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Effects of Teachers' Beliefs about Learners' Autonomy on their Practices in EFL Classrooms

Case study: EFL Teachers at 8 Mai 1945 University, Guelma.

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture

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Dedication

To my parents and all my family members.

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Abstract

Moving from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness, the beliefs and practices of teachers are affected. Learner autonomy is a major trend that teachers attempt to implement in their learners. The present research explores the effects of teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy on their practices in EFL classrooms. To meet this purpose, a single-method approach has been conducted through a questionnaire administered to ten EFL teachers at Guelma University. It is hypothesized that EFL teachers believe that learner autonomy is a must-promote capacity among students, and that their beliefs are assumed to encourage teachers opt for certain practices in order to help their learners be more autonomous. Data are drawn through a quantitative method. The findings of this study reveal that teachers' beliefs have an immense effect on their practices in EFL classrooms. Teachers share a positive view towards learner autonomy and attempt to demonstrate that in the classroom despite the challenges they face.

Keywords: Learner Autonomy, Teachers' Beliefs, Teachers' Practices, EFL Classroom

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Background

Among a large literature on learner autonomy (LA) in language teaching and learning, there have been a research study conducted by Rosalba (2006) which aimed to analyze what is involved in teacher autonomy and the importance of understanding, developing and experiencing autonomy as teachers to be able to guide learners in the development of autonomous behaviours to make them life-long learning individuals and ready to face the challenges of modern-life to continue learning beyond formal education.

Another work made by Al-Saadi (2011) who tried to propose a framework for a gradual handover of some of the roles traditionally held by teachers to the learners. He emphasized the role of the teacher in helping learners feeding themselves and minimizing their over-reliance on the teacher. Furthermore, Al Asmari (2013), in a Saudi Arabian context, focused on promoting teachers' perceptions on LA in English language learning at the university level. He deposited that learner training is an important way of helping learners develop their responsibility for their own learning to become autonomous and motivated.

Statement of the Problem

LA is an essential skill for the teaching / learning process. As noticed, most teachers at Guelma University complain about learners' underachievement in learning English subject, their dependence on teachers and low self-esteem. LA has always been a major concern for researchers. In this respect, attention should be paid to teachers' beliefs about LA to check whether they can positively or negatively affect teachers' practices, which can be a reason for the hindrance or elevation of LA.

Significance of the Study

Several previous works tackled LA in relation to various teaching conditions and in different perspectives. Yet, there was no much literature on the link between teachers' views on their practices and LA. That is, the beliefs and practices of teachers were not highlighted in this area. However, the present study is different from many other studies. It tends to specify investigation on the potential relevance of teachers' beliefs and practices in the context of autonomous learning particularly in tertiary levels. Teachers' perspectives in this area were rarely tackled. For that, this work is assumed to be significant in terms of exploring Algerian EFL teachers' views on their practices and in terms of context as well.

Basically, the potential benefits of this project will be to make Algerian university teachers aware of the notion of autonomous learning and to find out the challenges that teachers may face when helping their learners to become more autonomous. Additionally, this study will bring some solutions for teachers helping them to change their teaching practices to better achieve an autonomous class and it will provide them with effective useful strategies to enable their learners work independently and get them used to rely on themselves.

Objectives of the Study

This research aims at investigating teachers' beliefs about LA in order to ascertain their impact on teachers' practices. It also attempts to reveal the challenges that EFL teachers encounter when implementing autonomy in the classrooms.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The researcher raises the following questions

1. What are teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy in EFL classrooms?

2. To what extent do these beliefs affect their practices in the classroom?

It is hypothesized that:

1. EFL teachers believe that learner autonomy is a must-promote capacity among students.

2. Their beliefs are assumed to encourage teachers opt for certain practices in order to help their learners be more autonomous.

Research Methodology

To meet the purpose of the study, a single-method approach will be conducted through the use of a questionnaire. The questionnaire is to be administered to ten EFL teachers at Guelma University. Data will be drawn through quantitative analysis.

Structure of the Study

The study contains three chapters. The first chapter presents a theoretical background on concept of learner autonomy. The second chapter deals with teachers' beliefs and practices in the classroom. The last chapter deals with the research design where details about the participants and the research instrument are presented. It also provides the analysis of data, discussions of the findings and recommendations.

Chapter One: Learner Autonomy

Introduction

Nowadays, English language teaching and learning has become a very interesting issue worldwide, especially since English has a great importance and status in the educational setting. Its significance and relevance empower it to move from one direction to another. English teaching and learning have shifted from traditional to modern; in term of methods, approaches and way of teaching. These changes in the teaching learning process, from teacher-centered to learner-centered approaches led to the extension of autonomy in EFL classroom settings.

The first chapter attempts to introduce the notion of autonomy in EFL classrooms. Also, it tackles a definition of the term "Learner Autonomy" (LA) and its characteristics and importance in EFL context. Also, it includes the reasons behind enhancing LA and the ways that lead to its improvement in EFL educational settings.

1. **Defining the learning process**

The learning process is considered as a crucial item in education; it plays a significant importance in mastering and developing new skills and methodologies. To start, learning is defined by Crow (1983,p.1478) as the "acquisition of knowledge, habits and attitudes. It involves new ways of doing things in order to overcome obstacles or to adjust to situations. It enables the person to satisfy interest to attain goals". In other words, learning is an essential process for individual improvements and attitudes. Through the learning process, students may make decisions to overcome their learning issues and obstacles. Also, they can reach their objectives and goals.

Another definition is given to the learning process by Givry (2003), who claims that learning intends to "express an idea" or a conception. According to him, learning enables

students to express their ideas, thoughts and knowledge, then s/he creates a connection between the abstracts thoughts and improve them to concrete ideas and conceptions. Thus, the learning process is generally linked with the educational environment. In addition, Saljo (1976) maintains that the learning process is not only the skill of reproductive ancient information; but it is also about making new meaning and constructive ideas and conceptions. He spots that learning has a great significance for individuals' development and environment change; by which, it is considered as an active and attractive process more than teaching.

Therefore, Vygotsky (1991,p.79) claims that "learning as a matter of supported performance and emphasizes the social-interactive dimensions of the learning process". Learning is significant for achieving academic purposes. Thus, as long as the learning environment is healthy and comfortable, students will feel motivated and be encouraged to learn and engaged in different tasks and activities. (Najeeb, 2013)

1.1 Learning Strategies and Styles

The notion learning strategies is generally referred to as individual differences in capacities and ways of learning. Learning strategies are considered as an effectual state that may enable learners to acquire, grasp and understand new knowledge in the target language. Further, Cohen (1998, p.4) views language leaning strategies as "those processes which are consciously selected by learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning or use of a second or foreign language, through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about that language". That is to say, these strategies are followed by the individual to improve his/her learning process, and make it easier and more effective while learning a foreign language. Learning strategies are useful in enhancing the learning process; by which they require learners to identify their flaws and problems and develop their

linguistic and communicative capacities, as well enrich their cognitive abilities. (As cited in Shi, 2017)

Thus, Oxford (1990) that defines learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-direct, more effective and more transferable to new situations" (p.8). Moreover, these strategies facilitate the learning process and make it easy and practical. The provide learners with solutions and ways that may overcome their obstacles and difficulties while learning. Learning strategies also enable students to improve their understandings and conception. Chamot and Rubin (1994) declared that a good language learner "cannot be described in terms of a single set of strategies but rather through the ability to understand and develop a personal set of effective strategies." (p.772)

Another item in learning, which is called, "learning styles", may impact how students learn and grasp knowledge. Learning styles differ from a learner to another; typically, it is reflected to individuals' differences. To start with, Lee (2005) views learning styles "as habitual patterns in how a person learns or in how a person prefers to learn. The manner in which people think, learn, and process information is often influenced by their attitudes, feelings, and preferences" (p.294). This is to say, learning styles indicate how the learner behaves and interacts with others. They also have a significant role in the learning process; by which it assists learners to achieve their goals and success. Through learning styles, learners will be able to discover their points of strengths / weaknesses and control themselves.

1.2 Stages of Learning

Scholars and researchers agree that the learning process passes through stages that may simplify it. These stages are generally related to learning strategies; each time the student learns and experiences new skills and competencies. Fitts (1964) proposed three phases for

the learning process; cognitive, associative and autonomous. First, the cognitive stage addresses new learners or learners with low-abilities; it refers to the prior knowledge and understanding and how learners process the information that they receive. In this stage, the learners should be provided with essentially knowledge and guidance that enable them to create their own cognitive realization. Then, the associative phase -also called the motor stage- helps students learn how to perform their skills, and then they master new skills and integrate them into an action. The last stage is known as the autonomous phase; by which good and bad outcomes can be performed by the learner. It comes after much time and practice and empowers learners to make automatic actions and reactions.

1.3 Motivation in learning

Motivation is a crucial concept in education especially in the learning process; it is considered as an influential factor. Broussard and Garrison (2004) defined motivation as "the attribute that moves us to do or not to do something" (p.106). In other perspective, motivation is a psychological factor that is referred to humans as a complex nature and that offer them the ability to do things. Another definition is given by Stipek (2002), who claims "motivation for learning is a particular kind of motivation that is concerned with the goals, activities, and behaviors involved in acquiring skills, knowledge, or competence" (p.310). Motivation is important for learners because it provide them with the essential help and guidance while learning.

Motivation is related to different factors that characterize the individual such as age, gender, personality, etc. and it is demonstrated by specific academic goals in learning. Motivation has two types: intrinsic and extrinsic. In the opinion of Deci and Ryan (1980), intrinsic motivation is viewed as an approach assumes that people have a natural tendency to

seek experiences that increase their competence, elicit curiosity, and promote autonomy (p.42).

For more explanation, intrinsic motivation refers to learners' desire and wants to obtain progress and success. It aims to improve humans' competences and experiences. On the other hand, Lee (2005) claims that extrinsic motivation is "when students engage in learning activities without the promise of rewards or the threat of punishment" (pp.331-332). Extrinsic motivation is related to educational psychology and learning advancement; it permits students to accomplish and engage in tasks and activities in the classroom.

1.4 The learner-centered Approach

The learner-centered approach has been developed over the last century, and it is reflected on how the relation between teacher and students is established and how the classroom is structured. Students-centered approach is viewed an active learning condition where learners are problem solvers, question answerers and generators. Indeed, in this type of class, the learners discuss, explain, debate, or brainstorm during class and learn in groups. (Blumberg, 2004). In other words, the learning process has been completely changed from students as passive learners to active learners. Another perspective is given by Blumberg (2004), who spots that learner-centered instructions tend to be consuming the teacher focus. Also, it seems to empower learners and thus take instructors out of their critical role. In this approach, learners are the core of the learning process where they focus on solving the issues that face them.

1.4.1   Characteristics of learner-centered Approach

Learner-centered approach is characterized by various qualities. To start with, it makes the students engage in the learning process; by which they begin doing efforts and working

hard to achieve their academic objectives. Then, it encourages learners to think about what they are learning and the way they are learning. That is to say, learners start reflecting on the challenges that encounter them and try to overcome the problems that meet them. Thus, learner-centered approach motivates students to develop themselves and make decisions. By the help of the teacher, students will be able to learn from their mistakes and discover new steps and strategies in learning. (As cited in Azadovna, 2020)

2. Learner Autonomy

The term "Autonomy" is rooted from the Greek words *autos* 'self' and *nomos* 'law' or 'rule' ,thus individual's autonomy refers to one's capacity to govern themselves 'self-rule' (Sneddon, 2013). In educational settings, autonomy has been introduced differently by scholars. Little (1997, p.35) defines autonomy as "the idea of autonomy is fundamental to liberal philosophies of education, which see the central goal of schooling as the development of independent minds and hence of capacity for independent action". In other words, learner autonomy is a crucial concept in educational setting; which refers to individuals' capacity to deal with their learning.

Recent studies in the field of education are increasingly focusing on learner-centered orientation in language education by integrating various approaches and trends (Vieira, 1999). New approaches have emerged recently to improve the quality of teaching as to produce independent educational systems. These systems regulate an acceptance of a metaphor of the individual as a producer, not a passive consumer of knowledge and the learning process (Holec, 1981).

In addition, there is an increasing tendency towards turning education into a process of empowerment, where the goal of personal growth and self-regulation are integrated within educational purposes. Autonomous learning takes place in modern methods, in which teachers

and learners are supposed to foster education system towards pedagogy for autonomy in the EFL classroom.

This common ideological stance highlights the capacity of an individual's goal for independent learning at the levels of principles and facilitating conditions for action, as well as on the definition of pedagogical roles in the classroom. In the classroom, autonomy may refer to the teacher, the system of education or the learners themselves leading to new and often complex conceptualizations of the role of autonomy in language teaching and learning. In this study, the focus mainly lends itself on LA as it is the core of a successful teaching-learning process and on how LA is perceived by teachers. (Wright, 2005)

Moreover, the notion LA is associated to self-instruction and self-controlled learning. It also indicated the individual capacity to use their knowledge and skill in personal, social and educational context. Trebbi (2006) highlights that LA is about taking responsibility of one's personal learning which "is a verbiage since no learning takes place unless the learner is in charge. He is of the view that taking charge of one's own learning is a prerequisite of learning and learning itself is impossible without the learner actually taking charge" (as cited in Nadjeeb, 2013, p.1239). For more explanation, it facilitates how to learn, and grasp knowledge they need. Additionally, Najeeb (2013) contends that "students should have control over the goals and content of the learning they are involved in" (p.1239). This means that students require to master cognitive and meta-cognitive awareness.

1.2 Characteristics of Autonomous Learners

The scope of LA is functionally constrained by what the learner can do in the target language (Little, 2007). Little also believes that the development of autonomy in language learning is governed by three basic pedagogical principles: learner involvement, learner reflection, and appropriate target language use, in which learners should be engaged in the

learning process by sharing their responsibilities, thinking critically and monitoring their own learning, while using the target language as a principal medium of language learning (Little, 2007). The aspect of responsibility refers to situations where the learner can be autonomous and the characteristics that need to be measured.

Benson (1997, p.1) presented several LA applications and situations in specific contexts. Amon them, we mention using and creating learning opportunities to study independently, and applying skills and knowledge in self-directed learning contexts. Further, Benson (1997) described how learners practice their responsibility for their own learning and their rights to set its direction.

The diversity of definitions of LA rests upon its attribution to the learners themselves more than the situation. This directs them to better utilize their potentials in different contexts, and emphasizes the learner's personal involvement in the content of their own learning. Thus, the characteristics do not guarantee an autonomous learner, but a mere guide to self-directed process of learning, as there are other factors affecting their learning; personality, styles, strategies, motivation and psychology. This caused many researchers to claim its complexity; how difficult is to apply LA in the classroom.

Another point of view is given by Dickinson (1993) who postulates that learning autonomy can be achieved when the learner recognizes what to be taught. For him, autonomy refers to the collaboration between teacher and his/her students; this collaboration assists learners in selecting the appropriate strategy of learning. In this respect, Cotterall (1995, p.200) asserts that "autonomous learners are likely to be individuals who have overcome the obstacles which educational background, cultural norms and prior experience may have put in their way". In other words, autonomy provides learners with the ability of willing and being ready to give solutions and answer to different issues in learning. Also, it may support them to

know the target culture and experience new information and challenges.

1.3 Importance of Learners' Autonomy

Autonomy has an effective importance in learning. Benson (2001, p.1) maintains that "autonomy is a precondition for effective learning; when learners succeed in developing autonomy, they not only become better language learners but they also develop into more responsible and critical members of the communities in which they live". To begin with, autonomy promotes learners to develop their competencies in various factors, such as learners who live in foreign society and need to learn the language in order communicate and interact with people.

Furthermore, learners' autonomy is the key of accomplishing motivation. Knowles (2001) contends that helping learners to develop their attitudes towards learning and consider it is a lifelong process are the major aims of education. This leads them to acquire the skills of self-directed learning. In this respect, LA tends to motivate the individuals to improve their attitude and perspective in learning. In addition, Umeda (2000) spots that LA significance is specified in three factors; "fostering a survival capacity with rapid social changes, developing the learner's individuality, and improving the diversity of the learner's cultural and educational background" (pp.61-62). This means that it advances social exchange, cultural knowledge and educational context.

1.4 Reasons for Developing Leaner Autonomy in EFL Classrooms

There is a myriad of evidence asserting LA's significance, in and out-of-class, for primary and secondary schools, and also for teaching at the university level. Both researchers and practitioners in the field of foreign language education are increasingly interested in the notions of self-regulation, self-direction, independent learning, learner-centered process and

LA produces better language learners; "better people", it has been associated with other concepts as: independence, individualization and empowerment (Benson, 1997). To further highlight this, for learners to maintain a positive attitude towards learning the target language in the future, they need to take charge of their own learning, as the core of developing LA is mainly to enable learners to become autonomous users of their target language (Little, 1995).

Little (1995) notes two distinct dimensions for LA: pedagogical and communicative. He believed that the pedagogical autonomy paves the way for a communicative autonomy, for learners to acquire the effective strategies to learn the target language and be able to communicate with it. The interdependence and interaction between them distinguish language learning from language use. Thus, a successful practice of autonomy undertakes the target language performance with a degree of confidence. It is this confidence that enables learners to learn a language effectively and communicatively, and it is an important reason why autonomy should be developed in language learners (Little,1995).

Moreover, Little (2007) claims that the need to feel free is a basic human need. He considers it as one of the factors nourishing learners' intrinsic motivation; their proactive interest in the world around them; the motives behind accepting responsibility and commitment for developing the skills of reflective self-management in learning. Motivation is, furthermore, an important source of autonomous learning, and motivated learners are more likely to achieve better outcomes. Such effectiveness means that the knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom can be applied to situations that arise outside it, because autonomous learners take advantage of each opportunity, they meet to practice the language, which consequently enhances learners' English proficiency (Little, 2007).

Therefore, it is likely important to consider the role of teacher in maintaining such

positive outcomes. It is important for teacher to be aware of the significance behind LA, and what could be achieved through its application. Teachers have spent years and ages attempting to motivate their students to learn, yet the key now is more apparent.

1.5 Learner Autonomy in Language Learning Development

Scholars state that autonomy has a big importance in developing foreign language learning. First, autonomy assists obtaining awareness, involvement, intervention, creation and transcendence; by which it helps learners to recognize what tasks are about and then make choice and try to refine their own answers and create them. Therefore, Dörnyei (2001) specifies two effectual classroom changes that are an increase of learners' involvement in the organization of the learning process, and a shift in the teacher's role. That is to say, autonomy makes change in the teaching learning process. It transforms students from passive to active learners and enables them to make decision and engage in classroom activities and tasks.

Moreover, LA makes students concerned in making decisions and resolution for the challenges they experience. According to Littlejohn (1985), LA "is based on the idea that if students are involved in decision making processes regarding their own language competence, they are likely to be more enthusiastic about learning" (p.258). This means that they are motivated to participate in the classroom interaction and be more decisive and cooperative.

Conclusion

The learning process is a crucial issue in the education context. Through learning, we grasp knowledge and information and enable ourselves to discover new strategies and skills to enrich our perceptions. Learning helps them to develop their linguistic, communicative and social competences. From the notion of learning process, scholars created theories to make it more practical and easier. They state that the way of teaching and learning has changed over

years from the teacher-centered approach to learner-centered approach. This change has brought the concept of 'learner autonomy'; which is considered as an important transformation in education. All in all, LA reflects on the impact of learners in the classroom and encourages them to be cooperative and creative.

The present chapter has provided a theoretical background of LA. It has defined the learning process, strategies and styles. Then, motivation in learning has been presented and followed by the learner-centered approach. The core theme of the chapter, autonomous learning, has been highlighted through discussing its importance and reasons for enhancing it. Indeed, the teacher's role cannot be denied. For that, the practices of teachers even in a learner-centered class are important. Along with their beliefs, the teacher's practices will be the focus of the following chapter.

Chapter Two:

Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

Introduction

The present chapter introduces the interplay between teachers' beliefs and learners' autonomy. It also highlights teachers' assumptions about LA through showing their roles in supporting their learners, and challenges facing them. The present chapter is also a theoretical section; by which it is a continuation of the first chapter. It includes the definition of teachers' beliefs, differences between beliefs and knowledge, importance of teachers' beliefs, and the impact of teachers on learning autonomy.

2. Teachers' Beliefs

Teachers' beliefs are described as a system involving how they understand the world through complex personal and professional knowledge (Richards and Lockhart, 2007). Raymond (1997) defines a belief as a personal judgment accumulated from experiences. However, Kunt (1997) and Wang (1996) referred beliefs to opinions and views. Teachers' beliefs gradually change and improve as their experiences grow, even from being a student till becoming a trainee then an experienced teacher.

It is conventional that teachers' beliefs are reflected through classroom actions. For instance, based on the belief that a good teacher is friendly, funny and presentable, s/he shall present these qualities in class. Thus, the beliefs that teachers uphold, guide the way they behave and practice in classes. Research on teachers' beliefs systems suggests that they are derived from different sources (Kindsvatter et al., 1988):

A - Their own experience as language learners: as teachers were once students, some of the beliefs they uphold are reflections of how themselves were taught.

B-Experience of what works best: finding that some strategies worked, and some did not bring or enhance beliefs.

C - Established practice: certain teaching styles could be a preference in an institution, a district or even an educational system.

D- Personality factors: indeed, teachers have their personal preferences for a particular teaching pattern, arrangement or/and activities for they match their personality.

E - Research-based principles: teachers can draw on their understanding of learning principles from educational psychology or pedagogy, and then apply them in class. Besides, researching about specific principle would lead them to adopting or disregarding them in practice.

F - Approaches or methods: a teacher may believe that a particular approach/method is more effective or helpful. Then, they consistently implement them in class.

Teachers play an essential role in the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process, which makes researchers highly concerned with the beliefs of teachers. Recent research in the study of teachers' beliefs has increasingly been paid considerable attention to their effectiveness. According to Ashton (2014), only few studies of teachers' beliefs were conducted, and most were dissertation studies. He (2014) declares that "the dominance of behaviorist theory during the 1940s and 1950s discouraged research on cognitive constructs, such as beliefs" (p.31). Thus, traditionally, language teaching has been described in terms of what teachers do: that is, in terms of the actions and behaviors, which teachers carry out in the classroom and the effects of these on learners (Richards and Lockhart, 1996). Nowadays, with the elevation of cognitive and constructivist approaches, which led to the emergence of learner-centered approaches, studies shifted the focus to the beliefs affecting teachers' practices in the classroom.

Although a large number of researchers and theorists have attempted to explain the

conceptualization of teachers' beliefs, a myriad of their studies have not achieved an explicit definition of 'belief' in the educational context. In fact, teachers' beliefs have not been effectively analyzed and examined, because it is difficult to achieve a thorough understanding and definition of teachers' belief system (Borg, 2006; Pajares, 1992). According to Pajares "the difficulty in studying teachers' beliefs has been caused by definitional problems, poor conceptualization, and differing understandings of beliefs and belief structures" (Pajares, 1992, p.307). He also suggests that the concept is avoided because: "it is often seen as the more proper concern of philosophy or, in its more spiritual aspects, religion" (Pajares,1992, p.309).

Based on different definitions, teacher's beliefs can be described as presuppositions of any practice in educational settings, that can be discovered through the teacher's implicit or explicit acts.

2.1 Teachers' Beliefs versus Knowledge

Regardless of many propositions that have been denoted to define the concept 'beliefs' (Calderhead 1996; Pajares 1992; Borg, 2006, 2003), there is no single thorough definition of the term. The intricacy in defining the concept of beliefs led to confusion concerning the distinction between beliefs and knowledge. Pajares (1992) argues that one of the salient reasons making it difficult to distinguish between the features of knowledge and those of beliefs is that, beliefs are "messy constructs" and are often referred by means of different interchangeable concepts. Pajares (1992) puts them as "attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, explicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertories of understanding, and social strategy" (p.309).

He suggested the concept "beliefs" as a reference to the psycho-logical constructs (attitudes, perceptions, perspectives, personal theories). In order to distinguish between knowledge and beliefs, Pajares (1992) asserts beliefs as "based on evaluation and judgment; knowledge is based on objective fact" (p.313). As a result, it seems to acknowledge that the terms are distinguished by objectivity and subjectivity. According to Borg (2001) in numerous empirical studies on teachers' beliefs, the difference between beliefs and knowledge seems to be 'blurry' and what distinguishes between these two concepts is the 'truth element': she defined a belief as "a mental state" which is held and "accepted as true by the individual holding it, although the individual may recognize that alternative beliefs may be held by others" (p.186). However, knowledge, according to Bord (2001), is more likely to represent truths and facts in mind that are not subjective (p.186).

However, Pajares suggested that Nespor (1987) and many other pioneers underestimated the significance of evaluation and effect in knowledge, as he concluded that belief and knowledge are "inextricably intertwined" (p.325), which means knowledge and beliefs cannot be considered separately. Various studies concluded that beliefs hold stronger influence and evaluation than knowledge in determining practice and are stronger predictors of practices (Pajares,1992). Nespor (1987) on which teachers rely on when they do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding about a given task. Nespor (1987) suggests that teachers tend to rely more on their beliefs than on research-based theory claiming that:

> Teachers' beliefs play a major role in defining teaching tasks and organizing the knowledge and information relevant to those tasks.... The contexts and environments within which teachers work, and many of the problems they encounter, are ill-defined and deeply entangled, and that beliefs are peculiarly suited for making sense of such contexts. (p.324)

In spite of the various definitions of 'beliefs', some researchers have achieved considerable agreement concerning some core features of 'teacher beliefs' (Borg, 2001). On the basis of their agreements and the nature of the present research, the notion of 'teacher beliefs' is approached from different perspectives, and the term signifies the views, perspectives, perceptions and attitudes that teachers hold and even their knowledge.

2.2 Importance of Teachers' Beliefs

Beliefs turned out to have a significant role in various aspects of one's life as they assist individuals comprehend the world, and have a greater impact on how new coming information is internalized (Borg, 2003, 2006; Pajares, 1992). Borg (2001) adds that beliefs play a pivotal role in defining behavior, organizing knowledge and information. Similarly, (Nespor, 1987) argued that when teachers do not find a sufficient knowledge and understanding about a given task, they tend to rely on their educational beliefs. Pajares (1992) revealed his insights to improve the quality of research on teachers' beliefs, which was driven by his view that "beliefs are the best indicators of the decisions individuals make throughout their lives" (p. 307).

Kagan (1992, p.85) asserts that it is critical to consider the study of beliefs in education. He suggests that "the more one reads studies of teacher belief, the more strongly one suspects that this piebald of personal knowledge lies at the very heart of teaching" (cited in Pajares, p.329). Thus, these studies offered a greater importance for essential reading for teachers, educators and researchers studying teachers' beliefs, expecting that the value of beliefs could elevate to its appropriate place.

In fact, teachers' beliefs play a significant role in fostering teachers' professional development and teaching practices in the classroom (Pjares,1992). That is why an investigation of teachers' beliefs is necessary in order to gain a better understanding of what

happens in the classroom, since teachers bring with them their beliefs, attitudes and values to the classroom (Borg, 2001). This definition was chosen because what teachers believe in encompasses all what they know or believe to be true, and will presumably act accordingly. Studies revealed that teachers' actual practices are associated with their beliefs, and that teachers filter new information through personal beliefs.

2.3 Relationship between Teachers' Beliefs and Actual Practices

In order to reach valid findings, reliable data, assessing teachers' beliefs require inferences about what they say, do, practice and behave while teaching (Pajares, 1992). In which, "Unexplored entering believes may be responsible for the perpetuation of antiquated and ineffectual teaching practices" (p.328). In other words, teachers' context-specific beliefs are reflected in their actual practices.

To reveal the link between what teachers, say, do and how certain beliefs affect teachers' practices. It is not sufficient to utilize an unstructured interview or a questionnaire for evaluating teachers' self-reports of their beliefs. Their actual practices must be observed where data, methods, and tools are integrated in genuine classrooms. To further highlight this, Pajares (1992) asked if teachers' educational beliefs can be a primary focus of their teacher preparation programs, adding that beliefs "are consistent with effective teaching practices … inconsistent with such aims, and beliefs that may play no significant role" (pp. 327–328).

However, Khader (2012), in his qualitative case study on the correspondence of teachers' pedagogical beliefs to their practices, concluded that due to the complexity of teachers' belief system, they cannot be observed and measured effectively in their teaching practices. The instability, inconsistencies, and the divergence between the two is related to a number of factors, including their emotions and psychological moods. Furthermore, teachers' beliefs are dynamic and they can even change their practices sometimes (Khader, 2012).

Although it is often claimed that teachers' beliefs are complex and difficult to be analyzed from a mere interview or a questionnaire, beliefs represent a basis for individuals' decisions; people act in a certain way because they believe it to be true. In spite of the significance of teachers' beliefs and practices in education, there is very little research on the effects of teachers' beliefs on their practices.

3. Teachers' Beliefs about Learner Autonomy

Recent studies on LA and how to implement it in the classroom are seen to be affected by many factors, such as teachers' beliefs. Teachers hold different beliefs about various issues in education; as they have an important influence on their teaching (Borg, 2001; Pajares, 1992). Various researchers, like Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012), sought to explore teachers' beliefs in promoting LA. In this context, they conducted a project to develop LA in Oman. They reported the beliefs held by 61 teachers of English, as they highlighted both positive and negative teachers' dispositions to LA, and discovered that mostly were supportive. Moreover, teachers' views on the factors that hinder the development of LA include: the lack of motivation, lack of independent learning experience and fixed curriculum (Borg and Al-Busaidi, 2012).

From another perspective, Asiri and Shukri (2018) investigated a sample of 50 English language teachers at Saudi university through a mixed research method. Data analysis revealed that teachers believe that Saudi learners were not autonomous, as they lack knowledge, motivation and training, even teachers themselves sought to have professional development to help promote LA (Asiri and Shukri,2018).

However, in the Algerian context, Birouchi (2015) revealed that a myriad of teachers considers the belief that some learners were born talented and with the ability to learn the language better than others. With such beliefs, LA cannot be promoted. Teachers interpreted

their roles under LA instruction as facilitator, guide and resource. Yet, such roles require much more than just pushing learners to seek information, but also to help them acquire the skills needed as to set objectives, select materials and assess themselves (Birouchi, 2015).

Besides, Missoum (2015) revealed that all surveyed teachers' views agreed on that autonomous learners succeed better in their studies. Fostering LA may even extend beyond academic benefits to society at large. In fact, in a similar study with teachers at Algiers University, Bensemmane argued that "teachers believe that university prepares for life in society and agree that an autonomous learner […] will become an effective citizen in a democratic society" (2008, p.257). Thus, this highlights the positive contribution of LA to academic achievement in Algerian higher education. In previous studies, as in Bensemmane (2008); Fedj and Benaissi (2018), teachers assert positive beliefs about LA, even though some lack an appropriate understanding of the concept and others struggle in implementing it.

3.1 Teachers' Roles in Fostering Learner Autonomy

Little (2009) asserts that the scope of LA is ultimately dependent on learner's capacity in using the target language. The teacher has a significant role of a facilitator and guide in getting students more involved with language use. For LA to be promoted, the teachers should:

- Use the target language as the preferred medium of classroom communication and require the same from learners;

- Involve their learners in a non-stop quest for good learning activities, which are shared, discussed, analyzed and evaluated with the whole class - in the target language, and to begin with very single terms;

- Help learners to set their own targets and choose their own learning activities, subjecting them

to discussion, analysis and evaluation - again, in the target language;

- Require learners to identify individual goals; but pursue them through collaborative work in small groups;

- Engage learners in regular evaluation of their progress as individual learners, and as a class in the target language. (Little, 2009, p.2)

However, Stefanou et al (2004) defined three features of autonomy support that are: organizational, procedural, and cognitive autonomy support. The organizational autonomy support concerns learners' opportunities for choice over environmental procedures, such as: choosing group members and deciding on task deadlines. In the procedural autonomy support, students are able to take control over materials. In the cognitive autonomy support, students are encouraged to learn, and teachers encourage them in the learning process (p.101).

Teachers foster learners' critical thinking by encouraging them to find solutions and evaluate their own and others' ideas. It is suggested that procedural and organizational autonomy serve to initiate students' willingness to begin task work, while cognitive autonomy support may lead to a deep-level engagement (Stefanou et al, 2004, p.101). LA does not imply marginalization of teachers' roles, but rather teachers with different roles. Hence, in implementing autonomous learning teachers are ought to face various challenges.

3.2 Challenges Encountered in Implementing Autonomous Learning

Autonomy is viewed as difficult, but desirable for ages. Various studies concluded that certain challenges reflect these three themes: learners, institution, and teachers in EFL classrooms (Shahsavari, 2014; Alibakhshi,2014; Borg and Al-Busaidi,2012).

Shahsavari (2014) studied teachers' view towards LA and challenges they face in EFL

classrooms in Isfahan and Iran. They found that most of teachers needed more understandings about the notion of LA. Besides, learner-related factors reflected how learners are less aware of the significance of promoting autonomy. Some believed that the educational system in the country was the reason for a teacher-centered method choice. Moreover, teachers claimed that they were not allowed to have creativity due to the educational system restrictions. Yet, few confessed that they needed training for such courses to develop LA (Shahsavari, 2014).

Among the challenges found by Alibakhshi (2014), is the lack of relevant resources for teachers, as well as the lack of the learners and teachers' experience in LA. Indeed, Alibakhshi (2014) mentioned other challenges such as ignoring the role of learner in the curriculum and the prescribed objectives, learners' inability in self-study activities, fear of losing authority, etc. (p.90)

Accordingly, Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) in discussing the challenges teachers face when promoting LA, teachers believed that institutional factors (e.g. the curriculum, relevant resources) had a great impact on hindering the development of LA. Moreover, most of challenging factors concerned learners' attitudes, abilities, knowledge and motivation, lack of experience of autonomous learning; learners use of English out-of-class, learner ability to exploit resources, and learners' concentration on passing tests.

Learner and institutional factors: culture, environment, motivation and psychology are also major factors to be considered in promoting LA. The latter should be implemented in the right essence, where teachers along with their students should work together in facing these challenges, armed with a better understanding of LA.

3.3 Influence of Teachers' Beliefs about Autonomy on Teachers' Practices

A substantial amount of research over the past three decades has reviewed teachers'

beliefs as an area of enquiry in language teaching. One strand of these studies has placed attention on the relationship between teachers' cognitions, knowledge, beliefs and their classroom behavior, in which the language teaching enacted as an outcome of the effects of teachers' beliefs on their practices, in addition to the interaction between teachers' beliefs and educational contexts (e.g. Borg 2001, 2003, 2006; Pajares 1992; Borg and Al-Busaidi, 2012).

In their study, Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) concluded that some of the teachers had limited expectation of students' achievement resulting in inhibiting them from developing LA, they rejected students' freedom of choice and responsibilities. Few others attempted to hand learners such opportunities; however, the latter required some abilities along with the readiness to benefit from such opportunities (p.21). Yet, the majority of the teachers believed that LA has a positive effect on learning success, where such beliefs mirrored their practices; they used specific strategies to promote LA. Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) contend that "their descriptions of how they did so highlight a range of pedagogical strategies from advocacy and awareness-raising to independent out of class language learning activities" (p.20). However, some teachers struggled with lack of materials, resources and other challenges which had a major effect on their practices.

In addition. Juan and Yajie (2018) addressed how EFL teachers' beliefs have an effect on their practices. The study concluded that participants held positive attitude towards developing LA, and were aware of its importance and their roles as facilitators, counselors and resources. Yet, their teaching practices showed different degrees of intervention in promoting LA. Furthermore, due to some difficulties they had encountered, there were some mismatches between teachers' beliefs and their practices. They adopted traditional teaching more frequently, even though their beliefs were very supportive. For instance, one of the teachers claimed to stimulate learning interest through creating a good environment, and applying ICTs; but it was a big challenge for her due to her lack of ability and motivation to

learn new things.

Hence, it is highly believed that what shapes teachers' beliefs will certainly shape their practice. Teachers' perceptions are mainly reflected in the efforts they made to develop or hinder LA, which, consequently, reveal that teachers' beliefs have a major impact on their practices depending on the context, learners, institution and teachers' themselves. However, the majority of teachers have the desire to promote LA, they view learners as still dependent on the teacher, and still face constraints for different reasons, which might produce certain mismatches between teachers' beliefs and their practices.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter attempted to shed light on the theoretical background for the effects of teachers' beliefs about LA on their practices. The notions of LA and teachers' beliefs were presented. This chapter also provided a discussion of teachers' beliefs about LA followed by an analysis of their roles in supporting LA, and challenges facing them. It is concluded that various studies highlighted a general view about the positive contribution of LA to academic achievement. Yet, few considered the importance of teachers' beliefs towards autonomy and their effects on teachers' practices. This issue is further discussed in the practical part of this study.

Chapter Three:

Teachers Beliefs and Learner Autonomy

Introduction

The preceding chapters presented the theoretical part of this research. The teachers' beliefs and practices towards LA were provided. This chapter is devoted to the practical part of the research. It aims at describing the design and methodology of this research. It includes descriptions of methods, participants and data collection procedure. The chapter provides the analysis of data obtained from EFL teachers. It also highlights the major findings and discusses them. Some relevant recommendations are suggested.

1. Research Design

There are few studies dealing with the notion of LA in Algeria, namely in the middle and primary schools, yet less attention is placed at the university level. The present study attempts to explore EFL teachers' beliefs about LA and how these beliefs affect on their practices in EFL tertiary levels. The following questions have been raised:

- What are teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy in EFL classrooms?

- To what extent do these beliefs affect their practices in the classroom?

To answer these questions, an exploratory approach is applied following the single-method approach. One data collection tool is used in this study which is the questionnaire. This study is conducted during the academic year 2021/2022. The case deliberately chose to work on twenty EFL university teachers at Guelma University, Algeria.

1.1 Participants

The target population is EFL teachers at Guelma University. In order to gain insight from their beliefs and reported practices concerning LA, ten (10) teachers have been randomly selected to answer a questionnaire. The participants are male and female teachers

with different degrees, years of experience and they teach different levels.

1.2 The Questionnaire

Questionnaires are useful in surveying numerous teachers about their classroom practices, and they permit teachers enough time to provide considerable answers (Wragg,1999). It is often claimed that questionnaires are the preferred type of data collection procedure, both for the economy of the design, the rapid turnaround in data collection, and generalization of data (Creswell, 2003). Much of the questionnaire represent a quantitative form of data. There are on some occasions open-ended questions where teachers are allowed to comment and give further insights.

The questionnaire of the present study consists of four sections. The first section collects general data about teachers and their classes. The second section investigates teachers' views and perceptions of LA. Section three reviews their practices in the classroom, how they deal with various situations in the classroom. The last section links the teachers' beliefs with practices regarding LA. The questionnaire consists of multiple-choice questions with two cases of justification, which allows a deeper understanding of teachers' views and practices towards LA. (see Appendix).

1.3 Data Collection

The questionnaire has been administered to ten EFL teachers at Guelma university. It has been answered through printed and electronic copies. The collected data are to be analyzed by encompassing the quantitative aspects within an exploratory purpose.

2. Data Analysis

In this section, the analysis of the collected data from the teachers is provided.

Necessary illustrations with tables and figures are presented.

Section One: General Information

The sample of teachers consists of 60% of females and 40% of males. Half of them 50% have an experience of teaching up to five years, and the other half taught for more than five years. The levels they teach are Licence 3 (60%), Master 1 (50%), Licence 1 (40%) and Licence 2 (40%). The majority of teachers are Magister holders (60%), the others are PhDs (40%).

Section Two: LA Perceptions

Q1. What does learner autonomy mean to you?

Table 3.1.

Teachers' Perception of Autonomy

Option	Number	Percentage
learners can make choices about how they want to learn.	08	57.15%
a capacity that teachers can help learners to develop in the learning process.	06	42.85%
to be totally independent of the teacher.	00	00%
Total	14	100%

In the current question, teachers are allowed to choose more than one answer depending on their definitions of LA. Results showed that the most voted answer was autonomy is about learners' choices about learning (57.15%). Six teachers (42.85) selected the second definition. Informants did not consider autonomy as the total independence from the teacher. It seems that most teachers believe in scaffolding, guiding the students to foster their learning, and allowing them to choose the way they want to learn, more than handing them the total responsibilities of learning.

Q2. What do you think the role of a teacher is in EFL classroom?

Table 3.2.

Teachers' Roles

Option	Number	Percentage
Guide	08	53.33%
Facilitator	06	40%
Lecturer	01	06.66%
Mentor	00	00%
Total	15	100%

The role of a teacher as a guide appeared to be the most endorsed by respondents. Results reveal that 53.33% of the views considered the teacher as a guide, 40% of them considered the role of a facilitator. Only one participant added the role of a lecturer to their choices. No response considered 'monitoring' as a role. This reflects that their beliefs about their roles are similar to their beliefs about learner autonomy, where a teacher as a facilitator or a guide is supportive to learners' autonomy.

Q3. How often do you encourage your learners to be autonomous?

Table 3.3.

Frequency of Encouraging Learners be Autonomous

Option	Number (%)	Percentage
Always	02	20%
Often	08	80%
Sometimes	00	00%
Rarely	00	00%
Never	00	00%

	10	100%
Total		

The majority of teachers (80%) responded that they often encourage their earners to be autonomous. Only two informants (20%) chose 'always'. The results reflect how the participants believe in the importance of LA.

Section Three: Teachers' Practices

Q1. Which of the following techniques do you currently use in your classroom?

Table 3.4.

Common Techniques Used by Informants

Option	Number (%)	Percentage
Integrate various techniques	06	10%
Integrate various methods	08	13.33%
Permit students to choose the way they learn	04	00%
Promote learners' critical thinking through dialogues, role plays, discussions, etc.	05	08.33%
Encourage peer assessment	03	05%
Promote self-assessment	02	03.33%
Encourage them to work back home by giving them extra homework	08	13.33%
Focus on learners' interests / needs	04	06.66%
Reward them for good performance	06	10%
Increase learners' awareness of the different approaches / learning styles	02	03.33%
Tolerate grammatical mistakes	03	05%
Hand learners the responsibility of presenting / lecturing without guidance	04	06.66%
Negotiate with students on assignments, topics for presentations, activities, etc.	05	08.33%
Total	60	100%

The majority of teachers responded that they use different teaching methods and they encourage students to work outside classroom (13.33%). Rewarding students and integrating various techniques received 6 votes for each (10%). Additionally, negotiation with students and promoting their critical thinking were considered by rate of 8.33%. However, only two informants (3.33%) responded that they promote self-assessment and work on increasing the learners' awareness about the approaches and styles of learning. The results indicate that teachers attempt various techniques in the classroom, where they mostly focus on promoting critical thinking, learners' interests and needs, tolerating grammatical mistakes and students' choice over their learning.

Q2. What factors influenced you to arrive to your present views towards learner autonomy?

Table 3.5.

Factors Affecting the Informants' Views on LA

Option	Number	Percentage
Teaching experience	09	40.90%
Learning experience	05	22.72%
Established practice	04	18.18%
Personality factors	04	18.18%
Total	22	100%

The teaching experience was highly selected as a factor that affects the teacher's view on LA. Nine informants (40.90%) responded that the teacher's experience is the major factor. In addition, the learning experience was also chosen by 22.72% of the participants. Some teachers (18.18%) claimed that personality factors contribute to shaping teachers' views. The establish practices in class were also the choice of four informants.

Q3. You believe that teaching can be done by:

Table 3.6.

Informants' Beliefs about Teaching Actors

Option	Number	Percentage
Teacher	00	00%
Learner	00	00%
Both	10	100%
Total	10	100%

The actors in class are teachers and learners. The informants were asked about the belief about the active actor in teaching. All informants responded that both learners and teachers represent the active teaching process members. This indicates that the informants believe in the learner's ability to be effective and influential actors in class.

Section Four - Teachers' Beliefs and LA

Q1. How do you make your learners autonomous?

Table 3.7.

Teachers' Ways to Make Learners Autonomous

Option	Number	Percentage
Encourage them to set their own study objectives and plans	04	40%
Support them to learn and use English outside the classroom	03	30%
Help them identify their preferred styles and strategies	02	20%
Raise their awareness about learning processes	01	10%
Total	10	100%

The teachers who responded that they make their learners autonomous through encouraging them to set their study objectives were four (40%). Besides, supporting learners to learn outside the class was the option chosen by three informants (30%). Only two informants help their learners identify their styles of learning, and one who depended on raising their awareness about the learning process. The results of this item reflect that helping learners be autonomous is not an easy task because teachers varied in their views on how to encourage LA.

Q2. How do you motivate your students to learn English?

Table 3.8.

Teachers' Ways to Motivate English Learning

Option	Number	Percentage
Provide interesting, fun and practical activities	08	34.78%
Explain the importance of the lesson	07	30.43%
Guide them for out-of-class learning	06	26.08%
Stress grades and scores	02	08.69%
Total	23	100%

Eight teachers (34.78%) claimed that they motivate their students through providing interesting, fun and practical activities. Seven responses (30.43%) explain the importance of the lesson. Six teachers (26.08%) guide their students for out-of-class learning, while only two (8.69%) teachers stress grades, in order to motivate them to learn. The least chosen answer reflected grades and scores, which refers to the traditional behaviorist ways of teaching in order to foster learning. Yet, the overall beliefs reflect how variant the ways that teachers adopt to motivate their learners.

Q3. Do you think the taught content/module affects fostering learner autonomy?

Table 3.9.

Informants' Beliefs about The Effect of the Module on LA

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	10	100%
No	00	00%
Total	10	100%

The informants were asked about the belief about the role of the module in raising LA. All teachers agreed that the module nature can foster LA. They justified that oral expression, for instance, allows learners to interact and gives them more freedom, where they prepare presentations, chose their peers and provided open-discussion, as students were the source of information. Yet "Phonetics, phonology" were more scientific so that students stick to specific terminologies (stress, intonation); they discuss ideas, solve tasks and activities in and out-of-class.

Q4. In your opinion. what are the challenges that may be encountered when implementing learner autonomy in EFL classrooms?

Table 3.10.

Challenges of Implementing LA

Option	Number	Percentage
Classes of multi-level students	06	26.08%
Students' low self-confidence	05	21.37%
Lack of motivation	04	17.39%
Lack of interest	04	17.39%
Students' laziness	04	17.39%
Total	23	100%

One of the common challenges teachers face when implementing autonomy was found

to be students' multilevel class (26.08%). Teachers believed that their expectations are raised

due to advance level students, then got disappointed due to others. The results are all about

the learners' themselves: laziness, motivation, lack of interest (17.39% for each option). The

low self-confidence was also chosen as a challenge by half of the participants. The challenges

selected by teachers reflect that each teacher had their challenges they encounter in their own

teaching career.

Q5. What factors, do you think, have an influence on fostering learner autonomy?

Table 3.11.

Factors that Foster LA

Option	Number	Percentage
students' interest in the module	08	34.78%
self-encouragement	06	26.08%
students' strong personalities	05	21.37%
positivity towards their works	04	17.39%
Total	23	100%

Factors that foster LA fell into two categories: intrinsic and extrinsic. Students'

interest in the module was a major factor selected by informants (34.78%). Six informants

(26.08%) claimed that learners' self-encouragement contributes mostly to fostering LA.

Besides, the students with strong personalities were considered as a factor by five informants.

Positivity towards works was also considered a factor that fosters LA by four informants

(17.39%). The responses reflect how hard it is to deal with LA in class for the diversity of

problems that teachers encounter in the teaching process.

Q6. a- Whenever you ask your students to prepare a presentation or exposé, do you
prefer them to be done by:

Table 3.12.

The Situation of Presentations

Option	Number	Percentage
Single Person	06	60%
Pair	03	30%
Group	01	10%
Total	10	100%

Six informants (60%) preferred that only one learner presents or orally provide a task or answer. Three informants (30%) responded that pair work is better. Yet, only one informant preferred the group work for presentations. This indicates that the majority of teachers practice what they believe about LA. They all justified that according to the task and presentation as well as the evaluation timing to be reduced.

Q6. b- Do you believe that Master degree dissertations should be carried out by:

Table 3.13.

The Situation of Dissertations

Option	Number	Percentage
Single Person	09	90%
Pair	01	10%
Group	00	00%
Total	10	100%

Almost all informants (90%) preferred that only one learner works on their dissertation. Only one informant preferred that a dissertation is better done by two students. The justification of the latter is that the number of students is large, and teachers can work with pairs of students easily. However, the results show that calling for learner independence

in the dissertation is favored.

Table 3.14.

Reasons for the Situation of Dissertations

Option	Number	Percentage
Too many pedagogical responsibilities for the learners	04	21.05%
Lack of competent students	04	21.05%
Lack of LA	04	21.05%
Lack of time	04	21.05%
Lack of supervisors	03	15.78%
Total	19	100%

The teachers varied in their opinions regarding the dissertation whether to be done by one or two learners. However, the lack of supervisors was selected by three informants, the other options received four responses for each. This means that teachers tend to raise LA differently and despite all the various challenges.

Q6. c- Your learner has been getting average/low grades, and you would like to see him/her improve. A useful approach might be to:

Table 3.15.

The Situation of Grades

Option	Number	Percentage
Provide them with extra-work individually in order to earn extra-credit	02	20%
Offer him/her praise for each good mark and a warning for lower ones.	03	30%

Encourage them to recognize their weaknesses and work harder outside the class.	05	50%
Total	10	100%

The table above shows that five (50%) teachers intend to encourage students to recognize their weaknesses and work harder outside the classroom, in order to foster their grades. Yet, three (30%) teachers believed that praising and warning are good ways. Only one informant responded that providing them with extra work may be a solution.

Q6. d- In your class: an introvert learner is always quiet and usually alone. Your wisdom would guide you to:

Table 3.16.

The Situation of Introverts

Option	Number	Percentage
Create multiple activities and include him/her in group work.	04	20%
Try to get them involved alone with you only, without obliging them to interact or work with others	04	20%
Emphasize that s/he should cooperate with others	05	25%
Prod them into interactions and praise them for any social initiative.	07	35%
Total	20	100%

The question aimed at revealing teachers' treatment with introverts, if their roles as a guide and a facilitator correspond to their practices. Responses indicate that 35% of teachers prod introverts into interactions and provide them with much praise for any social initiative.

Besides, four teachers (20%) emphasized that students should participate and cooperate with others so they will learn English more effectively. The other choices received four votes for each. The results indicate that creating multiple activities, encouraging group work, and praising are sometimes considered useful, especially when dealing with introverts.

Q6. e- Some of your students seem uninterested and bored with an activity you are using in the classroom. The best thing to do is:

Table 3.17.

The Situation of Lack of Interest

Option	Number	Percentage
Give students some choices in other interesting activities.	05	33.33%
Explain why this activity is useful and important.	07	46.66%
Tell them they must finish the activity in order to get good grades.	03	20%
Total	15	100%

To know how teachers deal with students in different situations; one of them is when students are uninterested or bored. Results reveal that (46.66%) of teachers claim to explain the importance of the activity. Besides, five informants (33.33%) tend to give students the choice in other activities. Three informants opted for encouraging them through grades. Overall, teachers do not stress grades, rather they attempt to explain the significance of the task, otherwise, they give students the chance to choose what interests them.

Q6. f- When teaching your students, you ask them a question and they seem to be silent:

Table 3.18.

The Situation of Clueless Students

Option	Number	Percentage
Provide them with clues and hints	09	42.85%
Emphasize its importance and repeat the question.	03	14.28%
Explain the answer and then continue with the lecture.	06	28.57%
Encourage them to think more to reach right answer.	03	14.28%
Total	21	100%

Dealing with clueless students is a major problem. Nine teachers (42.85%) here responded that they tend to provide them with clues and hints to reach the answer on their own. Six (28.57%) teachers claimed that they explain the answer and then continue with the lecture. However, the other two options received three responses for each (14.28%). The results here indicate that teachers seem more likely to leave the learners work on their own autonomy.

3. Findings and Discussions

According to the results of the questionnaire, teachers' beliefs were in line with previous findings (little, 1991, 2009; Borg, 2001). They viewed LA as a capacity that teachers can help learners to develop in the learning process where learners can make choices and decisions about how they want to learn. This matched their views towards their roles. It seemed that their positive beliefs about their roles are similar to their beliefs about LA where a teacher as a facilitator or a guide is supportive to learners' autonomy (little, 2009).

EFL teachers at Guelma University believed in scaffolding, guiding the students to facilitate their learning, and allowing them to choose the way they want to learn, more than

handing them the total independence of learning. They could bring some characteristics of an ideal autonomous learner. LA for teachers seemed to be about competencies and skills, initiative taking, awareness of autonomy importance, self-regulation and reliance, ambition, motivation, etc. Teachers highlighted the psychological aspect of LA taking into consideration mental and emotional characteristics, learners' capacities, etc.

The interpretations of results revealed that teachers' attempts and beliefs towards their roles as facilitators reflected their commitment in the implementation of teacher-based approach (Benson, 2001; Borg and Al-Busaidi, 2012). It is noticed that high proportions of teachers hold positive beliefs about fostering LA matching their practices.

The interpretations of the study results reveal that beliefs and practices seemed to have a reciprocal relation; in which they both shape each other. As teachers' experience is what led them to gain certain beliefs; their beliefs certainly shaped their practices. In addition, it was noticed in that teachers' practices were also affected by the module they taught (three teachers confirmed); they act in certain way depending on the module.

Therefore, there was a degree of consistency between what teachers said and what they did. The findings were similarly and previously mentioned in the findings of Borg (2001) that beliefs led teachers' actions. This is evident of that teachers' beliefs about LA matched their practices, in which they had positive approaches to implementing LA, even if some believed in total independence, they tend to act accordingly. It was also concluded that positive beliefs about LA and its importance did not always result in good practice.

4. Recommendations

In order to be successful in fostering LA, teachers ought to be aware of their role and responsibilities, as they transition from information providers to facilitators of learning. While

implementing various approaches, the teacher should the learner-based approach and teacher-based approach to cope with learners' different styles and strategies, and train them to understand how certain kind of adaptation fits particular situations.

Despite the lack of materials, teachers should attempt to foster LA through the resource-based approach; learners' independent use of materials. For instance, students during the presentations should be allowed to select the suitable materials, and use dictionaries as hard copies or electronic dictionaries. Students should also be allowed to choose how to contact their teachers. Further, teachers should implement classroom-based approach through learners' cooperation; presentations and homework groups, selection of peers, and encouraging learners' debates and discussion.

Conclusion

This chapter provided data presentation, analysis and interpretation. The results obtained from the questionnaire were discussed. The majority of the participants have clearly demonstrated different practices attempting to make learning successful and increase LA. Whereas the questionnaire revealed a consistency between teachers' beliefs and practices. The chapter also provided some recommendations.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Results show that teachers' beliefs have major impact on teachers' practices, in which teachers shared a positive view towards LA and attempted to demonstrate that in the classroom, despite the challenges they faced. The results revealed that teachers' beliefs towards LA were positive and they were aware of its significance in successful learning.

Further, it was noted that teachers' beliefs have a considerable effect on their practices and that they have a reciprocal relation. The results also revealed that their beliefs were positive and sought to encourage LA. Indeed, the majority had their attempts to promote LA through their classroom practices.

There were many challenges that teachers sought to overcome. They are related to teachers, learners, institutional and administrative challenges. Moreover, there was a high degree of consistency between teachers' beliefs and practices, where there were attempts to depict their positive beliefs through actions, in which the interpretation of the questionnaire revealed a high degree of autonomy support. LA and its importance were viewed logically by teachers as they are depicted in their classroom practices.

This research was conducted to explore the effects of teachers' beliefs about LA on their practices in EFL classrooms, how they view LA, and what challenges they face. The case studied was of EFL teachers at the University of Guelma. To achieve the purpose of this research, the methodology incorporated a single-method approach using the questionnaire as a research instrument. Data were drawn through a quantitative method.

This research consisted of three chapters. The first chapter of this research tackled the theoretical framework of LA. The second chapter tackled the teachers' beliefs and practices. The third chapter was devoted to the analysis and presentation of data. Interpretations and discussions were also provided and followed by some relevant implications and recommendations.

Furthermore, new gaps emerged to include: some teachers misunderstanding of the concept, teachers' high influence by their modules and the reciprocal relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices. The study, however, could be better accomplished if the following issues were better addressed: time, some teachers' cooperation, considering learners' beliefs and practices, and other factors affecting LA. The researcher recommends improving physical conditions of teaching and learning context; class and time management, teachers' training, crowded classes, and integrating educational technology in the classroom. In addition to further research should be conducted to explore learners' beliefs and practices towards LA, and also the effects of teachers' training on LA promotion.

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APPENDIX

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

You are kindly asked to help us by answering the following questions concerning Effects of Teachers' Beliefs about Learners' Autonomy on their Practices in EFL Classrooms: Case of EFL Teachers at University of 8 May 1945, Guelma. All responses to this questionnaire will be handled with complete confidentiality. We assure you that information gathered will be solely used for this research study purposes. Please answer the questions as honestly and accurately as possible **BY PUTTING A CAPITAL X IN THE RIGHT BOX!.**

Section One - Basic Details

1. Gender:

Male		*Female*	

2. Years of experience: …….

3. Diploma:

Bachelor		*Masters*		*Magister*		*PhD*	

4. **Classes you are currently teaching:**

1st *year*		2nd *year*		3rd *year*		*Master 1*		*Master 2*	

SECTION TWO - LA PERCEPTIONS

Q1. What does learner autonomy mean to you?

Learners can make choices about how they want to learn.	
A capacity that teachers can help learners to develop in the learning process.	
To be totally independent of the teacher.	
Others…………………………………………………………………………………	

Q2. What do you think the role of a teacher is in EFL classroom?

Guide	
lecturer	
Mentor	
facilitator	
Others: …………….	

Q3. How often do you encourage your learners to be autonomous?

Always	
Often	
Sometimes	
Rarely	

SECTION THREE - TEACHERS' PRACTICES

Q4. Which of the following techniques do you currently use in your classroom? (*Please check all that you apply*)

Integrate various techniques (ways)	
Integrate various methods (ideas about how language or learning should be taught)	
Permit students to choose the way they learn	
Promote learners' critical thinking through dialogues, role plays, discussions, etc.	
Encourage peer assessment (students evaluate other students)	
Promote self-assessment	
Encourage them to work back home by giving them extra homework	
Focus on learners' interests / needs	
Reward them for good performance	
Increase learners' awareness of the different approaches / learning styles	
Tolerate grammatical mistakes	
Hand learners the responsibility of presenting / lecturing without guidance	
Negotiate with students on assignments, topics for presentations, activities, etc	

Q5. What factors influenced you to arrive to your present views towards learner autonomy? (You may choose more than one)

Teaching experience (Experience of what works best)	
Learning experience from being once a learner	
Reading and searching about learner autonomy	
Established Practice (certain teaching styles could be a preference in your institution)	
Personality factors (teachers have personal preferences for a particular teaching pattern, arrangement or/and activities for they match their personality)	

Others: ……………	

Q6. You believe that teaching should be done by

Teacher	
Learner	
Both	

SECTION FOUR - TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND LA

Q7. How do you make your learners autonomous?

Encourage them to set their own study objectives and plans	
Support them to learn and use English outside the classroom	
Help them identify their preferred styles and strategies	
Raise their awareness about learning processes	
Use the target language as the preferred medium of classroom communication and require the same from learners	
Involve their learners in a non-stop quest for good learning activities, which are shared, discussed, analyzed and evaluated with the whole class	
Engage learners in regular evaluation of their progress as individual learners, and as a class in the target language.	
Other: …………………...	

Q8. How do you motivate your students to learn English?

Provide interesting, fun and practical activities	
Explain the importance of the lesson	
Guide them for out-of-class learning	
Stress grades and scores	
Others: …………………………………………	

Q9. Do you think the taught content/module affects fostering learner autonomy?

Yes	
No	
Justify ……………………………………	

Q10. In your opinion, what are the challenges that may be encountered when implementing learner autonomy in EFL classrooms? (You may choose more than one)

Students' laziness	
fear of losing authority	
Lack of interest	
Lack of motivation	
Classes of multi-level students	
Students' low self-confidence	
Time constraints	
Long syllabus	
lack of experience of autonomous learning	
learners use of English out-of-class	
Learners' inability to exploit resources	
Learners' concentration on passing tests only	
Lack of materials and media	
Others: …………………………………………	

Q11. What factors, do you think, have an influence on fostering learner autonomy? (You may choose more than one)

students' interest in the module	
students' strong personalities	
positivity towards their works	
self-encouragement	
Others: …………………………………………	

Q12. Below are situations faced by university teachers in the classroom. Please tick the most appropriate answer. (You may choose more than one)

Whenever you ask your students to prepare a presentation or exposé, do you prefer them to be done by: (You may choose more than one)	
Single Person	
Pairs	
Group	
Whatever your answer, please justify …………………………………………………	
Do you believe that Master degree dissertations should be carried out by: (You may choose more than one)?	
Single Person	
Pairs	
Group	
Whatever your answer, please do justify by ticking (You may choose more than one)	
dissertation assessment would be 100% accurate	
dissertation assessment would not be accurate & sometimes unfair for the group members	
Lack of time	
Lack of supervisors	
Lack of LA	
Lack of competent students	
Stress-free	
Too many pedagogical responsibilities for the learners (exams, exposés, studies, etc)	
Your learners were getting average/low grades, and you would like to see them improve. A useful approach might be to	
Encourage them to recognize their weaknesses and work harder outside the class.	
Offer them praise for each good mark and a warning for lower ones.	
Provide them with extra-work individually in order to earn extra-credit	
Assuming their failure without extra chance of helping them	
In your class: an introvert learner is always quiet and usually alone. Your wisdom would guide you to: (You may choose more than one)	
Prod them into interactions and praise them for any social initiative.	
Emphasize that s/he should cooperate with others	
Create multiple activities and include him/her in group work.	
Try to get them involved alone with you only, without obliging them to interact or work with others	
Some of your students seem uninterested and bored with an activity you are using in the classroom. The best thing to do is: (You may choose more than one)	
Tell them they must finish the activity in order to get good grades.	
Explain why this activity is useful and important.	
Give students some choices in other interesting activities.	
When teaching your students, you ask them a question and they seem to be silent:	

(You may choose more than one)	
Provide them with clues and hints	
Encourage them to think more to reach right answer.	
Emphasize its importance and repeat the question.	
Explain the answer and then continue with the lecture	

Q13. How do you make your learners autonomous?

Encourage them to set their own study objectives and plans	
Support them to learn and use English outside the classroom	
Help them identify their preferred styles and strategies	
Raise their awareness about learning processes	
Other: ……………………..	

SECTION FIVE - SUGGESTIONS

…………………….……………………..……………………….……………………..………
………………..………………..…………………..……………………..………………
…….…………………..…………………..…………………..……………………..

Thank you for your cooperation!

Résume

En passant du centrage de l'enseignant au centrage de l'apprenant, les croyances et les pratiques des enseignants sont affectées. L'autonomie de l'apprenant est une tendance majeure que les enseignants tentent de mettre en œuvre chez leurs apprenants. Le présent travail de recherche explore les effets des croyances des enseignants concernant l'autonomie de l'apprenant sur leur pratique dans les classes d'EFL pour atteindre cet objectif, une approche unique a été menée à travers un questionnaire administré à dix enseignants d'EFL à l'université de Guelma. L'hypothèse de cet ouvrage postule que les enseignants d'anglais comme langue étrangère (ALE) croient que l'autonomie d'apprenant est une capacité qui doit être promue parmi les étudiants, et que leurs croyances sont assumées de les encourager à opter pour certaines pratiques à fin d'aider leurs apprentis à devenir autonomes. Les données sont tirées d'une méthode quantitative. Les résultats de cette étude révèlent que les croyances des enseignants ont un effet immense sur les pratiques des enseignants dans les classes d'anglais comme langue étrangère (ALE). Les enseignants partagent une vision positive de l'autonomie de l'apprenant et tentent de la démontrer en classe malgré les défis auxquels ils sont confrontés

Les mots clés : autonomie de l'apprenant, croyances des enseignants, pratiques des enseignants, classes d'anglais comme langue étrangère (ALE).

ملخص

بالانتقال من التركيز على المعلم إلى التركيز على المتعلم تتأثر معتقدات المعلمين وممارساتهم. استقلالية المتعلم هي مهارة رئيسية يحاول المعلمون غرسها في المتعلمين. يستكشف العمل البحثي الحالي آثار معتقدات الأساتذة حول استقلالية المتعلم على ممارساتهم في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. لتحقيق هذا الغرض، تم تنفيذ مقاربة أحادي المنهج من خلال استبيان تم إجراؤه على عشرة أساتذة للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة قالمة. فرضية البحث تفترض أن أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية (إ ل أ) يعتقدون أن استقلالية المتعلم هي قدرة يتحتم ترقيتها وسط الطلبة، و أن معتقداتهم تفترض تشجيعهم على اختيار بعض الممارسات ما لإعانة المتعلمين ان يصبحوا مستقلين. يتم رسم البيانات من خلال طريقة كمية. تكشف نتائج هذه الدراسة أن معتقدات الأساتذة لها تأثير هائل على ممارسات المعلمين في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. يشارك الأساتذة وجهة نظر إيجابية تجاه استقلالية المتعلم ويحاولون إثبات ذلك في الفصل الدراسي على الرغم من التحديات التي يواجهونها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استقلالية المتعلم ، معتقدات الأساتذة ، ممارسات الأساتذة ، فصل اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (إ ل أ).