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Learner autonomy: Beliefs and practices of Filipino liberal arts and natural sciences English language learners

Vivien Sigrid B. Iñigo

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Corresponding author
Vivien Sigrid B. Iñigo
University of Santo Tomas, Manila, The Philippines
vivieninigo@gmail.com

Abstract

Studies have presented various definitions of learner autonomy, the benefits it offers, its implications for teaching and learning (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012), and the beliefs and practices of students and teachers about it. However, no substantial body of literature has been conducted to compare how college English language learners from two different disciplines view learner autonomy. Hence, this study aims to determine how the liberal arts and natural sciences students differ in their beliefs and practices about learner autonomy, how autonomous they feel as English language learners, how learner autonomy helps them in second language learning, and how they differ in their views about the promotion of learner autonomy by their English language teachers. The present study analyzed data obtained from questionnaires and focus group discussions involving the learners, which were all compared to support and validate specific conclusions, present quantitative and qualitative findings, and interpret better the students' questionnaire responses. The findings revealed that there was a slim difference between the beliefs and practices of the two groups of learners based on the quantitative aspect of the research, but the qualitative data, in a way, say otherwise. Several themes surfaced from the learners' comments such as Independence and Activities. The present study challenges the assumption that different areas of discipline have varied ways of learning at least in the aspect of second language learning.

Keywords: Autonomous learner, learner autonomy, second language learning, teacher roles

1. Introduction

Time has a profound role of impacting society and of continuously changing the social world (Abbott, 1997; Broadfoot, 2000), and education cannot avoid to be affected by this change. Seemingly, "with the turn of the clock and the dawn of a new century, our schools are suddenly inadequate" (Ehrcke, 2013, p. 61). The traditional version of education is said to have been created in and intended for a very different time (Hampson, Patton, & Shanks, 2012), and it cannot be assumed that it will meet the demands of today's learners. This education-learner mismatch has paved the way for experiments in teaching styles and methods in schools (Ehrcke, 2013). Therefore, schools have started to do education differently because education is too important to be left behind in this rapidly changing world (Hampson et al., 2012).

The reforming of education in the 21st century envisions the individuals and their diverse talents, needs, and inclinations to be, once again, the focus of attention in education (Broadfoot, 2000). Abbott (1997) asserts that the strategic center of the 21st century has to be individual and group learning and considers those who can direct and manage their own learning as 'successful individuals.' Abbott (1997, 2002) also suggests a model of learning, which he refers to as the biological concept of weaning. This method is characterized by independent study or self-regulated learning. Among the promises of 21st century learning is the student-centered or personalized learning (Eckhre, 2013). Learner-driven education places the uniqueness or individuality of the student at the heart of the learning process in which the learner is both the subject and the end purpose (Singh, 1991). However, the classroom is not the only "major access point to a range of information and expertise on which knowledge is built" (Abbott, 1997, p. 15), and learning must be viewed as a total community responsibility. Indeed, students and teachers have their responsibilities of teaching and learning in the language learning process (Ivanosvska, 2015).

Learner autonomy supports a learning environment that focuses on learners and where the teacher serves as the guide. The rise of learner-focused research emphasizes that learners' varied responses to teaching is an important factor to language learning (Benson & Nunan, 2005). The positive effects of learner autonomy, such as improving the quality of language learning, preparing individuals for lifelong learning, and allowing learners to utilize learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012) have led scholars to promote this way of a more meaningful learning. Holec (1981, as cited in Najeeb, 2013) suggests that being autonomous helps students to freely practice their knowledge and skills in contexts outside learning institutions. Autonomous learning goes beyond the classroom because learning in itself is a lifelong endeavor (Najeeb, 2013).

In the field of language education, the issue of learner autonomy has been a debated concept for over the past three decades (Egel, 2009), and has been a major field of interest in foreign language teaching (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012). Since then, studies about and investigations on the meaning and experiences of autonomy in the language classroom have been conducted (Egel, 2009). Of the several research about such a concept, the nature of learner autonomy, the reasons for promoting it, and the implications it offers for teaching and learning have been the most extensively studied (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012).

1.1 The Concept of Learner Autonomy

Autonomy is a multifaceted concept, which is difficult to be defined precisely (Dafei, 2007; Egel, 2009; Najeeb, 2013; Nunan, 1997, as cited in Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012); therefore, experts arrived at a number of ways to define and describe autonomy in connection with language learning (Dafei, 2007). Dafei (2007), Little (2007), and Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) state that the most prominent and influential definition of autonomy was given by Holec (1981) who defined autonomy as 'the ability to take charge of one's own learning' (as cited in Najeeb, 2013, p. 1239). On the other hand, Benson (2001, as cited in Dafei, 2007, p. 6) defines learner autonomy as the "capacity to take control of one's own learning." It can be noted that Benson substituted the word "charge" in Holec's definition with "control," and this is primarily because the idea of "control" seems easier to be investigated than the idea of "charge" (Dafei, 2007). Trebbi (2006, as cited in Najeeb, 2013), challenging the definition of Holec, also argued that no learning takes place if the learner is not in charge.

Furthermore, Benson (2013) states that learner autonomy is assumed to imply isolated learning, learning without the supervision of the teacher, or learning outside the classroom. On the other hand, Ivanovska (2015) and Dafei (2007) posit that learner autonomy or autonomous learning is often interpreted in different ways and is commonly linked with various terms such as 'self-instruction,' 'self-access,' 'self-study,' 'self-education,' 'self-direction,' 'out-of-class learning,' 'distance learning,' 'learner independence,' or 'independent learning.' However, they also have varying perspectives. Ivanovska (2015) claims that these items are similar, while Dafei (2007) contends that these terms are not synonyms of one another. Further, Benson and Voller (1997, as cited in Najeeb, 2013) define learner autonomy as "the ability to take personal or 'self-regulated' responsibility for learning" (p. 1239). Thus, it can also be proposed that learner autonomy is "a construct of capacity for making informed decisions about one's own learning" (Najeeb, 2013, p. 1239).

The multifaceted nature of learner autonomy can be attributed to differences in learning practices of students from various cultures and contexts, and it can be assumed that different areas or disciplines suggest different ways of learning. Diversity may be most apparent in classrooms where learners come from different sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds (Murray, 1996, as cited in Benson & Nunan, 2005). However, "even learners with similar backgrounds vary in terms of psychological predispositions and learning experiences that they bring to the classroom" (Benson & Nunan, 2005, p. 5). Benson (2007) emphasizes the fact that "individual learners differ from each other and may seek to develop their individuality through divergent learning processes" (p. 29). Brown (2000) also argues that the context of language learning is another factor that needs attention because general differences and similarities in the aspect of culture may affect the language learning process among students. Moreover, Benson (2013) agrees that the multidimensionality of autonomy takes "different forms in different contexts of learning" (p. 1).

1.2 Learner Autonomy in the Philippines

Learner autonomy has not been given much attention in the field of research in the Philippines (Madrunio, Tarrayo, Tupas, & Valdez, 2016). However, a number of studies have indirectly addressed the issues on language learner autonomy such as in the studies conducted by Lucas, Miraflores, and Go (2011) and Cequeña and Gustilo (2014) on language learner anxieties. In another study by Soekartawi, Haryono, and Librero (2002, as cited in Madrunio et al., 2016), autonomy is implicated in e-learning issues concerning the provision of distance-education programs. Moreover, it does not suggest that the Philippine education fails to acknowledge the need for learners to be autonomous; rather, learner autonomy seems to be less recognized as an educational aim in the country than the others (Madrunio et al., 2016). The country's educational program recently shifted to the K to12 curriculum, which emphasizes learner-centeredness in curriculum design, implementation, and evaluation (Commission on Higher Education, 2014). It can be assumed that the recent changes in the Philippine educational landscape may contribute to how the concept of autonomy would be established in the following years, and such seem to be a critical step toward improving a curriculum that can facilitate better language learning and teaching in the Philippines (Madrunio et al., 2016).

1.3 Literature Review

A number of studies have investigated the concept of learner autonomy in different Asian countries, and these studies would prove that language learners did not have enough autonomy in Asia, but were inclined to be autonomous, preferring a classroom that is focused on the students and that involved the learners in making decisions (Dang, 2010; Holden & Usuki, 1999; Karababa, Eker, & Arik, 2010; Sakai, Takagi, & Chu, 2010).

Moreover, a study done by Cotterall (1995) attempted to examine language learners' beliefs to determine the readiness for autonomy of adult ESL learners who enrolled in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course. She presented the role of the teacher, role of feedback, learner independence, learner confidence in study ability, experience of language learning, and approach to studying as the six factors that affected learners' beliefs about learner autonomy. She likewise found that a common understanding of learner autonomy by both the students and the teachers could help them better perform their roles in language learning and teaching. Cotterall (1995) also posits that the "beliefs and attitudes learners hold have a profound influence on their language behavior" (p. 195). It was also suggested by Horwitz (1987, as cited in Cotterall, 1995) that false beliefs about language learning may lead to using less effective strategies because learners' behavior is guided by their beliefs and experiences. It follows then that behavior toward autonomous language learning may be supported by a particular set of beliefs or attitudes. The beliefs learners hold may help or hinder in the development of their potential for autonomy (Cotterall, 1995).

Furthermore, Oxford (1999) suggests that students who are most competent in a second or a foreign language class are likely to use different language learning strategies, which would help them become autonomous and self-regulated learners. Two variables that

affect language learning were introduced by Oxford (2003): styles and strategies; and learner autonomy may be implied in the learners' preferences in learning styles and strategies. Almeida and Mendes (2010) analyzed the learning styles of Portuguese university students from various academic fields (i.e., biology, biochemistry, biotechnology, education, language, and multimedia) using Kolb's (1981, as cited in Almeida & Mendes, 2010) Learning Styles and Modes of Learning. Almeida and Mendes (2010) acknowledged that the findings do not correspond to the relationship between disciplines and learning styles established by Kolb (1981, 1984, as cited in Almeida & Mendes, 2010) who asserts that education students should prefer an accommodating learning style; language and multimedia students, a diverging learning style; biology and biochemistry students, an assimilating learning style; and biotechnology students, a converging learning style. It was discovered in the study that education students have no dominant learning style, whereas the biology, biochemistry, biotechnology, language, and multimedia students have accommodating learning style as their dominant learning style but vary in the "*degrees* of accommodating style" (p. 300).

Also, Amir, Jelas, and Rahman (2011) investigated the learning preferences of university students from the natural sciences, social sciences, and professional courses. The results show that students from the natural sciences and professional courses are inclined toward the Dependent learning style, whereas learners from the social sciences are more independent. Independent students prefer to study on their own and do not rely much on lecture notes. On the other hand, lectures, hands-on activities, and guided learning are beneficial for dependent learners. Learning preferences are also evident in the gender and age of learners, and it was revealed that female students lean toward the Dependent, Competitive, Collaborative, and Participative learning styles, while the male students favor Independent and Avoidant learning styles. Moreover, learners who are under 22 years old are found to prefer the Dependent learning style, whereas students who are 22 and above are inclined toward the Participative learning style.

It can be argued then that various areas of discipline have distinct ways of learning, which may be reflected on how language learners from across fields of specialization may differently perceive and practice language learner autonomy. While there have been studies that examined the views on learner autonomy and the autonomous practices of language learners, and the learning styles and strategies of learners from varying disciplines, it seems that no substantial body of literature has been conducted to compare the learner autonomy of tertiary language learners from different disciplines. Thus, it is of interest to investigate how the beliefs of language learners from two different language learning contexts influence their autonomous learning practices.

1.4 Research Questions

The primary objective of this paper was to explore how Filipino college students from the liberal arts and natural sciences disciplines view learner autonomy in English language learning. Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. How do the beliefs of liberal arts students on learner autonomy differ from those of the natural sciences students?
2. How do the two groups of students differ in their views about the desirability and the feasibility of promoting language learner autonomy?
3. How does learner autonomy contribute to second language learning according to the learners? How do the two groups of students differ in their views as regards this aspect?
4. To what extent do the students agree that they are autonomous learners at a fair degree? How do the two groups of students differ in such an aspect?
5. How do the students differ in their views with regard to their English language teachers' promotion of learner autonomy?

1.5 Theoretical Framework

With the present study's goal to determine the beliefs and practices of two groups of students about language learner autonomy, it is important to establish a common ground by defining learner autonomy and describing an autonomous learner to see if their beliefs and practices also reflect these definitions and descriptions. Furthermore, showing the connection between learner autonomy and second language acquisition, and introducing the roles that teachers play in promoting learner autonomy are necessary in order to discover whether these beliefs and practices are evident, observed, and/or applied in the context of the present study.

1.5.1 Language Learner Autonomy

Scholars have presented various definitions of language learner autonomy, but Benson (1997, as cited in Benson, 2007; Ivanovska, 2015) was the first to present different 'versions' to describe learner autonomy in language learning. The three terms to describe these versions or perspectives suggested by Benson (1997, 2006, as cited in Dang, 2010) are technical, psychological, and political. The *technical* perspective emphasizes skills and strategies used by learners for unsupervised learning such as metacognitive, cognitive, social, and any other strategies identified by Oxford (1999, 2003, 2011). *Psychological* perspective, on the other hand, refers to the attitudes and cognitive abilities that enable learners to be responsible for their own learning. Finally, the *political* perspective highlights the "empowerment or emancipation of learners by giving them control over the content and process of their learning" (Ivanovska, 2015, p. 353).

1.5.2 The Autonomous Learner

According to Little (1991), teachers must not wait for the time when learners are ready for autonomy because these learners can be ready 'as soon as possible.' Autonomous learners

are not passive learners, and they understand why there is a need to study specific lessons. Learners who exemplify autonomy also take responsibility for their own learning, have the initiative to plan and perform learning activities, and are willing to monitor their learning (Little, 2002, as cited in Bajrami, 2015). Thanasoulas (2000) also describes autonomous learners as those who have an idea about their learning styles, the eagerness to learn, the readiness to take risks, and the diligence to accomplish their tasks with or without assessment from their teachers. Moreover, learners who manifest autonomy create their own criteria to assess themselves and judge their strengths and weaknesses and can be, at times, independent from the teacher (Bajrami, 2015). Autonomous learners are also interdependent rather than independent and are willing to work in collaboration with other learners (Little, 1991). In other words, autonomous learners are those who have developed certain learning strategies that help them take control of their own way of learning (Bajrami, 2015).

1.5.3 The Relationship Between Learner Autonomy, and L2 Learning and Teaching

For Oxford (1999), the different language learning strategies of competent second or foreign language learners help them become autonomous and self-regulated learners. In addition, the concept of language learner autonomy is premised on three pedagogical principles: *learner involvement*, which engages learners to share responsibility in the autonomous learning process; *learner reflection*, which helps learners in their critical thinking and self-monitoring; and *appropriate use of target language*, in which the medium of language learning is the target language (Najeeb, 2013).

1.5.4 Teacher Roles in Fostering Learner Autonomy

A need for language teachers to know and perform their roles in the process of autonomous learning is important in order for them to promote the autonomy of their language learners (Yan, 2012). Breen and Candlin (1980) also identified the roles of a teacher, which Yan (2012) summarized into three:

a. **Manager and organizer.** The success of effective and relevant classroom activities and of the students' learning depends on good organization and classroom management by the teacher.
b. **Facilitator.** The teacher-facilitator has the responsibility of serving as a language resource, a guide to motivate the students, and an evaluator of the student's language learning success.
c. **Counselor.** Helping learners and giving them advice in order for them to learn the language more effectively are tasks of the teacher as a counselor.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

The present study employed quantitative data, which includes the closed questionnaire items, and qualitative data, which concerned the open-ended questionnaire items and focus group discussions (FGDs).

2.2 Participants

General education English courses are taught to first- and second-year students; thus, the study consisted of first- and second-year students from every degree program in the second term of academic year 2016-2017. The participants of the study came from a comprehensive Catholic university in Metro Manila and consisted of students in the fields of liberal arts and natural sciences from the University's Faculty of Arts and Letters and College of Science, respectively, with the aim to compare two different disciplines and with the assumption that soft science and hard science students vary in their study methods. Hard science and soft science are the two general types of science, and hard science includes the fields of biology, chemistry, and physics, whereas soft science includes economics, sociology, and jurisprudence (Morse, 2017). According to the Office of Higher Education (2008), the liberal arts (e.g., drama, economics, history, languages, literature, philosophy, political science, sociology) contain general or theoretical courses designed to understand and judge the relationship of human beings to the social, cultural, and natural facets of their total environment. On the other hand, natural sciences, as the name implies, are "disciplines that deal with natural events"; therefore, the focus of a natural science study "lies hereby on the natural and not on the social world" (Boutellier, Gassmann, & Raeder, 2011, p. 2). Also, the aim of the natural sciences is to learn about and discover the laws that govern the world (Büchel, 1992, as cited in Boutellier et al., 2011). Boutellier et al. (2011) also mention that historically, there are three core areas of natural sciences, namely chemistry, biology, and physics, from which other disciplines were established. A total number of 571 respondents constituted the study. Table 1 shows the total population and the sample sizes needed for the study.

Table 1
Population and sample sizes of regular students taking up General English courses

	1st Year	2nd Year	Total	**Sample Size**
Arts and Letters				
ASN	0	119	119	**26**
BES	0	95	95	**21**
CA	88	174	262	**57**
ECO	0	91	91	**20**
ELS	0	90	90	**19**
HST	0	82	82	**18**
JRN	0	130	130	**28**
LM	0	133	133	**29**
LIT	0	79	79	**17**
PHL	0	80	80	**17**
POL	34	119	153	**33**
SCL	0	84	84	**18**
Total	122	1, 276	1, 398	**303**
Science				
AM	0	40	40	**12**
AP	0	40	40	**12**
BIO	32	361	393	**119**
CHEM	0	48	48	**15**
MB	0	32	32	**10**
PSY	39	290	329	**100**
Total	71	811	882	**268**

2.3 Questionnaire

The study adapted the questionnaire developed by Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012), which was modified in order to fit the participants of the present study who are English language learners rather than teachers. For this reason, the aforementioned research questions were also adapted from Borg and Al-Busaidi's (2012) study as the questionnaire was the main source of answers to the present study's research questions.

2.4 Research Procedure

2.4.1 Orientation of Participants About the Concept of Learner Autonomy

Because of the limited time to organize workshops and gather all participants, the respondents were oriented as regards the concept of learner autonomy only when the researcher was asked to define what learner autonomy is during the pilot testing and administration of the survey questionnaires. Also, it was actually decided not to give the meaning of learner autonomy to the participants beforehand because autonomy, as argued by Nunan (1997, as cited in Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012), is not an absolute concept, and the students' own ideas of the concept may contribute to the growing field of study about learner autonomy.

2.4.2 Pilot Testing

A pilot testing of the questionnaire, which was a small-scale trial, was conducted in order to determine any problem or issue with the test instructions and identify specific instances where items were unclear; all of which were considered in finalizing the survey questionnaire. The questionnaire for pilot testing was completed by 50 students: 25 from the Faculty of Arts and Letters, and another 25 from the College of Science, who were not actual respondents of the study.

2.4.3 Finalizing and Administering the Questionnaire

Minimal changes were made to the questionnaire after the pilot testing. No questionnaire items were removed; however, the option *Unsure* in the first part of the questionnaire was deleted to avoid neutrality in the respondents' answers. The basic information asked at the beginning of the pilot-testing questionnaire was named Profile of the Respondents, and became the Section 1 in the final questionnaire. Options for the Faculty/College and Sex were also provided in the first section. Additionally, it was made more specific in the first open-ended question that the respondents must consider their experiences as language learners because the questionnaire item confused some respondents whether it referred to learning in general or language learning in particular.

The final questionnaires (see Appendix A) were then distributed from one room to another based on the students' schedules requested and obtained from the dean's offices of the respective colleges. The participants were given about 15 minutes to answer the survey. Questionnaires with items left unanswered were invalidated and were not included in the data analysis. It is also important to note that despite the efforts to make the questions clear and specific, there were still answers irrelevant to what was being asked about language learner autonomy.

2.4.4 Focus Group Discussions

The second phase of the present study consisted of FGDs with randomly selected student respondents who completed the questionnaire and volunteered to participate in an interview with the researcher. The purpose of the FGDs was to carefully study in more detail the students' responses in the questionnaire. A discussion was done with one group of three liberal arts majors and another with a group of three natural sciences majors. Each FGD lasted for around 20 minutes and was conducted on the informants' and researcher's agreed available time. Questions were prepared prior to the FGDs (see Appendix B); the first three questions were related to the items in the survey questionnaire and were adapted from Borg and Al-Busaidi's (2012) interview questions. The FGDs were audio-recorded and transcribed.

2.4.5 Ethical Considerations

Permission to modify and use the questionnaire developed by Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) was requested through e-mail before using the instrument for the researcher's own study, and the approval of the respective offices and subjects involved in the present study was also obtained. The participants were given enough details to make informed decisions about their involvement in the study, which was completely voluntary, and were assured that the collected data would be treated confidentially.

2.5 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was calculated for all questions, while inferential statistics was used to examine relationships between and differences among variables (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012), and to deduce and arrive at a conclusion based on the findings from the sample data. The analysis of the closed questionnaire data was also done statistically with the help of professional statisticians. T-tests were conducted for Sections 2 and 3 using Microsoft Excel to prove whether or not the means of the responses of the liberal arts (LA) students are statistically different from those of the natural sciences (NS) students. Also, the comments of the LA and the NS students in the open-ended questionnaire items were classified into themes through the qualitative thematic analysis, and the FGDs were analyzed based upon the theoretical underpinnings of the present study about the concept of learner autonomy, the autonomous learner, the relationship of learner autonomy and second language learning, and the teachers' roles in promoting learner autonomy. Moreover, the data from the questionnaires and FGDs were all compared to support and validate specific conclusions, present quantitative findings and qualitative examples, and gain a better interpretation of the students' answers in the questionnaire items.

3. Results and Discussion

The present study aimed to discover whether there is indeed a difference between the beliefs and practices of students from the liberal arts and natural sciences colleges about language learner autonomy, and if there is, how do the two groups of students differ in their views as regards the various aspects of the concept. Moreover, the study endeavored to examine the students' level and their teachers' promotion of learner autonomy in language learning.

The views and beliefs of the respondents on learner autonomy were obtained from their answers to the closed questionnaire items, while their responses to the open-ended questions and FGDs would imply their autonomous learning practices. The main source of data to answer all of the research questions was the survey questionnaire, except for the third research question, which heavily relied on the data from the FGDs. The students' responses to the fourth FGD question specifically answered the third research question.

3.1 Beliefs of Liberal Arts and Natural Sciences Students on Learner Autonomy

Only 414 (72.50 percent) out of 571 questionnaires were completed and were included in the data analysis. To represent how the two groups of language learners view learner autonomy in a bigger picture, it is appropriate to examine whether the questionnaire responses favor any of the ten constructs about learner autonomy (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012). Figure 1 shows the results of the support shown by liberal arts and natural sciences students for the different constructs on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 represents Strongly Disagree and 4 represents Strongly Agree.

As can be seen in the figure, in almost all of the constructs, the two groups of learners do not differ in their views and practices about learner autonomy, except for the psychological perspectives on and the role of the teacher in learner autonomy. The NS students give more support to the psychological perspectives (Mean [*M*]=3.2) than the LA students. The psychological orientation highlights an individual's mental qualities that allow autonomy (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012). On the other hand, the LA students favor more the construct about the teacher's role in learner autonomy (*M*=3), which is higher than that of the NS students by 0.5.

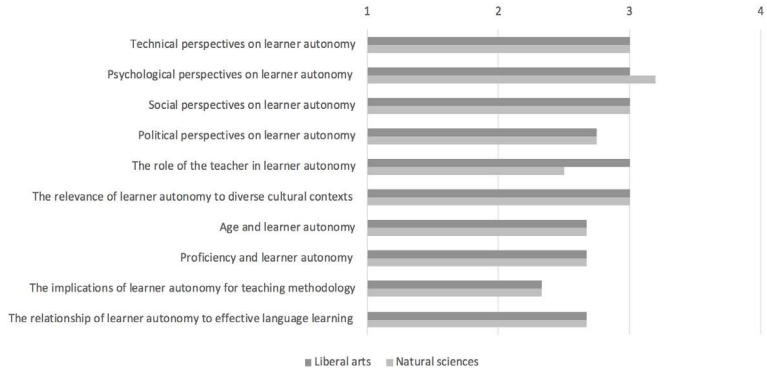

Figure 1. ***Mean levels of support by liberal arts and natural sciences students for the ten constructs on learner autonomy***

More specifically, the significant differences between the students' support for the two constructs can be seen in their responses to items 8 and 29 in Section 2, which are shown in Table 2. As can be seen, there is a contradiction between the responses of the two groups of learners in number 8 as 43.9 percent of the LA respondents answered Agree, while 45.4 percent of the NS students answered Disagree. Moreover, the degree of agreement of the two groups differs in item 29 in Section 2, for a great percentage of the LA students answered Agree, whereas most of the NS students answered Strongly Agree.

Table 2
Responses to numbers 8 and 29 (Section 2)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8. Learner autonomy means learning without a teacher.				
Liberal arts	10	85	**86**	15
Natural sciences	8	**99**	88	23
29. Learning how to learn is key to developing learner autonomy.				
Liberal arts	0	8	**115**	73
Natural sciences	0	9	103	**106**

However, it cannot be concluded that the answers of the two groups of students to each of the two questionnaire items are totally different because the percentages of LA and NS students who answered Agree and Strongly Agree to Section 2 questionnaire item 8 have only a 0.6 difference. Moreover, a total of 95.9 percent of LA students and 95.8 percent of NS students answered Agree or Strongly Agree to questionnaire item 29 found in Section 2.

The two groups of students' agreement or strong agreement to items 8 and 29 may be explained by the students' beliefs that learner autonomy means independence or learning by oneself and that autonomy is practiced by managing one's learning, which are supported by their comments in the open-ended questions.

- *Independence*
  I can do such things on my own and I prefer working alone. (ECO-3)
  I have a fair degree of learner autonomy (I think), because I learned to be quite independent in things to different activities given by professors. (CHEM-4)

- *Managing own learning*
  Due to the fact that I have the ability to learn, assess, and evaluate myself… (POL-16)
  I think autonomy is important because you can evaluate your own self and also you can see your progress. (CA-24)

The themes above reflect and imply that the LA and the NS students' English language instructors foster learner autonomy by adhering to the pedagogical principle called *learner reflection*, which allows students to monitor their learning on their own (Najeeb, 2013), hence the connection to the themes *Independence* and *Managing own learning*. Learner autonomy or self-regulation is developed not only through cognitive activities but also through monitoring one's own progress in learning (Bloom, 2013). Moreover, monitoring requires reflection, and when teachers assist students in monitoring their progress toward achieving their learning goals, the students are given the opportunity to "think about their learning" (State of Victoria Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2007, p. 18) or what is also called metacognition (Darling-Hammond, Austin, Cheung, & Martin, 2003).

3.2 Desirability and Feasibility of Promoting Language Learner Autonomy

The next part of the questionnaire asks the students about their views on the desirability and feasibility of various learner involvement and learner abilities. The respondents are positive about their views on the desirability and feasibility of learning-to-learn skills and of their involvement in decision-making. Figures 2, 3, 4, and 5 show the desirability and feasibility of certain aspects of learner autonomy as viewed by the LA and the NS students.

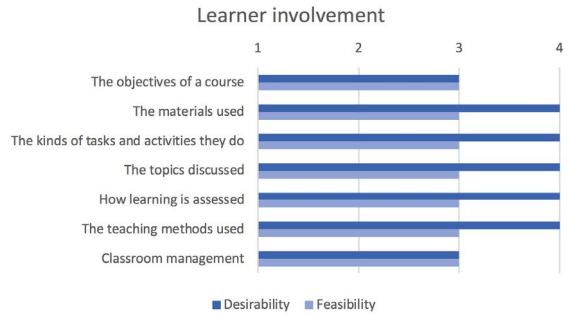

Figure 2. ***Desirability and feasibility of learner involvement as viewed by liberal arts students (1=Undesirable/Unfeasible; 4=Very Desirable/Feasible)***

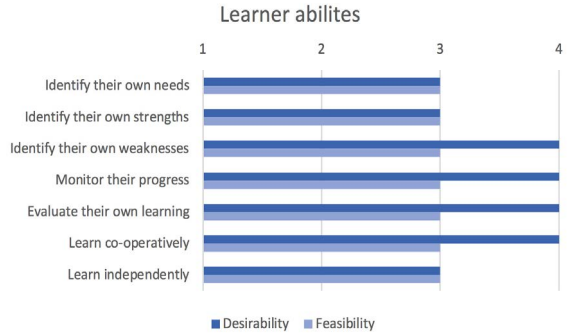

Figure 3. ***Desirability and feasibility of learner abilities as viewed by liberal arts students (1=Undesirable/Unfeasible; 4=Very Desirable/Feasible)***

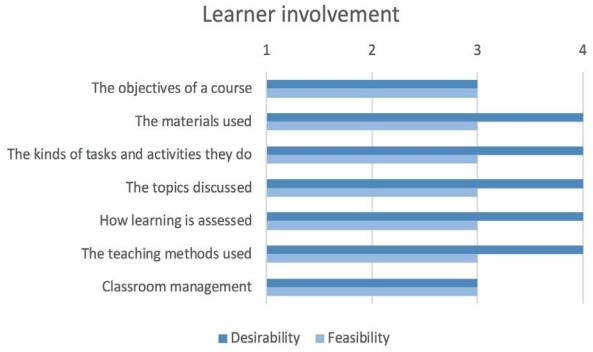

Figure 4. ***Desirability and feasibility of learner involvement as viewed by natural sciences students (1=Undesirable/Unfeasible; 4=Very Desirable/Feasible)***

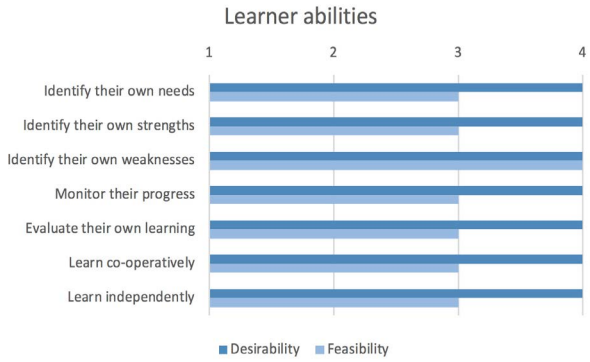

Figure 5. ***Desirability and feasibility of learner abilities as viewed by natural sciences students (1=Undesirable/Unfeasible; 4=Very Desirable/Feasible)***

3.2.1 Learner Involvement

As shown in Figures 2 and 3, the answers of the LA students to the items about feasibility for both learner involvement and learner abilities are all equal. It is also evident in Figures 2 and 4 that the results of the responses of the LA students and the NS students for their learner involvement are exactly the same. While the two groups of students think that it is both desirable and feasible to be involved in most of the aspects of decision-making in language learning, they also feel that it is less feasible for them to be able to choose materials, activities, topics, and assessments that may be employed in class. This finding that both groups arrived at the same exact results for learner involvement, regardless of their disciplines, shows that the students have limited or constrained participation in decision-making that can be brought about by the top-down curriculum and rules of the University. Nevertheless, this result also shows that the two groups of learners' teachers, to some extent, adhere to another pedagogical principle, that is, *learner involvement* (Najeeb, 2013), which allows the students to be responsible for fostering their language learner autonomy.

3.2.2 Learner Abilities

The LA students find it very desirable, but not as feasible, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, monitoring their progress, evaluating their learning, and learning cooperatively. On the contrary, the respondents from the natural sciences college find all aspects about learner abilities very desirable but less feasible, except for identifying their strengths and weaknesses, which these students seem to exemplify more. These findings may be supported by the students' responses to the first open-ended question in which only two (2) answers from the LA students fall under the theme *Able to Identify Strengths and Weaknesses*, while 12 responses from the NS students belong to the same category. The said theme implies

that the learners' English language instructors follow the pedagogical principle of *learner reflection* (Najeeb, 2013) as learners seem to be given the opportunity to monitor their learning. Comments of NS respondents that reflect this theme are indicated in the following FGD extracts:

> I think that I am capable of determining my own weaknesses and strengths in my degree of autonomy. (AM-11)
>
> I agree with the statement because being a student for how long [*sic*] I have come to know my strengths and weaknesses when it comes to how I tend to gain knowledge. (BIO-31)

Students are able to monitor and manage their learning if they can identify their strengths and weaknesses because determining such will help them produce realistic learning goals and strategize on how to accomplish certain tasks (West Virginia Department of Education, n.d.). Learners also have an active role in developing their own autonomy by planning about and taking responsibility for their own learning, which will let them identify later on their strengths and weaknesses (Sella, 2014).

3.3 Contribution of Learner Autonomy to Second Language Learning

The answers to this particular research question were taken from the FGDs and the responses to the items in the second section of the survey questionnaire that represent the construct about the relationship of learner autonomy and effective language learning. Table 3 shows the views of the learners about the connection between learner autonomy and language learning.

Table 3
Responses to numbers 5, 12, and 36 (Section 2)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
5. Individuals who lack autonomy are not likely to be effective language learners.				
Liberal arts	12	**127**	47	10
Natural sciences	25	**114**	68	11
12. Learner autonomy allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would.				
Liberal arts	1	19	**128**	48
Natural sciences	0	19	**143**	56
36. Learner autonomy has a positive effect on success as a language learner.				
Liberal arts	2	7	**125**	62
Natural sciences	0	10	**129**	79

An inconsistency in the general responses can be seen in Table 3, for not the whole population agrees that the lack of autonomy may result in ineffective language learning. A large number of the students disagree to the fifth questionnaire item, and this may be because the statement may have sounded somehow discriminatory to the students and agreeing to this statement may show exclusiveness. Moreover, some of the respondents consider themselves not very autonomous, but they may feel that they can still learn the language effectively.

To obtain sufficient information about the students' views about the said concept, the FGD participants were generally asked how they would define learner autonomy, what they think is the relationship between learner autonomy and language learning, and how learner autonomy helps [them] in second language learning. According to Najeeb (2013), autonomy is connected to language learning in such a way that learners are given the opportunities to learn inside and outside the classroom. Learning beyond the classroom allows the students to direct their learning without the prompt assistance of a language instructor, to set their own learning goals, and to choose appropriate learning strategies to fulfill such goals (Najeeb, 2013).

3.3.1 Learner Autonomy as Defined by English Language Learners

Based on their answers, the FGD participants generally perceive learner autonomy as the ability to learn and discover things or knowledge on one's own and the awareness about one's learning styles or strategies that are effective for him or her. These definitions of learner autonomy given by the students represent two of the perspectives Benson (1997, as cited in Dang, 2010) proposed, specifically the political perspective, which is concerned about the power given to learners to control their learning, and the technical perspective, which highlights the learning skills or strategies the learners use when learning by themselves.

3.3.2 Connection Between Learner Autonomy and L2 Learning According to English Language Learners

The LA students answered that learner autonomy helps them in making decisions about their learning, resisting academic impositions, choosing topics that interest them, and expanding their vocabularies, which reflect their inclination to having freedom and the liberal culture they have been exposed to in their field or discipline. On the contrary, the NS informants emphasized the role of autonomy in interaction for successful second language acquisition and in developing intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. These suggest that the NS students, despite having the belief that learner autonomy means learner independence, give great importance to learning the language with the help of other communicators.

3.3.3 Contribution of Learner Autonomy to L2 Learning According to English Language Learners

The responses of the LA students to this question are all similar. They stated that learner autonomy helps them utilize self-access materials such as the dictionary, thesaurus, and the Internet, which enable them to discover the meaning of new words and concepts they encounter in the process of learning and are useful in accomplishing various paperwork and research projects typical in university learning. On the other hand, the NS respondents emphasized the role of motivation in autonomous learning. Autonomous learners, based on their responses, are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to learn by themselves because there is a need for them to learn a second language, which, according to one of the NS students, is demanded by society.

> Motivation *talaga* helps the *ano*...helps the drive *kasi alam nung* learner *na kailangan na n'ya*...demand s'ya *ng* society...*Yun yung magiging* motivation *nung* learner itself *kasi dine*-demand *s'yang mag*-learn *ng* second language... (Motivation really helps the...helps the drive because the learner knows that he or she needs to or it's a need to…It's a demand by the society. That will become the motivation of the learner himself or herself because he or she is being demanded to learn a second language.) (NSS3, NSS2)

Based on this finding, it can be assumed that language learners from the natural sciences have learning goals that are best accomplished when they are motivated and when they have reasons for doing tasks related to language learning, unlike the liberal arts students who may not give much attention to the objectives of different language activities. Moreover, the demand of society for young individuals to learn English is considered to be a motivating factor to successfully learn the language according to NSS2; however, one comment, which emerged in the LA students' responses to the first open-ended question in the survey about society inhibiting the students' autonomy, contradicts this view.

> No because sometimes there are these people who have more materials and capacity to learn autonomy because they are privileged to learn it due to their, for example, financial resource. While others, even with the same interest to learn, will have to work harder due to incomplete materials. (CA-44)

This particular comment relates to learner autonomy, which some writers have interpreted "in terms of being a fulfilled and/or effective *citizen* in a democratic society" (Ivanovska, 2015, p. 353). Society is circumscribed within a culture, and culture is inseparable from language (Ivanovska, 2015). The definition of culture given by Kneller (1965, as cited in Ivanovska, 2015) implies that a specific learning culture would include various elements

such as "a community which shares the culture," "learning practices which are recognized in this community," and "tools and products which play some part in the community's learning practices" (p. 354). These elements are reflected in the comment above where society may be suggested by "a community which shares the culture" in which the mutual desire to learn [the language] is present. Moreover, the element "learning practices which are recognized in this community" may imply what one of the NS students mentioned about language learning as required by society. Also, the learning materials (e.g., language textbooks, computers) mentioned by the LA students are included in the "tools and products which play some part in the community's learning practices," and it can be assumed that these learning practices may also be affected by socioeconomic factors that foster or hinder language learner autonomy.

3.4 Students' Feelings About Their Degree of Autonomy

The results concerning the views of the groups of learners about their degree of learner autonomy do not greatly differ. Among the LA students, 70 percent agreed and 13 percent strongly agreed that they have a fair degree of learner autonomy; while 71 percent of NS students agreed and 12 percent strongly agreed to the same statement, both with a total of 83 percent. The similarity of the results may be attributed to the groups of students' common view about learner autonomy as independence or learning on one's own.

Furthermore, 32 themes surfaced from the answers provided by the respondents to the first open-ended question about their degree of autonomy as language learners. The dominant theme for both the liberal arts and natural sciences' groups is *Independence* with 58 and 71 occurrences, respectively. Some comments have two or more themes, and some are truly unique as seen in the following examples:

- *Independence, Utilizing self-access materials, Early development of LA*
  As an introvert (INFJ), it's easier for me to work on my language skills alone. Growing up, I watch cartoons and it provided me a building block in learning English. Now, I read literary works and look up unfamiliar words in the dictionary as coping mechanisms. (LIT-2)

- *Independence, Managing own learning, Teacher as guide*
  The instructor gives us the syllabus for us to learn it on our own way and to help us manage our schedules on learning the said course. The instructor facilitates our learning, but does not intervene completely. (AP-2)

- *Education as a right*
  I agreed because being a student needs to have the rights to fair education whether learner autonomy or not. (BES-7)

- *Nontraditional learning*
  I believe that learner autonomy is a skill that is obtained when you are able to learn independently and nontraditionally. (BIO-98)

- *Equal learning opportunities*
  We all have equal opportunity to learn these things. (BIO-6)

The themes were further grouped into categories to present the various facets that help or limit the students to achieve, at least, a fair degree of learner autonomy. A total of eight (8) categories surfaced, and it can be assumed that the roles of teachers and students, the materials they use, the learning environment they are in, the power entrusted to learners to have control over their learning, and the factors that may promote or limit learner autonomy are among the aspects necessary in the process of fostering language learner autonomy.

Moreover, one of the themes that emerged in the present study is *Traditional teaching,* and this is consistent with the study conducted by Dang (2010) in which traditional learning method was discovered to be one of the reasons for the EFL learners' limited autonomy. The effective promotion of learner autonomy requires a learner-centered classroom, which can only be achieved if the teacher is willing enough to change the power structure of the classroom and to veer away from the expository mode of teaching through which they were trained (Little, 1991). Further, learner autonomy suggests learners' freedom from "educational and linguistic barriers" and the learner's ability to "transcend the limitations of personal heritage" (Hui, 2010, p. 68) or simply of himself or herself. Additionally, the teacher is instrumental in the learners' development of autonomy by means of scaffolding (Smith, 2000), that is, assisting learners starting with their level of knowledge and providing the necessary support while students take control of their learning (Hui, 2010).

3.5 Promotion of Learner Autonomy by the Learners' English Language Teachers

As regards the respondents' English language teachers' promotion of learner autonomy that is asked in the second open questionnaire item, 59 percent of LA students agreed that their English language instructors give them opportunities to develop their learner autonomy, whereas 54 percent of the NS students expressed agreement with the statement. It must also be noted that only 20 percent of the LA students strongly agreed with the same questionnaire item as compared with the 24 percent of the students from the natural sciences who strongly agreed. With these results, a total of 79 percent of LA students answered Agree and Strongly Agree to the second open-ended question, while 78 percent of the NS learners responded Agree and Strongly Agree. It is also worth-mentioning that the comments of some respondents in the said questionnaire item did not correspond to the items they marked; for example, some may have checked Disagree, but their comments expressed why they agreed to the statement.

Further, 30 themes emerged from the comments of the students to the said open-ended question; 16 of which were found in both the responses of the two groups of learners. The theme *Activities* garnered the highest frequency from the responses of both groups of

students, with 54 comments from the liberal arts group and 63 from the natural sciences. This theme suggests that the learners are actually given sufficient amount of tasks prepared by their teachers to help in promoting learner autonomy. Therefore, it can be said that the role of the teacher as a *manager and organizer* (Yan, 2012) in conducting language activities is performed by the instructors of the LA and the NS students. Moreover, the theme *Teacher as guide*, which surfaced from the answers of both groups of learners, shows that the instructors also play the role of a *facilitator* (Yan, 2012).

The themes about the instructors' promotion of learner autonomy were also grouped into categories to reveal the different aspects that contribute to the ways instructors give opportunities to students to foster their autonomy. A total of nine (9) categories that highlight the themes based on the students' comments were identified, namely classroom environment, teaching strategies, role of the teacher, role of the learner, political perspective, success in learner autonomy, factors that hinder the promotion of autonomy, factors that foster learner autonomy, and attitude toward learner autonomy.

4. Conclusion

The present study argued that varied learning styles of students from different disciplines may influence their beliefs and practices about language learner autonomy. However, while it may be true that various disciplines have distinct ways of learning in the courses related to the students' fields of specialization, it does not seem to apply to second language learning. The statistics shows that there seems to be no stark differences in the views of the two groups about learner autonomy and the desirability and feasibility of learner autonomy based on learner involvement and learner abilities; however, the details about how the students practice their language learner autonomy, how they view the relation and contribution of learner autonomy to second language learning, and how they experience learner autonomy through their instructors' promotion of learner autonomy show a slightly greater difference between the groups of students' concepts about autonomous language learning. In addition, the learners' teachers also seem to adhere to the pedagogical principles proposed by Najeeb (2013) and to the teacher roles summarized by Yan (2012), contributing to the continuous development of the liberal arts and the natural sciences students' autonomy.

The insignificant difference in the quantitative findings seem to imply that the learners are already autonomous to some extent as they have acquired a certain degree of autonomy even before they entered the fields or disciplines where they are now a part of. It can be assumed that the general subjects the language learners took up in the basic and secondary education may have influenced the autonomy they have developed, which they bring with them in learning their collegiate courses including English. Moreover, the similarities in the views on the desirability and feasibility of learner autonomy may be due to the university or departmental policies to which their English teachers adhere. Learner autonomy may then be considered as the students' actions upon recognition that they possess sufficient skills, which they have acquired through time to accomplish the tasks given to them

by their teachers. This realization will then allow the learners to experiment on and explore the different aspects of the learning process. The teachers, on the other hand, can foster the students' already-existing learner autonomy by giving them opportunities to reflect on and employ the students' acquired abilities, which will help make learning more successful.

Based on the aforementioned findings, Filipino college students seem to be autonomous to some degree in contrast with the claim that Asian language learners do not have enough autonomy (Dang, 2010; Holden & Usuki, 1999; Karababa, Eker, & Arik, 2010; Sakai et al., 2010). The findings from the open-ended questions and FGDs also imply that the learners' beliefs about learner autonomy are influenced by factors proposed by Cotterall (1995). Moreover, although the two groups of students do not greatly differ in their quantitative responses, they differ in the degrees of agreement and disagreement to certain aspects of learner autonomy just as how students from different fields of specialization may prefer the accommodating learning style but vary in degrees of accommodation (Almeida & Mendes, 2010). In addition, natural sciences learners may be seen to prefer dependent learning styles in the study of Amir et al. (2011); however, while this learning style may be best to study their scientific courses, natural sciences students actually exemplify independence in learning a second language as revealed in the results of the present paper.

Further study is necessary to contribute to the growing research about learner autonomy in the Philippines. It is thus recommended to expand the present study by including interviews with English language instructors and conducting actual classroom observations that may or may not reveal a mismatch between the current survey results and the classroom reality. It is also suggested to conduct a research on how Filipino college students from different disciplines exercise their learner autonomy when learning their major courses and when learning a second language. A study concerned with comparing the learner autonomy of secondary and tertiary language learners is also encouraged with the claim that language learners have developed their learner autonomy during their basic and secondary education.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire on the beliefs and practices of English language students about learner autonomy

English Language Learners' Beliefs about Learner Autonomy

Section 1: Profile of Respondents
Please provide the following information:

NAME: _____ YEAR & SECTION: _____ AGE: _____
FACULTY/COLLEGE: □AB □SCIENCE DEGREE PROGRAM: _____ SEX: □M □F

What general education English course are you currently taking up?
ENG 1 □ ENG 2 □ ENG 3 □ ENG 4 □

Section 2: Learner Autonomy
Please give your opinion about the statements below by ticking (☑) ONE answer for each. In answering each item, you should consider your experience as a language learner more generally.

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Language learners of all ages can develop learner autonomy.	□	□	□	□
2. Independent study in the library is an activity which develops learner autonomy.	□	□	□	□
3. Learner autonomy is promoted through regular opportunities for learners to complete tasks alone.	□	□	□	□
4. Autonomy means that learners can make choices about how they learn.	□	□	□	□
5. Individuals who lack autonomy are not likely to be effective language learners.	□	□	□	□
6. Autonomy can develop most effectively through learning outside the classroom.	□	□	□	□
7. Involving learners in decisions about what to learn promotes learner autonomy.	□	□	□	□
8. Learner autonomy means learning without a teacher.	□	□	□	□
9. It is harder to promote learner autonomy with proficient language learners than it is with beginners.	□	□	□	□
10. It is possible to promote learner autonomy with both young language learners and with adults.	□	□	□	□
11. Confident language learners are more likely to develop autonomy than those who lack confidence.	□	□	□	□
12. Learner autonomy allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would.	□	□	□	□
13. Learner autonomy can be achieved by learners of all cultural backgrounds.	□	□	□	□

14. Learner autonomy is promoted when learners have some choice in the kinds of activities they do.	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Learner autonomy cannot be promoted in teacher-centered classrooms.	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Learner autonomy is promoted through activities which give learners opportunities to learn from each other.	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. Learner autonomy implies a rejection of traditional teacher-led ways of teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. Learner autonomy cannot develop without the help of the teacher.	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. Learner autonomy is promoted by activities that encourage learners to work together.	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. Learner autonomy is only possible with adult learners.	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. Learner autonomy is promoted by independent work in a self-access center.	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. Learner autonomy is promoted when learners are free to decide how their learning will be assessed.	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. Learner autonomy is a concept which is not suited to non-Western learners.	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. Learner autonomy requires the learner to be totally independent of the teacher.	☐	☐	☐	☐
25. Co-operative group work activities support the development of learner autonomy.	☐	☐	☐	☐
26. Promoting autonomy is easier with beginning language learners than with more proficient learners.	☐	☐	☐	☐
27. Learner autonomy is promoted when learners can choose their own learning materials.	☐	☐	☐	☐
28. Learner-centered classrooms provide ideal conditions for developing learner autonomy.	☐	☐	☐	☐
29. Learning how to learn is key to developing learner autonomy.	☐	☐	☐	☐
30. Learning to work alone is central to the development of learner autonomy.	☐	☐	☐	☐
31. Out-of-class tasks which require learners to use the internet promote learner autonomy.	☐	☐	☐	☐
32. The ability to monitor one's learning is central to learner autonomy.	☐	☐	☐	☐
33. Motivated language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than learners who are not motivated.	☐	☐	☐	☐
34. The proficiency of a language learner does not affect their ability to develop autonomy.	☐	☐	☐	☐
35. The teacher has an important role to play in supporting learner autonomy.	☐	☐	☐	☐
36. Learner autonomy has a positive effect on success as a language learner.	☐	☐	☐	☐
37. To become autonomous, learners need to develop the ability to evaluate their own learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section 3: Desirability and Feasibility of Learner Autonomy
Below are two sets of statements. The first gives examples of decisions LEARNERS might be involved in; the second lists abilities that learners might have. For each statement:
a. First say how desirable (i.e. ideally), you feel it is.
b. Then say how feasible (i.e. realistically achievable) you think it is for you as a learner

You should tick (☑) TWO boxes for each statement – one for desirability and one for feasibility.

	Desirability				Feasibility			
	Undesirable	Slightly desirable	Quite desirable	Very desirable	Unfeasible	Slightly feasible	Quite feasible	Very feasible
Learners are involved in decisions about:								
1. The objectives of a course	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. The materials used	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. The kinds of tasks and activities they do	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. The topics discussed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. How learning is assessed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. The teaching methods used	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Classroom management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Learners have the ability to:								
8. Identify their own needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Identify their own strengths	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Identify their own weaknesses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Monitor their progress	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Evaluate their own learning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Learn co-operatively	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Learn independently	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section 4: The learners and the teaching
This section contains two open-ended questions. These are an important part of the questionnaire and give you the opportunity to comment more specifically on your language learning and your language teacher's teaching.

1. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? Choose ONE answer:
   In general, I, as a language learner, have a fair degree of learner autonomy.

   Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree ☐

   Please comment on why you feel the way you do about your general degree of autonomy:

2. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? Choose ONE answer:
   In general, in teaching English, your English professor gives you opportunities to develop learner autonomy.

   Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree ☐

   Please comment. You may want to explain why and how your English professor promotes autonomy, if you think he/she does, or to explain why developing learner autonomy is not an issue they must focus on in their work:

Section 5: Further participation

3. In the next stage of my study, I would like to talk to groups of students to learn more about their views on learner autonomy. Would you be interested in discussing this issue further with me and other English language learners?

   Yes ☐ No ☐

   If you answered YES, please write your e-mail address and contact number below:

E-mail address:	
Contact number:	

Thank you for your time to answer. God bless.

Appendix B
Questions for the focus group discussions

1. Based on your understanding, how would you define learner autonomy?
2. What do you think are the key characteristics of an autonomous learner?
3. What do you think is the relationship between learner autonomy and language learning? (*The relationship of learner autonomy to effective language learning*: numbers, 5, 12, and 36)
4. How does learner autonomy help in [your] second language learning?