

The Effect of Autonomous Learning on Language Proficiency and Use of Language Learning Strategies for the Moroccan Baccalaureate Learners

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Abstract— Autonomous Learning (AL) as a teaching concept has been widely approved of as a highly sophisticated promoter of efficient language teaching and learning. It is a pedagogical philosophy that is believed to enhance the quality of lifelong learning by accentuating the learner's presence as an active participant in the teaching-learning operation. In fact, developing effective autonomy-enhancing methodologies and devising appropriate and practical activities that may nurture the sense of learning responsibility and promote the teacher's classroom presence as assistant and guide has attracted considerable attention in the realm of applied linguistics ever since the early 1960's. In the same vein, this paper aims to tackle the issue of AL in the Moroccan secondary school environment and how incorporating it into the classroom can increase Baccalaureate graders' language proficiency (LP) and their use of language learning strategies (LLS). Two groups (control and experimental) of twenty students each were involved in a one- year- long experiment to demonstrate how training learners to become autonomous, through the systematic use of the learner development program (LDP) that was devised by Charles and Zsabo (2000), would advance their LP and their ability to effectively use LLS. The results show that the level of LP and use of LLS can improve when teachers engage their learners in autonomy-enhancing activities in a consistent and systematic manner.

Keywords— autonomous learning, language learning strategies, language proficiency.

I. INTRODUCTION

Autonomous Learning (AL), as a teaching conception, has attracted a great deal of research in the realm of teaching English as a foreign language TEFL since its development in the early 1960's. The objective has always been to promote clear and practical methodologies that enhance the application of such a paradigm that may trigger the virtue of lifelong learning and promote the pedagogy of learning even in the absence of an instructor; such a pedagogical end-goal is well desired to attain quality teaching and improve the rate of learning productivity (Katung, 1997). Another objective that has influenced the increase in research regarding AL is the desire to make up for the shortcomings that marked its antecedent methods which have been principally behaviorism- bound. Such methods have proven short of efficacy not only in terms of providing learners with the know-how to learn and the necessary techniques to engage in a self-instruction process, but also in fostering their learner motivation and critical thinking (Richards, 2014). Indeed, the traditional methods of teaching a foreign

language, in general, accentuate the construct of teaching instead of learning. They have consequently prevented learners from thinking and learning independently and, by effect, deprived them from learning how to self-teach even in teacher-free contexts (Selwyn et al, 2010). By contrast, within the paradigm of learner autonomy, teachers are obliged to change their roles in such a way as to help their learners engage in more effectual learning that provides them with the ability to acquire knowledge themselves even in the absence of a teacher (Poole,1995).

As a matter of fact, the definition of a good teacher has changed from an absolute presenter of knowledge to 'subservient learners' to an individual who successfully manages to foster the growth of learners as independent thinkers and knowledge-seekers (Elmore, 1996). Following the autonomous learning layout, both teachers and students participate in the teaching and learning process in such a manner as to offer students more opportunities to practice the four basic language skills, which are speaking, listening, reading and writing, efficiently (Kohonen, 1992). This requires a willingness on

the side of the teacher to change his or her role that has to be as flexible as to engage learners in broader learning perspectives (Richards, 2005).

It should be mentioned that the promotion of AL gained momentum since the early 1960s (Katz, 1964). However, in Morocco, learner-centeredness and independent inquiry without teacher supervision have started to attract attention in the last twenty years with the advent of the communicative approach. However, research on such a topic may still be considered as insufficient and needs more research to explore its effectiveness in the local Moroccan classroom.

It stands to mention that this paper firstly reviews some studies broached on learner autonomy to promote our understanding of such a concept in the TEFL arena. In addition, a concise introduction of the learner development program (LDP) as developed by Scharle and Szabo (2000) is introduced followed by the full description and findings of the afore-mentioned experiment. While some suggestions for future research are stated, this paper may inherently justify that autonomous learning is applicable in contexts other than where it first generated, as has been claimed by Littlewood (1999).

II. LEARNER AUTONOMY DEFINED

Learner autonomy has been a widely circulated concept in the field of foreign language teaching after it was first considered in other areas such as politics and philosophy (Guilherme, 2002). It was introduced into the field of second and foreign language teaching in the 1960s, and has since attracted considerable interest for the benefits it is claimed to bring to the teaching-learning operation in terms of fostering the concept of “the ability to keep learning when teaching stops”. Little (1991) defines AL as principally an issue of the learner’s mental relation to the process and context of acquisition. AL is to be found in a wide variety of behaviors such as the ability for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent reflection. In Little’s view, AL requires a positive attitude towards the purpose, content. Developing this positive disposition is crucial to the success of the development of learner autonomy and is an essential, long-term objective of any learner training curriculum. Similarly, Benson (1996) asserts that a ‘psychological view’ of autonomy emphasizes the value of the ‘psychological’ or ‘internal’ skills of the learner, such as cognition and learning styles, motivation, attitudes, and aptitude and so on. Ultimately, the learner is responsible for his or her own success or failure in learning. Hacker & Barkhuizen (2008) present the history of the “philosophy”

of learner autonomy in education and entertain the wide range of terms linked to it used in the language field. The idea of AL is assumed to originate from debates about the development of lifelong learning competencies and the enhancement of independent thinkers, both of which were generated in the 1960s. According to Campbell (2004), learner autonomy can be defined 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” (Cited in Chang, 2011, p.105)

Since the 1990s, many educationalists (Benson 1996; Lee 1998, Gardner 2002) repositioned their focus to the social aspects of developing autonomy in the area of foreign language teaching. Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory laid the foundation for their positions in that it asserts that the development of learner autonomy rests social interaction and the cultural context that shape the learner’s view of the world and so may promote his or her ability to work independently. In fact, AL does not only bear on the individual, but can only be enhanced when the learner gets involved in social and cooperative teaching environment. Benson (1996) suggests that “greater control over the learning process, resources and language cannot be achieved by each individual acting alone according to his or her own preferences”, Lee (1998) invites “a supportive environment” into the scene. He assumes that communication, dialogue, and cooperation, etc. are important essential to autonomous learning. Nevertheless, individual autonomy is still the focal standard when discussing AL in the west and ‘socialist’ views of how autonomous learning is believed to survive in what is called collectivist societies (Marsh et al, 2001).

Perhaps the most often quoted definition is still that of Holec (1981) who defines autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning”. To take charge of one’s own learning is to hold the responsibility for every decision concerning all aspects of learning, i.e. 1) determining the objectives; 2) defining the contents and progressions; 3) selecting methods and techniques to be used; 4) monitoring the procedure of acquisition; 5) evaluating what has been acquired. This definition adequately covers the main areas of the learning process in which one might expect the autonomous learner to exercise control. In addition, Holec (1981) assumes that the skillfulness to take charge of one’s own learning is not unnatural but must be acquired in a systematic, intentional manner. His view that autonomy needs to be encouraged has led to the development of a wide range of techniques and procedures known most commonly as “learner training”, or “learning to learn”.

Complex as the concept may be, there are at least three generally accepted senses of autonomy in language teaching. They are as follows: (1) Students should take responsibility for their own learning; (2) Teachers, courses and institutions influence the development of this responsibility; (3) Learner autonomy is a goal of education that learners, teachers and institutions should work together to achieve (Benson, 2007).

III. AUTONOMOUS LEARNING IN THE MOROCCAN TEFL AREA

AL has become a priority in the Moroccan TEFL system as may be the case for many educational systems across the globe. It is considered a fundamental educational objective ensuing from the need to innovate language teaching and put an end to teacher-centered concepts in language instruction in order to attain quality teaching and promote the learner's abilities to bear learning responsibilities (Doyle, 2012). Allright (1988) describes the shift stating "the idea of learner autonomy was associated with a radical re-structuring of language pedagogy that involved the rejection of the traditional classroom and the introduction of wholly new ways of working" (p.35). Allright assumes that autonomy requires a re-conceptualization of relationships between teachers and learners in the classroom environment as well as a rethinking of the nature of activities that can be used therein. Practicing autonomy, for Allright, can be realized in students' unexpected participation in classroom activities (although this option can generate derailed teacher's planning for the class). This idea may be reinforced by Vakhnenko (2014) who contends that students often behave 'independently' both cognitively and behaviorally in the classroom. As a matter of fact, Allright (1988) and Vakhnenko (2014) assume that autonomous learning can be applied in secondary school classrooms without self-access or formal learner training.

These conflicting views suggest differentiation between proactive and reactive autonomy. While proactive autonomy allows for independence in which the learner determines the direction of learning himself, regulates the activity and evaluates his learning independent of the teacher, reactive autonomy refers to the kind of autonomy in which the learner regulates his own learning once the teacher's directives are set (Littlewood, 1999). In fact, attempts to articulate how AL might differ qualitatively across-cultures have been subject to scientific queries. Noels (2014) argues that language learners in the western context prefer proactive autonomy; East Asians prefer approaches that foster reactive autonomy. He links these broad preferences to differences in self-construal, the

values accorded to power differentials, and ideologies regarding education. Greater interdependence, a higher regard for authority and confusion (vs Socratic) approaches to education would predict greater preference for reactive autonomy, and the converse would predict proactive autonomy.

Concerning the Moroccan educational context, I would position the Moroccan learner to be prone to reactive learning more than to the proactive counterpart. The competency-based approach (CBA), being the officially assigned teaching methodology since 2003, incorporates learner autonomy principles and application with the obligatory presence of the teacher's directives to ensure successful end-of-term test-taking. It stresses the need for measurable and useable skills and abilities and claims that the learner should independently activate his or her values, knowledge, attitudes and behavior to successfully apply school acquired knowledge in real-life settings with the instructive role of the teacher in the background (Byram, 1997).

IV. THE EFFECT OF AL ON THE MOROCCAN BACCALAUREATE LEARNER

The applicability of learner autonomy as a pedagogical paradigm that can generate positive results for the Moroccan Baccalaureate learners is a topic of considerable interest in the Moroccan TEFL area nowadays, especially that most teachers may hold negative view of practicing learner autonomy and may be doubtful about its fruition and effectiveness in the local context. My study intends to provide a scientific justification to whether practicing learner autonomy can generate positive results on the learner's use of learning strategies and language proficiency. The findings show that autonomous learning is effective and can aid in the advancement of language proficiency and the mastering of learning strategies in the Moroccan Baccalaureate students.

V. DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIMENT

The experiment took place between September 2016 and May 2017 with the purpose to measure the effect of learner autonomy – enhancing activities on the development of LP and use of LLS for Moroccan Baccalaureate learners in Mohamed V Secondary School in Kenitra, Morocco. The quantitative approach was used in order to make descriptive conclusions based on the numerical data collected.

As mentioned earlier, the study sets as objective to address the efficacy of practicing AL in the Moroccan

high school environment. Mohamed V high school in Kenitra was taken as a case study. A case study is “a research approach in which one instance or a few instances of a phenomenon are studied in depth” (Given 2008, p. 68 Cited in Elfatih 2011; p.61). The aim was to investigate the issue of autonomous learning in a specific context which is that of TEFL. Worth noting here is that this study was constructed out of one principal hypothesis as its starting point, it meant to be a theory-testing study aimed at providing enough evidence to prove the effectiveness of learner autonomy in the Moroccan TEFL context. To attain this goal, a proficiency test was administered to two groups (control and experimental) once before and once after the experiment. Participant students also were asked to complete a Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (as devised by Oxford, 1990) to gauge their advancement vis-à-vis their use of LLS before and after treatment.

VI. THE SAMPLING AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My questions for this study are an attempt to understand if applying learner autonomy following a clearly structured framework will yield any positive results on the levels of language proficiency and use of LLS of Moroccan Baccalaureate Learners. The levels of language proficiency and the use of the LLS are used here as dependent variables, while the LDP was taken as the independent variable. Two Baccalaureate classes participated in the experiment. twenty learners from each class were chosen following the simple random sampling (SRS) mode to attain a higher level of validity; one as the experimental group (EG) and the other as the control group (CG). The SILL and a language proficiency test taken from William Bertrand 100 Questions Tests were used. In addition, the learners were required to write regular journals to keep track of their learning experience. Comparisons were made in two areas: language level and adoption of learning strategies. The fundamental hypothesis is that the LDP would have a positive influence on the development of the learners' LP and use of LLS. The following are concrete descriptions of the hypotheses behind the experiment:

- 1-The LDP can improve students' learning effectiveness in terms of LP.
- 2-The program gives students guidance in developing their LLS.

To analyze the results the SILL questionnaire and the pre and post test scores were put in SPSS 16.0 to

compare them using descriptive statistics, means comparison, and paired sample t.test.

VII. DEFINITION OF THE LDP

This program was introduced by Sharles and Szabo (2000); its objective is to promote learner autonomy through various practical activities that focus on the enhancement of the learners' responsibility towards learning and their motivation to engage in effective use of learning strategies. The program goes through three procedural stages:

1-Raising awareness stage: It is considered as the most teacher-controlled of the three stages. In this stage, the teacher helps the learners bring their inner processes of learning to the conscious level of their thinking via activities in which they demonstrate to students what to do.

2-Changing attitudes stage: It is the stage where the learners practice what they discovered at the preceding stage. They are required to be aware of the strategies they apply in doing the tasks, and how and why they do things this way or that. Most of these activities can be repeated to give way for more practice opportunities.

3-Transferring roles stage: It is the phase that is most crucial as it requires important change in classroom management. The learner is supposed to adopt some classroom management roles from the teacher. The activities are loosely structured to give students enough room for taking the initiative in accomplishing tasks.

In all three stages, various activities are designed to work on familiar targets of learner development, such as motivation, learning skills, empathy and cooperation. The innovation here lies in the systematic combination of such goals.

VIII. RESULTS

To test the improvement of the learner's LP after the application of LDP, an analysis of students' post-test scores was conducted. The tables below display the obtained results that actually show that the scores in the EG were higher than those of the CG after the experiment. The mean score of EG was 14.5 with a range of 08.00, while the mean score of CG was 12.1 with a range of 12.00; their respective standard deviations were 02.44 and 03.12. As displayed in the tables, students receiving treatment out-scored those in the CG. A paired sample t-test was conducted between the pre and post test scores in both groups to test further if there was any significant difference in student's language performance before and

after the experiment and to see whether the mean difference between the groups is statistically significant or simply due to chance.

Table 1: Comparison of pre- test scores between EG and CG

	N.of students	Min	Max	Mean	Std. D	Range
EG	20	10	17	12.7	2.12	7
CG	20	8	19	11.9	2.75	11

Table 2: Comparison of post- test scores between EG and CG

	N.of students	Min	Max	Mean	Std. D	Range
EG	20	11	19	14.5	2.44	8
CG	20	09	19	12.1	3.12	12

Table 3: Paired sample t- test between pre-test and post test scores in EG and CG

	N	Mean	Std.D	T	df	Sig
CG	Pre-test	11.9	1.73509	.306	19	.612
	Post-test	12.1				
EG	Pre-test	12.7	3.12208	.009	19	.018
	Post-test	14.5				

Table (3) above shows that some improvement in LP was obtained after the treatment took place. This difference suggests that compared with the pre-test, the experimental group made some improvement in the post-test scores with a gain of 1.8 in their mean score. Moreover, the P-value significance displayed a rate of probability well below 0.05. On the other hand, though there was some improvement in the mean difference in the control group before and after the experiment with a gain of 0.2 in their mean score, their P-value showed .612, well above 0.05. Therefore, the improvement demonstrated by the student of the CG was not significant and the result asserts that the EG performed better in the LP test than the CG after they received training.

As for the effect of the program on the exploitation of learning strategies some advancement took place throughout the experiment. It stands to mention that

recent times have witnessed a growing academic interest to unveil the methodologies of how to engage learners in active lifelong learning. The conscious use of strategies, the ability to transfer those strategies to other contexts, and self-assessment and monitoring of the learning process are integral to the AL model. The basic principle behind the spread of such an approach is founded on the premise that success in education cannot satisfactorily materialize without the student's ability to select, use and evaluate his or her working techniques and learning strategies (Moore, 2014).

In fact, effective language learning likely occurs when the learners become well aware of their individual learning needs, and question their learning in and out of classroom contexts. In other words, the ultimate goal of AL should be to empower students by allowing them to take control of the language learning, not only through

class activities, but through out -of- school tasks. Therefore, to assess the effect of this program, interest was not only laid on language proficiency results, but also on the development of the learning skills and strategies.

Comparisons took place based on the results of the two sets of the SILL questionnaires of the two groups before and after the experiment.

Table 4: Comparison of the overall frequency of strategy use in six SILL categories by the student in EG and CG before the experiment

Categories	EG		CG	
	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D
Memory strategies	14.75	6.69	13.95	06.94
Cognitive strategies	20.55	10.21	19.7	08.04
Compensation strategies	26.4	03.93	25.35	06.22
Meta-cognitive strategies	14.4	04.39	16.45	04.09
Affective strategies	10.05	02.21	11.6	04.47
Social strategies	12.3	03.55	11.25	02.57
Total	16.4		16.3	

The table above shows that both groups showed almost the same level of frequency in strategy use. The total mean were 16.4 and 16.3 respectively, which actually shows that both groups were on a somewhat parallel level in the frequency of use of the six LLS.

The analysis demonstrates the rate at which our sample students make use of their LLS that were stated in Oxford (1990). Before the experiment, students of both groups reported compensation strategy as the most used LLS with the mean of 26.4 for the experimental group, and 25.35 for the control group. Oxford defines compensation strategies as the techniques and utilities used in guessing when the meaning is not known, or using synonyms or gestures to express meaning of an unknown word or expression. Regarding affective strategies, their use in the Moroccan context did not counter -argue the generally confirmed conclusion that such strategies are the least used strategies across language students in the world. Chamot et al. (1987) found that the powerful affective strategies are a way to be adopted as an efficient learning technique with one out of twenty users amongst language learners. For social strategy, it was the second least used as reported in the pre-experiment SILL questionnaire with the results of

12.3 and 11.25 respectively in the mean score of both groups.

While memory strategies are concerned with the process of storing and retrieving information through mental processes, it seems that our participant learners were not well aware of their importance in language learning even in such an advanced stage as the Baccalaureate level. The underlying reason may be that memory strategies are often seen as strategies that should be used in primary levels (Naiman, 1996). However, a different interpretation of this phenomenon may be that Moroccan learners are not informed of the importance of using memory strategies in language learning.

After the experiment which took place for one school year (2016-2017), it can be noted that some variation occurred in the rate of exploitation of the LLS between the two groups. While the CG group showed some stagnancy in the scores of the strategies used, the EG demonstrated important change that varied between fair to strong in alteration of attitudes towards developing language learning techniques. The following is a detailed analysis built on the results displayed in tables.

Table 5: Paired sample T-test on learning strategy use before and after the experiment in CG

Categories	Sources	Means	Std.D	df	T	sig
Memory strategies	Pre	13.95	06.94	19	576	.577
	Post	13.65	07.08			
Cognitive strategies	Pre	19.7	08.04	19	-295	.772
	Post	19.8	07.75			
Compensation strategies	Pre	23.15	07.98	19	-3.327	.004
	Post	25.95	06.22			
Meta-cognitive strategies	Pre	16.45	04.09	19	-243	.810
	Post	16.60	07.98			
Affective strategies	Pre	12.70	04.47	19	1.542	.140
	Post	12.55	04.60			
Social strategies	Pre	11.25	02.50	19	-0.89	.930
	Post	11.3	02.59			

Table 6: Paired sample T-test on learning strategy use before and after the experiment in the EG

Categories	Sources	Means	Std.D	df	T	sig
Memory strategies	Pre	15.4	07.59	19	366	.719
	Post	14.6	06.06			
Cognitive strategies	Pre	20.55	10.21	19	3.147	.005
	Post	29.45	13.42			
Compensation strategies	Pre	26.4	03.93	19	.591	.562
	Post	25.6	04.38			
Meta-cognitive strategies	Pre	14.4	05.37	19	2.539	.020
	Post	21.5	08.3			
Affective strategies	Pre	10.05	02.21	19	7.033	.000
	Post	16.2	04.92			
Social strategies	Pre	12.3	03.46	19	5.806	.000
	Post	18	05.74			

By examining the results of the paired sample t-test within the same group in tables (5) and (6) above, I can conclude that strategy instruction had some effect on the way students approach the use of learning techniques. Students in the experimental group have become more aware of the use of four out of six strategies. It seems that memory strategies and compensation strategies need more emphasis to efficiently engage the learners in constructive activities for better results. A probable reason for such a conclusion may be that students at Baccalaureate stage find memory and compensation strategies as activities below their acquisition potentials or are more appropriate for lower levels. During the experiment, some students raised the point about memory strategies as being outmoded and are undermining to the learners cognitive skills to remember and use language components; the incident that actually drew my attention to another variable that can be decisive in the outcome results; the learner's beliefs, attitudes and willingness to engage in a particular mode of learning. Thus more stress on the psychological preparation and motivation is to be given attention. The

following table demonstrates the p-value result of the experimental group:

Table 7: Results of p-value of strategy use in EG

Strategies	P-value
Memory strategies	0.719 >0.05
Cognitive strategies	0.00 <0.05
Compensation strategies	0.562 >0.05
Meta cognitive strategies	0.02 <0.05
Affective strategies	00.00 <0.05
Social strategies	00.00 <0.05

In clear contrast to the EG results, the t-tests of the control group (table 6) did not demonstrate any significant difference between their pre and post test results except with a noticeably unexpected development in the use of compensation strategies with a t-test score slightly below 0.05 value. I assume such a result might be due to the nature of compensation strategies that are

acquirable even in the absence of instruction and that the learners used them reflexively in the course of their learning. The following is a statement of the control group results:

Table 8: Results of p-value in strategy use in CG

Strategies	p-value
Memory strategies	0.577>0.05
Cognitive strategies	0.772>0.05
Compensation strategies	0.00<0.05
Meta-cognitive strategies	0.810>0.05
Affective strategies	0.140>0.05
Social strategies	0.930>0.05

To conclude, it may be true that AL conception is, to some extent, culture specific and can be practical and efficient in the European context where it first generated. However, the results of my experiment above counter-argue such a claim. The experiment displays a considerable development in the Moroccan Baccalauretae learners' ability to engage in an effective autonomy-enhancing class-environment when given the chance through insightful teaching practices that foster learner centeredness with softened tutorial roles. In the following, I will state the study implications with some suggestions to how the practice of learner autonomy can best be applied in the Moroccan TEFL area.

IX. STUDY IMPLICATIONS

This study provides a variety of data that was collected to investigate how efficiently AL can be practiced in the Moroccan context to develop high quality teaching and effective learning. The results show that training learners how to become responsible students can generate positive results in the level of language proficiency and use of learning strategies. I assume autonomous learning to be a conception worth consideration in the realm of modern didactics owing to the great benefits it can have on ensuring lifelong learning quality. In fact, the analysis of this data generated some measures which I assume can be taken as a guiding framework to encourage teachers, trainers, syllabus designers, and students to reconsider their attitude towards AL and seek the necessary means to implement such an important teaching concept. The following are some suggestions that I believe can be effective to promote teaching within the AL classroom.

The first suggestion is the teacher's use of a portfolio. A portfolio can be defined as a record of the teaching-learning carrier. Like any professional, teachers need evidence of their development over time. The professional portfolio is a tool for collecting and presenting the evidence of the teacher's achievement. Through portfolios, teachers can get the opportunity to evaluate their work and search for the necessary means to develop it vis-à-vis their application to AL. When teachers carefully check their own practices, they are likely to improve the productivity of their service. According to Vieira (2009) the professional portfolio should include:

- Sample group rewards.
- Sample individual rewards.
- Positive statements made by the teacher. 'How I used to teach and how I am teaching?'
 - All remarks made by inspectors and through peer observation and even by learners
 - Sample unit plan.
 - Sample lesson plan.
 - Video-recordings of some of their lessons
 - Professional philosophy of education
 - Recommendations
 - Records on participations in professional activities (conferences, in service-meetings, workshops)
 - Reflection on professional and personal prospect.

As regarding the application of AL, teachers should evaluate the level of autonomy in their learners. Students can be asked to use a personal portfolio to trace their learning progress; besides, a questionnaire can be handed at the end of each school year to work out students' attitude towards learning autonomously. In case the results are unsatisfactory, a reflection on the practice is then needed to re-orient the teaching methodology and re-direct the didactic means inasmuch to meet the standards postulated.

The importance of writing diaries and journals is unquestionable in the professional development for teachers. Personal events, thoughts, and observations can be recorded, then, in a form of personal diary to provide the teacher with a clear image of what their teaching quality is like. Objectivity here is much demanded to accurately evaluate the teaching performance and generate solutions to any shortcomings (Crookes, 2003). Students attitudes and opinions about the teaching quality have to be prioritized over the teachers own perception of their own performance. It goes without saying that the student is the element around which the teaching learning operation

should center. Accordingly, the teacher, whilst writing his diary or journal, has to formulate his thoughts around the benefit of his learners and not just evaluate the methodologies or structures that suit his proper benefit.

In practical footings, the teacher can record how well his or her learners are engaged in classroom activities, and whether they independently react to their input using the different LLS. The diary will help teachers state the problem and the reason for its occurrence, ending up with a bank of ideas to which they can refer. Besides diaries, writing journals can also be useful. A definition to what a journal is would be a teacher's written response to teaching events. It takes the view that keeping a journal answers two objectives:

1-Events and ideas maybe registered for later reflection.

2-The fact of writing itself can help ignite thoughts and reflections about the teaching process.

Journal writing in this respect serves as a discovery process that helps uncover the fault and provides the appropriate solution to it. Classroom experience can be explored through: personal reactions to things that happen in the classroom, questions or remarks about problems that may take place in the course of teaching, profiling the negative and positive areas in the lesson plan (Francis, 1995).

As a second suggestion, assisting students' motivation can also be an important tip to promote AL. It may be obvious that innovation in language teaching necessitates that all the local TEFL stakeholders bring their efforts together. In my consideration, no result can be attained without effective and motivating pre-service training and without continuous in-service assistance to teachers. I believe a teacher will always fail to create the motivational conditions to help their learners become autonomous if they are not motivated themselves to set the exemplary model to follow suit.

It is no longer argued that high quality teaching largely rests on how well the learners are motivated. The teacher has to create the positive arena that best serves their teaching duties regardless of any adversities. All instructional efforts will go amiss if the learner's motivation is ruined. Before engaging learners into motivating activities, some of the following conditions have to be accounted for: A good rapport with students, supportive classroom environment, and an increased learner self-confidence. Indeed, what Moroccan learners need is perhaps a full cognizance of the merits learning autonomously may have on their learning achievements. Motivating them, as a matter of fact, is a decisive factor

that should be given due consideration on the part of the teachers.

A third suggestion can be appropriate implementation of project work. The importance of project work as a pedagogical activity is undoubtful. It may be true that for most teachers, project work is just a follow up activity to encourage working in an out-of class context. Perceived as such, the rationale behind project work, which is basically to ignite worthwhile discussions between instructor and students and to fuel the need to learn how to make research would be skipped. It may be clear that Moroccan teachers in general do not assist their learners while in the process of their project task. Project work would better serve the purpose of AL when the teacher keeps abreast with the learner's work as a guide, assistant, and even a participant. New roles are assigned for both the teachers and learners. Indeed, most of the job is put on the learner side. The learner's have to bear the responsibility of the selection of materials, stating the objectives and directing their work; while the teacher plays a softened roles as observer, guide, and advice-giver. It seems that coming up with a successful project work requires that the learner be able to self-evaluate and give feedback about his or her own performance. Such a practice is a real step towards an innovative perception of the modern language classroom in which the learner takes up some of the teacher's role. However, the importance of the instructor's presence cannot be overlooked.

A fourth suggestion is the use of persuasive communication. Changing the learner's attitudes and beliefs towards working in an autonomous mode should be a task well-esteemed by the teacher to help active learning take place. Positive change of attitudes can be achieved by way of setting up communication. Persuasive communication following Thanasoulas (2000) is a discourse displaying information and arguments with the objective to alter an evaluation of a topic, situation, task, and so on. These arguments could be either explicit or implicit, especially when the topic is deemed important. Emphasis in the communication course should tap into the premise that "the more a learner embarks on AL the more successful they may become in receiving and making use of knowledge". I assume devoting time to persuasive communication should find a slot in the teachers overall annual planning of their teaching course. However, it may be important to note that convincing the learners that the use of autonomy will differ from one to the other. The level of student's intelligence and their social background may be decisive agents. High achievers in general may be quicker to convince than their low achieving counterparts.

Concerning the fifth suggestion, I consider the use of ICT to be a useful tool to develop a learner's sense of responsibility in his or her learning especially that AL is also aimed at equipping learners with the 21st century skills. Obviously, the incorporation of technology is fundamental in developing student's know-how of the subject matter, and by extension their learning responsibility. However, I believe appropriate use of technology should be under the supervision of the teacher, especially for beginning learners. Assigning homework that requires access to internet may lack validity in that the student can resort to outsider assistance or may copy information unreflectively. I believe doing the research task in the classroom under the assistance of the teacher would serve all students who can also be encouraged to use their smartphones as an alternative to a computer lab.

A final suggestion is encouraging the use of published materials. It may be true that the widespread use of information technology can encourage students to take charge of their own learning; but, a complete disregard of the effect of published materials on learning would be an injustice to such an important source of knowledge. Physical documents and books have had incontestable influence on the development of high quality learning for ages prior to the internet (Delors, 1998). The following is a statement of the positive impact published materials can have on learning.

1-Published materials are similar to the materials learners use in the classroom and, as a result, most learners, especially those unfamiliar with technology use will find them easy to handle in the most effective manner.

2- Published materials are convenient for project work; they enable learners to gather a large amount of information and provide the added benefit that students can use the material practically any time they want.

3-Book-referenced knowledge is widely recognized as an effective means to develop the four learning skills, in addition to broadening the learner's vocabulary and scope of knowledge.

X. CONCLUSION

To put it in a nutshell, the results of the experiment confirm the hypothesis that autonomous learning can efficiently be applied in the Moroccan context and that it can generate positive results in the levels of the learner's language development and use of LLS. Furthermore, it actually may provide enough proof that such a concept may be practicable in contexts other than

where it first generated. Despite the unfavorable conditions that may surround TEFL in the local Moroccan environment, such as a lack of ICT materials, loaded official curricula, or unmotivated students, applying systematic curricula that enhance AL resulted in measurable outcomes in nearly every category. Most importantly, the learners' of the experimental group when asked about their feedback on the experiment expressed their preference for learning within the AL paradigm rather than studying within somewhat, the teacher-centered methodology.

It can be argued that AL in the high school context does not solely rely on the tactic of role swapping between teachers and learners, but moreso on a combination of factors without which AL, or any teaching system for that matter, would be considered incomplete. Pre-service teacher training, textbooks, and project work are all important in an independent learning equation; deleting just one element would inevitably deter the autonomous learning paradigm. In order to engage teachers in a particular mode of teaching, they should inevitably go through comprehensive pre-service and in service training based on both theory and practice. Indeed, AL cannot be obtained without considering the 3 components that provide the basis for an effective teaching-learning operation. These elements are: the learner, the process of the learning and the context of the learning. An effective adoption of the autonomous learning paradigm requires the dismissal of the question of dominance in teaching- learning operation; none of the three aforementioned constituents should have any supremacy over the other. Instead, they should interrelate each being of equal importance to the growth of the learner and the innovation of learning. This may be suggestive of continued research in this area so as to analyse the effectiveness of pre-service training in Morocco on the development of AL in TEFL.

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