English Language Teachers' Beliefs About Developing Independent English Language Learning Among Jordanian Students and Their Instructional Implications

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Abstract

The ultimate goal of every learning action should be that the learner can do it on his or her own. This study attempted to probe the beliefs of teachers of English regarding independent English language learning in Jordan and their associated instructional implications. Therefore, a sample of thirty (30) EFL teachers, from Amman Second Directorate of Education, responded to a close questionnaire designed to achieve this purpose. The results of the study indicated the essential need to train language learners and their teachers on the development of independent language learning throughout, for example, the gradual emancipation of students from the excessive dependence on their teachers and also the elimination of the classical didactic methods still used by some EFL teachers. These results were also supported by some qualitative results in this study which confirmed the same findings. Based on the study results, it was recommended that EFL learners and their teachers should be trained on developing learner's independence and that this new approach should be integrated into the educational system. It was also recommended that teachers of English be trained to account for independent English language learning.

Keywords: learner independence, ESL/EFL teacher education, foreign/ second language learning

Introduction

Learner independence has been conceived of as revealing learner control over his or her learning and that this ownership has multiple positive results for learners who seek to follow this learning path.   According to Rickabaugh (2012) learners who have ownership see learning as something they have control over it . He asserted that ownership over learning transfers the responsibility to achieve success from others (normally teachers) to the learner him or herself.

Worldwide and in Jordan, English language learner independence (also referred to as learner autonomy) has recently gained special attention due to recent changes and developments in second and foreign language learning field where it is assumed that the learner can take on board the learning responsibility. Frequent reform initiatives in both curriculum design and instructional methods have been enacted in Jordan to reform it to be more effective. To nurture learner independence in English language instructional field in Jordan, several calls are launched to transform language teaching to focus more on learner independence rather that the traditional teacher-centered language instruction. Learners should be given the responsibility to decide on the path of learning English language.

Several concepts and terms prevail in the relevant literature coinciding with learner independence such as learner autonomy, language awareness, self-direction and andragogy (Thanasoulas, 2009). The time when learner autonomy first originated was a point of disagreement among several interested scholars. The idea of learner independence was originally developed in the early 1970s. According to Smith (2008) it first came from political and moral philosophical fields. On the other hand, Holec (1981), mentioned that since the 1960s a trend towards moving from a look at the learner as a product of his/her society to a learner as producer of his/her society has been adopted.

Learner independence is defined as 'the ability to take charge of one's learning' Holec (as cited in Little 1991: 7). Describing the characteristics of autonomous learners, Conacher and Royall (1998) argue that independent learners are able to identify what they want to learn, when and the manner in which learning should take place and the means by which learners judge the quality of their learning. A similar definition was expressed by Jones (1998: 378) who described self instruction as ' a deliberate long term learning project instigated, planned and carried out by the learner alone, without teacher intervention. According to Little (1991: 4) 'autonomy is a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action'.

In the related literature, Learner independence is referred to as a behavior or capacity, whether it characterizes learner control or responsibility for learning, as a psychological construct with political implications or conversely as a political right which has it psychological implications and finally if a teacher's autonomy is needed to be complementary with learner autonomy (Little, 2009). According to Thanasoulas (2009) both linguists and educationalists did not reach a compromise concerning what learner autonomy means. Vickers and Ene (2006) argue that learner autonomy is neither restricted to giving learners learning tasks based on computer interactive nature nor to regard the teacher as obsolete, but according to them, to think of it as a

pedagogical ideology which encourages the learner to manage learning and to act independently.

Focusing on learner independence, Jones (1998) asserted that the new trend is towards enabling foreign language learners to determine their plans, materials and strategies. This indicates that some or all language learning should be as self learning. He argues that the learner achieves several positive results thanks to self learning. Among these is that autonomous learning encourages intrinsic motivation ad can create a personalization of tests and learning tasks due to the absence of the teacher. It can also enable the development of communicative skills in addition to feeling of empowerment on the part of the language learner.

The training of learners and teachers on the development of independent English language learning gains special momentum due to the potential benefits obtained via this type of learning. There is a common consensus with respect to the training of teachers and learners to facilitate and achieve the development of learner autonomy (Sert, 2006). Reflecting on the value of effective learner training, Sturtridge (1997:71) called on interested centers to attempt to consider ' learner development an ongoing cycle of action and reflection and to offer a development program that keeps pace with the learners as they work'. Different other models were suggested by other scholars as an example are models developed by Sheerin's (1997) model of independent learning activities and Nunan's (1997) model ' autonomy: levels of implementation'.

There is a an international trend to tackle learner independence, according to the multiple educational environments in which it is expected to be used and upon which to base language learning. According to Littlewood (1999) autonomous language learning is presented with respect to the western concept which might not fit the Asian language learning milieu. He did not advocate this view but concluded that it is essential to customize learning autonomy to the different traits and needs of learners in various educational contexts. The study searched for the types of learner autonomy rooted in Asian traditions and the likelihood of developing them through language learning. He also cautioned against setting up stereotypic ideas in East Asia learners which once misused might produce a lack of sensitivity by teachers pertaining the needs and dispositions amongst individual differences. Further, Little and Dam (2009) believed that in the development of autonomous second language learning, an expansion of teaching approaches is required to align with specific cultural traditions inside and outside classroom.

Some factors, according to Sert (2006), obstruct teachers from effectively engaging themselves in learner autonomy-based instruction which encompass the feeling of fear of the students' fast improvement in their independence from them as teachers themselves are not autonomous learners. Another factor is related to the state school teachers who feel secure about their positions and so strive a little to learn more about how to teach. A final point is related to the issue that teachers sometimes teach English in the same mode that they themselves were taught through.

The aim of the present study is to reflect the EFL teachers' beliefs about independent/autonomous language learner characteristics and their roles in promoting this kind of independent language learning which is essentially a reflection on the teacher's themselves as believers in learner independence. The training of teachers to execute EFL instruction should take into consideration recent directions in language learning which at the center of which is learner independent.

Statement of the problem

Jordan has been teaching English as a foreign language for a long time since the establishment of the Kingdom of Jordan. English language learning and teaching in Jordan has for a long time suffered from a traditional and didactic teaching of English as a foreign language. The use of a didactic approach to teaching English in Jordan like in the case of many other developing countries as reported by practicing teachers where teaching is still totalitarian and issues authoritarian commands to the learners with the use of traditional teaching methods, maintains a situation where the learner may lack initiative taking and opportunities for self assessment and self development. With the continuing changes and improvement introduced by Ministry of Education successive projects and initiatives, the EFL has witnessed real changes towards independent learning though it has not yet fully become a reality. Several activities are included in the EFL curriculum which are supposed to promote autonomous learning. It is only through little local literature in the field of learner independence/ autonomy and from casual observations to EFL classrooms that such a research issue gains interest by researchers. Therefore, the present study probes the beliefs of English language teachers regarding independent language learning in Jordan from the perspective of these teachers. Little (2009) said that the coming few years will see more research on learner independence and its effect on learners, teachers and the whole educational system.

Significance of the study

The importance of this study is two-fold by, on one hand, targeting the aspects of English language learner independence. On the other hand, it addresses the beliefs of teachers of English regarding language learner independence. The importance of the study is manifested in being among earlier studies to investigate this language learner independence. It serves above all the English language teachers themselves who can benefit

from its results by becoming aware and critical of the relevance of this method to classroom instruction and in enabling teachers in their mission by varying their teaching roles instead of acting as dictators in the classroom. On the other hand, it serves syllabus designers who can see how this new concept is perceived by classroom teachers and how they think of its importance. Supervisors of English can benefit from it by tailoring their training courses to empower classroom teachers in their new teaching roles. They can also explore the thinking patterns of the English language teachers regarding their perception of learner independence. The results of this study can be used to find out how to enable teachers to assist learners to be self-learners of English.

Questions of the study
1- What are the beliefs of the Jordanian teachers of English about EFL learner independence?
2- How much qualitative data related to EFL teachers' beliefs about independent learning obtained from an open question in this study match up with quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire instrument?

Definition of terms
The following terms required to be operationally defined because of their frequent appearance in this study.
Independent (English) language learning: a language learning concept which has recently appeared in the field of learning, in general, and language learning, in particular, especially with the emergence of cognitive learning. Operationally, in this study, it is measured via the items of the questionnaire which were stated clearly to connect up with independent English language learning in Jordan.
EFL teachers: those who teach English at Jordanian schools using Action Pack curriculum

Literature review
Several research studies investigated and compared between western students and eastern students with regard to learner independence. Others revealed how learner autonomy is tackled in several world states looking at learner independence as a recent trend which should be nurtured and incorporated in language instruction. At the core of learner independence, learner strategies according to some research play a role in the promotion of the concept of learner autonomy.

With regard to the strategies learners use to achieve independent learning, White (1995) stressed that the self-instruction strategies learners use and the level of autonomy they exercise has received scant attention. She compared strategies used in distance learning with those used by foreign language learners. She used a questionnaire to gather data from 417 learners besides using a verbal report technique with 37 students. Data were analyzed with reference to O'Malley and Chamot 1990 model of metagocontive, cognitive and socio-affective dimensions of the learning process. The study revealed that the method of study represented the predominant effect on metacognitive aspects of the use of the strategy prior to both age and study level. The study focused on the contribution of self-management strategies in promoting autonomous language learning.

At an East Asian level, Littlewoods (2000) compared perceptions of students' autonomy in eight East Asian countries with those of the students in three European countries. He reached the conclusion that Asian students preferred to be active and independent as is the case with their European counterparts. He referred the claimed passive classroom behaviors with Asian students to the educational contexts in which they learn, rather than to any inherent natures of the learners themselves. Similar results were obtained by Gieve and Clark (2005) who compared reflections developed by Chinese students with those written by European learners and concluded that Chinese learners appreciated the benefits from autonomous study which was the case with European learners.

Usuki (2001) investigated the needs for awareness-raising towards Autonomy and roles of the teachers from Japanese learners' perspectives. The results of questionnaires revealed that students in a Japanese English Language learners tended to be highly motivated to learn English. The study showed that these students did not appear ready for autonomous learning. It is hypothesized that because of their past learning experiences, which represented excessively spoon-feeding instruction, learners failed to develop an autonomous attitude toward their English language learning. Their past learning tended to be grammar-based, teacher-oriented and shaped by competing among each other on examinations. It was concluded that high motivation does not automatically mean that learners are prepared to learn autonomously. For this reason, it is essential to consciously teach students to be more autonomous by raising their awareness of self-possessed learning. This includes awareness-raising for autonomous learning via textbook reading, journal writing, lectures on meta-learning and individual consultations. It was concluded that the training turned learners to be more autonomous. It was also highlighted that teachers are not only facilitators of learning, but also part-takers in learning. Learner training was a source of learning for both students and teachers.

Vickers and Ene (2006) examined advanced second language learners of English ability to gain improvement in grammatical accuracy through noticing and correcting autonomously the grammatical errors they committed. They built their study on the belief that learning tasks can promote habits of language learning. They worked with thirteen at the advanced level in their composition course. Students were explicitly

encouraged to compare their use of grammatical form in their written product to that in written output produced by a native speaker. On the basis of this comparison the subjects corrected their grammatical errors. Consequently, it was suggested that the above comparison was useful in helping learners to achieve gains as to grammatical accuracy.

Kavanos et al (2006) explored the beliefs, knowledge about learner centeredness and the assumptions teachers of English had regarding learner centeredness and examining how this concept is implemented by teachers in the classroom. Two schools: one was public while another was private in Istanbul were included in this study. Thirteen teachers of English from each school were interviewed using focus group interview as a data gathering method. This was followed by individual interviews and observations for four volunteer teachers. These teachers were observed ten times with reflections provided by them. Interview data were inductively analyzed. The study findings suggested that public EFL teachers had limited knowledge to apply learner centered learning where this was not the case with private schools. The study highlighted that teachers should be provided with support to shift their classrooms to learner centered instruction and that the training programs should provide teachers with a framework of instruction on the basis of learner centered approach.

In the Chinese EFL context, Dafei (2007) investigated the extent to which how learner's proficiency in English is influenced by learner autonomy. The sample of the study included 129 non-English majors who studied in a teacher college in China using a questionnaire and an interview. The analysis of the data benefited from statistical measures such as T- and F-tests. The results of this study revealed that the learners' English proficiency was significantly and positively associated with their autonomy. The study also indicated that here was no relationship between different learners' proficiency in English and their learner independence.

Madrid (2009) probed the relationship between computer based language learning and approaches of language learning. The study was underlined by three aspects including the demand to conduct qualitative studies in order to inform a conceptual framework for developing computer-assisted language learning, focusing on the relationship between computer-assisted language learning and language learning approaches and to test the need to teach learner autonomy via specialized learning packages. The context of the study motivated a number of actions: designing a pilot application on the basis of autonomous criteria represented in the application of technology to develop learner autonomy, examining this design with learners who have a specific learning style with respect to their autonomy degree and finally comparing the results reached in other tests of other language learning packages. The study pointed out that the case-study confirmed that the criteria on which the design of computer-assisted language learning was based could be regarded the requirements to integrate autonomising strategies into the learning activities. Therefore, the study concluded that caring about learning styles, the possibility of transfer, use of a discursive approach and the implantation of authentic language learning material could assist the development of learner autonomy.

The above review of literature reflected a world-wide interest in the investigation of independent / autonomous language learning and its incorporation in the process of language instruction and its syllabus design. It has revealed that more research is needed to be undertaken in this field.

Subjects

The sole aim of this study was to investigate the beliefs of English language teachers regarding learner independence. This study was conducted during the first semester, 2013 and the questionnaire was responded to by thirty EFL teachers from Amman Second Directorate of education.

Research instrument

In tracing the beliefs of teachers of English with respect to English language learner independence, the researcher applied the questionnaire which was developed with reference to the relevant literature by referring to a set of studies such as one by Holec (1991) with a focus on the definition of learner autonomy, Rathbone (1971), Conacher and Royall (1998) and Keherwald (2009) with reflection on autonomous learner characteristics, Jones (1998) who reflected on materials, plans and strategies of autonomous learners and MicGrath (2000) and Smith (2000) and Rickabaugh (2017) with focus on teacher's degree of belief in learner autonomy and its effect on learner's learning. The questionnaire was validated by a specialized jury of referees. It was checked by a committee of referees which showed a high validity and reliability rates. It consisted of 61 items as appearing in the table below. The questionnaire used a five point Likert scale system of options that ranged from (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree). The researcher personally administered the questionnaire and clarified to the respondents any misunderstandings related to it. The questionnaire covered several related points that address the concept of learner independence in English language learning.

Validity of the instrument

To ensure that the questionnaire instrument used in this study is valid, the researcher forwarded it to nine

specialists in TEFL (six university professors, two school supervisors and a teacher trainer). All assured that the instrument fits the purpose of the study and proposed a few modifications to some items which were modified accordingly.

Reliability of the research instrument
The reliability of the questionnaire was computed by giving the questionnaire to a number of teachers of English from outside the original sample. The obtained reliability co-efficient was .90 which was high and, therefore, fitted the purpose of the study.

Data Analysis
After collecting data via the close questionnaire, all data were processed using a special computer SPSS program where mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for each item in the questionnaire.

Results
This study investigated the beliefs of the teachers of English language about learner's independence. Following are the descriptive statistics related to the means and standard deviations with respect to the questionnaire items as perceived by the EFL teachers pertaining learner independence in English language learning.

Table 1: EFL teachers' beliefs about independent English language learning

N of the item	Characteristics of independent English language learners	Mean	Std. Deviation
x1	EFL Learners demonstrate self-motivation to learn English as a foreign language	3.38	1.026
x2	EFL learners show initiation in English language learning	3.34	1.195
x3	EFL learners hold a vision about idea about what to learn	2.98	.984
x4	EFL learners have their special profit in achieving their instructional outcomes	2.87	1.112
x5	EFL Learners recognize their needs and work with the teacher to achieve their goals	2.62	.989
x6	EFL Learners learn both inside and outside the EFL classroom	2.91	1.111
x7	EFL Learners study EFL classroom material and build on that by themselves	2.89	1.079
x8	Learners of English know how to benefit from learning resources independently	2.77	.972
x9	Learners of English practice learning through active language learning	3.43	.879
x10	Learners of English adjust their learning strategies to improve their learning	2.79	1.109
x11	Learners manage their time by distributing it wisely in English language learning	2.14	.991
x12	English language learners do not regard the teacher as the only source to achieve effective learning of English	2.57	1.076
x13	English language Learners enjoy the ability to determine their goals in English language learning	2.72	.971
x14	English language learners demonstrate awareness of how to use educational material effectively	2.91	.982
x15	Learners organize their learning time accurately	2.55	.983
x16	English language learners have confidence in their ability to learn English	2.85	1.053
x17	English language learners depend on themselves in their language learning	2.77	1.132
x18	English language learners have enthusiasm to learn English	3.50	1.118
x19	English language learners are aware of the aim for learning English	3.36	1.029
x20	English language learners are risk-taking language learners	2.72	1.141
x21	English language learners do not fear from what they do not know in language learning	2.49	1.216
x22	English language learners take risk to attain further learning	2.74	.995
x23	English language learners use the guessing strategy in English language learning	3.16	.649
x24	Learners reflect on what they learn in English language learning	3.17	1.132
x25	Learners value what they learn in English language learning	3.26	1.027
x26	English language learners judge the value of their English language learning	3.19	1.178
x27	English language learners take decisions in their English language learning	2.94	1.027
x28	Learners take responsibility for their English language learning	2.84	1.183
x29	I think that the focus on learner autonomy suits most highly liberal countries	3.28	1.440
x30	I think a distinct perspective is needed regarding the learner autonomy in Jordan	3.83	.969
x31	I do not allow the learner to make a decision regarding what and how to learn English	3.17	1.282
x32	It is my responsibility to be responsible for the learner's learning process	3.39	1.649
x33	The school instructions do not allow the learner to be fully responsible for his self learning of the English language.	3.96	1.167

N of the item	Characteristics of independent English language learners	Mean	Std. Deviation
x34	I think learners achieve better when they learn on their own and hold initiative taking	4.63	.654
x35	I believe it is the learner's responsibility to wait until I dictate on him the material to learn	2.78	1.392
x36	I think it is the learner's responsibility to wait until I decide to him the path through which to learn English	2.67	1.242
x37	I think the whole school atmosphere forces the teacher to be responsible and take decisions for the learner's learning and not the other way around	3.75	1.176
x38	The whole responsibility is placed on the shoulder of the teacher concerning success and failure of the learner in English language learning	3.21	1.524
x39	I think the teacher's responsibility centers around planning for lessons and directing activities and assessing learners' learning	4.14	.757
x40	The home and the community forces the teacher to be responsible for the learning of the English language learners	4.23	.939
x41	I think it is necessary to train learners to develop autonomous language learning	4.16	.874
x42	I think it is possible to train learners on developing their independence according to the aims of the Jordanian philosophy of education	3.96	.822
x43	I think the independent English language learner should monitor and assess her or her learning	4.17	.881
x44	Training on language learning strategies enables the learner to develop his learner independence in English language learning	4.26	.856
x45	The learner should be reflective to develop his or her independence	4.03	.803
x46	I believe that the learner should be trained on how to assess his or her in language learning	4.23	.863
x47	The teacher's role is to provide the learner with feedback concerning his or her progress in self-language learning	4.64	.984
x48	I believe in training teachers on revising some of their practices and beliefs regarding their role in autonomous language learning	3.82	1.227
x49	I believe in the necessity of changing some of the students' perspectives concerning their learning independence and to free them gradually of the dictatorship of the teacher upon their learning	4.22	1.134
x50	I think it is important to remind and meet parents who feel it is the first and last responsibility of the English language teacher to teach their children the English language	4.34	.857
x51	I provide the learner with the example to help him or her to learn the skill instead of depending on the teacher all the time in English language learning	4.30	.874
x52	I tend to use the traditional method in teaching English especially some of the students favour that	2.53	1.345
x53	Learner independence should be gradually conducted and through stages in language learning	4.25	.623
x54	I think not all school teachers welcome the use of independent language learning	3.88	.944
x55	English language learning becomes more effective when responding to the learner's expectations, needs and interests and individual differences	4.52	1.011
x56	English language learning becomes more effective when encouraging the learner to play an active role in developing his or her school curriculum	4.21	.954
x57	I believe in reducing the intervention in the learner's learning from the teacher's side	3.62	.984
x58	I think there are teaching methods that promote independent language learning more than others	4.16	.878
x59	I value training the learner on how to learn not only the learning content	4.69	.528
x60	I believe in leaving students to choose their learning activities	3.66	1.033
x61	I believe in freeing students from their teacher's authority in their English language learning	4.18	.866

The table above revealed that high mean scores indicate the EFL teacher's interest in training the English language learner on how to learn rather than the content of learning. Also, the teacher should give feedback to the learner to achieve self-learning. Low items, on the other hand, as revealed by study results did not reveal a high commitment on the part of the English language learner to distribute time of learning and manage it wisely as expressed by English language teachers who participated in this study. The table also presents results in favor

of training English language learners on learning strategies where the desired outcome should be the promotion of learner autonomy. At the same time, training of English language teachers is needed because some teachers might not be fully satisfied with giving up their master role in the classroom whilst others still use traditional methods of teaching English that maintain the superior role of the teacher over that of the learner. Certain procedures such as the reduction of the intervention in the learner's learning and the gradual introduction of independent English language learning besides freeing learners from waiting until dictated on by their teachers and also persuading them of the value of learner independence to their life not only at the present , but also for their future life and finally changing the beliefs of the parents who still believe in the major role of the teacher in the classroom due to previous instructional experiences.

An EFL teacher, in this study, in her response to an open question in the questionnaire,   described the route to achieve independent language learning by saying:

> Learner independence should be developed earlier in learner's learning. Learners need to depend on themselves and to take initiative in learning rather than following the spoon feeding by the teacher where the teacher does everything and the learner's role is accordingly passive. Schools should move towards the development of learner independence. (EFL teacher No :12)

Another teacher in this study stressed similar directions by saying:

> English language learning becomes more effective when encouraging the learner to play an active role in forming his or her school curriculum. I am a believer in reducing teacher's role and giving more opportunities for learners to decide on what and how they learn.   (EFL Teacher 5)

Other teachers in this study confirmed the same point and provided similar results.

The above findings suggest that the development of independent /autonomous language learning does not happen overnight, but need time, investigation of learner needs, reduction of teacher's roles and revision of school policies to allow for independent language learning to occur.

Discussion

The present study endorsed several previous research findings about the significance of learner independence or autonomy, the need to focus by learners and their teachers on the development of learner independence/ autonomy. On the other hand, it has shown how teachers of English need to be guided and trained regarding different pedagogical issues among which is learner independence as the focus of this study. The Jordanian Ministry of Education together with specialized Jordanian universities could, for example, design training programs to instill this construct of learner independence in relevant classroom instruction if this is on the Ministry's agenda.

The current study also asserted that among the problems of the promotion of learner independence, according to the teachers of English, has to do with the traditional teaching undertaken by some school teachers. Some teaching methods were seen to be superior over others in teaching English in their potential endorsement of learner independence. In consonance with this direction, Sert (2006) considered the traditional teaching and the learning philosophy adopted by the teachers one of the main reasons antithetical to autonomous learning. According to her, as teachers play a key role in autonomous language learning, it may be more effective to get them undergo a gradual change in their beliefs and attitudes. Railton and Watson (2005, p.192), likewise, emphasized the significance of guidance in autonomous learning process.

There is a general feeling among almost most English language teachers in Jordan as felt by the researcher through meetings and visits to schools with regard to the importance of autonomous language learning though not all of them are fully aware of how such a type of learning can be nurtured nor of the demands to make it achievable. Teachers of English might know about this approach from their university academic study and through the teaching practice and collaboration with peers. Railton and Watson (2005) called for empowering student teachers to be independent.

The present study called for a gradual integration of learner independence. In this regard, Dam (1995) supported this path by the achievement of a 'gradual autonomisation' first using the target language as the medium for teaching and learning from the start of the learning process. Secondly, learners develop a storage of learning activities and finally the continuing process of language learning evaluation. Fullan (2001) suggested that teachers should have three important things embodying time, training and support to get innovation of their classroom instruction to be successful. In order to let teachers to shift from transmitters of knowledge to become facilitators of the learner's construction, they need support, feedback and reflection.

This study recommended the training of learners on how to learn more than what to learn, pushing them to take initiative in their English language learning and empowering them to be independent in their learning rather than to be dependent on their teacher. Further, it called for getting teachers meet with parents to change their beliefs about the learning process of their children, encouraging learners to be self-assessors and convincing learners of the importance of how to be independent in learning, that teachers should provide feedback to the

learners enabling them to be independent and finally inviting teachers to revise and change their teaching methods to promote learner autonomy. Usuki (2001) called for conscious training of students to become independent learners by raising their awareness of their learning. According to him, this training should include awareness-raising for autonomous learning via textbook reading, journal writing, lectures on meta-learning and individual consultations. This challenges the belief subscribed to by some teachers and researchers as well as some parents that learner independence fits more highly liberal societies of western countries than less developed countries.

Also, this study looked at the following as requirements for the development of independent language learning such as the training of students on learner strategies and also training them to be reflective. Also, they should be good assessors of their learning; their beliefs regarding autonomous language learning should be changed; that individual differences among them should be considered; that they need to select their learning activities and finally freeing them from the authority of the teacher. Reflecting on the value of effective learner training, Sturtridge (1997) encouraged interested centers to attempt to consider learner development a continuing cycle of reflection and action beside offering a development program which keeps pace with the students as they work.

One important issue in this study was that good students are more capable to demonstrate and assume responsibility for their learning and managing as well as assessing their learning. The researcher made sure of this through identifying the school results of some of the students who participated in this study who responded to the open question attached to the questionnaire. This is in congruence with much literature which emphasizes the investigation and adoption of the strategies of good language learners to promote learner autonomy. Alkhawaldeh (2005), (2011) and (2012) and Karsou and Alkhawaldeh (2005) stressed the value of learner independence for English language learners to have ownership over their learning.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that both English language learners and their teachers should be trained on how to foster learner independence among learners of English. English language learner independence should be gradually developed in the light of principles of the Jordanian society and the gradual freeing of the learner from the authority of the teacher. Also, there is a need to provide knowledge and practice on learner independence to teachers through, for example, school-based teacher training. Further, learner independence in English language learning at the Jordanian educational level should take into consideration the socio-cultural ecology of the Jordanian society when integrating independent language learning. Current teaching practices should be investigated to see to what extent independent language learning can be a reality in school instruction.

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