



**Addis Ababa University**

**College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication**

**Department of Foreign Languages and Literature**

**First Year Students' English Language Learning Autonomy at Addis Ababa  
Science and Technology University**

**By: Ababo Abebe**

**A Dissertation submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in English Language Teaching**

**July 2024**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**



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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Ababo Abebe, entitled “First year students’ English language learning autonomy at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University” in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Teaching complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Approved by the Examining Committee

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Examiner	Signature	Date
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Examiner	Signature	Date

July, 2024

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

## **Declaration**

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original work, has never been presented in this or any other University, and that all the resources and materials used for the dissertation have been dully acknowledged.

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July, 2024

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## **Abstract**

*The main objective of the study was to investigate first-year students' English language learning autonomy at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University (AASTU). The study employed a mixed-methods approach which integrated qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques. The survey questionnaire was filled out by 313 first-year AASTU students who were selected using a simple random sampling technique. Further, twenty-four (24) of these students were selected randomly to take part in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). While these students provided data through questionnaires and FGDs, five teachers were also interviewed. The data collection process began with classroom observations, followed by the administration of the student survey questionnaire. The obtained quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS. The quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS, while the qualitative data collected through observations, FGDs, and teacher interviews were analyzed thematically. The findings of the study revealed that students were motivated to learn English and their practice demonstrated that they were autonomous learners to some extent. However, they only considered a few aspects as their responsibilities. The teachers were found to be involved in limited practices that promote autonomous English language learning and did not effectively utilize the available supporting facilities. Based on these findings, the study recommends that English teachers should participate in professional development programs to promote autonomous language learning. The university should also provide English teachers with consecutive and practical training on using the available supporting facilities to foster autonomous English language learning and address any technical issues with these facilities.*

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## List of Symbols and Abbreviations

AASTU	Addis Ababa Science and Technology University
AELL	Autonomous English Language Learning
APA	American Psychological Association
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BED	Bachelor of Education
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FLEN	Communicative English Skills
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
ICT	Information Communication Technology
KII	Key Informant Interview
LCD	Liquid Crystal Display
MA	Masters of Arts
P1-P8	Coded for participants in FGD Three
R1-R8	Coded for participants in FGD One
RQ	Research Question
S1-S8	Coded for participants in FGD Two
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
T1-T5	Teacher one to Teacher five participated in interview
TEFL	Teaching English as Foreign Language

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Background of the study**

The development of autonomy and independence in today's learners has become essential as a response to the numerous changes that have three main dimensions: the learner, teaching institutions, and society as a whole have taken place in recent times. Some of the changes include the emergence of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and its personal, educational, and social applications, the unprecedented availability of information, the impact of globalization, political, economic, and pedagogical developments worldwide, expansion in student enrolment, responding to new technologies, responding to the changing learner needs, and the increasing need for communication between people from different parts of the world (Lamb & Reinders, 2005).

Learner autonomy has been found as a good quality of learners, and it is one of the elements that lead to successful learning. Holec (1981) defined learner autonomy as the ability to take charge of one's learning, meaning to have responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of learning. In language education, the theory and practice of learner autonomy refers to, broadly, a capacity for independent action that learners can develop in the process of learning, and which they can possess to varying degrees and express in various behavioral modes (Hsieh & Hsieh, 2019).

Even though definitions of autonomy have varied, they have usually included central features such as students taking responsibility for their learning because all learning can in any case only be carried out by the students themselves and also they need to develop the ability to continue learning after the end of their formal education and taking ownership (partial or total) of many processes (Littlewood, 1999; Cotterall, 2000). Dickinson (1995) notes that taking an active, independent attitude to learning and undertaking a learning task independently is beneficial to learning, as personal involvement in decision-making leads to more effective learning. Sharing responsibility in the decision-making process can help learners develop a sense of responsibility for their learning, which is the basic component of learner autonomy (Little, 1991). In addition, when learners are trained and allowed to set their learning agenda, learning becomes more focused and purposeful, and thus more effective both immediately and in the longer term. Little

(1991) stresses that when responsibility for the learning process is given to the learner, the barriers to learning that are often found in traditional teacher-led educational structures will not arise.

Previous research works stated that learning resources provision should also encourage students' autonomous learning both in and out of the classroom (Gardner & Miller, 1999; Little, 1997; Benson & Reinders, 2011; Benson, 2013; Richards, 2015). Ryan (1991) listed some of the factors that constitute the ideal facilitating environment for autonomy as concrete support through the provision of help and resources, personal concern and involvement from significant others, opportunities for making choices, and freedom from a sense of being controlled by external agents. Hence learner autonomy is the product of interdependence rather than independence, which means that learner autonomy, develops most effectively in an interpersonal environment.

Littlewood (1999) proposes a distinction between two levels of self-regulation: proactive and reactive autonomy. Proactive autonomy regulates the direction of activity and the activity itself while reactive autonomy regulates the activity once the direction has been set. Proactive autonomy will be achieved when learners can take charge of their learning, determine their objectives, select methods and techniques, and evaluate what they have acquired (Holec, 1981; Little, 1994). However, in reactive autonomy learners don't need to create their direction, but it enables learners to organize their resources autonomously to achieve their goal under the direction that has been initiated once (Littlewood, 1999).

Even though scholars define learner autonomy in different contexts, learner autonomy for this study context depends on the definition given by Holec (1981) and the distinction given by Littlewood (1999). In addition, the definition adopted by Shu and Zhuang, (2008) that defines it relating to some characteristics fits more with the context of this study. According to Shu and Zhuang (2008), autonomous language learning is characterized by three key aspects. Firstly, learners' attitude refers to their active approach and willingness to take responsibility for their learning. Autonomous learners are motivated and proactive in their language study. Secondly, learners' capacity involves the development of independent learning abilities, which are nurtured through training and support from teachers. This includes acquiring learning strategies, study

skills, and self-regulation techniques to effectively control their learning process. Lastly, a supportive environment is crucial for autonomous language learning. This encompasses the guidance and assistance provided by teachers, access to appropriate learning resources and facilities, and relevant materials. Teachers play a significant role in fostering autonomous language learning by creating an environment that encourages learners' autonomy. In summary, autonomous language learning is a constructive process where learners develop their autonomy within a supportive context, with teachers playing a pivotal role in facilitating and guiding their journey.

Based on the definitions and discussions on learner autonomy, considering Ethiopian higher education students, the present research defines learner autonomy as the ability to take responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of their learning. When it says decisions concerning all aspects of learning, it is about how the learners consciously work in the given direction. This includes 1) understanding teaching objectives and requirements; 2) setting goals and making a plan for one's studies; 3) employing learning strategies effectively; 4) monitoring the effect of one's learning strategies; and 5) monitoring and evaluating the English language learning process. In other words, there will be a direction given or an expected goal for a certain level so that learners do not need to create new ones, but following the given direction, the learners are expected to take responsibility for their learning.

Accordingly, in this study context, autonomous English Language Learning was seen as the capacity of students to be clear about teaching objectives and one's own goals, students' confidently and independently organizing learning materials, students' commitment to use additional learning methods and resources, students' readiness to self-regulate and cooperate to learn individually or in groups by themselves, and the capacity to use available supporting environments and guidance from their instructors to achieve the teaching-learning goals.

In Ethiopia, English is taught as a Foreign Language (EFL). It is not widely used in day-to-day communication but is taught as a subject from the first grade and serves as a medium of instruction in all secondary schools and in higher education institutions which can have implications for students' attitudes, motivation, and home-based independent learning. As Tekle (2016) tries to explain, firstly, the fact that English is not used for immediate social interaction

may determine the extent to which students like to learn this language, secondly, learning English for purposes that are not immediate enough can influence the level and type of motivation students possess. Finally, parents, caretakers, and other family members cannot provide enough support to children in the early grades to prepare them to become independent EFL learners. These factors can determine whether students will become lifelong independent EFL learners or not.

In the context of all these potential hindrances, at university students are expected to take more responsibility and be engaged in learning a variety of strategies. Since the English language is a medium of communication in the teaching-learning process, English courses are given as a common course at the first-year level. The courses aim to help students develop the skills and strategies that they need to become independent learners and to develop the students' English language proficiency through language learning activities designed to help them use English for their academic and social needs. Those language learning activities encourage them to learn by doing things in English and students are also expected to reflect on the activities they do in each unit.

Therefore, students should be engaged independently in English Language learning both in and outside the classroom by taking responsibility for their own learning or autonomously. English teachers also have a role to lead students in the way they develop autonomous learning. Hence, studies that aim to explore autonomous English Language learning in the Ethiopian context are worthy.

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

In the field of foreign language education, learner-centeredness, which is the new perspective, has changed the roles of learners and teachers in the classroom (Alonazi, 2017). In today's language classroom, learners are expected to take more responsibility for their learning, and teachers are expected to help learners become more independent inside and outside the classroom. These developments have brought the concept of learner autonomy in the field of language teaching (Aoki, 1999 cited in Cherinet, 2019; Benson, 2001). Learners need to be independent learners because learning by what teachers give is not enough. This needs autonomous learning ability, which is the ultimate goal of language learning. When there is

shared responsibility in the decision-making process, it can help learners develop a sense of responsibility for their learning, which is the basic component of autonomous learning.

In Ethiopia, where English is learned as a foreign language, learners need to be autonomous because their environment provides few opportunities to use English in daily life. Learners need to learn and practice the language on their own, apart from classroom instruction, because classroom instruction may not be sufficient to make them effective in their learning. Autonomous language learning is a very essential ability that learners should develop. Despite its importance in facilitating learning, few local studies have been conducted on learner autonomy.

Minwuyelet (2020) studied the association between learning autonomy, language anxiety, and thinking style among Ethiopian university students. The study focused on the relationship between learner autonomy and thinking style and the relationship between learner autonomy and language anxiety. The result confirmed that there was a significant association between learner autonomy and thinking style as well as between learning autonomy and language anxiety among Ethiopian university students. Mesfin (2008) conducted an assessment focusing on the practice of autonomous learning and identification of the problems encountered in practicing it with grade 11 students and attempted to identify students' awareness concerning their own roles, responsibilities, and strategy use in language learning. The findings indicated that the majority of students were aware of their roles and language learning strategies but they had little awareness of their teachers' role and they were not responsible for their learning. Lack of basic English skills, exam-based technique of study, inadequacy of English materials, and lack of confidence in using English were some problems that held back students' efforts to learn English autonomously.

Zelege (2014) examined the correlation between students' beliefs about autonomous learning of writing and their writing performance. The result demonstrated that there was a strong positive correlation between the students' belief in autonomous learning of writing and their writing performance on each of the aspects of writing. Usman (2015) assessed learners' autonomy in vocabulary learning in an EFL Class in grade 12, which focused on students' awareness of their responsibility and the way they use vocabulary learning strategies. The results revealed that the majority of students were aware of their responsibility but they did not know how to use

vocabulary learning strategies and they were not encouraged to learn and develop their vocabulary materials autonomously. Another study conducted by Cherinet (2019) examined students' and teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy, focusing on students' willingness to take responsibility and teachers' ability to move their students toward autonomous learning. The study found that there was no significant difference in students' and teachers' perception of taking responsibility and students did not exert effort in involving autonomous learning activities and the teachers were also not able to encourage learners to do the activities and tasks by themselves.

As Murphy (2011) stated, due to the lack of a single universal theory of autonomy, the educational importance of developing autonomy can take a variety of forms, depending on learning context and learner characteristics. In addition, some of these studies were done at the high school level, where teaching-learning practices could be highly influenced by the social and cultural environments. The studies conducted at higher education institutions focused on the association of autonomy with a certain English Language skill or behavior and also focused on the correlation between teachers' and students' perceptions. However, this study was intended to examine the state of autonomous learning practices, students' attitudes towards autonomous learning, the role of English language teachers in promoting learners' autonomy, and the extent of supportive environments available to promote autonomous learning in Addis Ababa Science and Technology University (AASTU). Most of the studies conducted so far in the country have hardly comprehensively addressed these issues. There is a common consensus among all educators and policymakers that at the university level students are expected to be responsible for their learning. Teachers at AASTU are often heard complaining about their students' inclination to entirely rely on their teachers, feeling frustrated for the little response they get in return for the efforts they devote to their classes, and considering teachers the only responsible for students' success or failure.

However, learner autonomy promotion equally requires the effort of both teachers and students. It can be promoted not only by the students' readiness but also by the teachers' readiness and commitment to develop it (Mattarima, 2011). The teacher and students should work together for the same goal, producing independent learners. Since English is a medium of instruction and nearly all the teaching-learning and reference materials are provided in English, English

language courses are given to university students to help them improve their proficiency. This implies that language teaching practices alone by teachers in the class cannot make students English language learners unless the students are committed to being autonomous learners.

On the other hand, today's world situation encourages out-of-class and independent learning. The emergence of technology and the availability of information, impose students to take responsibility for their learning, especially outside the classroom. Thus, a proper understanding of students' beliefs and practices related to autonomous language learning, and adequate information about the roles that teachers should adopt to encourage learner autonomy are some of the crucial things to take proper measures.

Hence, these pieces of evidence imply that conducting a study on autonomous learning may contribute towards generating pertinent recommendations for appropriate policy intervention in higher education institutions in general and in AASTU in particular. In addition, since autonomous learning is not innate or inborn and should be acquired and guided, proper training can also be suggested. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate students' English language learning autonomy at AASTU.

### **1.3. Objectives of the study**

#### **1.3.1. General Objective**

The general objective of this study was to investigate first-year students' English language learning autonomy at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University.

#### **1.3.2. Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- a. Assess AASTU students' autonomous English language learning activities.
- b. Assess AASTU students' attitudes towards autonomous English language learning practices (taking responsibility).
- c. Examine the role of English language teachers in promoting autonomous English language learning practices.
- d. Investigate how supportive the facilities in AASTU are for autonomous English language learning.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

The study attempted to answer the following research questions:

- a. What are the activities AASTU students do to learn the English language autonomously?
- b. What are the attitudes of the students towards autonomous language learning practices (taking responsibility)?
- c. To what extent do English language teachers play their role in promoting learners' autonomous English language learning?
- d. How supportive are the facilities for implementing autonomous English language learning in AASTU?

#### **1.5. Significance of the study**

This study is significant in various ways. First, it raises awareness among the students as to the efforts they need to develop autonomous English language learning abilities and how to be responsible for their learning. It might also provide valuable insight to the teachers, what role they have to play, and to take practical actions to facilitate autonomous English language learning and produce autonomous English language learners.

Second, it has made a methodological contribution as the study tried to use a data collection tool to assess autonomous English language learning practices and the facilitating conditions of autonomous English language learning in AASTU.

As far as the researcher's reading is concerned, no research was carried out on the level of higher education in Ethiopia about the autonomous English language learning practices and the facilitating conditions of autonomous English language learning. Therefore this study also contributes to the current body of literature about autonomous English language learning practices in Ethiopia.

Furthermore, the study can be helpful for curriculum designers and material writers to develop syllabuses and materials that are geared toward encouraging students to develop autonomous English language learning abilities in studying English. Moreover, this research can also serve as a preliminary idea for any interested researcher in the area. It may serve as a means for further study by other scholars who are interested in researching autonomous English language learning.

In summary, the study presented in this doctoral dissertation was believed to contribute to the practice and theory of autonomous language learning. First, it contributed to a better understanding of autonomous English language learning. Second, it promoted the practices and the roles of students and teachers in the development of autonomous English language learning. Third, the study made methodological contributions to the review and development of autonomous English language learning. Finally, the study resulted in key recommendations that could potentially implicate syllabus and material amendments in the English Department of AASTU and beyond. Briefly, this research has practical and methodological contributions to ELT literature, stakeholders under the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, and ELT researchers in general.

### **1.6. Scope of the study**

The main objective of this study was to investigate students' English language learning autonomy at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University. Conceptually, the study was delimited to autonomous learning focusing on its practices, students' attitudes towards autonomous English language learning, roles of teachers in promoting learners' autonomous English language learning, and the extent of supporting facilities in the study area. The study focused on first-year students assigned to pre-engineering at AASTU, and a course 'Communicative English Language Skills I' (Flen 1011) which is a first-semester English course because it encourages students' independent learning.

### **1.7. Limitations of the Study**

The study has some limitations, which should be addressed in further research. The study was conducted in only one research setting, and the qualitative data was collected from a relatively small number of participants. This may have constrained the generalizability of the study. Consequently, in further research, the study could be replicated in other universities within Ethiopia with a larger number of samples to draw a bigger picture of autonomous English language learning practices in Ethiopia and to work on how to develop effective autonomous language learning.

In addition, teachers' perception toward students' autonomous English language learning should be investigated because autonomous English language learning could not be successful without

the involvement of teachers. Finally, it is hoped that this study contributed in some small way to informing the current autonomous English language learning practices at AASTU. Further ways like technology-based learning should be found to enable the students to become more responsible and independent language learners.

### **1.8. Operational Definitions**

In this section, definitions of the terms are provided since a clear understanding should be established at this point on how these terms are used in the study.

**Autonomy:** In this study, autonomy is a teacher-and-student link where the teacher guides, gives instructions, enlightens the vague ways, and directs the students based on which students can set their goals and attain their progression.

**Autonomous learning:** autonomous learning is the capacity of students to confidently and independently organize learning materials, students' commitment to use additional learning methods and resources, students' readiness to self-regulate and cooperate to learn individually or in groups by themselves, and the capacity to use available environmental opportunities and guidance from their instructors to achieve the teaching-learning goals.

**Independent learning:** in this context, independent learning is how learners can achieve English Language skills in their way and strategies. Independent English language learning includes developing confidence about learning new languages, developing effectiveness as a learner, effective use of study hours outside the constraints, work constructively with friends and native speakers of the English language. It also embraces making learning fun by choosing materials that interest the learner and taking responsibility for own progress and achievements.

**Out-of-class learning:** Out-of-class learning is any effort learners make out of class on their own for the achievement of their English Language learning goal. These are learners' involvement in the language learning task in different ways such as adding related language learning activities to their regular classroom input, reading in the English language, listening to music, listening to the news, reading novels in English, and chatting with friends. It also includes learners' use of the English language for the functions they get from the internet, learning through television, out-of-class projects, and interacting with native English speakers.

**Learning practices:** learning practices are activities learners do inside and outside of the class individually, in pairs, and in groups cooperatively. They include students' involvement in decision-making, ability, and willingness to take responsibility.

**Supporting environments/facilities:** supporting environments for autonomous learning are some teaching practices that are supportive of autonomy. They include resource-based, technology-based, learner-based, classroom-based, curriculum-based, and teacher-based approaches in the practice of fostering autonomy among learners. However, the focus of this study will be on resource-based and technology-based.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Conceptual Background**

A seminar report published by Holec, in 1976 was regarded as an important foundation in the field of autonomy. The report was on self-directed learning and autonomy, a contribution made by Holec and his colleagues. Early ideal practice of learning autonomy focused on total independent learning which means learners should be responsible for the whole decision-making process of their learning which rejected the traditional classroom. Later, with Dam's demonstration of autonomy, in which principles could be integrated into classrooms, a second wave of autonomy was raised in the 1990s. With the influence of the deconstruction of the conventional classroom, many researchers came to the third wave of interest in learner autonomy, which led to a tendency to explore and understand the role of autonomy in language teaching and learning (Liu, 2015).

The roots of this concept can be seen in the radically student-centered educational thought of writers such as Dewey (1930), and in work on adult self-directed learning by Brookfield (1986). These ideas were developed systematically in the 1970s, and autonomy in language education began with the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project, which led to the publication of Holec's (1981) seminal report. In Holec's (1981) report, autonomy was defined as 'the ability to take charge of one's learning', and this definition has proved remarkably robust and remains the most widely cited definition in the field.

Another important development has been a growing emphasis on the psychology of learner autonomy. Holec's (1981) focus was on the mechanics of day-to-day learning management even though he frequently discussed the qualities of autonomous learners such as the selection of materials and content, method of learning, monitoring learning progress, and self-assessment. On the other hand, other authors put psychology at the heart of learner autonomy and mentioned autonomy in language learning as the development and exercise of a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action (Little, 1991; Dang, 2012). Campbell (2004) expresses learner autonomy as a quality enabling a person to interact with text or accomplish some other language task in a self-directed manner without significant or constant

assistance from others. Learner autonomy has been characterized as “the capacity to take control of one’s learning” (Benson, 2011).

Learner autonomy is now gradually recognized as a legitimate need and goal in education. Especially since the 1980s, autonomy in language learning has been a topic of widespread discussion (Littlewood, 1999). As Gremo and Riley (1995) tried to examine the broader historical background of autonomy as well as ideas and concepts that contributed to the development of autonomy, they identified a variety of important factors: minority rights movements, development of adult education, increase in the school and university population, increased demand for foreign languages, commercialization of much language provision and the perception of language learner’s role and development in technology were reasons interconnected with the classification of arguments scholars give to highlight the importance of fostering learner autonomy. As McDevitt (1997) states the end product of language learning is an independent learner in every aspect of the language. Cultivating a learner’s independence or autonomy should be regarded as the end goal that teachers and educators pursue.

## **2.2. Definition: What is autonomy?**

There are many definitions of autonomy proposed by some scholars. Holec (1981) defined autonomy as the ability to take charge of one’s learning. The term ‘ability’ here is understood as the "potential or capacity" to carry out a certain task. So according to him when we say someone is autonomous, it means that he/she is responsible for exercising control over the learning process in terms of determining the objectives of his/her learning, choosing the content, selecting the techniques and methods of learning, monitoring his/her progress and evaluating what has been acquired. Holec noted that this ability is to have responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of learning and it is not inborn but must be acquired by natural means or by formal learning i.e. in a systematic, deliberate way.

Benson (2001) defines autonomy as the capacity to take control of one’s learning. It is a capacity to take responsibility and about people taking more control over their lives - individually and collectively. It pays much attention to an attribute of learners rather than the learning situation. As Scharle and Szabó (2000) indicate, autonomy and responsibility are very much interrelated because both require active involvement. Autonomy is the freedom and ability to manage one’s

affairs, which entails the right to make decisions as well whereas, responsibility is being in charge of something, which implies one has to deal with the consequences of one`s actions.

Little (1991) describes autonomy as a capacity - for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, independent action, and psychological relation to the process and content of his or her learning and finally transferring what he or she has learned to wider contexts. It is an ability in which learners should act independently, reflect on their needs critically, and make their own decisions. Dickinson (1987) cited in Benson (2001) defines autonomy as the situation in which the learner is responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his/her learning and the implementation of those decisions.

Meanwhile, Kohonen (1992) in Benson (2001) argues that autonomy includes the notion of interdependence, i.e. learners can cooperate with others and solve conflicts constructively. Candy (1991), on the other hand, states that autonomy is an essential way of effective learning that is not the total detachment of the teacher, but the teacher and student collaboration to meet students` needs. A further cognitive dimension to the definition of autonomy has been suggested by Sinclair (1999). She defines autonomy as the learners` capacity to make “informed” decisions about their learning. She argues that autonomous learners are not only able to make choices but also can provide a rationale for their choices and describe alternative strategies that they could have used.

Peng Dingjin (2002) also defines autonomy from the perspective of Chinese students` characteristics. Learner autonomy has five aspects: taking responsibility for learning, having a clear objective, making schedules, evaluating the effectiveness of learning, and adjusting the learning strategy. Learner autonomy implies a particular kind of socialization involving the development of attributes and values that will permit individuals to play active, participatory roles in a democratic society (Benson, 2007) Autonomous learning is a process that takes place gradually and never-ending progression (Holec, 1981) and it is a constant process, open to educational interventions rather than a state, which is reached once and for all (Candy, 1991).

In addition, autonomy is a teacher-and-student link where the teacher guides, gives instructions, enlightens the vague ways, and directs the students based on which students can set their goals

and attain their progression (Killen, 2013). Dang (2012) categorizes the attributes of learner autonomy into three categories: initiating, monitoring, and evaluating. The initiating learning process involves attributes related to understanding personal learning preferences, setting goals, preparing study plans, and creating learning opportunities. The monitoring learning process, where most of the learning takes place, includes attributes related to learning engagement and maintenance such as selecting appropriate strategies, modifying learning paths, and negotiating with others. The evaluating learning process anticipates attributes about the way to review learning outcomes such as proofreading an assignment and appraising a piece of writing. Knowing that gaining success in this long process of initiating, monitoring, and evaluating oneself for learning requires extended psychological pressure, and knowing students' differences in terms of their learning level.

There is broad agreement that autonomous learners are learners who understand the purpose of their learning program, explicitly accept responsibility for their learning, share in the setting of learning goals, take initiative in planning and executing learning activities, and regularly review their learning and evaluate its effectiveness (Holec, 1981; Little, 1991). In other words, there is a consensus that the practice of learner autonomy requires insight, a positive attitude, a capacity for reflection, and a readiness to be proactive in self-management and interaction with others.

### **2.3. Autonomy in language learning**

In language education, the theory and practice of learner autonomy broadly refers to a capacity for independent action that learners can develop in the process of learning, and which they can possess to varying degrees and express in various behavioral modes (Hsieh & Hsieh, 2019).

In the context of foreign language learning, Holec (1981) cited in Benson (2006) defines autonomy as the ability to take charge of one's learning, so an autonomous learner is a person who is capable of taking charge of his or her learning. Holec elaborates this definition as the ability to have and to hold the responsibility for all decisions concerning all aspects of learning, such as: determining the objectives, defining the content and progression, selecting methods and techniques to be used, monitoring the procedure of acquisition, and evaluating what has been acquired. In short, they refer to the capacity to make decisions at successive stages of the learning process. As Benson (2006) mentioned, autonomy in learning is about learners taking

more control over their learning in classrooms and outside, and in the language learning context, it is about learners taking more control over the purposes for which they learn the language and how they learn. According to Campbell (2004), autonomy in language learning is the ability to interact with text or accomplish some other language task in a self-directed manner without significant or constant assistance from others.

As Littlewood (1996) examines the components that makeup autonomy in language learning, he defines an autonomous person as the one who has an independent capacity to make and carry out the choices that govern his or her actions. He further explains that capacity depends on two main components: ability and willingness. This means that a person may have the ability to make independent choices but no willingness to do so, or a person may be willing to make independent choices but not have the ability to do so. Ability and willingness can further be divided into two components. Ability depends on possessing knowledge about the alternatives from which choices have to be made and skills for carrying out whatever choices seem most appropriate. Willingness depends on having both the motivation and the confidence to take responsibility for the choices required. To be successful in acting autonomously, all of these four components need to be present together.

Littlewood (1997) presented a three-stage model that involves dimensions of language acquisition, learning approach, and personal development. In the context of language acquisition, autonomy involves an ability to operate independently with language and use it to communicate personal meanings in real, unpredictable situations, i.e. autonomy as a communicator (Benson, 2006). In the context of classroom organization, it involves learners' ability to take responsibility for their learning to apply active and personally relevant strategies.

To improve autonomy in language learning, Little (2007) suggests three fundamental principles. The first principle is learner involvement which refers to affective and metacognitive aspects of language learning, encouraging learners to be involved actively in their learning process. The second principle is learner reflection which is associated with the metacognitive aspect of language learning: learners should be encouraged to become critical thinkers to develop awareness about the learning process and learning content. The third principle is appropriate target language use which is related to the communicative and the metacognitive aspects,

proposing that students should use the target language both for communicative purposes and metacognitive activities such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating. These principles are seen by Little as operating in a dynamic relationship to one another, and he argues that the development of autonomous learning may take place, only under conditions where all three principles are followed in practice (Little, 2007).

The principle of learner involvement is about learners' engagement in their learning and taking responsibility for key decisions which highlights the importance of learners determining for themselves their learning purposes and goals (Little, 2007). Self-determination of learning purpose and goal can directly influence their motivation and sense of control. According to Han (2013), the first references to learner autonomy are language learners' attitudes and motivation for learning. Language learners are willing to take an active attitude and motivation toward their language study and take the initiative to be responsible for the study if they are involved in decision-making.

The principle of learner reflection follows the need for learners to be taught to think critically about the process and content of their learning; therefore learners should be guided to consider cognitive processes of learning and developing insights into their ways of learning (Little, 2007). Through learner training and teacher support, language learners can develop learning strategies to learn independently (Han, 2013). Learning strategies are the conscious thoughts and actions that learners take to achieve a learning goal (Chamot, 2004). As Wenden (1991) cited in Chamot (2004) defines, learning strategies are mental steps or operations that learners use to learn a new language and to regulate their efforts to do so. These definitions inform us that learning strategies are essential in learning a language. Therefore, learners have to be trained on how to use them to be autonomous.

Moreover, authentic interaction with the target language users, collaborative group work, open-ended learning tasks, and learning about the language are some areas of activity through which learner autonomy can proceed toward critical engagement (Benson, 1997) cited in Kohonen et al. (2001).

In the late 1990s, several writers attempted to operationalize the notion that autonomy is a matter of degree. For instance, Nunan's (1997) attempt involved a model of five levels of 'learner action' for students to develop autonomy considering both goals and content. These include awareness (making students aware of pedagogical goals and content of materials and identifying their learning styles and strategies); involvement (making learners review and select among given options); intervention (making learners adapt official goals); creation (learner is the inventor, originator, and creator of his/hers own goals) and transcendence (making links between the content of classroom learning and the world beyond, finally becoming teachers and researchers) that inform the sequencing of learner development activities in language textbooks.

#### **2.4. Characteristics of an autonomous learner**

Autonomy is viewed as the ability to think and act critically and independently, to self-manage study and learning, and realistically to appraise one's strengths and weaknesses as a learner Crome et al. (2009). They further explain that the capacity for autonomous learning is recognized by its expression in various forms, such as the ability to search for, read, and understand relevant primary and secondary materials; to explain an issue in oral and written form to others; and to demonstrate an awareness of the consequences of what has been learned. As Mattarima (2011) stated, autonomous learners make strong efforts to inquire about what is learned, how it is learned, and why it is learned. They will need a little help from their teachers. They have great potency in appropriately selecting their learning strategies and mostly learn in their strategies and styles

According to Little (2011), autonomous learners understand the purpose of their learning program, explicitly accept responsibility for their learning, share in the setting of learning goals, take initiative in planning and executing learning activities, and regularly review their learning and evaluate its effectiveness. This means that the practice of learner autonomy requires a positive attitude, a capacity for reflection, and a readiness to be proactive in self-management and interaction with others.

Autonomous learning is achieved when certain conditions are obtained: cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies, motivation, attitude, awareness, and knowledge about language learning on

the part of the learner. The autonomous learning process is as much a skill as learning to drive, which requires practice, and it is assessed against specific criteria (Thanassoulas, 2007).

Upon reviewing the different definitions and connotations of learner autonomy, a working definition having three important characteristics is proposed by Han (2013). Firstly, learner autonomy refers to language learners' attitudes and motivation for learning. Language learners are willing to take an active attitude and motivation toward his or her language study and take the initiative to be responsible for the study. Secondly, learner autonomy is viewed as the capacity of learning. Through learner training and teacher support, language learners can develop the capacity and learning strategies to learn independently. Lastly, the development of learner autonomy cannot be accomplished without a supportive environment or context. Here, environment includes the teacher's guidance, teaching and learning facilities, and learning materials and resources (Han, 2013; 2014). Therefore learner autonomy is the constructive process of how language learners develop their autonomy within the supportive environment or context.

Many researchers have suggested different characteristics related to autonomous learners. Candy (1991) stated some characteristics of autonomous learners such as being logical and analytical; reflective and self-aware; curious, open, and highly motivated; flexible, interdependent and interpersonally competent; persistent and responsible; creative; and methodical and disciplined; self-sufficient, information seekers, knowledgeable and skillful about learning process and critical thinkers.

According to Dickinson (1993), although quite a lot of learners do not know what is going on in their classes, autonomous learners can identify what has been taught. They can formulate their learning objectives in collaboration with their teacher. In addition, autonomous learners can select and implement appropriate learning strategies consciously, and they can monitor their use of learning strategies. Lastly, autonomous learners can also monitor their learning and self-assessment. As Cotterall (1995) mentioned in Çak (2015), it is essential that learners be able to evaluate the quality of their learning, appreciate their abilities, and their progress, and what they can do with the skills they have acquired. In addition, autonomous learners are likely to be individuals who have overcome the obstacles that educational background, cultural norms, and

prior experience may have put in their way. Following the above definition, learners, first and foremost, become willing and ready for the change that learner autonomy requires (Cotterall, 1995).

The capacity learner autonomy necessitates may be innate or may be learned afterward. The capacity whether it is innate or learned afterward may grow with practice or it may be lost if it is not used (Holec, 1981; Little, 1991). Similar to capacity, awareness may also develop naturally and gradually and learners thus may start taking initiative by exercising and nourishing their capacity. Learners need to be consciously aware of how language systems work and what they need for an effective learning process. Through awareness, learners may set up learning goals, plan and practice learning activities, select and use appropriate learning strategies, monitor their progress, and actively engage in the learning process (Holec, 1981).

From the literature, autonomous learners have the following features in common. They are responsible, flexible, and curious; they need to learn, hold a positive attitude towards learning, set their objectives, plan their learning, explore available learning opportunities and resources, use a variety of strategies, interact with others, monitor their progress, reflect on and evaluate their learning, rationalize their actions, are aware of alternative learning strategies, are aware of their cognitive abilities and learning style, transfer what they have learned to wider contexts and finally appreciate that their efforts are crucial to progress in learning and behave accordingly (Little, 1991; Benson, 2001). Therefore, there is a consensus in the literature that autonomous learners are indeed effective learners.

## **2.5. Contributing Factors in Learner Autonomy**

For the achievement of students' autonomous learning, there are conditions or contributing factors. Knowing these conditions/factors helps teachers to facilitate autonomous learning. According to Zeng (2016), there are four factors contributing to learner autonomy: motivation, attitudes, learning strategies, and evaluation that contribute to the achievement of autonomous language learning.

### **2.5.1. Motivation**

Motivation is one of the key factors that influences the rate and success of second or foreign language learning. It has several effects on students' learning and behavior. It leads to increased effort and energy that learners expend in activities directly related to their needs and goals. Jingnan (2011) suggests that students need to possess intrinsic motivation, and a strong desire to take responsibility for their learning, which includes setting objectives, designing learning activities, selecting learning methods, and assessing their learning processes. As Hussin, Maarof, and D'Cruz stated in Zeng (2016) English teachers are responsible for motivating students to let them have a positive self-concept, high self-esteem, and positive attitude, get a clear understanding of goals for language learning, and continuous active participation in the language learning process. These are relevant for the creation of a favorable environment that could contribute to the success of language learning. Therefore, before introducing various activities aimed at fostering autonomy in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, teachers should ensure that their students possess sufficient motivation to actively participate in all planned activities (Spratt et al. 2002). Encouraging learners in case of failure, assuring them of the possible reward of constant efforts, and praising them in case of success for further progress is the duty of the teachers.

### **2.5.2. Attitudes**

Attitude is a term frequently used in psychological theories, and includes three key elements: emotional responses, beliefs, and behavior (Albarracin et al. 2021). Affect refers to an individual's emotions, moods, and feelings toward a particular object or attitude. In language learning, it is related to learners' preferences towards taking more responsibility for their learning or relying on the teacher. Cognition relates to a person's knowledge and beliefs about the object of attitude, specifically in language learning, including attitudes toward their role in the learning process and their capacities (Hosseini & Pourmandnia, 2013). The behavioral component involves a person's intentions and actions towards the object of attitude, such as learners with positive attitudes towards learner autonomy being more inclined to take responsibility (Svenningsson et al. 2022). Modifying negative attitudes can facilitate the learning process. Attitude change is typically achieved through persuasive communication between teachers and learners. Generally, these components can shape an individual's attitude toward language and

culture in the context of language learning. Hence, teachers need to identify learners' attitudes and focus on modifying any negative attitudes to promote autonomous learning.

### **2.5.3. Learning Strategy**

Language learning strategies are generally defined as specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that learners use to make language learning successful (Oxford, 1990; Hardan, 2013). Learning strategies are the conscious thoughts and behaviors used by learners with the explicit goal of improving their knowledge and understanding of a target language learning (Liu, 2010). Learning strategies are the mental and communicative procedures or techniques learners use to learn and use language effectively (Cohen, 1996; Chuin & Kaur, 2015). Although these definitions have differences, all of them accept the efforts to learn about the target language. Hence, learning strategies include mental and physical actions that a learner deploys to make effective in the process of language acquisition. Learning strategy is decisively considered to be the key to promoting learner autonomy. Supporting students to understand the importance of strategies and using some strategies appropriate for them is an effective way to promote their learner autonomy (Shi & Han, 2019).

### **2.5.4. Evaluation**

Holec refers to self-assessment as an integral part of learning (Holec, 1981). Yan (2023) keeps self-assessment as central to the active and reflective involvement of learners. Autonomy is a new approach to studying for many learners and lacks the traditional system of feedback on achievement inherent in teacher-led education (Zeng, 2016).

## **2.6. Teachers' role in the development of learner autonomy**

The scholars and researchers involved in theoretical issues and practical implementation of the frameworks, approaches, and principles mentioned express several common observations related to putting learner autonomy into practice. All of them agree upon the fact that developing autonomy is a lengthy process and its successful implementation depends on the persistence of the teacher. For the implementation and development of learner autonomy, teachers play an important role because they are responsible for developing a learning environment conducive to promoting learner autonomy. Little (2007) points out that learner autonomy is the product of an

interactive process in which the teacher gradually enlarges the scope of his or her learners' autonomy by gradually allowing them more control of the process and content of their learning. The systematic and continuous awareness-raising discourses and exercises are seen as essential for a smooth transition from a teacher-fronted to a learner-centered approach and then to the desirable learning-centered approach.

According to Benson (2001), autonomy is not a method of learning, but an attribute of the learner's approach to the learning process. Therefore the teacher cannot teach students to become autonomous but, the teacher may create such an atmosphere and conditions in which they will be encouraged to develop the autonomy that they already have. Autonomy is considered a multidimensional concept that takes the different contexts of learning which is usually accepted as essentially implying particular skills and behaviors and particular methods of organizing the teaching and learning process (Çakıcı, 2015). According to Zeng's (2005) suggestion, the teachers' central roles include developing learning motivation and interest of students, establishing a pleasant learning environment, providing a learning guide, teaching metacognitive and learning strategies for students' independent learning, organizing learning activities that promote learner autonomy, and encouraging students to use other resources.

The promotion of autonomy depends to a great extent on the teacher's redefinition of his or her role because the idea to incorporate autonomy in language learning typically comes from the teacher (Hill, 1994). Hence, if the learning mode of the students is to become more autonomous, a re-examination of teacher roles is essential (Crabbe, 1999). The role of a teacher implies two functions: a management (the social side of teaching) function and an instructional (the task-oriented side) function (Wright, 1987). Teachers with these two functions are expected to determine learning goals, select class materials, evaluate learning progress, and group language learners while teachers for autonomous learning should share with learners the responsibility for some of the decisions they make and take on the role of a facilitator, a counselor, or a helper.

Consequently, changing roles is usually associated with a re-distribution of power from the teacher to the learner. Raising awareness and promoting autonomous learning to students is the responsibility of English language teachers. According to Mattarima (2011), teachers should

promote learner autonomy by acknowledging different ways of goal attainment and learning styles, minimizing external pressure, fostering intrinsic motivation, and sharing responsibility with the students in the learning process.

To encourage learners to become autonomous inside the language classroom, Yu (2006) suggests teachers' to-do lists developed from what Holec (1985) and Nunan (1997) stated about teachers' role in creating awareness of pedagogical goals, contents, and strategies; intervention while modifying and adapting personal goals, learning style, and strategies; creating awareness of responsibility and motivation; involving learners in independent learning task; monitoring and evaluating learning if needed skills and knowledge were acquire. Little (2007) enriched these teachers' roles in promoting language learner autonomy being related to three general pedagogical principles: learner involvement (planning, monitoring, and evaluating of learning); learner reflection (process and content of learning and self-assessment); target language use (the medium as well as the goal of learning).

Based on the definition given by Holec (1981) in the context of foreign language learning, autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's learning and an autonomous learner is a person who is capable of taking charge of his or her learning and the role of the teacher is to help learners to assume the responsibility for making decisions of their learning. Accordingly, the role(s) of the language teacher for autonomous learners is to facilitate and help them to assume the responsibility for making relevant decisions concerning their learning in the following aspects: 1) determining the learning objectives; 2) defining the learning contents and progressions; 3) selecting learning methods and techniques to be used; 4) monitoring the procedure of acquisition; 5) evaluating what has been acquired (Han, 2020). Teachers can also provide students with guidance on recommended online tools and services and evaluate appropriate online resources (Godwin, 2011).

Based on the three pedagogical principles (learner involvement, learner reflection, and appropriate target language use), Little (2001) states that teachers should: use the target language as the medium of classroom communication and require the same of the learners; involve learners in a non-stop quest for good learning activities; help learners to set their learning targets

and choose their learning activities; require learners to identify individual goals but pursue them through collaborative work in small groups; require learners to keep a written record of their learning, such as plans of lessons and projects, lists of useful vocabulary, and texts they produce; and engage learners in regular evaluation of their progress as individual learners and as a class.

To foster learner autonomy, teachers need to develop a sense of responsibility and encourage learners to take an active part in making decisions about their learning. As Berfield, et al (2007) suggest, the role of teachers in fostering autonomy includes institutional knowledge to start to address effectively constraints on teaching and learning; willingness to confront institutional barriers in socially appropriate ways to turn constraints into opportunities for change; readiness to engage in lifelong learning to the best of an individual's capacity; reflection on the teaching process and environment; and commitment to promoting learner autonomy.

According to Louis (2006), teachers should encourage learners to work independently, helping them to make decisions about their learning process because directing and participating in their learning process actively can help students develop awareness of the responsibilities that they should fulfill during the process. In this way, students may work confidentially outside of the classroom without getting help from the teacher. Namely, teachers should not transfer knowledge to students; instead, they should teach them 'learning to learn' (Godwin, 2011; Holec, 1981).

It is the teachers' role to help students learn how to become autonomous learners. Teachers' goal is not only to prepare students for standardized tests but also to make them capable of improving the language beyond school and using it for communicative purposes. Since autonomy is an important construct that must be applied to both the teaching profession and language learning, they are expected to be improved after the formal education process and throughout life (Genc, 2015).

As Al-Saadi (2011) strongly argued specialized workshops and hands-on training sessions for teachers in schools and language institutes should be given to, first, critically reflect on and problematize their current practices; secondly, rationalize the intended move; and finally, explain in practical terms how teachers and students could give up their traditional roles and take on new ones. Again, as Little (2000) stated, the development of learner autonomy depends on the

development of teacher autonomy. This is because expecting teachers to foster the growth of autonomy in their learners cannot be reasonable if they don't know what it is to be an autonomous learner. Teaching those same reflective and self-managing processes that they apply to their learning can easily be shared with their learners. Although all truly effective learning entails the growth of autonomy in the learner as regards both the process and the content of learning, for most learners the growth of autonomy requires the stimulus, insight, and guidance of a good teacher.

Xu and Xu (2004) summarize the teacher's role depending on the theoretical research and relevant empirical studies on the teacher's role in fostering learner autonomy. Based on the research papers discussing teachers' roles concerning the promotion of learner autonomy, the roles of the teacher include facilitators, helpers, or consultants (Knowles, 1975); managers who create a supportive and stimulating learning environment (Higgs, 1988); active participants, monitors, consultants and guides when they work closely with their students' language learning and help students develop better techniques for learning (Nunan, 1993). They also reviewed the role teachers play in helping learners realize their responsibility for learning (Ho, 1995); facilitator who initiates and supports decision-making processes, a counselor and a resource who makes his or her knowledge and expertise available to the learners when it is needed (Voller, 1997); responsible for strategy instruction (Yang, 1998); helper of students to build the belief and confidence in autonomous learning; to make effective use of self-directed center; to think about the learning strategies and put them into practice; to make practical plans; to provide more opportunities for students to develop their autonomous ability and encourage more communication between teachers and students via various channels to monitor the learning process (Xu & Xu, 2004).

In fostering learner autonomy, teachers play multiple roles such as catalysts, discussants, consultants, observers, analysts, facilitators, and counselors, as highlighted by (Little, 1991). They adopt a supportive and patient approach, demonstrating tolerance, empathy, openness, and non-judgmental attitudes. Teachers view learners as active partners in the pursuit of shared objectives, aiming to motivate them by encouraging commitment and nurturing self-confidence. As partners, teachers assist learners in overcoming obstacles and challenges encountered during

the learning process (Benson, 2001). To foster learner autonomy in foreign language classes, teachers actively assist learners in various aspects. They support learners in setting objectives, planning their work, selecting appropriate materials, self-evaluating their progress, and acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge. In addition, teachers play a pivotal role in reshaping students' perceptions of the traditional roles of teachers and learners within the classroom. They encourage students to move away from the notion of the teacher as the sole authority and the learner as a passive recipient of knowledge. Instead, teachers promote a more collaborative and interactive learning environment where learners take ownership of their learning process and actively engage in it. This shift in perception empowers learners to become more independent and self-directed in their language-learning journey.

As part of the process of raising awareness and promoting learner autonomy, teachers engage in explicit explanations of objectives and the rationale behind specific activities. They provide training to learners, helping them identify their learning styles and appropriate learning strategies, and emphasizing the value and necessity of learner autonomy. Importantly, teachers respect the diverse approaches that learners employ in tackling tasks, as advocated by Benson (2001). Consequently, teachers are instrumental in providing the necessary support to enhance students' awareness, identify their specific needs in terms of strategy use, and facilitate the adoption of different strategies that will enable them to become autonomous learners and overcome educational barriers. To expose students to a wider range of strategies, teachers should offer them a comprehensive list of learning strategies and assist them in selecting the ones that align best with their learning styles.

### **2.7. Learners' Role in development of learner autonomy**

Holec (1979), identifies learners regarding their roles as good learners who make decisions regarding the choice of objectives; choice of content and materials; methods and techniques to be used; and how to assess progress and outcomes; responsible learner who accepts that his/her efforts are crucial for effective learning and co-operates with the teachers monitoring own progress through the use of opportunities available and the aware learner, who sees the relationship to what is to be learned, how to learn and the resources available to take charge or

control of learning. Under such learning, it is the learner who has to do a lot on their own with the suggestions and facilitation of teachers.

The first step towards autonomy starts when learners accept responsibility for their learning (Dam, 1995). This involves an attitude that generates learning behaviors shaped and guided by reflection, and to this extent, learner autonomy depends on a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. The development of learner autonomy also has a social interactive dimension.

Kohonen et al. (2001) insist that learners need to develop the following kinds of capacities to be autonomous: confidence (sense of control and mastery of one's body, behavior and the world), curiosity (desire to find out about things), intentionality (capacity to work with persistence and develop a sense of competence), self-control (ability to modulate and control one's action appropriately, developing a sense of inner control), relatedness (ability to engage with others, developing a sense of empathy), communication (ability to exchange ideas, feelings and experiences with others, developing trust in others), and cooperation (balancing one's needs with those of others in group situations).

## **2.8. Supporting Environment for Autonomous Learning**

Any practice that encourages and enables learners to take greater control of any aspect of their learning can be considered a means of promoting autonomy (Benson, 2001). Benson observes some teaching practices as supportive of autonomy. They include: 1) resource-based approaches which emphasize learner's independent interaction with learning materials; 2) technology-based approaches which emphasize learner's independent interaction with educational technologies; 3) learner-based approaches which emphasize the direct production of behavioral and psychological changes that enable learners to take control over their learning; 4) classroom-based approaches which emphasize learner control over the planning and assessment of classroom learning; 5) curriculum-based approaches which extend the idea of learner control to the curriculum; 6) teacher-based approaches which emphasize the role of the teacher and teacher education in the practice of fostering autonomy among learners. The distinction made in the classification above lies in the focus of the approaches. However, these approaches are interdependent, and

sometimes are combined in eclectic ways. It is likely that learning autonomy will be fostered effectively through a combination of approaches.

According to Schemenk (2005), the popularity of learner autonomy may be partially related to the rise of computer technology and the growing importance of computers in language learning environments worldwide. Computer technology has contributed much to the concept of autonomous learning in terms of facilitating learner autonomy thorough enabling a vast amount of materials for self-learning (Godwin, 2011). Although access to a wide range of materials is one of the main advantages of new technology, it requires a carefully planned and thought-out strategy on the part of the teacher from day one of classes, in which the teacher develops the necessary strategies to inform the students about the different paths they may choose to follow in order to identify and use the right kind of information. This is one of the first steps in the direction of learner autonomy in terms of retrieving the kind of information they need (Raya & Fernández, 2001).

## **2.9. Conceptual framework**

Conceptual framework synthesis the theoretical and empirical literature reviewed on the key components of the study. Accordingly, the conceptualization of the core components of this study is supported by the foregoing concepts and theoretical frameworks. The conceptual framework attempts to capture the possible connection between students' autonomous language learning activities, and their attitude towards autonomous learning, their teachers' roles and supportive environments leads to autonomous learning.

According to this study, there are four contributing factors for the development of autonomous language learning. The first factor is the teacher. The teacher has a great role for the development of autonomous English language learning. The teacher has to facilitate the overall activities the students' need to be involved in. As Little (2007) points out, learner autonomy is the product of an interactive process in which the teacher gradually enlarges the scope of his or her learners' autonomy by gradually allowing them more control of the process and content of their learning. This implies that the way the teacher manages or facilitates the engagements will determine the actions students take both inside and outside the class. The teacher has also the responsibility to

give guidance on proper use of the supporting environment which is the second factor that determines the students' actions towards autonomous learning, mainly outside class activities.

Even though computer technology has contributed much to the concept of autonomous learning in terms of facilitating learner autonomy through enabling a vast amount of materials for self-learning, it requires a carefully planned and thought-out strategy on the part of the teacher (Godwin, 2011). The third factor that determines the students' action towards autonomous learning is their attitude they have towards autonomous learning (taking responsibility). As Littlewood (1996) examines the components that make up autonomy in language learning, taking responsibility is the umbrella that includes ability and motivation under it. Therefore the attitude the students have towards taking responsibilities for their learning will determine their autonomous learning. The intention of this conceptual framework is to show that if the teacher plays his/her role for the development of autonomous learning, if there is a supporting environment/facilities that facilitates autonomous learning, and if the students have a positive attitude towards taking responsibility for their language learning, autonomous English language learning can easily take place. The following figure is the flow chart showing the relation between these factors.

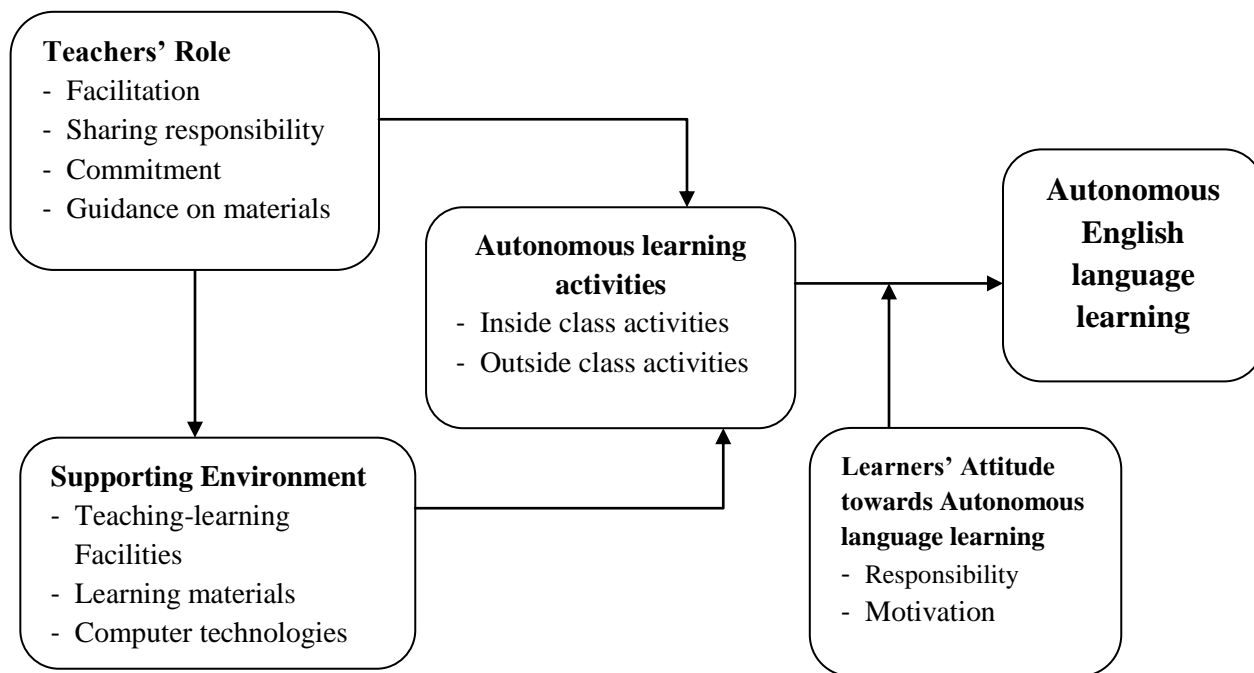


Figure 2.1. Conceptual Framework of the study (developed by the researcher, 2021)

The starting point of autonomous language learning is the teacher. Suppose the teacher is committed to guiding students to becoming autonomous learners using the supporting facilities. In that case, students can easily be involved in autonomous language learning activities both inside and outside the classroom. In addition to the teachers' guidance and supporting facilities, learners' attitudes toward autonomous language learning are essential. If students have the motivation and willingness to take responsibility, they can easily be autonomous language learners.

Therefore the relationship shown in the above figure indicates that the teachers make the students get involved in autonomous language learning activities using the available supporting facilities. In addition to the teachers' enforcement, students' attitude also determines the level of their autonomous language learning. When students get involved in the activities with positive attitudes towards autonomous language learning, they become autonomous language learners.

On the other way effective autonomous language learning can take place when students have a positive attitude toward autonomous language learning and practice autonomous language learning activities with the help of their teachers and available supporting facilities.

## **2.10. Summary of the Related Literature Review**

Learner autonomy is recognized as a legitimate need and goal in education. The end product of language learning is an independent learner in every aspect of the language and cultivating a learner's independence or autonomy is regarded as the end goal that teachers and educators pursue.

For the achievement of this goal, there are several contributing bodies: learners, teachers, and the environment. Learners' attitudes and motivation to learn autonomously determine to what extent they are ready and willing to learn autonomously. The first step towards autonomy starts when learners accept responsibility for their learning.

The teachers' role in the development of autonomous language learning is very essential. Even though teachers cannot teach students to become autonomous, they can create such an atmosphere and conditions in which students will be encouraged to develop the autonomy that

they already have. Autonomy is considered a multidimensional concept that takes the different contexts of learning which is usually accepted as essentially implying particular skills and behaviors and particular methods of organizing the teaching and learning process (Çakıcı, 2015). To foster learner autonomy, teachers need to develop a sense of responsibility and encourage learners to take an active part in making decisions about their learning.

Generally, researchers believe that more researches need to be done until single universal theory of autonomy is developed. As the literature discussed above indicates the educational importance of developing autonomy can take a variety of forms, depending on learning context and learner characteristics. As a worldwide the popularity of learner autonomy may be partially related to the rise of computer technology and the growing importance of computers in language learning environments. Computer technology has contributed much to the concept of autonomous learning in terms of facilitating learner autonomy through enabling a vast amount of materials for self-learning even though it requires a carefully planned and thought-out strategy on the part of the teacher. Therefore since the goal of education is developing autonomous learning, autonomous language learning should be researched, both teachers and students have to know their roles and contribute to its development.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Introduction**

The main objective of this study was to investigate first-year students' English language learning autonomy at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University. To achieve this goal four research questions are expected to be answered. This chapter describes the methodological orientations, methods, procedures, and techniques used to generate empirical data and answer the research questions outlined in the introductory chapter. It starts with explaining the research design adopted for the current study. This is followed by descriptions of the research site and research participants followed by sampling techniques used for the study. Then, it moves on to explain the tools used and procedures followed for data collection, analysis, and reporting. Across this chapter, philosophical, methodological, and practical issues in designing, collecting, and analyzing the empirical data are discussed and justified against achieving the purpose of the study and answering the research questions.

### **3.2. Research paradigm**

Language learning studies use a wide range of research methods that originate from different paradigms to study various topics. Any research method is built on specific ontological and epistemological foundations. Ontology is the nature of reality, which may be viewed objectively or subjectively. Epistemology is the researcher's philosophy of research. Methodological choice indicates the translation of a researcher's ontological and epistemological views into methodological frameworks of data collection and analysis. Researchers with more positivistic tendencies prefer quantitative methods; those with constructivist epistemologies prefer qualitative methods; and those with pragmatic beliefs prefer mixed methods (Riazi & Candlin, 2014; Johnson & Gray, 2010).

Pragmatism provides a suitable research framework in terms of the process of inquiry for this study, as advocated by John Dewey cited in (Morgan, 2014). Pragmatist researchers appreciate all of the objective, subjective, and inter-subjective realities and their interrelations (Johnson and Christensen, 2014; Johnson and Gray, 2010) to work out what is "best" in a specific context. As a pragmatist, the researcher of the present study stressed learning from the experiences or reflections of students and teachers.

Many authors (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Creswell *et al.* 2003; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004) advocated the use of mixed-methods research designs in educational research because they integrate qualitative and quantitative methods and supplement one another to provide a complete picture of what is being studied. In terms of epistemology, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) recommended that researchers take a pragmatist view to offer a philosophical partnership for mixed-method research. Similarly, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) said that pragmatism helps to find a negotiated approach between philosophical and methodological dogmatism and to locate a workable solution. Its assumptions are based on the notion that no single perspective allows researchers to arrive at the truth alone, but rather a combination of perspectives is most practical in allowing them to fully describe a phenomenon. In other words, the pragmatic perspective is problem-centered and sheds light on how research methods can be mixed productively (Hoshmand, 2003).

### **3.3. The Research Design: Convergent Mixed Methods Research**

Research design is a way that aids in utilizing empirical data to address the research questions. Additionally, it is crucial to assist the researcher in selecting the appropriate tools, techniques, and methodologies for data analysis. A mixed methods research design is an approach for gathering, examining, and "mixing" quantitative and qualitative data in a single study to comprehend a research problem. This study used a mixed methods research design due to its strength in producing both qualitative and quantitative data and reducing the constraints of both methodologies (Cresswell & John 2018). Using mixed methods research design, the researcher was able to minimize the possible limitations of a single-method research design. Creswell (2003) explained that the mixed method approach is an inquiry strategy that focuses on "converging or triangulating qualitative and quantitative data sources." Triangulating qualitative and quantitative designs was found to be more advantageous than using either of them, as it offered the study an opportunity to use various measures to better understand a phenomenon. The incorporation of qualitative and quantitative approaches provided a better understanding of autonomous English language learning practices.

The researcher used quantitative data collection techniques to gather quantifiable information from students, about students' autonomous English language learning practices, EFL teachers'

roles in promoting autonomous English language learning, and supporting facilities in AASTU for autonomous English language learning. To support the quantitative data in the study, the researcher observed the classroom, the research participants were involved in FGD and they were interviewed concerning each research question and their opinions were included in the study. The research design consisted of two separate but concurrent phases: quantitative and qualitative. The qualitative phase, which included analysis of classroom observation, student FGD, and teacher interviews, was prepared and analyzed thematically. In the quantitative phase, data collected using closed-ended survey items was analyzed descriptively via Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

### **3.4. Research Setting and Participants of the Study**

The next subsections provide information about the research setting or context and participants of the study. This study aimed to reveal the students' English language learning autonomy at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University (AASTU), where the researcher has taught English language courses for over ten years. The familiarity helped, especially in the data collection process and overall logistical arrangements of the study. Students enrolled at AASTU stay for a four-to-five-year-long study period in the undergraduate regular program. Besides the courses in their major fields of study, students take common courses mainly in the first and second years of their studies.

#### **3.4.1. Research setting**

The study took place at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University (AASTU) which is one of the two science and technology universities, located in Addis Ababa. It was established in 2011 under the Council of Ministers Regulation No. 216/2011. The campus is located in the Akaki Kaliti sub-city around the Kilinto area. Students, who score high marks on the national higher institution entrance exam, and are interested in joining the specific fields of study, join this university by taking additional entrance exams.

There were five colleges (College of Natural and Social Sciences, College of Applied Sciences, College of Biological and Chemical Engineering, College of Architecture and Civil Engineering, and College of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering). Of the five colleges, the College of

Natural and Social Sciences was selected purposely because freshmen students were administered under this college.

For the first two semesters, all freshmen students were assigned to pre-engineering before they joined their specific engineering department. From the pre-engineering courses, Communicative English Skills I (FLEn 1011) and II (FLEn 1012) were the two English courses given as common courses for all freshmen students. ‘Communicative English Skills I’(Flen 1011) is the first-semester course that encourages students to learn by doing things in English and by reflecting on the activities they did. It aims to develop students’ skills and strategies that they need to become independent learners. Since it is crucial to practice autonomous and independent learning at higher education institutions, freshmen pre-engineering students were the target population of this study.

### **3.4.2. Participants of the study**

The participants of the study were undergraduate students who took the ‘Communicative English Skills I’(Flen 1011) course in the first year and first semester of joining the university. The main objective of the course is to enable students to communicate in English with acceptable accuracy and fluency, in academic contexts and beyond. At AASTU, undergraduate program students commonly take three English courses. These are ‘Communicative English Skills I and II and Technical Report Writing Skills. While ‘Communicative English Skills I and II are offered on a three-credit-hour-per-week basis for all first-year students in the first two semesters, Technical Report Writing Skills is offered on a one, two, or three-credit-hour-per-week basis in the third or fourth year of study, depending on the specific curricular requirements of various fields of study at AASTU.

First-year students were assigned to pre-engineering where they take common courses. The pre-engineering courses, ‘Communicative English Skills I and II’ were common English courses given for pre-engineering students. ‘Communicative English Skills I’ (Flen 1011) is the first-semester course that encourages students to learn by doing things in English and by reflecting on the activities they did. The aim is to develop students’ skills and strategies that they need to become independent learners.

There were 1620 freshmen pre-engineering 2013 entry students and 23 EFL teachers in AASTU. There were 36 sections of pre-engineering students having 45 students in each section. Hence, students from freshmen pre-engineering and EFL teachers of ‘Communicative English Skills I’(Flen 1011) were participants in the study. More specifically freshmen pre-engineering 2013 entry students participated in the survey questionnaire and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and teachers took part in the interview.

### **3.5. Sampling technique**

The present study employed four different data gathering instruments – classroom observation, questionnaire, FGD, and interview for which participants were selected using various sampling techniques.

The main purpose of observing the classrooms was to assess the classroom practices focusing on how students got involved in autonomous language learning and how teachers were involved in promoting autonomous language learning in five freshman pre-engineering classrooms at AASTU. The number of observed classrooms was determined based on the teachers who participated in the study as interviewees. There were 23 English teachers in the department at the time of data collection but only 10 were considered to participate in the study. Thirteen teachers were pursuing their doctoral studies at different universities and hence they were not considered for selection. Four teachers were also taken out of the teacher population because they had taken part in the pilot study- as interviewees and their classes were also observed. From the remaining 6, only one teacher was left because he was disabling to see. The researcher decided to omit that person only for the sake of uniformity and to avoid different variables that might have an impact on the result of the study. Hence five teachers participated in the interview and their classes were also observed for two consecutive days. In those classrooms, the students were taking the Communicative English Language Skills I (Flen 1011) course in which they learned various skills in learning the English language.

The sample size for the survey questionnaire was determined depending on Krejcie and Morgan’s (1970) sample size determination calculation. Accordingly, for the 1600 population size, 310 samples are appropriate and since the number of the population was 1620 the researcher decided to take the sample size of 1700 population which is 313in number. The

researcher took 9 students from each section using systematic random sampling. The researcher selected students at every 5 (1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40) from the attendance generated from the students information management system (SIMS). Hence, 324 students ( $36 \times 9 = 324$ ) were selected to fill the survey questionnaire. From nine students who participated in the survey from each section, one participant was selected by lottery method. 36 participants were selected for FGD.

### **3.6. Data collection instruments**

The main purpose of data collection is to gather high-quality evidence that can address the research questions and enable informed decision-making on factual matters. Data collection is therefore a systematic process of gathering and analyzing specific information to answer the relevant questions. This can be achieved by employing appropriate data collection methods, which refer to the tools used to collect data in conducting research. It is critical to carefully select and utilize the appropriate data collection tools, as research can be carried out in diverse ways and for varying purposes. This study followed a Mixed Method Research design, and thus to get reliable data from the participants both qualitative and quantitative data were collected using qualitative and quantitative instruments. Qualitative data was collected using classroom observations, student FGD, and teacher interviews. For the quantitative data collection, a student questionnaire was used using closed-ended and open-ended items.

#### **3.6.1. Questionnaire**

Questionnaires can be employed in quantitative surveys to collect data on topics such as attitudes, values, beliefs, motivations, experiences, and behaviors through methods such as Likert scaling (Williams, 2003). The questionnaire is the main instrument for collecting data in survey research, and it is a set of standardized questions, often called items, which follow a fixed system to collect individual data about one or more specific topics (Lavrakas, 2008). The questionnaire for this study was adapted from a questionnaire provided by (Chan, Spratt and Humphreys, 1999) and additional questions that are related to teachers' role and supporting environment were developed by the researcher.

The questionnaire was designed in two ways. The first one consists of closed-ended items that contain a Likert scale type on which the respondents were asked to show their level of agreement. The second one dealt with open-ended questions which allowed respondents to add more points about the issues they were asked about. The questionnaire consisted of five sections: section one dealt with respondents' background information; section two dealt with students' inside and outside practices/activities of autonomous English language learning; section three consisted of two sub-sections that dealt with students' attitudes towards autonomous English language learning; the fourth section comprised of items that explore supporting environment/facilities in AASTU to promote autonomous English language learning and the sixth section dealt with the teachers' role in promoting autonomous English language learning. A Likert scale-type questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from students as can be seen in (Appendix B).

### **3.6.2. Classroom observation**

An observation is a purposeful and selective way of watching and/or recording an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place naturally (Crado & Brewer, 2002). Classroom observation is agreeable to the qualitative component of the study since it helps to collect qualitative data from the actual teaching-learning encounters. Accordingly, observation was employed to collect qualitative data used to ascertain to what extent students practice autonomous learning inside the classroom to see how responsible the students are for their learning, and to what extent English teachers promote autonomous English language learning in the class to facilitate out of class independent practice and autonomous learning. This helped to stabilize and triangulate the data obtained through the questionnaire, FGD, and interview.

Five teachers were observed for two consecutive days which means ten observations took place for about 8 hours and 40 minutes. The teachers who were teaching in the classrooms were also willing, as the researcher informed each of the five teachers in the observed 10 classrooms that the classroom observation had no relation to their efficiency rating, which the university sometimes adopts. Moreover, the researcher kept all pieces of information confidential and their names were not disclosed in the data analysis and discussions. Once permission was granted, the researcher explained the purpose of the observation and requested the students' consent to

observe their classroom and audio-recorded their voices. The researcher was present in the class as a non-participant observer, which involved observing classroom interactions, taking some potentially important observational notes, and recording the classroom events, but not contributing to the interaction itself (Van, 1997). In addition to note taking the researcher also used an audio recorder to record the voices of the teacher and students to remember events from the recordings when organizing the ideas from the taken notes. There was also an observation semi-structured checklist that helped the researcher to gather students' autonomous English language learning practices in the classroom and the teacher's role in promoting autonomous English language learning.

### **3.6.3. Focused Group Discussion (FGD)**

Focus group discussion (FGD) is one of the most popular qualitative research methods, and it is a structured discussion used to obtain in-depth information (qualitative data insight) from a group of people about a particular topic (Creswell, 2012). FGD contributed to discovering students' practices and their intention of getting involved in those autonomous English language learning practices. FGDs enabled students to hear each other's thoughts and agree or disagree with them, allowing for lively debate at times. It was found that more open questions often generated relevant information, so discussions with students in the FGD took directions of their own. The FGD brought out some information that might not have been elicited adequately by the questionnaire. From nine students selected from each section for the questionnaire, one student was selected using a lottery system for FGD. As a result, 36 students were selected for FGD and it was administered in three groups. The discussion took place at a time when all of them were free of class and by appointment. From each group, four students were not present at the time of discussion which means in each group there were only eight students' participants.

Before the FGD started, the moderator (the researcher) talked about why they were gathered and what they were going to be discussing. She explained that the purpose was to get their reflections concerning their autonomous English language learning practices and their teachers' roles. She also told them that she was not there to share information or give her opinion. It was made clear that the reflections that mattered in the discussion were not those of the moderator. It was also clarified that there were no right or wrong, desirable, or undesirable answers. They were also

informed that they could politely disagree with each other as they wished. They were encouraged to feel comfortable with what they thought and how they felt with their responses.

Following permission the participants granted, discussions were held at the teachers' office by using prepared interview guidelines to elicit the practices of autonomous language learning, their motivation to learn the English language, their teachers' role in promoting autonomous language learning, and the usage of supporting facilities in AASTU under the facilitation of the researcher. The discussion was recorded with the researcher's phone. The FGD data was analyzed following a systematic process of transcribing all the interviewees' responses line by line. Then, the verbatim transcription of the FGD was categorized into FGD guiding and synthesized into themes, which were similar to the research questions of the present study. The data found from the FGD were used for triangulation purposes.

#### **3.6.4. Key Informants Interview**

An in-depth interview was used because it supports capturing respondents' interpretations of concepts in their own words, and it is a desirable strategy in mixed data collection methods, allowing the researcher to present the exact experience from the respondents' perspective. The aim of administering the interview was to uncover the story behind the participating teachers' experiences about autonomous English language learning in AASTU, which was one of the specific objectives of the study. Participants in the key informant interview were EFL teachers who had given a communicative English skills course at AASTU. These key informants who are EFL teachers were expected to best help the study by providing firsthand information.

A one-to-one interview type was employed using a semi-structured and generally open-ended format, allowing flexibility throughout the process. Five teacher participants whose classrooms were observed were involved in the interview. In addition, of the five interviewees, one was female while the rest were male. The names of teachers were coded so that their actual names did not appear in the transcript and analysis due to confidentiality reasons.

The analysis and discussion were presented as a description of the interview participants' views and roles in their students' English language learning autonomy. Like the FGD, the interview guideline was set up in a way that made it feasible to collect English language learning

autonomy-related issues. The interview data was analyzed following a systematic process of transcribing all interviewees' responses line by line first. Then, the verbatim transcription of the interview was categorized into concepts, and finally, the data was synthesized into condensed themes, which were similar to the research questions of this study.

Table 3:1 Profile of teacher interview participants

<b>Code</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Educational background</b>	<b>Section</b>
T1	Male	14 years of experience in teaching English at AASTU and various HEIs within Ethiopia	MA in TEFL	R /18
T2	Female	20 years of experience in teaching English at AASTU, various HEIs and high schools in Ethiopia	MA in TEFL	C /3
T3	Male	10 years of experience in teaching English at AASTU	MA in TEFL	K /11
T4	Male	15 years of experience in teaching English at AASTU and various HEIs within Ethiopia	MA in TEFL	I /9
T5	Male	17 years of experience in teaching English at AASTU and various HEIs within Ethiopia	MA in TEFL	F /6

### **3.7. Data Gathering Procedure**

During the pilot study, a questionnaire was prepared based on the review literature and by adapting items from a questionnaire provided by (Chan, Spratt & Humphreys, 1999). Before administering the questionnaire, experts reviewed and commented on the tools to enhance their reliability and validity, respectively. Based on the comments, some items were improved and the other irrelevant ones were deleted. Concerning the interview and FGD, the guiding questions were prepared in advance.

Before conducting the main study, the researcher followed the following procedures. First, the researcher contacted the English department head at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University to get permission to conduct the study. After getting permission to conduct the study,

the researcher decided on the number of teachers' participants. The reason for deciding the number of teachers participating in the study was that before the teachers were interviewed, their classrooms needed to be observed. After classroom observation was completed, the students' participants were selected from all sections to provide information in the questionnaires and the FGD.

After the whole classroom observations were completed, 324 nine from each section representative samples were selected from 36 sections. After gathering the students in a separate room, the researcher distributed the questionnaires, read through the cover page of the questionnaire to the students, and explained the objective of the study before requesting them to answer the questions. The researcher told them to complete the questionnaires carefully and honestly. The students were told that every student had to work by himself/herself without asking a friend and that they could ask the researcher if they needed clarification. The questionnaire was administered on the spot to avoid duplication of responses and to maximize the return rate of questionnaire copies. The students completed the questionnaire in approximately 20 minutes. At the end of these sessions, one student from every nine students was selected for FGD. These 36 students were grouped into three and appointed at a time that was convenient for them. Before administering the discussion the researcher further explained the issues and asked them permission to record their voice. The discussions were administered in the English language.

The final data was interviews with teachers whose classrooms were observed. Following arrangements of place and time in accordance with the convenience of teacher respondents, the interview was conducted in an office. The researcher explained the objectives of the study and asked permission to record their voice. The interview was conducted individually using the English language. This procedure was followed to avoid the possible bias of responses.

### **3.8. Data Organization**

After the whole data collection process was completed, the researcher organized the data in a way that was appropriate for data analysis.

In this study, a survey questionnaire was the tool that was used to collect quantitative data. First, the researcher checked the quantitative data obtained from students' survey questionnaires to make it ready for feeding to a computer software program SPSS. When doing data clearing, from 324 returned papers, only 313 questionnaires were appropriate to be fed on the SPSS for the remaining eleven papers were void because of their incomplete information. After feeding the data to the software, Descriptive statistical techniques of frequency and percentage were used for data analysis. Frequency and percentage counts are considered in this study to determine the findings of the research question.

Firstly, to identify the major students' autonomous learning activities inside and outside the class, the result of the students' responses on the activities they often and sometimes practiced were added together, and the activities they rarely and never practiced were added together to know the percentage. This helps to show the extent the students were involved in autonomous learning activities. Secondly, the expected result was the attitude students have toward autonomous learning (taking responsibility). Students categorized different responsibilities whether it is their responsibility or it is their teacher's. The percentage of the responsibilities they took as their own and their teachers' or the responsibility of both student and teacher, indicated to what extent the students know their responsibilities and are ready to take responsibility for their autonomous English language learning. Thirdly, the frequency of teachers' roles in the development of autonomous learning which was gathered using the Likert scale was analyzed by adding the two extremes (always/usually) and (rarely/never). The result helped to indicate whether the teachers were playing their role or not in the development of students' autonomous English language learning. Finally, the percentage of the available supporting environment/facilities helped to decide the availability of the supporting environments/facilities in AASTU.

Qualitative data were obtained from classroom observation, students' FGD, and teachers' interviews. The first qualitative data from classroom observation was collected using note-taking under the structured checklists. The objectives of classroom observations were to get first-hand information about the practices that took place in the classroom while the teacher was teaching. The data from observation was analyzed qualitatively. To analyze the data, the researcher

categorized the data found from observation into two broad themes which were students' inside classroom activities and teachers' role in promoting autonomous learning. The students' autonomous learning activities observed in the class throughout ten observations were listed to show to what extent students got involved in autonomous learning activities. Besides, to what extent the teachers are responsible for promoting their students' autonomous English language learning and how they lead their students on the way of autonomous English language learning were analyzed thematically. This helped to cross-check the students' responses to the questionnaire.

The second qualitative data was students' FGD. The main objective of students' FGD was to get in-depth information about students' intention of taking part in those inside and outside classroom activities, the purpose of their motivation, the reason for categorizing responsibilities as theirs or their teachers', to what extent their teachers facilitate autonomous learning and how do they use the available supporting facilities. The audio-recorded data was transcribed and the information gathered was coded thematically and analyzed according to the research question.

The third qualitative data was teachers' interviews. The main objective of administering teachers' interviews was to get in-depth information about the students' activities of autonomous learning and their attitudes towards autonomous learning, to what extent the teachers are playing their roles, and to what extent the students and teachers use the supporting facilities. The audio-recorded data was transcribed and coded thematically. To analyze the interview data the researcher used a thematic analysis (content or meaning analysis). These themes were analyzed according to the research questions.

### **3.9. Method of Data Analysis and Interpretations**

To achieve the objectives of the study and seek answers to the research questions raised in the first chapter of this research, data collected from the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study were presented separately and the findings were integrated to develop a complete picture.

The interpretation of the data generated from both quantitative and qualitative data was integrated according to the research questions to give a complete picture of the study. The first research question concerned the students' autonomous English language learning practices that

take place both inside and outside the classroom. The quantitative data gained from students' questionnaires was justified with the data from classroom observation and students' FGD. Data from teachers' interviews added information on students' classroom practices. Finally, major findings were summarized and conclusions were drawn, for which corresponding recommendations were forwarded.

The second research question regarding the students' attitude towards autonomous English language learning, data from students' questionnaires showed the level of their motivation and the extent of taking responsibility for their autonomous language learning practices. Then from the students' FGD, the reason/ intention behind their motivation and categorization of responsibilities as theirs and their teachers' were justified. In addition, teachers reflected on the students' responses when they were asked to get involved in autonomous English language learning practices or when taking responsibility. Results from all these data sources enabled to conclude the attitude students had towards autonomous English language learning.

The third research question was about teachers' role, i.e. the extent teachers play their role in the development of their students' autonomous English language learning. Quantitative data was generated from students' questionnaires and the result of the questionnaire was proofed from classroom observation and justified by students' FGD. In addition, teachers themselves gave explanations about their roles in the development of their students' autonomous English language learning.

The last research question regarded the facilities available in AASTU. The quantitative data from the questionnaire was justified by the students' FGD and qualitative data from teachers' interviews explained and justified the issues related to the facilities. This helped to cross-check the result and decides the availability of the supporting facilities in AASTU.

In general, the findings from both quantitative and qualitative sources were validated through a triangulation process. Data was gathered using two or more data collection instruments to answer each research question. This supported the triangulation in the analysis and interpretation stage of the study. The table below displays which data-gathering tool was employed to respond to which research question in the study:

Table: 3.2 Summary of research methodology

<b>Data gathering instruments</b>	<b>Sample participant</b>	<b>Sampling technique</b>	<b>Research question</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
Questionnaire	324 students	9 students were selected randomly from 36 sections to fill the questionnaire, but 11 incomplete papers were void	RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, RQ4	Descriptive analysis
Classroom observation	10 observations: five sections twice	5 teachers whose classrooms were observed were selected purposively	RQ1, RQ2, RQ3	Thematic analysis
Students FGD	24 students	1 student who filled in questionnaire was randomly selected from each of the 36 classes, but 24 students were participated in the FGD	RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, RQ4	Thematic analysis
Teacher interview	5 teachers	5 teachers whose classroom was observed were interviewed	RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, RQ4	Thematic analysis

### **3.10. Ethical considerations**

The present study was conducted with the utmost consideration for ethical principles. Researchers and participants are expected to follow the correct procedures and requirements of research principles (Kumar, 2012; Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Therefore, the researcher tried to follow the following research principles: The dignity and well-being of the participants were protected at all times. During the data-gathering process, the instruments were carefully developed to ensure they did not contain any language that could be considered degrading,

discriminatory, or offensive to the respondents. Strict confidentiality was maintained for the research data, as promised to the participants from the outset. Throughout the research stages, measures were taken to ensure the privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of the participants. Additionally, all sources used in the study were properly referenced using the APA citation system.

The researcher explained the purpose of the research and the importance of the participants' involvement with the selected individuals. Participants were informed that they had the freedom to withdraw their consent and discontinue their participation in the research at any time without any negative consequences. In general, the researcher adhered to the five main ethical principles, which are: (a) minimizing the risk of harm; (b) obtaining informed consent; (c) protecting anonymity and confidentiality; (d) avoiding deceptive practices; and (e) providing the right to withdraw (Lund, 2012).

### **3.11. The Pilot Study**

A pilot study is conducted to evaluate the practicality of some crucial data collection methods or tools for the main study to test research protocols, data collection instruments, sampling selections, and techniques. Accordingly, the pilot study was conducted before dealing with the main study to test research protocols, data collection instruments, sampling selections, and techniques. First, the face and content validity of the items of the questionnaires, as well as the guidelines for the interview, FGD, and classroom observation checklist were reviewed by three AASTU English language teachers. Then, the tools were pilot-tested to detect possible appropriateness, clarity, and flaws in measurement procedures including instructions and item content.

The pilot study was conducted at AASTU in the 2012 academic year. First-year students from the 2012/13AY batch and 4(four) EFL teachers participated in the pilot study and the 2013/14 AY batch of first-year students took part in the main study. The teachers who participated in the pilot study in the interview and observation did not participate in any form or share in the main study. Consent of the four English teachers was acquired before setting the date and the time with participants for observation, questionnaire, FGD, and interview. In the quantitative phase,

closed-ended survey questionnaires were employed. The qualitative data collection employed classroom observation, student FGD, and teacher interviews as instruments. 114 students filled out the questionnaire; four teachers who were selected depending on their interest were interviewed and their classrooms were also observed; 12 volunteer students were selected for FGD. The interviews and FGDs were recorded and transcribed. The analysis was made using tables, verbal descriptions, and themes based on the research questions. The collected data were analyzed to determine the reliability of the questionnaires and gain insights for the main study. The lessons gained from the pilot study were the following:

The instructions given in the questionnaire to guide the respondents were not clear and the language used to construct statements students' were going to select was reconstructed. For example, the statements constructed in the form of questions were changed to statements. The questionnaire was only closed-ended. Some respondents in the pilot study suggested the researcher include additional blank space if a respondent was more interested in writing any ideas that were not included in the questionnaire.

Therefore, the researcher modified the questionnaire used in the main study by adding additional blank spaces. Unclear statements were also modified; for example, under the category of identifying the responsibilities of teachers and students a statement said 'identifying your weakness in English' and it was changed to 'identifying your weakness in learning English'. The other major lesson from the questionnaire was that most of the sentences used represented the actions of proactive autonomy while the study was on reactive autonomy.

Concerning the teachers' interview, the researcher was able to conduct it easily with the interviewees; however, some of the questions were supported by additional clarification questions. Instead of asking "Do you encourage your students to set their own goal?" It was modified as "Do you discuss goal setting with your students?" Since it is about reactive autonomy, the direction is already set, and the role of the teacher is to inform them to let them put direction to achieve that goal. Therefore, these kinds of questions were refined and added to the main study interview to help respondents.

Regarding students' FGD at the time of the pilot study, students had a problem understanding autonomous language learning. It was observed that some of the questions asked for the discussion were related to proactive autonomous English language learning, not the reactive ones. Their answers showed their confusion as students were facing a problem in answering those questions. Since the aim of FGD is to get detailed ideas about the raised issues, questions that invite them to explain more were asked in the main study. For example, some questions added were: What was the reason to practice those inside and outside classroom activities/practices? (purpose); Do you know the goal that you need to achieve from taking this course? (Have you discussed with your teacher the goals and plans of your learning and how to achieve those goals?); what are students' responsibility and their teachers'? Why do you consider those responsibilities as your teachers? (Purpose)

Observation was the first tool to collect data about the actual classroom practices. There was a checklist to fill out from the observation. At the first observation, only a little information was found that can be filled on the checklist. This created a question of whether it was because those practices were not applicable or because of the type of lesson that took place that day as some of the practices might not be seen at once. Therefore, for the main study classroom observations were held for two consecutive days. In addition to the checklist, a note was taken so as not to miss the activities that took place in the classroom. It was audio recorded to remember the situation during data organization.

In summary, as to the researcher, the pilot study assisted the researcher in figuring out how to work out the procedures of the main data collection and the research procedures in general. The comments given by my invigilators of pilot work were also incorporated into the main study. Data gathering instruments were found to be valid, and the method of data analysis was of paramount value as it clearly showed the findings of the data collected. The course of the pilot study accomplished the mission as it provided an important lesson in terms of raising the researcher's analytical skills.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The main objective of this research was to investigate students' autonomous language learning practices and autonomy-promoting aspects at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University. The study used both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data obtained from the survey questionnaire are presented in a tabular form with descriptive statistics according to the five main sections of the questionnaire, which were (a) students' autonomous language learning activities inside and outside the class; (b) students' perceptions of their responsibilities and the teacher's; (c) students' motivation level (d) teachers' role in promoting autonomous language learning; and (e) supporting environment/facilities available in AASTU. Following the quantitative analysis, the qualitative analysis of qualitative data gathered from classroom observations, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews is presented. The entire data was generally analyzed to answer the research questions, and discussed in light of the literature reviewed in the areas of students' autonomous learning activities, their attitudes towards autonomous learning, and their teachers' roles and the supporting environment.

### **4.2. Quantitative Data analyses: Analyses and Findings of the Questionnaire**

The discussions and interpretations of the data collected through the survey questionnaire were presented below within the framework of the specific objectives or the basic research questions. The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement in connection with the different statements related to their autonomous learning activities inside and the outside classroom, their attitudes towards autonomous learning practices (taking responsibilities), their teachers' role in promoting autonomous language learning, and the supporting environment available at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University. The quantitative data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results were presented in the same order as the research questions produced for the study.

#### 4.2.1. Students' Autonomous language learning activities

To answer the first research question which investigates students' autonomous language learning activities, the students were asked to indicate the activities they applied and how often they practiced these activities. They are expected to be part of different activities to show whether they are practicing autonomous language learning or not. These activities can take place both inside and outside the class. The data of students' autonomous language learning activities inside and outside the classroom are presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 separately.

##### 4.2.1.1. Students' autonomous English language learning activities inside the classroom

Table 4.1. Students' autonomous English language learning activities inside the classroom

Item	Inside classroom activities	Often/Sometimes		Rarely/Never	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	I ask the teacher questions when I don't understand	180	57.5	133	42.5
2	I preview lesson before class (i.e see summary, lesson ...)	168	53.6	145	46.3
3	I note down new information	294	93.9	19	6.1
4	I make suggestions to the teacher	60	19.2	253	80.8
5	I take opportunities to take part in the activities that need to speak in English	208	66.4	105	33.6
6	I discuss learning problems with my classmates	255	81.5	58	18.5
7	I make notes and summaries of lesson	256	81.8	57	18.2

*Source: compiled from survey, 2022*

As one can observe from Table 4.1, in items 1-7 students were asked to identify how often they carried out the activities that indicated their autonomous learning practices inside the classroom. The responses of participants regarding the 'often/sometimes' and 'rarely/never' categories have been combined to indicate a valid percentage of their answers. The major activities that students selected as they 'often' or 'sometimes' practiced include: noting down new information (93.9%), making notes and summaries of the lesson (81.8%), and discussing learning problems with classmates (81.5%). Most of the activities were practiced 'often' or 'sometimes' by the students except item 4, which is about making suggestions to the teacher where 80.8% of the students selected that they 'rarely' or 'never' practiced it.

This result can imply that students are practicing most of the activities that indicate their autonomous learning practices in the classroom. It needs further investigation to know the reason or the intention of practicing those activities whether it is because they understand it is expected from them or because they are afraid of their teachers' response.

#### 4.2.1.2. Students' autonomous English language learning activities outside the classroom

Table 4.2 Students' autonomous English language learning practices outside classroom

S/ N	Outside classroom activities	Often/Sometimes		Rarely/Never	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1.	I read grammar books on my own	183	58.4	130	41.5
2.	I do assignments which are not compulsory	161	51.5	152	48.6
3.	I note down new words and their meanings	236	<b>75.4</b>	77	24.6
4.	I write in English for chatting with friends	270	<b>86.3</b>	43	13.7
5.	I read English notices	259	<b>82.8</b>	54	17.3
6.	I read English newspaper	140	44.8	173	55.3
7.	I send e-mails in English	247	<b>78.9</b>	66	21.1
8.	I read books or magazines written in English	259	<b>82.7</b>	54	17.3
9.	I watch English TV programs	283	<b>90.4</b>	30	9.6
10.	I listen to English radio	152	48.6	161	51.4
11.	I listen to English music	250	<b>79.9</b>	63	20.1
12.	I talk to the teachers outside the class in English	63	20.1	250	79.9
13.	I practice English recording my own voice outside the class	75	24	238	76.0
14.	I talk to foreigners in English	184	58.8	129	41.2
15.	I practice using English with friends	188	60	125	39.9
16.	I do grammar exercises	245	<b>78.3</b>	68	21.7
17.	I watch English movies without subtitles in my language.	276	<b>88.1</b>	37	11.8
18.	I attend different seminars to improve my English.	88	28.1	225	71.9
19.	I attend different training courses to improve my English.	102	32.6	211	67.4
20.	I attend different conferences to improve my English.	64	20.4	249	79.6
21.	I write a diary in English	102	32.6	211	67.4
22.	I use the internet in English	299	<b>95.5</b>	14	4.5
23.	I revise lessons and seek the reference books	208	66.5	105	33.5
24.	I do revision activities for my own sake even though it is not required by the teacher	171	54.6	142	45.4
25.	I attend a self-study channels (e.g. e- learning)?	143	45.7	170	54.3
26.	I collect texts in English (e.g. articles, brochures, labels)	177	56.5	136	43.5
27.	I go to discuss with my teacher about my work	72	23	241	77.0

Source: compiled from survey, 2022

More of the activities done for autonomous learning take place outside the classroom. From items 1-27, students were asked to identify their out-of-class autonomous learning activities. Out of 27 outside classroom activities, there were 17 activities in which more than half of the respondents reported they ‘often’ or ‘sometimes’ engaged. The first top ten activities were:

- Using the internet in English (95.5%),
- Watching English TV programs (90.4%),
- Watching English movies without subtitles in their language (88.1%)
- Writing in English for chatting with friends (86.3%)
- Reading English notice (82.8%)
- Reading books or magazines written in English (82.7%)
- Listening to English music (79.9%),
- Sending emails in English (78.9%)
- Doing grammar exercises (78.3%)
- Noting down new words and their meanings (75.4%)

Talking to the teachers outside the class in English (20.1%) and attending different conferences to improve their English (20.4%) were the two least practiced activities. Attending a course and seminar provided by a university, and contacting teachers to discuss their work were less practiced even though they have a direct relation to studying or learning English. Some of the activities that are related to the study or learning of English appeared to be less widely practiced. It is uncertain whether some of the activities were all carried out for reasons of study. This result implies one cannot be sure that they are doing those activities to learn the English language autonomously since most of these activities are non-academic activities.

#### **4.2.2. Students’ attitudes towards autonomous language learning**

##### **4.2.2.1. Level of Students’ motivation to learn English language**

Level of motivation also determines the attitude students have towards autonomous learning. As it can be seen from table 4.3, students were reasonably motivated.

Table 4.3 Level of students' motivation to learn English language

<b>Motivation level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Highly motivated to learn English	97	31.0
Well-motivated to learn English	123	39.3
Motivated to learn English	79	25.2
Poorly motivated to learn English	11	3.5
Not motivated at all to learn English	3	1.0

The majority (95.5%) of students considered themselves as 'motivated', 'well-motivated or 'highly motivated'. The rest (3.5%) were 'poorly-motivated' and 1% was not motivated at all. This result implies that since students were motivated to learn the English Language, the problem of motivation cannot be a hindrance to their autonomous learning.

#### **4.2.2.2. Students' attitude towards taking responsibilities**

To answer the research question which investigates students' attitudes towards their responsibilities in autonomous English language learning, the students were asked to indicate who is responsible for doing certain actions related to autonomous English language learning. The listed actions are the responsibilities that students who are autonomous language learners take as their responsibilities. Table 4.4 illustrates the results of students' attitudes toward taking responsibility which is indirectly autonomous language learning.

As can be seen from Table 4.4, the responsibilities that the majority of the students considered as their responsibilities only were: deciding what they learn outside class (85.9%), making sure that they make progress outside class (84.3%), looking for new opportunities to learn English (70.3%), and looking for other resources to learn English (57.5%). Students consider as their responsibilities the ones which are related to outside-class learning activities, and the searching of new opportunities and resources to learn English. The actions that the majority of respondents felt the teacher should take responsibility for include: deciding what students should learn next in English lesson (73.2%), deciding the textbook and materials to use in class (60.4%), choosing what activities to use to learn English in English lesson (60.1%), evaluating the course (53.4%), and deciding the objectives of English course (50.8). This implies a tendency to be dependent on the teacher and their consideration of the teacher as the decision maker.

Table 4.4 Students' attitudes towards their and their teachers' responsibilities

S/ N	Responsibility	Students'		Teachers'		Both teachers' and students'	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
<b>Planning</b>							
1.	Deciding the objectives of your English course	30	9.6	159	<b>50.8</b>	124	39.6
<b>Learning process</b>							
2.	Deciding what you learn outside class	269	<b>85.9</b>	16	5.1	28	8.9
3.	Deciding the textbook and materials you use in class	25	8.0	189	<b>60.4</b>	99	31.6
4.	Choosing what activities to use to learn English in your English lesson	21	6.7	188	<b>60.1</b>	104	33.2
5.	Deciding what you should learn next in your English lesson	19	6.1	229	<b>73.2</b>	65	20.8
6.	Deciding how long to spend on each activity	60	19.2	145	<b>46.3</b>	108	34.5
7.	Stimulating your interest in learning English	134	42.8	33	10.5	146	<b>46.6</b>
8.	Making you work harder	129	41.2	32	10.2	152	<b>48.6</b>
9.	Making sure you make progress during lessons	67	21.4	70	22.4	176	<b>56.2</b>
10.	Making sure you make progress outside class	264	<b>84.3</b>	11	3.5	38	12.1
11.	Looking for other resources to learn English	180	<b>57.5</b>	13	4.2	120	38.3
12.	Looking for new opportunities to learn English	220	<b>70.3</b>	16	5.1	77	24.6

However, evaluating the progress students have in learning English (58.8%), making sure that students make progress during lessons (56.2%), evaluating the outcomes of learning English (55.6%), evaluating the learning (54.3%), and setting an action plan on how to solve learning problems or improving learning (53%) were the actions that majority of the students considered as the responsibility of both students and teachers.

Table 4.5 Students' attitudes towards their and their teachers' responsibilities on evaluation

<b>Evaluation</b>							
<b>S/N</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Students'</b>		<b>Teachers'</b>		<b>Both teachers' and students'</b>	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1.	Evaluating your learning	67	21.4	76	24.3	170	<b>54.3</b>
2.	Identifying your strengths in learning English	133	42.5	36	11.5	144	<b>46.0</b>
3.	Identifying your weaknesses in learning English	123	39.3	49	15.7	141	<b>45.0</b>
4.	Evaluating the progress you have in learning English	69	22.0	60	19.2	184	<b>58.8</b>
5.	Evaluating the outcomes of learning English	88	28.1	51	16.3	174	<b>55.6</b>
6.	Evaluating the learning strategies	36	11.5	136	43.5	141	<b>45.0</b>
7.	Evaluating the course	24	7.7	167	<b>53.4</b>	122	39.0
8.	Analyzing what difficulty you actually have in learning English	121	38.7	41	13.1	151	<b>48.2</b>
9.	Setting an action plan on how to solve learning problems or improve learning	94	30.0	53	16.9	166	<b>53.0</b>

In addition, even though it was not the majority, the major percentage of some actions like making students work harder (48.6%), analyzing what difficulty students have in learning English (48.2%), stimulating students' interest in learning English (46.6%), identifying students' strengths in learning (46.0%), identifying students' weaknesses in learning English (45.0%) and evaluating the learning strategies (45.0%) were also considered as the responsibility of both teachers and students.

#### **4.2.3. Roles of the teachers in promoting autonomous learning**

The third objective of this study was to investigate teachers' roles in promoting autonomous language learning. Students were expected to identify to what extent their teachers were playing their roles in the development of students' autonomous learning. Table 4.5 below shows the response of students to show the extent their teachers play their role by dividing it into three categories: facilitator, guide/mentor, and inspirator/supporter. The responses of participants regarding 'always/usually' and 'rarely/never' categories have been combined to indicate a valid percentage of their answers.

#### 4.2.3.1. Teachers' teaching practices for the role 'facilitator'

As can be seen from Table 4.6, four items are related to the practices of English teachers as learning facilitators. The role that teachers practiced 'always' or 'usually' was only sharing responsibilities in the learning process with students (56.5%). Teachers involve students by engaging them to evaluate their learning progress regularly (41.9%) and directing them to set their own goals to achieve the course objective (39.7%).

Table 4.6: Teachers' teaching practices for the role 'facilitator'

S/ N	Teachers' roles as facilitator	Always/Usually		Sometimes		Rarely/Never	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Directing students to set their own goals to achieve the course objective	124	39.7	113	36.1	76	24.3
2.	Sharing responsibilities in the learning process with students	177	<b>56.5</b>	94	30	42	13.4
3.	Engaging students to evaluate their learning progress regularly	131	41.9	98	31.3	84	26.8
4.	Directing students to reflect on the tasks they did inside and outside class	103	32.9	108	34.5	102	32.6

#### 4.2.3.2. Teachers' teaching practices for the role of 'guide/mentor'

Table 4.7: Teachers' teaching practices for the role of guide/mentor

S/ N	Teachers' role as guide/mentor	Always/Usually		Sometimes		Rarely/Never	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
5.	Helping students to become aware of alternative strategies and learning styles	149	47.6	110	35.1	54	17.3
6.	Encouraging students to pursue their individual goals by working with others in (pair and group)	180	<b>57.5</b>	96	30.7	37	11.8
7.	Involving students in a non-stop search for good learning activities	129	41.2	112	35.8	72	23
8.	Informing students the necessary strategies about the different paths they may choose to follow in order to identify and use the right kind of information.	145	46.3	104	33.2	64	20.4
9.	Providing students guidance on recommended online tools and services (links and resources)	142	45.4	96	30.7	75	24
10.	Supporting students as they can develop the capacity to learn independently	160	<b>51.1</b>	88	28.1	65	20.8
11.	Providing students alternative learning strategies which they could have used	149	47.6	105	33.5	59	18.8
12.	Mentoring students on how to achieve their goals	125	40	103	32.9	85	27.2

As can be seen in Table 4.7, eight items are related to the practices of English teachers as learning guide/mentor. The responses of participants regarding the ‘always/usually’ and ‘rarely/never’ categories have been combined to indicate a valid percentage of their answers. The two roles that teachers practiced ‘always’ or ‘usually’ were encouraging students to pursue their individual goals by working with others in (pairs and groups) (57.5%) and supporting students as they can develop the capacity to learn independently (51.1%).

#### 4.2.3.3. Teachers’ teaching practices for the role ‘Inspirator & Supporter ’

Table 4.8: Teachers’ teaching practices for the role ‘Inspirator & Supporter

S.N	Teachers’ roles as Inspirator & Supporter	Always/Usually		Sometimes		Rarely/Never	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Using English language as the medium of classroom communication and require the same of students	238	<b>76.1</b>	57	18.2	18	5.8
2.	Acknowledging different ways students follow to attain their goal and their own learning styles	125	39.9	102	32.6	86	27.5
3.	Motivating students to learn English by minimizing external pressure	155	49.5	94	30	64	20.4
4.	Encouraging students to keep a written record of their plans of lessons and assignments	128	40.9	81	25.9	104	33.2
5.	Encouraging students to keep a written record of their learning such as lists of useful vocabulary and texts they produce by themselves	127	40.6	92	29.4	94	30
6.	Being positive and supportive especially when giving feedback	129	41.2	112	35.8	72	23
7.	Raising awareness about autonomous learning and promoting it to students	165	<b>52.7</b>	82	26.2	66	21.1

Items from 1 to 7, as shown in Table 4.8, are intended to investigate to what extent the teachers play the role of inspirator/supporter in promoting autonomous language learning. The two roles that teachers practiced ‘always’ or ‘usually’ to inspire students were using the English language as the medium of classroom communication and requiring the same of students (76.1%) and raising awareness about autonomous learning and promoting it to students (52.7%).

#### 4.2.4. Supporting environment/facilities to promote autonomous English language learning

The fourth objective of this study was to investigate how supportive the environment was for autonomous English language learning. Since Addis Ababa Science and Technology University (AASTU) is a science and Technology University, it is expected that infrastructures helping to foster autonomous learning are available in the university. Students were asked to identify the availability of some supporting facilities that help students' autonomous English language learning found in AASTU. The result is presented in the following table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Supporting facilities in AASTU for autonomous English language learning

Item	Facilities	Available		Not available	
		F	%	F	%
1	Internet access	<b>270</b>	<b>86.3</b>	43	13.7
2	Computer access	<b>291</b>	<b>93</b>	22	7.0
3	Online sources	<b>217</b>	<b>69.3</b>	96	30.7
4	e-library	<b>191</b>	<b>61</b>	122	39
5	English TV program	35	11.2	278	88.8
6	e-learning platform	95	30.4	218	69.6
7	Language learning lab	82	26.2	231	73.8
8	Materials that guide/initiate students to independent learning	<b>175</b>	<b>55.9</b>	138	41.1

Table 4.8: Supporting facilities in AASTU to support autonomous English language learning

*Source: compiled from survey, 2022*

As indicated in Table 4.9, the percentage of the students who agreed to the availability of computer access, internet access, online sources, e-library, and materials that guide/initiate students to independent learning were 93%, 86.3%, 69.3%, 61%, and 55.9% respectively. This shows that there are supporting environments/facilities that can facilitate autonomous learning.

#### 4.3. Qualitative Data Analysis and Findings

This section is dedicated to the analysis and findings of data that were gathered using classroom observation, students' FGD, and teachers' interviews. In the first part, the analysis and findings

of classroom observation are reported. In the next part, the analysis and findings of the FGD are presented. The final part of this section discusses the analysis and results of teachers' interviews.

#### **4.3.1. Data analysis and findings from observation**

The main purpose of observing the classrooms was to assess the classroom practices focusing on how students got involved in autonomous language learning and how teachers were involved in promoting autonomous language learning in **five** first-year classrooms at AASTU. All classes were freshman pre-engineering. In those classrooms, the students were taking the Communicative English Language Skills I (Flen 1011) course in which they learned various skills in learning the English language. Each classroom was observed for two consecutive days.

Observation of students' autonomous language learning practices in the classroom and how teachers promote it were conducted by the researcher for two consecutive days. There were 23 English teachers in the department at the time of data collection but only 10 were considered to participate in the study. Thirteen teachers were pursuing their doctoral studies at different universities and hence they were not considered for selection. Four teachers were also taken out of the teacher population because they had taken part in the pilot study- as interviewees and their classes were also observed. From the remaining 6, only one teacher was left because he was disabling to see. The researcher decided to omit that person only for the sake of uniformity and to avoid different variables that might have an impact on the result of the study. Hence five teachers participated in the interview and their classes were also observed for two consecutive days.

All teachers (5) participated in this study as interviewees had three sections to teach. From the three sections the teacher teaches, only one section was observed. The researcher informed teacher participants that the classroom observation had no relation to their efficiency rating and that it was for the sake of PhD theses. Moreover, the researcher promised them that all pieces of information would be kept confidential and their names would not be disclosed in the data analysis and discussion. Thus the researcher adjusted observation programs as per the teachers' class schedule.

The semi-structured observation checklist was categorized into two: students' autonomous English language learning activities and teachers' autonomous English language learning promoting practices. While checking these students' and teachers' practices, responsibilities could be identified as it can imply the attitude towards taking responsibility (autonomous learning). Therefore, data from observation answered the first (students' autonomous language learning practices), the second (students' attitude towards autonomous language learning), and the third (the role of teachers in promoting autonomous English language learning) research question of the study.

One day before conducting the observation, the researcher started data gathering as per the below schedule that was agreed upon by the respective classroom teachers and students of the respective classrooms. When the observer entered the classrooms she explained the purpose of the observation and requested the students' permission to observe and audio record the lesson that was about to take place. Then the teacher started the lesson and the researcher observed and took notes. The overall classroom observation was conducted from July 4 up to July 15.

Table 4.10: Classroom observation schedule

Classroom observation schedule				
Teacher	Section	Room	Time	Date
T1	R/18	B59/R306	8:00-10:20pm	Thur. July 7, 2022
				Thur. July 14, 2022
T2	C/3	B59/R204	2:30-5:20am	Thur. July 7, 2022
				Thur. July 14, 2022
T3	K/11	B59/R003	2:30-3:20am	Mon. July 4, 2022
		B80/R404	4:30-6:20am	Wed. July 6, 2022
T4	I/9	B59/R201	3:30-6:20am	Fri. July 8, 2022
				Fri. July 15, 2022
T2	F/ 6	B59/R105	2:30-5:20am	Tue. July 5, 2022
				Tue. July 12, 2022

### Physical conditions of the classrooms

All observed classrooms shared common features except the one on B80/R404 because it was a language lab that had different facilities like computers, headsets, multipurpose screens used for video display and LCD projector, comfortable chairs with separate desktop tables, and clean mat on the floor. Other classrooms were found on the same block and the classrooms had equal size

and a rectangular shape with space for moving around for teachers and students. The rooms had an almost equal number of armchairs with an accommodation capacity of forty-five to fifty students. Despite the cleanness and invisibility of the whiteboard because of the reflection of the window light, the rooms seemed to fairly serve their purpose. However, the observer pointed out that one problem especially with the noises coming from outside and the number of students in a classroom was not suitable to supervise easily.

#### **4.3.1.1. Observation analysis of autonomous English language learning practices inside classroom**

In this section autonomous language learning practice includes the practice of both students and teachers. This means the practice that took place in the classroom included what the students were doing and how the teacher was giving a response to the student's practice. Therefore the students' practice and the teachers' practice were discussed together. The data in this phase are analyzed descriptively. A brief introduction of the teacher's professional background is followed by a summary of what the subject said before the analyses. In this study, therefore, the summary of each lesson is presented with a brief introduction of the teacher's background then followed by the analyses and discussions of autonomous language learning practice.

##### **4.3.1.1.1. Observation analysis of T1's initial classroom and AELL Practice**

###### **A) Initial classroom observation**

Teacher: 1

Observation: I

Section: R/18

Teacher 3 got a bachelor's degree in English from Adigrat University and an MA degree in TEFL from Addis Ababa University. He taught English for 14 years at universities in Ethiopia.

All the students were in the classroom when the teacher entered the room and he greeted them and put his bag on a table taking out the material. He cleaned the board and wrote 'Unit three: cultural tourism'. He asked what their last time discussion was and let them show him the reflection part of the unit found at the end of the unit. He went through the class to check whether they had done it or not. He advised them that it is a part that helped them to audit their learning and it seems easy but when they try to write their answer, it is not that easy. Then he

introduced the new chapter and gave them time to read the listed objectives of the unit from the material. He asked them to write the definition of culture and characteristics of cultural groups in their notebook and then compare their definition with each other. After giving them time a whole class discussion was made based on the given questions in the module. Then he informed them that they were going to the listening part and before listening to the text that he was going to read, he let them do the pre-listening activity. He asked them if there was someone familiar with the cultural practice seen in the picture.

One student raised his hand and said he was familiar with the culture because he had lived there for five years. He explained the situation, the time for that practice, the ceremony, and the concerned individuals. While he was explaining the students switched the language to Amharic and completed his idea using Amharic. The students were listening impressively and the teacher thanked him. Then the teacher informed them to continue doing the other activities and while they were doing the activity the teacher wrote two words on the whiteboard and started to move in the classroom and see what they were doing. After the students finished their work he asked them the meaning of those two words but they kept silent. Then the teacher read the meaning of the words from a piece of paper and only some students were trying to write what the teacher was saying. No one was seen when using cell phones as all of them were using the hard copy of the material. He told them that he was going to read the text twice and they were expected to complete the activities depending on the listening text. Before starting reading he let them read the questions. Then he read the text once and gave them time to answer the questions and then read the text again to answer the remaining questions. Then the teacher told them the answer to cross check their answers. At the end, the teacher asked them to do the post-listening activity which was paragraph writing. The students started to write and after waiting for some time he ordered them to finish it at home and bring it to the next class.

Teacher: 1

Observation: II

Section: R/18

The teacher entered and greeted them and started to clean the board. Then he asked them to take out their homework and exchange it with their friends beside them. While they were reading

their friend's text the teacher wrote the criteria for evaluating the text. He asked them to write comments according to the criteria and return them. Then let them write the text again at home inculcating the comments given. He ordered them to go to the grammar part which was about tenses. The activity was identifying verbs of different tenses from the given reading passage. The teacher gave them time to do it and then he gave a chance to answer for some volunteer students with only three verbs under each category. Then he informed them to collect as many as possible words for each category on their own. The teacher gave them time again to do the next activity which was matching the tenses with their usage. The teacher discussed with students and let them do the remaining activities related to grammar as an exercise on their own. He moved to the writing part which made the students write a paragraph about their first day on campus. After giving them some time he asked some students to read their paragraph for the class. Then the teacher ordered them to categorize the verbs they used in their paragraph according to their category. He told them to finish at home and wind up the session.

### **B) T1's Autonomous English Language learning Practices in Classroom**

From students' autonomous English language learning practices in the classroom, students were observed when taking notes, using opportunities to take part in activities that need to speak English, and discussing with their classmates. Most of the students were also coming to class completing what their teacher ordered them to do even though it cannot be sure that they did the homework because the teacher punished them or because they knew they were responsible for doing that for their own sake whether the teacher checked or not.

#### ***Teacher as facilitator***

As a facilitator, the teacher was observed when directing students to reflect on the tasks as he was checking whether the students had done it or not. In addition, the teacher engages students to evaluate each other's work by giving them criteria for evaluation and letting them get feedback. Related to sharing responsibility there was no clear identification of responsibilities and there was also nothing done on directing students to set their own goals to achieve the course objectives other than making them read the unit objectives.

### ***Teacher as guide/mentor***

As a guide, the teacher was expected to lead the students on the way that took them to autonomous English language learning. Informing and providing different learning strategies for students were not observed at all. Even though it cannot be sure students were conscious about achieving their goals, the teacher was observed when encouraging working with others and individually. The teacher was also involving students in different activities given on the material.

### ***Teacher as inspirator/supporter***

As a supporter of autonomous English language learning the teacher was expected to inspire students in different ways. The teacher was using English as a medium of classroom communication although he was allowing students to explain their ideas in other languages. He also gave them homework that needed to be written and even encouraged them to write texts they produce by themselves.

#### **4.3.1.1.2. Observation analysis of T2's initial classroom and AELL Practice**

##### **A) T2's Initial classroom observation**

Teacher: 2

Observation: I

Section: C/3

Teacher 4 got a bachelor's degree in English and an MA degree in TEFL from Bahirdar University. She taught English for more than 20 years at high schools and universities in Ethiopia.

The teacher entered the classroom, put her material on the chair found at the front, took out the attendance paper, and gave it to the student sitting at the front. After the teacher got closer and talked to a student, she informed the students that they were going to start unit three which is about cultural tourism. She introduced the unit as its structure was like the previous unit however the topic was different. The four skills were integrated with vocabulary and grammar. As the main focus of this course was on receptive skills the productive skills were also woven into them. She asked them what culture is. She repeated can you define culture she asked. All of them keep silent. She changed the question do you have culture? There was an unclear sound; she

ordered them to write it in their notebook. After some time she let them discuss with their friend. While they were discussing she wrote a question to write five cultural values most Ethiopians share. After some time she asked to reflect on the cultural values and one student raised a hand and told one value. She appreciated it and asked for another; students did not respond immediately. One student said 'respecting elders' she asked him to explain but he kept silent.

She immediately ordered them to read pre- and while-listening questions before she read the listening text. She told them to simply listen when she read the text once and they could fill the gap when she read for the second time. Then she read for the third time to let them check again. After the students discussed for some time she asked them to answer and checked their answers. She asked them if they had questions and let them do the post-listening activity which was writing paragraphs and the grammar part as homework for the next class. She took her attendance paper and reminded them to do the homework properly and left the room.

Teacher: 2

Observation: II

Section: C/3

The teacher entered the class and asked if they had done their homework and randomly checked going through the class. She ordered them to exchange their paragraphs with someone and let them give feedback. After waiting for some time she asked how they saw their friend's text whether it had been introduced, sufficient information had been given, and whether the ideas had been winded up or not. She advised them to improve their text depending on the given comments and passed on to the next part which was grammar. She read them the instructions and let them read the article first before collecting words of different tenses according to their categories. After waiting for some time she asked them to mention three words from each category voluntarily. She informed them to collect as many as possible words under each category. The next activity was matching tenses with their uses. After these activities were completed, she informed them that she was going to do with them only some part of the grammar exercise questions and the remaining questions would be done on their own. The teacher started to discuss with them only some randomly selected questions. After doing some of the questions, one student raised his hand and asked why she skipped that question. The teacher responded

that the teacher was not expected to do each question. Let you do it on your own, she said. She directly turned to the writing part. The issue that they were going to write about was about their first day on campus, the topic you have already worked on when introducing yourself at the beginning of the semester. She informed them the difference was the time difference which expected them to use different tenses; it had been speaking but now it was writing. She gave them time to write. While they were writing she checked their work randomly moving in the class. After they finished writing, she chose three students and let them read their paragraphs. At the end, she told them to identify the tense they had used and why they used that tense instead of others. Finally, she told them to read the next part which was about strategies for improving English grammar knowledge. She took her attendance and left the room.

### **B) T2's Autonomous English Language learning Practices in Classroom**

At observation time students were not that actively participating in using the opportunities to speak in English, however, they were doing activities in pairs and groups. Students did their homework and became ready for their classroom discussion. It was also observed when a student asks or gives suggestions to the teacher.

#### ***Teacher as facilitator***

As a facilitator, the teacher was observed to raise nothing about the objectives. Even though it was directly observed the teacher was informing the teacher was not responsible for every activity on the material and if the teacher did it for a sample, the remaining part was the responsibility of the students.

#### ***Teacher as guide/mentor***

As a guide, the teacher was observed when guiding students to work in pairs and groups in addition to peer feedback. The teacher encouraged students to participate by asking questions differently to let the students be clear about the question and initiated to speak freely. It was also observed when supporting them that they could develop the capacity to learn independently by showing them how to apply what they had learned. Related to learning strategies the teacher was informing students to read about different strategies provided on the material.

### ***Teacher as inspirator/supporter***

A supporter or someone who initiates the teacher was observed when using the English language as a medium of communication and required the same from students. The way the teacher gave feedback might not inspire students. When a student asked the teacher to do the remaining exercise questions, the teacher responded that the teacher was not responsible for doing all of them. In this dialogue to decide whether the conversation had positive intention or not, or whether the student was suggesting or asking the teacher, the intention of this conversation needed further investigation. If the student's idea was considered as a suggestion, the response of the teacher was not positive as it could have a negative impact on the student. However, if the idea was considered as asking the question because the student needed to know the answer, the teacher was expected to answer the question for the student.

#### **4.3.1.1.3. Observation analysis of T3's initial classroom and AELL Practice**

##### **A) T3's Initial classroom observation**

Teacher: 3

Observation: I

Section: K/11 B59/003

Teacher 1 got a BA degree in English from Axum University and an MA in TEFL from Addis Ababa University. He taught English at the university for more than ten years. In his career, he attended several workshops and pedagogical training like action research and TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge).

The teacher entered the class and started to clean the whiteboard until the others arrived. After he finished cleaning he asked the students to take out their homework and started to check. He reminded them that he gave them post-reading activities as homework. When he checked, only five students had done it. He wrote their name on a piece of paper and told them that they were going to get three marks for their work. He informed them that there is always assessment and that class participation has its value. He told the others again to do it and then asked them to open their module on page 29. He asked them to do the activity while he was writing notes about guessing meaning on the whiteboard. While he was writing, he told them if they had finished the

exercise, they discussed in a group of four the techniques that helped them work out the meanings of the words. Most of the students were writing the note the teacher wrote on the whiteboard and the others were talking to each other. After giving them some time to discuss, he pointed to the note written on the board and told them that those are some techniques that can help them guess the meaning of words. He told them to do the reflection part on their own and the next time that they are going to start a new unit they are expected to come to language lab block 80 room 404 having their notebook and their copy of the module with them. He asked them whether they had questions or suggestions; no one answered. He collected his materials and left the room.

Teacher: 3

Observation: II

Section: K/11 B80/404

Teacher 1 opened the door ahead and waited for the students. After all the students arrived the teacher closed the door and asked them to open their module and read the unit introduction which included the objectives of the unit while he was writing the title of the chapter on the whiteboard. After waiting for a while he asked them to do the first question of the first activity individually and share it with a friend. After that, there was a whole class discussion. Most of the students were actively participating. The teacher asked if there was someone who knew the practice seen in the picture. One student raised his hand and the teacher asked if he could tell them the practice in detail. The student explained and the teacher asked additional questions to let him tell them more. The teacher thanked and appreciated him. The teacher told them that they were going to listen to a text read three times and then they were going to do activities related to the listening text. Before starting to listen, he let them read while listening. The audio started on a loudspeaker. It took about five minutes. The teacher repeated it and let them do the activity while they were listening for the second time. After giving them some time to do activities related to the listening text, the audio was repeated to let the students check their answers. When the students completed their work again the teacher gave them time to check their answers with their friends. Finally, after the answers were checked with the teacher, he gave them the post-listening activity which was paragraph writing as homework. In the end, the teacher advised them to practice listening to this kind of audio text to make them familiar with the native English

speakers and they can get the audio text with their questions from the internet. He also asked them if they had questions but no one asked. He thanked them and let them leave the room.

### **B) T3's Classroom Practices of Autonomous English Language learning**

Classroom practices included both teachers' and students' observable practice. Students were involved in practice like discussing with their friends and taking opportunities to take part in the activities that needed to speak in English. Students were not seen when asking and making suggestions to the teacher. Most of the students were not involved in tasks that had extensions to outside class activity. For example, most of the students did not work on homework when the teacher checked their work

From the teachers' classroom practices of promoting autonomous English language learning, facilitating, guiding/mentoring, and inspiring/supporting students were the terms that the researcher used to represent different teachers' tasks or roles in the classroom.

#### ***Teacher as facilitator***

As a facilitator, teachers are expected to direct students to set their own goals to achieve the course objective, share responsibilities in the learning process with students, direct students to reflect on the tasks they did inside and outside the class, and engage students to evaluate their learning progress regularly. However, the teacher was seen only when ordering students to read the introduction part that included the objectives of the unit. .

#### ***Teacher as a guide/mentor***

As a guide/mentor, the teacher was expected to show the way or lead on the way that can help students develop autonomous English language learning. The teacher was encouraging working with others in pairs and groups as he was letting them do the activities with others. He also informed them that they could use the internet for additional information. Here he did not give them specific resources but simply informed them that they could search on the internet. The teacher was letting the students be involved in different activities on the module. Something related to strategies was not observed.

### *Teacher as inspirator/supporter*

As a supporter of autonomous English language learning, the teacher has to inspire or motivate students and initiate them to let them be. The teacher was observed when using the English language as the medium of classroom communication and requiring the same of students. The teacher was giving incentives for those who tried independently and advising the other to let them do it independently. The teacher reminded them participation has value to let the students actively participate.

#### **4.3.1.1.4. Observation analysis of T4's initial classroom and AELL practice**

##### **A) T4's initial classroom observation**

Teacher: 4

Observation: I

Section: I/9

Teacher 4 got a bachelor's degree in English from Haramaya University and an MA degree in TEFL from Addis Ababa University. He taught English for more than 15 years at universities in Ethiopia. In his career, he attended several workshops and pedagogical training like e-learning and Moodle (online training).

The teacher entered the class and had only the attendance paper in his hand. He gave it to a student sitting in front and went through the class talking to students. He asked where they stopped last time and they replied that they completed unit two. Immediately he asked have you done the reflection part at the end of the unit? What did you get new he asked. He asked to get closer to individuals and they gave a response. After talking to some of them he advised them to do it properly because it makes them conscious about their learning while they are trying to answer those reflection questions.

He ordered them to open their material and most of them were using the soft copy of the material. The teacher introduced and explained the objectives of the unit and told them that they were going to reflect on these issues at the end of the unit. He let them do the first two questions and they started to talk to each other. He observed them from the middle. After waiting for some time, he started to ask them questions and made the discussion for all. He informed them that the

next part was listening and he was going to read a text about cultural tourism. Before that, he asked them to see the picture of the material. Can we get someone who can tell us about the picture? He asked. Two students raised their hands and he asked are you from there? They said yes. He gave a chance for one and the others were following attentively. While the first one was speaking, the other student reminded him. One of them said porridge would be prepared for the hyena on that day. Everyone laughed. The teacher also added more informing them he was also closer to that area. Again the teacher asked if there was someone who could tell them about another cultural ceremony and one student told the class about Chambalala.

The teacher gave them the meaning of two words and let them read questions taken from the listening text. He read the text once and let them fill in the answers. He read it for the second time and completed the remaining. Then he let them crosscheck their answers with their friends. He read it for the third time and checked their answers. He asked if there were confusing answers when they compared with their friends. Two questions were asked and the teacher answered. Then the teacher gave them time to do a listening activity which was writing. He told them to develop the first draft of their text, exchange it with their friend, and let their friend give comments. Here students who were asking for paper from someone were not small. At the end he let them finish writing the final draft of the paragraph at home. He thanked them and left the room.

Teacher: 4

Observation: II

Section: I/9

When the teacher came up, only a few students were there. He greeted them and asked for others and they told him that they were coming. The teacher started to operate his cell phone for some time and started to check their last time work randomly. Some of them were showing him from their cell phone and the others from paper. After he made sure everyone had come, he asked how they got the comments of their friends about their paragraph. He took comments from some of them and let some of them read the final draft of their text loudly for the class. He gave them highlights about writing; the elements of paragraphs and how they can develop their paragraph effectively. No one was taking notes when he was giving them highlights.

The teacher introduced that day's lesson which was grammar. He let them read the article on the material and collect verbs from the article according to their category. He gave them time for both collecting and sharing with friends. Before discussing with them he directly asked them to do the next activity which was about matching types of tenses with their uses. Then he revised the tenses for them and let them mention some of the verbs under each category. He advised them to do the remaining grammar exercises for their practice and let them use the references mentioned before or search on the internet if they need further explanation. He let them do the writing part using those different tenses. The teacher gave them time to write while he was getting closer to them to talk to them. When they finished he gave a chance to read for some students and the time was finished. He thanked them for their participation and left the class.

### **B) T4's Autonomous English Language learning Practices in Classroom**

Students were observed when actively participating in the classroom and coming up with completed tasks. Students freely take opportunities to take part in activities that need to speak in English and are actively involved in pair and group work. Here no one was observed when taking notes while the teacher was explaining and even most of the students did not have their notebook where they took paper from others when they were asked to write something. There were also students using the material as their notebooks. They did the exercise on it.

#### ***Teacher as facilitator***

As a facilitator, the teacher was observed when directing students to reflect on what they had learned in the unit and to reflect on each other's tasks. Even though the teacher identified responsibilities he was assigning them to do and checked what he had given them to do. Regarding the objective setting, the teacher only reminded them of the objectives of the unit and how they were going to evaluate whether they had achieved them or not.

#### ***Teacher as guide/mentor***

As a guide, the teacher did nothing related to learning strategies as the teacher was using the learning strategies mentioned in their material. The teacher encouraged working with others and also supported students as they can develop the capacity to learn independently. Regarding sharing responsibility, the teacher informed them of their tasks as he was doing his part. He also

reminded them they could refer to other materials from the internet other than providing them the material itself.

### ***Teacher as inspirator/supporter***

The relationship and the way students and the teacher communicated implied that the students were inspired. The way he was giving feedback seemed friendly because he talked to them and was closer to them. This can also motivate them to use the English language as he also expected them to use the opportunity to use English and they were also giving responses for what their teacher asked them to do. He encouraged them to write their paragraph.

#### **4.3.1.1.5. Observation analysis of T5's initial classroom and AELL practice**

##### **A) T5's initial classroom observation**

Teacher: 5

Observation: I

Section: F/6

Teacher two got a BED degree in English from Bahir Dar University and an MA in TEFL from Addis Ababa University. He taught English at the university for more than 17 years and he enjoyed teaching English literature courses that are given to English major students at university.

The teacher entered the class and waited for a while until all of the students entered the class. He closed the door and wrote the unit and title of the unit. He asked the students whether they had done the reflection part of the unit completed last class. No one answered. He continued that they are going to start a new chapter which is about cultural values.

He wrote the title of the unit and let the students read the introduction and the objectives of the unit silently. While they were reading, he wrote questions 'What is culture?' and 'What is cultural value?' on the whiteboard. After about ten minutes, he asked the question again and randomly asked some students. Six students got the chance to reflect. Then the teacher gave them time to do the next four pre-listening activities which is a group activity. He asked them to group themselves and select one representative to present their idea. Students get closer according to their seats and after a short time of silence, the students started to discuss loudly. Students were working with their mobile phones. The teacher got closer and asked what they

were doing with their mobile phone and they told him that some were using a dictionary and some were using a soft copy of the material. It was heard when students were talking in the local (Amharic) language. The teacher was moving around to assist the students' group discussion. Most of the discussions seemed like a personal issue however the students returned to the discussion when the teacher got closer to the group and asked them their reflection on the questions. After fifteen minutes the teacher asked them to let the representatives reflect on their discussion. When the representative was present, the teacher asked them additional questions that helped them to speak more and to let the other members of the group reflect. The teacher asked if there was someone who came from the society of the culture there in the picture. No one answered. The discussion took place for about 30 minutes. The teacher wrote the meaning of the two words given on the material to let the teacher define it for the students if they don't know the meaning of the words.

Then the teacher informed students that he was going to read a text three times and that they listen and do the activities taken from the listening text. While the teacher reads the text for the first time, the students simply listen and for the next two rounds, the students answer the questions. After completing their answers, the teacher gave them time to cross-check their answers with each other and after that, they discussed their answers with the teacher. At last, the teacher gave them a post-listening activity to do as homework. Throughout the period, only a few students were actively participating and using the target language freely for the discussion. Some students wrote their answers on the material and some of them wrote in their notebooks. The number of students sitting idle and simply closing their notebooks was not small. He asked if they had any questions. No one asked so he completed the lesson for the day and left the room.

Teacher: 5

Observation: II

Section: F/6

The teacher entered the class and greeted the students. He asked them for their last discussion and gave time for three students. He asked them if they had tried their homework. Everyone kept silent. He told them that one task was left before the post-listening and it needed to listen to the

text once again. He read the listening text once and let them do the activity which was filling a blank space. He gave them time to complete their task and compare their answers with friends. After pair work the teacher discusses the answer as a whole. The post-listening activity was writing a paragraph. The teacher asked them to read the instructions which ordered them to search quickly on the internet if they needed information and then write a paragraph. While students wrote the paragraph the teacher wrote on the whiteboard the skeleton of the paragraph they were going to develop. After they completed their writing, the teacher ordered them to exchange with someone and to let them comment on the paragraph. After some time they were expected to write the final draft of their paragraph. The teacher ordered them to complete it at home and bring it to the next class.

### **B) T5's Autonomous English Language learning Practices in Classroom**

From the observable students' classroom autonomous language learning practices, some of them were seen. Some students were observed when they took part in the activities that needed to speak in English and at the time of discussion to cross-check their answers, they were seen when they tried to help each other. Even though the students needed the initiation and motivation of the teacher, they were participants in classroom activities in the direction the teacher had given them.

#### ***Teacher as facilitator***

As it was observed the teacher ordered students to read the introduction part which includes the objectives of the unit before starting the unit. There was nothing done with students concerning the objectives given there. There was no clear sharing of responsibilities with students. Regarding engaging them in evaluating their progress, the teacher was heard simply asking whether the students had done the reflection part of the unit or not before starting the new one. Related to directing students to reflect on the tasks they did, students were asked to cross-check their answers with their friends and to reflect on one another's work before the whole class discussion. In general from what was observed it is difficult to say the teacher was playing the role of facilitator in promoting students' autonomous English language learning.

### *Teacher as guide/mentor*

As discussed in reviewed literature the way the teacher promotes students' autonomous language learning is by guiding them on the way to become autonomous language learners or by mentoring them. Informing and providing alternative learning strategies and learning styles were the role of the teacher as a mentor. The teacher was not observed when showing alternative strategies other than using what was given there on the module. It was observed when the teacher makes the students work in pairs and groups even though it cannot be sure whether they know the objective of getting involved in group and pair work.

### *Teacher as inspirator and supporter*

To inspire students to let them be autonomous English language learners, the teacher needs to show he is a supporter of autonomous language learning and needs to be a role model. It was observed that the teacher was using the English language as a medium of classroom communication and required the same of students. The teacher encourages the students when they are afraid to speak by asking some guiding questions that remind them what to say. The teacher was also listening to the students in their group discussion and giving them feedback. These kinds of actions motivate students to learn English because it minimizes external pressure like using English in front of others. Therefore it was observed that the teacher inspired students even though it was not directly telling the students about autonomous English language learning.

#### **4.3.1.2. Observation analysis of supporting facilities for AELL in AASTU**

As to the researcher's observation, most of the supporting facilities at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University that encourage autonomous language learning are available. To begin with, there is computer and internet access in the two big digital libraries. Another digital library around the students' dormitory has been established. Strong broad band and Wi-Fi services were also provided to the entire community of the university. This means in addition to the computers provided in the libraries, students and teachers can use their smart phones to get internet service. If access to the internet is available, the opportunity to use online sources is wide. The e-learning platform has also been established; even though only a few teachers employ it.

The university has established two digital language laboratories with facilities like desktops, multi-purpose smart boards, smart TVs, and recorders. The rooms are well-furnished and attractive. The objectives of this kind of laboratory are to enhance and facilitate students' English language learning skills at the time the teacher teaches and when students want to learn and improve their language skills on their own at a time comfortable for them. However, few EFL teachers were using it due to its limited services due to software failure, and lack of training to the teachers on how to use it. The researcher observed one teacher teaching listening using the audio text.

#### **4.3.1.3. Summary of classroom observation**

Observation data was collected at the beginning, and it took place while the teachers taught for two consecutive days to get sufficient information about autonomous English language learning practices in the classroom. The findings from classroom observations were organized under two objectives that are expected to be answered using observation. These objectives were the students' autonomous learning activities that took place inside the class and the teacher's role in the promotion of autonomous learning. From these classroom observations students were seen applying most of the activities except one activity which is giving suggestions to the teacher. Even though the students were practicing those activities, the extent of their involvement was different depending on the issue discussed on the day. The students were observed when they asked the teacher a question privately and loudly. The students were also observed when taking opportunities to take part in the activities that needed to speak in English. Related to active participation, students were actively participating especially in two classes where the teachers notified them repeatedly that class participation has its value at the end. Regarding note taking it was observed that there were only a few students taking notes and even having their notebooks with them. Most of them followed the lesson from the module there on their cell phone. There was only one teacher observed when asking them to take notes when giving additional explanations about note-taking. This can imply that students were not ready to go further other than what was given there in the module. Students were not observed when suggesting to the teacher. From the expected students' autonomous learning activities that take place inside the class, most of them were practiced. However, the intention of practicing or not practicing those activities needs further investigation.

Regarding teachers' actual classroom practice in promoting autonomous English language learning, the roles of teachers were categorized into three: facilitator, guide/mentor, and inspirator/supporter. From the role of facilitator, two practices were not observed in all classes, and one practice was observed in all classes. Goal setting and self-evaluation were observed in none of the classes. The teacher did not direct students to set their own goals and evaluate their work on their own. In all observations, none of the teachers were observed promoting goal-setting and self-evaluation. Instead of self-evaluation, peer evaluation was observed in two observations. Therefore, the teacher's role as facilitator concerning setting objectives and self-evaluation was ineffective. Regarding sharing responsibilities, teachers were observed only when assigning tasks for students as homework, class work, and optional tasks to do on their own. Other than these activities the teachers were not observed when sharing responsibilities in setting their own goals and evaluating their work. The observation revealed that almost all the teachers put students in pairs or in groups at least to share ideas on a certain issue. The teachers encouraged learners to work with friends and let them reflect on their understanding. When relating the issue of cooperative learning with sharing responsibilities, the teachers did not assign responsibility to the group/pair members. The teachers simply ordered students to do the task in pairs or groups.

As a guide/mentor teachers were not observed when informing and providing alternative strategies to achieve their goal and providing them guidance on recommended online resources. As an inspirator/supporter of autonomous language learning, all teachers were observed when using the target language and also expecting their students to use the English language. Teachers were observed when motivating students using different methods. For example, in observation 4 the teacher encouraged the students by reminding them of the benefit they gain from doing the tasks just by relating the activity with other major subjects. In observation 1 the teacher tried to motivate the students by reminding them of the Mark benefit they get. In the remaining observations, the teachers explained how the issue is going to be useful for their future duties and encouraged them to learn effectively. Therefore these results imply that teachers were not promoting autonomous learning by facilitating, guiding, and inspiring students to let them develop autonomous English language learning habits.

#### **4.3.2. Analysis and findings from FGD with students**

The aim of administering focus group discussion was to gain in-depth information and strengthen the findings drawn from the qualitative (observation, and interview) and quantitative (survey questionnaire) analysis. From nine students who participated in the survey from each section, one participant was selected by lottery method. 36 participants were selected for FGD but only 24 were available at the time appointed for the discussion. The discussions were conducted in three sessions in which eight discussants were supposed to sit with the researcher. Participants' names were coded (from S1-S8 for the first session, from P1-P8 for the second session, and R1-R-8) so that their actual names would not appear throughout the research report for confidentiality reasons.

Before the FGD started, the researcher talked about why they were gathered and what they were going to discuss. She explained that the purpose was to get reflections concerning their autonomous language learning practice, their attitude towards it, and the role of their teachers in promoting their autonomous language learning. She clarified that there were no right or wrong, desirable or undesirable answers. They were encouraged to feel comfortable with what they thought and how they felt by informing them their discussion would be kept confidential and recording of their voice was just not to miss their ideas and to listen again and organize their ideas. The students discussed the issue in detail under the administration of the researcher depending on the semi-structured questions.

The process of analyzing the FGD data started by transcribing all of the discussants' responses line by line and the verbatim transcription of the FGD was categorized into the guiding questions and finally synthesized in a way that made it possible to respond to the research questions of the study.

The analysis and discussion were presented as a means of brief description among the eight participants about 1) their motivation to learn the English language, 2) their practices of autonomous language learning, 3) their practice of taking responsibility, 4) their teachers' role in promoting autonomous language learning and 5) the usage of supporting facilities in AASTU.

## **Procedures for the discussion**

The researcher gained each participant's permission before starting to record the discussion and everything they would say remain confidential. It was clarified that it would never be used in any form or for purposes outside the scope of the current research. no one would be able to know who said what in both the transcription and analysis of the FGD data. They were also informed from the onset that they could either skip any question if they did not feel comfortable, or even leave the room in the middle of the discussion. All the students who participated in the FGD sat in a circle in an office located on the fourth floor of Block 80. The discussion began clockwise at first, but participants began to participate whenever they felt like sharing an idea on a topic under discussion.

### **4.3.2.1. FGD Analysis of Motivation to learn English language**

Before asking the students about their autonomous English language learning, knowing whether they are motivated to learn English or not, was essential because the basis of autonomous learning is motivation.

Question #1: Are you motivated to learn English? What motivates you or why are you motivated?

For the questions related to motivation, every student reflected that they are motivated to learn the English language. Most of the reasons for their motivation were related to the benefit they get by using the language. English is the medium of classroom communication and international language, available resources are in English, and most of them agreed that they want to be competent globally. Some of them raised the issue of scholarships abroad where English knowledge is very important. Some of them also raised the issue of entertainment industries that attract them to know English. As one of the respondents (P3) stated:

*“Watching movies, reading books, and listening to podcasts... help you on the way while watching movies if you don't understand certain phrases or words or the grammar they are using, you like to search it by yourself, in doing that you are motivated to know something so that is one criterion of learning.”*

Most of them believed that knowing English is not optional because it is a means of getting what they want in the world. From these reasons, one can understand that students have sufficient reasons to be motivated to learn the English language. These reasons can also be the intention to take part in those activities, especially the activities that took place outside the class. In reverse, getting involved in extracurricular activities outside the classroom can also motivate the students to learn English. For example, one student tried to explain it by relating it to watching an English movie.

*“Even to watch a movie you must be motivated so if you are watching a movie, you are most likely willing to understand what they are talking about so you are going to need to learn. You might not learn from watching a movie but watching a movie motivates you to learn. Why do I do this and why do I do that what is the grammar behind this, what are they saying so you are going to be motivated to learn more.”(P1)*

Therefore motivating students to be involved in activities that take place outside the classroom can be the method to motivate students to learn the English language.

#### **4.3.2.2. FGD Analysis of Students’ Practices of autonomous language learning**

After the response they gave for their motivation, the following question was what actions they took to learn the language, especially the effort they made on their own.

Question #2: What were the actions you took both in the classroom and outside the classroom to learn the English language autonomously? What was the intention of practicing those activities, especially those you practiced outside the class?

In the classroom some of the common practices the students got involved in for their autonomous language learning were talking to each other in English; actively getting involved in presentations; being an active participant; following the teacher.....

The common activities they practiced for their autonomous language learning were watching English movies, listening to English music, reading books, and watching YouTube videos. They also mentioned that in the future they want to use English as a means to discover and understand

new knowledge as different technologies expect international language; even the entertainment industries attract them to learn English...

Students mentioned that the intention of taking part in those activities might be different. For those classroom activities, students are expected to be engaged in what their teacher asked them to do. However, for the activities that took place outside of the class, they relate to motivation. As one of the participants mentioned (P1):

*“If you constantly engage yourself watching movies or constantly engaging in reading English books or engaging yourself with English speakers you are more likely to learn English more than sitting in the classroom and listening to someone speaking. Even to watch a movie you must be motivated so if you are watching a movie, you are most likely willing to understand what they are talking about so you are going to need to learn. You might not learn from watching a movie but watching a movie motivates you to learn. You are gone and ask what the grammar behind this is. What are they saying? So you are going to be motivated to learn more.”*

To be engaged in those activities there should be motivation. If they were not interested in learning the English language there were other options. Since they engaged in those activities without any enforcement other than their motivation, it can be said the purpose of getting involved in those activities can be motivation to learn the language.

These results imply that students develop their language skills while taking part in those activities even though their intention might not be to learn the English language purposely.

#### **4.3.2.3. FGD Analysis of students’ attitude towards taking responsibilities**

To get the students’ attitude towards autonomous language learning they were asked to reflect on responsibility-related questions. The researcher minimized the question to make it clear and organized.

Question #3: What do you think is the responsibility of the students and the teacher in language learning at the different stages: planning stage, learning process stage, and evaluation stage?

The findings of the FGDs regarding the responsibilities showed that the majority of the participants believed in shared responsibilities although there were students who wanted to take the responsibility to make decisions. Shared responsibility means for a certain task, both the teacher and the students are responsible.

As the students tried to justify their reason for not taking full responsibility, there were two reasons: first, they were afraid of taking full responsibility for their learning because they were not sure whether their decisions were right or not. That is why they want their teacher to assure them that their decisions are right. As R3 mentioned in the discussion,

*“Everyone can have a different goal, but the teacher has to set a goal that is general for all of us because everyone has a different goal and the teacher cannot help every student to achieve their goal. I plan or set a goal for what I am bad at. And some people may not know what they know and what they don’t. So the teacher should give different assignments to different skills to test their skills and to discover what they are good at and what they are bad at.”*

Second, the students mentioned that their responsibilities were doing what was already planned in their module, doing the activities given there under the instruction of their teacher, and getting their grades under the evaluation of their instructor.

In another way, some suggested the content of the course should not be decided on the way it is now. For instance, P1 stated:

*“What this university and others are trying to do is give modules on what they think the students should know rather than giving what they should know. And there is a kind of making their choices for them. I think that should be changed. And how we can learn English is based on how much we want to be that person. If we are forced to be there I don’t think that has much fruit on it, I don’t think that would be successful. Rather we should be asking each other and it should be based on the choice of the student. I am not saying that the teacher should not have any power on this but it should be based on the choice of the students.”*

The students believe that they can identify their needs and then that the lesson should depend on the needs of the students. Even though they agreed that at the university level students are mature enough to identify their strengths and weaknesses and that they can be autonomous decision-makers in their learning, still they believe there is room for the teacher in decision-making. Therefore, it can be said the students agreed on the shared responsibilities. This result also implies the reason for considering most of the responsibilities as they are shared responsibilities of both teachers and students may be because they understand it is their effort that determines their success in language learning but the teacher is the decision maker.

At the process level students agreed that they need the mentorship of their teacher. They also mentioned that setting a goal might not be difficult for students but the teacher has to show them the way to achieve that goal. There are a lot of resources to learn English and they need their teachers to assist them in achieving their goals. These can be by selecting and providing appropriate materials and motivating them. Some students mentioned that even though they can take responsibility for their learning, they cannot be sure that they are on the right track. They need their teacher to check and approve the way to reach their goal. Some of them mentioned that they can take responsibility for their learning because they know their weaknesses but they need mentorship. As (P2, S3) mentioned

*“It is like we could read books and understand the grammar but students don't like self-learn Teachers should assign books to read and asking for book reports could help improve our reading habits, and having discussions in the classroom and presentations to students get out in the crowd and helping to speak could help them to like the subject and promote English learning.”*

They needed their teacher to show them the way. The availability of mentorship increased the efficiency of their learning. In addition, they mentioned that they expect the teacher to motivate them to learn by decreasing the other factors that decrease the efficiency of the students' learning. For example, they shared their experience of how they learn from watching movies. When watching movies, because there are no worries about learning and exams, students can learn freely. Therefore making the lesson interesting is considered as the responsibility of the teacher.

Again engaging students in different discussions not only with the teacher but also with other students in pairs and groups is also the responsibility of the teacher.

They explained their teachers' role as someone who tests what they have learned up to now by giving assignments, homework, and exams. If students had a good background at previous levels, it was not so difficult to achieve what was expected from them. However, those who do not have a good background cannot cope with it since language learning is a process that takes time. They expected their teachers to consider their differences (S2, S5,). They all agreed that a lot is expected from them even though they can't categorize it as theirs' or their teachers' responsibilities. The teacher gave hints on a certain issue and broadening that issue was the responsibility of the students (S4, S3, P2) and then the teacher had to evaluate whether the students had achieved the goal or not using tests.

At the evaluation stage, some students (S1, S4,) stated that they tried to evaluate themselves after the teacher gave them tasks like speech delivery and essay writing and evaluated them. The responsibility of the students was to wait until the teacher evaluates their work and gave them feedback on their work. This means evaluation is the responsibility of the teacher.

They all agreed that there is no scarcity of learning resources; there are ample resources if someone wants to learn but it needs commitment. There should be a teacher that enforces them to be committed.

From the discussion related to the students' attitude towards taking responsibility, students believe that they have to share responsibility with their teacher even though they don't know the demarcation between their responsibilities and their teacher's responsibilities. These implied that there is an indicator that shows students have a positive attitude toward autonomous language learning.

#### **4.3.2.4. FGD Analysis of Teachers' role in promoting autonomous language learning**

Question#3: How much did you think your teachers were involved in promoting autonomous language learning? To what extent do your teachers play their role in developing students' autonomous language learning?

Participants were asked if their teachers were playing their role in promoting autonomous language learning. The practices or actions teachers take to promote autonomous language learning can be categorized into three roles: facilitator, guide/mentor, and inspiratory/supporter. Students were asked whether their teachers were playing their role in the promotion of autonomous language learning. The discussions of the participants indicated that the roles teachers were playing in the promotion of autonomous language learning were very limited. The participants tried to raise the issue connecting with the factors that make the teachers not play their role in promoting autonomous language learning for the students.

As the participants indicated the factors that disable the teacher to play the role of facilitator which are to direct students to set their objective, to share responsibilities, to evaluate their learning progress, and to reflect on their tasks, might be different. The first one was the readymade objective. Participants indicated that they were not expected to set their objective because it was already set. This means the teacher did not direct the students to have their objective to achieve the broad objective. Students mentioned it as a problem because it was already tied up.

*“The teachers were sticking to the guidelines they came with. We were not given this opportunity to set a goal; they directly come up with the guidelines of the university and directly go to teaching, they did not communicate with the students they start with what they think right... that is the problem” (P8).*

Related to this students agreed that there should be an objective that the teacher came up with but since it might not work for everyone, it should be accustomed. Some students mentioned that if there were discussions on the objectives, the teacher might help the students considering their differences. The initiation to discuss with the students and customize it to their needs should come from the teacher. In addition, there were no discussions on sharing responsibilities.

*“They only give us the clear definition or guideline which is the course outline and what is going to be done in the course. There was no discussion, it is already known.” (P2) “English learning system which is more test and grade oriented rather than knowledge oriented. The teacher does not focus on how much*

*knowledge or how we're getting improved... the teacher is just taking or testing what we have got in the previous section of our life, not showing us the way to get something new or something important,”(S5)*

The second one was the motivation of the teacher. They stated that teachers themselves need to be motivated to facilitate autonomous language learning before they facilitate the students' autonomous language learning.

*“It is good if this is supported by the teacher but before supporting students the teacher has to know himself and be motivated to share this for the students... We need some motivation and extra information and its application in the new and real world and what we can do with it otherwise it will be time-wasting.”(P6)*

The third factor was time. Since the time given for a certain lesson was limited teachers were forced to stick to the module. Even if the teacher was motivated to promote autonomous language learning, time became a barrier not to apply. In summary, the data collected using FGD showed that teachers were not playing their role in promoting students' autonomous language learning.

#### **4.3.2.5. FGD Analysis of the Usage of supporting facilities in AASTU**

Related to the supporting facilities, most of the students agreed that there was no scarcity of learning facilities if there were the initiative and motivation to learn. Even though it cannot be said sufficient enough, materials and facilities like the internet, digital libraries, language labs, and computers were available in AASTU.

*“We have internet access in the digital library, and on the ground floor of our dormitories (S5)...at this time lots of the information we need is found on the internet and the digital library provides us desktops that have internet access (R1), language lab to work on the listening part of the module (R2).*

However, students mentioned that they needed their teacher to make them disciplined. This means the availability of facilities and materials could not make students autonomous learners. They needed their teachers to create an exposure and give them additional materials and online

resources because the module was simple and very specific. *“If we are committed enough to do the activities given in the module I don’t think it is a big deal.”* This means it is not about the difficulty of the module/material but about making the students committed. There should be the teacher’s enforcement that keeps the students on the right track. They need teachers’ evaluation for what they did. Considering the learning material/ module, students mentioned that it guides them to learn independently to some extent but they need to check and be sure about what they did. For the given exercises and activities, there were no key answers to check whether they were correct or not. Therefore, they needed their teacher to tell them the correct answer.

#### **4.3.3. Analysis and findings from teachers’ interview**

The objective of this interview was to get elaborated information on how teachers understand autonomous language learning, about students’ activities of autonomous language learning and their attitudes towards autonomous language learning, to what extent the teachers were playing their roles, and to what extent students and teachers were using the supporting facilities available for them. The teachers’ responses were organized under the four themes and the summary was presented below according to their category.

Before directly going to ask them about the students’ practices, teachers were asked to define autonomous language learning.

Question #1: What is autonomous language learning? How do you understand autonomous language learning?

Three of the respondents defined autonomous language learning as a kind of independent learning that students do by themselves at their exposure (T1&T3); without the interference of the teacher (T2). T4 defines autonomous language learning as a type of learning where students shoulder more responsibility for their learning with the support of their teachers. Autonomous learning is students’ active engagement in the tasks or learning materials (T5) From these definitions we can say that teachers consider it equivalent to independent learning except one teacher that related it with students’ sharing of more responsibility with the support of the teacher.

#### 4.3.3.1. Students' Autonomous English Language Learning Practices

Question #2: what are the practices expected from the students to be autonomous language learners?

The teachers were asked to describe what was expected from the students to be autonomous learners and their responses showed that there was a lot to do especially outside the classroom since students were expected to be autonomous learners at higher education institutions and the time given for a class is very limited. As one of the teachers explained, since the given time for class is limited and the students are also expected to be independent learners, they are supposed to plan and change their plan of action accordingly (T4). Since the environment was not teacher-dominated like the high school level, planning helps to be involved in outside class activities because it encourages independent learning in the long future. This also indicated that autonomous language learning was not a kind of learning that happens immediately but it needs time. All the respondents stated that in the classroom students are supposed to get engaged in most of the activities. Students were expected to do activities that can be read and understood on their own, and even develop or drive rules on their own before interacting with their teacher.

*“...Students should expose themselves to different activities both inside the classroom and outside their classroom; they shouldn't need help from others, they are expected to do it on their own...develop vocabulary from their reading, speaking and listening. So they are expected to practice even outside the classroom, for example, they are expected to listen to different foreign speakers, listening and recordings, just to improve their listening skills, and can also improve their speaking because their pronunciation will be shaped by a native speaker. They have to be exposed to different activities.”(T2)*

As can be seen from the above extract there should not be the involvement of the teacher. Outside the classroom, there were different expectations of what students needed to do. For example one of the respondents mentioned the time given in the classroom was limited and that it is expected from the students to do more outside the class.

*“For example, speaking, unless they practice outside the classroom, activities inside the classroom by itself are not enough so we have to encourage them to do*

*different practices with their friends, colleagues, or their family members. If we take writing as a simple example, the task on the module gives them only limited tasks, but we encourage them to do different activities outside the classroom. These are some of the samples that I encourage my students to practice outside the classroom by themselves.” (T1)*

Students were expected to do activities in their textbook, do assignments, read and understand texts and reference books, listen to audio recordings and lectures from YouTube, practice pronunciation, practice communicating with each other, practice writing, plan for their learning, be scheduled for their out of class activities, and be engaged to activities.

#### **4.3.3.2. Teachers’ role to promote autonomous English language learning**

After reflecting on the students’ practices, teachers were asked about their roles. To get detailed information the researcher minimized the question to planning, process, and evaluation stages. However, the result was presented categorizing the roles of teachers into three: Facilitator, Guide/mentor, and inspirator/supporter.

Question #3: What do you think are the roles of the teacher to encourage autonomous language learning?

##### ***Teacher as a Facilitator***

As facilitators, teachers were expected to direct students to set their own goals to achieve the course objective, to share responsibilities with the students in the learning process, to engage students to evaluate their progress, and to direct students to reflect on the tasks they did inside and outside the class.

Teachers agreed that they had roles in the development of students’ autonomous language learning even though the roles they considered as theirs were different. For the questions related to goal setting, the teachers were asked whether they assist their students in setting their own goals or not, all of them responded that they would not let students set their own goals explicitly but all of them mentioned that there might be an implicit goal setting. At the beginning of the course, when discussing the course outline, there was a discussion about the expected goal. Even though they didn’t make their students set their own goals, they all mentioned that they discussed

the general objective of the course at the beginning of the course and the specific objectives at the beginning of each unit. The teachers explained it as it was done indirectly.

*“It is done at the beginning of the semester or the beginning of the session, there is a Course outlines or course plan during the introductory session of the course plan. I share the responsibility, I have my responsibility and students have their responsibility. There are course objectives that the students are expected to achieve at the end of the semester. At that time when I tell them these are your responsibility and these are mine, indirectly I am forcing them just to have their plan. I informed them in each session that they have to know why they are speaking, and writing that is the point.”(T3)*

*“... I advised them to plan priorly before doing some activities. Setting goals is an effective study mechanism in which students are expected to set objectives for why they are doing some activity. I encourage them but I haven't had any experience in doing or making plans like that.” (T1)*

*“I provide them with clear objectives or goals. Without setting goals, it's not possible to carry out autonomous learning, so I usually inform them what kind of objectives they are going to achieve, whether it's individual or group work.”(T5)*

The result indicates that the teachers did not direct students to set their own goals to achieve the course objectives and identify and share responsibilities with students. Regarding sharing responsibility, T5 stated that before students come to the class, they must know something about the upcoming lesson because it helps them to have active interaction in the classroom and to ask questions if it is not clear. Otherwise, if they come to the class and open their soft copy or hard copy of the material in the class, it's not a good way of learning. Concerning directing students to reflect and evaluate their work, responses of teachers indicated that self-evaluation was not common. As T5 stated *“I don't give them the chance to evaluate their performance by evaluating their achievements, but indirectly yes, I give them the chance to evaluate themselves from peer feedback not self-evaluation but by having group discussion.”*

### *Teacher as a Guide/mentor*

As the interviewees revealed, students are expected to be autonomous learners and they encouraged autonomous learning by giving students tasks to do independently and outside the class. They also encouraged and assigned their students to work cooperatively in pairs and groups. The reason to do this could be time limitation, as one of the interviewee (T2) mentioned most of the time, he involved them in different activities just for ease of activities, to manage his time easily and expose them to activities to let them develop the skill by their own. The others provided them with additional activities to enrich what they had taught.

Related to providing alternative strategies interviewees have different positions that they tried to justify using different cases. For example, one interviewee (T3) mentioned about vocabulary learning strategy. The students were not willing to implement what they were asked to set as their goal. The teacher ordered them to have a vocabulary notebook to list new vocabulary they gained when engaging in different activities and informed them that it is one strategy to learn new vocabulary, but no one was interested in implementing this strategy. Another interviewee (T5) stated that he makes them conscious about their learning strategies. He advised them that being conscious of what they are doing helps. He informed them of the strategy to learn vocabulary in different contexts.

He explicitly tells them they need to have a conscious understanding of the use of their background knowledge to understand difficult reading materials. He tells them to improve their vocabulary knowledge by having a separate exercise book in which they have to document difficult words they encounter every day. He tells them that separate material has an evaluative function for their academic performance. Whenever they try to speak or write, they have to try to include that word by itself. Memorizing difficult words in the context of speaking and writing is a good way of language learning by memorizing in day-to-day interaction. He informed them that it can also apply to grammar learning; if they encounter a new grammatical form, they must consciously know that it is new for me, and for the upcoming language classroom interaction, they should use it.

The other interviewee explained that there was no need to provide alternatives to the students. Sometimes considering students' interests may be needed but using the appropriate kind of strategy for that kind of activity should be decided by the teacher.

*“I have never done this, I have used my strategy, and I will see their interest. I feel that this kind of strategy may be appropriate for this kind of activity unless otherwise, I didn't give them to choose on their own...when I'm using my own, I will also see their interests for example, the students' performance is different the students strategy and learning style is different so, I will see the majority of the students where they are, what kind of strategy I preferable for them, just a kind of informal observation, I will read them before deciding; unless otherwise, I will not allow them.” (T2)*

As the interviewees mentioned, the Communicative English Skills course is a common course that provides several strategies to learn not only English but also other subjects, students will learn the strategies they can use for learning. Therefore, they thought that different strategies were already provided in the module and the students could select the one that is appropriate for them.

*“It is already stated in the course plan that the learning style and process should be like this, lecture, group, pair, and individual work is needed, which is mentioned at the beginning of the session. As a teacher, I have to be flexible b/c I don't know what happens in the classroom. I may give them time for a presentation and if they are not interested in that, I may change it to pair work or group work. Simply by considering the context, I try to use a variety of strategies.” (T3)*

*“The module also guides us to follow certain strategies, and we primarily follow the module and then sometimes based on the feedback as well as by looking the gestures of the students, we try to shift our approaches to teaching... by looking at the major contents of the course, I'm trying my best to make my lesson suitable to the learning.” (T1)*

From the responses of the interviewees, one can understand that providing alternative strategies to students was not common practice. All respondents believe that strategy-related tasks were the responsibility of the teacher.

As a guide supporting students as they can develop the capacity to learn independently is the responsibility of the teachers. If teachers were responsible for exposing their students to different tasks, the chance of missing students from the tasks was rare. When students are asked to do activities on their own, they will have a chance to read, organize some notes, and present them in a class; it becomes room for the students to exercise autonomous learning (T2). Interviewees explain this idea differently.

*“Teachers have roles, they are the guide to export students to independent learning or autonomous learning unless you expose them,... students are always expecting something from the teacher. If you guide them they can do it.” (T2)*

*“Though it might not be as supportive at the university level, it is our responsibility to encourage them, to give them opportunities to work hard outside the classroom, at the same time in the classroom. “(T4)*

However, this did not mean that students should not work with others cooperatively. Working independently does not mean completely omitting cooperative learning. As (T1) stated, though time is a time of competition that motivates students not to share ideas and be self-sufficient, cooperation should be there among the students and the teacher is the one who is responsible for encouraging it.

Related to guiding additional material, all of them agreed that the reference materials were given at the beginning of the course and they also mentioned that the tasks done in the class were not sufficient and there must be additional tasks to be done out of the class time both individually and in pairs or groups.

*“When you are teaching writing, what you are doing in the classroom may not be sufficient for the students. You may provide them with different activities, and materials, that is to be self-sufficient, independent learners that help them to develop and enrich their understanding about what you are teaching in the*

*classroom and that is one way of encouraging them. Or you may encourage them to work together outside the classroom in which they are sharing ideas, learning experiences, sharing their materials, or different kinds of issues that they are supposed to do in the outside classroom environment.” (T4)*

*“Students need additional material, I gave them video links, pdf materials, they need a guide, especially for writing and speaking I gave them video links to support and to address their needs besides the material.... cooperative learning is very important, especially during debate and speaking session, I informed them as the process is very important, the assessment may be at individual level but I told them I need to see the overall process. one student should cooperate with his friend, their motivation, their preparation, the end is the sign of the process I told them. if they know this they are forced to work together. so cooperative and collaborative learning is the important strategy I use in the language classroom” (T3)*

*“Because it is difficult to complete the module at that given time I will not go further because I need to cover the course material on time, but sometimes when I'm teaching them, I will use these additional resources for my notes and I will give them additionally. (T2)*

*“I have attached books to refer to; I have provided them with some audio materials, audio-visual materials for their listening activities; I'm trying my best to give them extra materials that would improve their skills... I give them group assignments that would encourage students to cooperate and work on some activities. I encouraged them to do so and forwarded their views to the classroom. By this kind of activity, I encourage my students to participate in collaborative activities and if students bring new ideas, and new points to the classroom in the form of a group, I give them bonus marks, like an incentive.” (T1)*

Most of the informants agreed that students' self-evaluation was not common but after the students did some individual activity, they will give them time to revise their work and let their

partners see and give feedback. In addition, at the end of each unit students were expected to fill the reflection and self-assessment sections. Related to those questions (T 3) mentioned that the questions were very easy and that students could answer by common sense; the students did not want to waste their time because it was very simple to answer. Instead, they need some challenging tasks to evaluate their knowledge.

Related to learning materials, the interviewees stated that they advised students to use reference books given in the course outline and gave them additional online resources and YouTube links. They advised them to be selective because time is limited. However, one of the interviewees (T2) mentioned that he did not provide or suggest to students to use different materials from different sources, but he only used different materials for himself to give them additional notes.

### ***Teacher as Inspirator & Supporter***

As an inspirator/supporter of autonomous language learning, teachers need to be committed to help their students develop the ability to become autonomous learners. One of the teachers admitted that there was a lack of commitment. The environment at university did not encourage students to let them freely communicate with their teachers and to get their teachers' advice.

*“We are not hiring, implementing, or appreciating students to conduct or to follow independent learning because of different reasons. One is commitment, we don't have that quality, and we are not that committed to encouraging our students to evaluate, give feedback, and even sometimes assess their activities. But teachers are grateful. If we properly use our time, we can manage; we can even sometimes interfere and give them advice to improve their skills.” (T1)*

Motivating students to learn English by minimizing external pressure and giving them advice were some of the ways to inspire students to learn English autonomously. However, the environment at university did not encourage students to let them freely communicate with their teachers and to get their teachers' advice. As (T4) tried to describe the culture in a university about the relationship between teachers and students: *“Our environment is very discouraging. We don't normally advise them; we will terrorize them and you will fail. It is better to advise*

*them smoothly, approach them friendly, keep your social distance as students can approach, and talk to you about what they are supposed to do.”*

Since the course is an English course, the medium of communication is English and one way of inspiring students was using the English language as a medium of communication and encouraging students to use the language for communication. Related to this idea (T1) revealed that he gave priority to expressing ideas instead of the language they use to express their ideas. This was used as a way to encourage students to reflect on their ideas.

*“This is a class where they are expected to use the opportunities I encourage them to use. When I'm asking them questions, I encourage them to speak not only in English; even they can explain their answers in Amharic or other languages if they want. That means I don't want them to keep silent by having the answers, but I encourage them in whatever language I encourage them to speak at heart.”(T1)*

As the teacher used this method to encourage the students the others also used different motivating methods. For example, providing incentives; giving Mark for their active participation, and giving them feedback that encouraged them to work better. One of the interviewees mentioned that he also gives opportunities to students to get feedback from other friends.

*“When they are just writing a paragraph, I don't always just mark what they have written. I see what they do in the classroom. Without providing them with more feedback, I may allow them to share, exchange their materials, and get opinions or feedback from their friends. And I encourage them just to do it again outside the classroom and check whether they have learned something or whether they are progressing or not. That might be a kind of guidance if it is considered to be one aspect of autonomous learning.”(T4)*

One way of inspiring students to learn autonomously was by being positive and supportive especially when giving feedback. The teacher informed them that he gave feedback repeatedly. After the students get feedback from their peers and check their work again. In addition, the students get feedback twice for impromptu speech: immediately after they finish their speech the

teacher gives them feedback and their peers and friends also give feedback and at the end, they reflect on their work on their own (T1). This shows that when they get more feedback they can easily improve their learning.

#### **4.3.3.3. Students' attitudes towards taking responsibilities**

To know the attitude of the students towards autonomous language learning, teachers were asked about the response of their students when they were asked to be involved in autonomous language learning practices.

Question #3: For this issue, teachers were asked about the attitude of the students; teachers tried to reflect on what they had seen from their students' actions. Teachers mentioned that as there were motivated students for autonomous learning, there were also unmotivated students. As (T1) stated, even though students were working dedicatedly to be autonomous learners, some students wanted to complete the course activities in a classroom and didn't want to engage in different activities outside the classroom. Even though there were students taking action seriously for their language learning, there were also students who did only what was given in the module and the class for the sake of fulfilling the course requirements. The indicators of their attitude can be seen from the responses they gave for the actions or activities they were asked to do. For example one of the teachers asked them to write about their first impression about the course at the beginning of the course.

*"I asked them to write a paragraph about their first impression without any interference, without any information, without any kind of guidance in the classroom and almost all of them were very willing and happy to write about that. This might be one instance in which students are eager and motivated to do things by themselves. And when I give them activities to be done outside the classroom, they are not reluctant, I think, as far as I observed the students in the classroom... they are responding positively to the activities they are given to do." (T4)*

As (T5) also tried to describe the motivation of students, he stated:

*"Students are not motivated to speak in class. Few students take the initiative to speak in class. The majority doesn't have the motivation. They don't know that*

*speaking by itself helps them to speak and to improve their language. Sometimes I encourage them, especially after reading material; I ask them to reflect on their understanding of the text. But still, some students usually participate in the class. Even the material, especially communicative English skills I encourage students to reflect on their attitudes and their understanding about the material at the end of each unit. I usually skip it and let them do it outside on their own.”*

However, for most of the practices, students need the teachers’ enforcement. If the teacher did not order them to do it they will not do it in their interest. Related to this, one teacher explained the initiation of students to do activities given in their module.

*“To speak frankly, the module encouraged students to do different activities especially it encouraged them to make them good writers, but students do not want to write much. And at the end of each unit, it encourages them to write a paragraph but students are not happy to write. I even sometimes encourage students to do independent work, and group work activities, but they are not happy to do it. They keep silent every morning. And we are even trying to pull them in to stimulate them to speak individually and discuss in groups. Even though the module required them to do independent activities, they are not happy to do those activities.”(T1)*

Sometimes the material itself influences the way they reflect as it cannot touch their interests and does not consider their level of understanding. Some students might believe that it's very simple and nothing new for them. The teacher advised them to take the risk of speaking in the class, despite the familiarity of the content to them. But still, they don't speak in the class (T5).

#### **4.3.3.4. Supporting environment for autonomous language learning**

For the questions related to the supporting environment in AASTU, the interviewees responded that there were better infrastructures like the internet, computers, and online resources that students can access in the library, but the availability of those infrastructures only could not be helpful for the students. As one of the interviewees (T3) mentioned, because the number of students in a class was limited and the students were familiar with technology usage, the base of

using supporting facilities was there in AASTU so that the teacher could support students easily. However, the availability of the supporting facilities did not mean that they were functional or used for supporting students' autonomous language learning. For example, all respondents reflected that the language lab was there physically but it didn't function properly; no lab technician was constantly available there to assist teachers and students with the proper usage of the equipment. There were no organized materials that guided students to learn independently. Because of these problems, the students cannot use the language lab on their own. Some very limited teachers used the lab to teach listening just for the sake of using the loudspeaker. The others used their mechanism because they were not familiar with the equipment and the lab was not open for students to use it on their own.

Regarding the module the respondents stated that it encourages students' independent language learning to some extent however it needs some improvements. Some of the interviewees mentioned that the module guides students to let them learn autonomously even though it needs some modifications and the effort of teachers to initiate students. *"The module encouraged students to do different activities especially it encouraged them to make them good writers, and at the end of each unit, it encouraged them to write a paragraph... It encouraged students to do independent work, group work activities."*(T1)

*"There are activities that are done before telling the students rules or the principles. First of all, the activity makes them involved in their activities. Finally, to derive certain kinds of rules from that and even the notes come after the activities... The module allows the students to do certain kinds of activities. After they have done the activities independently, they will have some kind of understanding on their own. They dig out; they think and also develop critical thinking. It will help them to develop certain kinds of notes. So, that is very encouraging for me, even if the module has some kind of faults or criticisms, but on the side of independent learning it encourages."* (T2)

*"In the module, there are reflective activities. Students are expected to reflect on the previous activity that they did during the entire session. That reflective activity helps them to reflect on what they have learned, their weak side, the strength of*

*the content, tasks... the material also forces them to have some sort of reflection but they are not interested. The reason is the simplicity of the tasks. As you know students need challenging tasks.” (T3)*

Respondents stated that the module initiates autonomous learning but it needs the teachers' follow-up to balance the difference of the students. As (T4) tried to explain the activities given in the textbook may be one way of giving opportunities for students to evaluate themselves. It doesn't necessarily mean that all students are doing it at the expected level because they had no opportunity to do such kinds of activities in the classroom at the high school level. Since there may be both advanced students and very struggling students who are not able to understand even rudimentary or very elementary concepts, some of the questions should be re-modified so as not to ignore diversity.

#### **4.4. Discussion**

##### **4.4.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents an in-depth discussion of the results emerging from the analysis conducted in chapter four with the links to the literature presented in chapter two. These results are discussed according to the objectives of the study, as stated in chapter one to explore students' English language learning autonomy at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University. As can be seen from the detailed analysis performed in the preceding chapter, primary and secondary data sources were consulted to provide both quantitative and qualitative data to meet these intended specific objectives. The discussion is presented by integrating both quantitative and qualitative results as per the reviewed literature. The four objectives are students' autonomous language learning activities, students' attitudes towards autonomous language learning, teachers' roles in promoting autonomous language learning, and supporting the environment to encourage autonomous language learning.

##### **4.4.2. Students' autonomous language learning activities**

Autonomous learning practices took place both in and outside of the classroom. The findings from the questionnaire indicated that the major activities students get involved in inside the classroom were, noting down new information, making notes and summaries of the lesson, and discussing learning problems with classmates. At observation time the students were observed

when they took notes, referred to the meaning of a new word from their dictionary, and discussed with each other when the teacher gave them time to discuss. Among the inside class activities, 'making suggestions to the teachers' was reported to be 'rarely' done. This result is the same as the findings of Chan, et al (2002). This could be because of the previous culture that students' suggestions and comments usually had little effect on the teacher's decision, be it on the design of the course, classroom organization, activities, or assessment. Students were also observed when asking the teacher a question individually and then the teacher asked the whole class to let the others try to answer the question. As they also mentioned in FGD, students agreed that they are expected to complete what their teachers ordered them since the teacher monitors their work, and evaluates and gives value for their work at the end of the course.

In addition, this can also imply the reason for the practicability of those activities inside the classroom was because the students might think they may be asked by their teacher, or practicing those activities may help them during exams. It was the teacher who dictated what happened in the classroom and they could only ask the teacher if they needed clarification. This, perhaps, confirmed the general impression that a student's previous learning experience and preference were largely teacher-centered and teacher-dominated.

Outside the classroom, several activities initiate autonomous language learning. As the result from the questionnaire indicated, outside the class, students use the internet in English, watch English TV programs and movies, listen to English music, chat with friends in English, read notices and books written in English, and listen to English music. Students mentioned also in the FGD that watching movies, listening to English music, watching English teaching YouTube channels, and using the internet in English for different purposes were the activities that helped them to improve their English language even though it can't be sure they did it purposely to learn the language or not. It is uncertain whether some of the activities were all carried out for reasons of study. Learning English vocabulary words and English grammar, practicing speaking English with their friends, and learning in a self-study center at a university were the practices that have a direct relation to studying or learning English; where the finding is similar to Chan, et al (2002) finding. Talking to the teachers outside the class in English and attending different conferences

and seminars to improve their English were less practiced even though they have a direct relation to studying or learning English.

Evidence from the results for the inside and outside classroom activities and the FGD discussion, students' behavior demonstrated that students were taking part in more than half of the listed autonomous learning activities even though it needs further study to know whether they did what they did consciously understanding what is expected from autonomous learning. As Littlewood (1999) stated about reactive autonomy, students will engage in fruitful independent study and organize their resources autonomously within a teacher-initiated direction. Hence it needs to be checked whether those activities were in a teacher-initiated direction.

#### **4.4.3. Students' attitudes toward autonomous language learning/ taking responsibility**

According to Jingnan's (2011) suggestion, students need to possess intrinsic motivation, and a strong desire to take responsibility for their learning, which includes setting objectives, designing learning activities, selecting learning methods, and assessing their learning processes. To know the students' attitude towards autonomous language learning, the level of their motivation, and to what extent they are taking responsibility are the two indicators.

Concerning the level of motivation, students felt that they were reasonably motivated. The majority of students consider themselves motivated because English is an international language and at a higher level they are expected to use the language to share the world's knowledge. In addition, they want to be competent everywhere in the world and they understand that the major tool to be competent in the world is the English language. Hence, if they have the motivation to learn English, they are willing to be involved in the activities they are expected to do to learn the English language. This can also be related to the activities they do inside and outside the classroom. Even though it cannot be sure about the outside class learning activities, students were willing to be engaged in different activities inside and outside the classroom.

It is justified that to be successful in acting autonomously, the confidence to take responsibility is the base (Littlewood, 1996). The students considered as their responsibilities the ones which are related to outside class learning activities, and the searching of new opportunities and resources to learn English. The five actions that the majority of respondents felt the teacher should take

responsibility for include: deciding what students should learn next in English lessons, deciding the textbook and materials to use in class, choosing what activities to use to learn English in English lessons, evaluating the course, and deciding the objectives of the English course. This implies a tendency to be dependent on the teacher and their perception of the teacher as the decision-maker.

However, evaluating the progress students have in learning English, making sure they make progress during lessons, evaluating the outcomes of learning English, evaluating the learning, and setting an action plan on how to solve learning problems or improve learning were the actions that the majority of the students consider as both students and teachers were responsible for it. In addition, even though it was not the majority, the major percentage of some actions like making you work harder, analyzing what difficulty you have in learning English, stimulating your interest in learning English, identifying your strengths in learning, identifying your weaknesses in learning English and evaluating the learning strategies were also considered as the responsibility of both teachers and students.

This result is different from previous studies (Chan et al. 2002; Cherinet, 2019; Khreisat, 2021) that considered dependence on the teacher as the reason for students' inability to be autonomous learners. The result of this study indicates that students consider most of the responsibilities as they are shared responsibilities. As they tried to justify the reason for sharing the responsibility, there were two reasons: first, they were afraid of taking full responsibility for their learning because they were not sure whether their decisions were right or not. That is why they want their teacher to assure them that their decisions are right. Second, the students mentioned that their responsibilities were doing what was already planned in their module, doing the activities given there under the instruction of their teacher, and getting their grades under the evaluation of their instructor. This result also implies the reason for considering most of the responsibilities as they are shared responsibilities of both teachers and students may be because they understand it is their effort that determines their success in language learning but the teacher is the decision maker.

Since the result of this study showed that the students considered their responsibilities the ones which are related to outside class learning activities, and the searching for new opportunities and

resources to learn English, more of the responsibilities go to the teacher even though the students understood they have shared responsibilities. Therefore, as the result showed, the responsibilities of the students were following what was stated in the module and the order of their instructor which means more of the responsibilities go to the teacher. This result is similar to some extent to the findings of Mesfin (2008) which indicated a lack of the student's awareness of their teachers' roles towards their autonomous learning if there is no clear understanding of one's responsibilities, it affects autonomous learning.

The students considered their responsibilities as the ones that are related to outside class learning activities, and the analysis of difficulties they have in learning English. As also mentioned in the FGD, students consider as their responsibilities the practices like doing what is already planned on their module, doing the activities given in the module under the instruction of their teacher, and getting their grade under the evaluation of their teachers. The students emphasized that their teacher is responsible to check and approve the effectiveness of their learning practices. As also stated in the interview with the teachers, since there was limited time to cover the portion, there was no time to make students set their own goals, to provide them with different strategies to let them choose the one that is appropriate for them and evaluate the course and their learning. Therefore, the result implies that teachers also contribute to the students' attitude toward taking responsibility. Indirectly this can also imply that the teacher didn't promote autonomous language learning and share responsibilities for the students.

According to Dang (2012), students need to be responsible for three attributes: initiating, monitoring, and evaluating whereas result of this study shows that students have motivation to learn the English language but they appear to be less willing to make autonomous language learning decisions. This could be created by the expectations they had about their teacher's responsibilities and their lack of experience in learning autonomously.

#### **4.4.4. Teachers' roles in promoting autonomous language learning**

For language teachers facilitating and promoting language learners' autonomy in learning is as important as fostering and developing learners' language communicative competence (Han, 2020). Autonomous language learning is a process of how language learners develop their autonomy within the supporting environment where the teacher's role in fostering autonomous

learning in classroom teaching is essential. As Shu and Zhuang (2008) state, one of the important characteristics of autonomous language learning is the learner's capacity developed by teacher support and supporting environment or context which includes the teacher's guidance, teaching and learning facilities, and learning materials.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to foster autonomous learning in the process of making students lifelong learners (Yan, 2012). As Han (2014) stated, the role of the teacher in autonomous learning is to help learners assume the responsibility for making decisions about their learning in determining the objectives; defining the contents and progressions; selecting methods and techniques to be used, and evaluating what has been acquired. Having adequate knowledge about the concept of learner autonomy and the best strategies that students need to be autonomous learners helps teachers offer their students sufficient training to learn independently (Alonazi, 2017). Learners, therefore, will be able to manage their language learning in different ways like reflecting on their learning process, evaluating their performance, and making important decisions regarding their learning.

For the implementation and development of learner autonomy, teachers play an important role because they are responsible for developing a learning environment conducive to promoting learner autonomy. Accordingly, this study tries to discuss to what extent teachers are playing their role in promoting autonomous language learning. The practices teachers get involved in were categorized under three categories: teachers' practices as facilitators; teachers' practices as a guide/mentor; and teachers' practices as inspirators/supporters of autonomous learning.

As facilitators, teachers are expected to initiate and support decision-making processes (Voller, 1997). Results from the data show that teachers were not playing the role of facilitation as they only directed students to share responsibilities. Teachers did not direct students to set their objectives, to evaluate their learning progress, and to reflect on their tasks. The justification both the students and teachers gave for not playing these roles is that it is already decided. At the beginning of the course already decided objectives, goals, and contents were provided for the students. Since it was already decided, the teachers' role was to inform the students. Engaging students to reflect on the tasks they did and to evaluate their learning progress was also done according to what was already planned. Students do not know that they have a responsibility to

set their own goals. Teachers also approve of this as they don't facilitate letting the students set their own goals directly. All teachers mentioned that they have advised their students to let them have a goal not specifically for the subject they teach but a goal they need to achieve at the time of their stay at university.

Regarding evaluation, the response of the teachers and students is opposed to some extent. The result from the survey shows that teachers did not work on the facilitation for evaluation. Students also stated the same idea in the discussion that evaluation is a task of teachers. They expect teachers to assess the level of the students' knowledge, identify their gaps, and help them to work on how to fill the gap. However, teachers stated that they encourage students to evaluate each other's work. After doing some activities students were expected to exchange their work with their friends and they gave feedback for their work. Even though it was the responsibility of the teacher to make students involved in evaluating their learning, teachers have mentioned that there was a lack of interest in evaluation. Teachers stated that there was even room for self-evaluation on the students' module. At the end of each chapter, there is a reflection section where students are expected to reflect by answering the given questions and indirectly evaluating the progress of their learning. However, students were not willing to do it on their own unless the teacher ordered and gave them time in class to do it. Students also stated the same idea in the discussion that evaluation is a task of teachers. They expect teachers to assess the level of the students' knowledge, identify their gaps, and help them to work on how to fill the gap. This implies that teachers did not understand how to facilitate so that they can help their students by facilitating autonomous English language learning

The result shows that the roles of the teacher under every category were very limited. It was found that English teachers play the role of facilitator only through sharing responsibilities in the learning process with students. This is far from what Yan (2012) and Xu and Xu (2004) explain the role of facilitator/helper as offering necessary enlightenment and assistance and helping students to make English learning plans and objectives. This result is the same to some extent with the findings of Cherinet (2019) that the teacher did not seem to share their responsibility in evaluating students' learning, and involving learners in decision making which traditionally are considered to be the teachers' responsibility. As the result indicates, teachers did not involve

students in evaluation because of the students' unwillingness to be involved in evaluating their work. This implies that teachers fail to play the role of facilitator since they cannot involve students in evaluating their learning and progress. Students have to reflect on their learning process (Alonazi, 2017).

As a guide/mentor, teachers were expected to guide students in a way that can lead them to autonomous language learning. According to Little (2011), the practice of learner autonomy requires readiness to be proactive in self-management and interaction with others. The teacher is the one who is responsible for guiding students so they can develop the capacity to learn independently in collaboration with others. Both teachers and students mentioned that teachers give students individual and group work that was done frequently both inside and outside the class to develop students' independent learning and collaboration with others.

Related to providing different learning strategies, the responses of the students in the questionnaire and what the teachers responded do not match. The students' responses indicated that the teachers provided them with alternative strategies to let them choose but the teachers explained that they used a strategy that seemed to them appropriate for teaching the topic on their own or by the direction given in the module. Regarding guiding recommended resources and services, both teachers and students agreed that there is no scarcity of resources; however, it needs to be selective as time is limited and teachers are the ones who should provide filtered resources and show students how to be selective. Students are happy when they get additional resources from their teachers. This shows what Richards and Rodgers (1986), as cited in Yan (2012) stated, as a guide to resources; teachers introduce some learning materials and to motivate learners, teachers should be capable of selecting the materials that can be used to arouse learners' interest and cater to their learning level so that this ensures the learners' satisfaction and confidence.

As a guide, teachers show the effective ways of learning English independently and cooperatively (Zhao, 2018; Xu & Xu, 2004). Providing alternative learning strategies is one of the roles the teacher needs to play. As the result from qualitative data indicates, even though strategies to be used are already indicated in the module, teachers mentioned that there are situations that force them to change the given strategy. This implies that teachers are playing the

role that Yan (2012) stated as manager and organizer where teachers are expected to create opportunities for learners to learn spontaneously and creatively and to take the initiative to construct their knowledge and also when students encounter any difficulties, teachers are expected to actively participate in finding solutions. The role of teachers as resource providers also stick to the course outline by providing some references and materials for English learning and introducing some internet resources. However, students also indicated that they know resources are available everywhere and they need teachers to follow them and motivate them to use those resources.

The result implies that students can access different resources even more than teachers but the ability to get access cannot be guaranteed for students to learn autonomously. Therefore teachers need to follow up with the students on how they are using resources. This is the same as what Yan (2012) indicates as a facilitator: a guide to resources. Teachers should be capable of selecting the materials that can be used to arouse learners' interest and cater to their learning level to motivate and ensure their satisfaction and confidence.

As an inspirator/supporter of autonomous language learning teachers are expected to motivate students by showing them practically how to be autonomous language learners. From the three governing basic pedagogical principles for the development of autonomy in language learning provided by Little (2003), using the target language as the principal medium of language learning is one. The majority of the students had testified that their teachers were using the target language as the medium of classroom communication and required the same of the learners.

Raising awareness about autonomous learning and promoting it to students is one of the teachers' roles that can include the other activities in it. Creating awareness can simplify the task. As Killen (2013) tried to explain awareness creation by relating it to teacher-student relation, he stated that the teachers' role in goal setting and evaluation is a teacher-and-student link where the teacher guides, gives the instructions, enlightens the vague ways, and directs the students based on which students can set their goals and attain their progression. Even though the result from the questionnaire confirmed that the teachers raised awareness about autonomous learning and promoted it to students, the discussion with students differed in that there was no discussion between teachers and students about the creation of autonomous language learning. This can

imply that there was no transaction between the teacher and students for awareness creation about autonomous learning. This result can also imply to what extent teachers share responsibility with the students.

As a way to inspire and show the teacher is a supporter of autonomous learning, using the English language as the medium of classroom communication and requiring the same of students is the practice teachers frequently use in promoting autonomous learning. This shows that teachers inspire their students by encouraging them to use English and motivating them to participate in communicative activities. In the process of becoming autonomous learners, teachers need to make all the efforts to make the learning easier and motivate students to use the best of their potential. Motivation can include: motivating students to learn actively and autonomously, helping them to plan and carry out their independent language learning, learning, helping them to acquire knowledge and skills, and helping them to get rid of uncertainty and anxiety and overcome obstacles (Yan, 2012).

Learners get more personal feedback and guidance from the teacher through the logbooks which serve as a medium of communication as well as a tool for organization and reflection Bajrami (2015); Liu & Chen (2018) as a counselor, a teacher can give advice and feedback when it is needed to help effective learning. However, the practice of being positive and supportive when giving feedback, and encouraging students to keep a written record of their learning were not practiced. Acknowledging different ways students follow to attain their goal and their learning styles is the characteristic of autonomy-supportive teachers and when teachers detect learners' desires, inclinations, and interests, bring them about by boosting and cultivating satisfactory classroom settings (Ma, 2021).

Concerning motivating students, there are different issues like the culture at the university doesn't encourage; most of the time teachers terrorize students instead of advising them smoothly and friendly. The other is while encouraging students to express their ideas freely, allowing them to speak in their own language will oppose the other criterion which is using the English language. As Hussin, Maarof, and D'Cruz stated in Zeng (2016) English teachers are responsible for motivating students to let them have a positive self-concept, high self-esteem, and positive attitude, get a clear understanding of goals for language learning, and continuous

active participation in the language learning process. These are relevant for the creation of a favorable environment that could contribute to the success of language learning.

Therefore, the finding from this study shows the opposite and it implies that teachers do not motivate students by encouraging learners in case of failure, assuring them of possible rewards of constant efforts, and praising them in case of success for further progress. In addition, as someone who is inspired and supports the idea of autonomous language learning, teachers need to encourage students to keep written records of their plans and their learning like texts they have produced and new vocabularies. Even though it cannot be said that teachers were not playing their roles in the development of students' autonomous English language learning, the roles they were playing were not sufficient to say teachers were playing their roles in the development of students' autonomous English language learning.

#### **4.4.5. Supporting environment in AASTU to encourage autonomous language learning**

The supporting environment in this study context is the facilities that can help to support students' autonomous learning. Both students and teachers stated that most of the facilities were available in AASTU. Access to a wide range of materials is one of the main advantages of new technology, which requires a carefully planned and thought-out strategy on the part of the teacher from day one of classes, in which the teacher develops the necessary strategies to inform the students about the different paths they may choose to follow to identify and use the right kind of information (Raya & Fernández, 2001).

Accordingly, availability is not enough so there are lots of responsibilities teachers need to do. Teachers are responsible for making effective use of self-directed centers to facilitate autonomous learning and to encourage more communication between teachers and students via various channels to monitor the learning process (Xu & Xu, 2004). Teachers have to suggest tools and techniques for self-assessment, use computer-based learning materials, select and evaluate resources according to students' needs and levels, suggest websites, videos, or online dictionaries that motivate students to use the target language outside the classroom, encourage students to read English books, magazines and newspapers outside the classroom (Alonazi, 2017). From what the students mentioned, there were no problems with the learning resources

but what they needed was the mentorship of their teacher to be selective of the resources and to motivate them to learn independently.

This implies that the role of the teacher in using and initiating students to use those supporting environments is very crucial. In other words, the reasons related to the supporting environment cannot be a reason for not practicing autonomous learning in AASTU. In addition, using those facilities cannot be effective without the assistance of the teacher. This implies availability of these facilities may help to foster autonomous learning if the assistance and guidance of the teacher is added to it.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **5.1. Introduction**

In this final chapter, a summary, conclusions, recommendations, and implications of the study are presented. In the first section, the instruments, the major findings of the data analyses, and the discussions made on the findings are summarized. In the next part, the conclusions drawn from the findings will follow. Then, the recommendations suggested are forwarded. In the final section, the implications of the conclusions and recommendations of the study are drawn. The chapter ends with possible considerations for future studies concerning the present study area.

### **5.2. Research Summary**

This study was intended to investigate autonomous English language learning practices at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University. In this study context, practice is a broad term that includes students' autonomous English language learning activities and their teachers' roles in promoting autonomous English language learning. The first step in conducting this study was to find and read related literature about autonomous English language learning. Accordingly, a lot of literature written in local and global contexts was read to get a springboard for this study. Related to this issue, because there are limited local studies and different issues in different contexts, the researcher is interested in investigating students' English language learning autonomy in our context. The research questions that guided this study were the following:

1. What are the activities AASTU students do to learn the English language autonomously?
2. What are the attitudes of the students towards autonomous English language learning practices (taking responsibility)?
3. To what extent do English language teachers play their roles in students' autonomous English language learning practices?
4. How supportive is the environment/facilities for implementing autonomous language learning in AASTU?

In the literature review section of this study, different definitions of autonomous learning, characteristics of autonomous learners, teachers' roles, and supporting environment in

autonomous language learning were discussed.

To answer the research questions, the researcher employed a mixed methods research design as it allowed her to use both quantitative and qualitative data to get answers to the research questions in a better way. Since autonomous language learning is a practice that takes place not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom, students were asked to indicate to what extent they get involved in autonomous language learning practices that take place both inside and outside the classroom. To get answers to this research question, a survey questionnaire was used from a wide range. Students gave detailed information about their practices/activities and the intention behind their involvement in those practices at the time of FGD. In addition, the researcher got information about the students' classroom practice from classroom observation. For the second research question, students' level of motivation and their categorization of responsibilities were evaluated to get their attitude towards their autonomous language learning by using a questionnaire. Students' FGD was used to get detailed information about their attitudes towards autonomous English language learning. Interviews with teachers also helped to get data on students' responses to autonomous language learning.

The third research question concerned teachers' role in the development of students' autonomous English language learning. The data for this research question was established by both students and teachers. It was assessed with data collected using student questionnaires, FGD, and teachers' interviews. Classroom observation was also used to collect data on the teachers' roles.

Concerning the fourth research question which was about supporting environment, a questionnaire and FGD were employed with students and interviews with teachers to get information. The observation was also there. While the data from the questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively, the data from FGD, interviews, and observation were analyzed qualitatively.

### **5.3. Conclusion**

This study explored students' English language learning autonomy at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University through a thorough examination of students' practice, students, attitudes, teachers' roles, and supporting environment that promotes autonomous English language learning in AASTU. Based on the findings obtained from this study's quantitative and qualitative data, an

attempt was made to conclude the results that were consistent with the study's research questions. As the main objective of this research was to investigate first-year students' English language learning autonomy at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University, the results obtained from the data were analyzed and from the analysis, the following conclusions were derived.

1. The first research question examined students' autonomous English language learning practices. The exploration of students' practice/activities was conducted with the data gathered using a questionnaire, observation, and FGD. Students practiced most of the activities that helped them to be autonomous English language learners both inside and outside the classroom. As was seen from both quantitative and qualitative data, students took part in almost all activities in the classroom except one. The intention to practice those activities was because the students were under the control of the teacher. The students understand that they have to do what their teacher orders and what can add value to their learning under the administration of their teacher. The students know that what they did in the class will help them for the exam. In other words, the students do the activities in the class because they believe it may be helpful to answer what their teacher asks them on the exam. Therefore it can be concluded that even though the students believe they have to attend class and do what is expected from them, it cannot be concluded that they did what they did understanding their autonomous learning activities. Most of the activities done outside the classroom were also practical for the students. Even though students practiced those activities, they did it not for the sake of learning English. They are not conscious of their English language learning and the aim of doing those activities is not learning English. As a result, the activities that took place outside the classroom did not have a direct relation with learning English. The purpose of doing those activities might not be to learn the English language since those activities that have a direct relation with learning the English language were not practiced. Therefore, we can conclude that the students were practicing those activities unconsciously not for the sake of learning the English language.
2. The attitude towards autonomous English language learning can be seen from students' understanding of taking responsibility for their learning and the level of their motivation to learn the English language. Based on the data, it cannot be said students have a positive

attitude towards autonomous English language learning. Even though the students have the motivation to learn the English language and are ready to share responsibilities with their teachers, they consider that they are responsible for only a limited number of responsibilities. Considering those responsibilities as they were shared responsibilities might indicate that students understood they have to be responsible. The students know that they have to be autonomous language learners at a higher education level. They know that there is a lot to do to be successful at the university level and that they can only get very limited things from their teachers so they are expected to do a lot to be successful. They took responsibility for the activities done outside the classroom, and they wanted to share most of the responsibilities with their teacher. From these results, it could be concluded that the students know they have to take more of the responsibilities for their English language learning but they don't know the demarcation between their teachers' and their responsibilities. Therefore it can be concluded that students have a positive attitude towards autonomous language learning.

3. Concerning the roles of teachers in promoting autonomous English language learning, the quantitative data from the students and the qualitative data from both teachers and students show that teachers were involved in limited responsibilities. As their role is facilitating, guiding/mentoring, and inspiring students to let them be autonomous English language learners by showing them that they are going to support their students' autonomous language learning, teachers were expected to lead students in a way that can develop their autonomous language learning. The result implies that teachers were not playing their role effectively. Teachers did not have a complete understanding of autonomous language learning. There are misunderstandings about autonomous English language learning and how to foster it. The result of students' attitude towards taking responsibility can also be an indicator of to what extent teachers were playing their roles. Therefore this indicates teachers do not have sufficient understanding of autonomous English language learning. Teachers considered autonomous English language learning as independent learning where the teacher has no role at all. If this consideration was there in the mind of teachers they are unable to apply it. Hence it can be concluded that

teachers were not playing their roles in the development of students' autonomous English language learning.

Supporting environment/facilities that can help to promote autonomous English language learning in this context related to technology or computer-based facilities. Both teachers and students believed that there were facilities that could facilitate autonomous English language learning in AASTU but the proper use of those infrastructures in a way that can support autonomous language learning was very limited and availability only cannot assure that those facilities were used to facilitate autonomous English language learning. Availability cannot support autonomous language learning unless there is someone who can use it properly for appropriate purposes. The role of the teachers to let students use those facilities for their autonomous English language learning was very essential. Since teachers cannot assist their students in using the supporting facilities as it can help them to learn the English language autonomously, the availability of the facilities cannot make the students autonomous English language learners. Therefore, supporting facilities that can promote autonomous English language learning were available in AASTU even though it needs teachers' guidance to use those facilities for the promotion and development of autonomous English language learning.

#### **5.4. Recommendations**

Based on the conclusions drawn from the findings of this study, it appears reasonable to make the following recommendations:

- The students have to be conscious about their learning when they do any activities. Students have to know their goal when they do any activities instead of doing it just for the sake of the order the teacher gives. Students should be conscious about their learning and have to have their own goals when they do something. Therefore it is the responsibility of the teacher to make them conscious about the activities they do both in the class and outside the classroom.
- Regarding the students' attitude, since they have a positive attitude, it will be easy to let them be autonomous English language learners. The students have to know their responsibility clearly so they can fully participate in their responsibility and the teachers need to identify which areas of responsibilities to transfer to the students, where there is

more scope for students' involvement, and what contribution students could make in the whole language learning process.

- The findings of the study indicated that the roles of teachers were very essential for students' autonomous English language learning development. Before the application of autonomous language learning, having a clear understanding of what it is and how it works is very important. First teachers have to understand it and how it is applied in language learning and then they have to clarify it for their students. Before helping students develop English language learning autonomy, teachers should get hands-on training on what autonomous English language learning is, how autonomous English language learning is developed, and what roles teachers and students have. In practical terms, the training is about how teachers and students could give up their traditional roles and take on new ones.
- Teachers have to be trained on how to use technological infrastructure that can facilitate and encourage autonomous language learning.
- Teachers should train students how they become autonomous English language learners. They need to do more to create awareness and develop syllabus that encourage autonomous language learning and provide modules that lead to autonomous language learning.
- The English department and the university management should fix the problems that hamper the effective usage of the English language labs.
- The University should also provide technical support to the teachers and hire lab technicians who can manage the language lab and assist teachers and students when operating the equipment.

In general, teachers' capacity to promote students' autonomous English language learning should be developed. Teachers should also be encouraged to work with other teachers and their respective students to achieve the learning goal. One of the key lessons from the research process was that researching autonomous English language learning is challenging since no sufficient studies are done in different contexts. This research can also contribute concepts. Autonomous learning can also affect the development of long-term learning strategies and skills that have the potential to influence how educational programs are designed and implemented, both in terms of student learning and teaching approaches.

## **5.5. Implications**

Although the study forwarded practical recommendations in a way of responding to the research questions that were about exploring students' English language learning autonomy at AASTU, its findings still potentially contribute to autonomous English language learning practices in different contexts. Since there are limited studies and the results of the studies differ according to their context, this issue is unexplored in the context of Ethiopia. In addition, research needs to be done until a certain theory is developed for autonomous language learning, and as this research contributes its part, it is worth conducting further studies in this area for the following reasons.

As the findings of the study reflect only about AASTU students' autonomous English language learning, the number of participants in the study was small as compared to the Ethiopian higher education institutions' students. They may not be sufficient representatives to make generalizations about the entire university students in Ethiopian higher educational institutions. Moreover, the sampling technique used in the study was purposive sampling which is not recommended to generalize the findings of a given study. Therefore, researchers are advised to conduct more research on this area in different contexts.

As this study tried to investigate students' attitudes toward autonomous English language learning, teachers' attitudes also need to be investigated to compare it with their students' attitudes since it can have an impact on the students' attitudes. As one of the objectives of the module is to develop students' independent English language learning skills, the extent the module leads to independent learning also needs to be analyzed.

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### **List of Publications**

**Article 1:** Students' Practices and Perceptions of Autonomous Language Learning: the Case of Addis Ababa Science and Technology University,  
[https://psyjournals.ru/en/journals/langt/archive/2023\\_n2/Ababo\\_Animaw](https://psyjournals.ru/en/journals/langt/archive/2023_n2/Ababo_Animaw)

**Article 2:** The Role of Teachers in Promoting Autonomous Language Learning: The Case of Addis Ababa Science and Technology University,  
[https://psyjournals.ru/en/journals/langt/archive/2024\\_n1/Ababo\\_Animaw](https://psyjournals.ru/en/journals/langt/archive/2024_n1/Ababo_Animaw)

### Appendix A: Sample Size Determination

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

Note.—*N* is population size.  
*S* is sample size.

*Source: Krejcie and Morgan (1970)*

## **Appendix B: Questionnaire**

Addis Ababa University

College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication

A questionnaire for PhD study on “**First year students’ English language learning autonomy at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University**”

### **Introduction**

Dear, participant, I am Ababo Abebe and am a PhD candidate in English Language Teaching (ELT) at Addis Ababa University. The following questions are designed to collect data from selected students. The aim of the study is to investigate students’ English language learning autonomy at higher institutions: The case of AASTU freshman pre engineering students. Hence, the objective of the questionnaire is to collect data associated with this aspect. The collected data will be used only for this research which is for partial fulfillment of PhD degree in ELT at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. Therefore, your responses are very vital for the quality and reliability of the study. Thus, you are kindly requested to give your factual responses without any restriction. I assure that your responses will be kept with high confidentiality.

Thank you for your cooperation!

### **Section One: Background Information**

1. Sex \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Age \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Mention if there was an English language course/s you have taken before by your own effort
-

## Section Two

**Instruction:** When you are learning English, there are different practices you need to do. Using the scales below, indicate how often have you done the following activities in this academic year? Please put a tick (✓) to the answers

S/N	<i>Inside class</i>	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1.	I ask the teacher questions when I don't understand.				
2.	I preview lesson before class (i.e see summary, lesson ...)				
3.	I note down new information.				
4.	I make suggestions to the teacher.				
5.	I take opportunities to take part in the activities that need to speak in English.				
6.	I discuss learning problems with my classmates.				
7.	I make notes and summaries of lesson.				
	<i>Outside class</i>				
8.	I read grammar books on my own.				
9.	I do assignments which are not compulsory.				
10.	I note down new words and their meanings.				
11.	I write in English for chatting with friends.				
12.	I read English notices.				
13.	I read English newspaper.				
14.	I send e-mails in English				
15.	I read books or magazines written in English.				
16.	I watch English TV programs.				
17.	I listen to English radio.				
18.	I listen to English music				
19.	I talk to the teachers outside the class in English.				
20.	I practice English recording my own voice outside the class.				
21.	I talk to foreigners in English.				
22.	I practice using English with friends.				
23.	I do grammar exercises.				
24.	I watch English movies without subtitles in my language.				
25.	I attend different seminars to improve my English.				
26.	I attend different training courses, to improve my English.				
27.	I attend different conferences to improve my English.				
28.	I write a diary in English.				
29.	I use internet in English.				
30.	I revise lessons and seek the reference books				
31.	I do revision activities for my own sake even though it is not required by the teacher				
32.	I attend a self-study channels (e.g. e- learning)				
33.	I collect texts in English (e.g. articles, brochures, labels...)				
34.	I go to discuss with my teacher about my work				

Mention if there are any other practices you do inside and outside the class by your own

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### Section Three

**Direction I:** When you take English courses, there are different responsibilities for students and teachers. Please put a tick (√) to show whose responsibilities the following practices are.

S/N	Responsibilities	Yours	Your teacher's
1	Making sure you make progress during lessons		
2	Making sure you make progress outside class		
3	Stimulating your interest in learning English		
4	Identifying your weaknesses in learning English		
5	Making you work harder		
6	Deciding the objectives of your English course		
7	Deciding what you should learn next in your English lesson		
8	Choosing what activities to use to learn English in your English lesson		
9	Evaluating your learning		
10	Evaluating the course		
11	Deciding what you learn outside class		
12	Deciding the textbook and materials you use in class		
13	Evaluating the outcomes of learning English		
14	Evaluating the learning strategies		
15	Evaluating the progress you have in learning English learning		
16	Setting an action plan on how to solve learning problems or improve learning		
17	Analyzing what difficulty you actually have in learning English		
18	Deciding how long to spend on each activity		
19	Looking for new opportunities to learn English		
20	Identifying your strengths in learning English		
21	Looking for other resources to learn English		

**Direction II: Rate the level of your motivation.**

How would you describe yourself?

- Highly motivated to learn English
- Well motivated to learn English
- Motivated to learn English
- Poorly motivated to learn English
- Not motivated at all to learn English.

### Section Four

**Direction:** Please make a (√) if the following supporting environments are available at your university (AASTU) for learning English autonomously.

S/N	Supporting Environments	Available	Not Available
1	Internet access		
2	Computer access		
3	Online sources		
4	e-library		
5	English TV program		
6	e-learning platform		
7	Language learning lab		
8	Materials that guide/initiate students to independent learning		

Mention if there are more supporting environments

## Section Five

**Direction: Please put a tick (✓) to show how often your teachers play their own role for the development of your autonomous learning**

S/N	Items (questions)	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1.	Providing students alternative learning strategies which students could have used					
2.	Directing students set their own goals to achieve the course objective					
3.	Directing students to reflect on the tasks they did inside and outside class					
4.	Supporting students as they can develop the capacity to learn independently					
5.	Raising awareness about autonomous learning and promoting it to students					
6.	Acknowledging different ways students follow to attain their goal and their own learning styles					
7.	Sharing responsibility with the students in the learning process with students					
8.	Involving students in a non-stop search for good learning activities					
9.	Using the target language as the medium of classroom communication and require the same of the learners					
10.	Encouraging learners to pursue their individual goals by working with others in (pair and group)					
11.	Encouraging students to keep a written record of their plans of lessons and assignments					
12.	Encouraging learners to keep a written record of their learning such as lists of useful vocabulary and texts they produce by themselves					
13.	Engaging students to evaluate their progress regularly					
14.	Providing students guidance on recommended online tools and services (links and resources)					
15.	Informing students the necessary strategies about the different paths they may choose to follow in order to identify and use the right kind of information.					
16.	Helping students to become aware of alternative strategies and learning styles					
17.	Mentoring students on how to achieve their goals					
18.	Motivating students to learn English by minimizing external pressure					
19.	Being positive and supportive especially when giving feedback					

Thank you!

## **Appendix C: FGD questions for students**

- 1. To see what are the attitudes of the students towards autonomous language learning,**
  - Are you motivated to learn English? What are the reasons behind your motivation?
  - What are your responsibilities to learn English?
  - What are your teacher's responsibilities?
- 2. What do you do to learn English language autonomously/independently?**
- 3. What are expected practices you need to do inside and outside the class to improve your autonomous English language learning?**
- 4. Are you conscious about learning English when you do those activities**
- 5. To what extent English language teachers are playing their role to the development of students' autonomous English language learning?**
  - Raising awareness about autonomous learning and promoting it to students
  - Encouraging learners to set their own goals, in a given direction?
  - Sharing responsibility with the students in the learning process
  - Providing alternative learning strategies which students could have used
  - Encouraging learners to achieve their goals through collaborative work in pair/ groups
  - Engaging learners in regular evaluation of their progress
  - Motivating
  - Mentoring
  - Guiding
  - Facilitating
- 6. Are there supporting facilities in AASTU for the facilitation of autonomous English language learning?**
  - What are they?
  - How supportive they are?
  - To what extent their teacher guides them to use those supporting facilities?

## **Appendix D: Interview Guide Questions (Teachers)**

1. How do you understand autonomous English language learning?
2. How can students be autonomous English language learners?
  - What are expected from them?

- What are expected activities that students do inside and outside of the classroom to be autonomous English language learners?
3. Do you think teachers have roles in students' development of autonomous English language learning? What are their roles?
    - Planning/ goal setting
    - Process level
    - Evaluation
  4. Do you guide your students to have their own goal?
  5. What are the mechanisms you use to encourage your students to be reflective and motivated learners?
  6. and evaluate their achievements?
  7. Do you promote autonomous language learning to your students? What are the challenges you face in promoting/implementing autonomous learning?
  8. What are the mechanisms you use to encourage your students to be interdependent and cooperative learners?
  9. Do you provide opportunity for students to evaluate their own activities?
  10. Do you provide additional English language learning materials other than the module for your students in order to improve their language learning skills? What are the sources of those materials?
  11. What are the responses of students to the implementation of autonomous language learning?
  12. Do you inform them different learning strategies to let them use their own learning strategies?
  13. What are the supporting facilities available in AASTU to promote students autonomous English language learning?

## Appendix E: Semi Structured Class Observation Checklist

### 1. The actual classroom practices of the students in promoting autonomous learning

S.N	Activities	Students practices	
		Yes	No
1.	Do the students ask the teacher questions when they don't understand?		
2.	Do the students take opportunities to take part in the activities that need to speak in English?		
3.	Do the students take their own note when the teacher teaches?		
4.	Were the students participating actively in classroom?		
5.	Do the students make suggestions to the teacher?		

Additional autonomous English language learning practices

### 2. Teachers' actual classroom practices of promoting autonomous English language learning

S.N	Activities	Students practices			
		Yes	No		
1.	Goal setting	Does the teacher direct student on how to set have their own goals?			
2.	Motivating	Does the teacher motivate the students before starting the lesson?			
3.	Target language use	Does the teacher use the target language as the medium of classroom communication and require the same of the learners?			
4.	cooperative learning	Does the teacher encourage learners to work with others in group or pair?			
5.	self-evaluation	Does the teacher ask the students to assess their work themselves?			
6.	strategy use	Does the teacher Provides alternative learning strategies which students could have used			
7.	Materials and online tools Guidance	Does the teacher provides guidance on recommended materials and online tools			
8.	Share responsibility for the students	Does the teacher share responsibility with the students in the learning process			

## Appendix F: FGD and Interview time table

### FGD schedule

FGD	No. of students		Place	Time
	Male	Female		
FGD 1	5	3	B/80 R-408	4:30am-5:10 am
FGD 2	8	0	B/80 R-410	5:10am-6:5am
FGD 3	6	2	B/59 R-003	9:00pm-10:00pm

### Interview schedule

Interviewee	Place	Time
Interviewee 1	B/80 R-408	10:00pm-10:30pm
Interviewee 2	B/80 R-407	5:50am-6:15am
Interviewee 3	B/80 R-410	6:05am-6:30am
Interviewee 4	B/80 R-410	9:00pm-9:30pm
Interviewee 5	B/80 R-410	10:30pm-10:55pm

## Appendix G: Transcription of FGD 1(R1-R8)

**Moderator:** Okay. So, thank you for your willingness to have to give me your time for this kind of discussion. So, let me start my question. The first question will be, are you motivated to learn English? What is the level of your motivation?

**R1:** Yea I am motivated to learn English, because I feel like if I learned English, then I would be able to see, read or listen to a lot of information, most of the information provided for us is in English. So if we learn English, we will be able to access that information. So, I think I'm motivated to learning. I did not consider as if something forced me; simply I consider it like a way to understand other information so I don't think I would mind.

**R2:** As it is a worldwide language, you have to learn English and taking the time to speak fluently. I am so excited to learn English in well manner. Now, I'm learning but if I had achieved the level of fluently speaking success, it may not be necessary, but if I have some shortage, I will learn more.

**M:** Okay. How do you think you learn English? What are the practices you need to do to learn English autonomously in classroom and outside the classroom?

**R3:** Yeah, you can watch movies that are in English, can read books written in English. And reading books and watching movies in English will help us more in our English. Like it's not only speaking it's also reading, listening, and writing. So I think learning English would help us. All of us cannot be good at the four skills. Like for example, for me writing is hard and I want to develop the skill more. So learning English will help me more to develop my writing skill. But this does not mean it won't help for speaking and listening English.

**R4:** I'm really motivated to learn English, because as we know all our courses are given by English and not only this level, after I finish this course or this level, I have a plan to develop my English skill. English is like international language. And we will do our researches and different activities in the near future in the coming years. Most of our activities are done by English because there's a reason we have to develop our English skill. Things I have to do to develop my English skills are reading storybooks, watching English movies. And like reading new vocabularies and trying to translate, I think the main reason we must think to develop our English skill is just for communicating with others in English. When we learn English by ourselves, I think it's difficult to know, in my experience, I imagine myself like a full active speaker of English but when I'm trying to speak with others, most of the time I got mistakes and I fail to explain things easily and that is the reason why I said I have no experience of communicating with others in English at home with my friends at dorm and in different places. Because of this reason, my English speaking skill is damaged. So we have to speak with others at school. Whenever we go, we have to try to speak in English to develop our English.

**M:** Okay. Okay when we say practices it is not only outside of the classroom, you have to do

something in the classroom also. What about that, just to relate it with practices?

**R3:** Presentations, you have to make a lot of presentation. Most of the time we made presentation in English because it is world language. And if we develop, not only we develop our skill of speaking, we also develop self-confidence, and how to arrange your ideas, and how to express it in a manner that anyone could understand what we are trying to express.

**R1:** Participation too. If you are participant in class, you're most likely to speak in English, especially if it's an English class. And now we're taking most of our courses in English. So, when you participate, if you try to speak in English, I believe it could help you

**M:** How do you differentiate the responsibility of your teacher with your own responsibility? What are the responsibilities of the students in autonomous language learning at different level (planning, teaching- learning process and evaluation levels)

**R2:** I think it is possible if we had done some more activities to improve our difficulties, but we have to get some direction, if it was something to do by our own, we can do even extra thing by our own way but we cannot be sure it meets our target to learn the subject or it may not be targeted to our field of study. So there should be someone to select material to focus on.

**R4:** As a university student we are mature enough to select materials, Like if our purposes are specific, when I say if our purpose in selected or specific like for being prepared for English proficiency tests the materials are available online. if you have real passion or motivation to do, materials are readily available and we can select by ourselves. May be teachers help us to be disciplined, and motivated. Teachers have to give us an example or a model person that can show us a person who cannot speak English or bad at English can be completely changed to like fluent. Therefore the teacher should motivate and be good role model for students.

**R1:** I believe there should be a guide; at this point although students could be able to do things by themselves, still we need a guide.

**R7:** As my friends mentioned at this level we are expected to do a lot by ourselves and a lot to manage. I think that is not an easy task for us. As a beginner we have a lot of responsibilities: we have to plan and work. Specifically, we need to divide our time effectively as we can do what is expected from us. For example, for this course, our teacher informed us the content of the whole course at the beginning of the course and we can do what is planned and given for us before the teacher. If I have already done what is given there in the module, I can simply follow when our teacher teach us in the class. Even this can help me to check my work if I was correct or not.

**R8:** As a student we have to do what the teacher asks us to do like classwork, homework and assignments. We have to be participant in class activity that is our responsibility. We have also right to ask the teacher if we have question or if we need help. We can also ask our friends for help

**R1:** By the way it is our responsibility to dig more. As we have heard from our seniors, the teachers give only the hint and it is up to them to read and understand the concept deeply to answer the questions asked on the exam.

**M:** Did your teacher guide you to have your own goal or did your teacher create you awareness about how you can achieve the given objectives?

**R1:** If you follow what is given there in the course outline and the module, and if you follow the teachers' instruction you can achieve good result. It is already given and our responsibility is its application.

**R2:** If it was our responsibility, we can set an objective but to achieve that goal I don't think we are able to select material that can lead to that. We need the teacher to help us for the selection of the material. There are a lot of materials but we need the teacher to tell us the one which is preferable to learn English. Students can set their own goal but the teacher should guide them towards that objective, selecting a material is not easy for the students.

**R4:** for example I have a problem to the part of speaking English, and I have a goal to speak fluently in front of intellectual people, and scholars and our teacher has to motivate us to develop our English by giving individual assignment, reading assignment, giving time for presentation in the class. English needs practice so I have a plan to improve this speaking out of class. There is a

problem in Ethiopia specially at school, when you try to speak English every day you are considered as a boasting person, first we have to change our attitude. English is a language and knowing English is not knowledge or all languages are equal, English Amharic, Chinese, there is no inferiority or superiority between these languages.

**R1:** ok setting a goal is subjective for different people. As she said her goal is to improve her speaking skill and he said he want to improve his writing, so people could have goals, they have expectation that must happen after they take course, but I don't believe it is about time it is about motivation. May be we thought about it in our heads but didn't actually but the effort to write it down, if write something it will be somewhat serious but when it is in your head it is less likely to go through it. What I need to say is it is not about timing it needs real motivation.

**M:** when you set a goal after you set a goal there should be some effort to reach that goal and at the end that goal should be evaluated whether it has been achieved or not.

**R3:** everyone can have different goal, but the teacher has to set a goal that is general for all of us because everyone have different goal that the teacher cannot help every students to achieve their goal. I plan or set a goal for what I am bad at. And some people may not know what they know and what they don't. so the teacher should give different assignments to different skills to test their skills and to discover what you are good at and what you are bad at. After I know about what I am bad at, I have to do different activities and practices toward that and at the end of the year, I ask myself where am I and the teacher also gives taste and if there is another problem I am going to plan another goal and it is continuous.

**M:** Does your teacher inform you different learning strategies to let you choose the one which is comfortable for you?

**R4:** our teacher was a student and now a teacher and share experience for us. The teacher guides us how we select material easily

**R2:** our teachers' support is very essential for us and we use what is given for us as guidance for our learning.

**M:** What about the supporting facilities? What are the supporting facilities that can help you to learn English autonomously? (Language lab, module and guiding material)

**R1:** I think there is a good supporting environment. At this time lots of the information we need is found on the internet and the digital library provides us desktops that have internet access. If the student has a motivation to know more about the areas they are not good at, they have an access. The attitude we have regarding any language learning determines the extent of learning the language. There is no lack of material.

**R3:** our teacher gives us the source for a certain topic and shows us the way.

**R4:** there are a lot of youtube channels that teach English. In my opinion the place where we practice English should not be selective we have to practice speaking everywhere. It is not only in the library.

**M:** what about the material? Does the material guide you to learn English by your own autonomously?

**R1:** we can do some part of the chapter by our own. I think we can do by our own except the listening part. If we are committed enough to do the activities given on the module I don't think it is a big deal.

**R4:** The function of language lab will help more. For example I had an online exam which I face a great challenge of coping up with. When I see the lab I am impressed specially for speaking and listening it is very good.

**M:** Is there a time to practice by your own time?

**R2:** No, No, No, there is no time for students to practice in the lab by their own. Up to now we were taken to the lab to work on the listening part of the module.

**R6:** It is very important if the chance to practice different skills specially the listening and speaking parts are given for the students

**R5:** We need to improve our pronunciation we need a guide and access. We need to practice listening; we need the exposure to listen to the native speakers to be familiar with their accent and hear the words and phrases in the paragraph and essay.

**R3:** first we need our teacher to identify our level or what we are good at and bad at, then give us the objective and material and put the guidelines not to damage the equipment, then we can use the lab and improve our language.

**R1:** Related to the material once, I tried to do some activities before we discuss it in the class and I cannot be sure whether my answers are correct or not. The way the students could assess themselves are not sufficient. For instance, we can do a lot of questions and exercises in a way we understand but if we don't have access to know the correct answer, we are unable to know our status. Here unless the teacher gives us the correct answer we cannot be sure. This can also indicate the teacher's role is very important. We need feedback from our teacher.

The other is learning is very subjective. There are people that had an exposure to learn good English at lower levels and high schools; it may not be such difficult to do those exercises but for those who were not from good English learning exposure it may need more pushing factor in addition to allow them to learn English. Individual difference needs to be taken into consideration.

#### **Appendix H: Transcription of FGD 2 (S1-S8)**

**Moderator:** Thank you very much for you for your willingness. Let us start our discussion. Let me start my question from your motivation. Are you motivated to learn English?

**Students:** Yes, yes, yes, More than ever.

**Moderator:** Why? What motivates you?

**Student 1:** I think it is common since we got in to campus; it is obviously common to speak English to communicate with students and teachers also. Actually, in my opinion, I have another language, my mother tongue is not Amharic. Instead of trying to communicate just in Amharic, I would rather choose English to communicate with others. That motivates me.

**S2:** Everything in this world depends on whether we can speak English or not, we can achieve it by learning how to speak English. That motivates me.

**S3:** First of all, learning any kind of language is good for us. And if we want to study abroad, in any country, we use English; that is why we are motivated

**S4:** As the main motivation for learning English at campus might be an advanced level of English, which we have already completed the primary in elementary levels. So the main motive is, like he said, in order to apply for college, in order to study abroad, you need English. College English might be the advanced, so that's my motivation.

**Moderator:** Okay, so related to this, what are the practices you do to learn English more inside and outside the classroom? If you are motivated, what are those practices you do whether it is in classroom or outside the classroom?

**S5:** we learn in class or outside the class, the main thing is vocabulary and how to organize words and sentences. so reading English books, books written in English and watching movies. I think it's highly effective to speak and read English fluently. And in the classroom, we'll learn the science the reason why something is recognized or interpreted in that way

**Moderator:** What is your effort to learn language?

**S1:** I was referring to books, and watch movies. For example, my past experience for about three years straight from ninth grade to 11th grade, I was strictly watching movies. I had another experience that helped me on my pronunciation, grammar, beside my classroom. And it's quite often that I practice when watching movies. I repeat what they say after them, and also read some novels. Read big history books that helped me a lot.

**S2:** As they said. I love movies, and I see movies. When I watch movies, I learned the grammar, pronunciation, and also I watch YouTube videos on how to practice and there are more rap music, music, same types of music experience, seeing the lyrics and hearing music makes good vocabularies

**S4:** I think we can categorize learning English into the four skills listening, speaking, reading and writing. The main one is writing which is difficult for us and that we should be advancing in

this level. As of classroom, the only way we do is just following the teacher and outside the classroom, I do lots of, extra-curricular activities in order to increase my performance in essay writings. So, that's the main thing I do, like the writing part is difficult. So, I try to go have lots of material from library and lots of old books, which will increase essay writing abilities.

**S7:** to tell you my experience, I read grammar books and refer the rules from internet. Specially this day there are English teachers who teach English online, English we need to communicate with others in our daily life; there are also youtube channels that teach English grammar. Even there are questions for exercise and their answers to check.

**Moderator:** So related to this, do you think you are able to select your own materials? Whether it is soft copy or hardcopy do you think you are able? Can you take the responsibility of selecting your own material? To what extent you are responsible?

**S4:** I think I am responsible Yeah, because I know what my strength is and what my weaknesses are. It's not the beginning from a scratch, like, I've already got some knowledge. So, I know what I need and what I have. So, I go for my need.

**S3:** But I think we need a mentorship from elders or teachers, that helps us because they have something more than us by experience on so mentorship is

**Moderator:** to refine the question, can you categorize your responsibility and your teachers? Or what do you expect? What do you think about your teachers' responsibility and your responsibility?

**S2:** Yes. My responsibility is as I have been thought in class may be or to be on the schedule of my mentor, to do whatever he says, I mean, those people have a good knowledge,

**Moderator:** So, are you able or responsible, if you are given a chance to set your own goal, select your own material, and then at the end, evaluate what you have learnt and what is left?

**S2:** Not entirely, but maybe 40 percent of it, I can manage it, but it's not like everything

**S6:** I believe everyone should practice by their own because as learning from our mistakes and learning from others is different. When a child throws his hand on the fire, and he learned from

that, in our experience if his mother told him not to do it ever again, he will just try again and again, to reach the fire. So, when I learned something new, I learned by myself depend on myself. I learned from my mistakes or was learning well, if I'm guided, that makes me more into making more mistakes.

**S5:** I think we need mentorship and student relationship. And like of course, we can learn by ourselves, we can take full responsibility, but like when we have a mentor, it was really increase the efficiency of learning, not effectiveness efficiency. We will learn the language in a short period of time effective.

**S3:** I think it is hard learning English on our own because it's a language and you need someone to conversate with. Materials are helpful, but I don't think you use them in your day to day conversation, you need to hear other people, you need to talk to them to be more fluent and experience on the languages.

**Moderator:** The question is if everything is provided for you, it's about the decision making, can you decide?

**S3:** Well, if you have someone to talk to, I don't think you need a mentor. You can do it on your own. Lots of new, you mentioned materials and lots of materials that can help you. And if you have someone to communicate with and to practice what you learn, I think I can take the full responsibility to learn the language.

**Moderator:** Okay, so do you have future plan to learn English? You take English courses, communicative one and communicative two, then is that all about English learning or do you have future plans to do some things related to English?

**S4:** As an engineering student, I don't think nobody in here would have plans for studying English, but it depends. For example, if one side is to study abroad, it will be more than necessary; it will require me to study English. So it depends.

**Moderator:** When I say to study English, I'm not saying about joining English department, but I mean learning a language which is not a one-time incidence. It continues. Yes, that is what I

mean when I say studying English or future plan for learning English. So, if you have planned, so what you are going to do?

**S4:** I would like focus mainly on the writing parts. They are the most for example, like publishing a book might be. So I will mostly focus on the writing parts of English, okay.

**S1:** I think I have a plan to study in English, because in order to our daily routine, we will use English as a part of our life, even now, but in the future, we have to, because we do have a lot of income from outside world, which is English based, or even if you take our phone it is not our common language. But I have planned to move on courses on communication part, because that's the first thing to do. If I can communicate with my own friends, I can do anything in my daily routine. So I really focus on comprehending at the future

**S6:** in my opinion, I don't think I'm going to continue with learning English because now I can read books, and I don't think language is knowledge, it is a means of knowledge, a means of getting knowledge. I can get knowledge from reading books, YouTube videos and everything I can. And I am now at that point. So I don't want to continue with learning English. Just I want to continue other things. I want to learn more I have now understand how to get knowledge. So I'm not going to focus on trying to wait.

**Moderator:** So you mean, you have the means to learn? Yes. So in the future, your plan is just to continue learning the others using that means? Yes, don't you think that means stops one day? Do you think that? Or, can we finish learning a language? When you collect some knowledge using that language don't you think you are adding something? For example, you will learn different vocabulary words, so do you think learning a language stops somewhere?

**S6:** When you open book, you see another vocabulary. When I say I'm not going to learn English Language it is like, going to school or English school. I cannot stop learning English because when I hear new words, if I read a word that is adding vocabulary to me,

**S5:** I think I don't want to plan learning so far, or something strict classroom or, like a language course. But as English is, wherever in the ground in this new world era, as we're growing up, there's a chance to learn English, very well, like, in my experience, I learned English more than 15 years. And I was more effective in two months of the summer of grade 11. Just because of

reading books and watching more movies to the extreme extent. So I don't think learning English as a class or a language course is important. Rather, it's good to learn something from others and something from books, movies, and even still now we're presenting for our teachers and English communicating with our friends in English. Watching movies, using internet to communicate with others in the Europe or America, with people at universities we are communicating with them. So we're learning and taking something every day from them. So I don't think taking English as a language course is important.

**S2:** As English is the most valuable, and the most useful language in the world, of course, I want to learn it. And I mean, as he said, the writing part, I read, when I read poems, I can't even understand. I know the words but it's not the vocabulary, I can't understand. That is the literature part. I don't think I can achieve it only by myself. I think as I said before, I want that mentorship, I want the schedule, or I want the class to understand those literatures and novels. We know the words but it's not about the vocabulary, literature is tough. I don't think we can achieve it by only by ourselves.

**Moderator:** So you need someone to guide you just to understand the hidden meaning. Yes, in literature, most of the time, there are hidden meaning.

**S2:** It is not my mother tongue. So I can't understand as I know and understand points in Amharic, easily, in English, it's tough. It's not easy.

**Moderator:** So here in AASTU, what are the roles of the teachers?

Do your teachers guide you to let you have a certain objective? Share responsibilities with you? Let you evaluate your work? Do your teachers facilitate, and guide you to let you be autonomous language learners? Do your teachers guide you or promote about autonomous learning?

**S1:** I don't think this is only in AASTU even in our previous elementary and high schools, teachers just don't care about us. They only get about writing something, we read it we did get a test pass and we have a grade. They don't focus on our ability to talk or read to understand something not only in English, even in lower grades. So I don't need teachers to do that at all. But there are some good teachers that care about students even though they teach something, do those students really understand what I'm saying? They ask themselves and give us some clue in

previous but as I've experienced in this three months, teachers give as assignment, homework and give us time for presentation, but they don't care about other things.

**S5:** I don't support as good English learning is the school English learning system which is more of test and grade oriented rather than knowledge oriented. The teacher does not focus on how much knowledge or how we're getting improved, but he's just grading the best students as a student who didn't acquire more knowledge in the high school, he gives like F or D. Like, before this conversation, we had a listening test, and someone who develop his listening abilities in the high school, will grade A and someone who didn't, will grade F. That means like, the teacher is just taking or testing what we have got in the previous section of our life, not showing us the way to get something new or something important, then listening is not something you learn just one time, it's just a process of going process of taking knowledge, deep through the bottom of your heart. And I don't think the teachers are giving us some objective tutoring or something to do. Okay.

**S6:** I think not only in English, I don't have to be just in a group. When a teacher comes to the class, today, we are going to talk about the simple present or present perfect. Some students know, some of them don't know anything. Some people are fast, to achieve something, some people are very slow to achieve something or to understand something. So it has to be personal. Otherwise it will discourage students.

So it means that individual difference should be taken into consideration. Yes, okay.

**S4:** I think in both directions, the teacher gives you a bit of guidance and then they require a large amount from you. There is some guidance, for example, as they have already tried to say, we've had an exam. That exam, we've already talked about what listening is? You should practice listening, this can be guidance, he has already shown us the way but to go on that path, it is mainly ours. So I go every teacher to 25% and 75% be ours.

**Moderator:** What do you think the reason to do that?

**S 4:** Since it is higher level education, I guess it's mainly depends on us. We've got to make our own path.

**Moderator:** So can you relate that idea to autonomous learning?

**S4:** Yes, it mainly supported I guess, of course, there is a guidance but I can't say it is fully autonomous. We can't say that since there is guidance, and the teacher is requiring something from us. He already showed us something so we can't go fully with autonomous. Okay

**S 1:** think that is too late for us. For the generation coming after us, it can be fully autonomous. If teachers and professors teach their students to self-teaching at the bottom, starting from elementary school, they can be fully autonomous. Generation coming after us is very, skilled. I don't know why that's happening right now. But for us too late, because we are in higher education, I say we need, we are needed to do. So it's necessary for us to be honest.

**Moderator:** By the way, when we say autonomous, it does not mean you know, you don't need your teachers. There are teachers, but it's the way to handle.

**S3:** In higher education or at universities, you can't do the exam by just what the teacher teach and say in the class, you have to read. You have to go to libraries and get some knowledge. The teacher only shows you the way. So you have to do a lot. You do the most work. And we have assignments and home works, that helps us focus and study. And I think we're autonomous because of that, the teacher is only guiding us, just showing the way we do the hard part to do the reading we do the assignments and other things. The students are sharing their own responsibility and, the teacher just gives them the way.

**S4:** We have to do our parts

**Moderator:** Do you know your parts? Does your teacher share responsibilities? Is there some category as of your teachers' and yours?

**S2:** As we are the one who are learning, the lion's share is on us? And I don't think we know where our parts clearly but I know that I have to play with everything I can. I don't really know what my part and what is the teachers' part.

**S5:** just to add something interesting about autonomous learning. I don't think autonomous learning is really effective on science and math subjects. If that just give us some clue. And we can begin practicing we can lead with our friends and we can achieve something on just a week

or two days difference, we can know something better. But what if someone didn't have a good skill in English in high school, and when he gets to the university, that should give him some clue. And it's really impossible to achieve that skill in one week. And like that, when it comes to exam oriented in the teachers give us homework assignments, the student will be focused more on the exam and the grading system more than getting their knowledge and what is the meaning of the vocabulary? How the teacher is grading this thing was what I am I thinking and how the teacher is creating it, and after we finished the semester, that students are almost badly getting nothing from them. Maybe they're getting some communicative skills. Okay.

**S2:** One example is if I am asked or required to write a paragraph, the first paragraph on some topic, I just can't do it all on overnight because it's a skill. Writing is a skill. But it needs a long time practice. And even, I have to have to read a lot of articles just to know how, writing works. So can't be just done over a week.

**Moderator:** does your teacher direct you to evaluate what you have done? Do you have an experience of evaluation? Have you got a chance to evaluate what you have done by your own?

**S1:** the teacher didn't order but I was thinking, before two weeks or three weeks, we had a speech, presentation and I don't know why I'm afraid we seem really nervous because in our past experience, for example, I came from really far from Addis Ababa the rural area located far from here. Education science is not good enough around that we don't have any experience on talking to friends even if I speak in English outside the class it is laughable. I don't know why they lough. And when I came to AASTU and required to give a speech, I really get nervous because I don't have an experience and I've evaluated myself why I get nervous to speak about something in my mind. And I know something I like and I'm starting to get learning more communicative skill, I am developing my skill.

**Moderator:** In English class, did your teacher give you a chance to evaluate your work? Did your teacher guide you to evaluate what you have done by your own?

**S4:** Okay, speaking of goals, my difficulty is with essays. In class, the teacher encouraged us to do lots of essays, the teacher really evaluates us. So in my own, I have evaluated myself, I've

seen lots of improvements on my writing skills. I've got encouragement from the teacher. So I believe, yes, I've evaluated myself, and I know that I need lots of practice.

**Moderator:** okay. So related to that, what about the material? There is a module provided for this course. Does it promote self- learning, or autonomous learning?

**S5:** I think the one here is more helpful for the community. Because it's like, there is a topic, when you read it there is something. And then there's some hint. And you can just go through it. Like, if there's a topic that says, passing things, and it just gives you some clue. And you can go through and learn more about it simply rather than in the class, it's more collective. And then it asks you to write or to read, or like to do something, to do something collective in more of skill oriented. But the module is something specific. And when it comes to one passage, it's very specific, do these things and try to find out by your own, the module involves evaluation.

**S6:** I don't think the module helps me. Because the teachers help us more than the module, but nowadays, there are social media needs us now, to see another point of view, when I read the module, I tried to dig up on the internet, YouTube, etc. So I tried to understand as a whole. And when I go to the specific I will understand sometimes, when you see the whole and go to the parts, it's easier than seeing only the parts in trying to catch up with it too. It's more specific, and it's hard to grasp, by not seeing the whole, so I tried to pick up more good.

**Moderator:** So the material gives you only a hint, then digging the broader one is up you.

**S8:** For example, if we say module is helpful for our students who are not experienced to read some clue into finding answers, for example, it came from really rural area, that don't really have internet enough speed. We don't really have anything searching on YouTube. if I say the module gives you a specific theme, specific look, and I don't have any idea what he's talking about. Because this is high level language as English is not our mother tongue, we do have some lack to understand it firstly, and we have to take time to understand even the question, maybe I think it needs improvement.

**Moderator:** Okay. What are the supporting facilities or something that initiates you to be autonomous learners found in AASTU to initiate Autonomous language learning?

**S2:** there are enough things for learning because here most of the students that I just talked with English in here, and that helps you communicate and also the library is very helpful because you can dig up anything. If you can't understand and learn from that you have to look at the books in the library. So, you have every material to learn anything, not only English, maths, everything you can learn autonomously in here because there are always a material. So it's only the initiation of the student.

**S7:** if we see from another perspective, AASTU was supposed to be the highest and the qualified university, but after I reach the campus. For example in our floor, we share the same block but, there is no Wi Fi on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. Even there is no 3g network can get access. If I want to learn something I can't get enough internets. Even there are no practice areas in a group. Besides, the libraries are enough but we need some place to talk freely. I like this.

**Moderator:** what about collaborative learning?

**S2:** in the classroom we are learning this course in a formal way but since the course is communicative skill we must practice communicating. We need more practical

**S5:** we have the internet access in the digital library, and in the ground floor of our dormitories and even the entertainment industry pushes us to the American and European entertainment system, so we learn in English and we entertain in English and this can be the factor to be autonomous learners of English.

**S2:** on the western entertainment we can learn speaking and listening but we need more practice than that. There are exposures to get different sources but we need to use those exposures properly

**S1:** for example take Communicative English Skills course, we sit in the class for two or three hours listening to the teacher doing activities and exercises. If we listen for half time and speak for the remaining half, we can improve our English in two weeks. Not only at university level even in lower level grades. That is why I said we are too late. For the coming generation, the curriculum needs improvement I think.

**S6:** we have learnt English for 15 years but even we can't talk in English properly. This shows our language learning system that needs collaboration. Speaking skill should be taught more. Most of the time we learn the rules, we may hear when someone talks but we can't speak freely. There should be dialogue between students and teachers.

**S5:** as I said last time, the education system focuses more on exam (exam oriented) but to improve our English we can work on the summer time collaborating with our mentor. At summer time if we are committed to a certain project under the coordination of our mentor and when we comeback from summer if we share what we got, I think it helps. When we learn a language it should be in free mind, free from grade. At least if we develop one skill at one summer at the end of campus life we can develop four or five skills in a good manner.

**S3:** English is given as a subject like math and science, and the teacher is the one who speak. We get a chance to speak when there is assignment, but it should not be in such a way. The teacher should give questions to let students communicate with each other. We need the exposure.

#### **Appendix I: Transcription of FGD 3 (P1-P8)**

**Moderator:** how do you understand Autonomous language learning and what do you think about your learning of English autonomously?

**Respondent (P1):** in high school, we use to have English teacher and what we call student centered learning if I am not mistaken. Basically we what we need is: he try to ask us which one we want to learn basically a choice, the one that we lack we know we are not good at we learn that course and I will take that kind of behavior should be promoted. B/c what this kind of universities and others are trying to do is giving module what they think the students should know rather than giving what they should know. And there is a kind of making their choices for them I think that should be changed. And how we can learn English is based upon how much we want to be that person. If we are forced to be there I don't think that have much fruit on it, I don't think that would be successful. Rather we should be asking each other and it should be based on the choice of the student. I am not saying that the teacher should not have any power on this but it should be based on the choice of the students.

**P2:** I think it is self-learning, for English it is like we could read books and understand the grammar but students don't like self-learn may be teachers should assign book to read and asking for book report could help improving our reading habits, and having discussion in the classroom and presentations to students get out in the crowd and helping to speak could help them to like the subject and promote English learning.

**P3:** in my opinion what is done in the classroom based on the teacher and his decision, what should learn but mostly we were not talking the language, I think the person could have on how he could learn a language, b/c it differs from person to person. When we talk about English I think there are a lot of things we can do on ourselves in terms of autonomous learning and we have a lot of facilities. For example watching movies, reading books and listening to pod casts. these are not learning methods but they help you on the way while watching movies if you don't understand certain phrase or word or the grammar they are using, you like to search it by yourself, in doing that you are motivated to know something so that is one criteria of learning that is why what the lecturer is saying is not only enough and what we do outside the class is also important. We can help ourselves. B/c it is different from person to person we can adjust what feels wrong and right. Some people might like read more and the others might like to listen audio and the others may like to watch movies

**Moderator:** when you do those activities/practices did you do it purposively to learn English?

**P1:** No not only this even if it was unconsciously the purpose is to learn but we do what teachers asks whether we like or not our habits define what we are, so if you constantly do engaging yourself watching movies or constantly engaging in reading English books or constantly engaging yourself with English speakers you are more likely to learn English more than sitting in the classroom and listening to someone speaking. Even to watch movie you must be motivated so if you are watching a movie, you are most likely you are willing to understand what they are talking about so you are gone need to learn. You might not learn from watching a movie but watching movie motivates you to learn. Why do I do this and why do I do that what is the grammar behind this, what are they saying so you are going to be motivated to learn more.

**P2:** you need motivation to know what is going to learn, understanding each other. Even children they don't know the language but they engage in it. Even if we are not interested to the language, but engaging on it we are more likely to learn the language. It helps like listening to the teacher in the classroom, watching movies, reading books, motivates you to learn.

**Probe:** are you motivated to learn English?

**P2:** As you are engaged to do the activities for example when watching movie it might not be to learn the language but to understand the message you are going to search for the meaning of what they are saying. As you are engaging from the things you want yes I am motivated to learn the language

**P3:** yes we are as English is the medium of communication, as long as we are social, and we know how globalization is moving fast, we still know that we need it and we all are motivated to learn it to communicate with the world.

**P4:** I think it depends on the way you see things for example if you want someone to learn something you need to know how to make that person motivated. English is easy to get that person motivated for example it could be movie, song, podcast the medium you are trying to address will play a lot to motivate to learn English.

**Moderator:** what are your responsibilities to learn English autonomously?

**P4:** if you are watching movie you may not be conscious of learning English but entertaining or enjoying, but if someone is reading grammar structure book, it might be reminded of your responsibilities of learning English rather than watching movies.

**Probe:** what if we bring it to the classroom what are your responsibilities in the classroom?

**P5:** not only the students but also the teacher I think they can work better and a bit interesting b/c when you come to the class you are already accosted telling what you already know “subject plus verb”, that is how we learn other subjects but I don't think language should be structured in that way. For example other subjects like mathematics and physics subject, you read it and it is pretty much structured in every aspect of learning. But language learning should be communicative. You should work on the speaking part, and making interesting was that is why I judge myself

more than fifty percent of my English was completed outside the class. In a classroom I learn grammar and basic vocabularies. As he says you are not worried about learning or you are not going to worry that there is exam, you just concerned about to enjoy the time you have and on the way you learn it. the purpose was to enjoy so making it interesting will make students motivated and not only this making them engaged is also important not only with the teacher making them engaged with each other and also this is a good exercise arranging them into groups so that they can discuss b/c they will talk to each other more than their teacher and I think it will be better.

Probe: what do you expect from your teachers to let you develop your AL

**P7:** providing other resources and additional materials, assigning tasks, evaluating our progress

**Probe:** whose responsibility do you think setting objective/goal is?

**P1:** I think it should be on both teacher and students. If the teacher is the only that is involved in planning that might be good b/c he/she knows good at the technical part of it but it does not mean it addresses what we need. What the teacher plan to teach and the need of the students might not match and the system starts to fail. So both teachers and students should communicate and choose. When I say to choose may be sometimes the students may choose the objective that cannot be sufficient for achieving the objective but discussing together might be benefit for both.

Probe did your teacher encourage you to set your own goal to reach the objectives set as a broad?

**P8:** I think the teachers were sticking to the guideline they came with. We were not given this opportunity to set goal; they directly come up with the guideline of the university and directly go to teaching, they did not communicate with the students they start with what they think right. I think that is the problem

**Moderator:** did your teacher assign your responsibility, or is there a culture of sharing responsibility b/n teacher and students?

**P2:** very rare and unique they only give us the clear definition or guideline which is course outline and what is going to be done in the course there was no discussion it is already known.

**Moderator:** what about evaluating what you have done?

**P4:** I don't think when any teachers come to the classroom they don't feel they could change. I don't see when teachers come to the class feeling that he is going to teach English to the Ethiopian society and change them. I don't think they have their own objective. If they have no objectives they cannot make me to have an objective so we just torching each other. He is on his road, me in my own road he is preaching and wasting my time and we are not solving anything. But if the teacher comes to the class having a certain objective set by somebody, it should be accustomed. That objective may not work for everybody in the classroom and as an independent learner we have to customize it as it could be appropriate for us and the teacher should help on customizing do that otherwise that objective set by someone cannot be applicable for everyone in the classroom. If the teacher does that the students won't complain. It starts form there

**P5:** I think they can have the motivation to do this way but they may need more time to do this. When they plan to do the schedule may not be enough so they will be forced to bring the book and continue with that. They could have the motivation but something barriers to do it

**Moderator:** to what extent your teachers promote AL to you? Did they show you the way you can learn English by your own?

**P6:** that kind of teacher is not common but it is hard to say there is no such kind of teacher, but there are a certain barriers to do that could happen for example they have to finish the module before what they actually want to do and they are forced to finish. This kind of guidelines can be the setback to encourage autonomous learning.

**Moderator:** Is there supporting environment in AASTU that encourages AL?

**P2:** to some extent we have a digital library, we have internet access but only at limited areas like library and some blocks having Wi-Fi access, in digital library we have computers with internet access but the computers are very limited in number, we need more computers and to get more internet access everywhere.

**P3:** I have heard of there is a language lab but we don't know where it is and we didn't use it until now.

**P6:** there is no such different supporting environment that is different from high schools. It is almost equal to the previous level but if we put similar effort to learn the language, but if we are personally motivated to learn the language we can do a lot of things to learn the language. so language learning needs a lot of ambitions and we need to boost ourselves. So we should have to keep motivating to ourselves. There are also e-learning platforms and books on the internet. The only limiting things: the first one is our lack of motivation which is a big factor for our learning and some minor things like internet. And it is good if this is supported by the teacher but before supporting students the teacher has to know himself and being motivated to share this for the students and then the students have to take full risk of their learning

**P4:** I don't think there are a lot of books, the actual physical books, forget e-library even the existing books are hard to find and very limited in number I don't think there is a helpful environment for us this year may be in the future

**P2:** so we both lack motivation and an access

**Probe:** you mean you take more of the responsibilities to you

**P2:** to some extent

**P4:** I think we carry more weight than teachers. It has been like that since we were from primary school, it had been like that and at university we are expected to practice independency which we are already familiar with

**P6:** the teachers are not living for this they may use it as their income method, so they carry more responsibility much higher than us, so they should have to be aware of that we are here to be shaped and we need accurate shaper.

**P1:** some of the teachers were reflecting their learning with us in the class; they don't have background about it. I am not saying I know everything but it looks like that they don't have put that much effort and they are not interested in it that should be changed first.

**P6:** if the teacher did well in English, he can do it much better otherwise if he comes to teach the module, we can read it do it by ourselves, we can understand and explore from the internet. We

need some motivation and extra information and its application in the new and real world and what we can do with it otherwise it will be time wasting.

#### **Appendix J: Interview Transcription of teacher (T1-T5)**

**Interviewer:** What is Autonomous language learning? How do you understand autonomous learning?

**Respondent:** Okay, I understand autonomous language learning is a kind of independent learning that students do by themselves at their exposure.

**I:** So what are the practices or the activities students are expected to do, in the classroom or outside the classroom, what is expected from them?

**R:** So, as far as I am an English language instructor, there are some activities that are expected from students to do outside the classroom. For example, in a classroom, we can give them classwork activities, short answers and even short responses. But outside the classroom, we expect them to practice different skills, for example, speaking, unless they practice outside the classroom activities inside the classroom by itself is not enough so that we encourage them to do different practice with their friends, colleagues, or with their family members. If we take writing as simple example, the task on the module gives them only limited tasks, but we encourage them to do different activities outside the classroom. These are some of the samples that I encourage my students should practice outside the classroom by themselves.

**Probe:** Okay, so you mean that you encourage your students to be autonomous learner?

**R:** Of course, as you know that the time given in the classroom is not sufficient; it's limited for that we only have about 45 or 50 minutes. And if the students want to improve their overall skills, whether it is micro or macro skills, it's advisable if they do at their disposal. So I encourage highly inquired them to write, to speak and even to follow lecture, I mean, to listen to lectures from YouTube and other sources.

**I:** Okay, what is the response of the students for the implementation of autonomous language learning?

**R:** To be honest, some students are very happy in accepting this kind of instructions. But I don't have any modality that I can check whether my students have applied autonomous learning outside the classroom or not. But sometimes when you ask them cross checking questions, they try to answer those questions. And in that way, I can even assume that they have done it some activities outside the classroom, but their responses totally when I look at it is good.

**I:** Okay. So you mean that they are willing to be autonomous learner?

**R:** Yeah, some students take dedicatedly to be autonomous learners, but some are not willing. And they don't want to engage in different activities outside the classroom, they want to do everything they want to finish the course activities in a classroom. They don't want to browse or refer for other materials outside the classroom, but I can, I can observe that some students are very happy to improve their skills, and some students are not that much happy to do it outside the classroom,

**I:** okay. So, is there a time to encourage your students to set their own goals other than the objectives set as a general, Is there a time to let the students set their own goal.

**R:** Of course, as study skill, the study skill needs planned schedule, I advised them to plan priorly before doing some activities. And setting goal is effective study mechanism students are expected to put objective for why they are doing some activity. I encourage them but I haven't had any experience in doing or making them plan on like that.

**I:** What about evaluating what they have done; evaluating their achievement by their own ?

**R:** in terms of feedback, they do a kind of activity with their peers; they can take some feedbacks and check their writing compositions. But by myself, I have given them two times feedback

concerning the paragraph writing, and concerning the speaking, impromptu speak, I immediately give them feedback when they finished speaking, but in terms of getting feedback from their peers and friends, I invite them to do it by their own

**I:** So what do you think the role of the teachers are in promoting learner autonomy? Do you think teacher has role for the promotion of learner autonomy.

**R:** Yes, to some extent but because of different reasons when we are not hired, implementing, or appreciating students to conduct or to follow independent learning because of different reasons. One is the commitment, we don't have that quality, we are not that much committed to encourage our students in evaluating, giving feedback, and even sometimes in assessing their activities. But teachers are grateful. If we properly use our time, we can manage we can even sometimes interfere and give them advice to improve their skills.

**I:** Okay. The other question is, do you provide additional learning materials that can help them to be autonomous learner, in addition to the module provided? As a general?

**R:** Exactly, of course, as a teacher, I have many experiences in providing different materials, for example, you can look at our telegram group, I have attached them books to refer to do their skills to the maximum level have provided them some audio materials, audio visual materials for their listening activities. As far as possible, I'm trying my best to give them extra materials that would improve their skills

**I:** Okay, what about providing different learning strategies? Do you provide them different learning strategies for a certain issue and let them select the one which is appropriate for them? Is there a chance to doing this kind of this kind of...

**R:** I mostly follow the student centered approach and, and there is the module also guides us to follow certain strategies, and we primarily follow the module and then sometimes based on the feedbacks as well as by looking the gestures of the students, we try to shift our, our approaches

to learning as far as possible in question by looking at the content, the major contents of the course, I'm trying my best to make my lesson suitable to the learning.

**I:** what are the mechanisms you use to encourage your students to let them be interdependent learners or cooperative learners, something related to interdependence and cooperative learning?

**R:** Yeah, one is we give them a group assignment that would encourage students to cooperate and work on some activities. The other one is in a classroom the course also encouraged group activities. I encouraged them to do and forwarded their views to the classroom. By this kind of activity, I encourage my students to participate in collaborative activities; the other point is, if students bring new ideas, new points to the classroom in a form of group, I give them bonus marks, like an incentive, and that's I'm trying to encourage my students

**I:** Do you encourage students to reflect their ideas openly?

**R:** off course, most of the time, I start encouraging my students from the beginning of the class and that means this is a class that they are expected to use the opportunities I encourage them to use the exposure that they have in a classroom. When I'm asking them questions, I encourage them not only in English; even they can explain their answers in Amharic or in other languages if they want. That means, I don't want them to keep silent by having the answers, but I encourage them in whatever language I encourage them to speak at heart. So, I'm creating opportunities actually, in the speaking for example, like I try to create different opportunities for the students to speak in front of their friends and then finally be evaluated out of 10 in a classroom, when different situations are there, I encourage all my students to participate and even sometimes if they keep silent I call from the attendance randomly to explain about the ideas and this is one way that I used to encourage my students

**I:** related to the supporting environments, what are the supporting environment available here in AASTU, for students to let them be an autonomous language learners?

**R:** As Addis Ababa science and Technology University is found in Addis Ababa, our students can simply get different materials without any difficulty. They have internet access to get different materials, whether in the form of audio or audio visual, in the form of video, even a form of textual materials are simply accessible. They can also explore our e-learning materials. Beside this, if they want extra reference materials, they can find these materials easily from different bookstores, which are available in Addis. So I believe that our students could freely access to these materials without any problems. And if they use their spare time freely, they can improve their English skills. Not only this one, if they are willing to ask their teachers, teachers are also willing to give them different advices as well as supportive classes.

**Probe:** Okay, what about the module? Does it encourage autonomous language learning?

**R:** The module. To speak frankly, the module encouraged students to do different activities especially it encouraged them to make them good writers, but students do not want to write much. And at the end of each unit, it encouraged them to write a paragraph but students are not happy to write. I even sometimes encourage students to do independent work, group work activities, but they are not happy to do it. They keep silent every morning. And we are even trying to pull them in to stimulate them to speak individually and discuss in group. Even though the module required them to do independent activities, they are not happy to do those activities.

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## **Interview Transcription of teacher 2**

**Interviewer:** Ok, thank you for having this time with me, I really I want to say thank you in advance. So, let me start my question. The first question is how do you understand autonomous learning?

**Respondent:** Okay, my understanding towards autonomous learning is that we make the students independent on different activities on especially our course is English. So, make the

student to do English activities in different skills independently without the interference of the teacher.

**I:** So, what is expected from the students to do or some activities that is expected from them to be autonomous learner, whether it is inside or outside of the classroom, what is expected from them

**R:** Yeah, there are different expectations from the students to be autonomous or to be autonomous learners, particularly outside the classroom, they are expected to use or to communicate with their friends using English to do different activities or assignments to read different returns materials by their own and understand it, and in the classroom, what is expected there are different activities that will be given for them. So they are expected to do by their own some activities to read activities and understand where they roll without referring their teacher or without asking their teacher or other students, they need to read and understand and even develop or drive rules by their own before they're expected or involvement to be communicated or to interact with their teachers. So this is expected from them just expose for different activities to do with inside the classroom and outside their classroom, they shouldn't need help from the others, they are expected to do by their own read and understand read and write like all the English skills that we know vocabulary there are reading, speaking listening. So they are expected to practice even outside the classroom, for example, they are expected to listen differently foreign speakers listening recordings, just to improve their listening skill, when they have this chance also, they can also improve their speaking because their pronunciation will be shaped in such a native speaker so just make them to be exposed to in different activities. This is expected for them to be independent.

**I:** Okay, so do you encourage them to be autonomous learners?

**R:** Yeah, I encourage our students to be autonomous learner, but totally to say this that is difficult, most of the time, we also help them to do just for ease of activities, to manage our time easily most of the time we involve them in different activities. But also I will expose them to

activities and makes them to develop by their own. So to say, totally, that's difficult, but to some extent, I make them to do independently. But when we are striving to cover certain courses within a short period of time we may enforce them and we may just help them in different activities. For example reading activity, I expose them to do the activities by their own and finally I'll give them feedback. So I can say partially I do this

**I:** What is the response of the students when you let them do something or some activities by their own? Are they willing?

**R:** Yeah, they're willing. Students are willing to do this kind of activities, when I allowed them to do this they are ok. After they have given their responses I will give the correct answer by hearing their own response first for particular reading activity, they do it independently. So they have interest and positive response to that.

**I:** Do you guide your students to have their own goal towards the given objectives and then to do something towards the desired goal, and then at the end to evaluate what they have done?

**R:** There might be informally not formally, I didn't do this one, I didn't notice this. Sometimes I may ask them why you came here? What do you want to achieve in the future after you receive BA degree? I make it indirectly. I couldn't say that I directed make them to set their own goals. That's difficult for me to say.

**I:** Okay, so, do you think the teacher has a role to make the students to be autonomous learner?

**R:** Yeah, the teachers have roles, they are the guide to export students to independent learning or autonomous learning, unless you expose them, by the way, most of the times students are always expecting something from the teacher. If you guide them they can do it.

**I:** So what's the responsibility of the teacher?

**R:** Yeah, there is a role, what is the role of the teacher is just to give activities for them to do by their own, if you didn't allow them to do it, they will not do by their own interests, but if you are making them to be exposed to this kind of activity, they're okay or they're voluntary. So, the teachers' responsibility is just to expose them to this kind of activities or situations

**I:** Okay. So, do you provide them additional learning materials other than the module? What kind of material whether it is online resources or the hard copy.

**R:** Yeah, it depends on the time. By the way, I do this because it is difficult to complete at that given time. So, because of that, I will not go further because I need to cover on time the course material, but sometimes when I'm teaching them, I will use these additional resources for my own note by their own but I will give them additional resources or to give some additional notes is kind of things there is but totally it is difficult to say I have used this kind of source totally impossible to say

**I:** what about the learning strategies, Is there a chance to provide them or do you provide them different learning strategies to let them choose the one which is appropriate or comfortable for them?

**R:** No, I have never done this, I have used my own strategy, I will see their own interest. And I feel that this kind of strategy may be appropriate for these kind of activities unless otherwise I didn't give for them to choose by their own

**Probe:** will you provide by your own and let them use

**R:** when I'm using my own by the way I will see their own interests for example, the students' performance is different the students strategy and learning style is different So, I will see the majority of the students are where are they what kind of strategy I preferable for them just a kind of informal observation, I will read them and unless otherwise I will not allow them.

**I:** What are the mechanisms you use to let your students be interdependent or cooperative

learners?

**R:** Yeah, the mechanisms that we use to make the students independent that the first one is that just give them a certain kind of activity to do by their own, give a certain kind of assignment to do by their own and to present to the class. particularly what I make is that just I will give certain kinds of tasks by their own and I will make them to present in the class, because when you are giving tasks for them to do, they will have the chance to read, organize some kind of notes and then present it. So this is the room for them to exercise autonomous learning.

**Probe:** What about doing with others?

**R:** this kind of activity is also there in the classroom, there are different situations that needed their cooperation, for example, there are debating they will debate with their friends without that, then there are also group activities that needed their own pair work or group work. I looked at this one, and I would make them to assign a chairperson from the group here there is group learning, independent learning that both of them are using alternatively, or at the same time there might be because in one classroom session, there might be the activity that needs cooperative learning, there might be activity that needs independent learning. So I use the both of them

**I:** Are they reflective students? Or are they motivated to learn autonomously?

**R:** In relation to that Yeah, yeah. By the way, I will ask most of the time students, whether they are comfortable with the teaching learning method or not, I will ask them, what should I do you like it the way that I'm cope up with you? And I will ask them and some students may teacher, instead of doing this why not this? You know, there are these kind of comments, Yeah, there are free students. But I'm not saying that totally all of the students are free to comment. It is difficult to say all, but there are few students, which are exposed for this kind of experiences. And most of the time during this year, are you comfortable with the way I'm delivering with you in relation to the strategy, in relation to my speed, and the relation to the way that you are acting with activities? I would ask them, and some said, That's okay. Go ahead, or they say teacher, this

should be improved in such a way they will give me so there are expenses that I appreciate this kind of confidence, they're free to reflect.

**I:** Okay. Do you give them an opportunity to evaluate their own activities and what they have done by their own?

**R:** Yeah, sometimes, by the way, evaluation will be reflected in different perspectives. One kind of evaluation is just made them to involve in different activities and make them to give an answer. The other one, it can be in the form of test. The other one, maybe simply by observing, the other one may be, just as the asking them to reflect it. And so there is a kind of evaluation already, without evaluation, there is no teaching learning to say. It is impossible to say so there is.

**I:** Okay. Do you think there is a supporting environment available here in AASTU to let the students be an autonomous learner?

**R:** Totally to say this it is very challenging for me, by the way, why when a supportive environment is just made them to use outside the classroom. So what's the environment say? It's difficult for me to say there is an environment, for example, there's English days out of high schools, when we were teaching there, there was English day, so the students have the chance to communicate also outside the classroom in English. Also, even the staff not only the students but now a days there's this kind of principles or rules. So whether they're using or not it's difficult to evaluate.

**Probe:** What about technology? Do you think technology makes the learning easy?

**R:** Yeah, really they have access for technology, like Internet, their mobile phone, laptops, desktops, they have the access to use this one. And that will make them also to learn independently as we know, for instance, if students are searching for a certain kinds of material, and if they have read and understand to present or prepare kind of term papers, that's good. So that should be appreciated. So that the university by itself has this kind of exposure.

**I:** What about the module? Do you think the ways the module provided encourage autonomous learning?

**R:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, I can say that. Why because there are activities that make the students before telling them the rules or the principles. First of all, the activity makes them to be involved in their activities. And finally, to derive certain kinds of rules from that, and even the notes come after the activities. So if you are first teaching, the principle is that is not independent learning. Just First, the module allows the students to do certain kinds of activities. After they did they did the activities independently, they will have some kind of understanding by their own they dig out, they think critical thinking also develops, through the way independent learning, autonomous learning would make the students to be critical thinker then after the material involves them to do certain kinds of activities. It will help them to, to evolve in certain kind of notes. So, that is very encouraging for me, even if the module has some kind of faults or criticisms, but in the side of the independent learning it encourages, okay.

### **Interview Transcription of teacher 3**

**Interviewer:** I want to thank you for your willingness I will ask you some question related to autonomous learning and you will tell me your experience.

**Respondent:** all right thank you very much

**I:** the first question is how you understand autonomous learning?

**R:** just to begin with for me autonomous learning is a kind of learning that help learners to get freedom for their own learning, as a university students they are expected to be independent learner and they have to construct their own knowledge by using the inputs given from the teacher as well as the inputs that they discover from different materials. In general autonomous learning is a type of learning that helps learners to be independent learner.

**I:** so what are expected practices that students need to get involved in inside or outside the classroom?

**R:** Yea when we design task the driving force should be the objective that we have. That is the most important thing for example if we take speaking or writing skills the designed tasks should enable students just to raise their own understanding and to bring their life experience to the classroom. So tasks should be authentic, learners should have to develop their skills and the learners have to share their experience, they have to integrate their prior knowledge with that of the given situation or contexts so activities in the context of autonomous learning should be need oriented, they should initiate learners to discover something new.

**I:** so you mean you encourage learners to be independent learner

**R:** yea as I mention before the course objective and the type of tasks are the determinant points. If those designed tasks in line with the course/lesson, objective matches with students' expectation that is well done. If there is task that need students involvement and there are tasks that need teachers engagement, there are tasks that need both teachers and students engagement so it depends on the type of task and the type objective I have

**I:** do you encourage your students to have their own goal?

**R:** in fact it is done at the beginning of the semester or at the beginning of the session, there is course outline or course plan during the introductory session of the course plan I share the responsibility, I have my own responsibility, the students have their own responsibility there are course objective that the students are expected to achieve at the end of the semester at that time when I tell them this is your responsibility, these are mine those are yours, indirectly I am forcing them just to have their own plan. in each and every session you have to know why you are speaking, writing that is the point and I may not remember as their objective that they have design in each session of the semester once I tell them, in fact there is no mechanism just to control whether learners are doing in line with the objective they have designed at the beginning of the session or not. I can't do this and I didn't follow. General they have their own objective

**I:** You mean you make them to assign their objective at the beginning of the year?

**R:** Yea when the course plan starts to be introduced.

**I:** Do you think the students are ready/willing to be an autonomous learner? How do students respond for the implementation of autonomous learning?

**R:** for your surprise most of this time students are not interested. For the sake of having plan or objective they may have but they can't implement. If you ask how do you check whether they are interested or not for example I always ask learners to have their own vocabulary notebook. When they are engaging in different activities there are room to be encountered with new words. I told them once that they should have vocabulary notebook, you have to write new vocabulary you learnt from day to day activities at the back of their exercise book but no one implement this strategy they are not interested this is the point that forced me to say students are not interested to have their own course objective and one reason might be our courses might be common courses they may not have awareness concerning the role of the courses the two English courses that might be the reason.

**Probe:** not only about goal setting what about the activities are they willing or ready to do the activities by their own

**R:** for example take communicative English I, if you see the activities in the module they are very simple even they don't want to devote their time in doing those tasks, some students said these are very simple tasks we don't have expected to spend our time we can answer this question using our prior knowledge, just due to the simplicity of those tasks. they need challenging tasks in fact our students are not very similar to other universities they are here, they took exam, they passed exam, they have they have good language command that may be the reason so they are not interested. Even sometimes I ask the student to do something the students prefer to be silent. when I ask them why they said this is very simple

**I:** so indirectly you are giving chance to evaluate their achievement.

**R:** yea if you see the module there is a reflective activities. students are expected to reflect their previous activity that they did during the entire session that reflective activity help them to reflect what they have learnt, their weak side, the strength of the content, task... so not only me the material also forced them to have some sort of reflection but they can't do. They are not interested. The reason is the simplicity of the tasks. as you know students need challenging tasks

Probe: so indirectly you are saying you will promote their independency but their response may not be as you expect

**R:** yea

**I:** do you provide additional learning material?

**R:** students need additional material, I gave them links video links, pdf materials, they need guide, specially for writing and speaking I gave them video links so I use this in order to support and ever to address their needs beside the material

**I:** so what kind of responses for those materials?

**R:** they are very happy most of them we need the material like the previous time. We need links and videos. They have positive perception for the additional material I gave them

**I:** what about the learning strategies? Do you provide several strategies to a certain topic to let them choose the one comfortable for them?

**R:** Yea it is already stated in the course plan, the learning style, and process should be like these, lecture, group, pair, individual work is needed which is mentioned at the beginning of the session. As a teacher, I have to be flexible b/c I don't know what happen at the classroom. I may give them time for presentation and if they are not interested to that, I may change it to pair work or group work. Simply by considering the context, I try to use varieties of strategies.

**I:** so what are the mechanisms you use to encourage your students to be interdependent, cooperative and to let them be reflective learners or motivated learners?

**R:** yea the first strategy is I told them classroom participation is very important at the end of the semester I may give 5/10 marks for participation. If they know class participation will have value, they raise their hand. The other strategy if most of the students prefer to be silent I may give one mark for this question, anyone who is interested to answer this question, there may be mark. when I say mark they raise their hand, and I will write their Id on a piece of paper. so if they know that there is something at the back they will participate.

**I:** You mean they need an incentive?

**R:** yea class participation and mark are the two strategies I always use in my classroom.

**I:** what about cooperative learning?

**R:** in fact cooperative learning is very important specially during debate and speaking session, I informed them as the process is very important, the assessment may be at individual level but I told them I need to see the overall process. one student should cooperate with his friend, their motivation, their preparation, the end is the sign of the process I told them. if they know this they are enforced to work together. so cooperative and collaborative learning are the important strategy specially in language classroom.

**I:** Do you believe that there are supporting environments available to students to be autonomous learner here in AASTU?

**R:** for me Yes because one determinant point just to implement autonomous learning is class size 25-30 students which is manageable. The teacher can be accessible for all students, all students can participate, share ideas for their friends, it is very easy for assessment, so learners can be encouraged by giving emphasis for those type of activities

**I:** what about the material, can they manage it independently?

**R:** yea first they do the tasks alone, after doing the task alone, they may share their idea for their friends, then at the end their friends' idea and their reflection might help them just to have a kind of reflection. so they see the material, they share for a friend and the combination of the three important issue may help them to produce one single entity.

**I:** is there a reflective page that evaluates what you do in the class or does it initiate students to evaluate what they learn?

**R:** yea there: the title is very impressive it says reflection section and when you see the questions, they are very simple. Rather than sticking to those questions it is better to ask open ended questions like what is new can you share for your friends, the new thing that you discover through the process. what are the new points that you grasped in unit one, in unit two ... that is better to ask this kind of question rather than asking the students to identify their weak side, their

strong side as well as the gap they have, the gap of the material, it is better to make it open. This is my understanding.

**I:** So what about the facilities/ supporting environments that can make them to be autonomous learner?

**R:** it is difficult to say the facilities are effective and conducive in our context but if you see in fact there is no internet access in the classroom Wi fi doesn't work there but there is digital library and they have Wi fi access around their dormitory. after knowing that they have this tasks when I send them video links you have to do this, even most of the time I don't accept tasks in hard copy, even they don't like, they use their email or telegram address this happened because of the facilities that is one point, and concerning the listening session, we have language lab here even if it is not installed 100%, it is better to say it is not functional because very limited intities are working here. The desktops are not working, there is no internet access, what is working here is simply the speaker, there is limited access but we teachers have to use this one even few teachers are using this digital lab. It is not from the weak side of those teachers but the accessibility of the equipment. It is not satisfactory. It might be done because of the initiation of the teacher,

**I:** If there is something you need to add just related to this issue

**R:** finally our students are the would be engineers or scientists, so the reason why we are teaching English course is not to help them or to make them English language teacher or writer or something else, we are helping them to be an effective engineer or scientists. and our courses are very important, and may serve as a lung for other subjects. Scoring A+ or A in communicative English I and II is nothing for me but if they score A+ or A, with the other major courses using this course, that is the objective of the course. so we teachers have to consider this issue. As much as possible, we have to help our learners to be an independent or autonomous learner. One way of making them an autonomous learner is understanding the course objective, and designing tasks in line with the need of the students so at the end of the day your research finding may suggest how the process will be improved. That is what I need to say.

#### **Interview with teacher 4**

**Interviewer:** Thank you for giving me this chance just to have a discussion with me and I want to say thank you in advance. So the issue that we are going to discuss is about autonomous language learning. So how do you understand autonomous learning?

**Respondent:** Autonomous learning is a type of learning where students are shouldering more responsibility for their learning with the support of their teachers. And when we are talking about autonomous learning, there are some strategies that they are supposed to provide to the students, for example, pre-planning, and encouraging them to be autonomous learners by planning different activities that help them to be self-sufficient learners. The kind of flexible learning is not totally independent of the role of the teachers, but it might be difficult for us to have autonomous learners in our context where totally avoiding teachers' interference on the students' autonomous learning.

**I:** Okay. So what is expected from the students? Just to let them practice autonomous learning? Is there something that is expected from them?

**R:** Yeah. There are activities that they are supposed to do. As I told you before, they are supposed to plan for their learning. They are supposed to put their plans into action, which means that they are supposed to plan for their future learning. At the same time, they are supposed to be scheduled. They are supposed to work based on their schedule outside the classroom, and when they are in the classroom they are supposed to get engaged in most of the activities, as long as they are supposed to be autonomous learners, because it is not a kind of learning where the teachers are dominating the classroom activities. I think that may encourage them to be independent learners in the long future. Because autonomous learning is not a kind of learning which happens within a short period of time it takes time, especially in our context because they come from the high school environment where it is more teacher-dominated, where the teacher is spoon-feeding students and the students are not as such active enough to shoulder most of the responsibilities. So it might be difficult to have such kind of learners or autonomous learners within a short period of time at the university line, but through time it is possible.

**I:** So you mean that you encourage them?

**R:** Yeah, it might not be explicitly, but implicitly sometimes, for example, when you are teaching writing, what you are doing in the classroom may not be sufficient for the students. You may provide them different activities, or you may provide them different materials, or you may do something else in which they are supposed to do outside the classroom that is to be self-sufficient, independent learners that help them to develop and enrich their understanding about what you are teaching in the classroom. Maybe that is one way of encouraging them. Or you may encourage them to work together outside the classroom in which they are sharing ideas, sharing learning experiences, sharing their materials, or different kinds of issues that they are supposed to do in the outside classroom environment. Though it might not be as supportive at university level, it is our responsibility to encourage them, to give them opportunities to work hard outside the classroom, at the same time in the classroom.

**I:** Okay. So do you have, or do you remember that you gave a time for setting their own goal?

**R:** Explicitly it might be difficult, and you may not remember those things, because you may do it intuitively or you may do it intentionally. For example, if I am teaching about conditional sentences, what you are teaching them in the classroom might be a small amount. And you may provide them activities or options or other mechanisms, for example, to download and read materials and to use conditional sentences in context. When you come to reading, for example, you might have done some of the activities related to the reading material in the classroom. Outside the classroom, you may help them or you may encourage them to write summaries for that particular text, which helps them to help themselves to learn independently or to become a better reader.

**Probe:** So are they willing?

**R:** Yeah.

**I:** What is the response of the students?

**R:** I think they do have positive responses. Just to remember at the very beginning of my class, I introduced myself and the students introduced themselves among themselves and to the teacher and I asked them to write a paragraph about their first impression without any interference, without any information, without any kind of guidance in the classroom and almost all of them were very willing and happy to write about that. or this might be one instance in which students are eager and motivated to do things by themselves. And when I give them activities to be done outside the classroom, they are not reluctant, I think, as far as I observed the students in the classroom. workers that were already completed and dormitory or in the library, whatever it is, that is a kind of that might be reflecting they are responding positively to the activities they are given to do.

**I:** Okay, so in addition to setting their goal, do you encourage them to evaluate what they have done by their own?

**R:** Still, it might be rare. I can say yes, because for example, when they are just writing a paragraph, I don't always just mark what they have written. I see what they do in the classroom. Without providing them more feedback, I may give them the opportunity to share, to exchange their materials and get opinions or feedbacks from their friends. And I encourage them just to do it again outside the classroom and check whether they have learned something or whether they are progressing or not. That might be a kind of guidance if it is considered to be one aspect of autonomous learning. I think that's enough.

**I:** So what about the material with regards to autonomous learning? Does it encourage students to set their own goal, then work towards their goal, then evaluate by their own?

**R:** Of course, yes, it encourages. If you ask me what the evidence for that is, there are different activities at the end of each unit, I give them that activities in the classroom and just I wonder here and there or move from here and there and I observe what students are doing. And some of them are just insisting on, I am doing this and I am not doing this, I am confused, is it clear? I evaluated myself this way, am I right? And that might be one way of encouraging our students to evaluate themselves. But you don't need to just insist on what is already given in the book. You can give them additional activities. For example, the questions might be very simple. Some

students may just finalize it and may make some kind of fun about it. So you should look at, you should observe what students are doing in the classroom and provide them additional activities that challenges them to evaluate themselves. In addition, the activities given in the textbook, that may be one way of giving opportunities for students to evaluate themselves, to evaluate their progress. It doesn't necessarily mean that all students are doing it at the expected level because they had no opportunity to do such kind of activities in the classroom at high school level. So I think the material is somehow supportive, but some of the questions should be re-modified because we do have very advanced students in the classroom and very struggling who are not able to understand even the rudimentary or very elementary concepts. So the activities should balance those things. If not, it might be encouraging some and discouraging some, which ignores diversity in the classroom with regard to their readiness level.

**Probe:** OK. So what about the additional materials, which is different from the module given to them? Do you provide that?

**R:** Yeah, there are some reference materials given at the back, but some of them are very old enough and some of them are not even... the year of publication is not stated, I don't know what kind of things are incorporated as a reference. The reference should be very much updated and the reference should consider the level of the students. Whatever their background might be, we should have some kind of mechanism, to help our students, one of them is providing reference materials they can easily download from the internet. High school students might focus more on the lessons or activities related to the materials that provide them lessons related to their entrance exam. Most of the time in English it grammar. So they may read those commercial books, but here they are supposed to read more educational books produced by experts who are supposed to produce materials for students at university level. So there are some books, essential grammar or something, I don't remember the names. If you have the access to these materials, it is better to read these materials instead of just insisting on grammatical elements which are at sentence level. I go to school by car. What makes it different from what they have been doing at high school level? It might be very demotivating and discouraging. I'm not saying that such kind of activities should be considered. The activities should be contextualized that makes it somehow

different, somehow challenging, somehow supportive for the students to be autonomous instead of being dependent on their teachers the way they were doing at high school.

**Probe:** Is there a way to lead them to use online sources? Have you encouraged them?

**R:** Yeah, it's possible. For example, from books.com or library Genesis, there are some students who ask me at the very beginning, are we supposed to read only this material or do you have some kind of materials? No, at the university level you are supposed to be self-sufficient, you are supposed to be independent, you are supposed to be autonomous learners as long as you are here at university level. Because they are supposed to shoulder more responsibilities here at university as opposed to what happened at high school level. So they can easily access, even some students are able to access materials much better than the teachers. Why I say that is that a student told me that I got a kind of books from this website. Is it supportive? Tell me the title and the website from where you got it. I got it from this website. If it is related to the lesson that you are taking right now, if it is related to the course that you are taking right now, just read it, but you should be very much selective, because time is very precious for university students. If you are not selective, if you are reading everything that they get university students. If you are not selective, if you are reading everything that they get, everything that is available they may not be academically successful. They have to do assignments, and they have to pass exam while the other activities are additional that substantiate their knowledge and that develop their thinking, understanding and the like

**I:** how about alternative strategies do you provide different strategies for your students?

**R:** for example if you are teaching writing, you can give them several topics to let them choose the topic they are familiar with, they can do it with their friends if they face difficulty. Though it is competitive cooperation should be there among the students since competitive environment is not such supportive because it motivates students not to share ideas and be self-sufficient. For example it can be planning strategy: what they are supposed to plan, to do after class, before coming to the class, after they finalize the exam because our environment is very discouraging. We don't normally advise them; we will terrorize them you will fail. It is better to advise them smoothly, approach them friendly keeping your social distance that students can approach, talk

to you about what they are supposed to do. Even you have to tell them about what they have to do after they graduate; what kind of challenging environment they are going to face. You don't need to tell them about writing topic sentence, supporting sentence and concluding sentence. They are supposed to be good writers at university level and even after they graduate they are supposed to work by themselves. As engineering students they need to be able write different kinds of proposals, reports, they have to compete for research grants, they are supposed to write articles and the like. You should encourage them to see from different angles as a university students. That might be one way of encouraging our students

**I:** what about the supporting environment in AASTU?

**R:** I encouraged students to use online material but told them to be selective. Everything that can be downloaded may not be advantageous for students as long as we can help them or support them to be selective. I visited language lab but most of the teachers are just using their own mechanism to teach listening. The other environment can be the classroom which should be somehow technologically supported but what is there is the same thing with what we saw in other universities. As a technology university, there should be other mechanisms which give students the opportunity to learn in the classroom using technology. The materials available in the laboratory should be available for the students and the teachers. I don't think there is a professional to manage the laboratory. It should be well furnished, and there should be someone to manage it. but here if you want to use the lab you need to ask somebody and you need to ask someone who knows the operation and there is long process that might be very discouraging for teachers. If it is language lab, teachers should avail materials for the students and it should be open at any time you want to use the laboratory. There should be someone who is fully responsible to manage the lab because all teachers cannot be responsible and may not be able to use the devices. When we come to the environment of learning English language, I don't think the department used fully the available materials to create very conducive language learning environment. It needs to struggle. Whatever department they joined the language proficiency matters and affects their academic achievement since it is the medium of instruction. If we are using all opportunities for creating conducive learning environment, I think we can have proficient students specially most of the students in the field of engineering are good and if you

help and provide them more support and assistance, we can have much better students. Students are very friendly with technology but that should be managed appropriately. Providing them access to technology or the materials may not be sufficient because you may think the students are listening or doing something using their smartphones but some of them might be doing something else. Even in the language laboratory if the teacher cannot manage things very well, the students may divert to something that take their attention. Friendliness may have its own value to help our students but the department can do more

Autonomous learning is what the time needs and the academics want this at university level but it needs more effort, commitment, professional support and more patience to have autonomous learners which might lead them to be independent learners after they graduate or when they join the world of work we can have very confident, independent flexible and self-sufficient student in the long future.

#### **Interview with teacher 5**

**Interviewer:** Thank you for being willing for giving me your ideas. How do you understand autonomous learning in your class?

**Respondent:** Thank you very much for having me for this interview. In my class autonomous learning means that in the classroom interaction students and teachers have their own roles. So in terms of learning students are expected to take over responsibilities to workout individual or group work. In that case, the student must be autonomous learning by themselves in active engagement of the tasks or they must be active participants in pair or group discussions. So one way or the other, when I say autonomous learning, it must be individual, group or pair work in which the students must be actively engaged into the tasks or learning materials.

**I:** Okay, so you mean that you promote autonomous learning for your students?

**R:** Yeah, if I take my own teaching experience, most of the time I try to encourage students to work in groups or in pairs, to share ideas, to check their answers, or to read materials individually in a silent way, in a silent manner. So in that case, most of the time I provide them

with clear objectives or goals. Without any setting goals, it's not possible to carry out autonomous learning, so I usually inform them what kind of objectives they are going to achieve, whether it's individual or group work. Yes, of course, it's my usual practice to use autonomous learning in the form of individual or group work, by giving them clear objectives.

**I:** so if you show them to set their own goal, do you give them a chance to evaluate their objective, whether they achieve it or not?

**R:** not explicitly, but most of the time I give them implicitly in the form of checking their answers with their friends. I don't give them the chance to evaluate their individual performance by evaluating their own achievements, but indirectly yes, I give them the chance to evaluate themselves from peer feedback not self- evaluation but by having group discussion

**I:** So you mean this, you motivate your students to be autonomous learners? Or what kind of mechanism do you use to motivate them to let them be autonomous learners?

**R:** Motivation, for example, I clearly tell them that cooperation or group work is very important. I encourage them that you don't make always your learning individual whether it's in class or outside. Group discussion is very important because despite your understanding of the facts and times, there are different short mechanisms to answer questions or to understand complex materials. So most of the time, my experience is that I initiate them to have cooperative learning experience can result in good learning opportunities. So in that case they are initiated to make active participation within service, so I motivate them to have group participation. In addition to that I tell them to read outside. I tell them to budget their time outside the They should have a plan to study their own study skills by, for example, making complex material reading ahead and making simple material that needs short time to accomplish it. inform them to have a plan to study, whether it's English or other course, inform them to have a good study skill. That's very important to them. Before they come to the class, they must have something about the upcoming lesson, so that helps them to have active interaction in the classroom, to ask questions. But whenever they come to the class and open their soft copy or hard copy material in the class, it's not a good way of learning. So autonomous learning can be, also in the class, by using their time, by reading material ahead, or in the class by interacting in groups or in pairs.

I: Do you provide them different strategies to let them select the one which is appropriate for them?

R: I don't give them different possibilities to choose from, but instead I explicitly tell them that, for example, they need to have conscious understanding about the use of their background knowledge to understand difficult reading materials. Or I tell them to improve their vocabulary knowledge by having a separate exercise book in which they have to document every day they encounter difficult words. That separate material I tell them that has an evaluative function for their academic performance. So I encourage them to have a separate exercise book to document the difficult vocabularies. So whenever you try to speak, write classroom try to include that material by memory by itself is a way of good language learning so by memorizing difficult words in the context of speaking, and writing they must use those difficult words. It's not always documented but they have to memorize in day-to-day classroom interaction. In addition to that, there are also difficult grammatical problems. When they read material outside the classroom, or in the communicating material, if they encounter a new grammatical form, they must be consciously know that it is new for me, and for the upcoming language classroom interaction, I should use it, or in the other section, whether it is a common course or major course, this language material is very important. Because I tell them that language is a tool, it's a code for them to understand the content in the major course. So don't always make languages always a freshman course. It is up to your graduation level. When you do research, when you make your classroom presentations, or any other course, if you want to be an international competent scholar, it's very important for your academic achievement. So always I tell them that language is their way of achieving their ambition.

I: What about the habit of reflecting on what they have learned? Do you give them chance to reflect on what they have learned in the class? Or do you encourage them to be reflective students?

R: no, because students are not motivated to speak in class. There are few students who take the initiation to speak in the class. The majority doesn't have the motivation. They don't take/ know, that speaking by itself helps them to speak and to improve their language. Sometimes I

encourage them, especially after reading material; I ask them to reflect their personal understanding of the text. But still some students usually participate in the class. Even the material, especially communicative English skills I encourage students to reflect their attitudes, their personal understanding about the material at the end of each unit. I usually skip it and to let them do it outside. By making small groups you can reflect by yourself. Usually they keep silent. Sometimes in the middle of the classroom instruction, as I said earlier, it's only when there is a material, reading comprehension, and in connection with that text-based comprehension, and extend their self-reflection. But whenever the reflection becomes big, like text, I mean, unit-based reflection, it's not manageable and the students are not motivated to speak.

**I:** So can we say they are not positive about this autonomous learning? Or for the activities they do, whether it is in the classroom or outside, what do you think their responses were?

**R:** sometimes the material itself influences the way they have to be reflective, cannot touch their interests, cannot keep their level of understanding. Some students might believe that it's very simple what kind of new things I would say about this topic, so it can't be common for all, it can be, but I tell them that it is always take the risk to speak in the class, despite the familiarity of the content to you still they don't speak in the class.

**I:** What was the response of the students when you ask them to do something autonomously?

**R:** The response is very quick. They even don't use the given time. They accomplish the given activity ahead of the given time. Maybe my budget of time may be wrong, but when I give them some minutes to accomplish the activity, they usually do it ahead of the given time. So they are actively participating in this learning or individual autonomous learning.

**Probe:** So we can say they are able to learn autonomously?

**R:** Autonomously in the form of a given task, for example. If the task by itself demands their individual learning, yes, they can be autonomous learners, but just for activities or information-grabbing activities or some complex kinds of tasks. In that case, they may fall short of some autonomous learning practice. It depends on the kind of activity.

**I:** What about the supporting environments? What are the supporting environments available here in AASTU?

**R:** In AASTU, e-learning for example, and what we call it telegram. Most of the time I use telegram to add soft copy materials. I provide them with essential materials that can help them to improve their grammar vocabulary as well as the basic four basic language skills. So I usually use telegram as a conducive learning environment. I try to use e-learning but it's not always... in a conducive environment sometimes there may be an internet connection problem or the password is sometimes corrupted so it's not possible to use it. So, language lab for example, if you take language lab, still it's here, but we are not able to use it for listening as well as some other cooperative, autonomous learning. Because of some official or some other inconvenience, I would say that Telegram for me is the best condition learning for individual learning. That means there is no any kind of cooperative or group-based learning as we, know, in lab it's possible to group students and make a very warm discussion but because of the lack of using the lab I am unable to use it. There are sufficient environment but the problem is the application. We are not strongly asking for assistance from responsible bodies. The problem comes to me.

In general I believe autonomous language learning is very indispensable because the end of teaching English is making the students autonomous. Every concerned bodies especially material designers, classroom teachers and officials should give due emphasis on how help students to achieve that level. Students have different way of learning the language so we have to consider how it is possible to help each student specially when the class size is large, making students autonomous learners can be very difficult. For example here in each section, there are 45-50 students. Because of reasonable justifications, in language class the number should be reduced to help students.