

**Perceptions and Practices of Learner Autonomy in  
the Department of English at the University of  
Petra**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study was conducted in the English Department at Petra University, in Amman, Jordan seeks to look into students' and teachers' perceptions on learner autonomy. The study aimed to find out to what extent learner autonomy is fostered or practiced in that specific context. This study more specifically attempted to find out the perceptions and practices of the instructors and the students regarding learner autonomy.

This is a case study which follows a descriptive method, it adopts a mixed- method approach to research where quantitative and qualitative data are gathered via student and instructor questionnaires and instructor interviews. The number of participants in this study is 76 undergraduate learners and 8 educators in the English Department in Petra University in Amman.

The outcomes of the research study reveal that the students and the instructors shared positive beliefs about learner autonomy. Also, both groups of participants encouraged the involvement of learners in decision taking about their learning. In general, the instructors thought that the students have the required skills to develop autonomy and turn out to be autonomous. However, they claimed that it is not feasible to make students take part in decisions regarding all aspects of their learning for example, the time and place of the lesson, the materials used and the course content. Additionally, both the students' and the instructors' perceptions about learner autonomy were found to be positive, but in terms of the feasibility of learner autonomy in their Department the students expressed different opinions from their

instructors: while they found it feasible to promote autonomy in their Department, their instructors felt it was not feasible.

Finally, the instructors indicated that they always attempt to encourage and promote autonomy in their courses. They stated various ways of doing so, such as making their learners explore, discover, learn and search for themselves and engaging them in group discussions, debates on the topics they choose or find interesting.

**Keywords:** Learner Autonomy, Autonomous Learners, Desirability, Feasibility, traits.

## ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Ürdün Amman bölgesinde, Petra Üniversitesi'nde İngilizce Bölümünde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ürdün, öğrencilerin ve öğretmenlerin öğrenenlerin özerkliği konusundaki algılarını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma ayrıca, öğrenen özerkliğinin ne ölçüde teşvik edildiğini veya bu bağlamda uygulandığını da ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, özellikle öğretmen ve öğrencilerin öğrenen özerkliğine ilişkin genel algı ve uygulamalarını ve onu teşvik etmek için ne yaptıklarını bulmaya çalışır.

Bu vaka çalışması tanımlayıcı bir yaklaşımı izlemektedir ve öğrenci ve öğretmen anketleri ve öğretmen görüşmeleri yoluyla nicel ve nitel verilerin toplandığı karma yöntem bir çalışmadır. Araştırmanın katılımcıları Amman'daki Petra Üniversitesi'ndeki İngilizce Bölümünde 76 lisans öğrencisi ve 8 öğretim görevlisidir. Çalışmanın sonuçları hem öğrencilerin hem de öğretmenlerin öğrenenlerin özerkliği ile ilgili olumlu inançlarını paylaştığını ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca, her iki katılımcı grubu da öğrencilerin öğrenmeleri ile ilgili karar alma sürecine katılımını desteklemiş, genel olarak öğrencilerin özerklik geliştirmek ve özerk olmak için gerekli yeteneklere sahip olduğunu düşünmüşlerdir. Bununla birlikte, öğretmenler, öğrencilere öğrenmeleriyle ilgili her konuda yer almanın, örneğin dersin saati ve yeri gibi, mümkün olmadığını iddia etmişlerdir. (Kullanılan malzemeler ve ders içeriği). Ek olarak, hem öğrencilerin hem de öğretmenlerin öğrenenlerin özerkliğine ilişkin algıları olumluydu. Ancak, öğrenenlerin özerkliklerinin bölümlerinde uygulanabilirliği açısından öğrenciler, bölümlerinde özerkliği teşvik etmenin uygun

olduđunu dűşűndűkleri belirterek eđitmenlerinden farklı gűrűşler ifade etmişlerdir. Ancak, eđitmenleri bunun műmkűn olmadıđını dűşűnmektedir.

Ayrıca, eđitmenler kurslarında űzerkliđi her zaman teşvik etme hususundaki girişimlerini belirtti. Bunu yapmanın, űđrenenleri keşfetmelerini, űđrenmelerini ve kendilerinin araştırmalarını ve grup tartıřmalarına katılmalarını, seętikleri veya ilginę buldukları konular hakkında tartıřmalar gibi ęeřitli yollar kullandıklarını belirtti.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** űđrenen űzerkliđi, űzerk űđrenenler, Arzu edilebilirlik, Uygulanabilirlik, űzellikler.

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my inspiring and loving parents, Abdullkarim & Fatimah Tarawneh, and to my siblings, Khalid, Abdullah and Abeer for Their strong belief in me their love attracted all the positive vibes towards me and gave me the power to continue and never give up during my MA journey.

# **I DID IT!**

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# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Nowadays in the field of English language teaching or in foreign language education, ‘learner autonomy’ is considered as a buzz word as well as a desirable educational target (Little,1991). For almost 30 years learner autonomy has been defined in more than one way differently by different experts. However, there is one definition that stands out as the fundamental one: Holec (1981) defined learner autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (p.3). In other words, learner autonomy means to hold the complete responsibility of all the choices and decisions regarding aspects of this type of learning. This definition was reported to the Council of Europe. It has become increasingly necessary for both educators and novice learners to understand the real meaning behind the notion of learner autonomy to enhance students’ abilities in achieving it and for teachers to understand how essential it is becoming in the classrooms. Many scholars have shed light on the importance of learner autonomy and referred to it by different names such as independent learning, learner-centered instruction, etc. More specifically, Le (2013) states that autonomous learning helps for life-long learning and makes students feel the gist of being independent. Autonomy helps make people feel being independent and have the full responsibility over their decisions and actions. Littlewood (1996) explains this by defining an autonomous person as “one who has an independent capacity to make and carry out choices which govern his or her

actions” (p.428). On the other side, Little (2010) argues that “autonomous learners are characterized by their active involvement in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of their learning” (p.27).

However, many English language teachers have not fully understood this concept clearly, and therefore they could not apply or encourage autonomous learning effectively or in the correct manner in their classrooms. That is why it is of vital importance to make teachers or teacher candidates fully aware of the importance of autonomous learning and train them on how to apply it in their classrooms.

For this reason, Little (2004) argues that teachers should create and preserve a learning community in order to develop autonomous learning. In order to achieve this, English language teacher education programs should emphasize autonomous learning. Many scholars have argued for the importance of learner autonomy and teachers’ perceptions about it. For example, Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) highlight that it is crucially important to reach to a level and understand teachers’ perceptions and beliefs regarding autonomous learning when trying to foster learner autonomy. Additionally, Benson (2011) states that “in order to foster learner autonomy, teachers themselves must display a degree of autonomy in their approaches to teaching and learning” (p.185).

Moreover, Al Asmari, (2013) explains that the role of the teacher is vital in learner autonomy since in simple words, learner autonomy depends on teacher autonomy as both are fully associated in achieving the maximum effectiveness of language learning and teaching. He also mentions that teachers mentor the students to obtain

full responsibility over their own learning as well to help guide them to be more engaged in monitoring and planning their own learning.

So basically, promoting teacher autonomy should be on equal grounds as promoting learner autonomy because if the teachers lack understanding the real goal behind autonomous learning then they will not be able to foster it in their classrooms with their students and in their teaching. Furthermore, Balçıkanlı (2010) points out that if language teachers lack the opportunity of experiencing any “autonomy-oriented training”; then they will surely encounter and face some obstacles and difficulties in creating or preserving a classroom culture that represents an autonomous learning environment. Hence, the earlier language teachers are in support of the principles of autonomous learning; they are made aware of the value and significance of learner autonomy in their initial teacher training and the more easily they will be able to foster this approach in their own current and future classrooms and lectures. Because of this, there should be more educational centers and programs and even teacher communities that support teacher autonomy and stress on the fact that teachers should acquire a degree of autonomy to be able to develop and guide their students autonomously. Little (1995) supported this claim by stating that: “language teachers are more likely to succeed in promoting learner autonomy if their own education has encouraged them to be autonomous” (p.180)

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Promoting learner autonomy is of vital importance to foster teacher autonomy in teacher education programs, in order to make teachers more aware of what autonomy really means and to increase their desire to learn by themselves. When teachers understand the real meaning behind autonomy, it becomes much easier for

them to develop it with their students and in their classrooms. So basically it is highly recommended and a must for teachers to experience learner autonomy as learners in the first place and then carry it out in their lectures or classrooms (Camilleri 1999).

Little (1991) states that both learner autonomy and teacher autonomy go hand in hand and are interrelated. In order to foster learner autonomy, teachers should be exposed to autonomy by gaining a clear background reflection on their own practices and perceptions regarding autonomy. Then, for promoting learner autonomy among the students, teachers should bear in mind individual differences in their classrooms. As students may differ in their competence and backgrounds, and for this particular reason, teachers should pay close attention to every distinction and try to develop autonomy accordingly.

In the Department of English, at the University of Petra, Amman- Jordan, one of the topmost learning goals of the BA program is to ensure that learners become autonomous learners while their still in their learning process and for the long run as future teachers too. However, based on the researchers' unofficial observations there is not much attempt to achieve this goal. Albedaiwi (2014) points out that "It is evidenced that promoting autonomy of teachers promotes better education and that promoting better learner education promotes teachers' autonomy" (p.17).He further states that with the new and updated teaching methodologies arising in the field, it is challenging for educators to please learners' needs to obtain more and better concepts, if the teachers themselves have not yet adopted autonomy.



For this particular reason, this research is conducted in order to seek into the teachers' and learners' perceptions and practices of learner autonomy to raise their awareness regarding autonomous education in the English Department at Petra University.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The present study, which was conducted in the Department of English at the University of Petra (UOP), in the region of Amman, Jordan aims to investigate into students' and teachers' perceptions on learner autonomy. The study also aims to find out to what extent learner autonomy is promoted or practiced in that specific context. The study more specifically seeks to find out the general perceptions and practices of teachers and students regarding learner autonomy and what they do to foster it in the Department of English.

Generally, this study urges to explore to what degree autonomous learning takes place in the English Department at the UOP and whether or not it is fostered, as perceived by the teachers and students. To this aim, it focuses on investigating their perceptions regarding learner autonomy, as well as their practices of it.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

Accordingly, the study tries to answer the following research questions:

- 1 What are the perceptions of the teachers and the students regarding learner autonomy?
- 2 What do the teachers do to help their students develop learner autonomy?
- 3 What do the students do to develop learner autonomy?

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The present study can be considered significant because it can become an eye-opener to the teachers in the Department of English by raising their awareness regarding the importance of learner autonomy and providing them with actual feedback on their students' perceptions and practices about the issue. The results of the study can also help students gain awareness about learner autonomy and their perceptions and readiness regarding autonomous learning. In the long run, this may help them to be autonomous educators in their future.

## **1.6 Summary**

The introduction chapter has given a brief overview of what the research is about, listed the research questions, and discussed the importance of the study. In the second chapter, significant and relevant literature on learner autonomy is reviewed. In the third chapter, the method of the research is explained and in the fourth chapter the findings of the study are presented in detail. The final, chapter, deals with the findings of the study which are argued below the study's research questions. Possible implications for practice are stated. In addition, the limitations of the study are explained as well along with some recommendations for future studies.

## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter two reviews relevant literature regarding the concept of ‘learner autonomy’. Also, it deals with teacher autonomy and autonomous learners and their traits. In addition, the influence of autonomy on language teaching and learning is presented. Moreover, approaches in promoting autonomy, are explained too. Finally the perceptions and practices of both students and teachers concerning autonomy are reviewed by looking at some studies in different contexts.

#### 2.1 Autonomy

Learner autonomy emerged from the foundation of the Centre de Recherches et d’Applications Pédagogiques en Langues (CRAPEL), at the University of Nancy in the 1970s (Benson, 2011). Later on, in the 1980s, the notion of learner autonomy gained a lot of importance and popularity and since then autonomy is always been debated and argued upon by so many of the experts and practitioners in the field of foreign language education. Up to this point, they have lacked to agree on what ‘autonomy’ really means, by reason of the many descriptions, beliefs and points of view regarding learner autonomy in language learning and teaching. However, Benson (2006) stated that there is one fundamental definition that stands out and is one of the best quoted definitions in the research of language learning; it states that autonomy is an “ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (Holec,198, p.3). Yang (2005) points out that this particular definition stresses on both ‘capacity’ and ‘responsibility’ as the vital features for learner autonomy and focuses on the

individual differences for learners and those learners who are considered to be autonomous are able to take full charge or make any decisions regarding any aspect in their learning process.

However, many scholars keep coming up with different definitions and assumptions based on their own perspectives and beliefs. For instance, Little (1991) refers to autonomy as “a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action” (p.4) . Little (1991) merges psychology to the nature of learner autonomy. Furthermore, Benson (2001) indicates “autonomy as the capacity to have control of one’s own learning” (p.47).

On the other hand, the term autonomy has come to be used in at least five ways according to Benson and Voller (2014): (1) in circumstances where students fully depend on themselves during their own learning process; (2) during the practice of learner autonomy, students might acquire certain skills; (3) learner independence can be helpful to the development of the natural capacity that is, suppressed by the institutional education; (4) it can be a chance to make learners exercise how to be responsible of their own learning.; (5) learner autonomy can be useful to motivate learners to take the full accountability over their own learning.

Additionally, Chan (2001) explains autonomy as “to have and to hold the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning” (p.505).

With the widespread of autonomy and since it became one of the hottest topics in the field of foreign language education, it has become increasingly important for both teachers and students to understand the real meaning behind the notion of learner autonomy to help enhance learners’ abilities in achieving it and for teachers

as well to understand how essential it is becoming in the classrooms. Many experts have shed light on the importance of learner autonomy either by defining it from their own perspective or by referring to it by different names such as *independent learning*, *learner-centered* instruction, etc. Learner autonomy spins around the idea that if scholars are involved in decision making processes regarding their own language competence, “they are likely to be more enthusiastic about learning” (Littlejohn, 1985, p. 258).

Autonomy helps make people feel being independent and have the full responsibility over their decisions and actions. Littlewood (1996) explains this by defining an autonomous person as “one who has an independent capacity to make and carry out choices which govern his or her actions” (p.428). Nevertheless, Friere (1996, cited in Joshi, 2011) views autonomy as the learners’ freedom and capacity to assemble and reassemble the taught or given knowledge.

Little (1995) states that the significance of learner autonomy is often clarified from the point of the positive connection between present and future learning. He explains that learners who take full control over their own learning are expected to obtain their learning goals and if this occurs; they are defiantly going to reflect a positive manner towards learning experiences in the future.

## **2.2 Teacher Autonomy**

With the recent wide spread of autonomy, there has been huge emphasis on teacher autonomy too. Han (2014), stressed that the teachers part in developing autonomous learning should always be taken into consideration and never neglected. However, bearing in mind this important issue many researchers have not yet reached on an

agreement on what really teacher autonomy is. As a result, different opinions and definitions arose in the field. Many scholars have defined teacher autonomy from their own philosophy, view or even experience. Thavenius (1999), defined teacher autonomy as “teacher’s capacity to support their learners to take control of their own learning” (p.160). Little (1995), on the other hand, defined teacher autonomy as the ‘capacity to engage in self-directed teaching “(p.176)

Additionally, Smith (2001) points out that teacher autonomy are “the ability to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes for oneself as a teacher in cooperation with others” (p.1)

According to De Vries and Kohlberg (1987, cited in Balckanli 2010) a teacher who is found to be autonomous is the one to have a solid chain in both theoretical and practical convictions is a teacher who can frankly know how and what learners are thinking as well as promoting a constructive classroom culture. For those learners, such a teacher does not stick to a fixed curriculum that is not compatible with students’ needs. Instead, an autonomous teacher would amend and play with the objectives of the curriculum in order to serve the students’ needs. Teachers in this sense would plan their lessons in a way that is related to the objectives and fair to where the students stand in terms of their knowledge at that point.

So in simple words, an autonomous teacher would guide students to better autonomous learning. Moreover, Al Asmari (2013) has a strong belief that the teacher is able to be a significance part in the promotion of learner autonomy by creating a suitable learning environment that is seen conductive to this notion, firstly

by taking into consideration and viewing learners past learning experiences and then following a method or strategy to promote independent learning.

However, many English language teachers have not fully understood the concept or term clearly, 'teacher autonomy' and therefore they could not apply or encourage autonomous learning effectively in their classrooms. That is why it is of vital importance to make teachers or teacher candidates aware of the prominence of autonomous learning and train them on how to apply it in their classrooms. Little (1995) notes, that "language teachers are more likely to succeed in promoting learner autonomy if their own education has encouraged them to be autonomous" (p.180)

Also, Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) highlighted that it is extremely important to understand educators' beliefs regarding autonomous learning when trying to foster learner autonomy, since teachers' perceptions can be the guide to shape their practices and the learning opportunities students take. And surprisingly, many scholars encourage teachers nowadays to try to promote autonomy in their classes by using the correct material and by distributing the suitable activities that will help trigger an autonomous learner in the future.

On the other hand, Reinders and Balcikanli (2011) indicate that in order to promote learner independence, there are two essential features that educators must have: "one has to do with the teacher's own autonomy and the other with a set of teaching skills relevant for developing autonomy" (p.16).

To sum up, learner autonomy and teacher autonomy are interrelated; like Yan (2010) points out if teachers are autonomous, it helps bring out a suitable environment for students to learn autonomously.

### **2.3 Autonomous Learners and their Traits**

Whenever learner autonomy is discussed, we all come to a conclusion that autonomy refers to making learners take full charge and responsibility over their learning process. And being an autonomous learner leads to having high chances to develop your own way to what you want to learn and most importantly how to learn it. Most researchers and experts, support this teaching strategy towards autonomous learning and autonomous learners. They acknowledge that it can be a reason to achieve better and more promising learning outcomes and trigger better L2 learners. Hence, it is crucial to draw your attention that since autonomy is concerned with learners' preferences and needs, this clearly contradicts with any teacher-centered approach. Mohammed (2016) claims that "Autonomous learner refers to learner independence; self-access learning, self-paced learning and distant learning emphasize a shift of attention to learner-oriented approach to language learning." (p.21). This means, scholars have the freedom to learn using whatever strategy or method they find suitable, as well as choosing their own pace to learn.

In simple words, in order for autonomy to be successful then learners should acquire certain characteristics that turn them into successful autonomous learners. According to, Cotteral (1995), Little (1995), and Littlewood (1999), autonomous learners are described: 'expert', 'successful' and 'intelligent' learners. More specifically Little (1995) indicates that an autonomous learner "tends to integrate whatever he or she



learns in the formal context of the classroom with what he or she has already become as a result of developmental and experiential learning”(p.175).

Moreover, Dickinson (1993, cited in Tao, 2005) clarifies that autonomous learners can be defined in 5 ways: (1) they are able to identify what was taught; (2) they are able to frame their own learning goals; (3) they are learners who are able to choose and apply the suitable learning techniques; (4) they are able to spot the methods that are not appropriate to them; (5) and they are able to observe their own learning and self- assessment.

Joshi (2011) addresses those learners who are characterized as autonomous, as the ones that have the ability to accomplish or transfer their decisions in order to guide whatever action they take autonomously. He further suggests that if autonomy is supported or promoted in classroom instruction then students have the opportunity to take on more responsibilities as well as having a word regarding the choices about their learning, yet often with the supervision of their instructors. Moreover, Schunk (2005) says “The autonomous learner shows initiative regarding learning, and shares in monitoring progress and evaluating the extent to which learning is achieved” (p.130). Doğan (2015) agrees with Schunk (2005) and asserts that autonomous learners are engaged in every part of their learning journey, which can begin with preparing the priorities and learning requirements, continue to monitor and end up assessing themselves and their needs with a complete perspective to start another day of learning again with a fresh and better mindset.

Cotterall (1995), notes that “learners who are autonomous might take responsibility by setting their own goals, planning practice opportunities, or assessing their

progress.” (p.219). She further claims that helping learners become more self-independent during their education process is seen one of the ways to take full advantage of their choices in life.

On the other hand, Chan (2001) presents six essential components that she believes autonomous learners should be able to do, alongside with the ability to take charge of every stage in their own learning. The six points are: (1) setting learning goals; (2) identifying and developing learning strategies to achieve such goals; (3) developing study plans; (4) reflecting on learning (which includes identifying problem areas and means of addressing these problems); (5) identifying and selecting relevant resources and support; (6) assessing one’s own progress which includes defining criteria for evaluating performance and learning

## **2.4 Autonomy in English Language Learning and Teaching Context**

It is noteworthy to mention that the growth of autonomy in language learning is explained in Benson’s (2013) book *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning*. Najeeb (2013) claims that promoting learner autonomy has a crucial role in both the theoretical and practical side of language teaching. She stresses that language learning is a lifelong aim, not an endeavor that can begin and end in a language classroom. Many researchers in the field surprisingly have come to agree that the concept of autonomous learning and independent learning are interlinked in most cases and have come to play a huge important role in language education. More specifically, Littlewood (1996) believes that learner independence in the field of foreign language learning is highly dependent on both the ability and willingness of the learner to be able to complete specific and general tasks, thus

there are 3 major areas where autonomy is mostly relevant in foreign language learning which are: (1) communication, (2) learning, and (3) personal development. On the other hand, Illés (2012) illustrates that in language learning context autonomy challenges learners to figure out solutions to different problems on their own as well as to cooperate and get involved in group and pair work, and to try developing the tools they need to evaluate their individual work, along with the work of their fellow colleagues. More specifically, she states “presenting learners with problems that have no ready-made answers forces them to activate their problems-solving capacity and to work out solutions for themselves” (p.509).

Cotterall (1995) provides philosophical, pedagogical, and practical reasons for autonomy in language learning: The philosophical inference entails the belief that learners have the complete right and freedom to form choices regarding their learning process. The pedagogical reasoning on the other hand, points out that adults in specific feel more secure during their learning, they happen to learn more effectively when they are given the opportunity to participate in decision making about their pace, sequence, mode and content of instruction. The practical justification is that a teacher may not always be present to guide learners needs ,to be capable to learn on their own.

Moreover, Cotterall (2000) explains that autonomy in educational contexts should not be seen as a goal restricted just for high committed students or by other means only for students with high proficiency skills. But rather, it should be seen as an essential target of all learning. Moreover, Little (2004b) thinks that “autonomy in language learning is underpinned by three general pedagogical principles: learner

involvement, learner reflection, and appropriate target language use” (p.105).

Littlewood (1999) comments:

If we define autonomy in educational terms as involving students’ capacity to use their learning independently of teachers, then autonomy would appear to be an incontrovertible goal for learners everywhere, since it is obvious that no students, anywhere, will have their teachers to accompany them throughout life .(p.73).

To sum up, so much research has been done by several experts just to shed light on the importance of autonomy in language learning and teaching. As well as, emphasizing the effect and impact of autonomy on learners during their learning process. By stating that, autonomy helps provide opportunities for learners to: challenge, think and make decisions for themselves. More specifically, engaging learners in group or pair work to enhance better lifelong learning without the full-time availability of the teacher.

## **2.5 Ways to Foster the Promotion of Learner Autonomy**

Holec (1981) points out that the promotion of learner autonomy means supporting learners “to determine the objectives, to define the contents and progressions, to select methods and techniques to be used, to monitor the procedures of acquisition and to evaluate what has been acquired” (p.3) and through these procedures an autonomous learner is able to come up with his own learning strategy.

There are plenty of ways to promote autonomy in language classrooms one of them is presented by Cotteral (2000) who provides five course design principles which are essential for the development of learner autonomy in any language course. These five principles relate to “(1) learner goals, (2) the language learning process, (3) tasks, (4) learner strategies, and (5) reflection on learning” (p.110).

Moreover, many approaches and teaching methodologies have been influential and used as a way to promote autonomy in language education. It is the language teachers' mission to boost interest and offer help to students to become autonomous learners. For example, Benson (2013) proposes 6 methods to fostering learning autonomy: (1) resource-based, (2) technology-based,(3) learner-based, (4) classroom-based,(5) curriculum-based, and (6) teacher-based approaches. Below the researcher will discuss each approach briefly.

### **1- Resource-Based Approach**

In this first approach it is vital for learners to start and use their own learning resources independently to develop autonomy, and this can happen only if teachers give students the freedom to practice and plan their learning, to be able to choose what materials and tools they want to use through their learning process. And teachers should create opportunities for learners to assess themselves and their learning. According to Benson (2013) students feel more motivated to develop autonomy from the resources they find on their own or even from the ones their teachers provide them with. And for this reason, the choices learners take is seen very important in this specific approach.

### **2- Technology –Based Approach**

Technology has been included into the field of teaching and learning, and in this approach, technology is used as a type of resource to promote autonomy. The technology approach includes using Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and having access to the internet. Opportunities are given to students to produce their own videos, presentations and writing emails too in simple words engaging them in an electronic environment to make practicing autonomy easier for students.

### **3- Learner-Based Approach**

Benson (2013) explains the learner-based approach as an approach which focuses on providing options for greater learner control. The main idea behind this approach is on the behavioral and psychological changes that cause the student take accountability over their own learning. This method stresses on different language learning strategies in order to seek autonomy. Therefore, it is vital to offer learners with ways of learning strategies. And it is also important to equip learners with strategy-based instruction, alongside with training them using language learning strategies and techniques as it will help learners to determine their ideal way to learning.

### **4- Classroom-Based Approach**

The fourth method focal point has to do with the classroom environment as a whole, which is advised to be supportive and cooperative, where learners are encouraged to take decisions on their own and they are given opportunities to arrange and assess the classroom learning. In simple words, learners can develop autonomy much easier when they own control over their learning and through having extensive practice on independence.

### **5- Curriculum-Based Approach**

Benson (2013) states that in the curriculum-based approach learners are expected to be involved in outlining and designing the curriculum; this means that learners are free to plan the syllabus of their learning with their teachers and colleagues; the syllabus includes the content, the materials and process of learning.

### **6- Teacher-Based Approach**

The sixth approach is teacher-based approach which deals mainly with the teacher's professional development. In this approach teachers are no longer knowledge

deliverers; their role changes to guiders, advisers, facilitators and resource helpers. Teachers can cooperate with their learners and work hand in hand with them to help them during their learning process. Learners can seek guidance on ways to assess or evaluate their learning and obtaining new abilities and knowledge by making them discover their own learning.

## **2.6 Studies on Instructors' and Learners' Perceptions on Learner Autonomy**

This section focuses on the studies that have been conducted in the field of foreign language regarding the perceptions of teachers and students on learner autonomy. The studies are categorized under three sub-headings namely, *studies on teachers' perceptions on learner autonomy*, *studies on students' perceptions on learner autonomy*, and *studies on both teachers' and students' perceptions on learner autonomy*.

### **2.6.1 Studies on Teachers' Perceptions on Learner Autonomy**

Surprisingly many researchers agree that the perceptions and beliefs of teachers regarding learner autonomy play a crucial role to ensure successful autonomous learning and teaching. To support this claim, Borg and Al- busaidi (2012) state that “teachers’ beliefs can powerfully shape both what teachers do and, consequently, the learning opportunities learners receive”. (p.6)

Doğan and Mirici (2017) research was to identify the perceptions and practices of 96 EFL instructors’ regarding learner autonomy in nine foreign language schools at Turkish universities. The data was gathered through a mixed method; both quantitative and qualitative. The outcomes of their study showed that the educators

had high optimistic interpretations on diverse aspects of learner autonomy. It was also revealed that they did not see it as much feasible as they saw it to be desirable.

Al Asmari (2013) conducted a survey at the University of Taif in the English Language Centre at Saudi Arabia. The objective of the survey was to gather information about the opinions of teachers on the practicality and future of learner autonomy in their classes. The sample consisted of sixty educators from various countries teaching English to Arab students at University level. The study concentrated on the educators' perceptions of learner autonomy, its practical side and predictions within the Saudi Arabian context. Findings emphasized the importance to offer learner training along with students studies in order to help learners become autonomous.

Similarly, Nguyen (2014) conducted a case study with a total of 188 Vietnamese EFL lecturers to investigate into their beliefs regarding learner autonomy and to find out how they put their perceptions in to their teaching practices. The method used for this study was a mixed method: the data was gathered quantitatively and qualitatively. The outcomes clearly indicated that it was difficult for most teachers to understand the real meaning behind learner autonomy; as a result, they had different interpretations of learner autonomy and some had confused conceptions.

Additionally, Duong (2014) attempted in his study to investigate into the perceptions of 30 EFL teachers on how they can promote learner autonomy as well as how they teach within a Thai setting. The study was a quantitative type of research; therefore the data was collected through a closed-ended questionnaire. The participants for the chosen study were EFL teachers who were teaching English courses at a Thai



university. Regarding data analysis both descriptive statistics and Wilcoxon signed ranks tests were selected. The results revealed that the teachers could perceive the notion of learner autonomy and the roles of teachers in an autonomous language learning environment, yet the majority lacked in applying their knowledge and perceptions on learner autonomy in this specific context.

Furthermore, Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) conducted a study at a large university language center in Muscat- Oman, with a total of 61 English language instructors. The method used for this study was a mixed method: data were collected both quantitatively and qualitatively in the form of questionnaires and interviews. Concerning the results of the study, the participants shared positive perceptions regarding learner autonomy and they were fully aware of this learning strategy. Nevertheless, the teachers did not feel positive about the feasibility of learner autonomy in their classes and the chance of developing it with their students. Additionally, the teachers thought that their learners were capable enough to practice autonomy inside and outside their classes, but they believed that their students did not show any act of willingness to take advantage of the opportunities they had to practice and develop autonomy.

Ürün (2013) conducted a research study with 118 high school English teachers from different schools in Izmir. In his study he aimed at identifying the teachers' practices in fostering learner autonomy in their classrooms. He also wanted to get a closer look at their practices and whether or not their practices indicate some important differences with regard to certain background variables for example, experience and gender. The method used to collect data was through a questionnaire developed by the researcher in order to seek and measure the practices and opinions of teachers in

developing autonomy and ensuring a proper autonomous learning environment for their learners.

To sum up, this section discussed studies related with teacher's perceptions as regards learner autonomy and the methods used and final findings were identified.

### **2.6.2 Studies on Students' Perceptions on Learner Autonomy**

In this section some studies about student's beliefs on learner autonomy are reviewed. For instance, Yigi and Yildirim (2018) conducted a study that mainly aims to investigate into the consciousness of ELT (English Language Teaching) students regarding learner autonomy in language learning. The participants of the study consisted of a total of 20 students who were interviewed in order to gain a wide understanding into their perceptions on learner autonomy. The findings obtained were analyzed according to the year of study and gender of participants in the ELT program starting from 1st year to 4th year students. Content analysis was done for the qualitative data and the findings of the qualitative data were organized according to the students' study years and their gender as stated above. The findings indicated that the participants mainly agreed on the same responsibilities, abilities, and activities with regard to their year of study. In addition, qualitative data revealed that although both female and male participants shed light to similar attitudes related to responsibilities, abilities, and activities on learner autonomy, they point out different reasons for giving importance to those aspects. Moreover, the participants give some definitions related to learner autonomy and they demonstrate how adaptable the concept of learner autonomy is to them.

Similarly, Abdel Razeq (2014) carried out a study in the Department of Languages and Translation at Birzeit University in Palestine, which focused on investigating the

readiness of Palestinian students regarding learner autonomy in learning English as a foreign language. The participants of the study were a total of 140 students enrolled in two English obligatory courses. In order to evaluate students' readiness for autonomous learning, the researcher used a questionnaire and interviews as the research instruments. The study considered the students' perceptions and their teachers' responsibilities during their English classes. The study also measured the students' ability to act in an autonomous manner while learning English as a foreign language, and lastly the roles they take in activities that require them to be autonomous inside and outside their classrooms. The results revealed that because of previous instructional experiences, the learners were habituated by their past instructional experiences to position the responsibility for the success or failure of their language acquisition on their lecturers. However, the students in the study reported that they are willing to learn autonomously if only they were given the chance to do so.

Chan (2001) did a study at the University of Polytechnic located in Hong Kong with 20 students majoring in English Language in order to determine their beliefs on learner autonomy. She employed both a questionnaire and interviews to collect the needed information related to students' perceptions regarding learner autonomy. In her study, the students examined their roles along with their teachers and the future that awaits language learning and their views on learner autonomy. The outcomes of the study indicate that although students proved to show excellent readiness to become autonomous learners, they expressed the need for dependence on their teachers to help them stimulate or develop such autonomy.

On the other hand, Ünal, Çeliköz and Sarı (2017) conducted a study with Turkish students in order to investigate the relationship between their perceptions regarding learner autonomy and their language proficiency levels. More specifically the study aimed to determine to what degree the perceptions of ELT learners is affected by the proficiency level of the students. The study was applied in a public institution and data was distributed in the form of questionnaires to 326 participants from different classes and levels. The findings revealed that there were no differences between learners' learner autonomy perceptions and their proficiency levels. Nevertheless, the findings indicated that there are some differences regarding the teachers' role in promoting learner autonomy and the technical views on learner autonomy.

To conclude, this section discussed studies on students' beliefs and perceptions for learner autonomy mainly by focusing on the methodologies and results of how students view autonomy.

### **2.6.3 Studies on both Student and Teacher Perceptions on Learner Autonomy**

Ibrahim (2018) looked into the beliefs and practices of the lecturers and the students regarding learner autonomy at the University of Sulaimani in the Department of English in Kurdistan- Iraq. She also investigated into their practices of learner autonomy, a mixed-method in which quantitative and qualitative data was implemented and used. The participants of the study included 150 university students and 18 instructors. The results illustrated that although autonomy was not promoted in the Department of English; the student and their instructors have positive thoughts about learner autonomy and are willing to put autonomy within their learning and teaching practices in the future.

Additionally, Joshi (2011) conducted a study at the University of Tribhuvan, Nepal with 80 graduate English Education majoring students and 6 teachers. The aim of the study was to investigate into the students and teachers perceptions regarding the teachers and students role in learner autonomy. A mixed -method was used and the data was gathered via questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. It was clear from the results that the learners made good use of autonomous activities, and that both teachers and students highly supported the notion of autonomy being integrated into the classroom. Moreover, they believed that students need to be fully be responsible regarding their learning and they seized the teachers' role to be a significant factor during the learning process.

Furthermore, Krisztina (2017) conducted a study at a secondary comprehensive school with the English as a second language (ESL) and German as a foreign language (GFL) about students and teachers perceptions as well as their classroom practices regarding learner autonomy. A mixed method approach, consisting of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, was adopted in order to gather data from 100 students and 12 language teachers. The findings firstly revealed what teachers really understood by the concept of learner autonomy and what techniques they adapted in their teaching practices in order to achieve autonomy. Secondly the findings looked into the beliefs of students on learner autonomy and to what degree they felt responsible to integrate autonomy in their learning. To sum up, the study showed close similarity between teachers' and students' autonomous beliefs.

Farahi (2015) carried out a case study in the Department of ELT at EMU (Eastern Mediterranean University) , North Cyprus in order to explore the beliefs of both students and lecturers as regards learner autonomy. Farahi (2015) used qualitative

and quantitative methods for data collection. The study consisted of 69 ELT undergraduate students and 11 lecturers. The findings of her study showed that both groups of participants expressed positive opinions on learner autonomy, and that it is optimal or desirable to advocate learner autonomy in that specific context . And the instructors noted that students should be given plenty of chances to make choices regarding their learning. Additionally, the instructors thought that the students own the needed skills for becoming autonomous . However, both the students and instructors agreed that it is not realistically achievable to foster autonomy in the Department of ELT.

Furthermore, Shahsavari (2014) conducted a study in the Gooyesh Language Institute in Iran so she can seek the perceptions of 150 scholars' and 150 teachers' regarding learner autonomy. The data collected through the questionnaire and interviews indicated that both the scholars' and teachers' expressed positive attitudes and ideas of learner autonomy, they ensured that learner autonomy is seen among the effective ways for students to learn. However, the students and teachers felt less positive regarding the feasibility of this learning strategy.

Khalil and Ali (2018) conducted a study to explore the perceptions of 265 students and 89 EFL educators regarding learner autonomy in a technical secondary school in Egypt. The researchers used a questionnaire and interviews as their research instruments. The results showed that learners and educators had promising beliefs for learner autonomy in language learning. The learners were fully aware of their teachers roles in promoting autonomy and the teachers indicated that they have a clear background of the notion of 'autonomy' and on the importance of this learning

approach to their learners. Despite that the teachers did not view their learners to be autonomous by reason to some institutional and individual challenges.

To summarize, section 2.6.3 reviewed studies about teachers' and students' views on learner autonomy, discussing the contributors along with the data collection strategies used and the most important outcomes.

## **2.7 Summary**

Autonomy is when learners are independent and mainly taking responsibility over their education. Chapter 2, some relevant literature on autonomy, autonomous learners and their traits has been discussed. Furthermore, teacher autonomy and the importance of autonomy in language teaching and learning context have been clarified. Approaches to foster autonomy have been reviewed. And lastly a couple of studies related to the views and practices of teachers and scholars as regards learner autonomy have been discussed.

## **Chapter 3**

### **METHOD**

This chapter reviews the methodology used in this study. The Chapter consists of seven parts. The first part will explain the overall research strategy. The second and third part introduce the context of the study and the research questions. The fourth part describes the participants. The fifth part deals with data collection instruments, which is followed by explanation on data collection procedures in the sixth part. Finally in the seventh section analysis of the data is discussed.

#### **3.1 Overall Research Design**

This study is a case study, which adopts a descriptive method. It investigates into the perceptions and practices of teachers and students on learner autonomy in the English Department at the University of Petra. According to Vogt (1999) a descriptive approach makes it achievable for the researcher to express an existing situation. This sorts of studies are used in order to find out possible research areas that are neglected by previous studies. Moreover, Salkind (2006) claims that “descriptive research describes the characteristics of an existing phenomenon” (p.11).

Mackey and Gass (2005) state that, “case studies provide detailed descriptions of specific learners within their learning setting” (p.171). A case study is mainly associated with a mixed method approach; meaning that the data has been collected via student and teacher questionnaire and teacher interviews. In this study both



qualitative and quantitative data were gathered. Since if we link 2 types of methods it can make the study stronger while if we avoided them it can be a reason for weakness.

According to Mackey and Gass (2005), “triangulation involves using multiple research techniques and multiple sources of data in order to explore the issues from all feasible perspectives. Using the technique of triangulation can aid in credibility, transferability, conformability, and dependability in qualitative research” (p.368)

There are so many benefits found in research when you come to combine two methods, many growing researchers nowadays, (O’Cathain, Murphy, and Nicholl, 2010) have claimed that when using a mixed method, readers feel more confident regarding the results and conclusions they conclude out of the study additionally, it will contribute in making the study easier and clearer for readers to understand and comprehend as well as helping in promoting ideas for further and future studies

### **3.2 Context**

The present research was conducted at the University Of Petra (UoP) in Amman – Jordan, at the Department of English. The study included undergraduate students and their instructors. It was conducted in the Fall Semester of 2018-2019 Academic Year.

The University of Petra was founded in 1991. Located in West Amman, the University of Petra aspires to be always the "University of Choice", in Jordan specifically and the region in general for both learners and scholars. The university offers a variety of programs at its eight colleges. One of the eight colleges is the Faculty of Art and Sciences, which includes the English Department.

The Department of English is a dynamic and growing department which was established in the academic year 1991/1992. It offers three study programmes; two undergraduate study programmes (BA in English Language and Literature, and BA in Translation) and one graduate programme ( MA in Translation). A number of courses are provided for students such as: linguistics, basic and advanced grammar, semantics, phonology, syntax, teaching English as a foreign language, English Literature and so many more. The vision of the Department of English, in line with its mission, is to be a model of excellence through comprehensive and challenging undergraduate and graduate programs in a supportive and respectful environment for all students.

The Department of English aims to: (1) assist learners in achieving educational and professional objectives through quality teaching and individual attention, (2) provide learners with chances that can expand their intellectual and social prospects, (3) to equip learners with the proper tools and resources to enhance better learning environment, (4) to offer learners a solid educational base favorable to vital knowledge, research skills, self-growth, enriched real life experiences and computer mastery essential to lifelong learning. ([www.uop.edu.jo/](http://www.uop.edu.jo/))

### **3.3 Research Questions**

Examining the instructors' and students' perceptions and practices regarding the notion of 'learner autonomy' is seen a vital reason for fostering autonomy. For this particular motive, the present study aims to find out to what degree learner autonomy is encouraged or practiced in the English Department at the University of Petra. It also seeks to find out the perceptions of the instructors on learner autonomy

and autonomous learning in that specific context. Accordingly, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the perceptions of the teachers and the students regarding learner autonomy?
- 2- What do the teachers do to help their students develop learner autonomy?
- 3- What do the students do to develop learner autonomy?

### **3.4 Participants**

Seventy- six students volunteered to take part in the study. They were mainly 2nd, 3rd and 4th year students in the English Department at Petra University in Amman- Jordan.

Additionally, 8 instructors agreed to volunteer in this study. The participants of the study are organized into two groups and they are introduced in detail in the following sub-sections.

#### **3.4.1 Students**

The student participants in this study were undergraduate students in the English Department and they all agreed to take part in the study. The number of the student participants are 76 and they were in their first, second, third and fourth year: 21 first year students (27.6%), 6 second year students (7.9%), 28 third year students (36.8%), and 21 fourth year students (27.6%). As regards gender distribution, 17.3% of the participants were male and 82.7% of them were female. Their ages ranged between 18 to 28 years old, the majority of them were 22 years old (21.1%). Almost all (94.7%) of the students were Jordanians and only 5.3% of them were from another country, mainly Palestine, Canada and Egypt. Also, almost all the students

(96%) had Arabic language as their native language and only 4% of them had English as their native language.

### **3.4.2 Instructors**

The instructors who participated in this study were 8 instructors, and they were all teaching at the English Department at the University of Petra. Regarding their gender, 50.0% of them were female and 50.0% of them were male. Their ages were between 28 to 69 years old. All the instructors were Jordanian citizens and all of them had Arabic language as their native language. Their years of teaching experience varied between 3 to 35 years, and regarding their years of experiences as educator at the University of Petra ranged between 3 to 27 years. As to their qualifications, 25.0% of them were MA lecturers and 75.0% had PHD.

## **3.5 Data Collection Sources**

In the present study, the data were collected by the researcher through both learners and instructor questionnaires along with teacher interviews. The data collection sources of the study were adapted from Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012), Chan( 2001) , Joshi( 2011), Littlewood (1999), Demirtaş and Sert (2010), Le (2013) and Chan (2003). Most of these instruments were also adapted and used by Ibrahim (2018).

### **3.5.1 Student Questionnaire**

The questionnaire distributed to the learners in the study consisted of 5 parts. It was advanced by the researcher by adapting instruments from several resources, (Borg &Al-Busaidi, 2012; Chan, 2001; Joshi, 2011; Littlewood, 1999; Demirtaş & Sert, 2010; Le, 2013) and Ibrahim, (2018). For the reliability of the student questionnaire, the Cronbach's Alpha value was calculated and found out to be 0.88. The purpose of the questionnaire was to find out the scholars' opinions regarding learner autonomy and what they do to foster it, i.e. their practices.

The questionnaire consisted of 5 parts as stated above. The 1<sup>st</sup> part dealt with learners' background info; their gender, age, nationality, mother language and year of study. The 2nd part concentrated on the learners' understanding and opinions as regards learner autonomy. This section contained 28 five point Likert-scale type of closed- items ( *Strongly agree* [5], *Agree* [4], *Neutral* [3], *Disagree* [2], *Strongly disagree* [1] ). Later the 3rd part was concerned with students' readiness for learner autonomy. This section tried to find out the learners' needs for learner autonomy, to investigate if they wish to get involved in decisions regarding their own learning process, and to identify their capabilities to develop learner autonomy. This section consisted of twenty-one 5-point Likert-scale type of closed-items: Never [1], Rarely [2], Sometimes [3], Often [4], Always [5].

The 4th part was related to the feasibility (i.e. realistically achievable) of learner autonomy in the Department of English. This section aimed to seek the perceptions of students on learner autonomy. Therefore, students were asked to respond to 21 closed-items in the form of a 5 point Likert scale from Never to Always: Never [1], Rarely [2], Sometimes [3], Often [4], Always [5]. Lastly, the 5<sup>th</sup> part includes 5 open ended questions about learners' experiences as well as perceptions of learner autonomy in the English Department at (Uop).

### **3.5.2 Instructors Questionnaire**

In this study the questionnaire distributed to the teachers had 4 parts, and the researcher planned this questionnaire by adapting the instruments from Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) and Chan (2003). These instruments were also adapted and used by Ibrahim(2018) in the English Department at the University of Sulaimani. For the reliability of the teacher questionnaire, the Cronbach's Alpha value was calculated

and found out to be .80. The intention of this questionnaire was to investigate into the instructors' views and practices on learner autonomy and to find out their recommendations for better autonomous learning in the department.

This questionnaire included 4 parts. The 1<sup>st</sup> part had to do with the educators' personal info, i.e. age, gender, mother language, number of years of teaching experience along with years of teaching at the University of Petra and finally their educational qualification.

Part two mainly concentrated on the instructors' general views and understanding about learner autonomy in language learning and teaching. This part included 36 closed-items in the shape of 5 point Likert scale. Part three dealt with the instructors' perceptions about the desirability and feasibility of learner autonomy in the Department of English. In this part 21 statements were listed. The first 12 items were mainly about the choices scholars were to take part in, for example the course content, classroom management and how learning is assessed and so on. The remaining nine statements concentrated on the learners' abilities to be autonomous such as learning independently, monitoring their progress and evaluating their own learning.

Finally, section four consisted of four open ended questions, and the instructors were requested to note and elaborate on their own instruction practices by giving examples from the English Department at the University of Petra.

### **3.5.3 Instructor Interviews**

The Instructors were interviewed by the researcher to examine into their beliefs and practices of learner autonomy generally and more specifically in the English

Department at the University of Petra. The interview questions were adapted from Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) and Joshi (2011).

The instructor interview contained 12 questions and they were divided into two main sections. The first section consisted of five questions about the instructor's perspective and understanding about learner autonomy. On the other hand, the second section consisted of seven questions related to the instructor's perceptions on learner autonomy in the Department of English in specific. Furthermore, during the process of the interview the instructors were asked whether or not their students are autonomous and how they can differentiate between students who are autonomous from those who are not and if they think that autonomous learners will be better L2 teachers in the future. The Instructors were also interviewed about the challenges they face as a teacher when promoting autonomous learning, and how desirable or feasible it is to develop autonomy in their Department. Also, they were asked for suggestions for more effective ways to promote autonomous education in the English Department at Petra University.

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedures**

The data for the present study was gathered during the Fall Semester of the Educational year 2018-2019. The researcher went through various stages in order to gather the needed data. In the first place, the researcher got the approval of the Department of Foreign Language Education at EMU and the Department of English at the University of Petra for conducting the present study (Appendix A)

In the second stage, the students were asked to sign a consent form upon agreeing to participate in the study to sign it. Afterwards they were given a questionnaire. Each student spent roughly 15 minutes to finish the questionnaire.

In the third stage, also consent forms were given to the instructors and they were requested to sign it. Then they were asked to answer the instructor questionnaire. In the last stage the researcher scheduled appointments with three for making interviews separately. The researcher distributed consent forms for instructors to sign. Each interview relatively spent 20 minutes, and all interviews were audio-recorded by the researcher.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

Data analysis was done through several stages. This study contained both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data were gathered using learner and instructor questionnaire in the form of closed-items, and they were analysed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data were analysed through descriptive statistics and later both the means and frequencies were calculated.

Regarding the qualitative data, both the teacher and student questionnaires along with teacher interviews included open-ended questions. In order to analyse the qualitative data, the researcher inserted all the responses below each question, then selected answers that share somehow the same responses and key-items for every question and provided codes. Lastly, the frequencies were calculated after organizing the data into codes.



Similarly for analysing the instructor interviews, the researcher first transcribed all the audio- recordings. Then the researcher analysed the data in the exact way as the open ended questions were analyzed as explained above.

### **3.8 Summary**

Finally, Chapter three viewed the method of the present research. The first two parts were about the whole research design and context of study. Part three and four were about research questions and the participants. Later on, the data gathering procedures and instruments were explained and lastly, the data analysis procedures in the study were described.

## **Chapter 4**

### **RESULTS**

In this chapter, the results of the study are presented. Firstly, the results from the student questionnaire are discussed. Secondly, the results from the teacher questionnaire are examined, and lastly, the teacher interviews' results are obtained.

#### **4.1 Student Questionnaire**

A questionnaire was administered to the students of the Department of English at (Uop) to investigate into their perceptions and practices of learner autonomy. The questionnaire contains four sub-headings, and the results are shown below these sub-headings.

##### **4.1.1 Learner Autonomy in Language Learning and Teaching**

The findings of this part show the perceptions and views of the students about learner autonomy. This part of the questionnaire contained 28 closed type items (five-point Likert scale). The findings of the study reveal that vast number of the learners had optimistic views for learner autonomy in language teaching and learning as a huge number of learners strongly agreed or agreed with almost all the items in part two. The results of this part can be shown in Table 4.1 below

Table 4.1: Learners' Perceptions regarding Learner Autonomy in Language teaching and learning

<b>Items</b>	<b>SA + A</b> %	<b>Neutral</b> %	<b>SD + D</b> %	<b>Mean</b>
<b>1</b> Students need the teacher to set learning goals for them.	84.2	9.2	6.6	4.55
<b>2</b> Students should choose their own materials for English courses.	64.5	19.7	15.8	3.97
<b>3</b> Students enjoy tasks where they can learn on their own.	66.2	27	6.8	4.19
<b>4</b> Students should note their strengths and weaknesses in learning English and try to improve them.	91.9	5.4	2.7	4.78
<b>5</b> Students should make decisions and set goals of their learning.	92.1	6.6	1.3	4.82
<b>6</b> Students should practice English outside the class such as: record their own voice; speak to other people in English.	89.5	7.9	2.6	4.74
<b>7</b> Students should make notes of their lessons.	86.7	10.7	2.6	4.68
<b>8</b> Students should use the Internet/ computers to study English.	76.3	18.4	5.3	4.42
<b>9</b> Students need the teacher to stimulate their interests in learning.	65.8	25	9.2	4.13
<b>10</b> Students should take risks in learning the English language.	80	14.7	5.3	4.49
<b>11</b> Besides the contents of the course, students should read extra materials in advance.	72.6	19.2	8.2	4.29
<b>12</b> When students make progress in learning, they should reward themselves such as: buy new things, celebrate parties, etc.	59.2	35.5	5.3	4.08
<b>13</b> Students should plan their time while learning English.	81.1	13.5	5.4	4.51
<b>14</b> Students should make preview before the class.	63.5	27	9.5	4.08
<b>15</b> Students should use library to improve their English.	63.2	23.7	13.2	4.00
<b>16</b> The role of the teacher is to make students work hard.	54.7	26.7	18.6	3.72
<b>17</b> It's the teacher's responsibility to create opportunities for students to practice.	50.7	33.3	16	3.69
<b>18</b> Language learning involves a lot of self-study.	78.7	16	5.3	4.47
<b>19</b> Independent study in the library is an activity which develops learner autonomy.	73.3	18.7	8	4.31

<b>Items</b>		<b>SA + A</b> %	<b>Neutral</b> %	<b>SD + D</b> %	<b>Mean</b>
<b>20</b>	Teachers should choose activities for students to learn English.	66.2	23	10.8	4.11
<b>21</b>	Teachers should engage students in group work activities in which they work towards common goals.	71.1	17.1	11.8	4.18
<b>22</b>	Learner autonomy is promoted through regular opportunities for learners to complete tasks alone.	52	42.7	5.3	3.93
<b>23</b>	Teachers should let students find their own mistakes.	62.7	16	21.3	3.83
<b>24</b>	Teachers should help students make progress outside class.	74	17.8	8.2	4.32
<b>25</b>	The teacher is an authority figure in the classroom.	60	33.3	6.7	4.07
<b>26</b>	A lot of language learning can be done without a teacher.	59.2	13.2	27.6	3.63
<b>27</b>	Teachers should give opportunities to decide on how to learn.	69.3	18.7	12	4.15
<b>28</b>	Knowledge is something to be 'transmitted' by teachers rather than 'discovered' by learners themselves.	43.4	36.8	19.7	3.47

According to Table 4.1, almost all the learners (92.1%) expressed their agreement (SA/A) with item 5 (*Students should make decisions and set goals of their learning*), and the item with the high percentage was item 5, and the mean for the item was 4.82. Moreover, a huge group of learners agreed (SA/A) with item 4 (*Students should note their strengths and weaknesses in learning English and try to improve them.*) with 91.9%, item 6 (*Students should practice English outside the class such as: record their own voice; speak to other people in English.*) with 89.5%, item 7 (*Students should make notes of their lessons*) with 86.7%, and item 13 (*Students should plan their time while learning English*) with 81.1% The mean for item 4 was 4.82, it was 4.74 for item 6, and 4.68 for item 7 and 4.51 for item 13. These findings show that the learners agreed with most of the above-given

statements which are associated with the learners' part in the language learning and teaching process.

Students opinions on how they can develop autonomy, a great number of learners demonstrated their agreement (SA/A) with item 10 (*Students should take risks in learning the English language*) with 80.0%, item 18 (*Language learning involves a lot of self-study*) with 78.7%, item 8 (*Students should use the Internet/ computers to study English*) with 76.3%, item 24 (*Teachers should help students make progress outside class.*) with 74.0%, item 19 (*Independent study in the library is an activity which develops learner autonomy*) with 73.3%, item 11 (*Besides the contents of the course, students should read extra materials in advance*) with 72.6%, item 21 (*Teachers should engage students in group work activities in which they work towards common goals*) with 71.1%, and item 27 (*Teachers should give opportunities to decide on how to learn*) with 69.3%. Regarding the means, for item 10 it was 4.49, 4.47 for item 18, 4.42 for item 8, 4.32 for item 24, 4.31 for item 19, 4.29 for item 11, 4.18 for item 21, and 4.15 for item 27. These findings show what learners think they should do in order to develop autonomy; also what they believe their teachers role is in making them learn autonomously.

Contrarily, there are few items in which relatively fewer learners expressed agreement with. To illustrate, 43.4% of the learners strongly agreed or agreed with item 28 (*Knowledge is something to be 'transmitted' by teachers rather than 'discovered' by learners themselves*), 59.2.7% expressed agreement (SA/A) with item 12 (*when students make progress in learning, they should reward themselves such as: buy new things, celebrate parties, etc.*), and 60% with item 25 (*the*

*teacher is an authority figure in the classroom*), but still nearly above half of the students expressed agreement. Furthermore, about these items, some learners were neutral. For example, item 28 (*Knowledge is something to be 'transmitted' by teachers rather than 'discovered' by learners themselves*) 36.8% were neutral while on the other hand, it was 35.5% with item 12 (*when students make progress in learning, they should reward themselves such as: buy new things, celebrate parties, etc.*), 19.7% with item 2 (*students should choose their own materials for English courses*) and for item 25 (*the teacher is an authority figure in the classroom*) 33.3%, and 27% with item 3 (*students enjoy tasks where they can learn on their own*).

Concerning the percentages of disagreement, the disagreement (D/SD) with the high percentage from all the items went to items 26 (*A lot of language learning can be done without a teacher*) with 27.6%, item 23 (*Teachers should let students find their own mistakes*) with 21.3%, and item 28 (*Knowledge is something to be 'transmitted' by teachers rather than 'discovered' by learners themselves*) with 19.7%. And the lowest mean was in item 26 (3.63).

To sum up, clearly through the findings it is shown that the learners on the whole had optimistic views and opinions to the notion of autonomy and the mean for these items was around 3.63 and 4.82.

#### **4.1.2 Readiness for Learner Autonomy**

In section 3 of the learners' questionnaire, the readiness for learner autonomy was the prior focus. This section consisted of 2 sections. In the 1<sup>st</sup> section, the learners were requested to suggest whether they want to be an active participant in decisions about several aspects in their learning or not, and in the 2nd section,

learners were required to tell their perspectives about their abilities to complete some activities which indicate learner autonomy. The results can be shown in table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Readiness for Learner Autonomy

No.	Items	Never %	Rarely%	Sometimes%	Often %	Always%
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**In my Department, I want to be involved in decisions about:**

1	The objectives of a course	9.4	10.8	33.8	28.4	17.6
2	The materials used	6.9	13.9	37.5	18.1	23.6
3	The kinds of tasks and activities they do	6.8	8.0	29.7	23	32.4
4	The topics discussed	6.8	9.6	27.4	27.4	28.8
5	How learning is assessed	5.4	18.9	35.1	21.7	18.9
6	The teaching methods used	5.6	13.7	28.7	23.3	28.7
7	Classroom management	11.1	18.1	30.6	22.2	18.0
8	The course content	9.5	9.5	29.7	28.3	23
9	The choice of learning tasks	10.7	12	21.3	28	28
10	The time and place of the lesson	10.7	8	20	21.3	40
11	The speed of the lesson	9.7	13.9	31.9	23.6	20.9
12	The homework tasks	9.3	13.3	24	13.4	40

**In my department, I have the ability to:**

13	Identify their own needs	5.3	13.2	21.0	25.0	35.5
14	Identify their own strengths	1.3	13.2	18.4	31.6	35.5
15	Identify their own weaknesses	9.2	7.9	28.9	23.7	30.3
16	Monitor their progress	3.9	17.1	30.3	34.2	14.5
17	Evaluate their own learning	6.6	19.7	22.4	32.9	18.4
18	Learn co-operatively (together)	3.9	19.7	25	28.9	22.4
19	Learn independently	8.0	9.3	34.7	25.3	22.7
20	Assess themselves, rather than be tested	4.0	14.7	36.0	32.0	13.3
21	Find out learning procedures by themselves	3.9	9.2	27.6	25	34.3

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According to the results, many learners felt the wish to be involved in deciding about their learning; hence learners mostly chose options other than *rarely* and *never* as their answers. For example, a great number of learners wanted to decide about *how learning is assessed* (18.9 always, 21.7 often, 35.1 sometimes, 18.9 rarely, and only 5.4 never).

Likewise, approximately all the students noted that they desired to be part of decisions about the *the teaching methods used* (28.7% Always, 23.3% Often, 28.7% Sometimes, 13.7% Rarely, 5.6% Never). also, most of the students wanted to decide about *the kinds of tasks and activity they do* (32.4% Always, 23% Often, 29.7% Sometimes, 8.0% Rarely, 6.8% Never), *the topics discussed* (28.8% Always, 27.4% Often, 27.4% Sometimes, 9.6% Rarely, 6.8% Never), and *the*



*materials used* (23.6% Always, 18.1% Often, 37.5% Sometimes, 13.9% Rarely, 6.9% Never).

However, relatively less learners claimed that they wanted to be involved in deciding about the *objectives of a course* (17.6% always, 28.4% often, 33.8% sometimes, 10.8% rarely, 9.4% never), *classroom management* (18.0% Always, 22.2% Often, 30.6% Sometimes, 18.1% Rarely, 11.1% Never).

Correspondingly, in terms with the learners' abilities, nearly all the learners stated that they have all the abilities that are given in section 3. to exemplify, a great majority of the learners stated that they have the ability to *identify their strengths* (35.5% Always, 31.6% Often, 18.4% Sometimes, 13.2% Rarely, 1.3% Never), *monitor their progress* (14.5% Always, 34.2% Often, 30.3% Sometimes, 17.1% Rarely, 3.9% Never), *learn co-operatively (together)* (22.4% Always, 28.9% Often, 25.0% Sometimes, 19.7% Rarely, 3.9% Never), *find out learning procedures by themselves* (34.3% Always, 25.0% Often, 27.6% Sometimes, 9.2% Rarely, 3.9% Never), *assess themselves, rather than be tested* (13.3% Always, 32.0% Often, 36.0% Sometimes, 14.7% Rarely, 4.0% Never), *identify their own needs* (35.5% Always, 25.0% Often, 21.0% Sometimes, 13.2% Rarely, 5.3% Never), *evaluate their own learning* (18.4% Always, 32.9% Often, 22.4% Sometimes, 19.7% Rarely, 6.6% Never), *learning independently* (22.7% Always, 25.3% Often, 34.7% Sometimes, 9.3% Rarely, 8.0% Never), and *identify their own weakness* (30.3% Always, 23.7% Often, 28.9% Sometimes, 7.9% Rarely, 9.2% Never).

On the whole, the results obtained for section 3 indicate that most of the learners had the wish to take part in the decision processes as regards their learning, and they assumed that they had the necessary skills to complete different actions for autonomous learning.

#### 4.1.3 Learner Autonomy in the English Department at the University of Petra.

Regarding the feasibility of learner autonomy in the English Department at the University of Petra ( section 4 ) in the questionnaire, the learners' perceptions on how realistic it can be to foster learner autonomy was explored.

Table 4. 3:Learners' Perceptions about Feasibility of Learner Autonomy in the Department of English at the University of Petra.

No.	Items	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %	Always %
<b>In my Department, students are involved in decisions about:</b>						
1	The objectives of a course	20	15.7	25.7	25.7	12.9
2	The materials used	20	22.9	21.4	30	5.7
3	The kinds of tasks and activities they do	10	14.3	44.3	21.4	10
4	The topics discussed	14.7	5.9	39.7	27.9	11.8
5	How learning is assessed	24.3	15.7	25.7	28.6	5.7
6	The teaching methods used	22.8	22.8	22.9	18.6	12.9
7	Classroom management	25	19.1	22.1	26.5	7.4
8	The course content	23.5	20.6	26.5	23.5	5.9

9	The choice of learning tasks	18.6	18.6	27.1	28.6	7.1
10	The time and place of the lesson	24.3	11.4	30	14.3	20
11	The speed of the lesson	25.7	12.9	21.4	27.1	12.9
12	The homework tasks	18.6	18.6	28.6	18.6	15.7

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No.	Items	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %	Always %
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**In my department, students have the ability to:**

13	Identify their own needs	12.9	17.1	37.1	12.9	20
14	Identify their own strengths	4.4	17.6	44.1	23.5	10.3
15	Identify their own weaknesses	8.6	24.3	37.1	18.6	11.4
16	Monitor their progress	5.7	21.4	44.3	17.1	11.4
17	Evaluate their own learning	11.6	21.7	34.8	21.7	10.1
18	Learn co-operatively (together)	4.3	21.7	26.1	36.2	11.6
19	Learn independently	5.7	18.6	41.4	22.9	11.4
20	Assess themselves, rather than be tested	18.6	15.7	35.7	20	10

21	Find out learning procedures by themselves	7.2	30.4	33.3	15.9	13
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The findings of this part show that the learners supposed that they were frequently taking part in decisions about their own learning, by way of most of the learners selected. Sometimes or Often as appropriate answers. For example, more than fifty percent of the learners thought that they are Sometimes or Often questioned to decide about *the kinds of tasks and activities they do* (10.0% Never, 14.3% Rarely, 44.3 Sometimes, 21.4% Often, 10.0% Always), *the teaching methods used* (14.7% Never, 5.9% Rarely, 39.7% Sometimes, 27.9% Often, 11.8% Always), *the time and place of the lesson* ( 24.3% Never, 11.4% Rarely, 30.0% Sometimes, 14.3% Often, 20% Always), *the course content* (23.5% Never, 20.6% Rarely, 26.5% Sometimes, 23.5% Often, 5.9% Always).

On the other hand, fewer learners felt that they were not so much associated in any choice making over their education as they selected either Never or Rarely for the items of this part. For instance, only few learners indicated that they are Never or Rarely asked to decide on *the speed of the lesson* (9.7% Never, 13.9% Rarely, 31.9% Sometimes, 23.6% Often, 20.9% Always), and *the homework tasks* (18.6% Never, 18.6% Rarely, 28.6% Sometimes, 18.6% Often, 15.7% Always).

Concerning the learners' abilities in the English Department, the majority of learners', claimed that they have necessary abilities which helps in the development of autonomy. As shown in the findings of table 4.3, most of the

students indicated that they have the ability to: *monitor their progress* (5.7% Never, 21.4% Rarely, 44.3% Sometimes, 17.1% Often, 11.4% Always), *identify their own strength* (4.4% Never, 17.6% Rarely, 44.1% Sometimes, 23.5% Often, 10.3% Always), and *learn independently* (5.7% Never, 18.6% Rarely, 41.4% Sometimes, 22.9% Often, 11.4% Always). And *identify their own needs* (20.0% Always, 12.9% Often, 37.1% Sometimes, 17.1% Rarely, 12.9% Never).

To sum up, the results for this section in response to the achievability of learner autonomy in The English Department at (Uop) show that learners are often associated in deciding in their Department they also claimed that the learners have the abilities to learn autonomously.

#### **4.1.4 Students' Perceptions and Experiences of Learner Autonomy**

In the fifth section of the student questionnaire, the students were asked to express their perceptions of learner autonomy, and comment more specifically on their learning experiences and practices in the English Department at Petra University.

In the first question (“what does ‘learner autonomy’ mean to do?”), 52.2% of the learners explained learner autonomy as ‘to learn depending on themselves’, ‘to take responsibility of their own learning’, ‘to study by yourself without any help’,. For example, S15 explained this question saying “it is making yourself more independent in your learning or decision making”. Moreover, 30.4% of the students defined learner autonomy as ‘being able to not depend on teachers’. In some of the answers, learner autonomy was defined as: “learner autonomy is having no teacher to tell me or guide me on how to learn” S42. However, 17.4% of the students defined learner Autonomy as ‘Knowing your weaknesses and strengths’. For

instance, S38 stated that “learner autonomy helps you identify your weaknesses and strengths”.

As regards the second question (“Are you an autonomous learner why or why not?”), the students responded differently: some stated that they find themselves autonomous only in topics or courses they are interested in, while other students clarified that they are not autonomous since they depend on their teachers. S9 stated, “No I am not autonomous I can’t figure out what or how to learn on my own”. While S3 said: “I am autonomous, I enjoy discovering new ways to learn and in most cases I look for easier ways than the teacher”. Moreover, S11 answered “I am not an autonomous learner I prefer learning and depending on the teacher” while S16 wrote, “I am autonomous, I always look at new ways to learn on my own.”

Regarding the third question (“what are your learning/ studying methods, techniques, strategies? What do you do to learn?”), 20% of the students used the internet sources to learn and reach information. S56 stated “watch videos and ask teachers for help and guidance and do some readings on topics I find difficult”. In addition, 80% of them stated that they take notes, brain storm and use the teachers’ presentations and resources to read and take extra information, some also prefer to go to the library. S12 noted that “I trust my own notes when studying”.

Concerning Question 4 (“what can teachers do to help students to become more autonomous?”), 25% of the students claimed that teachers should talk to them on the importance and value of autonomy and autonomous learning, S22 answered that “Instructors in our Department should plan workshops on how to become autonomous”. In addition, 37.5% of them stated that the teachers should use new

ways of teaching to help them become more autonomous, S4 suggested “Teachers should integrate the Internet in their teaching, for example YouTube and Facebook”. 37.5% thought that teachers should be open to change and be much flexible and stop using out dated strategies specially testing and assessment wise. S63 stated that “Teachers should not evaluate us based on a piece of paper, but rather on our skills, abilities and participation during the course”.

Regarding the last question (“Do you think the instructors in your department help you to develop autonomy?”), 42.9% of the students believed that the instructors help them to develop autonomy for example, S18 answered “My instructor always encourages me to make my own notes and depend on my own summaries when revising for an exam”. Whereas 57.1% thought that the instructors in their Department never promote or encourage autonomy or even help students become autonomous learners. To exemplify, S76 stated that “my professors never support the idea of self- study”. Also S10 stated that “My teacher never raised any issue regarding autonomous learning”.

Overall, nearly all the students defined learner autonomy differently but the majority agreed upon the idea that learner autonomy means being a responsible and independent learner and it means someone who can be fully responsible of their learning process. They also expressed whether they view themselves autonomous or not by stating that being autonomous depends highly on the course and on the teacher. And those who are not autonomous stated that when it comes to how and what to learn they prefer depending on their instructors. In addition the students listed some of their learning strategies, methods and techniques that they use in order to learn, Such as creating PowerPoint presentations, using the Internet and

some websites and teachers resources along with taking notes and brainstorming their own ideas. And regarding instructors roles, students stated that instructors in their Department should stop using out dated teaching methods and start to encourage independent work, become flexible and open to change.

Finally, Students also thought that teachers should start talking about the importance and value of autonomy and autonomous learning and the benefit they will encounter from this learning strategy. Since the majority of the students were not satisfied about their instructor’s part, learners mostly believed that their instructors do not provide them with opportunities to become independent learners

## 4.2 Instructor Questionnaire

The teacher questionnaire focused on investigating the instructors’ perceptions about learner autonomy in language teaching and learning along with their teaching practices in the Department of English at the University of Petra. The results obtained from the questionnaire are listed underneath four sub-titles below.

## 4.3 Language Learning and Teaching

In section two of the teacher questionnaire is the perceptions of eight instructors regarding learner autonomy and it contains 37 closed items. The results of section two can be seen in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Teachers’ Perceptions regarding Learner Autonomy in Language Teaching and Learning

Items	SA + A %	Unsure %	SD + D %	Mean
1 Language learners of all ages can develop learner autonomy.	8	0	0	5.0



<b>2</b>	Independent study in the library is an activity which develops learner autonomy.	8	0	0	5.0
<b>3</b>	Learner autonomy is promoted through regular opportunities for learners to complete tasks alone	8	0	0	5.0
<b>4</b>	Autonomy means that learners can make choices about how they learn.	8	0	0	5.0
<b>5</b>	Individuals who lack autonomy are not likely to be effective language learners.	2	4	2	3.25
<b>6</b>	Autonomy can develop most effectively through learning outside the classroom.	6	1	1	4.38
<b>7</b>	Involving learners in decisions about what to learn promotes learner autonomy.	7	1	0.0	4.75
<b>8</b>	Learner autonomy means learning without a teacher.	5	1	2	4.0
<b>9</b>	It is harder to promote learner autonomy with proficient language learners than it is with beginners.	5	0	3	3.88
<b>10</b>	It is possible to promote learner autonomy with both young language learners and with adults.	8	0	0	5.0

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<b>Items</b>	<b>SA + A</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>SD + D</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>11</b> Confident language learners are more likely to develop autonomy than those who lack confidence.	8	0	0	5.0
<b>12</b> Learner autonomy allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would	7	1	0	4.75
<b>13</b> Learner autonomy can be achieved by learners of all cultural backgrounds.	8	0	0	0
<b>14</b> Learner autonomy is promoted when learners have some choice in the kinds of activities they do.	8	0	0	5.0
<b>15</b> Learner autonomy cannot be promoted in teacher -centered classrooms.	3	1	2	4.0
<b>16</b> Learner autonomy is promoted through activities which give learners opportunities to learn from each other.	6	1	1	4.38
<b>17</b> Learner autonomy implies a rejection of traditional teacher-led ways of teaching.	5	0	3	3.88
<b>18</b> Learner autonomy cannot develop without the help of the teacher.	5	0	3	4.13
<b>19</b> Learner autonomy is promoted by activities that encourage learners to work together.	7	1	0	4.75
<b>20</b> Learner autonomy is only possible with adult learners.	0	1	7	2.14
<b>21</b> Learner autonomy is promoted by independent work in a self-access center.	6	2	0	4.5
<b>22</b> Learner autonomy is promoted when learners are free to decide how their learning will be assessed	3	3	2	3.5
<b>23</b> Learner autonomy is a concept which is not suited to non-Western learners.	2	0	6	2.75
<b>24</b> Learner autonomy requires the learner to be totally independent of the teacher.	0	2	6	2.25
<b>25</b> Co-operative group work activities support the development of learner autonomy.	8	0	0	5.0
<b>26</b> Promoting autonomy is easier with beginning language learners than with more proficient learners.	3	2	3	3.38
<b>27</b> Learner-centered classrooms provide ideal conditions for developing learner autonomy.	5	3	0	4.25
<b>28</b> Learning how to learn is key to developing learner autonomy	7	1	0	4.75

<b>29</b>	Learning to work alone is central to the development of learner autonomy.	6	0	2	4.25
<b>30</b>	Out-of-class tasks which require learners to use the internet promote learner autonomy.	8	0	0	5.0
<b>31</b>	The ability to monitor one's learning is central to learner autonomy.	7	1	0	4.75

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Items	SA + A	Unsure	SD + D	Mean
<b>32</b> Motivated language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than learners who are not motivated.	8	0	0	5.0
<b>33</b> The proficiency of a language learner does not affect their ability to develop autonomy.	3	3	2	3.5
<b>34</b> The teacher has an important role to play in supporting learner autonomy.	7	1	0	4.75
<b>35</b> Learner autonomy has a positive effect on success as language learner.	8	0	0	5.0
<b>37</b> To become autonomous, learners need to develop the ability to evaluate their own learning.	8	0	0	5.0

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The results reveal that a vast number of teachers had optimistic perceptions for learner autonomy since they strongly agreed or agreed with nearly all the statements in part two of the questionnaire

As it can be shown in Table 4.4, the 8 educators strongly agreed or agreed with item 1 (*Language learners of all ages can develop learner autonomy*), item 2 (*Independent study in the library is an activity which develops learner autonomy*), item 3 (*Learner autonomy is promoted through regular opportunities for learners to complete tasks alone*), item 4 (*Autonomy means that learners can make choices*

about how they learn), item 10 (*It is possible to promote learner autonomy with both young language learners and with adults*), item 11 (*Confident language learners are more likely to develop autonomy than those who lack confidence*), item 13 (*Learner autonomy can be achieved by learners of all cultural backgrounds*), item 14 (*Learner autonomy is promoted when learners have some choice in the kinds of activities they do*), item 25 (*Co-operative group work activities support the development of learner autonomy*), item 30 (*Out-of-class tasks which require learners to use the internet promote learner autonomy*), item 32 (*Motivated language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than learners who are not motivated*), item 35 (*Learner autonomy has a positive effect on success as a language learner*), and item 36 (*To become autonomous, learners need to develop the ability to evaluate their own learning*), with means 5.0 for all items. Furthermore, 7 out of 8 teachers strongly agreed or agreed with items 7, 12, 19, 28, 31, and 34 with mean 4.75. They thought that learner's involvement in decisions about their learning promotes autonomy, and learner autonomy allows learners to learn more effectively than they rather would. Instructors also, believed that activities that encourage group work promote autonomy, and if learners know how to learn and monitor their learning this can be a way to develop autonomy and lastly they still thought that the presence of the teacher is essential in supporting learner autonomy.

Additionally, six out of eight instructors expressed agreement (SA/A) with item 6 (*Autonomy can develop most effectively through learning outside the classroom*)

Item 16 (*Learner autonomy is promoted through activities which give learners opportunities to learn from each other*), item 21 (*Learner autonomy is promoted*

*by independent work in a self-access center*), and item 29 (*Learning to work alone is central to the development of learner autonomy*), with mean 4.5.

Concerning the appropriate age for students to be autonomous learners, most of the instructors indicated that learner autonomy can be promoted in all ages. For example, the eight instructors thought that *learner autonomy can be promoted with both young language learners and with adults* (item 10). Also, 7 out of 8 instructors believed that language learners of all ages can develop learner autonomy (item 1), and seven of the instructors expressed disagreement (SD/D) with the idea that (*learner autonomy is only possible with adult learners*) with (item 20) regarding the influence of culture on learners' ability to become autonomous, all instructors claimed that learner autonomy can be achieved by learners of all cultural backgrounds (item 13), and 6 out of the 8 instructors, strongly disagreed or disagreed with the idea that learner autonomy is a concept which is not suited to non-Western learners (item 23). Overall, most of the instructors had positive views about learner autonomy in language education context.

#### **4.3.1 Desirability and Feasibility of Learner Autonomy**

Section three in the instructor questionnaire attempted to find out about the instructors' perceptions regarding the desirability and feasibility side of learner autonomy in the English Department. The educators questioned to determine how desirable (i.e. ideally) they think learner autonomy is and how achievable or feasible they feel it is in the Department of English. This section consists of two parts: The first part dealt with decisions students might be involved in, and the

second part dealt with the abilities learners might have. The results of this section are given under two sub-headings below.

#### 4.2.2.1 Desirability of Learner Autonomy

The results concerning the desirability of learner autonomy in the Department of English as perceived by the instructors can be shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Desirability of Learner Autonomy

Items	Undesirable %	Slightly Desirable %	Quite Desirable %	Very Desirable %	
<b>Learners are involved in decisions about:</b>					
1	The objectives of a course.	1	1	5	1
2	The materials used.	0	4	4	0
3	The kinds of tasks and activities they do.	0	2	3	3
4	The topics discussed.	0	2	3	3
5	How learning is assessed.	2	0	4	2
6	The teaching methods used.	1	0	2	5
7	Classroom management.	1	3	3	1
8	The course content.	0	7	0	1
9	The choice of learning tasks.	0	2	5	1
10	The time and place of the lesson.	2	2	2	2
11	The pace of the lesson.	1	4	2	1
12	The homework tasks.	0	3	2	3

**Learners have the ability to:**

<b>13</b>	Identify their own needs	0	2	4	2
<b>14</b>	Identify their own strengths	0	3	3	2
<b>15</b>	Identify their own weaknesses	0	2	3	3
<b>16</b>	Monitor their progress	0	0	5	3
<b>17</b>	Evaluate their own learning	0	1	0	7
<b>18</b>	Learn co-operatively	0	0	0	8
<b>19</b>	Learn independently	0	0	5	3
<b>20</b>	Assess themselves, rather than be tested	3	3	2	0
<b>21</b>	Find out learning procedures by themselves	0	0	3	5

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The above findings indicate most of the educators expressed optimistic attitudes on engaging novices in the decision process as the majority of them carefully chose Quite Desirable or Very Desirable as proper answers. For instance, 7 out of 8 instructors thought that it is quite desirable or very desirable to involve learners in decisions about the teaching methods used and the choice of learning tasks.

In addition, (6 out of 8) instructors said that involving learners in decisions about The objectives of a course, The topics discussed, How learning is assessed, and the materials used is quite desirable or very desirable. Likewise, (5 out of 8) educators thought that learners should take part in making decisions about the homework tasks.



Similarly, when it comes to the learners' abilities, the majority of the educators expressed optimistic perceptions about learners' abilities. For instance, the 8 instructor supposed that the learners are able to monitor their progress, learn co-operatively, learn independently and find out learning procedures by themselves. Moreover, 7 out of 8 educators thought that it is quite desirable or very desirable that learners have ability to evaluate their own learning. furthermore, educators selected quite desirable or very desirable for the statement that states that learners have ability to Identify their own needs and Identify their own weaknesses (6 instructors) identify their own strengths (5 instructors) and Assess themselves, rather than be tested (2 instructors). On the other hand, relatively fewer educators thought that the learners are able to evaluate their own learning (1 instructor), and to Identify their own needs and Identify their own weaknesses (2 instructors).

To sum up, the results show that the majority of the educators felt it is *quite* or *very desirable* to make learners take part in deciding on matters related to their education. In general they supposed that the students own necessary abilities to perform tasks that promote autonomy.

### **Feasibility of Learner Autonomy**

The results concerning the educators' beliefs on the feasibility of learner autonomy in the Department of English at the University of Petra can be shown in Table 4.6 next page.

Table 4.6: Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Feasibility of Learner Autonomy

Items	Unfeasible	%	Slightly Feasible	Quite Feasible	Very Feasible	Feasible
<b>Learners are involved in decisions about:</b>						
1	The objectives of a course	5	0	3	0	
2	The materials used	6	0	0	2	
3	The kinds of tasks and activities they Do	0	2	4	2	
4	The topics discussed	1	3	1	3	
5	How learning is assessed	3	2	3	0	
6	The teaching methods used	0	1	3	4	
7	Classroom management	3	2	2	1	
8	The course content	4	3	1	0	
9	The choice of learning tasks	1	6	0	1	
10	The time and place of the lesson	4	3	1	0	
11	The pace of the lesson	0	6	1	1	
12	The homework tasks	0	3	2	3	
<b>Learners have the ability to:</b>						
13	Identify their own needs	1	3	2	2	
14	Identify their own strengths	1	4	2	1	
15	Identify their own weaknesses	2	2	2	2	
16	Monitor their progress	2	2	3	1	
17	Evaluate their own learning	2	2	1	3	
18	Learn co-operatively	0	2	1	5	

<b>19</b>	Learn independently	1	6	1	0
<b>20</b>	Assess themselves rather than be tested	6	1	0	1
<b>21</b>	Find out Learning procedures by themselves	5	0	3	0

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Regarding the results in Table 4.6 above, the educators had different ideas regarding the decisions they want their learners to be involved in. While they selected *unfeasible or slightly feasible* for most of the items, they marked *quite feasible or very feasible* for others. For example, (7 out of 8 instructors) believed it is *quite feasible or very feasible* to get learners to decide about *the teaching methods used*. Furthermore, for decisions about the *kinds of tasks and activities they do* (6 instructors) thought that it is very feasible/quite feasible, however two of them thought that it is slightly feasible/ unfeasible.

On the other side, regarding the rest items, most of the educators chose *slightly feasible or unfeasible* as suitable responses. For instance, 7 educators thought that it is not feasible to engage learners in decisions about *the time and place of the lesson*. Also, found it not feasible to make learners get involved in *the materials used*, Also,7 of the educators found it not feasible to involve learners in decisions about the course content.

In relation to the learners' abilities in the Department of English, most of the educators' assumed that the learners in the Department of English do not have most of those capabilities as they marked *slightly feasible or unfeasible* in most of the items. For example, 8 of the educators thought that the novices do not or even

have very little ability to: *monitor their progress, learn co-operatively, learn independently and find out learning procedures by themselves* as they marked *slightly feasible or unfeasible*. Moreover, 7 of them thought that it is *quite feasible* or *very feasible* for learners to *evaluate their own learning*. In addition, 6 educators claimed that the learners in the English Department do not have the required ability (*slightly feasible or unfeasible*) to *identify their own needs, and assess themselves rather than be tested*.

In conclusion, the educators had different opinions regarding the decisions they want their learners to be involved in, and they supposed that their learners in the Department of English do not have the sufficient abilities to become independence learners.

#### **4.3.1 Learner Autonomy in the English Department at the University of Petra**

Section 4.2.2 contains of four open ended questions, in which the instructors were questioned to note their perceptions on learner autonomy in the Department of English at the University of Petra and more specifically to mention their teaching practices in relation to learner autonomy.

In response to the first open ended question (“Are your students autonomous?”), almost all the educators claimed that their learners are not autonomous; five of them said that only a few of their students are autonomous, while the rest are not. For instance, T8 stated that “No, they are not autonomous because of the higher education rules it is more teacher focused”. Similarly, T5 claimed “learners at our Department prefer to memorize and this is against autonomy” Generally,

educators did not view learners in the English Department to be independent learners the educators had to many perspectives about this problem. Educators said that the learners don't get the suitable chances that can pave the way for them to be autonomous learners, educators further claim that Jordanian learners are taught in a way that makes them always spoon fed and reliant by their educators as T4 stated "some of my students are, while others are not. This depends on the course". Similarly, T6 said "some of them are; however the majorities are highly dependent on what the teacher says". T1 answered " in some courses, I find a couple who are autonomous but the rest enjoy copying or recording my lectures.

Regarding the second question, ("Do you foster autonomy in your class? Why? / Why not?"), the 8 educators stated that they foster autonomy in their classes and supported this notion and provided different ideas and positive attitudes regarding autonomous learning for their students. For example, T5 said "Yes I do foster autonomy, since learning and teaching is interrelated. Students get engaged if their teachers think of them as independent learners with adequate intellectual and emotional capacities". Similarly T7, indicated that he tries to promote autonomy every time he has the opportunity to do so because autonomy helps for life-long learning and gives learners the chance to explore, discover, learn and search for themselves.

T8 stated "I do, because autonomy is an approach that focuses on the learner as a whole and on making students independent learners".

As regards the third question, ("Please list any teaching activities you do to encourage students to learn autonomously"), approximately all the participants

stated that they encourage their students to learn autonomously in their courses. And when they were asked to list some of their teaching strategies, they mentioned more than one way such as using problem-solving and role playing activities. Engaging their learners in group discussions, debates on topics they choose or find interesting. They even stated that they create PowerPoint Presentations.

Moreover, T7 said “reading books of their choice, reflecting on their own work and sometimes assessing their work based on a given criteria.”, T8 stated “having a debate on topics students find interesting”, “Along with peer review.” Lastly T2, indicated “The use of Presentations; for discussions among themselves as well as group discussions. Challenging problem-solving issues and carefully planned self-assessment of students written texts.”

Regarding the fourth question, (“Please list any learning activities you recommend to students to encourage them to learn autonomously”), three instructors advised their learners on reading more often while five instructors stated that the use of blended learning and engaging them in peer and group work , individual research and the use of portfolios, and reflective writing and radio streaming educational programs are all seen as effective ways to create and preserve an environment that provides opportunities for learners in the future. For instance, T2 said “Guide them to analyze their own translation product by probing them to reflect on their own ways of producing the text”. T5, indicated individual research along with collaborative research. T6, stated “activities that will make the learner effective and take responsibility, such as workshop groups, TV

documentaries, online learning and referring learners to radio streaming educational programs, and documentaries”.

To conclude, most of the instructors in the English Department of Petra University did not consider their learners as autonomous learners, they all mentioned so many ways to promote autonomy along with some teaching and learning activities that encourage autonomous education.

#### **4.4 Instructor Interviews**

Instructor interviews were done to obtain in depth data about the instructors’ perceptions regarding learner autonomy as a whole and their perceptions about learner autonomy in the Department of English at the University of Petra specifically. The interview consisted of two major parts: the first part was about learner autonomy in general, and the second part was associated with learner autonomy especially in the Department of English at the University of Petra. Three instructors in the Department of English agreed to take part in the interviews and each interview took around 15 to 30 mins.

##### **4.4.1 Teachers’ Perceptions about Learner Autonomy**

This part contains the answers of the first five questions in part 1 of the teacher interview.

The responses regarding the first question (“What does ‘autonomy’ mean to you?”) the instructors defined the notion in various interpretations. For example T3 stated that “ it is difficult to pin down autonomy to one single definition, but autonomy means the ability to think on your own or to have some sort of reflection on what you’re doing or what have you done”. T2, also explained:

As a learner- centered learning approach, the type of learning that gets us away or out from the traditional way of teaching. It also promotes a new effective attitude in the way students learn.

Similarly T1 agreed with T2 and defined autonomy as “ independent learning and a new approach or teaching methodology that is far away from the old traditional ways of teaching.”

About the second question, (“Who are autonomous learners? What are their characteristics?”), T3 stated that “autonomous learners are those who tend to be inquisitive; ask questions, probe on issues. They have the ability to anticipate and come up with new insightful ideas every time to share with their fellow peers and teachers even.” T2 on the other hand highlighted that “autonomous learners are not born autonomous, they are trained and they are the products of autonomous teaching and learning. They are independent learners and they have the skill and ability to try things out and they don’t limit themselves to the classroom environment or class activities. They can go beyond that”. T1 agreed with T2 and defined autonomous learners as independent learners and hard workers who always seek for new learning strategies of their own and participate in classes.

T3 stated that “characteristics of an autonomous learner are the ones who want to get rid of the classical and traditional way of teaching where they are fed with information more than being themselves an active role in the learning process”.

Concerning the third question (“What differences do you find between the autonomous and non-autonomous learners regarding their performance in learning?”) the three instructors claimed that autonomous learners can be



distinguished from those who are not autonomous they are the ones seen as active and effective learners. T1, stated “Autonomous learners have a positive attitude to look things out. While non-autonomous learners performance is characterized as being static products that don’t show anything than imitating and emulating what they have been exposed too.”

T4, adds

Autonomous learner’s performance are learners who show creativity and who always take the initiative. They would innovate and always add something to any task or activity they are given. While on the other hand, non-autonomous learners are not motivated to try new things out and always appear to stick to one way only in learning anything and in most cases it is mainly the teacher’s way, they also stick to being exam oriented.

Upon the fourth question (“Do you think that the students who are more autonomous are better L2 learners?”)T1 and T2, shared the same response by stating “Definitely yes they are better L2 learners.” However, T3 answered: “yes sometimes they are better L2 learners but L2 learners can be given the chance or opportunity or even the proper circumstances to be autonomous learners too.”

As for the last question in section one, (“Do you think that the students who are more autonomous will be better L2 teachers?”) 2 out of the 3 instructors stated that yes for sure they will be better L2 teachers. While T1 answered “it depends how the more autonomous learner turns to be when being an actual teacher with students you cannot judge or overgeneralize from now. Since a lot of autonomous learners who exceeded in their learning or school turned to fail as teachers.”

### **4.3.2 Learner Autonomy in the Department of English at the University of Petra.**

This section contains the responses of the seven questions to part two of the teacher interview. When asked the first question (“Do you think that the students in your Department are autonomous?”) Three of the instructors indicated that there are clear cases of autonomous students and there a very few number of them who can be looked at autonomous. And three of them stated that there is a blend of both some autonomous and some need to be given the nudge. For instance T3, answered

We can't over generalize them we have a small number of students who are, but we need to develop on their attitudes and add more to their skills and he stresses that it depends on the number of students you have.

T1 also claimed that “if teachers believe in autonomous learning then they will meet the students half way and students will act accordingly”.

Regarding the second question, (“To what extent do you promote learner autonomy in your teaching? If you do so, how do you do this? If you don't promote it, please explain why not.” ) T3 stated that “Yes I do promote autonomy in my lectures by engaging my students in reflecting on what they do, I encourage interactive learning and I ask them to come up with their own assessment of their own specific performance. T2 and T1 indicated that they promote autonomy by talking about the importance of being an independent learner by making their students do some individual research and sometimes cooperate with classmates in group presentations and discussions.

Responding to the third question, (“Based on your experience, how desirable (i.e. ideally) is it to promote learner autonomy in your Department?”), the three

instructors believed it is quite desirable. T1 stated “it is very much desirable. Most teachers are aware and believe in the notion of autonomy, and we tend to share ideas about how to move forwards towards autonomous teaching using technology also.” For instance T3 claimed that “it is quite desirable and important in the department of English to promote autonomy since students will become teachers in the near future. So we need to give them a wakeup call regarding autonomous learning in the first place and then teaching”.

As to the fourth question: (“Based on your experience, how feasible (i.e. realistically achievable) is it to promote learner autonomy in your Department?”) all of the instructors answered that it is achievable to promote autonomy in the Department of English. T3, also highlighted that “It is a long-ongoing process and not an easy one to achieve fully fledged autonomous learners. It is a collective endeavor activity. It depends on the teachers belief in this teaching strategy and in avoiding the product based approach.”T1, answered:

It is achievable but it depends on the students and how we want them to learn. Students are always ready to adapt and adopt to the new system of learning. But it needs more encouragement and motivation to make them react in a positive way and to stimulate them to act likewise, but it heavenly depends on the teacher and lecturer.

Regarding the fifth question, (“What role if any, do you feel the teacher has in promoting learner autonomy?”) T1 and T3 stated that teachers must have the passion first since they are in the heart of this process. They also believed that teachers should have a strong belief in their students, abilities, skills and talent. But also be

realistic the environment plays a huge role. T2 also added that “we should direct them indirectly and never give them any decisive comments.”

In response to the sixth question: (“What are the vital challenges that you face as a teacher at the Department of English when helping your students become more autonomous”? Please explain.” ) Three of the teachers answered that the students attitude towards accepting such teaching or learning methodology.T3, stated

It is the residue from the old ways of doing things, from old fashioned ways of teaching and the out –dated practices at school and the lack of technology integration in the teaching methodology and also the absence of the varieties in activities. Also, the instructions of the higher education on how we apply exams for example. Nevertheless, lecturers should be patient and persistent and avoid lecturing in the traditional sense.

In response to the last question, “What are your suggestions for more effective or better promotion of learner autonomy in the Department of English in the University of Petra?” T3 answered, “ we need to start team work and brainstorming among the teachers until they automatically adopt a unified system for interactive teaching and reflective feedback from students and peer review.” On the other hand, T1 stressed that “start right away even if we go to the extent of having workshops on how to apply autonomous learning. Encourage professors to be part of the teaching methodology even if the results in changing the way we teach or change the books, materials and changing the programs and adding on them.

T2 further agreed with T1 that “ we should have workshops that stress on the importance of autonomous learning and teaching and we should change the way we test students such as examination rules and so on etc.”

## **4 5 Summary**

Finally, chapter four has presented the findings gathered from the learner and instructor questionnaires, along with instructor interviews. Results show that both learners' and educators' shared optimistic beliefs about learner autonomy. Also, the two group of participants encouraged the involvement of students in the decision making process on their learning, generally educators believed that learners have the necessary abilities to develop autonomy. However, educators claimed that it is not achievable to make learners take part in most of the aspects regarding their learning for example, the time and place of the lesson. The materials used and the course content. Additionally, both the students' and the instructors' perceptions about learner autonomy were optimistic. But in terms of the feasible part of learner autonomy in their Department the students expressed different opinions from their instructors where they found it feasible to promote autonomy in their Department. Yet, their instructors felt it was not feasible. In the next chapter, the results will be explained in relation to some relevant literature.

## **Chapter 5**

### **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSION**

Chapter five is categorized into five main parts. Part 1 is associated with the discussion of the major findings, Part 2 discusses the conclusion of the present study, and Part 3 explains the pedagogical implications, part 4 focuses on the limitations of the study whereas, part 5 proposes some recommendations for further research.

#### **5.1 Discussion of the Results**

In this part the results and major findings are discussed by answering the research questions and referring to the related literature.

##### **5.1.1 Research Question 1: What are the Perceptions of the Teachers and the Students Regarding Learner Autonomy?**

The outcomes obtained from the student questionnaire uncover that a great majority of the students in the English Department had positive thoughts regarding learner autonomy in their Department. But although most of the students have positive insights towards learner autonomy, exceptionally some students still felt they were highly dependent on the teacher and viewed their teachers as the only resource figures to attain knowledge from. For example, item 1 “Students need the teacher to set learning goals for them” had one of the highest means (4.55) in a similar study (Ibrahim, 2018), the researcher claimed that “ although the great number of students had positive attitudes towards learner autonomy, surprinsgly still half of the students considered their teachers as authority figures in their classroom” (p.68). Likewise,

Farahi (2015) stated that “students expressed feelings of dependence on the teacher as the main source in the classroom” (p.69).

In this research, the learners were asked about their readiness for learner autonomy i.e (how desirable it is for them), specifically in their Department. The results clearly show that almost all the learners had the readiness or wish to take part in decisions and choices about aspects on their learning process. To illustrate, they desired to be involved in decisions concerning homework tasks, the kinds of activities and tasks they do, the place and time of the lesson, the topics discussed and the teaching methodologies used. Correspondingly, Ibrahim (2018) discovered that nearly all the students showed positivity in taking part in the decisions regarding their objectives in learning, the assessment, the time and place of their lesson and even the materials used.

Holec (1981) indicated that in order to promote autonomy it really means the encouragement you invest or put in your learners “to determine the objectives, to define the contents and progressions, to select methods and techniques to be used, to monitor the procedures of acquisition and to evaluate what has been acquired” (p.3).

Regarding the students’ abilities, huge majority of the students pointed out that they have the acquired or needed abilities to identify their strong, weak points, needs, and find out learning procedures by themselves and learn independently and cooperatively. Schunk, (2005) highlights that “The autonomous learner shows initiative regarding learning, and shares in monitoring progress and evaluating the extent to which learning is achieved” (p.130).

According to the results attained from the instructor questionnaire, the 8 instructors expressed positive attitudes for learner autonomy. Again all the instructors reached to an agreement that when it comes to fostering autonomy, learners who are motivated, independent, risk takers and confident have the potential to develop autonomy more than those who lack those characteristics. In a similar study conducted by Doğan and Mirici (2017), the researchers found out that learners who are known to be motivated and confident language learners, have a wider and easier opportunity to develop autonomy than those learners who lack confidence and motivation.

Furthermore, eight instructors had a strong belief that offering learners to make choices regarding their own learning and engaging them in activities outside the classroom are all seen efficient ways to promote autonomy. In a similar study by Brog and Albusaidi (2012), their findings indicated that teachers can help in promoting autonomy with their learners by giving them the freedom of choice on aspects that involve their learning process and by making learners work outside the classroom.

Concerning the appropriate age for learners to be autonomous the instructors thought that whatever your age is, you can always promote autonomy, as they strongly agreed with the item that states language learners of all ages can develop autonomy.

Regarding the influence of culture on learners' abilities to be autonomous students, the instructors thought that whatever cultural backgrounds students come from they can always develop autonomy. Moreover, 6 out of 8 instructors disagreed with the



impression that learner autonomy is a notion which is not suited to non- Western learners.

Upon the instructors' perceptions on the desirability of learner autonomy in the English Department at Petra University, all the instructors expressed positive perceptions about the learners' involvement in decision making about their learning. The instructors had optimistic feelings too, about learners' abilities to perform tasks. Also most of the instructors thought it is *quite desirable/very desirable* to involve learners in the choice of learning tasks, the methods used, homework assignments and objectives of their courses.

The instructors claimed that students in the Department of English had the needed abilities to foster autonomy. Similarly, in a study conducted by Dogan (2015) the instructors expressed the desire for involving learners in decision making and they were so positive about it. They also claimed that such chances can be a reason to promote autonomy or autonomous learning. Thus, both the learners and the instructors had the same positive perceptions regarding the desirability of learner autonomy, since both group of participants believed that it is either quite or very desirable to involve learners in any decision making procedure. In addition, the instructors and the students showed that students have ability to become autonomous.

To summarize, the instructors and the students shared positive perceptions about learner autonomy in the English Department at Petra University.

### **5.1.2 Research Question 2: What do the Teachers do to Help their Students Develop Learner Autonomy?**

Regarding the educators' practices to develop learner autonomy, the educators at the Department of English varied in their practices and opinions on the sort of decisions they want learners to be involved in. For example, most of the educators indicated that it is *unfeasible or slightly feasible* to make learners decide the objectives, the materials used, the content of their courses and time and place of their lectures. Likewise, Ibrahim (2018) found out in her study that it was slightly or not feasible to make students take part in decisions regarding the time and place of the lesson, the pace of the lesson and the materials used. On the other hand, the instructors thought that it is quite feasible or very feasible to get students to decide on the teaching methods used and on the choice of activities, tasks and homework they do. Concerning the perceptions the educators had about learners' abilities in the Department of English, nearly all educators assumed that the learners in their Department are not able to monitor their learning progress, learn co-operatively or independently and find out learning procedures by themselves as they marked *slightly feasible or unfeasible*.

However, educators explained that they constantly try to encourage autonomous learning in their classrooms by making their learners explore, discover, learn and search for themselves. They indicated that they use problem-solving and role playing activities as well as Engaging their learners in group discussions, debates on topics they choose or find interesting. They even create PowerPoint Presentations and slideshows for their learners. Also, they include challenging problem-solving issues and carefully planned self-assessment of students' written texts. In a similar

study, Balçıkanlı (2010) states that “In an autonomy-focused classroom, the teacher introduces a range of learning activities and tasks by taking the students’ needs and interests into consideration”. (P.93)

But the educators, on the other hand, presented some of the vital challenges they face as teachers when promoting autonomy, are challenges like the out –dated practices students were used to when they were at school and the lack of technology integration in the teaching methodology And most importantly, the instructions from the higher education on how instructors apply or prepare exams.

Finally, In the Department of English the instructors had the same opinions on the decisions they want their learners to be very much involved in, also they clearly stated learners in their Department still lack the abilities to foster autonomy. The instructors also shared some of the ways they use in order to promote autonomy or autonomous learning.

### **5.1.3 Research Question 3: What do the Students do to Develop Learner Autonomy?**

Regarding the students’ practices and roles to develop autonomy, the vast majority of the students indicated that learners are found to be frequently involved in the decision making process regarding their learning in the English Department at the University of Petra. They stated that they take part in decisions about the teaching methodologies used, the kinds of activities and tasks they do and the time and place of the lesson. On the other hand, comparatively fewer students thought that the English Department does not offer learners the opportunity to be part of any choice making process. And learners added that they would like to be involved in the

management of the class, the objectives, the homework tasks and the speed of the lesson.

Concerning the learners' abilities in the Department of English, the majority of learners, had a strong feeling that they have the necessary abilities which help in the development of autonomy. For example, they identify their weak and strong points learn independently and cooperatively and figure out their needs, monitor their progress. Likewise, in a study conducted by Khalil and Ali (2018) the students stated that to ensure the development of autonomy the students should be able to learn independently and know their abilities to perform any tasks. Chan (2011) further asserts that when students are fully aware of their roles and learning preferences and styles in any decision making or involvement process in their learning this shows that they are autonomous.

Moreover, the students were asked to list learning strategies, methods and techniques they use when learning to become autonomous, the students had so many ways to study, and very few students stated they used the internet sources to learn and reach information and go on occasional visits to the library. However, the great majority of the students preferred to take notes, brain storm and use the teachers' presentations and resources to read and comprehend extra information also, planning their time wisely and having an organized studying schedule and meeting with friends to study and share different ideas. Chan (2011) stresses that there should always be room for group work activities and discussions among students since it can inspire students to be motivated.

## 5.2 Conclusion

In this study, the results clearly demonstrate that the students and their instructors in the English Department at Petra University both had positive views regarding learner autonomy. The findings also show that involving learners in decision making process was found to be desirable by both groups of participants. The instructors also stated that the students have the required abilities to become autonomous.

Moreover, the instructors explicitly stated that it is *somewhat feasible* or *not feasible* to include their students in decisions about their education process, such as, in decisions about the place, and time of the lesson. Also, the instructors found it not possible to involve students in the decisions regarding materials used and the course content. Yet, the instructors found it quite feasible or very feasible to involve learners in the teaching methods used, and the decisions about the kinds of tasks and activities they do.

Moreover, the instructors stated different perceptions regarding the choices they want their learners to be involved in: they supposed that their learners in the English Department do not have the sufficient abilities to become autonomous learners. Whereas the students thought they do have those abilities.

In addition, all the instructors presented several ways in which they promote autonomous learning in their courses, such activities that make their learners explore, discover, learn and search for themselves. They indicated that they use problem-solving and role playing activities with their students, as well as engaging them in group discussions and debates, and making students work on individual and collaborative research. The most importantly, the instructors in the English

Department at Petra University started introducing 'Blended Learning' and radio streaming educational programs to their learners to improve their metacognitive skills and make them more autonomous.

On the whole, both the students' and the instructors' perceptions about learner autonomy were positive. However, regarding the feasibility of learner autonomy in their Department the students expressed different opinions from their instructors: while they found it feasible to promote autonomy in their Department, their instructors felt it was not feasible.

### **5.3 Implications of the Study**

The practical implications of the study initially, in order to ensure the development of learner autonomy in the Department of English at the University of Petra the students should have a word in decisions like the classroom management, homework assignments, and objectives of the course and how learning is assessed. Furthermore, regarding the teacher education program, the significance of autonomy and learner autonomy should be touched upon to ensure that the students are more aware of this learning strategy and its importance. Finally, students are advised to enroll in a workshop that focuses on autonomy in general and learner autonomy in particular.

### **5.4 Limitations of the Study**

The first limitation of the study is that the researcher did not have the opportunity to observe real classrooms in order to get a closer look on what students and their instructors do regarding learner autonomy. Another limitation is the absence of student interviews since the researcher was only able to collect data from the student and instructor questionnaires and instructor interview. In addition, the third

limitation was the number of instructors who agreed to take part in this study there were only eight, which can be seen as a small number for this study. And regarding the gender the number of male participants was low compared to the female participants so this can be seen as a limitation for the study.

### **5.5 Recommendations for Further Research**

One of the limitations of the study was that the researcher could not observe real classrooms; so for future studies it is advised that researchers get the opportunity to go into real classrooms for observation. Also the researcher did not interview students so it is recommended to add another data collection instrument such as student interviews. Other researchers can repeat the same steps of the current study but include postgraduate students in addition to undergraduate ones to make their participants sample larger, and try to get more instructors to participate in the study in order to get more generalizable perceptions. Finally, providing a training program for the instructors on the importance of autonomy to them and most importantly to their learners.

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## **APPENDICIES**

## Appendix A: Permission Letter from University of Petra

**University of Petra**  
Faculty of Arts & Sciences  
Department of English

  
جامعة البترا

  
جامعة البترا - خمسة وعشرون عاماً  
University of Petra Anniversary  
كلية الآداب والعلوم  
قسم اللغة الإنجليزية

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Dear Prof Shibliyev, Chair,

Ms. Mais Tarawneh is most welcome to gather the necessary information she might need for her quite promising study on our campus. I wish her all success in her research endeavor.


Sincerely yours,  
Prof. Omar Atari,  
Department of English Chair

  
July 15, 2018



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هاتف : ٥٧١٥٥٣ - ٥٧١٥٥٦ - ٥٧١٥٨١ - فاكس: ٥٧١٥٥٧ - ٥٧١٥٥٨ - ٥٧١٥٥٩ - ص.ب ٩٦١٣٤٣ - عمان - الأردن  
Tel: 5715553 - 5715546 - 5715981 - FAX: 00962-6-5715570 - P.O. Box 961343- Amman-Jordan

  
A.D 

## Appendix B: Student Questionnaire

### Student Questionnaire

#### Section 1: Background Information

Please mark (X) as appropriate.

Your:

1. Gender:  Male  Female
2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Nationality:  Jordanian Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify)
4. Native language:  Arabic  English Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify)
5. Year of study:  1<sup>st</sup> Year  2<sup>nd</sup> Year  3<sup>rd</sup> Year  4<sup>th</sup> Year

#### Section 2: Your Perceptions of Learner Autonomy

You are given some statements about learner autonomy in language learning and teaching below. Please give your opinion about these statements by ticking ONE option for each.

5- Strongly Agree (SA), 4- Agree (A), 3- Neutral (N), 2- Disagree (D), and 1- Strongly Disagree (SD).

		5	4	3	2	1
		SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	Students need the teacher to set learning goals for them.					
2.	Students should choose their own materials for English courses.					
3.	Students enjoy tasks where they can learn on their own.					
4.	Students should note their strengths and weaknesses in learning English and try to improve them.					
5.	Students should make decisions and set goals of their learning.					
6.	Students should practice English outside the class such as: record their own voice; speak to other people in English.					
7.	Students should make notes of their lessons.					
8.	Students should use the Internet/ computers to study English.					



		5	4	3	2	1
		SA	A	N	D	SD
9.	Students need the teacher to stimulate their interests in learning.					
10.	Students should take risks in learning the English language.					
11.	Besides the contents of the course, students should read extra materials in advance.					
12.	When students make progress in learning, they should reward themselves such as: buy new things, celebrate parties, etc.					
13.	Students should plan their time while learning English.					
14.	Students should make preview before the class.					
15.	Students should use library to improve their English.					
16.	The role of the teacher is to make students work hard.					
17.	It's the teacher's responsibility to create opportunities for students to practice.					
18.	Language learning involves a lot of self-study.					
19.	Independent study in the library is an activity which develops learner autonomy.					
20.	Teachers should choose activities for students to learn English.					
21.	Teachers should engage students in group work activities in which they work towards common goals.					
22.	Learner autonomy is promoted through regular opportunities for learners to complete tasks alone.					
23.	Teachers should let students find their own mistakes.					
24.	Teachers should help students make progress outside class.					
25.	The teacher is an authority figure in the classroom.					
26.	A lot of language learning can be done without a teacher.					
27.	Teachers should give opportunities to decide on how to learn.					
28.	Knowledge is something to be 'transmitted' by teachers rather than 'discovered' by learners themselves.					

**Section 3: Your readiness for Learner Autonomy.**

Please read each of the following statements and mark ( X ) as appropriate for YOU.

<b>I <u>want</u> to be involved in decisions about:</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
The objectives of a course.					
The materials used.					
The kinds of tasks and activities I do.					
The topics discussed .					
How learning is assessed.					
The teaching methods used.					
Classroom management.					
The course content.					
The choice of learning tasks.					
The time and place of the lesson.					
The speed of the lesson.					
The homework tasks.					

<b>I <u>have</u> the ability to:</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
Identify my own needs.					
Identify my own strengths.					
Identify my own weaknesses.					
Monitor my progress.					
Evaluate my own learning.					
Learn co-operatively.					
Learn independently.					
Assess myself, rather than be tested.					
Find out learning procedures by myself.					

**Section 4: Learner Autonomy in the Department of English at the University of Petra**

Please read each of the following statements and mark (X) as appropriate to indicate how feasible (i.e. realistically achievable) they are for **you** in the **Department of English at the University of Petra**

<b>In my Department, students are involved in decisions about:</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
The objectives of a course					
The materials used					
The kinds of tasks and activities they do					
The topics discussed					
How learning is assessed					
The teaching methods used					
Classroom management					
The course content					
The choice of learning tasks					
The time and place of the lesson					
The speed of the lesson					
The homework tasks					

<b>In my Department, students have the ability to:</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
Identify their own needs					
Identify their own strengths					
Identify their own weaknesses					
Monitor their progress					
Evaluate their own learning					
Learn co-operatively (together)					
Learn independently					
Assess themselves, rather than be tested					
Find out learning procedures by themselves					

**Section 5: Your perceptions and experiences of learner Autonomy**

Please answer the following questions to express your perceptions of learner autonomy, and comment more specifically on your learning experience in the English Department at the University of Petra. (UOP)

1. What does 'learner autonomy' mean to you?

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2. Are you an autonomous learner? Why or why not?

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3. What are your learning/ studying methods, techniques, strategies? What do you do to learn?

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4. What can teachers do to help students to become more autonomous?

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5. Do you think the instructors in your Department help you to develop autonomy? (Please explain your answer)

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**End of the questionnaire**

Thank you for your cooperation.

## Appendix C: Teacher Questionnaire

### Teacher Questionnaire

#### Section 1: Background Information

Please mark (X) as appropriate.

Your:

1. Gender:  Male  Female
2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Nationality:  Jordanian Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify)
4. Native language:  Arabic  English Other \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)
5. Years of teaching experience in total : \_\_\_\_\_
6. Years of teaching at the University of Petra: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Academic Qualification:  BA in \_\_\_\_\_  MA in \_\_\_\_\_  PhD in \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section 2: Learner Autonomy

You are given some statements about learner autonomy in language learning and teaching below. Please give your opinion about these statements by ticking **ONE** option for each.

**5- Strongly agree (SA), 4- Agree (A), 3- Not sure (NS), 2- Disagree (D), 1- Strongly disagree (SD).**

		5	4	3	2	1
		SA	A	NS	D	SD
1.	Language learners of all ages can develop learner autonomy.					
2.	Independent study in the library is an activity which develops learner autonomy.					
3.	Learner autonomy is promoted through regular opportunities for learners to complete tasks alone					
4.	Autonomy means that learners can make choices about how they learn.					
5.	Individuals who lack autonomy are not likely to be effective language learners.					
6.	Autonomy can develop most effectively through learning outside the classroom.					

		5	4	3	2	1
		SA	A	NS	D	SD
7.	Involving learners in decisions about what to learn promotes learner autonomy.					
8.	Learner autonomy means learning without a teacher.					
9.	It is harder to promote learner autonomy with proficient language learners than it is with beginners.					
10.	It is possible to promote learner autonomy with both young language learners and with adults.					
11.	Confident language learners are more likely to develop autonomy than those who lack confidence.					
12.	Learner autonomy allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would					
13.	Learner autonomy can be achieved by learners of all cultural backgrounds.					
14.	Learner autonomy is promoted when learners have some choice in the kinds of activities they do.					
15.	Learner autonomy cannot be promoted in teacher - centered classrooms.					
16.	Learner autonomy is promoted through activities which give learners opportunities to learn from each other.					
17.	Learner autonomy implies a rejection of traditional teacher-led ways of teaching.					
18.	Learner autonomy cannot develop without the help of the teacher.					
19.	Learner autonomy is promoted by activities that encourage learners to work together.					
20.	Learner autonomy is only possible with adult learners.					
21.	Learner autonomy is promoted by independent work in a self-access center.					
22.	Learner autonomy is promoted when learners are free to decide how their learning will be assessed					
23.	Learner autonomy is a concept which is not suited to non-Western learners.					
24.	Learner autonomy requires the learner to be totally independent of the teacher.					
25.	Co-operative group work activities support the development of learner autonomy.					
26.	Promoting autonomy is easier with beginning language learners than with more proficient learners.					

		5	4	3	2	1
		SA	A	NS	D	SD
28.	Learner-centered classrooms provide ideal conditions for developing learner autonomy.					
29.	Learning how to learn is key to developing learner autonomy					
30.	Learning to work alone is central to the development of learner autonomy.					
31.	Out-of-class tasks which require learners to use the internet promote learner autonomy.					
32.	The ability to monitor one's learning is central to learner autonomy.					
33.	Motivated language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than learners who are not motivated.					
34.	The proficiency of a language learner does not affect their ability to develop autonomy.					
35.	The teacher has an important role to play in supporting learner autonomy.					
36.	Learner autonomy has a positive effect on success as a language learner.					
37.	To become autonomous, learners need to develop the ability to evaluate their own learning.					

### Section 3: Desirability and Feasibility of Learner Autonomy

Below there are two sets of statements. The first gives examples of decisions **LEARNERS** might be involved in; the second lists abilities that learners might have. For each statement:

- First say how **desirable** (i.e. ideally), you feel it is.
- Then say how **feasible** (i.e. realistically achievable) you think it is **for the learners you currently teach in the Department of English**.

You should mark ( X ) **TWO** boxes for each statement – one for **desirability** and one for **feasibility**.

	Desirability				Feasibility			
	Undesirable	Slightly desirable	Quite desirable	Very desirable	Unfeasible	Slightly feasible	Quite feasible	Very feasible
<b>Learners are involved in decisions about:</b>								
The objectives of a course.								
The materials used								
The kinds of tasks and activities they do								
The topics discussed								
How learning is assessed								
The teaching methods used								
Classroom management								
The course content								
The choice of learning tasks								
The time and place of the lesson								
The pace of the lesson								
The homework tasks								
<b>Learners have the ability to:</b>								
Identify their own needs								
Identify their own strengths								
Identify their own weaknesses								
Monitor their progress								
Evaluate their own learning								
Learn co-operatively								
Learn independently								
Assess themselves, rather than be tested								
Find out learning procedures by themselves								



**Section 4: Learner autonomy in the Department of English at the University of Petra**

In this section you are given two open-ended questions and asked to comment more specifically on your teaching at the Department of English at the University of Petra. Please answer the following questions by giving specific examples.

1. Are your students autonomous?

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.....  
.....  
.....

2. Do you foster autonomy in your classes? Why/ why not?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

3. Please list any teaching activities you do to encourage students to learn autonomously.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

4. Please list any learning activities you recommend to students to encourage them to learn autonomously.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**End of the questionnaire**

Thank you for filling in the questionnaire

## Appendix D: Teachers Interview

### Teacher Interview Questions

#### Section 1: Learner Autonomy.

1. What does 'autonomy' mean to you?
2. Who are autonomous learners? What are their characteristics?
3. What differences do you find between the autonomous and non-autonomous learners regarding their performance in learning?
4. Do you think that the students who are more autonomous are better L2 learners?
5. Do you think that the students who are more autonomous will be better L2 teachers?

#### Section 2: Learner Autonomy in the Department of English at the University of Petra.

1. Do you think that the students in your Department are autonomous? Please explain.
2. To what extent do you promote learner autonomy in your teaching? If you do so, how do you do this? If you don't promote it, please explain why not.
3. Based on your experience, how **desirable (i.e. ideally)** is it to promote learner autonomy in your Department?
4. Based on your experience, how **feasible (i.e. realistically achievable)** is it to promote learner autonomy in your Department?
5. What role if any, do you feel the teacher has in promoting learner autonomy?
6. What are the vital challenges that you face as a teacher at the Department of English when helping your students become more autonomous? Please explain.
7. What are your suggestions for more effective or better promotion of learner autonomy in the Department of English in the University of Petra?

#### End of Interview

Thank you for your Cooperation.

## Appendix E: Students Consent Form

### Informed Consent Form for Students

**Dear Students,**

As part of my MA studies, I am currently conducting my thesis on learner autonomy, entitled 'Perceptions and Practices of Learner Autonomy in the Department of English at the University of Petra.' This questionnaire aims to investigate your perceptions and practices regarding learner autonomy in language learning and teaching. Please express your opinion sincerely when responding to the questionnaire. Your identity and individual responses will be kept confidential and will be used only for research purposes, and please be informed that you can withdraw from the study at any time.

Thank you for your cooperation.

**Mais Tarawneh**

MA student

Email: [maysaltarawneh@gmail.com](mailto:maysaltarawneh@gmail.com)

Department of Foreign Language Education

Faculty of Education

Eastern Mediterranean University

**Asst. Prof. Dr. Fatoş Erozan**

MA Thesis supervisor

Email: [fatos.erozan@emu.edu.tr](mailto:fatos.erozan@emu.edu.tr)

Department of Foreign Language Education

Faculty of Education

Eastern Mediterranean University

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### CONSENT FORM

I have read and understood the purpose of this study in general and that of the questionnaire specifically, as well as how my responses will be used.

Therefore, I agree to participate in this study by responding to this questionnaire.

Name- Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F: Teachers Consent Form

### Informed consent form for Teachers

#### Teacher Questionnaire

**Dear Teachers,**

As part of my MA studies, I am currently conducting my thesis on learner autonomy, entitled 'Perceptions and Practices of Learner Autonomy in the Department of English at the University of Petra.' This questionnaire aims to investigate your perceptions and practices regarding learner autonomy in language learning and teaching. Please express your opinion sincerely when responding to the questionnaire. Your identity and individual responses will be kept confidential and will be used only for research purposes, and please be informed that you can withdraw from the study at any time.

Thank you for your cooperation.

**Mais Tarawneh**

MA student  
Email:maysaltarawneh@gmail.com

Department of Foreign Language Education

Faculty of Education

Eastern Mediterranean University

**Asst. Prof. Dr. Fatoş Erozan**

MA Thesis supervisor  
Email: fatos.erozan@emu.edu.tr

Department of Foreign Language Education

Faculty of Education

Eastern Mediterranean University

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#### CONSENT FORM

I have read and understood the purpose of this study in general and that of the questionnaire specifically, as well as how my responses will be used.

Therefore, I agree to participate in this study by responding to this questionnaire.

Name- Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G: Teachers Interview Consent Form

### Informed Consent Form

**Dear Teachers,**

As part of my MA studies, I am currently conducting my thesis on learner autonomy, entitled 'Perceptions and Practices of Learner Autonomy in the Department of English at the University of Petra.' This interview aims to investigate your perceptions and practices regarding learner autonomy in language learning and teaching. Please express your opinion sincerely when responding to the interview questions which will be audio- recorded. Your identity and individual responses will be kept confidential and will be used only for research purposes, and please be informed that you can withdraw from the study at any time.

Thank you for your cooperation.

**Mais Tarawneh**

MA student

Email:maysaltarawneh@gmail.com

Department of Foreign Language Education

Faculty of Education

Eastern Mediterranean University

**Asst. Prof. Dr. Fatoş Erozan**

MA Thesis supervisor

Email: fatos.erozan@emu.edu.tr

Department of Foreign Language Education

Faculty of Education

Eastern Mediterranean University

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### CONSENT FORM

I have read and understood the purpose of this study in general and that of the interview specifically which will be audio-recorded , as well as how my responses will be used.

Therefore, I agree to participate in this study by responding to this interview.

Name- Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_