning. They were allowed to select the assessment instruments, their value, how and when they were submitted, as well as the number of these. In other words, students were involved in the decisions made about their learning throughout this process, which led to the conclusion that autonomous learning was fostered among the participants of this study.

It was also concluded that the intervention achieved its goal because skills and personal traits that are essential in autonomous learning were developed. Participants' awareness was raised. They became conscious of their strengths, weaknesses, learning styles, preferences, as well as useful learning strategies and techniques. Abdelrazeq (2018), Darsih (2018), and Tassinari (2016) affirm

that raising student awareness regarding themselves as learners and their learning is key in autonomous learning because this process helps them to discover relevant knowledge which they can use to make better decisions about their learning (Cohen, 2003). Moreover, participants developed their decision-making skills. This practice was new to them; nevertheless, they learnt to do so and put it in practice throughout the intervention. Zulaihah & Harida (2017) and Holec (1981) explain that autonomous learning requires students to make their own decisions about their learning, which learners did to a little or greater degree during the study. In addition, the findings indicate that participants developed their reflective skills. This resulted from having them analyse and reflect about their learning and try to find ways to improve this process. Tassinari (2016) and Scharle & Szabo (2000) affirm that students need to reflect at every stage of their learning process in autonomous learning. In this study learners were asked to reflect at the end of each learning period about their learning, although some reflection was conducted when students wrote their diary entries during the interventions. These reflection tasks helped to develop participants' reflective skills.

A relevant aspect of autonomous learning found was that participants became more independent in their learning. Eventually, they learnt with little or no help from the teacher, often in advance, by collaborating with others, and by using different learning resources; given as well as others they found by themselves. Boggu & Sundarsingh (2019) and Ajideh (2009) argue that in autonomous learning students need to be independent and actively involved in their learning and learn by working by themselves or in collaboration with others (Hu and Zhang, 2017; Cabrera-Ruiz, 2009), which was done by participants during the intervention. Furthermore, subjects took more responsibility of their learning. They tried to meet the deadlines they set for themselves, submit all the assignments they chose to do, they were motivated to do their best effort, they were aware of and accepted the consequences of their decisions. Al-Saadi (2011) and Nunan (1997) contend that learners not only make decisions about their learning, but they also must take responsibility of conducting the actions that result for such choices. Gradually, participants became responsible of their learning by making their own decisions and doing what resulted from these.

Another conclusion drawn from this investigation was that one element of the intervention that assisted the introduction and development of autonomous learning was the strategy used to implement this approach. Gradually introducing autonomous learning gave participants time to develop the skills they needed and to adapt to a new way of learning that was new to them since they were accustomed to learning with teacher-centred methods. This is consistent with what Bocos, Radut-Taciu, & Chis (2015), Nordlund (2001), and Brajcich (2000) suggest. They affirm that autonomous learning must be introduced gradually to prevent confusion and negative feelings

among learners. In addition, the scaffolding, the resources, the assistance, and support subjects were given throughout the study played a crucial role in the fostering of autonomous learning. They stated that the previous helped them to organize, plan, monitor, and guide their learning, as well as to foster independent learning. Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu (2013) and Kanter (2012) affirm that learning autonomously involves a drastic change for many students. Because of this, learners need assistance when this approach is implemented to have a good understanding of its implications in their learning and develop the competencies this approach requires them to have (Reinders, 2010; Chia, 2005). Finally, the levels of implementation included in the model provided subjects with something they needed to learn autonomously. Whether to gain knowledge; awareness raising, or develop skills needed in this approach to learning; making decisions, monitoring, or reflecting on their learning, each level contributed to foster autonomous learning.

Based on the findings, the researcher concluded the level of implementation that made the greatest contribution to the fostering of autonomous learning was allowing participants to make their own decisions about their learning. This practice gave learners the opportunity to take control of their learning. The more decision they made; the more autonomous participants were. Lengkanawati (2017) and Karababa, Eker, & Arik (2010) explain that autonomous learning requires students to take control of their learning at every stage of this process, although this can also happen at some stages (Cotterall, 2000). This is achieved by having learners make their own decisions (Lengkanawati, 2017; Zulaihah & Harida, 2017; Holec, 1981). In this study, learners were able to take charge of their learning to some degree during the intervention, at the beginning a little whereas during the second part about many aspects of their learning. This was also a practice that eventually was welcomed by all the participants.

It was concluded that participants welcomed learning with this approach because they took control of different aspects of their learning: they were able to learn at their own pace, they selected the learning activities and tasks, they chose some of the assessment instruments, just to name a few. They also acknowledged the benefits of learning with this approach such as: they were motivated to learn, their learning improved, they became less teacher-dependent in their learning and most responsible of it, and they develop different skills useful for their learning. Several researchers agree with the opinions participants expressed regarding the benefits autonomous learning produces (Sakrak-Ekin & Balçıkanlı, 2019; Zulaihah & Harida; Boggu & Sundarsingh, 2019; Hu and Zhang, 2017; Yamashita, 2015; Bhattacharya & Chauhan, 2010; Shawwa, 2010; Lowe, 2009; Ryan and Deci, 2000). Although at the beginning of the treatment they had negative opinions about this approach, at the end of the intervention they all agreed they welcome autonomous learning and wished to continue learning with this approach.

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concluded that self-study guides can foster autonomous learning, but learners' work and progress must be monitored continuously. The latter is especially necessary when students who have had no experience working with them. It has been established that these guides assist students to learn, as well as to promote autonomous learning (García and Mercedes, 2014; Garcia Aretio, 2014). However, what has not been discussed sufficiently is the fact that students' progress needs to be monitored and checked frequently. It was found in this research that the latter is essential for different reasons. First, to make sure students work regularly in their study guides. Lack of monitoring can result in procrastination by learners. This leads to incomplete work or low quality in it because it was all done in a few days without paying attention to details and not taking enough time for revising and correcting. In addition, learners can experience stress, frustration, and anxiety from having to complete several tasks in a short period of time. Second, checking students' work decreases misconceptions about the content to be learnt, as well as incorrect performance of tasks because any wrong or understanding or doing is informed to students or highlighted for them to correct. Guidance, feedback, and corrections are possible if this practice is implemented throughout the learning process. Finally, monitoring and checking learners' work can also be used to encourage learners as they learn autonomously. Ideas can be suggested, praising can be done, questions can be answered, deadlines and other information can be reminded, and any other type of assistance is possible to be provided while students work and learn to increase the quality of their work and learning. Students cannot just be given self-study guides to work with and expect them to be disciplined, responsible, manage their time properly, and work consciously and continuously in their study guides. Monitoring is necessary to ensure the previous happens. If so, expected learning objectives will be reached and autonomous learning will be fostered.

6.2 **Limitations**

The current study falls within a large area of research. Autonomous learning has an endless number of issues that have been and continue to be explored by researchers all over the world. This investigation examined only two of them: the introduction and development of this learning approach. Its findings contributed to get a better understanding of these aspects. Nonetheless, more studies of this type are required to be conducted in other settings, including participants with different profiles, and done under diverse conditions to gain more knowledge about the issues explored here. Due to the fact that this learning approach is so vast, and it has so many variables, an unlimited number of topics can be investigated about it. This study examined two of these from the thousands that are likely to exist. Although this can be considered as an advantage

because it led to get reliable information about them, the researcher is conscious that there are many more that still need to be researched but could not be included in this study.

6.3 Future research

An issue connected to the introduction of autonomous learning that needs to be investigated further is the planning of the implementation of this learning approach. It was identified in the conclusions section that little is known about this process. It is clear; however, that researchers who have introduced autonomous learning prior to this process thought through and made essential decisions about it to get the best possible results. Nevertheless, not enough has been written about what happens in the planning stage. The author of this study believes that further research on this issue needs to be carried out so that there can be a better understanding of what the planning process involves, how it can be done, which decisions must be made, the aspects and elements that must be considered, and anything else related to this stage. The information generated from this research could benefit anybody interested in implementing autonomous learning because they would get some guidelines which can assist them to plan this process. As more knowledge is obtained about how to plan, people interested on this topic will have fewer questions and doubts about it, and it is likely that their planning will be more appropriate.

Throughout this investigation it has been discussed that for students to become autonomous learners they need to employ autonomous learning skills. Although different researchers have written about which these skills are and some of them have conducted studies that have generated some knowledge regarding what can be done to develop such skills, more research needs to be conducted on this issue. In contexts like the one in this study, where everything is controlled by the teacher, it is likely that there is and has been no effort to help students develop such abilities. If autonomous learning is intended to be introduced among this type of learners, it is crucial to help them acquire the skills they will need to be independent in their learning. Nevertheless, if not enough is known about this issue, it is going to be more difficult to reach this objective; and therefore, develop autonomous learning. Further research on this topic will lead to generate knowledge regarding how and what can be done to develop the skills needed in autonomous learning such as time management, discipline, becoming responsible of their learning and the like. This knowledge would be very useful for people interested in fostering this type of learning because it could provide them with useful activities, ideas, tasks, and guidelines that can inform them regarding what can be done to reach this goal.

The introduction of autonomous learning requires assistance to learners during this process, especially at the beginning of it. Recent technological devices and tools have made it possible to

enhance communication with others. These could also be employed to provide guidance, feedback, explanations, or any other type of assistance to learners. Technology could significantly improve the efficiency, amount, and quality of the support given to learners when this learning approach is introduced. This is a topic that has not been explored but needs to. It would be beneficial to research whether online resources such as Skype, WhatsApp, Facetime, Zoom, Email, Facebook, Messenger, Meet, and others, could enhance and increase the support learners are given when autonomous learning is introduced. Other issues that it would be useful to explore would be how each electronic tool can contribute in this endeavour, how effective they are at it, which are best for what purposes, and how they should be employed. This information would be useful for those interested in implementing autonomous learning because it would increase the tools and resources they can use to help learners; as well as to make the assistance given more efficient during the learning process.

This investigation produced findings that contributed to understand how to introduce and develop autonomous learning among learners in a content class; however, more research is needed to explore whether this leaning approach could be employed in English as a foreign language learning in the context where the study took place. Several participants stated that autonomous learning should not be used for the development of EFL skills; nevertheless, the studies reviewed showed that the use of autonomous learning in EFL classes produced positive outcomes. The latter led the researcher to believe that it is necessary to explore if similar results can be obtained from the employment of autonomous learning in EFL learning in the setting where this study was carried out. This type of research has not been done in this context; thus, a study of this nature would be beneficial to learn more about the effects of this learning approach in the development of EFL skills. The researcher believes that developing autonomous learning skills among EFL learners and having them take charge of their learning could result in the enhancement of their English development because their language learning would not be restricted to what is done in the classroom only. It is likely that students' English level could increase considerably if; inside and outside the classroom, they worked at their own pace, on their language needs, using the resources they have available and they preferred, and by doing activities and tasks they have experienced helped them learn the most. A study is necessary to find out if this hypothesis is valid.

Another research project that needs to be conducted is in relation to the use of self-study guides to develop autonomous learning among learners who are not used to working with this type of learning materials. Although the results of this investigation showed that these guides significantly benefitted the fostering of autonomous learning because they gave them control of their learning, several drawbacks were found among them as well. Some participants stated that

certain elements of the guides need to be improved; however, it was their implementation what the most troublesome to subjects. The approach used to introduce them and monitor participants' work and progress from using them was not the most appropriate. This negatively affected the development of autonomous learning, as well as in participants' learning. Changes can be made to self-study guides to enhance them, by take into consideration the comments and suggestions given by participants. Nonetheless, in order to discover if such modifications can actually prevent the problems the self-study guides used in this study generated, and these learning materials can better promote this learning approach, it is necessary to conduct an investigation implementing them with the improvements suggested by the participants of the study, the researcher, and existing literature on this topic. Designing and implementing self-study guides appropriately according to the profile of the learners can make a significant difference in the development of autonomous learning, therefore further research on this topic is essential.

6.4 **Practical outcomes**

Based on the results of this investigation and the experience obtained from conducting this study, several practical outcomes emerged. One of them is the fact that plenty of time needs to be spent planning the implementation of autonomous learning. Teachers need to think carefully how this process is going to take place and make important decisions about the different aspects that will be part of it prior to starting the introduction process. A profile of the learners must be created in order to be conscious of what they are like, their strengths and weaknesses, and acknowledge how familiar they are with this type of learning, as well as how much experience they have had with actively participating in their learning process. The latter is vital to make decisions regarding the process and approach to be employed. If participants are used to learning with teacher-centred approaches, it is necessary to consider how they are going to be assisted to acquire the knowledge and develop the skills they will need to learn autonomously. Furthermore, teachers need to think through what the main objective of the intervention is going to be, how it is going to be achieved, what is going to be needed to do so, and how long the process is going to take. The level of autonomy in learning students are expected to reach by the end of the implementation process must be clearly established, as well as the length of the intervention. Based on these two elements, the teacher needs to plan how the objective is going to be achieved, as well as when each of the aspects or elements of this learning approach are going to be introduced to reach such goal. Furthermore, a list of the learning materials students will have access to has to be created to complete the learning tasks and activities given, as well as the resources they will be provided with to help them adapt to this way of learning. It is vital to create a support system. The latter includes the tools and strategies that are going to be employed to be in touch with, guide,

assist, and give feedback to students. It is also important to select, and if necessary, create the instruments that will be used to monitor and assess learning and decide how they are going to be introduced if they are novel to learners and how they are going to be employed. Finally, a blueprint of the implementation process must be created, which includes a clear schedule stating what, how, and when from autonomous learning is introduced, along with a description of all the resources and strategies that will be used to gradually reach the objective set for the intervention.

Raising participants' awareness is a must at the beginning of the introduction process. Students need to be conscious of different aspects regarding themselves and their learning. This process needs to be divided into different sessions to avoid overwhelming students. In one session students can be helped to learn what autonomous learning is, what changes it implies in their studying and learning habits, their roles as learners and the teacher's. It is also advisable to explain to them why this change is being introduced, how it is going to benefit them, and what the introduction process is going to be like overall. This is especially important when participants have had no experience learning with student-centred methods. All the questions that may be asked about this learning approach should be answered to ensure clarity regarding what learning is going to be like during the intervention. Another session can focus on learners gaining awareness about themselves. Here they can be led to be conscious about what they are like, what they are and are not skilful at, when they are at their best, what type of activates they like doing to learn and to relax, what their time management is like, how disciplined they are to work on their own, how they spend their time, and the like. During a third session, awareness can be raised about their learning. Here learners can be assisted to discover which their learning styles are, their preferences, what they currently do to learn or which learning strategies they use, their strengths, and their weaknesses, how they can learn best, which learning materials helped them the most, and anything else related to their learning which would be worthwhile to discover. Although awareness raising is suggested to happen at the beginning of the introduction process, it is likely that it will increase as they participate in the intervention. It also advised to have them reflect about everything related to their learning after certain periods of time to expand and refine learners' awareness to identify what helped them learn, what did not, and what changes they need to make to improve their learning.

It is necessary to create a blueprint and write a description of the entire introduction process of this learning approach. Here, the length of the intervention and the level of learner autonomy expected to be reached is considered to decide the number of phases this process is going to have, how long each of them will last (these can be selected according to the terms, units of study, examination periods, or any other periods that are common to learners), what the goal; in relation to developing autonomous learning, of each stage is going to be. The division of the

implementation process needs to be established to decide which aspects and practices from autonomous learning will be introduced in each phase, how, as well as which resources and strategies will be used to facilitate this process in each period. Based on the level of autonomy students are expected to reach at the end of the implementation process, the degree of autonomy to be achieved at each phase are sequenced backwards from the main goal. The use of this strategy ensures that students gradually develop their autonomy in learning, and the objective is reached within the time established. The more the introduction process is scripted, the easier it is going to be to follow it. This can also result in fewer difficulties and facing less unexpected events. Some changes and adaptations may be done if necessary; however, these are likely to be few if the implementation process was thought through and was written down in detail.

It was concluded that having learners participate in the decisions made regarding their learning was essential to develop autonomous learning. However, the implementation of this practice needs to be organized well, especially if students have never been asked to make their own decisions. Because this practice may involve a drastic change in subjects' learning habits, it is necessary to clearly establish which decisions they will be asked to make and sequence their introduction properly. To achieve the previous a list of all the decisions students will be asked to make during the intervention needs to be created. Then, they need to be ranked from the easiest to the most difficult. They should be introduced gradually; in number and complexity, considering the number of phases the implementation process includes. Thus, in the first phase students are asked to make the easiest decisions and only a few of them. In the second one, a few decisions are added, and these are a bit more challenging for students to make. The same principle of gradually increasing the number of decisions and their difficulty in each phase is considered for the rest of the phases of the process. In the last one, learners are expected to make all the decisions selected for the intervention. This approach was found to be appropriate for this practice in this research because it prevented participants, who were not used to making their own decisions, from stressing too much when they had to make many and difficult decisions all at once at the beginning of the treatment. Making decisions about our learning is a skill that takes time to master; as it happens in the development of any skill, it should begin with something easy and gradually increase its difficulty as learners' abilities evolve. All in all, it is advisable to make a proper selection of the decisions learners are going to be allowed to make, to sequence these from easy to more complex; then, gradually introduce them to help participants adapt to this practice and contribute to the development of autonomous learning.

6.5 Reflection of the teacher/researcher regarding implementing the model and conducting the investigation

The conduction of this investigation generated new experiences for me as a researcher more than as a teacher. This was because I have taught English for over two decades and done teacher training for more than ten. During this time, I have introduced different teaching approaches, methods, techniques, strategies, and materials to help students learn. These were learnt through formal studies, attending language teacher conferences frequently, and learning other ones on my own. Therefore, introducing something new in my classes was not alien, nor it has been to attempt to foster autonomous learning. For the past decade I have been learning about autonomous learning independently, as well as by taking courses and attending talks on this topic. Since then, I have employed different practices in the classes that I have taught to try assist students to become more independent in their learning. Although what I implemented at first was isolated, as time has gone by and through experience, I learnt to structure, sequence, and implement such practices more appropriately. The difference was that this time it was not a few strategies and elements which were introduced, based only on my experience, but a model according to existing literature. This involved extensive review of studies, more planning to adapt the model selected to the context and learners, to create the process that was going to be followed, to identify the resources that could be used to sequence and schedule what was going to be implemented, and to insert it in the program to foster autonomous learning and help students the content of the class. More time, organization, reflection, as well as comprising teaching experience and findings in existing literature to reach these two goals were needed. The implementation of the intervention was not novel for me because I have some experience in introducing changes in my classes.

On the other hand, taking the role of a researcher, and everything this implied, was troublesome because I had little experience in this area. One of the most difficult aspects was to perceive what I did from the standpoint of a researcher and not of a teacher. Since I have been teaching for some time, I naturally see what is done in the classroom from a teacher perspective. It required some effort and guidance from my advisor to adopt a researcher and theoretical standpoint. Considering and doing what the investigation required based on research and not according to my teaching experience was a great challenge. In addition, planning, organizing, and conducting research of this magnitude was troublesome for me at every stage of this process. I was familiar with the procedure, but not with the amount of work and analysis it required. Because of the size of the research, it was difficult sometimes for me to see it as one, and not in parts. The support I received from my advisor was vital to overcome this and other problems. The most challenging

aspect of the investigation was the data analysis. This was caused by two factors. The first one was that I was neither knowledgeable nor experienced in the data analysis methods I used. I had to learn about them and the steps that needed to be followed to analyse the data properly. The second reason was the amount and variety of information collected. I had never gathered so much information, nor had it been regarding different issues related to the same topic. Analysis the data involved a great deal of comparing, selecting, contrasting, and analysing to answer the research questions and obtain the results of the investigation. Becoming a researcher was a slow process, but it is a role that I can take more easily now that I have conducted this investigation. Developing the abilities needed to conduct research have made me more confident to combine it with my teaching skills and experience to carry out more research projects in my classroom in the future.

Appendix A: **Intervention**

A.1 **Description of the model used**

The treatment is going to be implemented during the Fall semester 2016. The intervention begins in the third week of classes in late August and ends in mid-December, when the semester is over. There are three terms during the semester, each one is six weeks long. There are no classes during exams' week. The treatment involves the implementation of a process model adapted from the one created by Reinders (2010). This model was selected to be employed in the study because an analysis made to process models created to promote autonomous learning showed that it is the most complete model in relation to the number of levels that it includes, the elements included in it that help to promote this approach to learning, and the one that could be adapted to the context where the study is going to take place without removing any vital component that would significantly affect the main structure of it; which could seriously affect its capacity to foster autonomous learning. Although Reinders' model has not been put into practice; as far as the researcher knows, in any real learning environment, it has a sound theoretical framework to foster autonomous learning that is the reason why scholars have used it as a reference for this topic. It includes six levels of implementation: raising awareness, setting goals, planning learning, monitoring progress, assessing learning and its practices, and reflecting about learning. Literature on autonomous learning indicates that the implementation of this approach can be done through levels of implementation (Nunan, 1997; Egel 2009; Onozowa, 2010) because it makes this process gradual, it helps learners to progressively acquire the knowledge and skills they need in this learning approach, as well as slowly adapt to this way of learning (Henderson and Clifford, 2012). An analysis of the models that have been designed in this way showed that most of their levels match the stages of the learning process. Dang (2012) and Onozowa (2010) explain that structuring models with this principle results in learners conducting behavioral and cognitive actions that lead them to reach their learning goals and develop the competencies they need to be more autonomous at each stage of their learning process.

Adaptations made

Several adaptations had to be made to the model by Reinders (2010) to meet the conditions of the context where this investigation is going to be done and the profile of the participants. One of the changes made to the original model was to remove one of its levels. Instead of having six: raising awareness, setting goals, planning learning, monitoring progress, assessing learning, and reflecting about learning; the model employed in this study only has five: raising awareness, planning learning, monitoring progress, assessing learning, and reflecting on learning. This model does not involve students in the establishment of their learning goals because these are dictated by the program and cannot be altered or removed. It is an institutional policy that has been considered in the structuring of this model. Larsen-Freeman & Cameron (2008) and Yildirim

(2012) state that institutional limitations of the context have to be taken into account when trying to promote this approach. This is why the level setting goals was removed from the original one. Another adaptation made to the original model was increasing the number of issues students have to become aware of in the first level of implementation. Raising awareness about participants' learning styles, preferences, and preferred learning tasks was added in the present model. Such knowledge is needed in order for students to choose appropriate learning strategies, materials, and tasks that can help them learn more efficiently (Zulaihah & Harida, 2017).
The model employed in this study increases learners' participation in the fourth level of implementation; assessing learning. Subjects are required to be involved in more decisions regarding the assessment of their learning such as selecting deadlines for assignments and tasks, assessment instruments and criteria, whether they are assessed individually or in pairs, and the number of graded assignments to be submitted. Participants are not expected to decide by themselves all of these at the beginning of the treatment but eventually, towards the end of the treatment they were asked to do so. This was added because not involving them in the decisions made regarding the evaluation process prevents students from learning how to measure their learning on their own and continue to depend on others for this task (Karababa & Arik, 2010).
Finally, although Reinders' model requires students to reflect about their success in their learning tasks and the problems they faced while learning, this is not enough to help them become better learners. Yamashita (2015) argues that students also need to reflect about the learning practices they employed in order to establish what helped them learn, what did not, why, and which changes they need to make in order to improve their learning practices. Therefore, the participants of this study will be asked to reflect about all of these issues to raise their awareness of useful learning practices they employ, other ones they can employ, as well as any other changes they need to make to enhance their learning. Reflecting on these issues is necessary to have students realize what helps them learn and prevent them from repeatedly using the same strategies and practices, regardless of their usefulness.

Levels of implementation included in the model

The first one is raising awareness. There is a general agreement that it is essential to help students become aware of their learning and themselves in the fostering of autonomous learning (Bertonldi, Kollar & Ricard, 1988; Nordlund, 2001; Murray, 2006; St. Louis, 2006; Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Silva, 2008). The second level is planning learning. This is found in most of the models reviewed (Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Nordlund, 2001; Murray, 2006; St. Louis, 2006; Iimuro & Berger, 2010) and give learners the opportunity to make their own decisions. The third level is monitoring learning. Reinders (2010) and Nunan (1997) contend that autonomous learners need to be able to monitor their own progress and revise their learning plans accordingly. This was a level that was present in most of the models analysed (Nordlund, 2001; Murray, 2006; St. Louis, 2006; Iimuro & Berger, 2010). The next level is assessing learning. Although only some of the existing models include it (Murray, 2006; St. Louis, 2006; Iimuro & Berger, 2010; Reinders, 2010), scholars agree that it is necessary to involve learners in the decisions made about the assessment of their learning (Little, 2004; Dang, 2012). The last level included is reflection on learning. Only two of the models examined include this aspect (Nordlund, 2001; Reinders, 2010). Nevertheless, scholars agree that having students reflect on their learning and their practices contributes to foster autonomous learning (Öztürk, 2019; Yamashita, 2015; Tassinari, 2016).

The following is a description of each level of implementation that make up the model employed in this study. In addition, a table includes the decisions subjects were allowed to make regarding their learning each term. This table shows how participants were asked to perform this practice gradually, as well as to present what they were able to decide as the treatment continued.

a) Raising awareness

The first level of implementation is learner awareness. Its purpose is to raise participants' consciousness about different issues related to the treatment and themselves. After students are explained about the study that is going to be conducted and the treatment that is going to be implemented, through an oral presentation subjects are going to learn what autonomous learning is, how learning takes place in this approach, what assessment is like, what it implies for them to learn in this way, the role they and the teacher are going to play, how it is going to be introduced and developed throughout the treatment. In a different session, participants are going to be guided to reflect about why they chose to attend this program, their strengths and weaknesses, learning styles, preferred learning strategies, and their English level. Students are going to reflect about the previous by answering questions on a piece of paper. They have to submit their responses to the teacher to check they did the task. Their answers will be returned to students to keep them. In addition, they are will be required to answer a learning styles test online to learn what learning style they have (http://www.educationplanner.org/students/self-assessments/learning-styles-quiz.shtml). The test gives students the result when they are done taking it. It tells them what learning styles is their strongest and lists some of the activities that help them learn. Students are going to be asked to submit these results and state whether they agree with them, if they do not, they have to explain what they disagree. In addition, they will be reminded this information when they are allowed to make decisions about their learning during the treatment. During the second and third midterm, awareness will be raised about other issues as well. At the beginning of the second and their term, participants will be asked to explain which tasks they performed well at in the previous term, which were their favorite learning tasks, and which learning practices helped them learnt. Awareness raising is going to be conducted mainly at the beginning of the treatment; as it develops, subjects will be required to become conscious of other issues related to their learning.

b) Planning learning

There are three terms during the Fall semester; because autonomous learning is going to be introduced gradually, subjects' involvement at each level of implementation will increase progressively each term. Participants are going to be allowed to plan some of their learning the first term, some more during the second one, and they will have almost complete control during the third term. Therefore, they will be able to progressively decide how they are going to learn, which learning materials and resources they are going to use, whether they work individually or with somebody else, some of the tasks they are going to complete, and when they are going to submit their assignments.

The following chart shows participants' involvement during each term.

Term	Participants' involvement
First	Selection of some of the rules they want to have in class.

	Whether they prefer to do some classroom activities on their own, in pairs, or small teams. Who they work with whenever they have to do classroom tasks or other learning activities during the face-to-face sessions. How they to work when doing so in small teams or in pairs. The learning resources they use to search information when they are required to; they could use the ones suggested by the teacher or any other ones they wished to. Creating a calendar where they wrote down the deadlines of the graded assignments.
Second	Selection of most of the rules they want to have in class. Whether they prefer to do some classroom activities on their own, in pairs, or small teams. Who they work with whenever they do classroom tasks or other learning activities during the face-to-face sessions. How they to work when doing so in small teams or in pairs. The learning resources they use to search information when they are required to; they could use the ones suggested by the teacher or any other ones they wished to. Whether they stay in the classroom or go somewhere else to work; whenever they are asked to work independently on some class activities, tasks or assignments. Create a workplan in which subjects state when they are going to work and complete the assignments they selected the value of and their type.
Third	Selection of most of the rules they want to have in class. Whether they to do most of the classroom activities on their own, in pairs, or small teams. Who they work with whenever they do classroom tasks or other learning activities during the face-to-face tutorials. Whether they attend face-to-face sessions or work at home. When they work on tasks and assignments. How they to work when doing so in small teams or in pairs. The learning resources they use to learn; they could use the ones suggested by the teacher or any other ones they prefer. Whether they stay in the classroom or go somewhere else to work; whenever they are asked to work independently on some class activities, tasks or assignments. Create a workplan in which subjects state when they are going to work and complete the assignments they selected the value of and their type.

a) Monitoring progress

In addition to having the teacher monitor participants' progress, different instruments are going to be used to help them monitor their work. These are the course outline, a work plan, and the assessment rubrics. The purpose of giving subjects the class course outline is to let them know what is going to be done in each face-to-face session, the deadlines of tasks and graded assignments, the instructions for the mandatory assignments, and to know the sessions when they were going to be given time to work in class. This helps them to organize their time as well as

to monitor their work in class. If they know the topics that have to be studied, they can self-check if they have learnt them. If they know the deadlines, they can establish how much time they have to what they need to in order to complete each assignment and submit it on time. This is how the course outline can assist learners to monitor their own progress. Furthermore, the work plan students create intends to make students aware of the topics to be studied, select the tasks and assignments they are going to complete, who they are going to do them with if they are to be done with others, as well as establish the deadlines when these will be submitted. The purpose of having students make some of the decisions related to their assessment is to give them the opportunity to plan their work and organize their time to be able to complete the assignments they chose to do to be assessed. It is a tool that intends participants to self-monitor their work and allows the teacher to check the subjects' learning process and efforts. Having students decide the value of graded assignment attempts to make students become aware of how much work and time they have to invest in learning the topics of the class to complete their assignments on time. Finally, showing learners the rubrics the teacher uses to mark assignments aims to have students become aware of the elements each assignment has to include and have them self-check that they are including everything they are supposed to. In other words, rubrics can assist subjects to monitor if their assignments meet the criteria they are going to be assessed with. The following were the instruments used to help students monitor their work.

Course outline

At the beginning of each term, students are provided with a course outline (see appendix A.2) which includes a day-to-day description of what is going to be done in class each day. It also includes the instructions for each of the required assignments students are going to submit in each term, as well as their deadlines.

Work plan

During the second term participants are going to be presented a work plan (see appendix A.3); they are going to be asked to create their own. Its purpose is to help students organize their time and work so that they can comply with all the requirements of the class and submit their assignments on time. It also intends to have students self-monitor their own work to assist them to become aware of whether they needed to work more, use their time more efficiently, or spend more time on the tasks or assignments. In addition, the teacher can ask participants to show their work plan and the progress they make to ensure they are following the plan they create, give them suggestions, answer questions, and check their progress as well.

Rubrics

Learners are going to be presented and explained the rubrics (see appendix A.4) the teacher is going to use to mark the different compulsory assignments they are asked to do. This is done during the first sessions when the course outline is presented at the beginning of each term. After each graded assignment is explained, the teacher presents the rubric that is going to be employed to mark it. Then, any questions about the assignment or the rubrics will be answered. In addition, the rubric is going to be posted online for students to be able to retrieve it during the term. The purpose of providing participants with the assessing rubric was to create awareness among learners regarding the elements that are taken into account to mark their assignments, give subjects the instrument they need to self-assess their work, and use it a tool that can help them

monitor their work on each assignment they do. During the third term, participants had rubrics for the different assignments they chose to do.
The following chart shows subjects' involvement in the monitoring of their work, as well as how it increased each term.

Term	Participants' involvement
First	Providing subjects with the class course outline so that they know which topic is going to be studied in each session, the deadlines for the graded assignments, and the instructions they have follow to complete each assignment. Number of drafts they submit before submitting their final assignments. Allow participants to decide how they spend the time given whenever they work inside the classroom towards completing any of their assignments.
Second	Providing subjects with the class course outline so that they know which topic is going to be studied in each session, the deadlines for the graded assignments, and the instructions they have follow to complete each assignment. Have students keep their work plan at hand and remind them to make sure they meet the deadlines they established. Number of drafts they deliver to get feedback before submitting their final assignments. Allow participants to decide how they spend the time given whenever they work inside the classroom and have them show evidence of the progress they made.
Third	Providing subjects with the class course outline so that they know which topic is going to be studied in each session, the deadlines for the graded assignments, and the instructions they have follow to complete each assignment. Have students keep their work plan at hand and remind them to make sure they meet the deadlines they established. Subjects choose the number of drafts they deliver to get feedback before submitting their final assignments. Allow participants to decide how they spend the time given whenever they work inside the classroom and have them show evidence of the progress they made.

a) Assessing learning

Students are involved in the decisions that are made in regard to their assessment. Considering the approach employed to introduce autonomous learning, in this level participants are required to decide some aspects of their assessment during the first term, and as the semester goes on, they are given more control of this process. These and other decisions are made by subjects gradually to the point that during the third term they make the majority of the decisions regarding how they are assessed, when, and which instruments they are used to do so. The following chart shows subjects' involvement in the assessing of their learning, as well as how it increased each term.

Term	Participants' involvement

First	Whether they want to do one of the graded assignments in individually or in pairs, choosing the person they are going to work with if the latter were chosen. Selecting the visual aids or materials they use when they are asked to do an oral presentation or any other graded assignments. Selecting 25% of the evaluation criterion. Showing and posting the rubrics they are going to be assessed with online so that they know the requirements their graded assignments have to meet.
Second	Selecting the type of assignment they want to do for half of the graded ones. Establishing the value of each assignment they chose. Selecting 50% of the evaluation criterion. The deadlines for the assignments they select the value of (There was a final deadline set by the teacher to submit all the assignments to give him enough time to mark them before term scores have to be submitted). Whether they want to do half of the graded assignments in individually or in pairs, and choosing the person they are going to work with if the latter were chosen. Selecting the visual aids or materials they use when they are asked to do an oral presentation or any other graded assignments. Showing and posting the rubrics they are going to be assessed with online so that they know the requirements their graded assignments have to meet.
Third	Selecting how many assignments they want to submit in addition to the one mandated by the teacher. Selecting the type of assignments they submit. Establishing the value of each assignment they chose to do. Selecting 75% of the evaluation criteria. The deadlines for the assignments they select the value of (There was a final deadline set by the teacher to submit all the assignments to give him enough time to mark them before term scores have to be submitted). Whether they send their graded assignments through email or come to the classroom to present or submit them in person. Whether they do the assignments they choose individually, in pairs, or small teams and selecting the people they work with. Selecting the visual aids or materials they use when they are asked to do an oral presentation or any other graded assignments.

a) Reflecting on learning

At the end of each term, participants are going to reflect about their learning. The purpose of this reflection is to have students analyze the decisions they made regarding their learning, the learning practices they employed, and the changes they need to make to improve their learning and become more efficient learners. By conducting this reflection subjects can become aware of the consequences of their choices. which can lead them to identify which decisions were and were not appropriate. Moreover, they can identify the learning tasks, activities, and other learning practices that helped them learn. This is necessary to make informed decisions, which can help them develop their decision-making skills. Finally, participants reflecting about their

learning at the end the term contributes to make them realize which changes they need to make in their learning process and practices to enhance their learning in general. These are the questions learners are going to answer in their learning logs at the end of each term.

Term	Reflection questions
First	1. What was your performance like during the first term? Why? 2. What changes are going to make for the second term?
Second	1. Which tasks or assignments did you perform well at? Why? 2. How do you work better individually or working with somebody else? Why? 3. What helped you learn? Why? 4. What would you change in your way of learning to make it more efficient?
Third	1. Do you work better by yourself or by working with others? Who do you work well with? 2. What helps you learn more: attending face-to-face tutorials, working on your own using online materials, or a combination of both? Why? 3. Which changes do you need to make to be improve your learning? 4. How do you feel about making your own decisions about learning? 5. Which changes have you made to adapt to learning autonomously? 6. How does making your own decisions affect your learning? 7. What do you think about using self-study guides to learn?

A.2 Course Outlines

1st Term Course Outline Fall 2016

Session 1

- Introduction of myself/welcome students to the class
- Getting to know students
- Reflection about their reasons for applying to this program: questions
- Presentation of the syllabus and course outline
- Explanation of the teaching approach used in this class
- Selection of classroom rules

Reading I: Subsystems of the language

Session 2

- Presentation of classroom rules
- Selection grading criteria
- Discussion of the subsystems of the language

Session 3

- Discussion about the subsystems of the language and the importance and use of such information in a teaching scenario.
- Completion of the subsystems of the language chart (appendix one).

Assignment one: Chart on the subsystems of the language.

Session 4

- Instructions for the 2nd assignment: oral presentation (appendix two)
- Organizing the teams, assign stages to each team, inform them what the content of the presentation will be and give them time to work on their presentations.
- Checking and feedback of oral presentations if needed

Assignment two: Team oral presentation. **Due date:** Session 7.

Session 5

- Checking and feedback on oral presentations on Piaget's theory of cognitive development: sensorimotor, pre-operational, concrete operational and formal operational stages.

Deadline assignment one

Session 6

- Checking and feedback of oral presentations on the observations done in regards to the stages of cognitive development according to Piaget: sensorimotor, pre-operational, concrete operational and formal operational stages.

Session 7

- Oral presentations

Reading three: Reading about the factors affecting language learning. Answer the following questions for each factor:

a) How does each factor affect second/foreign language learning?

Reflection questions

b) Can you (the teacher) do something about it to prevent such factors from negatively affecting foreign language learning? Which ones are in your hands as a teacher and which aren't?

Reading four: Read the article by Little John: Motivation where does it come from where does it go? Read it and write any questions you have about it, (not about vocabulary but content).

Session 8

- Oral presentations
- Presentation and explanation of the research project the teacher is conducted. Signing of consent forms.

Session 9

- Oral presentations
- Discussion on the factors affecting language learning and the article on motivation.

Assignment three: Individually write a reflection paper on the factors that most affect language learning. (See appendix 3 for instructions) **Due date: Session 12.**

Reading five (in teams): Research information about three learning theories: behaviorism, cognitivism and constructivism. Find the following information about them: principles, characteristics and educational implications.

Task: Poster presentation on the learning theories.

Session 10

- Discussion on the factors affecting second or foreign language learning
- Reading about three learning theories

Session 11

- Poster preparation

Session 12

- Poster presentation on learning theories

Session 13

- Learner profile
- Elements of a lesson plan

Assignment four: Lesson plan **Due date: Session 15**

Session 14

- Lesson plan formats
- Lesson planning and feedback

Session 15

- Lesson planning, feedback

Session 16

- General reflection on the first term
- Disclosure of final scores

Assignment one: Read the article on the subsystems of the language, then complete the following chart with the necessary information.

Appendix one: Chart on the subsystems of the language

	My definition	Example	Importance
Language			
The phonological system			
The morphological system			
Syntax			
Semantics			
Pragmatics			
Standard English			
Dialect			
Register			
Slang			

Appendix two

Assignment two (teams): Instructions for the oral presentation

Oral presentations on the theory of cognitive development according to Jean Piaget:
You will do a power point presentation on one of the stages of cognitive development according to Piaget. You will be told which stage you will present. The person who will do the presentation will be selected at random. Make sure every team member knows all the information well. You are the expert on the stage you are presenting; that means, you should be ready to answer any questions students or the teacher have. **Due session 7.**

Present the following information regarding the stage you are going to present:

a. Name of the stage
b. Age range
c. What children can cognitively do
d. How they learn (especially languages)
e. How they should be taught
f. Any other relevant information

Oral presentations on the results of the observations regarding cognitive development: You will observe a kid from one of the four stages of development according to Piaget. Before you do the observation, make sure you know well everything regarding that stage. The purpose of your observation is to find out if what Piaget says regarding the stages of cognitive development and what they can do at each stage is true. Compare what Piaget states with what you observe. Record what you observe; pay special attention on any behaviors that demonstrate what their cognitive abilities are. Make sure you note down their behaviors as well as anything else that you may consider important. Present your findings through power point.

Observe and present the following:

a. Name
b. Age
c. Stage of cognitive development
d. What according to Piaget they can cognitively do
e. How they learn
f. What is their language production like

Appendix three

Assignment three (individual): Reflection paper

Based on what you read, what was discussed in class, your learning experience and your opinions; answer the following questions in a reflection paper:

1. Which factors affect foreign language learning the most and why?
2. What will you do, as a language teacher, to prevent each factor you included in your paper from affecting the foreign language learning process negatively in your classroom?
3. What can you do as a teacher to increase your students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation?

Task 1

As a team, research the following information on the learning theory you were assigned and include it in a poster (include only key words not a lot of text in the poster):

a. Name of the learning theory
b. Its main focus of study
c. How learning takes place
d. Principles or general assumptions
e. Educational/classroom implications

Be ready to present your poster and explain the information included in it.

Assignment four (individual or in pairs): lesson plan

1. Decide whether you want to do this assignment individually or in pairs.
2. Select a group of learners to do a lesson plan for.
4. Do a learner profile of the group of learners you selected.
5. Clearly write the objective for the lesson plan.
6. Do a lesson plan that will help learners reach the objective you selected; make sure it includes all the elements discussed in class: Use the Warm-up, High challenge, Low challenge, wrap up format to do so.

2nd Mid Term Course Outline

Session I

Presentation of course outline
Explanation of the assignments
Selection of grading criteria
Forming microteaching teams
Selection of teaching methods and approaches for microteaching
Establishment of a work plan for the second term

Session II

Team reading about the methods or approaches selected

Questions and feedback on the methods or approaches selected
Lesson planning for microteaching (Learner profile and objective of the lesson)

Session III
Lesson planning for microteaching and feedback

Session IV
Lesson planning for microteaching and materials design

Session V
Lesson planning for microteaching and materials design
Microteaching practice

Session VI
Total physical response microteaching

Session VII
Lesson planning/reflection paper/independent assignment feedback

Session VIII
The natural approach microteaching
Communicative Language Teaching microteaching

Session IX
Multiple intelligences microteaching

Session X
CLIL microteaching
Competency-based microteaching

Session XI
Lesson planning/reflection paper/independent assignment feedback

Session XII
Cooperative language learning microteaching

Deadline for: independent assignment, reflection paper, lesson plan

Session XIII
Task-based language teaching microteaching

Session XIV
To be announced

Session XV
Final scores

Assignments Instructions

Microteaching assignment
In teams of four, the most, you will teach a 30-40 min. lesson using one of the teaching methods or approaches discussed in class. See the instructions for further information.

Deadline: According to schedule

Instructions
1. Once you are in teams, select a teaching method or approach you are going to base your microteaching on according to the list provided.
2. Read the information about the method or approach so that you know how to teach a lesson accordingly. You have to be an expert on such method or approach.
3. Make a learner profile. You can select the features of the learners.
4. Get the objective of your lesson plan. The purpose of the lesson should be to **teach something new to,** not to practice or reinforce it.
5. Do a lesson plan to teach the topic you have selected. Everything in the **lesson has to be according** to the **method or approach** you selected. You cannot use or do something that does not belong to the method. Any questions you have about whether an activity, materials or resource is according to the method ask course leader.
6. Create all the necessary materials to teach the lesson.
7. Teach the lesson. All the members in the team should take part in the teaching process.
8. Be ready to answer any questions about your lesson.

Note: Your lesson should last between 30 and 40 min. Make sure you check the course outline to know when you will teach your lesson.

Reflection paper (individual)

Instructions
1. Select the **three methods or approaches** you find **the most useful, attractive, interesting, effective, useful**, etc., discussed during the second term; the ones you would use when you start teaching. Make sure you have a clear understanding of how they work and how to teach according to each one of them.

2. Explain the following about each one of them:
    a. Why you selected/would use them (benefits, traits the other methods do not have, preferences or past experiences that make you choose it, etc.).
    b. Why and/or how each one of them will help students learn a foreign language.
    c. Which learners (in what stage of cognitive development) you would use it with and why.

Note: the paper should follow the conventions the teacher has requested for written assignments. Your paper should not include definitions, descriptions of the approach or any information that does not contribute to address the issues requested above.

Lesson plan assignment (individual or in pairs)

Instructions

1. Read all the teaching methods and approaches assigned for the class.
2. Make sure you understand how they work, what they are about, the roles of teacher and learners, the procedure, etc.
3. Select one you particularly liked, enjoyed, found useful, effective, etc. It cannot be the one you are doing the microteaching session according to.
4. Do a learner profile (You may select all the characteristics of learners).
5. Select an objective (it can be anything you want to teach but it has to be according to the learner profile).
6. Revise the type of activities appropriate for the method or approach you selected. Choose the most appropriate for the objective to teach and the type of learners you described in the learner profile.

7. Do the **lesson plan according** to the **method or approach chosen**. You cannot include any activity, material, resource, etc., that does not fit the method or approach selected. You **may or may not follow the warm-up, high challenge, low challenge, wrap up sequence.** It will depend on the method or approach you selected.
8. Request feedback if needed.
9. Create the materials necessary to teach the lesson.
10. Submit your lesson plan.

Independent assignment (individual)

Instructions
1. Read all the teaching methods and approaches assigned for the class.
2. Make sure you understand how they work, what they are about, the roles of teacher and learners, the procedure, etc.
3. Choose an assignment that will allow you to demonstrate that you have read and understood **all the teaching methods or approaches for this term, except for the ones used for the microteaching session and the lesson plan**, and that if asked, you can explain how to teach according to each of the methods and approaches read. It can be a chart, an oral presentation, a video, a graphic organizer, and the like; anything you choose to do, as long as it provides the information needed.
4. The information to be included of each method and approach is the following:

a) Name
b) Procedure
c) Activities
d) Role of the learner
e) Role of the teacher
f) Explanation of why this approach helps students learn

5. Organize the information in such a way that is clear, organized and straight forward. **Everything has to be written in your own words**. Get as creative as you can, but clear.
6. Submit your assignment according to your schedule.

Third Term Course Outline

Session I
- Disclosure of 2nd term scores
- Select evaluation criteria
- Explain compulsory assignment
- KWL chart on student-centered learning (SCL)
- Planning learning: action plan

Session II
- Research on SCL

Session III
- Discussion and learning about SCL

Session IV
- Comparison between a traditional classroom and a SCL classroom
- Elements of SCL

Session V

- Elements of SCL
- Scaffolding
- ZPD

Mandatory Assignment: Student-centered lesson plan**:** Learner profile, objective

Session VI (Monday)

- Dimensions of learning: I

Mandatory Assignment: Student-centered lesson plan: Dimension I and II.

Session VII

- Dimensions of learning: II
- Dimensions of learning: III

Mandatory Assignment: Student-centered lesson plan: Dimensions III and IV

Session VIII

- Dimension IV and V

Mandatory Assignment: Student-centered lesson plan: Dimension V

Session IX

- SCL lesson planning and feedback

Session X

- SCL assessment

Session XI

Mandatory assignment: Due date

Session XII

- Interview

Session XIII

- **Final scores**

Description of assignments

Compulsory Assignment: Lesson plan

In order to put into practice your knowledge on SCL, individually or in pairs, you will plan a lesson according to SCL. You have to do the following:

1. Create a learner profile of any class you want.
2. The objective of your lesson plan should be worded like this: By the end of the lesson students will be able to…..
3. Create a lesson plan according to student-centered learning and the 5 dimensions of learning. Make sure you clearly have students experience each dimension. It should be a 60-minute lesson plan.
4. Add scaffolding on each dimension.
5. Create whichever materials you need to teach the lesson and add them to the lesson plan.

A.3 **Work plan**

Work plan (Sample)

Instructions: Fill up the following work plan based on what you are going to learn or plan to do; to gradually work on the compulsory assignments for this term. Write down the information you are required in the chart, making sure you finish your assignments before the deadlines established in the course outline (This is just a sample, your work plan can be as long as it needs to be). Bring it to class so that the teacher can check your work plan and notes you have written on it during class time.

Name _____ Semester and group _____

Assignments: (These changed depending on the term and the content to be learnt)

1. Chart
2. Oral Presentation
3. Reflection paper
4. Lesson plan

Session	Work to be done	Comments/progress	Deadline
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

A.4 **Rubrics**

Reflection paper rubric

Criteria	4	3	2	1	Points
Depth of Reflection	Response demonstrates an in-depth reflection on, and personalization of, the theories, concepts, and/or strategies presented in the course materials to date. Viewpoints and interpretations are insightful and well supported. Clear, detailed examples are provided, as applicable.	Response demonstrates a general reflection on, and personalization of, the theories, concepts, and/or strategies presented in the course materials to date. Viewpoints and interpretations are supported. Appropriate examples are provided, as applicable.	Response demonstrates a minimal reflection on, and personalization of, the theories, concepts, and/or strategies presented in the course materials to date. Viewpoints and interpretations are unsupported or supported with flawed arguments. Examples, when applicable, are not provided or are irrelevant to the assignment.	Response demonstrates a lack of reflection on, or personalization of, the theories, concepts, and/or strategies presented in the course materials to date. Viewpoints and interpretations are missing, inappropriate, and/or unsupported. Examples, when applicable, are not provided.	
Required Components	Response includes all components and meets or exceeds all requirements indicated in the instructions. Each question or part of the assignment is addressed thoroughly. All attachments and/or additional documents are included, as required.	Response includes all components and meets all requirements indicated in the instructions. Each question or part of the assignment is addressed. All attachments and/or additional documents are included, as required.	Response is missing some components and/or does not fully meet the requirements indicated in the instructions. Some questions or parts of the assignment are not addressed. Some attachments and additional documents, if required, are missing or unsuitable for the purpose of the assignment.	Response excludes essential components and/or does not address the requirements indicated in the instructions. Many parts of the assignment are addressed minimally, inadequately, and/or not at all.	
Structure			Writing is mostly clear, concise, and well organized with good sentence/paragraph construction. Thoughts are expressed in a coherent and logical manner. There are no more than five spelling, grammar, or syntax errors per page of writing.	Writing is unclear and/or disorganized. Thoughts are not expressed in a logical manner. There are more than five spelling, grammar, or syntax errors per page of writing.	
Final score					

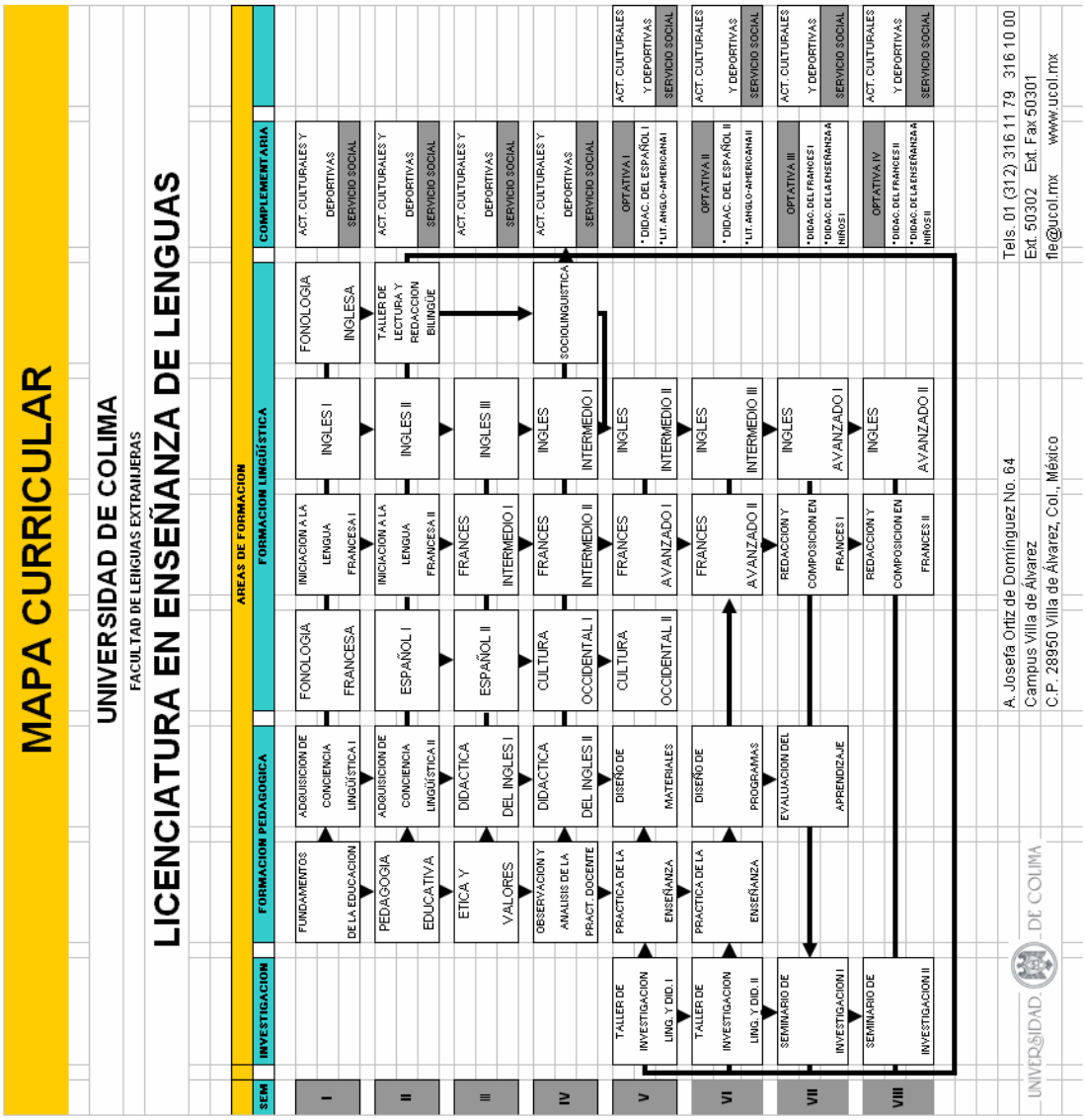
Oral presentation rubric

	3	2	1	0	
Quality of information	Covers topic thoroughly, includes details that support the topic	Includes essential information, includes some supporting details	Includes most essential information, details are somewhat sketchy	Lacks essential information	
Organization	Well organized and coherent, topics are in logical sequence, includes clear introduction and conclusions	Organized, some topics are out of logical order, conclusions are generally clear	Some organization, topics jump around, conclusions are unclear	Not organized, topics make no sense	
Oral presentation	Well prepared, speaks clearly, makes eye contact with audience, delivers with ease, invites questions	Engages audience, fluid delivery, uses different approach other than simply reading screen, invites questions	Clear and understandable, uses limited delivery techniques	Not clear, not understandable	
Grammar and spelling			No more than five errors	More than five grammar and/or spelling errors	
				Total	

A.5 **Reflection questions**

Term	Reflection questions
First	3. What was your performance like during the first term? Why? 4. What changes are going to make for the second term?
Second	5. Which tasks or assignments did you perform well at? Why? 6. How do you work better individually or working with somebody else? Why? 7. What helped you learn? Why? 8. What would you change in your way of learning to make it more efficient?
Third	8. Do you work better by yourself or by working with others? Who do you work well with? 9. What helps you learn more: attending face-to-face tutorials, working on your own using online materials, or a combination of both? Why? 10. Which changes do you need to make to be improve your learning? 11. How do you feel about making your own decisions about learning? 12. Which changes have you made to adapt to learning autonomously? 13. How does making your own decisions affect your learning? 14. What do you think about using self-study guides to learn?

A.6 BA Programme



A.7 Teaching Methods I syllabus

Universidad de Colima
Dirección General de Educación Superior
Nombre del Plantel

Nombre del Programa Educativo: Licenciatura en Enseñanza de Lenguas

Datos de identificación de la materia

Nombre de la materia: Didáctica de Inglés I

Nombre de la academia a la que pertenece: Academia de Didáctica

Semestre	Valor en créditos	Horas semanales	Horas teóricas a la semana	Horas prácticas a la semana	Horas semanales de actividades de aprendizaje individual o con tutoría o asesoría
3ro	8	5	2	3	4

Materias antecedentes: Fundamentos de la Educación I, Adquisición De la Conciencia Lingüística I y II; y Psicología Educativa.

Materias con las que se relaciona en el semestre:

Materias consecutivas: Didáctica del Inglés II, Observación y Práctica de la Enseñanza I y II, Taller de Investigación Lingüística y Didáctica I y II, Diseño de Materiales I y II, Diseño de Programas, Evaluación del Aprendizaje; y Seminario de Investigación I y II.

Propósitos de la materia

Propósito general u objetivos de la materia:
El objetivo principal de este curso es el de proveer a los futuros profesores de lenguas de tareas que le ayuden a estar consiente de elementos importantes que se involucran en el proceso de enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, conocer la teoría existen relacionada con el aprendizaje de otro idioma, así como de contar con los fundamentos teóricos para poder aplicarlos primero dentro de la materia consecutiva Práctica de la Enseñanza y posteriormente en su desempeño profesional. Se pretende que los alumnos conozcan las diferentes teorías del aprendizaje, los enfoques y las metodologías de la enseñanza, y los principales elementos para planear una clase y enseñarla.

Competencias o elementos del perfil del egresado que desarrolla la materia:
Para lograr lo anterior, se trabaja durante la clase en los objetivos siguientes:
Profundizar en el conocimiento de la didáctica de las lenguas inglesa.
Aplicar el conocimiento adquirido.
Vincular la forma de trabajo de los docentes con los estudiantes.
Complementar el aprendizaje de las lenguas estudiadas y sus aspectos humanísticos.

Unidades de Aprendizaje

Unidad I: Bases teóricas y aspectos importantes en la enseñanza del inglés.

Objetivo: Dar al alumno bases teóricas sobre aspectos relevantes en la enseñanza del inglés.

Periodo: 12 de agosto al 13 de septiembre (5 semanas).	Fecha propuesta para la evaluación de la Unidad: 18 al 23 de septiembre	
Contenidos a desarrollar	Estrategias didácticas y experiencias de aprendizaje	Estrategias y criterios para la evaluación del aprendizaje

Universidad de Colima Dirección General de Educación Superior Nombre del Plantel		
Perspectives of linguistics Subsystems of the language Stages of cognitive development Factors that affect language learning Second Language acquisition learning theories Lesson planning	El aprendizaje centrado en el estudiante es la principal enfoque que se utilizará para impartir esta clase, sin embargo de igual manera se realizarán actividades de otros enfoques tales como el aprendizaje basado en tareas, en contenidos, trabajo cooperativo e inteligencias múltiples. La expectativa de esta clase es que todos los alumnos co-participan (aprenden y enseñen). Muchas de las tareas son compartidas y evaluadas por uno o más de sus compañeros de clase. Los alumnos también realizarán prácticas de micro enseñanza con sus compañeros de acuerdo a las técnicas, enfoques y métodos estudiados en el curso. El maestro retroalimentará a los alumnos después de exponer/entregar su trabajo y/o después de haber sido evaluado por sus compañeros.	Los alumnos entregarán un trabajo por semana a partir de la segunda semana de clase, cuatro trabajos en total. En caso de ser necesario durante la quinta semana se aplicará un examen. Los alumnos seleccionarán individualmente como van a ser evaluados. El profesor y los alumnos negocian juntos el número de trabajos van a entregar en cada unidad. Después, cada alumno decide que trabajos van a entregar, el valor que cada uno va a tener y si lo va a realizar individualmente o con alguien más. De igual manera los alumnos deciden si van a tener un examen al final de la unidad o no. Las fechas de entrega de los trabajos también es establecida en conjunto por maestro y alumnos.
Unidad II: Métodos y enfoques utilizados para la enseñanza del inglés. Objetivo: Ayudar al alumno a conocer algunos de los métodos y enfoques utilizados en la enseñanza del inglés, así como aplicar estos conocimientos en un salón de clase.		
Periodo: 24 de septiembre al 25 de octubre (5 semanas).	Fecha propuesta para la evaluación de la Unidad: 28 al 31 de octubre.	
Contenidos a desarrollar	Estrategias didácticas y experiencias de aprendizaje	Estrategias y criterios para la evaluación del aprendizaje

Universidad de Colima Dirección General de Educación Superior Nombre del Plantel		
Métodos de Aprendizaje de una Segunda Lengua a. Audiolingual method b. Suggestopedia c. Total Physical Response d. Communicative Language Teaching e. Multiple Intelligences f. Cooperative Learning g. Content-Based Learning h. Competency-Based Language Teaching h. Task-Based Learning	El aprendizaje centrado en el estudiante es la principal enfoque que se utilizará para impartir esta clase, sin embargo de igual manera se realizarán actividades de otros enfoques tales como el aprendizaje basado en tareas, en contenidos, trabajo cooperativo e inteligencias múltiples. La expectativa de esta clase es que todos los alumnos co-participan (aprenden y enseñen). Muchas de las tareas son compartidas y evaluadas por uno o más de sus compañeros de clase. Los alumnos también realizarán prácticas de micro enseñanza con sus compañeros de acuerdo a las técnicas, enfoques y métodos estudiados en el curso. El maestro retroalimentará a los alumnos después de exponer/entregar su trabajo y/o después de haber sido evaluado por sus compañeros.	Los alumnos entregarán un trabajo por semana a partir de la segunda semana de clase, cuatro trabajos en total. En caso de ser necesario durante la quinta semana se aplicará un examen. Los alumnos seleccionarán individualmente como van a ser evaluados. El profesor y los alumnos negocian juntos el número de trabajos van a entregar en cada unidad. Después, cada alumno decide que trabajos van a entregar, el valor que cada uno va a tener y si lo va a realizar individualmente o con alguien más. De igual manera los alumnos deciden si van a tener un examen al final de la unidad o no. Las fechas de entrega de los trabajos también es establecida en conjunto por maestro y alumnos.
Unidad III: Aprendizaje centrado en el estudiante		
Objetivo: Ayudar al estudiante a conocer y aplicar sus conocimientos en la enseñanza centrada en el estudiante.		
Periodo: 4 de noviembre al 6 de diciembre (5 semanas).	Fecha propuesta para la evaluación de la Unidad: 6 al 11 de diciembre.	
Contenidos a desarrollar	Estrategias didácticas y experiencias de aprendizaje	Estrategias y criterios para la evaluación del aprendizaje

Universidad de Colima
Dirección General de Educación Superior
Nombre del Plantel

Aprendizaje centrado en el estudiante a. Role of the teacher b. Role of the learner c. Environment d. Materials e. Scaffolding f. Zone of proximal development g. Dimensions of learning h. Assessment	El aprendizaje centrado en el estudiante es la principal enfoque que se utilizará para impartir esta clase, sin embargo de igual manera se realizarán actividades de otros enfoques tales como el aprendizaje basado en tareas, en contenidos, trabajo cooperativo e inteligencias múltiples. La expectativa de esta clase es que todos los alumnos co-participan (aprenden y enseñen). Muchas de las tareas son compartidas y evaluadas por uno o más de sus compañeros de clase. Los alumnos también realizarán prácticas de micro enseñanza con sus compañeros de acuerdo a las técnicas, enfoques y métodos estudiados en el curso. El maestro retroalimentará a los alumnos después de exponer/entregar su trabajo y/o después de haber sido evaluado por sus compañeros.	Los alumnos entregarán un trabajo por semana a partir de la segunda semana de clase, cuatro trabajos en total. En caso de ser necesario durante la quinta semana se aplicará un examen. Los alumnos seleccionarán individualmente como van a ser evaluados. El profesor y los alumnos negocian juntos el número de trabajos van a entregar en cada unidad. Después, cada alumno decide que trabajos van a entregar, el valor que cada uno va a tener y si lo va a realizar individualmente o con alguien más. De igual manera los alumnos deciden si van a tener un examen al final de la unidad o no. Las fechas de entrega de los trabajos también es establecida en conjunto por maestro y alumnos.

Bibliografía básica para el desarrollo de la Unidad:

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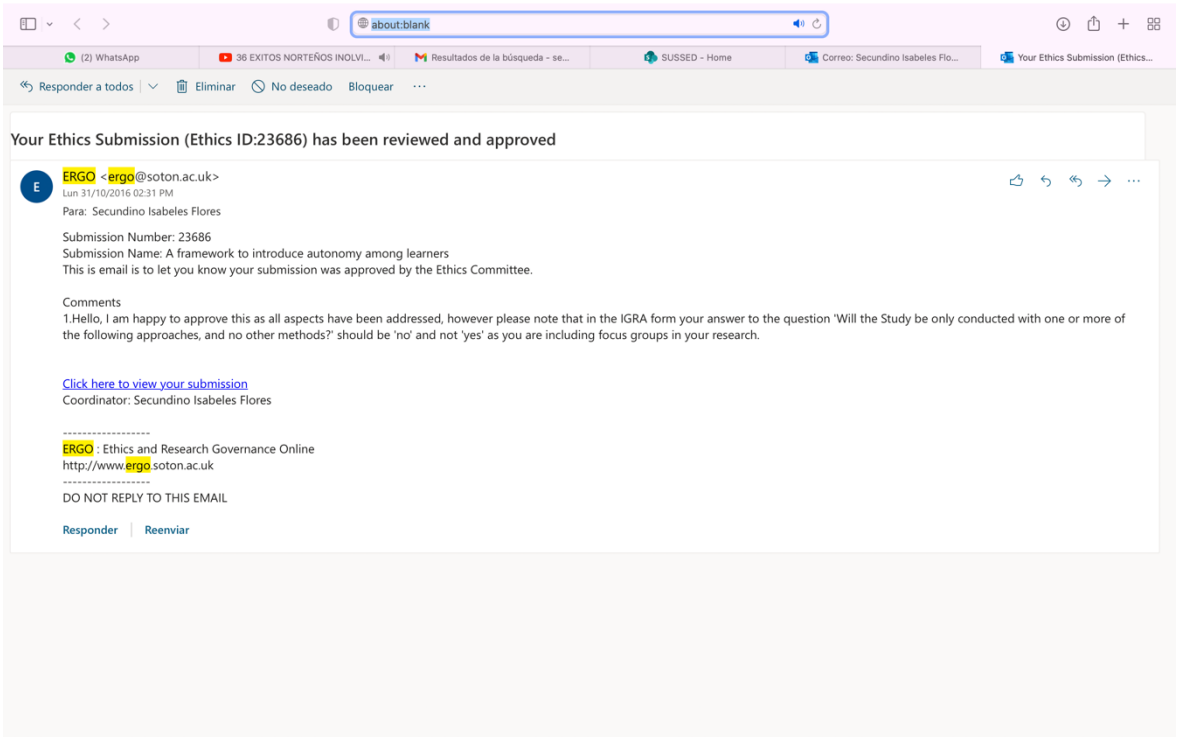
A.8 Ethics Committee Approval



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(2) WhatsApp | 36 EXITOS NORTEÑOS INOLVI... | Resultados de la búsqueda - se... | SUSSED - Home | Correo: Secundino Isabeles Flo... | Your Ethics Submission (Ethics...

Responder a todos | Eliminar | No deseado | Bloquear | ...

Your Ethics Submission (Ethics ID:23686) has been reviewed and approved

E

ERGO <ergo@soton.ac.uk>
Lun 31/10/2016 02:31 PM
Para: Secundino Isabeles Flores

Submission Number: 23686
Submission Name: A framework to introduce autonomy among learners
This is email is to let you know your submission was approved by the Ethics Committee.

Comments
1.Hello, I am happy to approve this as all aspects have been addressed, however please note that in the IGRA form your answer to the question 'Will the Study be only conducted with one or more of the following approaches, and no other methods?' should be 'no' and not 'yes' as you are including focus groups in your research.

Click here to view your submission
Coordinator: Secundino Isabeles Flores

ERGO : Ethics and Research Governance Online
http://www.ergo.soton.ac.uk

DO NOT REPLY TO THIS EMAIL

Responder | Reenviar

Appendix B: **Data Collection Instruments**

B.1 **Learner Diary Questions**

- Was there anything you liked this week? Why did you like it?
- What was the most difficult thing(s) you did this week? Why was it difficult?
- Was there anything that helped you learn this week?
- Was there anything that helped you learn this week? If so, what was it? Why do you think it helped you learn?
- Was there something we did in class you liked this week? Why did you like it?
- Was there something you did not like in class this week? What was it? Why didn't you like it?
- How useful/useless has it been to be given time in the classroom to work on your assignments? Have you really used the time to work? If not, what did you do during that time?
- How do you feel about having to work on your own about your assignments?
- How do you feel about learning with self-study guides?
- What is it like making your own decisions about your learning (grading criteria, number of assignments, attending classes, doing assignments individually or in pairs, etc.)? easy? Difficult? stressful? Why?
- What do you think about being given freedom and becoming responsible of your learning?
- Do you think you are ready to learn autonomously? if so, Why?
- What makes autonomous learning an effective teaching approach? Why?
- Would you use autonomous learning when you start teaching? Why? Why not?
- Do you like learning with this approach? Why? Why not?
- What have you become aware of?
- Would you like to continue working in the way you did for the lesson plan?
- What is your opinion about working autonomously? Did it help you learn?
- Do you think you it is easier now to learn in an autonomous way? Why?
- Do you think you have become an autonomous learner? Why?

B.2 Questionnaire

Autonomous learning questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect your opinions about autonomous learning practices used in the Teaching Methods class. This questionnaire is one of the instruments being used to collect data that can help the researcher write his doctorate thesis. Your responses will be confidential, only the researcher in charge of this study will read them. Your participation is voluntary, if you do not wish to answer the questionnaire please return it to the researcher. If you agree to complete it, please give it to the researcher when you finish answering the questions. Thank you for your cooperation.

Name _____

1. Read the following questions, then write your responses as honestly as you can.

1. As part of the class, you were asked to make your own decisions about aspects of the class and your learning in general, how was it?
2. Why was it like that?
3. Do you think receiving training specifically on how to make decisions would have helped you? Why?
4. What do you think about having to make your own decisions for the class? (selecting the grading criteria, the deadlines, working individually, in pairs or small teams, how many assignments you submitted, etc.)
5. In class, you were asked to work autonomously, what is your opinion about this?
6. Do you think making your own decisions has helped you become an autonomous learner? Why? Why not?
7. How does making your own decisions help you become an autonomous learner?
8. Was there anything done in class that helped you learn in an autonomous way? (course outline, teamwork, pair work, action plan, class activities, freedom to make decisions, feedback, etc.). If so how/why did it help you?
9. Did you do something extra, you were not asked by the teacher, to learn more or more efficiently? (look for information, watch videos, read related articles, ask people)

B.3 Interview questions

Ice-breaking questions

How are you today?

What have you been up to lately?

What are you going to do during the break?

Are you done with school?

What did you do yesterday?

Interview questions

1. What was it like learning in the way you did in class?

2. How did you feel about selecting the grading criteria each term? About making decisions?

3. Did having to make your own decision regarding the number of assignments and their value contribute to be a more autonomous learner? If so, in what ways? How did making such decisions help them to be more independent learners?

4. Why when given free time to work on assignments, did you actually work in your assignments? What motivated you to do so and not use it for other things or work on work for other classes? What made you work autonomously?

5. Did you follow the course outline? Did you know what was going to be done in each session? Did it help you organize your time? Learning? Efforts? Did it help to regulate your learning? Be more independent in your learning? How about the action plan? Did it help?

6. Did the tasks from class made you learn autonomously? Were they working independently because you have no option? Why?

7. During the third term, when you were allowed to decide whether you came to the face-to-face sessions, did you attend them? Why? Why not? If you didn't, did you work independently at home?

8. Out of class, did you do anything to complement or increase your learning about the topics from the class? Or did you limit yourself to working with the materials provided by the teacher? Why either? If you did the former, when was it? The whole semester?

9. Now that you are not taking the class with me anymore, do you still perform any behaviors from autonomous learning? Which? Why?

10. How do you feel about making decisions about your learning now, after having been in class?

11. Do you think, by the end of the semester you were a more autonomous learner? If so, what helped you to become more autonomous?

12. How do you feel about the way autonomous learning was introduced?

B.4 **Researcher diary**

Date:

Term:

Purpose of the session:

1. Notes:

(Some possible questions to help writing notes)

Which activities made students work independently?

How long were students working in an autonomous way?

What was their behavior like as they were working independently?

What questions/doubts came up as they were working in such way?

Did they go beyond what they were asked for? What did they do?

What is it like for students making decisions?

Has having them made their own decisions contributed to developing their autonomous learning? If so, in what ways?

2. Things that need to be observed in future session, asked students about or pay attention to

B.5 Consent form for students

UNIVERSITY OF Southampton

CONSENT FORM *(FACE TO FACE: Insert Version number)*

Study title: A framework to introduce autonomy among learners

Researcher name: Secundino Isabeles-Flores
Staff/Student number: 25710176
ERGO reference number:23686

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet (insert date /version no. of participant information sheet) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	☐
I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study	☐
I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected	☐

Data Protection

I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.

Name of participant (print name).....

Signature of participant.....

Date.....

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