

ЛИНГВОДИДАКТИКА И НОВАЦИИ. ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ОСНОВЫ ИЗУЧЕНИЯ ЯЗЫКОВ И
КУЛЬТУР | LINGUODIDACTICS AND INNOVATIONS. PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS OF LEARNING
LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

Роль преподавателей в процессе самостоятельного изучения языка: пример Аддис-Абебского университета науки и технологий

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Данное исследование посвящено изучению роли преподавателей в процессе самостоятельного изучения английского языка в Аддис-Абебском университете науки и технологий. Основное внимание уделяется ролям фасилитатора, гида/наставника и вдохновителя/помощника, а также тому, насколько доступны и эффективно используются вспомогательные условия, способствующие автономному изучению языка. Анкета для опроса была направлена 313 студентам первого курса инженерного факультета Аддис-Абебского университета науки и технологий, 24 студента приняли участие в фокус-группах. Кроме того, было проведено интервью с четырьмя преподавателями для получения дополнительных данных и триангуляции. Количественные данные были проанализированы с помощью SPSS, а качественные данные, полученные в ходе фокус-групп и интервью, были проанализированы с помощью тематического анализа. Полученные результаты свидетельствуют о том, что учителя применяли очень ограниченное количество методов, способствующих самостоятельному изучению языка, и неэффективно использовали имеющиеся вспомогательные средства. Предоставление учителям программ профессионального развития, направленных на развитие самостоятельного изучения языка, поможет развить самостоятельность учащихся.

Ключевые слова: самостоятельное изучение языка, поддерживающее окружение, роль преподавателей.

Для цитаты: Абабо А.Б., Анимав А.К. Роль преподавателей в процессе самостоятельного изучения языка: пример Аддис-Абебского университета науки и технологий [Электронный ресурс] // Язык и текст. 2024. Том 11. № 1. С. 117–130. DOI:10.17759/langt.2024110111

The Role of Teachers in Promoting Autonomous Language Learning: The Case of Addis Ababa Science and Technology University

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This study investigates the roles of the teachers in promoting autonomous English language learning at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University. Its emphasis was on the roles of facilitator, guide/mentor, and inspirator/supporter and to what extent supporting environment helping to promote autonomous language learning are available and are used effectively. A survey questionnaire was distributed to 313 freshmen engineering students at Addis Ababa Science and Technology University where 24 students participated in FGD. Furthermore, an interview was conducted with four teachers to obtain supplementary data and for triangulation. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS and the qualitative data obtained from FGD and interview was analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings indicate that teachers were involved in very limited practices that promote autonomous language learning and used available supporting facilities ineffectively. Offering teachers with professional development programs on how to promote autonomous language learning will help develop learner autonomy.

Keywords: autonomous language learning, supporting environment, teachers' role.

For citation: Ababo A.B., Animaw A.K. The Role of Teachers in Promoting Autonomous Language Learning: The Case of Addis Ababa Science and Technology University. *Yazyk i tekst = Language and Text*, 2024. Vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 117–130. DOI:10.17759/langt.2024110111

Introduction

Nowadays teaching students how to acquire knowledge and how to maintain enthusiastic about learning is an important aspect of education. In traditional language teaching, teachers play more important roles than students. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), the teacher acts as the model of language, the lesson planner, the controller of learner practice and the assessor of learners' performance, the organizers in the teaching program in terms of knowledge of grammar, the planners of the course, preparing the materials and deciding what and how learners ought to learn. However, in modern language teaching, the mode of teaching changed from teacher-centered to learner-centered in which learner is the center of the program.

Learner centeredness is an approach which views students to have more active and participatory roles in the learning and teaching process than in traditional approaches according to Tudor cited in KOÇAK (2003). This means there are changes in roles both for learners and teachers. The change in the roles of both students and teachers has led to the emergence of autonomous learning as a key

component in acquiring knowledge. Autonomous learning is about learners taking more control over their learning in classrooms and outside; autonomy in language learning is about taking more control over the purposes and the ways to learn the language (Benson 2006). Sometimes learner autonomy is misunderstood in a way that it can be realized without a teacher. Little (1996) states that learners usually do not automatically take responsibility for their learning but they need teachers to help them to do that. Thus teachers are responsible for developing autonomous learners through their roles and practices in the classroom other 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 (Alonazi 2017).

Littlewood (1999) proposes a distinction between two levels of self-regulation as proactive and reactive autonomy. Proactive autonomy regulates the direction of activity and the activity itself while the reactive autonomy regulates the activity once the direction has been set. Proactive autonomy will be achieved when learners are able to take charge of their learning, determine their objective, select methods and techniques, and evaluate what they have acquired (Holec 1981; Little 1994). However, in reactive autonomy learners don't need to create their own direction, but it enables learners to organize their resources autonomously in order to achieve their goal under the direction that has been initiated once (Littlewood 1999). Therefore this study focused on the reactive autonomy where the teachers were expected to follow up under the given direction.

Little (2007) suggests the three basic pedagogical principles governing the development of autonomy in language learning as learner involvement, learner reflection and appropriate target language use. Depending on these principles he also suggests some roles expected from the teachers. They are expected to use target language as medium of classroom communication and require the same of learners; involve learners in a non-stop quest for good learning activities; help learners to set their own learning targets and choose their own learning activities, subjecting them to discussion, analysis and evaluation; require learners to identify individual goals but pursue them through collaborative work in small groups; require learners to keep a written record of their learning plans of lessons and projects, lists of useful vocabulary, whatever texts they themselves produce and engage them in regular evaluation of their progress as individual learners and as a class. As Little tries to describe the importance of autonomous learning and the role of the teacher, he stated that all truly effective learning entails the growth of autonomy in the learner as regards both the process and the content of learning and for most learners, the growth of autonomy requires the stimulus, insight and guidance of a good teacher (as cited in Bajrami 2015).

As Shu and Zhuang (2008) proposed autonomous learning has three important characteristics: willingness, capacity and supporting environment. Firstly, language learner is willing to take an active attitude towards his or her language study, and takes the initiative to be responsible for the study. Secondly, through learner training and teacher support, language learner can develop the capacity to learn independently. Lastly, the development of LA cannot be accomplished without supportive environment or context which includes the teacher's guidance, teaching and learning facilities, and learning materials. Based on the above discussion, autonomous learning can be considered as the constructive process how language learners develop their autonomy within the supportive environment where language teachers play a crucial role in the classroom teaching in fostering autonomous learning.

To encourage learners to become autonomous inside the language classroom, Yu (2006) suggests teachers' to-do lists developed from what Holec (1985) and Nunan (1997) stated about teachers' role as: awareness of pedagogical goals, contents and strategies; active involvement in the learning;

intervention while modifying and adapting personal goals, learning style and strategies; setting up personal goals and plans; awareness of responsibility and motivation; independent learning task; monitor and evaluate learning; acquire needed skills and knowledge. This list is enriched by Little's (2007) suggestion of the teacher's role in promoting language learner autonomy being related to three general pedagogical principles as: learner involvement (planning, monitoring and evaluating of learning); learner reflection (process and content of learning and self-assessment); and target language use (the medium as well as the goal of learning).

For the effective development of autonomous learning, before contributing ones share, everyone in the process has to know his/her role. Autonomy requires the understanding of new roles between teachers and learners. It is necessary for teachers to change their roles so as to adapt themselves to the new requirement of autonomy. The promotion of autonomy is dependent greatly on how teachers are aware of their new roles. As Zhuang tries to compare the role of teachers in autonomous learning with traditional teaching method, autonomy does not remove teachers of their responsibility, but redistributes the decision-making rights between teachers and students in the learning process. In autonomous learning, learners have more rights in making learning strategies. Accordingly, teachers do not control the whole learning procedure like a commander, but take many other roles like directors or advisors (Zhuang, 2010).

Several scholars suggest the teacher roles in different ways. Nunan (1993) states, in promoting autonomous learning teachers' role is to guide. Voller (1997) classifies the teacher roles into three categories: teacher as facilitator, teacher as counselor and teacher as resource. Xu & Xu, (2004) state the roles of teacher as Guide (counselor, instructor); Facilitator (helper); Organizer & Designer; Cooperator (peer partner, friend, and participant); Inspirator & Supporter; Monitor & Evaluator; Resource supplier; and Atmosphere creator. Scholars choose the word that they think can represent the role of the teacher. In this case, the same practices can be represented in different terms. Therefore based on the given terms, in this study the researcher selects to use three terms that can represent the context of the study to show the roles of the teacher as: facilitator; guide/mentor and inspirator/supporter.

In an autonomous classroom, teachers as facilitator: are expected to manage the activities in the classroom and help learners plan their learning both for long and short term. Teachers have to be able to establish a close collaboration with the learners and make sure that all learners know what is expected of them at all times (Lowes & Target, cited in Bajrami 2015). Teachers as a guide: are expected to work closely with their students' language learning and help students develop better techniques for learning (Nunan cited in Xu & Xu, 2004). Teachers as inspirator/supporter: are expected to inspire their students by stimulating their interest; encouraging them to use English and motivating them to participate in communicative activities Xu & Xu, 2004. Teachers are also responsible to make effective use of self-directed center to facilitate autonomous learning and to encourage more communication between teachers and students via various channels to monitor the learning process (Xu & Xu, 2004). This indicates that supporting environment administration is the role of the teacher.

The promotion of autonomous learning needs readiness and commitment of both students and teachers. In other word it needs the teachers' awareness and effort to guide students in a proper way. Both teacher and students should work together for the achievement of their goal which is producing independent learner. As the study by Xu and Xu (2004) which was based on the teachers' roles from students' perspectives only shows, teachers are expected to play the roles as guide, facilitator, assessor, psychological coordinator, peer cooperator, source of information, learner and researcher. The study did not include teachers' perspective about the roles they actually play in

fostering autonomous learning in the classroom teaching. However, this study was intended to investigate teachers' roles in the promotion of autonomous language learning and to what extent supporting environment is available in Addis Ababa Science and Technology University (AASTU) from both students' and teachers perspective. In Ethiopia, English is thought as a foreign language and English is a medium of communication at higher education institutions. AASTU is one of the two science and technology universities in Ethiopia where students scoring higher score join voluntarily by taking entrance exam. Before joining their field of specialization, all freshmen students take pre engineering courses where communicative English skills is one of the common courses. This study tried to answer to what extent teachers giving a course 'communicative English skills I FLEN 1011' are playing their role of promoting autonomous English language learning for students and how effectively they use the supporting environment found in AASTU.

Research Methodology

The research approach of this study was a mixed approach. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed. In this study, the quantitative method depended on data gathered through questionnaires, whereas the qualitative method was based on data collected via teachers' interview and students' FGD.

Research Participants and Samples

In this study the population consists of both students and teachers in AASTU. Students were chosen to fill questionnaire to give information about to what extent their teachers are applying autonomous learning promoting practices in classroom. Using systematic random sampling, 313 students were selected for the survey. From these students 24 students again participated in the FGD in a group of six to give detail information on their teachers' practices to promote autonomous learning. In addition, teachers were asked to give detail explanation on their autonomous learning promoting practices in classroom. Four teachers who have more than ten years of teaching experience in the institution were selected randomly and involved in interview. This helps to triangulate the responses of the students and the teachers.

Data Collection Instruments

In this study three instruments: questionnaire, FGD and interview were used to gather data from the population. To elicit the data from students, questionnaire and FGD were used. First questionnaire was distributed for students. A questionnaire was designed to get information to what extent English teachers of AASTU play their role in promoting autonomous learning. The questionnaire is divided into two sections. The first section consists 18 items that are related to the roles teachers play in order to encourage autonomous language learning in their classroom. Based on the conducted literature review, the items are decided and organized according to three variables of teachers' roles: facilitator, guide/mentor and inspirator/supporter. This section needs the students to rate the frequency of their teachers' implementation of the items in their classrooms. Students are required to answer each item on a five-point Likert scale (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = usually, 5 = always). The second section includes eight items of agreement to identify the availability of the facilities that can support autonomous language learning.

FGD is a structured discussion used to obtain in-depth information from students on how their teachers help them to become autonomous language learners. Semi-structured questions were used to conduct the discussion with four groups. The questions are related to how their teachers share

responsibility and how they help their students to let them become autonomous language learners. The result was used as a counter-check of the data obtained from the students' questionnaire.

To elicit data from teachers interview was held. The purpose of the key informant interview was to gather in-depth information from teachers about their roles in promoting students' autonomous language learning. Participants in the key informant interview were EFL teachers who have given communicative English skills course at AASTU. They were expected to best help the study by providing firsthand information. The data was collected through face-to-face interview using semi-structured and generally open-ended questions to elicit views on their practices to foster autonomous language learning and to what extent the facilities provided in the university help them to promote autonomous language learning.

Result and Discussion

The main objective of this research was to investigate to what extent EFL teachers in AASTU were playing their role in promoting autonomous English language learning. The study used both quantitative and qualitative data. The result and discussion of both qualitative and quantitative data are presented integrated together. The quantitative data obtained from the survey questionnaire are presented in a tabular form with descriptive statistics followed by the qualitative data. The result was discussed categorizing teachers' role into three categories which were (a) facilitator; (b) guide/mentor and (c) inspirator/supporter. Then result and discussion about supporting environment available in AASTU was also analyzed and discussed. Results from the students' FGDs and teachers' interview was also presented integrated with the survey result.

Teachers' teaching practices for the role 'facilitator'

As it can be seen in Table 1, students were asked to identify the extent their teachers involved them in a way that promotes autonomous learning. The four items are related to the practices of English teachers as being a learning facilitator. The responses of participants regarding 'always/usually' and 'rarely/never' categories have been combined together to indicate a valid percentage of their answers. The roles that teachers practiced 'always' or 'usually' was only sharing responsibilities in the learning process with students (56.5%).

Table 1

Teachers' Teaching Practices for the Role 'Facilitator'
(compiled from survey, 2022)

№	Teachers' roles	Always/Usually		Sometimes		Rarely/Never	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Directing students to set their own goals to achieve the course objective	124	39.7	113	36.1	76	24.3
2.	Sharing responsibilities in the learning process with students	177	56.5	94	30	42	13.4
3.	Engaging students to evaluate their learning progress regularly	131	41.9	98	31.3	84	26.8
4.	Directing students to reflect on the tasks they did inside and outside class	103	32.9	108	34.5	102	32.6

Students mentioned that there was no different goal they were expected to set. At the beginning of the semester, teachers gave them course outline where the objectives of the course and the

contents of the course are stated. Students considered that goal setting related activities are the responsibility of the teachers. As one student stated,

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

From the above extract one can understand that the students do not know that they have responsibility to set their own goal. Teachers also approve this as they don't facilitate to let the students set their own goal directly. All teachers mentioned that they have advised their students to let them have a goal not specifically for the subject they teach but a goal they need to achieve at the time of their stay at university. In addition the issue of goal will be raised at the beginning of the semester and slightly at the beginning of new chapter. As one teacher (T1) stated,

“It is done at the beginning of the semester or at the beginning of the session, during the introductory session of the course, I share the responsibility; I have my own responsibility and the students have their own responsibility. There are course objective that the students are expected to achieve at the end of the semester. At that time when I tell them these are mine those are yours, indirectly I am forcing them to have their own plan but I may not remember as their objective that they have designed in each session of the semester once I tell them.”

As we can understand from the above extract the teacher facilitates to let the students share responsibilities. Most of the teachers mentioned that goal setting was done implicitly not explicitly. Both teachers and students stated that teachers were involved in sharing responsibilities implicitly and slightly creating awareness. However as we can understand from the above text, since there was no way to check its accomplishment, it means the teacher did not mentor students on how to achieve their goal. It was found that English teachers play the role of facilitator only through sharing responsibilities in the learning process with students. This is far from what Xu & Xu, (2004) explain the role of facilitator/helper as offering necessary enlightenment and assistance and helping students to make English learning plans and objectives.

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

and help them to work on how to fill the gap. As the result indicates teachers did not involve students in evaluation because of the students' unwillingness to be involved in evaluating their work. This implies that teachers lack to play the role of facilitator since they cannot involve students in evaluating their own learning and progress. Students have to reflect on their learning process (Alonazi, 2017).

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

Teachers' teaching practices for the role 'guide/mentor'

Students were asked to identify the extent their teachers get involved in the practices that promotes autonomous learning. As it can be seen in Table 2, eight items are related to the practices of English teachers as being a learning guide/mentor. The responses of participants regarding 'always/usually' and 'rarely/never' categories have been combined together to indicate a valid percentage of their answers. The two roles that teachers practiced 'always' or 'usually' were encouraging students to pursue their individual goals by working with others in (pair and group) (57.5%) and supporting students as they can develop the capacity to learn independently (51.1%).

Table 2

Teachers' Teaching Practices for the Role 'Guide/Mentor'
(compiled from survey, 2022)

№	Teachers' roles	Always/Usually		Sometimes		Rarely/Never	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Helping students to become aware of alternative strategies and learning styles	149	47.6	110	35.1	54	17.3
2.	Encouraging students to pursue their individual goals by working with others in (pair and group)	180	57.5	96	30.7	37	11.8
3.	Involving students in a non-stop search for good learning activities	129	41.2	112	35.8	72	23
4.	Informing students the necessary strategies about the different paths they may choose to follow in order to identify and use the right kind of information.	145	46.3	104	33.2	64	20.4
5.	Providing students guidance on recommended online tools and services (links and resources)	142	45.4	96	30.7	75	24
6.	Supporting students as they can develop the capacity to learn independently	160	51.1	88	28.1	65	20.8
7.	Providing students alternative learning strategies which they could have used	149	47.6	105	33.5	59	18.8
8.	Mentoring students on how to achieve their goals	125	40	103	32.9	85	27.2

As data from qualitative sources indicated working with others in pair and group was common practice in the course. As one of the teachers stated (T3), *“Most of the time it becomes a place to raise an issue of argument. They try to convince each other and at the end they need the teacher to judge their case. In this kind of situation students who were not active participant also become motivated and forget their fear of participation.”* This shows that teachers guide students to let them learn cooperatively. As students mentioned on the discussion the time given for a course is limited so that students are expected to work independently by their own. They also stated that teachers gave them homework to do in advance before coming to the class or by showing a sample of an activity in the class and to let the students finish by their own. Teachers play the role of guide by supporting students as they can develop the capacity to learn independently and encouraging them to work with others in pair and group. This is the same with what Xu & Xu, 2004 calls it as a Guide when teachers show the effective ways of learning English independently and cooperatively.

Regarding informing students different learning strategies, teachers mentioned that most of the time the strategies to be used was already given on the module so that they were not expected to use different strategies. However, there may be a time to change the learning strategies given on the module. As one teacher mentioned (T2)

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

From the above extract one can understand that the learning strategy may be changed depending on the will of the teacher. In addition, students also mentioned that they can use their own strategies but following the order of the teacher is better for them because they believe the teacher knows the better strategy to use. Providing alternative learning strategies is one of the roles the teacher needs to play. As the result from qualitative data indicates even though strategies to be used are already indicated on the module, teachers mentioned that there are situations that enforce them to change the given strategy. This implies that teachers are playing the role what Yan (2012) stated as manager and organizer where teachers are expected to create opportunities for learners to learn spontaneously and creatively and to take their own initiatives to construct their knowledge and also when students meet any difficulties, teachers are expected to actively participate in finding solutions.

Related to providing guidance on recommended online tools and services like links and resources, teachers mentioned that basic resources were stated on their course outline and when they get better resource that can help students more, they share for students using different medium of communication like telegram and email. Students had also mentioned that there is no problem with learning resources this days and everything they can be found easily but the main thing is the motivation and commitment to do it. The role of teachers as resource providers also stick to the course outline by providing some references and materials for English learning and introducing some internet resources. However students also indicated that they know resources are available everywhere and they need teachers to follow them and motivate them to use those resources. This implies that students can access different resources even more than teachers but ability to get access cannot be guaranty for student to learn autonomously. Therefore teachers need to follow up the students on how they are using resources. This is the same with what Yan (2012) indicates teacher

as a facilitator: a guide to resource. Teachers should be capable to select the materials which can be used to arouse learners' interest and cater to their learning level in order to motivate and ensure their satisfaction and confidence.

Teachers' teaching practices for the role 'Inspirator & Supporter'

Items from 13 to 19, as shown in table 3, are intended to investigate to what extent the teachers play the role of inspirator/supporter in promoting autonomous language learning. The two roles that teachers practiced 'always' or 'usually' to inspire students were using English language as the medium of classroom communication and require the same of students (76.1%) and raising awareness about autonomous learning and promoting it to students(52.7%).

Table 3

Teachers' Teaching Practices for the Role 'Inspirator & Supporter'
(compiled from survey, 2022)

№	Teachers' roles	Always/Usually		Sometimes		Rarely/Never	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Using English language as the medium of classroom communication and require the same of students	238	76.1	57	18.2	18	5.8
2.	Acknowledging different ways students follow to attain their goal and their own learning styles	125	39.9	102	32.6	86	27.5
3.	Motivating students to learn English by minimizing external pressure	155	49.5	94	30	64	20.4
4.	Encouraging students to keep a written record of their plans of lessons and assignments	128	40.9	81	25.9	104	33.2
5.	Encouraging students to keep a written record of their learning such as lists of useful vocabulary and texts they produce by themselves	127	40.6	92	29.4	94	30
6.	Being positive and supportive especially when giving feedback	129	41.2	112	35.8	72	23
7.	Raising awareness about autonomous learning and promoting it to students	165	52.7	82	26.2	66	21.1

Both teachers and students testified that medium of classroom communication is English. Students mentioned that when students got problem while explaining their idea, the teacher encouraged them by reminding them a word that that can help them express their idea. This can be considered as motivating students to learn English by minimizing external pressure where 49.5% of the students mentioned their teachers practiced it. Using English language as the medium of classroom communication and require the same of students is the practice teachers frequently use in promoting autonomous learning. This shows that teachers inspire their students by encouraging them to use English and motivating them to participate in communicative activities.

However, teachers had stated that even though they are ready to help their students by giving

feedback for what they did, students did not want to go further to improve their learning and students do not have a culture to ask for help for their problem. Students contacted their teachers in case there was problem with their result. Otherwise no one comes to discuss with teachers and to get support from them. Regarding encouraging students to keep a written record of their learning such as lists of useful vocabulary and texts they produced by themselves most of the teachers stated that they advise their students to have vocabulary notebook or to use the back of their notebook to record new vocabulary daily but the students were not willing to use this strategy to add vocabulary. One of the reasons not to apply this strategy was related to motivation. As one of the teachers mentioned students need incentives. When they are told to do something, if they know there will be mark, they will be interested to complete the task unless otherwise they don't think it is useful for them. In the process of becoming autonomous learner teachers need to do all the efforts to make the learning easier and motivate students to use the best of their potentials. Motivation can include: motivating students to learn actively and autonomously, helping them to plan and carry out their independent language learning, helping them to acquire the knowledge and skills and helping them to get rid of the uncertainty and anxiety and overcome the obstacles Yan, 2012. Regarding raising awareness about autonomous learning and promoting it to the students, both students and teachers mentioned that teachers reminded the students not to expect a lot from the teacher so that they have to work widely independently.

Supporting facilities for autonomous language learning

As Addis Ababa Science and Technology University (AASTU) is Science and Technology University, it is expected that infrastructures helping to foster autonomous learning are available in the university. Students were asked the availability of those supporting environment.

Table 4

Supporting Facilities in AASTU to Support Autonomous Language Learning *(compiled from survey, 2022)*

Item	Facilities	Available		Not available	
		F	%	F	%
1.	Internet access	106	93	8	7.0
2.	Computer access	106	93	8	7.0
3.	Online sources	96	84.2	18	15.8
4.	e-library	96	84.2	18	15.8
5.	English TV program	34	29.8	80	70.2
6.	e-learning platform	51	44.7	63	53.3
7.	Language learning lab	37	32.5	77	67.5
8.	Materials that guide/initiate students to independent learning	68	58.8	46	40.4

As indicated in Table 4, students were asked to identify the availability of some supporting facilities that help students' autonomous language learning found in AASTU. The percentage of the students agreed the availability of internet access, computer access, online sources, e-library and materials that guide/initiate students to independent learning were 93%, 93%, 84.2%, 84.2% and 58.8% respectively. As both students and teachers stated, now days if internet access is available a lot of tasks can be done using smart phones. Most of the students have smart phone so that they can support their learning and for those who do not have smart phone computers are available in the library with full internet access that they can use online sources and e-library. Regarding those

facilities that students stated their unavailability were related to language lab. Some of the students know that there were language lab and the others didn't know it. Those who know its availability mentioned that they got a chance to enter the lab when their teacher took them there to teach them listening part of the module. They were made to listen to audio texts where they were expected to do activities related to the listening text. In addition teachers also testify this that the students were taken to the lab only for the sake of listening audio texts. They all agreed that the purpose of language lab is not only that and it should be functional as a library as the students can work and practice the language using different learning methods. Teachers also believed that they should guide students to use the lab by assisting them on how to use it to improve their language skills by putting different materials and software on the computers to let the students use them to improve different skills of their language at the time comfortable for them. Teachers complained that computers and equipment in the laboratory were not functioning properly and there was no lab assistant that can operate the equipment and assist students on how to use that equipment properly at the time convenient for them. Supporting environment in this study context is the facilities that can help to support students' autonomous learning. Both students and teachers stated that most of the facilities were available in AASTU. Teachers are responsible to make effective use of self-directed center to facilitate autonomous learning and to encourage more communication between teachers and students via various channels to monitor the learning process Xu & Xu, 2004. Teacher have to suggest tools and techniques for self-assessment, use computer based learning materials, select and evaluate resources according to students' needs and levels, suggest websites, videos or online dictionaries that motivate students to use the target language outside classroom, encourage students to read English books, magazines and newspapers outside classroom Alonazi, 2017. Therefore using those facilities cannot be effective without the assistance of the teacher. This implies availability of these facilities may help to foster autonomous learning if the assistance and guidance of the teacher is added to it.

As Shu and Zhuang (2008) explain the three important characteristics of autonomous language learning which are learner's attitude towards language study, learner's capacity developed by training and teacher support, and supporting environment or context which includes teacher's guidance, teaching and learning facilities, and learning materials autonomous language learning is a process how language learners develop their autonomy within the supporting environment where teacher's role in fostering autonomous learning in classroom teaching is very essential.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The aim of this study was to investigate to what extent teachers were playing their role in fostering autonomous language learning. The roles teachers were playing to foster students' autonomous learning are limited. Although most of the supporting facilities were there in the university, the usage of those facilities and the guidance students get from their teachers on using those facilities were very limited. From these results it could be concluded that creating autonomous learning environment may not be easy for teachers if they are not introduced to the importance of learner autonomy and how they can support their students. Moreover, teachers may still be unaware of what their roles are although they are enthusiastic to foster their learners' autonomous learning. Therefore teachers should be trained on how to support autonomy-oriented learning.

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Ababo A.B., Animaw A.K.
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Language and Text. 2024. Vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 117–130.

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Получена 08.11.2023
Принята в печать 15.03.2024

Received 08.11.2023
Accepted 15.03.2024