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Students learning styles reveal autonomous attitudes towards learning the english language

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Dedication

"I thank God because of giving me faith to achieve this project in which my parents have supported me along the whole career in order to finish my studies and acquire my professional degree. I also thank the teacher Ximena Bonilla because of her dedication and teacher labor, and my fellow group members and other teacher".

Grace Chávez

"In first place, I thank God for making this project. I also thank my parents for supporting me, and Ximena Bonilla because of her patience and dedication".

Lorena Romero

"This research project, my career and my developments as a human being were possible thanks to my family. I dedicate this work to all the people, I have met and left a mark on me, allowing me become into what I am today".

Carlos Felipe González

"We thank to the teacher Ximena Bonilla for your help during the process of this project, to God and families who bring us encourage and faith to finish this project".

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Abstract

This paper   will focus on a discussion about learning styles, autonomy and students' attitudes while learning English. The purpose of this paper is to report on an ongoing study with students from the introductory and intermediate English levels at CUN. This project aims to describe how learning styles reveal autonomous attitudes toward learning the English language. The research methodology used in the project was a qualitative descriptive approach. The instruments applied to collect data were student diaries, questionnaires, surveys and teachers interviews.

It is important to understand students' attitudes reveal their learning styles through the autonomous learning, claiming that students are reflective, thoughtful, and responsible for their acts and for their own conception of the world.

Key words: Learning Styles, Autonomy, attitudes, attitudes towards learning English.

Content

Introduction

Nowadays, everybody is in a constant hurry which, which makes it impossible to get anything done. We have to do so many things at the same time that we reach the limit of available time and therefore we get desperate. This post-modern world that is consuming us, is making it more and more difficult every time to carry on a life in which mind and heart matters are very important. In order to change this, individuals have to develop some inner skills to achieve certain goals and reach their objectives; one of them is autonomy. There is no room for laziness in this competitive world, and we are responsible for our own performance and learning.

This proposal tries to identify the behaviors and attitudes that an individual shows when he/she is learning English through the learning styles, and the concepts that we have to make clear in order to identify the answer to the main question of the project. We will work on the definitions about learning styles, attitudes and autonomy, all related to our Practicum process at CUN (Corporación Unificada Nacional de Educación Superior) and our experience with the head professor and the students.

In the chapter called rationale we state the importance of the project, which is to identify learning styles that reveal autonomous attitudes while learning a language. After showing the importance of the project, we recognized that in order to be proficient on the English learning process should find some learning strategies that lead to students become more autonomous, and in this way take advantage of the English classes. Based on this interpretation, we defined our research question as following: *How do*

students' learning styles reveal autonomous attitudes towards learning English the language?

One of the main sections of the project is the literature review, in which we define the concepts related to the research question: learning styles, autonomy, attitudes and attitudes towards learning English. . Through making a short description of each one, we can state that Learning styles refer to the different methods and strategies each one of us applies related to our own conditions. Autonomy is a person's ability to create new strategies in order to take full advantage of his or her time and availability. Attitude is the pattern of behavior as a response to a series of events inside a certain context. And finally, Attitudes towards learning English are the actions taken by a student in order to find the best strategy to learn the language according to their skills.

Rationale

The importance of this research project is to determine which attitudes can help us measure autonomy in students. It is also related to the individual's ability to carry out an independent method in order to learn and practice a foreign language.

We believe this research project helps to make students aware of their learning styles as an aspect to take into account in the English learning and autonomy process. The intention of this paper is to recognize students' attitudes through the learning styles reflected during the English classes, analyzing their behaviors and how they are really performing an autonomous process inside the classroom that can give us an idea about their learning styles outside the classroom.

Furthermore it is said that autonomy is a quality to develop an integral education as an essential basis to have a good quality of life. Besides giving a lot of benefits to the English learning process, it also helps people to get more control and become more aware of their own learning process in certain areas and topics.

Rather than helping just students, this research will help teachers and practitioners to take advantage of the English classes in which students show different ways of learning and their interest to keep studying by themselves.

Statement of the Problem

Due to the huge technological development that is currently taking place in the world, there is a need of being competent in order to contribute to the society according to the context in which we are involved. An individual should be independent in all his or her processes, especially in the learning process because it helps the individual become more aware of self knowledge, and also because it builds the basis of autonomy and independence.

Through the studies done at CUN with students of International business with a basic and intermediate level of English, we have found out that students need to be more autonomous in their English learning process because they do not invest enough time studying English. All the exercises are carried out in class, when the teacher gives homework about 10% of the students do not do it. Our opinion is that this attitude is because students do not have the English proficiency demanded in the career; moreover some of them consider that English is just a requirement of the education center to get a degree.

We believe that students must be autonomous in order to develop abilities which help them to regulate their English learning process through strategies that help them to understand and comprehend a topic through tasks, homework, activities and complementing them with extra-curricular activities.

The main ability that a student has to develop in order to become autonomous is the "learn to learn" skill. This skill consists of the development of a series of abilities and cognitive strategies that allow the students to process information in an efficient way,

according to their needs, circumstances, abilities and motivation in order to orient an activity (Arguelles & Garcia, 2006).

In that sense Coperías, Redondo and San Martín (2000) mention some characteristics of the ideal autonomous student: he must prepare extra activities, participate in class, asks the teacher in order to solve doubts and be conscious of his or her own learning process and method.

There are several attitudes which might help us understanding the reason why students are not autonomous, for example lack of time invested in studying, lack of interest and lack of motivation. Through the observations carried out during the classes we realized that the activities proposed by the teacher were not accomplished by the students, and therefore, we consider that they need to focus more on the autonomous learning through activities that develop the motivation and that make them feel more secure. An example of this is a class in which the environment generates confidence and comfort.

Research Question

This research project aims to observe and describe the attitudes that students at CUN show in their English learning process from an autonomous perspective by addressing the following question:

How do students' learning styles reveal autonomous attitudes towards learning

the language?

Research Main Objective

- To describe attitudes which show the students' autonomy towards English learning through learning styles

Research Specific Objectives

- To explore students' attitudes that reveal autonomy toward English learning.

- To identify what learning styles students show according to their attitudes during English classes.

1. Background

As part of the project, it was important to know which other studies and researches had been done involving the concepts we took into account in our paper: attitudes, autonomy and learning styles. We made a review of some research papers about these concepts and after describing each one we could make a comparison of all the projects to identify similarities and differences.

1.1 Projects about autonomy

Holec (1981) and Dickinson (1991) state that autonomy is the process developed during the whole life which has as a purpose to think, feel and act on our own. They say it is a process because we are not born autonomous but is a series of steps in order to build an identity. This is something all projects have in common; they all have a complex definition of what autonomy is.

Most of the projects intented to determine what students understood as autonomy. A common tendency in all the projects was to look for the perceptions people had about autonomy and to contrast them with the specific definitions given by some authors, such as the ones mentioned before.

In other papers, we found out that the main idea was generating new strategies to develop autonomy in students. Therefore the projects were not only focused on observing and describing but also on creating new ways to develop autonomy while learning.

The research approach used in most of the projects was a qualitative approach, but the methodology used differed in each project; ethnographic, action research and case study. Instruments were: surveys, questionnaires, journals and interviews.

In accordance with the research they did, they got the following results: some people had a clear idea about autonomy but they did not apply it; another group of participants had a clear idea about what autonomy was and they applied it (Akinzola, 2009; Moreno, Romero, Nino, Camacho & Martinez, 1997; Chicangana & Miglianelli, 2008; Ariza, 2004; Sanz, 2003, Muete, 2007; Wil, Petegem & Meijer, 2008), another group of people did not know anything about autonomy; and the remaining group of people improved their levels of autonomy through new strategies (Usiki, 2007; Castillo, 2004; Fleming, 2005; Gonzalez, 2007).

1.2 Projects about attitudes

Little has been written about a definition of attitudes. Despite of that, what has been written by different authors can be summarized into a simple definition: an attitude is an individual disposition to face different situations (Robles, 2009; Goñi, 1996; Sarabia, 1992) showing cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects (Goleman, 1995).

There was a similarity in the projects consulted related to our purpose. All of them were directed to observe the students' attitudes in different academic spaces: one of the research projects focused on the attitudes towards learning English, other on attitudes towards a geography course and the other on attitudes towards mathematics (Korkmaz & Karakuz, 2009; Fleming, 2005; Akinzola, 2009).

The methodology used in the research projects was a quantitative approach, which meant that they focused on obtaining numbers and statistics. Another important

characteristic that all projects had in common was the use of two groups in order to study the population and obtain results: an experimental group and a control group. The dynamic consisted of using the traditional way of learning in one group, and in the other group the innovative one with the objective of identifying which group showed a better attitude towards the classrooom.

As a common result, all the research projects showed that the group taught by the innovative way of learning showed a more positive disposition than the traditional based group.

1.3 Projects about learning styles

The amount of research projects regarding learning styles was higher in comparison with the above projects. We found out that almost half of them were related to the importance of learning styles in language classes, and the other half about other academic spaces.

The tendency was to identify what learning styles were the predominant ones inside a class, based on different theories about learning styles. Some were just descriptive, as they limited to mention the learning styles observed through journals and observations. Others applied activities based on the different learning styles and deduced which ones were more successful based on the students' responses.

Researchers agreed in the statement of the results, since we could summarize all of them in one: Knowledge of students' learning styles can help teachers and institutions in class preparation, class delivery methods and development of appropriate technologies. It also helps students reflect about their own learning processes, it gets students to have a more positive attitude in class and to take advantage of classes.

These research projects focused on different topics and issues such as curriculum, proper language learner, variables that have an influence in the learning process, culture issues, external factors, motivation and performance.

2. Literature Review

This research will be focused on describing the students' attitudes that reflect autonomy according to the learning styles in an English class. To understand the concepts that are necessary for the development of this paper we would like to link the concepts of attitudes, autonomy and attitudes toward learning English. When someone is studying English, he or she usually shows attitudes of interest when they make questions, participate and give examples trying to be more aware about their learning process.

Life can be defined as a series of situations, one after another, linked by some reactions towards them. There are different kinds of events to which we react in different ways, showing our opinion, point of view, mood or emotion they set free in us. These reactions to specific chores or events can be called in different ways, but in this chapter we are going to focus just on one that is called *attitudes*. This is important because we need to identify what kind of attitudes students show to determine their learning styles.

2.1 Attitudes. First of all, attitudes have been defined in different ways; they are viewed as filters that help to focus the attention towards the things people want (Robles, 2009); and also as a lasting organization of beliefs around an object or situation that prepares you to react in a specific way (Goñi, 1996) or as Sarabia said (1992), they are tendencies or dispositions acquired that help to evaluate an object, person or situation in a defined way and also to act according to that evaluation (quoted in Prat, Grau., & Soler S, 2003)

Deepening the definition of attitudes, we can enter the field of psychology. Eagly and Chaiken (Quoted in Albarracin D, Jhonson B., & Zanna M., 2005) define an attitude as "a psychological tendency expressed by evaluating an object or a specific activity". Wich means that people can take decisions in their lives, whether good or bad in order to build their own ways of acting.

It is said that attitudes are a product of evaluated activities or objects, and the individuals make choices and determine if they are good or bad. In contrast, Robles (2009) says that attitudes just help to focus the attention without an evaluation, so it does not imply a judgement to determine if the object causes benefit or damage.

As attitudes are part of the inner essentials of the human being, they cannot be evaluated or observed, but they can be identified through the reaction of the person according to the response: cognitive, affective or behavioural. Attitudes can be seen by analyzing the different responses showed individually or in groups in the same place and time.

From our point of view, if students are in an English class and they like a specific topic, they are going to be motivated and that reflects the cognitive dimension of attitudes. If the same students build confidence in the study group and the context or the environment is comfortable, the individuals will demonstrate responses according to the affective dimension. Both of these, motivation and confidence, will influence the students' behaviour in class, which lead us to the third dimension which is the behavioural dimension.

Attitudes are shown through different internal and external factors that generate social judgements evidenced by each one those factors. These characteristics

determine the essence of each person when reacting towards a specific event that builds the personality, letting know that the attitudes depend on the context.

For example, several students that are presenting an exam and one of them is cheating. In the same classroom there is a student who catches him; this student will have a positive or a negative attitude that makes up a judgement. If the student that caught the cheater thinks that there is nothing wrong with cheating, he would probably say "he is going to pass the exam easily". But if he or she thinks that cheating is bad, he would most likely say "he will not to learn anything like this".

Likewise, we can observe different kinds of reactions, either positive or negative. If the student is interested or motivated or not, there will always be a reaction towards a specific stimulus. These are closely related to the behaviourist theory developed by Skinner (1974), in which the individual has a reaction produced by a specific stimulus as a consequence of a situation, and that generates a series of feelings by which individuals learn.

Once the concepts of attitudes has been defined as the way of reaction and evaluate situations in our lives, it is necessary to understand how autonomy can be reflected by those attitudes, since they are the ones helping us to determine the autonomy of the students. In that way, we can begin to explain the next main concept that sets up the base of this project which is autonomy. To talk about this concept we have to take into account many different perspectives and definitions.

2.2 Autonomy. From our point of view, autonomy refers to the individual's capacity to develop his or her own strategies, building some parameters in order to direct thoughts and attitudes on each diary activity in an assertive way.

Some writers define autonomy as the capacity of taking charge of our own learning (Holec, 1981). Dickinson (1987) defines 'autonomy' as the learning situation in which the individual manifests an attitude of responsibility and 'self-direction'. Holec (1979) defines 'autonomy' as the learner's ability to be responsible for his or her learning and later (1980) referred to autonomy to consider the learner's attitude of responsibility, while he used 'self-direction' in order to refer to the learning situation or mode in which the attitude of autonomy is showed. For instance, Allwright (1990) took a psychological perspective, stating that autonomy involves an attitude of willingness to take responsibility.

Constance Kamii (2006) says that autonomy means to become able to think critically by oneself, taking into account many views, both moral and intellectual. We can define moral autonomy as the series of behaviors that can be classified as positive or negative, depending on several points of view; and intellectual autonomy as ideas that can be classified as true or false according to the self knowledge. This author wants to tell us that being autonomous refers to the ability to express our ideas and think critically and being aware of the actions and the consequences in our lives.

As we mentioned, when we talk about autonomy we can say that it is the way in which people take control over their lives individually and collectively. According to Benson (1999) when we talk about autonomous learning, we could say that it is about people taking more control over their learning process inside and outside classrooms.

2.3 *Autonomy in language learning* is when students take control over the purposes for which they learn a language inside and outside the classroom. Likewise**,** when

students are aware of their difficulties when learning and designing strategies to overcome shortcomings, it is understood as autonomous learning (Manrique, 2004)

In addition, autonomy in classroom and learning refers to the ability to take responsibility to be in charge of the process and control over one's own learning. (Young, 1986) According to Dickinson (1977) autonomy when learning describes the situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all the decisions concerned with his or her learning process and the implementation of those decisions. It means autonomy is showed when students are able to take their own decisions contributing to their learning process in academic situations. The student is the one who controls his or her learning process. Autonomous students are actors of their own education because they are characterized by being creative, constant learners, assertive communicators and reflective.

By the same token, Fandiño (2008) gives a clear view of autonomy in Colombia where some individuals are not aware of what autonomy is, reason why many students of EFL are not conscious of the importance to use proper language learning strategies. Some of the learners do not know how to use a dictionary and others do not know how to store basic vocabulary or to translate, because they are not used to paying attention to their own feelings or using proper strategies to learn a language.

Therefore, teachers have to create a comfortable environment and help students through strategies that adjust the way of learning of each student. For example, in Colombia learners seek a mentor relationship with the teachers and tend to learn more when they share aspects of personal life and build a closer relation. Through this

confidence, teachers understand the way students learn better and guide the students to create their own strategies according to their learning styles.

Taking into account the conceptions above we can say that autonomy is the ability to be responsible for our own learning process and the construction of the independency to learn by ourselves, but without leaving behind the help and the guide that a tutor or teacher provides in the learning process. Autonomy guides and promotes the responsibility and the way of learning without the dependence on a teacher, although at the beginning a teacher's help is necessary to overcome the weaknesses in the language.

If the purpose of this project is to describe the attitudes that show autonomy through the learning styles reflected by students in the classroom, it is necessary to understand the variety of attitudes to show how autonomy towards English learning can help the process.

Retaking the concept of attitudes, we can say that these are the learnt reactions towards objects, people or situations based on the experiences individuals have with specific events. In an English class students are able to show their attitudes according to different activities proposed for the lesson. Those experiences will lead to different attitudes that will allow them to take advantage of the knowledge or, if they choose to waste it.

2.4 Attitudes towards Learning English. Attitudes towards English include affective, emotional and cognitive aspects. Those aspects make the learning process easier or more difficult for students who should reflect and evaluate their abilities, techniques, methods and strategies applied during the process.

Students show different attitudes towards learning English in the classroom: They show a response to the cooperative learning, to the use of language, to the teacher's attitude towards giving instructions, to the error corrections and even to their own limits. Attitudes are reflected on students during their learning process and lead to an active participation in order to promote efficient learning.

According to these attitudes, students would have the initiative to look for strategies that identify what makes their learning easier and at the same time has to classify them in order to define if they are useful or not, and this involves learning the language through discovery. These strategies are: contacting native speakers, practicing English skills outside the classroom, listening to the radio or watching television, reading books or magazines, interacting with other students, and some emotional and affective factors such as motivation and interest.

When stating that selecting the best ways to learn helps students to generate a positive and autonomous attitude towards learning, the students obtain results on a short term and identify the way they learn English and turn the strategies into efficient and productive ones (Villanueva & Navarro, 1997).

These strategies are a product of teachers' observation on the student's different learning styles. In the learning process, students are addressed by the English teacher, who takes into account ways of learning based on the learning styles presented by each one of the students.

2.5 Learning styles are different sets of methods and strategies by which students prefer to learn. There are several types of learning styles because of students acquire knowledge at various paces and ways. For instance, in a group of study where

all learners take the same classes, some of them present huge differences related to the way how they are able to acquire an input, in spite of they are performing the same activities. All of them will present different doubts and questions, and in the same way, they will advance in different areas of learning. While one student prefers to learn through writing or making grammar exercises, another can prefer listening to music and watching movies or videos.

To understand the world were we live, all of us receive information through the senses. Spite each one use a different combination of the five senses: visual, auditive, kinesthetic, taste and smell, having as a result a lot of ways of learning.

The traditional methods of teaching mainly use the visual and auditive senses, leaving outside the kinesthetic sense. A research made in EEUU, Japan and Hong Kong in order to determine the sensorial preference in 5.300 children in a specific class showed the following results:

➢ 29 % of the students presented visual learning

➢ 34% of the students presented auditive learning

➢ 37% of the students presented kinesthetic learning

Rita and Dunn made another research to determine the percentage of what students could remember after the class was finished, showing that:

➢ 40% of the students could remember about the 75% of what they had seen

➢ 30% of the students could remember about the 75% of what they had listened to

➢ 15% of the students could remember what they had touched or moved

➢ 15% of the students could remember what they had done physically

Their research had proved that every class is divided into three main learning styles: visual, auditive and kinesthetic. The other two senses smell and taste are used at the first months of our lives (Hearn & Garces, 2003)

For Willing (1998) and Wenden (1987) the notion of learning styles overlaps to the cognitive style but it is more comprehensive since it includes cognitive and affective behaviors which indicate the ways to perceive, interact and respond to the learning context

Dunn y Dunn (1975) mention that each human being has a dominant learning style which is not related to his IQ or economical status, and there are no good or bad learning styles. Although the style can change, the basic and strong characteristics change very little through the years. When a student learns through the appropriate style; she or he gets a significant learning improvement in academic performance, showing positive attitudes and behaviors in the learning process. Therefore, Dunn and Dunn state that there are three different learning styles: Visual, auditory and kinesthetic:

Visual learning: Students recognized by this learning style are the ones who prefer to develop activities through visual contact with educational material; they think about images and relate them to new information. They can get information more easily establishing relationships between ideas and concepts, they remember more from what they read than from what they hear; and materials like graphics, charts, diagrams are the best way for them to learn.

Auditory learning: Students prefer to learn by listening to different kinds of materials such a audiobooks, cds, among othres; they think in a ordered way and assimilate knowledge better when they explain it to another person, they are more likely

to learn listening to music, attending lectures and discussions which facilitate their learning, they remember more from what they hear than from what they read.

Kinesthetic learning: Students prefer to learn by interacting in different situations, they need to associate contents with movements or physical sensations, their learning processes are slower and their performance is higher in limited time tasks with frequent breaks, they can remember better what they do instead of what they see or hear.

Willing (1989) made another distinction of learning styles which seems to be the most appropriate for our project due to their relation with autonomy. He set four styles which are communicative, analytical, authority oriented and concrete:

Communicative*:* These learners like to learn by watching, listening to native speakers, talking to friends in English, watching television in English, using English out of class, learning new words by hearing them, and learning by conversation.

Analytical: These learners like studying grammar, studying English books and newspapers, studying alone, finding their own mistakes, and working on problems set by the teacher.

Authority-oriented*:* These learners prefer that the teacher explains everything, having their own textbook, writing everything in a notebook, studying grammar, learning by reading, and learning new words by seeing them.

Concrete*:* These learners tend to like games, pictures, film, video, using cassettes, talking in pairs, and practicing English outside classes.

Those learning styles are hugely connected to attitudes towards learning English because they allow us to know how our students can learn better, and what kind of

activities or strategies can be used . The teacher must also be aware of the different strengths, weaknesses and external factors students manisfest during the learning langage process.

In our practicum we used different strategies, materials and activities during the English classes, where we observed different attitudes on students. Some of these were: students enjoyed learning English through music, others liked to work in groups and others preferred to work alone. Then, according to the kind of learning style, students have different attitudes towards learning English.

We can connect students' attitudes toward learning English, taking into account those styles of learning, recognizing them in order to be focused to discover attitudes which affect the English learning process. At the same time the teacher takes advantage of the students' learning process as the way to improve the weaknesses, turning the English class into a more practical, funnier and successful experience.

Students' attitudes are so important to learning English because it reflects the way they feel related to the context. It is important to take into account several aspects that influence the way students learn such as space, time, classroom adaptation to foreign environment; materials, needs and objectives. Besides, teachers must take educative actions which integrate and help students to develop global attitudes as sharing, understanding, helping others, respecting, showing gestures of solidarity and being tolerant. Those attitudes can be promoted by teachers (Lamb & Reiders, 2008). In that way, classes become into the integral space that contributes to the development of students as able individuals to act in our society being responsible, and aware of their learning in education and life.

From our point of view, an English class is a very complex space in which both students and teachers identify different situations of their realities and overcome problems, which makes the class a very integral space. This class is also the space to talk about culture, interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, thoughts and ideas, letting the students reach their identity without limits. This is possible because an English class allows going beyond grammar and structures, and it becomes a more situational class in which others fields such as maths, science, history, literature can be linked in order to complement the English class.

3. Research Design

There are two types of approaches in order to collect and analyze data for a research project, the quantitative and the qualitative approaches. In our research project, we applied the qualitative approach because the concepts of autonomy and attitudes cannot be exactly measured.

3.1 Qualitative approach

We understand qualitative approach as a way which researchers focus on the characteristics of a group exploring its social relationships. Its purpose is to interpret and analyze the different aspects of human behavior presented in an specific group.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) the qualitative research is a naturalist-interpretative approach concerning with understanding the meaning which people attach to phenomena (actions, decisions, beliefs, values, etc) within their social world. This means that each person has a different perspective according to what he or she has lived or experienced. This allows the people's own interpretation about their relationship with the environment, behavior and reactions in different situations. We used the qualitative approach based on its purpose, which is to seek for the behaviors as the interpretation of the experiences. We decided to use this approach since the main question of our paper is directed to interpret and analyze students' attitudes that show autonomy related to the learning styles.

The Population involved in this study was night shift students of International business. The characteristics of these students were the following: Both genders, young students to grown up students, all of them worked, some of them have children.

3.2 Ethnographic Method.

The Ethnographic method was used in our research project, which was developed by anthropologists and sociologists based on descriptions of the empiric world and developing a theory that explains the human behavior. In order to achieve this, researchers apply participant and no participant observation, and then obtain reliable data of the phenomena just as seen in the real world (Goetz, 1988). Participant observation is the interaction between the observer and the object of study, and the way the observer is involved into the group. On the other hand, inside no participant observation there is no influence of the observer on the context, but he just describes it (Green & Thorogood, 2004).

Ethnography was applied in our project in the sense that students are observed during a specific period of time, observing and asking them questions to know what attitudes and beliefs they had regarding autonomy when they are learning English. Our methodology is based on the non participant observation, as we just describe the students' attitudes towards learning English, and we have no influence on their learning strategies.

3.3 Data collection procedures

According to our research method, we applied journals, questionnaires and interviews as our instruments. Donald Freeman (1998) mentions an article titled ~~called~~ *Teacher's voices: Exploring course design in a Changing Curriculum* (1995), which describes all the characteristics about the instruments used.

3.3.1 Questionnaires.

The questionnaire (see Annex 1) involved some questions about definitions of autonomy, in which the students had to give their ideas upon the concept. This was done in order to find out what their perceptions and beliefs were about autonomy.

A questionnaire is defined as a set of written questions focused on a specific topic. In that sense we used questionnaires to know which strategies and activities English learners applied inside and outside the classroom, in order to improve their level. Taking into account the time of the class, we decided to apply those questionnaires at the end of it explaining them our thesis project objective, in which we needed to collect information that allowed us to recognize different concepts about autonomy and attitudes of an autonomous person (See Annex 6.). Thanks to this we could perceive their attitudes toward learning English and the activities and strategies they do in order to improve their proficiency.

3.3.2 Teacher Interview.

The interview was based on questions directed to the teacher in order to know his perception about the attitudes of the students that showed autonomy. We developed three interviews to three different teachers based on the same type of questions, in which teachers had to answer an open question about the behaviors he saw in the students.

This instrument is face-directed and consists of a series of verbal questions about any particular topics (1995). We used this tool in order to know the concept of autonomy the teacher had according to his/her experience with night shift English language learners. These interviews were applied at the end of a class in which we

asked the teacher for permission to do so. This instrument was performed because we wanted to identify the attitudes the teacher perceived in each class when she or he did some activities, explained any topic, gave them homework and asked questions during the class related to grammar exercises or theory.

The Questionnaires and the interviews (See Annex 4.) helped us determine the student's conception of autonomy and how they applied this concept in their daily language learning process, more specifically inside and outside the English classes.

3.3.3 Journals.

The third instrument used in the project was the journals (See Annex 5.). Freeman (1998) says that journals are used to state learning plans, class activities, personal philosophies or ideas, feelings and reactions towards any element, reflections, observations and explanations.

Taking this into account, we used journals to observe the English classes and to determine the kind of attitudes students showed. In that sense, we could establish which ones of them helped us to identify different levels of autonomy in students. We applied journals during two semesters focused on answering our research question. The format designed contained three columns: the first one described students' attitudes in the classroom, the second one was focused on connecting those attitudes towards the autonomy concepts and the last one was directed to improve our practice according to the observations. Thereby, we did one journal per class and group.

3.4 Triangulation.

The next step was data analysis. In order to accomplish this step, we used triangulation, explained by Freeman (1998) in this way:

Triangulation is about what makes something study, things that are triangulated are better balanced and physically more dependable that things that are not, because they are able to stand by themselves. Triangulation includes multiple sources of information or points of view or questions you are investigating.

The sociologist Martin Denzin (1978) gives some details about four basic types of triangulation:

3.4.1 Data triangulation: it is the study of a student's writing, and it might use the writing itself, corrections and assessments of another teacher; and on the other hand it might use the writing samples, students' perceptions, and the points of view. In that way, we asked some students in order to know the concept of autonomy they had by using a questionnaire.

3.4.2 Investigator: triangulation uses more than one investigator to gather data; it might have a fellow teacher making field notes on the writing class, or a student who conducts some interviews. In our practicum there were six of us as investigators. We worked by pairs gathering data through the different instruments.

3.4.3 Methodological triangulation: It uses multiple ways to collect data, and thus to study the problem. It might conduct observations and interviews, and collect student work to study the research question. We applied three instruments which were journals, questionnaires and teacher interview. These instruments allowed us to get

information in the practice place with students of different careers and different English levels.

   3.4.4 Triangulation in time and / or location: It means collecting the same forms of data and using the same method over a given time period or with the same sources in several different locations. We collected data at CUN once a week during one year, taking the English classes as the appropriate space to do so.

   The triangulation can build stability and confidence in how you interpret your data and thus in what you find; it illuminates problems and anomalies, and thus raises new questions to pursue. Triangulation is recursive and not linear, you keep returning to the question of how you can know more, have more confidence in what you are finding, and thus how you can collect more or different data, or how you can look differently at the data you already have.

4. Data Analysis

In this chapter we present the findings of this project which include a description of analysis processes and the categories that emerged from the data analysis and the instruments. The first thing to do is to take the main question up:

How do students' learning styles reveal autonomous attitudes towards learning

the language?

The instruments applied at CUN during the practice were the interviews directed to the teachers; questionnaires directed to the students and journals based on their English classes. The way they were carried out was, firstly, journals development in which we wrote down their behaviors during different English classes and responses towards activities proposed by the teacher. Secondly, surveys were applied, where students had to answer to open questions about the concept of autonomy and ways of behaving that reflect their autonomy. Thirdly, interviews asking the teachers for their conception about autonomy and what they perceived from their students related to autonomy.

Taking into account the objectives, which were firstly, to identify attitudes that show the students' autonomy towards learning English through the learning styles; secondly, to explore students' attitudes toward learning English that demonstrate autonomy; and thirdly, to determine what learning styles students show according to their attitudes during English classes, we took each one of the instruments and organized the answers in charts. With the first instrument which was journals, we typed the more frequent answers related to students' attitudes that reflected autonomy and

classified them in order to set categories. This was done in four classes setting three groups of categories: General attitudes (which mean the attitudes the whole group showed), specific attitudes (the ones observed in a few students) and how autonomy was reflected by those attitudes. Through the second instrument, questionnaires, we made open questions in which participants (students chosen at random) answered about learning English and their concept of autonomy. These data were codified until we got the general categories by identifying the more frequent answers. The third instrument, which was the interview, was applied to four teachers to gather information about their concepts of autonomy and students' attitudes. The entire interviews were transcribed, and the answers that were most commonly found were joined and set as categories.

Attitudes in this chapter are specified by the external factors that make each attitude be recognized as the way student's behavior according to different learning situations

4.1 Categories Resulting from the Analysis

QUESTIONS	CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES
MAIN QUESTION: How do students' learning styles reveal autonomous attitudes towards learning the language?	-Students who practice a foreign language through internet, listening to music and watching movies tend to direct more independent learning. -Students Show an attitude of interest towards the foreign language through a concrete and analytical learning style.	-Students tend to work according to an authority oriented learning style
SUB QUESTIONS: -What attitudes that demonstrate autonomy do the students show? -What learning styles reveal autonomous attitudes?	- Independent work shows an autonomous attitude related to analytical and concrete learning styles -Passiveness is seen in students when they avoid participating during classes and performing extra activities.	-Students show an attitude of boredom when they receive a class without motivation or interaction

4.2 Students who practice a foreign language through internet, listening to music and watching movies tend to direct more independent learning.

According to what students said in the open questions about how to overcome the learning difficulties in the English language and how to improve their learning, we could identify that they practice English through resources like the internet, music, videos and movies, enabling better self-learning. This practice showed a positive aspect related to the activity, expressing an autonomous attitude towards the language learning. Defining practice, D'Agostino (1991) says that practice is an activity which requires perfectioning, giving the student both the opportunity to show his abilities and the possibility to enhance and ease learning and exercises.

One student said that one way to overcome the learning difficulties in English was: "practicing, because English is a lot of practice". Other student mentioned: "Listening to music and downloading the lyrics of the song". A third student said: "See the programs, movies in English and listen to music" and a final student expressed: "To listen to the movies and music in English". These answers and other similar ones showed that students felt safer and connected with the language.

In this case, students are applying one of the main concepts of what autonomy is. According to Benson (1999) when we talk about autonomous learning, we could say that it is about people taking more control over their learning process in classrooms and outside them. Likewise, when learning and designing strategies to overcome shortcomings, it is understood as autonomous learning (Manrique, 2004).

4.3 Students tend to work according to an authority oriented learning style.

Based on practicing independently in a foreign language, students use to study at home using a concrete learning style trying to improve their language proficiency. Despite of that, we perceived through the journals that the autonomy they show outside the classroom is not performed inside the classroom since they depend on the teacher to accomplish the assigned tasks and therefore, do not reflect the needed proficiency level in the foreign language.

This is evident in the journals when we observed that several students need a person to controle and motivate them in order to develop the assigned activities (see data encryption chart "autonomy reflected")

Keeping into account the above we see that students work inside the classroom, but only when teachers help them because they have many difficulties in their English classes and when a task is assigned they cannot do it by themselves and they have many doubts to solve the activity proposed, if teachers do not help them they do not carry out the task and begin to talk with each other, they get bored and as a result we perceived students totally frustrated.

This is showed through observation. When students have a lot of doubts regarding how to develop an activity, they do not pay attention to class nor develop the tasks (see data encryption chart "specific attitudes and autonomy reflected")

According to our observations about students' attitudes inside the classroom we could determine that students have many difficulties to work in class, and that is the reason why they need to ask the teacher constantly about what they have to do. Holec

(1979) defines 'autonomy' as the learner's ability to be responsible for his or her learning. However, we see that through the questions made in class by students and the disorientation they have in the classroom when a task is assigned, they tend to be absent minded, to talk about other issues, to get bored, but overall to feel frustration, reflecting that they can not be responsible for their own learning if a teacher does not give a solution to their frequent doubts.

We could observe this through group attitudes reflected in journals when realizing that students talked about different matters in pairs rather than the subjects' issues. Students also needed to listen to the instructions in Spanish in order to carry out the activity because otherwise, they did not do it and that is the reason why they felt bored and frustrated.

Students felt, scared, worried, and they feel dependency to what the teacher says inside the classroom. We observed that they wanted to learn, the disposition was inside them, but the low English level did not allow them to emerge in the classroom, and as a consequence they felt unmotivated.

We support the above through the questionnaires because when asking the question "How do you overcome the difficulties presented when learning English?" they answered "being auto-didactic and using the necessary resources to overcome them, success is up to me". Based on this we can deduce that students did have the desire of learning but they depended on the teacher very much, and they did not have the required level.

The quantity of knowledge they have is not proportional to the English class requirements and for that reason they do not do homework. They want to learn,

although the time invested to study English outside the classroom is not enough. Moreover, another aspect to highlight is that students need a teacher near them so they can understand and carry out the task assigned at home, due to their teacher dependence. This is reflected through their attitudes inside the classroom when they cannot perform a task, showing lack of interest which is reflected through the frustration and fear to participate and therefore the interaction in the foreign language class is little.

This is reflected in journals since we noticed that even though students had question, they did not ask them because they did not how to do it in English. They also stated that they do not have enough time to develop homework.

The above shows us they are autonomous but the way they use the learning styles to learn English is not used in a proper way. The problem is that language learning strategies are not reflected as expected by students in class, they constantly need a guide. We perceived they work by themselves, but not the necessary to be able to work in the English class level they are usually confronted.

They are not aware about what autonomy is and in consequence how to carry out proper strategies to accomplish with the English level required in their classes. We can support that with Fandiño (2008) who says that in Colombia some individuals are not used to be aware about autonomy is, reason why many students of EFL are not conscious of the importance to use properly language learning strategies. It means that although they want to learn, the time invested is not enough and they do not know how to use learning strategies to improve their English level. Consequently, they cannot connect it with their English classes, reason why the results of their independent work are not reflected in the English class.

4.4 Students Show an attitude of interest towards the foreign language through a concrete and analytical learning style.

After developing the observations inside the class, an interest attitude was perceived in the students. This is understood as a value given towards something, in this specific case, to learning English.

We could identify that students show an attitude of interest towards a foreign language through a concrete and analytical learning style. This attitude showed a high level of autonomy because students prefer to study a foreign language through resources like watching movies, listening to music, using the internet and others in which they can improve pronunciation and at the same time to work more safely and compromised. We could also observe that students worked with any of these resources, they were more involved in learning a foreign language because when they listened to music and the lyrics of a song several times they could recognize or tried to understand what the song said. Another way is when they watched movies, they got information through images and situations of the real life and tried to understand the expressions that native language speakers use and the pronunciation, and the same time to know a new culture. This and other resources are important for the students because they are more interested in learning a foreign language and have more enthusiasm, motivation in the practice of a language and work by themselves.

According to Holec (1981) autonomy is the capacity of taking being in charge of our own learning, Dickinson (1987) defines autonomy as the learning situation in which the individual manifests and attitude of responsibility and self-direction.

Therefore, the attitude of interest to learn a foreign language by resources such as technology, games, music and movies are tools that promote language learning.

4.5 Students show an attitude of boredom when they receive a class without motivation or interaction

When students are learning a foreign language and come into the classroom, they expect to get an enthusiastic class which leads them to knowledge and learning. According to the observations from journals, we could identify that students showed an attitude of boredom when they received a class without motivation or interaction.

If teachers developed their classes applying some techniques from a traditional way like following instructions from a book or extending in a topic explanation, students were not be motivated into the class and learning a foreign language became a burden.

Therefore, they decided to do other things such as talking to their partners, going out of the classroom or playing on the computers. This practice evidenced students were not interested in participating or interacting in the class. According to Villanueva & Navarro (1997) selecting the best ways to learn helps students to generate positive and autonomous attitudes towards learning. Students obtain results on a short term and identify the way they learn English and turn the strategies into efficient and productive ones. Consequently, the evidence of boredom tends to be an unfavorable practice and therefore there is not greater autonomy.

4.6 Independent work shows an autonomous attitude related to analytical and concrete learning styles

A student who researches on his or her own shows an attitude related to independence, since he or she does not necessarily need a tutor to study. Students who direct learning experiences through realia, such as videos, TV programs, movies and newspapers; and specific grammar and language exercises, develop the habit of working by themselves, which promotes autonomous learning.

After performing the interviews all teachers agreed that something that defines an autonomous student is the ability to work independently. Quoting what one teacher said "*Autonomous learning is when a student has the capacity to acquire knowledge by himself, it is when a student is permanently researching about things that have relation with English. It is when a student does not depend on the class and works at home alone with the elements that he has for example media and internet and he can enjoy it*" This practice was also found in the questionnaires, when asked the question "How do you go through the difficulties presented when learning English?", some answers were related to autonomous learning with activities such as listening to music, watching movies, reading magazines, looking for specific issues on the internet, attending tutorials, practicing and associating. This practice showed autonomy because students identified their weaknesses and implemented strategies to improve the skills they were presenting difficulties and overcome obstacles (Manrique, 2004), therefore they were aware of their English learning process and made decisions to change the unpleasant situation (Dickinson, 1977)

These answers also showed a relation to the communicative and concrete learning styles since the resources they use in order to overcome difficulties are the ones that define the previously mentioned styles. Watching movies and listening to music show a communicative learning style and using the internet relates to the concrete one.

4.7 Passiveness is seen in students when they avoid participating during classes and performing extra activities

Postponing activities builds a barrier for people who have set goals in short and long term. In educational fields, not much can be achieved if students show this tendency when learning English. Passiveness is a major reason of why students cannot get to be autonomous and this is seen nowadays in several academic spaces, as said by some English teachers in the interviews. Quoting what one teacher expressed: "*they are passive because most of the students in Colombia do not have an interest about learning English, and most of the times they are obligated to learn English, they do not show like a motivation, they do not have the energy to have the initiative to do the activities related to assignments or tasks*" Retaking Allwright (1990), willingness is a major factor of autonomy but without disposition little can be done. If the subject is not open to new experiences, new input and new knowledge, he will not get it despite of what teachers do. This issue was also observed in the open questions directed to the students, because when asked "what English topics have you learned by yourself without other's help?" some of them answered none because of different reasons, such as lack of guiding or not understanding by themselves. When observing the classes, we

could identify that some students resigned to acquire the input the teacher transmitted and avoided participating in class, especially when speaking.

Although this is not a common factor in university students, it is in Colombian EFL students, since they are not completely aware of what autonomy and autonomous learning is, nor the importance of English for their lives and careers (Fandiño, 2008). Their idea of what English means as a language is not enough for them to deeply get into it. According to what teachers said about their conceptions of autonomy in their students through the interview, we could identify that students do not pay attention to class. One teacher said students are not interested in learning English because they cannot find any use for it. As they are not interested, going to an English class represents nothing more than a requirement. When they are told that an activity worth a grade is when they start becoming interested. Another reason is that they consider English as a language and nothing more than that. This practice was observed during the whole classes in some students as it was written down in the journals. Students got distracted very easily, mostly because they had a computer in front of them and they could do other things instead of paying attention. Some other times, they started talking to their classmates and forgot all about the activity.

In this case, students are not applying what Young (1986) and Holec (1979) explain as autonomy. They say it is the ability to take responsibility over learning process and be in charge of it, but if the student is not willing to do so (Allwright, 1990) there is no autonomy.

This evidence of passiveness in students leads to just one possible learning style: authority oriented. In this case, students always need a guide who tells them what

to do. However, studying by this style means learning, but without interest and disposition is not probable that students actually learn.

5. Conclusions

There was not a predominant learning style among students. According to the categories seen in the data analysis, the total amount of students divided into authority oriented learning style, concrete learning style, analytical learning style and communicative learning style. This fact demonstrates that students' autonomy in class is not determined by the learning style each one of them apply, even though authority oriented is the only one that is followed by a non autonomous behavior.

This implies that students who need a tutor or a guide to go through their language learning experiences (authority oriented learning style) will not develop an autonomous study. Therefore, it will always depend on the teacher's perception of his or her improvement in English lessons. This avoids the student to take control over his learning, he will not be able to know his strengths nor weaknesses, he will ignore his mistakes and will not correct them, and as a product, he will not be able to set his own studying schedule or techniques with which he best learns the language.

Other than that, the other three learning styles promote autonomous learning by permitting students to work by themselves with different sources related to each specific learning style. A communicative style allows students interaction with native speakers, listening and watching to different English products and talking to partners. As this involves out of curriculum activities, students can perform them by themselves, and that way to learn how to pronounce words, accurate their accent and improve their vocabulary. An analytical style focuses on the cognitive part of the individual, making him think and understand the different rules and topics by practicing, making mistakes

and correcting them. This way, students are away of their weaknesses and strengths, and therefore, they are applying autonomous learning. Finally, a concrete learning style leads the students to didactic activities in which they have fun and enjoy with different games, riddles and puzzles, but at the same time they learn how to use English, without them to know it.

Taking into account the first category "Students who practice a foreign language through internet, listening to music and watching movies tend to direct more independent learning", it is said that they can improve their language proficiency, showing a good attitude towards the language and be aware of the difficulties they present. Therefore it is also said that students at CUN work according to the main learning styles which are the visual, in which the students learn better when reading or seeing the information rather than following and oral explanation. The authority , in which students learn better when they listen to the explanations and give them to other people.

On the other hand, from the sub-category "Students tend to work according to an authority oriented learning style" we could deduce that they work with different learning styles in order to overcome the difficulties presented, but there is still the necessity to reorient the way in which these learning styles are used by them so they are actually helpful.

In the category "Students show an attitude of interest towards the foreign language through a concrete and analytical learning style" we observed that students like to work by using videos, images and songs. Nevertheless, we think those kind of activities could be performed by teachers and therefore students would take advantages

of the tools in an autonomous way. That is the point when the teacher can help students developing activities in which concrete and analytical styles are more reflected.

In the next category "Students show an attitude of boredom when they receive a class without motivation or interaction" clases can become monotonous when they are book based and focused in the authority oriented learning style. Although they work following this style, it could be a cause of boredom and distraction reflected in clases.

Within the category "Independent work shows an autonomous attitude related to analytical and concrete learning styles" we found that students showed an autonomous attitude by working independently when finding difficulties and barriers in the learning process. They used resources related to the analytical and concrete learning styles, which are useful to develop an autonomous sense of the learning experience because the materials and techniques used demand the students to be aware of aspects they have difficulty with and to find the best way to cope with them.

In the last category, "Pasiveness is seen in students when they avoid participating during clases and performing extra activities", we perceived that students were not autonomous at all. They just did not go beyond from what the teacher told, and in some cases they did not even do the homework and tasks assigned.

Being passive in a foreign language class is not a good way to take advantage of all the available knowledge and opportunities given, because a language student must be proactive in order to become successful. Otherwise, the students will just waste time and he will regret afterwards. If the case is the one of a passive student who follows instructions and accomplish tasks, he will present an authority oriented learning style. This way, the student may learn but since an autonomous attitude towards learning

English is missing, proficiency and achievements will not be as rewarding as the ones of

an autonomous learner.

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Pedagogical Implications

In this Project we highlighted the importance of two aspects such as learning styles and students' attitudes towards learning English, showing their relevance when teaching a foreign language.

Regarding learning styles, we recognized that as teachers we focus on language teaching itself, and many times we do not understand why some activities and strategies work with some groups and do not work with others as expected.

According to research and the process we carried out, we found that in some groups students showed positive attitudes and a lot of interest for learning, while in other groups attitudes were negative and did not contribute to the development of the class.

Therefore, we consider that learning styles are directly related to the different attitudes students can reveal in class. These styles show strengths and preferences when it comes to learning. After taking into account these ways of learning, it is possible to identify different strategies for students to learn a language.

Besides, the teacher has the responsibility of leading his students to the subject's objective in a balanced and integral manner in which interaction comes form both parts keeping positive aspects such as interest, autonomy and motivation thereby helping to reduce negative attitudes as boredom, passiveness or lack of interest.

. Another important aspect of autonomy and autonomous learning are the participants of the whole process, since it does not entirely depend on the student's attitudes but also on the teacher's disposition to manage his or her classes.

One thing about students is that besides all the attitudes they show in English classes and all factors that come together, there are also some external factors that affect their performance: personal problems, fear to participate in class, insecurity or fear of being a target of jokes, bad mood and personal or professional concerns were some factors related to their learning process.

On the other hand, teachers have also responsibility on making students interested and catching them to their classes and in that way generate an environment in which students feel comfortable and committed to learn.

A way teachers might change attitudes that show no autonomy towards English could be the use of new strategies taking advantage of the enormous advance in technology. Teachers could use computers, cell phones, mp3 or mp4, i-pod, psp or any modern electronic device. This would be easier because students would be interested in learning through the things they use in their daily lives and that are forbidden in almost all academic spaces. This could be the way to use technology for the teachers, and not against us, so we could avoid the day in which teachers are replaced by some metallic pieces.

As we realized, the most common thing about the three learning styles that enhance autonomous learning is the use of different strategies, techniques and activities in a didactic and non-traditional way. They have a lot of pros, such as higher students' self confidence, awareness of the best way to learn and ability to correct their mistakes by themselves. Eventually, autonomous students will become autonomous individuals, who will apply this concept to their daily lives improving all aspects of their personal and professional lives.

Further Research

As we were developing our project, several doubts, concerns, ideas and changes came up. Firstly, the original idea for our main question was about identifying the levels in which autonomous attitudes were shown. When we got up to a point in which levels were not an essential part of what we wanted to investigate, we left them behind. This issue would be important to be studied because when talking about levels, autonomy would become into a measurable concept and therefore, one could be aware of what one needs to reach the next level.

Secondly, we realized that the concept of motivation covers a great range of theory which can be deeply researched in next projects. As we referred to what autonomy is, motivation is really linked to this concept and cannot be forgotten.

This is also related to how autonomous we are allowed to be. It would be a good option to understand how autonomy was conceived before by people who could not get to be autonomous, and also by high ranked individuals who did not find it profitable to manage people who were critical. After that, a comparison about this conception and the one from people nowadays should be done, since school and university's curriculums demand their students to be autonomous.

Annexes

Annex 1.
Open Questions about autonomy

STUDENTS LOG

NOMBRE: Leslie Maldonado.

FECHA: 29-09-09

1- Para usted qué es autonomía?
2- Qué haces para desarrollar esa autonomía?
3- Cuáles son las características de una persona autónoma?
4- Usted se considera una persona autónoma? Si No y por qué?

RESPUESTAS

1- Es saber trabajar solo, sin tener a alguien todo el tiempo diciéndome lo que tengo que hacer

2- Utilizo el Internet, pregunto, leo, escucho noticias, etc.

3- -le gusta investigar.
- quiere siempre aprender cosas nuevas.

4- Si, si me interesa un tema, investigo cosas sobre eso sin que me lo impongan.

Annex. 1.1. *Open questions learning English*

Grace Loreta

Secion 9

NOMBRE: Alejandra Tolaza Vargas
GRUPO: 4
FECHA: 22-09-09

1- ¿Cómo usted supera las dificultades que se presentan en el aprendizaje de ingles?
2- Qué temas de inglés ha aprendido por usted mismo sin la ayuda de otras personas?
3- Qué actividades de refuerzo usted aplica para mejorar su aprendizaje del inglés?

1 Creo que lo más conveniente para las dificultades en ingles esta en la practica y realizando oraciones.

2 Ninguno, creo pienso que tenemos que obtener la ayuda de otas personas ya que son bastantes los interrogantes y las dificultades que tengamos en cuanto a los nuevos temas.

3. la practica y seguir las explicaciones correctamente y hacer cada dia mejor para la mejora del aprendizaje.

Annex 2.
Questions about autonomy

¿Que entiendes por autonomia? todo lo que hago por aparte de clase para practicar lo enseñado.

Consideras que puedes llegar a ser autónomo (a)? Si

Conocer alguna actividad que sirva para desarrollar aprendizaje autonomo? no

Te gustaria ser mas autonomo en cuanto al aprendizaje del idioma ingles. Como lo lograrias? Por actividades como completar Workbooks o CD Para mejorar el vocabulario y Pronunciacion

¿Que medios usas para mejorar tu aprendizaje del idioma ingles? Escuchar musica.

Crees que el aprendizaje de una segunda lengua (Ingles) depende de la enseñanza que recibes en esta institucion. Por que? Si Porque es donde tomamos las bases para apriender ingles

Annex 3.
Learning Styles

10

Learning styles

Please read the sentences carefully, and tick the ones that apply to you.

a-
✓ In class, I like to learn by games.
✓ In class, I like to learn by pictures, films, video.
____ I like to learn the foreign language by talking in pairs.
I like to go out with the class and practice the foreign language.
✓ At home, I like to learn by using cassettes.
✓ In class, I like to listen and use cassettes.

b-
I like to study grammar.
✓ At home, I like to learn by studying foreign language books.
✓ I like to study the foreign language by myself (alone)
____ I like the teacher to let me find my mistakes.
I like the teacher to give us problems to work on.
✓ At home, I like to learn by reading newspapers.

c-
✓ I like to learn by watching, listening to foreign language speakers.
✓ I like to learn by talking to friends in the foreign language.
✓ At home, I like to learn by watching TV in the foreign language.
____ I like to learn by using the foreign language in shops, on the phone....
____ I like to learn the foreign language words by hearing them.
✓ In class, I like to learn by conversations.

d-
✓ I like the teacher to explain everything to us.
✓ I want to write everything in my notebook.
✓ I like to have my own textbook.
____ In the foreign language class, I like to learn by reading.
____ I like to study grammar.
✓ I like learn new words by seeing them.

Key:
Each group of sentences corresponds to a learning style, as follows:
a- Concrete b- Analytical c- Communicative d- Authority oriented.

Most students are characterized by a mixture of two or three styles, with a dominant one among them.

Name: Katherine Galindo.

Annex 3.1.
Learning styles survey

LEARNING STYLES date: October 6 2009															
CONCRETE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	T
In class, I like to learn by games	/														
In class, I like to learn by pictures, films video.	/														
I like to learn the foreign language by talking in pairs.	/														
I like to go out with the class and practice the foreign language.	/														
I like use the internet															
At home, I like to learn by using cassettes.															
In class, I like to listen and use cassettes.															
ANALYTICAL															
I like to study grammar.	/														
At home, I like to learn by studying foreign language books.	/														
I like to study the foreign language by myself (alone)															
I like the teacher correct my mistakes at the moment	/														
I like the teacher to let me find my mistakes.															
I like the teacher to give us problems to work on.	/														
At home, I like to learn by reading newspapers.	/														
COMMUNICATIVE															
I like, to learn by watching, listening to foreign language speakers.	/														
I like to learn by talking to friends in the foreign	/														

Annex 3.2.

At home, I like to learn by watching TV in the foreign language.	✗															
I like to learn by using the foreign language in shops, on the phone.																
I like to learn the foreign language words by hearing them.																
In class, I like to learn by conversations.	✗															
AUTHORITY ORIENTED																
I like the teacher to explain everything to us.	✗															
I want to write everything in my notebook.																
I like to have my own textbook.	✗															
In the foreign language class, I like to learn by reading.																
I like to study grammar.																
I like learn new words by seeing them.	✗															

At home, I like to learn by watching TV in the foreign language.	X														
I like to learn by using the foreign language in shops, on the phone.															
I like to learn the foreign language words by hearing them.															
In class, I like to learn by conversations.	X														
AUTHORITY ORIENTED															
I like the teacher to explain everything to us.	X														
I want to write everything in my notebook.															
I like to have my own textbook.	X														
In the foreign language class, I like to learn by reading.															
I like to study grammar.															
I like learn new words by seeing them.	X														

Annex 3.3.

	X															
At home, I like to learn by watching TV in the foreign language.																
I like to learn by using the foreign language in shops, on the phone.																
I like to learn the foreign language words by hearing them.	X															
In class, I like to learn by conversations.	X															
AUTHORITY ORIENTED																
I like the teacher to explain everything to us.																
I want to write everything in my notebook.																
I like to have my own textbook.	X															
In the foreign language class, I like to learn by reading.	X															
I like to study grammar.																
I like learn new words by seeing them.	X															

Annex 4.
Teacher Interview Transcription

Questions	Teacher A.	Teacher B.	Teacher C.	Teacher D.	Categories
1-What kind of attitudes do you see when your students are working by themselves?	1- Some time are distracted, some time pay attention, some others are really Motivation to work.	1-Depends on the level of students use a lot of They are interesting, enthusiastic, they have a lot of questions, they are ambitious to get the information but they know the limitations they have, like lack of vocabulary, in some cases it generates frustration and panic. Spanish Use the dictionary Improve their language at home, direct the questions to the teacher, they try to improve the language they achieve in order to get better and improve they do the homework.	1-They are interesting, enthusiastic, they have a lot of questions, they are ambitious to get the information but they know the limitations they have, like lack of vocabulary, in some cases it generates frustration and panic.	1-most of the time students have the capacity to work under their responsibility.

Where students like music a lot they are very independent in their learning English process. | 1-Distracted Pay Attention Motivation To Work Responsibility Independent Enthusiastic Have A Lot of Questions

Lack of Autonomy Frustration And Panic |
| 2-when you assign tasks to your students, what attitudes do you perceive? For example: (see below chart) They get bored / they make others tasks They get happy / they are distracted They get an attitude of challenge / they pay attention | 2-"Some people they get bored

Some other people they get an attitude of challenge, some others are passives". | 2-they achieve in order to get better and improve when they do the homework. | 2-It depends of the way I present the task, if I present the task with energy, enthusiastic and try to motivate my students, they have and attitude of challenge. | 2-they are passive: because most of the students in Colombia do not have an interest about learning English. and most of the times they are obligated to learn English, they do not show like a motivation, they do not have the energy to have the initiative to do the activities related to assignments tasks They pay attention: because most of the times they know that there is a process behind the | 2-Get Bored, attitude of challenge passives do not have interest depends on the teacher try to motive students they are obligated they do not show motivation They do not have energy and initiative They pay attention, because they know that activity has a |

They get worried / they are not attending They are passive / they are energetic Others causes:				activities, when the teacher says that those activities have a grade they pay attention immediately	grade.
3-What do you think about the causes of those attitudes?	3- Well for me, the main problem is lack of motivation.		3-It depends of the connection between teacher and student, and the methodology.	3-lack of initiative lack of energy to learn lack of interest	3- Lack of Motivation Lack of Initiative Lack of Energy to Learn Lack of Interest Depends of The Teacher Connection With Students
4-Have you focused on a specific student for some special attitude? What is the student's name?	4-"Generally, I focus away on motivation. And I take some kind of examples. American examples dollars win or lose the importance of the money in the life.		4-There are students that always wanted to improving their English level, but I have not preferences because students feel that.	4-from time to time you can find students with serious problems or learning problems in classes for those students you have focused basically in extra attention because the student doesn´t pay attention, he doesn't give results.	4-Lack of Attention Lack of Results In The Learning Process want to improve their level
5-What kind of attitude she or he reveal towards an autonomy way in the classroom? Say why do you think she or he has those attitudes?	5-"Is very difficult aspect because most of the time, students don't understand what is the autonomy in class I explain and explain that autonomy is important inside and outside classroom.	5- At the end of the level students are in the same conditions. Focus on specific students could be dangerous. Some of them are leaders.	5- I consider the origin of that attitude depends of the motivation I give them to learn English, I help them to improve their level.	5-they do not pay attention, all the time they try to avoid the assignments or units, they do not show up, absences, lack of interest, low performance, low grades, and indiscipline, frustration, Students expressed, they think English is only an idiom it is not useful for anything.	5-they do not pay attention Avoid the assignments They do not show up The absences Lack of interest Low performance Low grades Indiscipline constantly Frustration -They do not see English useful for anything Depends of the motivation the teacher gives them.
6-According to your experience as English teacher, What do you understand about autonomy?	6-"Auto determination by themselves".	6- Autonomy is doing the thing than you have to do, by yourself. Autonomy isn't very common. Nowadays it is difficult and there not conscious about that.	6-Self-learning, methodic, homework and honest.	6-is when a student has the capacity to acquire knowledge by himself, is when a student is permanently researching about things that have relation with English or whatever is when a student does not depend on the class, and work at home alone with the elements that he has for example media	6-Autodetermination by themselves capacity to acquire knowledge by himself student is permanently researching about things that have relation with English a student does not depend on the class Work at home alone with the elements that

				and internet and he can enjoy it.	he has self-learning, methodic, homework and honest.
7-What do you understand about autonomous learning?	7- Learn by the motivation, and autonomous working in class.	7- Have the possibility that you can learn any specific topic by your own.	7-Continuous learning and practice.	7-is search whatever is necessary the knowledge elements to acquire one specific skill, learn about specific languages, students have the capacity to search for the information by themselves to learn more, these students do not have the necessity to join a group or a class because they usually get all the information they need without help .	7-Learn by the motivation Autonomous working in class". is search whatever is necessary the knowledge elements to acquire one specific skill learn about specific languages students have the capacity to search for the information by themselves these students do not have the necessity to join a group or a class They usually get all the information they need without help. Continuous practice and learning.
8-What kind of attitudes, help you to determine the level of autonomy in your students?	8-You must observe the students level of autonomy through their attitudes, some are very young and other are very old I notice that through the degree of autonomy level.	8- When they do the homework, making exams I can see how students are studying, how they performance in the classroom, how they can act in class. Students participate in class.	8-The faces they show me in my class help me to determinate that, they change their face when I give them homework. They get happy when they identify the topic.	8-basically the production level, when a student has the capacity to produce orally, writing, speaking is the best way to know is a student has autonomous learning process when they produce in a class it is the result to acquire knowledge at home when they have autonomy they have the capacity to speak expressing their ideas.	8-autonomous learning process when they produce in a class it is the result to acquire knowledge at home students change their face with homework, Students get happy when they understand the topic.

Note: transcription of the interview by each teacher and by each question. Then the data is classified in the column of categories

Annex 5. *Journal*

Elementary Level English Business		Room: English Laboratory
Subject: Present Simple & Imperatives		Date: Third November, 2009
STUDENTS' ATTITUDES IN THE CLASSROOM	**CONNECTING THOSE ATTITUDES TOWARDS AUTONOMY**	**TO IMPROVE PRACTICES**
When the class was begging some of students used the computers in the laboratory, then, they were distracted and when the teacher said or asked for something, they did not understand and the teacher repeated the explanation of the activity. Students enjoyed the second activity where they did some actions inside and outside the classroom, moving and participating actively; the teacher was observing and helping to students about unknown vocabulary to continue playing; to the end students were very happy and motivated because they played and learnt in the same time. The oral part between the teacher and students was in some cases hard, because students asked to the teacher translates everything in Spanish,	In that class, some of students showed an attitude of distraction which did not contribute to autonomy, students distracted need to be controlled by the teacher.

On the other hand, others students participated actively showing an attitude of interest and motivation to participate in each activity as an autonomous learners feature.

Some of students showed certain grade of dependence of the teacher when they asked the instruction or explanation in Spanish without an effort to understand by themselves. | Students enjoy the English class when the teacher use activities to work in groups also move around the desk or room. We should take into account activities to encourage students to participate, talking and sharing fun, learning about a topic or improving their skills. It is important to use good material and activities to have the attention of the students. In activities when they were talking about something, the majority of them were fear and unsure, which it is necessary to show a model or an example before they start. After each activity the teacher should give a feedback or one practice exercise to be sure students had understood. Work a strategy to students can memorize vocabulary, could be use pictures, or a memory game according to the activity. |

Annex 6. *Exploring concepts of autonomy*

1.   ¿cómo usted supera las dificultades que se presenta en el aprendizaje del inglés?

Respuestas	Codificacion	Categorias
Asociando con otras situaciones y practicando mucho. *Practicando porque el inglés es de mucha práctica. *Siendo autodidacta, utilizando los medios necesarios para superarlos. De mi depende el éxito. *Repasando en casa y asistiendo a tutorías. *Chequeo en internet si no entiendo algo de vocabulario y para listening me gusta escuchar música en ingles y bajar las letras de las canciones. *Trato de leer y entender estudio por mi cuenta. *Escuchando música y hablar con otras personas que me puedan ayudar. *Con tutorías o pidiéndole a alguien que sabe más, que me pueda explicar. *acudiendo a un tutor o profesor que me ayude aclarar dudas. *en algunas oportunidades en internet investigo vocabulario, y realizo tutoriales aunque no dispongo de mucho tiempo. *Estudiando los aspectos negativos que se me dificultan. *estudiando el tema , investigando y colacandome ejercicios que permitan mejorar en el tema. *Retomando una y otra vez la lección enseñada hasta aprenderla. *Creo que lo más conveniente para las dificultades en inglés esta en la práctica y realizando oraciones. *Cuando no sabia bien las estructuras, me guiaba en libros que me recomendaba.	Asociando Práctica Practicando Autodidacta Estudio por mi cuenta. Trato de leer y entender Chequeo en internet Escuchando música Escuchar música en ingles Internet Utilizar recursos u herramientas que faciliten el aprendizaje del inglés Acudiendo a un tutor Asistiendo a tutorías. Con tutorías Hablar con otras personas que me puedan ayudar Realizo tutoriales Me guiaba en libros Colocándome ejercicios Investigando No dispongo de mucho tiempo. Estudiando Estudiando Repasando Retomando	Asociar Practicar Estudio autónomo Tics Interacción Investigación Escuchar música Internet No dispone de tiempo Tutorías

Note: The open question instrument is based on a questions made to the students to see the autonomy concept they had, the way they learn in a successful way English, and what are the kinds of tools worked by them to learn English outside the classroom.

Table 1.
Attitudes towards Learning English Inside and Outside the Classroom.

INSIDE THE CLASSROOM			
GROUP ATTITUDES	SPECIFIC ATTITUDES	AUTONOMY REFLECTED	GENERALITIES
pay attention - listening to jokes	Talk a lot in Spanish.	They not aware and not control over their own learning	· Students do not work by themselves because they do not have good bases about the topic and this happens because they do not do the homework and the workshops.
talk about other things in pairs	Some of them keep their mind attend	They need a person that control them and extra- motivation like jokes	· We think that students do not show interest in the class. · We observed that students did not pay attention to the class, because the teacher does not use strategies to catch the student's attention and speak very low.
Low attendance because of weather.	Pay attention	Take notes	· The students did not do the homework's and they are do not interested in received the class. · We think that they do not understand the activities, because they do not have the level and for that reason they show attitudes.
Students arrived so tired	They asked constantly	They do their homework.	Some students dissert of class because they express the lack of time. Which don't allow them come to class; neither spend time and show no motivation to study English.
Students were participating more active.	Nerves	Few students participate security in class	Some students were distracted because the computer, they didn't take advantage of the time in the classroom.

			Students enjoyed activities in groups and games to learning English.
They were reading	Insecurity	students did not do a review of the worked previous classes	· The majority of students react with an exclamation about the homework.
talk about other things in pairs	Some of them keep their mind attend	They need a person that control them and extra- motivation like jokes	· We think that students do not show interest in the class. · We observed that students did not pay attention to the class, because the teacher does not use strategies to catch the student's attention and speak very low.
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Students were participating more active.	Nerves	Few students participate security in class	Some students were distracted because the computer, they didn't take advantage of the time in the classroom. Students enjoyed activities in groups and games to learning English.
They were reading	Insecurity	students did not do a	· The majority of

		review of the worked previous classes	students react with an exclamation about the homework.
speaking	They did not pay attention class	Low autonomy level	*Students say don't have time for that homework. · Just a low percent of students show a medium level of autonomy.
working together	Boredom	They did not the homework	· A little group of persons stay yet in the classroom doing the homework
playing	Tiredness	They did not bring the material to the class	An activity consisted on living them some directions to develop an activity but not helping them, and they reacted in different ways: work by groups, ask their partners, look for the meaning of unknown words and ask other groups for advice.
They did not do the homework	Tension	They did not do questions about the doubts they had activities	I classified six different people in two different groups: more autonomous and less autonomous
fear to participate	Laziness in the activity	Teaching using maps (conceptual)	Some students participated and had energy in class, we think it is a good attitude which help to students to learning English, and advance in their knowledge.
The student dependent on the help of professor.	Little confused when the teacher ask questions	Learning using games	Other times students don't trust themselves so their acts depend on classmates' opinions, usually those who do better at English class
Irresponsibility	Participate	Translation from English to Spanish	Sometimes autonomy in class depends on English proficiency or English level.

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Fear of participating	Fear	Doing complete homework	
lack of interest	unsure	using resources outside the classroom (movie, books, magazine, internet)	Some people were confident on their own learning and knowledge, and others that still

			depend on teacher's advice.
no motivation	Creating new knowledge		· They bring the homework
absence and lack of time	use of tool (internet, dictionary)	Students make their own decisions about coming to class or doing the exercises	· Considering that students arrive tired at class, they have a good attitude to learn and to participate in the activities.
Students are motivated according to the material used.	do the activities	Use of some strategies to accomplish their goals	· Those attitudes showed interested by the class and students can communicate their ideas without concern their errors.
They pay attention	A student tried to translate into English a sentence made in a tense they hadn't seen	They have access to the web so that's a plus for English learners, but it can also be a distraction: it depends on them how to use them	· They show responsibility when reflecting that they do their homework. and they take notes in class in order to study them in house
distraction		Answering to open questions rather than yes/no questions	· A low autonomy level, because few students did the homework and for that reason they were who participated in class.
Fear of participating	Fear	Doing complete homework	
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distraction		Answering to open questions rather than yes/no questions	· A low autonomy level, because few students did the homework and for that reason they were who participated in class.
Students need listen instruction in Spanish		Autonomy was misunderstood	· In this class was too little the autonomy because of just three students can be fluent in the activity because they had the level,
Interaction when they work in groups	Reflect a low level of autonomy	The low level of autonomy	Autonomy related to the use of resource in class by the teacher and students to show a tool that help in the learning process.
Students decide whether if they come to class or not	They need a person over them to work	Interest in others things	Some of them take advantage doing more of the homework. Students pay attention.
Students participated without being demanded to do so	Pay attention in the class	The need of a person that control them	· They have a meeting to speak about the project that they have to do for the final exam.
Some students don't participate on class			· Students showed laziness, and asked to the classmates about the homework's let eight days before. · Tiredness, bad temper and no motivation.
Some students used computers to look for the translation of some words Students get used to			· They consult extra information to share in class

us			
When changing teachers, students didn't pay attention to what was next and everybody was doing something else			
Show a low level of autonomy			
They do not take advantage of their class time to learn			
They prefer do other things.			

Outside the Classroom			
Group Attitudes	Specific Attitudes	Autonomy Reflected	Generalities
* Fear, tiredness and laziness.	· Irresponsibility failure against the homework let at home.	· Low autonomy level, because students did theirs homework's before coming in to class.	We think students need to organize the time to accomplish purpose in English and increase their encouragement to study.
Some of them didn't do the homework; students spend time to other subjects. Students show tired and sad for the routine.	They are interested to learn English. They don't know about facilities ways to learn outside the classroom. They were not conscious about the English outside the classroom.	Find resources to learn ingles, and students found help from internet, music, movies, and take some books and reader, songs.	We think some students are autonomous because they found information and resources to improve in their knowledge and level.
· These attitudes show us a low level of autonomy, because it seems to see the homework as a boring thing, and not as a help to learn.	· That attitude shows us that few students take advantage of their time	· The low level of autonomy is reflect by don't take advantage of the time.	We think students are not conscious about the importance to learn English in their career (International Business).
· They worry to make the things good and to have	· The student makes his homework with the objective to learn more	· They show responsibility when reflecting that they do	

good results	but and bringing examples to class,	their homework.	
· We think that students are not interested in the class, because they are not worried to learn but to fulfill the homework.	· We think that the bad temper is related to the lack of understanding the topics worked in class and the tiredness and no motivation related to the way of teaching gave by the teacher.	· The students are not willing to take the class, for that reason they do not understand the topic and in consequence they do not do the homework,	
· We think that students do not work at home, reason why they had a low English level	· We think that students do not show the interest for coming in to class because they do not have the time and some of them are tired.	· We think that students do not work inside and outside in classroom, for that reason the level of autonomy reflected in them is low.	

Table 2. *Tabulation Learning Styles*

1. In class, I like to learn by games	9
2. In class, I like to learn by pictures, films video	16
3. I like to learn the foreign language by talking in pairs	11
4. I like to go out with the class and practice the foreign language	13
5. At home, I like to learn by using cassettes	11
6. In class, I like to listen and use cassettes	15

ANALYTICAL	
1. I like to study grammar	14
2. At home, I like to learn by studying foreign language books	10
3. I like to study the foreign language by myself (alone)	16
4. I like the teacher to let me find my mistakes	16
5. I like the teacher to give us problems to work on	12
6. At home, I like to learn by reading newspapers	3

COMMUNICATIVE	
1. I like, to learn by watching, listening to foreign language speakers.	15
2. I like to learn by talking to friends in the foreign language	7
3. At home, I like to learn by watching TV in the foreign language	14
4. I like to learn by using the foreign language in shops, on the phone	4
5. I like to learn the foreign language words by hearing them	5
6. In class, I like to learn by conversations	8

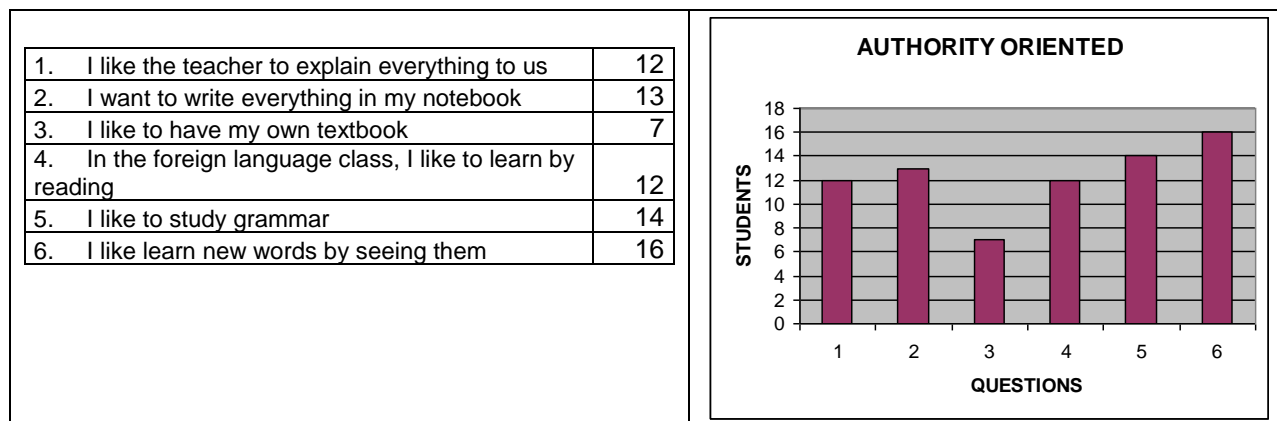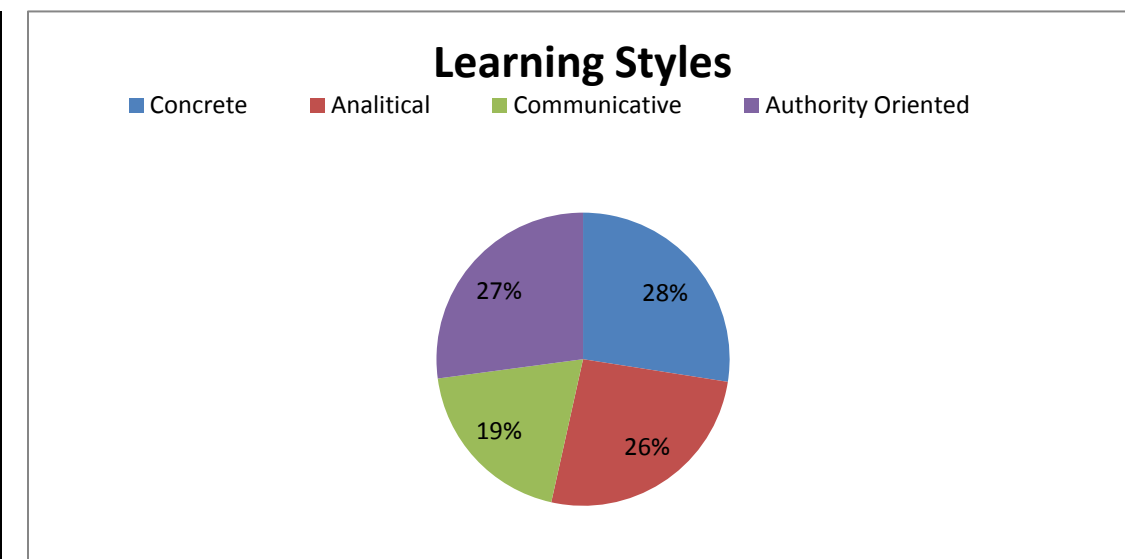|		
1.	I like the teacher to explain everything to us	12
2.	I want to write everything in my notebook	13
3.	I like to have my own textbook	7
4.	In the foreign language class, I like to learn by reading	12
5.	I like to study grammar	14
6.	I like learn new words by seeing them	16

Table 3. *Percentage of Answers to the Learning Styles Questionnaire*

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