

Teachers' Roles and Challenges in Developing Learner Autonomy among Non - English Majored Students at a College in Vietnam



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ABSTRACT: A descriptive quantitative research was conducted at the college of Technical – Economic in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The main aims of the research were to specify the roles of teachers in promoting learner autonomy for non-English majored students. The data were collected through two sets questionnaire referring teachers' roles and challenges teacher encounter in promoting learner autonomy. The findings reveal that most teachers take the role of counsellor more than the other roles ($M=4.23$). This finding also shows that teachers and students had good rapport in teaching and personalizing students' learning. This is similar to most of studies in the same topic of learner autonomy. Dealing with the challenges of constrains that teacher encounter during their teaching practice, the findings showed that students lack of skills in managing their studying effectively ($M=3.45$). This was particular true for students who have just transferred their studying from high schools to universities. they need time to adapt themselves in a new learning environment where the self-awareness of studying is the main source of acquiring knowledge.

KEY WORDS: learner autonomy, roles, facilitator, counsellor, resource, manager, challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

The concept of autonomy in language learning has attracted the major attention from many researchers since the shift from teacher-based learning to learner-based learning was made. The so called 'learner centred' changed the roles of teachers from knowledge suppliers to leaning facilitators, consultant and mentors. Since the 1970s, learner autonomy slowly came into existence that became the focus of many educational studies and stimulated many researchers to try to achieve a better realization of the concept and theory of learner autonomy (Bocanegra & Haidi, 1999). Also, it has been a major preoccupation in much of the research literature on autonomy. The focus of research into learner autonomy is on the learners' ability to assume responsibility for their learning (Dickinson, 1987; Holec, 1981; Little, 1991). The central concern is decision-making in the learning process, which both implies a change in roles for learner and teacher and raises questions about the willingness and ability of learner and teacher to assume their new roles. The research therefore focuses on both the methodological and psychological aspects of learners' language learning. Nunan (1997) confirms that the notion of autonomy in language learning is historically and theoretically associated with communicative language teaching. Researchers even consider learner autonomy as a desirable goal in language education. Knowles (2001) claimed that one of the main goals in education is assisting individuals to view learning as a life-long process and to learn in a self-directed way. Actually, the movement towards learner-centered approach has resulted in more emphasis on the benefits of learner autonomy in the success of language learning. It is seldom to find independent and autonomous learners in a teacher-centered learning environment (Weimer, 2002). Being autonomous learners is important because the most competent learners are those "who have developed a high degree of autonomy" (Little, 1991). Originally, autonomy was central to liberal values such as freedom, rights, democracy, legitimacy, justice, and equality. For centuries, the construct of autonomy understood as the capacity to think and act independently (Elena, 2014, p. 17). Because of this original understanding toward autonomy, many people misunderstood in a way that it can be realized without a teacher. In fact, teachers are responsible for developing autonomous learners through their roles and practices in the classroom. Little (1996) states that learners usually do not automatically take responsibility for their learning but they need teachers to help them to do that. Teachers should have other roles than just being the source of knowledge to students. By changing their traditional role to the role of an organizer or facilitator, teachers help their students to be more responsible for their own learning.

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The Statement of the Problem

In terms of teaching, the internal motivation of learners plays the most important part in all types of learning. Galileo (1564-1642) quoted “you cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him find it within himself”. The quote implies a fact that an autonomous learner seems to be a learner who pursues knowledge out of curiosity and needs. Researches on learner autonomy emphasize that learner autonomy is crucial to effective language learning, but at the same time they suggest that intensive support is needed. Autonomy helps learners apply the knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom in real-life situations that may arise outside the classroom. In Vietnamese learning contexts, English teachers often complain about their learners’ learning habits of over-reliance on the teachers. They feel frustrated for the little response they get in return for the efforts they devote to their classes. Thus, fostering learner autonomy seems to be the best solution for both teachers and their learners. Before implementing any interventions that aim at promoting autonomous learning, many areas need to be investigated first. The first essential area is to have adequate information about the roles that teachers should adopt in order to encourage learner autonomy. Secondly, investigating the challenges that teachers encounter in performing tasks rather than traditional teaching practice would be useful for further references.

Purposes of the study

In Vietnamese EFL classes, most of the time, learners seem to have a passive role in their learning. They are quite passive and depend greatly on their teachers. They are unwilling to develop a sense of responsibility for the outcome of their learning. The first priority should be how to create autonomous learners. Bearing in mind the importance of the roles and challenges that teachers perform in everyday practice to promote autonomous learners, the study’s primary focus was examining the different roles that teachers perform during their teaching. The second aim is that what challenges these teachers encounter when doing something beyond traditional teaching styles.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to attain the above mentioned purposes, the study addresses the following research questions

- 1.1.1. What types of role do teachers play in order to promote learner autonomy among non-English majors at Ho Chi Minh City Technical Economic College?
- 1.1.2. What challenges do the teachers face in fostering learner autonomy among non-English majors at Ho Chi Minh City Technical Economic College?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Learner Autonomy

The term ‘learner autonomy’ appears to have been derived from the concept of autonomy in the political discourse of ancient Greece. According to Wall (1998), the term is a combination of two Greek terms: auto, which means self, and nomos, which means law. In a political sense, autonomy is used to refer to a state being self-ruling and self-governing. When applied to an individual, autonomy signifies the capacity of the individual to act as an autonomous agent; that is, to be independent and not governed by others. The description of an autonomous person given by Gibbs (1979) implies an analogy with the original political concept of the term autonomy. From Gibbs’ point of view, an autonomous person must be free from external authority and “capable of formulating and following a rule, pattern or policy of acting and working” (p. 119).

In education, Holec (1981) conceptualized learner autonomy as the ability to undertake one’s own learning, especially the ability to choose and to make decisions. Holec contended that autonomy occurs when learners are able and willing to take charge of their own learning. This means learners can independently choose goals, materials, tasks and strategies, have choices in carrying out the chosen tasks and evaluate themselves. Another conceptualization of learner autonomy in education was provided by Winch (1999). Winch viewed learner autonomy as an important objective that democratic societies should aim towards through their educational systems. In relation to this view, autonomy might be thought to signify the underlying function of education in its aim towards liberating or freeing people from authority of others (Marshall, 1996).

For more than forty years of research and practice on autonomy in language learning and teaching, researchers are beginning to see a more widespread acceptance of learner autonomy as both a desirable characteristic of language learners and an important consideration in the practice of language teaching. This is the consequence both of a broader global educational climate that is geared towards notions such as generic skills, learning-to-learn, and lifelong learning, and also the numerous experiments in autonomy in language learning that have been reported at conferences and workshops around the world and in the publications they have produced. While language learner autonomy has been defined in a number of different ways, two broad approaches stand out. One approach favours learning outside the classroom and views autonomy as a situational condition in which learners direct their own learning outside the classroom independently of teachers (Dickinson, 1987). The other emphasizes the learners’ control over the learning process and does not preclude classroom teaching because control is essentially a matter of who makes the important choices and decisions in language learning, whether inside or outside the classroom (Little, 1991). As a teacher of English, we would favour the second approach because it raises the status and the role of teachers and educators in the creation of autonomous language

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learners. It was regarded as an accepted product of the practice of self-directed learning, or as type of learning where the objectives, progress and evaluation are monitored by the learners themselves. Trebbi (1996), gave a definition of autonomy as the “taking charge of one’s own learning”. Learning takes place when the learner is in charge; it is a prerequisite of learning”. Pemberton (1996) further adds that the term self-directed learning as “the techniques used in order to direct one’s own learning” (p. 3, as cited in Lee, 1998). However, he points out that although Holec (1981) and himself describes the term autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning”, it is sometimes used interchangeably with self-direction by some scholars. Additionally, Pemberton is on the same terms with Holec’s definition which means that the word autonomy is a capacity, while self-directed learning is a way of organizing learning. However, the word “capacity” and its definition need further explanation at this very point.

The Importance of Autonomy in Language Learning

Although learner autonomy has traditionally been linked quite strongly to contexts beyond the classroom, according to current understanding, learner autonomy and autonomous language learning can take place in an institutional setting as well. In fact, when carefully designed and implemented, formal teaching can even promote learner autonomy (Ellis and Sinclair 1989: 10). When considering certain aspects of learner autonomy, it fits formal language education surprisingly well. Firstly, however, some fundamental issues on the topic need to be overcome. To begin with, the roles and relationships in the language classroom need to change. Since learner autonomy is about control over learning, the role of the teacher needs to change from someone who is in control of learning and makes learning happen in the learners into a facilitator and a guide in the learning process that is controlled by the learners (Voller 1997: 101). Second, a change in the role of the teacher entails the very same of the learners; dependence on and need for teaching and controlling that the learners have been conditioned to by previous experiences on language learning need to be “decoditioned” (Holec 1980: 30). In other words, the learners need to become active in the learning process instead of being passive recipients of taught information.

In language learning learner autonomy has been viewed in many different ways. One way it has been viewed is as a situation in which the learner is “totally responsible” for all the decisions he/she makes for their learning (Dickinson, 1987, p.11). This view signifies full autonomy, which is referred to a situation in which the learner is independent and learns with the absence of the teacher. However, Little’s (1990) interpretation of learner autonomy is contradictory to this. For him, learner autonomy should signify neither the teacher taking no responsibility nor the learner working with absolute freedom and in isolation from the teacher and peers. Being completely independent or, in other words, having a total detachment is not an indicator of autonomy.

The development of learner autonomy can be either a means to effective language learning, or the end of language learning itself. It is a means because it requires involvement from the learner in their language study, which in turn leads to the success of their study (Tudor, 1996). Little (1999) considered learner involvement as one of the three factors, in addition to learner reflection and appropriate target language use, of successful language learning. According to Self Determination Theory, autonomy-supportive teaching is associated with the quality of students’ learning. In comparing students’ learning from autonomy-supportive and controlling classrooms, Deci, Schwartz, Sheinman and Ryan (1981) found that students in autonomy-supportive classrooms tended to be more curious and independent, and had higher self-esteem than students from controlling classroom.

Alternatively, learner autonomy becomes one of the key goals of a number of projects, courses, and many modes of learning. In this respect, learner autonomy becomes one end of language learning. The notion of autonomy in language learning being potential either a means or an end in itself resonates with the question of the orientation of education. That is, it parallels the question of whether education should be product-oriented, in which the goal of education is to produce an autonomous person, or be process-oriented which requires students to act autonomously (Boud, 1981).

Despite the multiple views of learner autonomy, in this thesis learner autonomy is defined by incorporating elements of personal autonomy as posited in SDT. Thus, learner autonomy is the learner’s psychological capability to take control of their own learning by making their own decisions and initiating behaviours that lead to the optimal outcomes of their learning. It is essential for educational and social contexts to provide environments that maximize the learner’s capability to do so.

No matter what it is used for, autonomy should be viewed neither as a form of teaching or learning, nor the outcome of a particular mode of teaching (Auerbach, 2007). It should not be treated as a way of organizing teaching or learning, because if it is, it becomes a method that can be abandoned when it is judged unsuccessful (Little, 2007).

Teacher’s Roles in Promoting Learner Autonomy

Autonomy is not an innate capacity and skills to learn autonomously do not come naturally; they are “learned skills” (Areglado, Bradley, & Lane, 1996, p.51). This is the crux of the paradox; learner autonomy suggests the student’s capacity to learn independently from the teacher, but in order to do so, they need assistance from the teacher. This paradox confirms what Macaro (1997) stated: “the presence or the absence of the teacher is not the yardstick by which one can judge autonomous learning skills” (p.168). In a classroom and learning contexts that aim to promote learner autonomy, the teacher, therefore, is there to aid learners in the pursuit of their autonomy. It is indicated that the idea of helping students to become autonomous by the teacher devising a specific framework and strictly following it may not be workable. In Murphey (2003)’s point of view, managing or teaching

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autonomy is “anti-autonomous” (p.7). Rather than a fixed framework, Murphey proposed what he regards as “autonomy- inviting structures”, which should include “possibilities for autonomous action at different developmental stages and offer as many choices as possible” (p.4).

Self Determination Theory posits that autonomy should not be viewed as the opposite of dependence (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Rather, it is a “feeling of volition that can accompany any act, whether dependent or independent, collectivist or individualist” (Ryan & Deci, 2000b, p. 74). The connection between learner autonomy and the absence of the teacher or learning “at home, with a computer, in a self-access center etc.” can be regarded as a “misconception” (Smith, 2003, p. 2). Thus, autonomous learners are not expected to be completely independent of the teacher. In line with this conceptualization, Benson’s (2008) view of autonomy in learning is in accordance with SDT. His view is grounded in the concept of personal autonomy in which ‘individuals must strive to lead autonomous lives and society must strive to respect the freedom such lives require’ (p. 18).

Self Determination Theory defines learning as a natural process, which is facilitated by environments that sustain three basic needs of human beings: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Learning occurs out of “interest, exploration, and assimilation” and takes place after and beyond classroom contexts (Rigby et al., 1992, pp. 165-166). Learning becomes a life-long process as learning transcends the confinement of formal classroom contexts. As such, it is important that learners develop life-long learning skills and retain them even after their formal education ends (Lee, 1998). This suggests that it is necessary that intrinsic motivation occur in the learning process.

Self Determination Theory contends that the satisfaction of students’ basic psychological needs leads to students’ academic achievement and well-being (Niemic & Ryan, 2009). It emphasizes the need for teachers to display autonomy-supportive behaviour in classroom, as the perceived autonomy-supportiveness of the teacher results in students becoming more autonomous in their learning (Williams & Deci, 1996). Autonomy-supportive behaviours that the teacher could adopt include acknowledging students feelings, taking their frame of reference when making decisions, providing them with choice, and avoiding pressure and control (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

The view of autonomy-supportive teaching behaviours entails certain changes in teachers’ roles. Its realization will never be possible if the teacher still embraces the old traditional roles. Areglado et al. (1996) stated that teachers can never change their students as long as they still deliver their instruction in traditional teacher-centred ways. Teachers should no longer be the “purveyors of knowledge” (McDevitt, 1997, p.36). Rather, knowledge can be reshaped and organized by learners. Thus, the teacher sets up “a dialogue in which the learner can reshape his knowledge through interaction with others” (Barnes, 1992, p.144).

Voller (1997) described new roles for a teacher as being facilitator, counsellor, and resource. When teachers function as a facilitator, they provide support for learning, either technical or psycho-social. As a technical provider, the teacher helps learners (a) to plan and carry out their independent language learning, (b) to evaluate themselves, and (c) to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to implement above. Psycho-social support refers to (a) being caring, supportive, patient, empathic, open and non-judgmental, (b) motivating learners, and (c) raising a learner’s awareness of autonomous learning.

Teacher as a counsellor places an emphasis on one-to-one interaction. A counsellor generally is a person who provides advice to those who need it. According to Riley (1997), when teachers act as counsellors, they give students suggestions regarding aspects of learning e.g. materials, methodology, sources, and self-assessment techniques. They become good listeners, by carefully listening to their students and providing assistance. Rather than answering questions, counselling teachers offers alternatives for students to make decisions on their own.

When the teacher acts as a resource, the teacher is seen as a source of knowledge and expertise (Benson & Voller, 1997). To optimize learning conditions for the development of learner autonomy, the teacher has to raise learners’ awareness of a wide range of knowledge materials and learning strategies.

However, the idea of helping students to become autonomous by the teacher devising a specific set of activities and strictly following their plan may jeopardize learner autonomy. Murphey’s (2003) point of view is that managing or teaching autonomy is “anti-autonomous” (p. 7). Rather than a fixed set of activities or materials, Murphey suggested the teacher provide students with as many choices and opportunities to exercise their autonomy as possible. According to Cotterall and Murray (2009), the teacher is to provide students with a learning environment conducive to their metacognitive knowledge. In order to do so, the teacher will need to provide not only support, but also opportunities for students to personalize their learning, engage in learning experiences, reflect on their learning process and try out their own goals, materials and strategies.

Challenges on promoting learner autonomy

In any given educational context, the challenges that may hinder the promotion of learner autonomy might exist. Paiva (2005) hypothesizes that, in any educational context, elements such as learner, teacher, institution, material, social and political contexts, and technology “can work either for or against autonomy”. Huang (2006) explored factors that constraint reflection and autonomy in language learning in a Chinese university. The obstacles identified included factors such as institutional pressures, societal expectations, and conflicts in learner and teacher agendas and priorities in learning.

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In terms of language teaching, the principles imply a major change in the role of the teacher; according to Dam (2011), instead of merely passing on knowledge, the teacher provides options to choose from, makes curricular demands and guidelines clear for the students, structures lessons transparently, encourages authentic use of the target language, and provides tools for reflection, evaluation and assessment. When it comes to the activities in the autonomous language classroom, Dam suggests the kinds that require active participation from each student, give space for differentiated input and outcome, and require the use of the target language and, especially, authentic language use. Overall, the learners need to be able to take over the activities used. For evaluative practices, Dam promotes the use of such tools as logbooks, portfolios and posters, since they document well both the process of and progress in learning, and thus make the reflection and evaluation of learning easier for the students.

While Dam's classroom-based approach is primarily concerned with improving the abilities related to learner autonomy, in their model, Lewis and Reinders (2008) concentrate especially on improving willingness to take responsibility; for Lewis and Reinders (2008: 97), the major obstacle in encouraging learner autonomy lies in teacher-centred students. According to Lewis and Reinders (2008: 97-98), the reasons for learner resistance are varied: teacher-centred students might be accustomed to the teacher having and giving readily the answers; they might not see value in non-language activities related to autonomous learning, such as reflection on and evaluation of progress; engaging higher thinking skills is difficult and requires effort; and it is overall easier to let someone else take charge. In addition to learner resistance, Lewis and Reinders (2008: 99) identify another issue that causes difficulties in developing learner autonomy in the language classroom: apart from some rare exceptions, formal teaching is usually defined by curricular guidelines, strict timetables and materialistic limitations.

In their framework for developing learner autonomy, Lewis and Reinders (2008: 99) suggest some strategies for overcoming the aforementioned obstacles. Above all, the teacher should provide a rationale for everything that is done in the classroom, take it slowly, and build on what the students already know. This way the students will not feel too overwhelmed in the face of change towards learner-centredness. In addition, Lewis and Reinders (2008: 100-106) offer concrete tips on how to develop learner autonomy in the language classroom. Firstly, following the view that language learning and the development of learner autonomy require interaction and cooperation, they suggest that the teacher should encourage pair and group work by explaining explicitly why working with peers is important in developing language and learning skills. In addition, by giving clear guidelines for the outcome, letting the students have a say in time allocation and in choosing the topic, and discussing group roles and working strategies, the teacher can ensure that group work actually works. Secondly, in order to develop learner autonomy among his or her students, the teacher should provide opportunities for self-faces language learning; in practice, this could mean a designated space inside or outside the classroom in which the students can work independently, but with the teacher's guidance and help readily accessible. Thirdly, as awareness of learning is important in autonomous learning, the teacher should draw their students' attention to the learning process and make it explicit by incorporating the use of diaries and portfolios in their teaching. This gives way to self-assessment, which, according to the researchers, helps the students in identifying the problematic issues in their learning and, consequently, in coming up with suitable strategies to overcome those difficulties. Lastly, while formal language teaching usually follows rather strict curricular demands and course designs, for Lewis and Reinders this is not a problem in developing learner autonomy as long as the teacher gives the students an overall understanding of the course outline, demands and objectives: this will help the students to regain a sense of responsibility in the face of external demands.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The study was conducted among 26 teachers of English at the Ho Chi Minh Technical-Economic College, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Details about participants could be found in the table 1 and table two below;

Table 1: the frequency of participants by genders

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	13	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Female	13	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	26	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: the frequency of participants by Ages

Ages		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	24-29 years old	4	15.4	15.4	15.4
	30-35 years old	5	19.2	19.2	34.6

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36-40 years old	9	34.6	34.6	69.2
41-over	8	30.8	30.8	100.0
Total	26	100.0	100.0	

Research design & instruments

The study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to answer the research questions. Data were collected using two sets of questionnaires. The first questionnaire consists of 20 items using the five point Likert scale (1-5) (see appendix A). Items were used to measure the role of teachers as facilitator (1-4), counsellor (5-9), resource (10-15) and manager (16-20). The second questionnaire consists of 9 items. Items from 1-5 refers to challenges that teachers encounter in promoting learner autonomy.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Reliability

A Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated for the Roles of teachers scale, consisting of “facilitator, counsellor, resource and manager. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was evaluated using the guidelines suggested by George and Mallery (2016) where $> .9$ excellent, $> .8$ good, $> .7$ acceptable, $> .6$ questionable, $> .5$ poor, and $\leq .5$ unacceptable.

Table 3 presents the results of the reliability analysis. The items for roles of teacher had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.942, indicating excellent reliability.

Reliability Table for Teachers' role

Table 3: Cronbach's alpha coefficient for items of teachers' role

Scale	No. of Items	α	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Roles of teachers	20	0.942	0.09	0.23

Note. The lower and upper bounds of Cronbach's α were calculated using a 95% confidence interval.

RQ1: What types of role do the teachers play in order to promote learner autonomy?

Table 4: The teachers' role as facilitator

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Helping students to set up their own learning objectives	26	3	5	4.42	.643
Helping students to evaluate their own learning and progress.	26	3	5	4.38	.804
Encouraging students to reflect on their learning process.	26	3	5	3.96	.774
Helping students to select their learning materials.	26	3	5	3.88	.516
Valid N (listwise)	26				

The mean of teachers' role as facilitators reveals that teachers *help students to set up their own learning objectives* rank the first in the list (M=4.42). the least facilitating activity was *helping students to select their learning materials* (M=3.38)

Table 5: The teachers' role as counsellor

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Making dialogues with students to find solutions for their learning difficulties.	26	3	5	4.50	.762
Being positive and supportive especially when giving feedback	26	2	5	4.23	1.210
Making students aware of the skills and strategies needed to learn by their own.	26	3	5	4.23	.908
Identifying psychological problems that inhibit students' progress.	26	1	5	4.12	.993
Encouraging students to make study plans.	26	3	5	4.08	.628
Valid N (listwise)	26				

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With the role as counsellor, most teachers reported that they *make dialogues with students to find solutions for their learning difficulties* (M=4.50). The bottom line was *encouraging students to make study plans* (M=4.08)

Table 6: The teachers' role as resource

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Suggesting websites, videos or online dictionaries that motivate students to use the target language outside classroom	26	3	5	4.46	.859
Selecting and evaluating resources according to students' needs and levels.	26	2	5	4.23	1.177
Encouraging students to read English books, magazines and newspapers outside classroom.	26	2	5	4.23	.951
Using computer based learning materials.	26	2	5	4.12	1.243
Suggesting tools and techniques for self-assessment	26	2	5	4.00	1.131
Encouraging students to study with their peers.	26	2	5	3.96	.999
Valid N (listwise)	26				

Referring to the role as resource, the teachers *suggest websites, videos or online dictionaries that motivate students to use the target language outside classroom* ranked the top (M=4.46), while the bottom line was *encouraging students to study with their peers* (M=3.99)

Table 7: The teachers' role as manager & organizer

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Giving learners opportunities to tell their opinions in the classroom management	26	2	5	3.88	.952
Providing clear instructions of the tasks assigned to students	26	2	5	3.85	1.047
Giving learners opportunities to tell their opinions in their learning activities	26	2.3	3.9	3.396	.4376
Organizing different kinds of games and activities in the classroom.	26	2	4	3.31	.549
Explaining the purposes and the significance of the tasks assigned to students.	26	2	4	3.27	.604
Valid N (listwise)	26				

As a manager, the item *giving learners opportunities to tell their opinions in the classroom management* mostly used by teachers (M=3.88) while *explaining the purposes and the significance of the tasks assigned to student* was reported as less popular (M=3.27)

Table 8: The means and standard deviations of the four roles

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
COUNSELLOR	26	2.80	4.80	4.2308	.52973
RESOURCE	26	2.17	5.00	4.1667	1.00222
FACILITATOR	26	3.00	5.00	4.1635	.59136
MANAGER	26	2.31	4.34	3.5407	.45153
Valid N (listwise)	26				

Table 8 shows the overall means of teachers' role in fostering learner autonomy ranking from M=3.5 to M=4.23. The role as facilitator and resource were equal of M=4.16 approximately.

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RQ2: What challenges do teachers face in fostering learner autonomy

Table 9: The means of challenges teachers reported facing in promoting learner autonomy

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Students lack the skills for autonomous learning	26	3	5	4.35	.689
Teachers themselves are not autonomous	26	3	5	4.08	1.017
Rules and regulations of the schools restrict the teachers' freedom in making choices on their teachings	26	3	4	3.88	.326
Teacher lack the essential strategies to promote learner autonomy	26	2	4	3.23	.652
Technology is not effectively implemented in language learning	26	2	4	2.58	.857
Valid N (listwise)	26				

In terms of difficulty that teacher encounter in promoting learner autonomy, the most challenge item was *students lack the skills for autonomous learning* (M= 4.35). in the second place was *teachers themselves are not autonomous* (M= 4.08). At the bottom of the list was technology issue (M=2.58)

DISCUSSIONS & CONCLUSIONS

The study was conducted to specify the roles of teachers in promoting learner autonomy. It is not surprise that most teachers take the role of counsellor more than the other roles (M=4.23). This finding reveals that teachers and students had good rapport in teaching and personalizing students' learning. This is similar to most of studies in the same topic of learner autonomy. Dealing with the challenges of constrains that teacher encounter during their teaching practice, the findings showed that students lack of skills in managing their studying effectively (M=3.45). This was particular true for students who have just transferred their studying from high schools to universities. they need time to adapt themselves in a new learning environment where the self-awareness of studying is the main source of acquiring knowledge.

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