

TEACHING STRATEGIES USED TO PROMOTE EFL AUTONOMOUS LEARNING IN
DISTANCE EDUCATION UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS:
AN INITIAL APPROACH IN THE FRAMEWORK OF
THE COLOMBIAN RESEARCH CONTEXT

A Monograph

Presented to the Program

Licenciatura en Inglés como Lengua Extranjera

Escuela Ciencias de la Educación

Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Licenciado en Inglés como Lengua Extranjera

by

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October, 2020

SPECIALIZED ANALYTICAL SUMMARY

Title	Teaching strategies used to promote EFL autonomous learning in distance education undergraduate students: An initial approach in the framework of the Colombian research context
Author(s)	Félix Antonio Monsalve Correa
Editorial	Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia
Date	Oral Defense Date: October 07, 2020
Keywords	Teaching strategies, Autonomous learning, English as a foreign language, Distance education, Colombian TEFL research
Description	Monograph
Sources	45 references: 27 journals 15 books 1 statistics 2 web pages
Contents	Este trabajo de naturaleza cualitativa se ocupa de las estrategias docentes utilizadas para promover el aprendizaje autónomo del inglés como lengua extranjera en la educación a distancia. Esto cobra sentido en el contexto colombiano donde la mayor parte de los estudiantes de educación superior son aprendices heterónomos y no alcanzan el nivel esperado como

usuarios independientes de esta lengua extranjera. Este trabajo consiste en una investigación documental de las revistas colombianas sobre la investigación de la enseñanza de las lenguas extranjeras, con el propósito de recopilar estrategias de enseñanza que brinden los fundamentos para promover el aprendizaje autónomo del EFL en este contexto. Para lograr el propósito, se analizó una muestra de nueve (9) de 70 artículos de investigación contenidos en las revistas y fueron seleccionados siguiendo varios criterios de búsqueda. Durante este proceso se compilaron los datos torno a los tres principales constructos: educación a distancia en Colombia, las características del aprendizaje autónomo del inglés como lengua extranjera y las estrategias docentes aplicadas. Los hallazgos en torno al primer constructo muestran que el modelo educativo a distancia sobre el cual hay evidencia empírica se caracteriza por el componente a distancia sumado al presencial; del segundo constructo, el aprendizaje autónomo del inglés cuenta con una amplia cantidad de características psicológicas, cognitivas, metacognitivas y sociales; y del tercer constructo, la investigación-acción y casos estudios muestran que la promoción del aprendizaje autónomo requiere tener en cuenta la naturaleza y condiciones de la educación a distancia, el concepto de aprendizaje

	<p>autónomo de EFL, los papeles de los instructores, la función de tutoría, el temario, materiales de auto-acceso, contenidos, herramientas, apoyo institucional, entre otros.</p>
<p>Research Line</p>	<p>This monograph has used a qualitative approach focused on textual data provided from the research papers. Mainly, it consists of documentary research that tries to develop an initial literature review and compilation of data about teaching strategies to promote EFL autonomous learning in distance education. The sample studied was composed of nine research papers gathered according to several criteria. It followed three phases: 1) exploration, 2) identification, 3) compilation. This work belongs to the ECEDU's research line named Bilingualism in Distance Education Mediated by Technologies because teaching strategies involve planned communication and action directed to the construction and modeling autonomous learning and critic thought on learners and it helps them to strengthen and master a foreign language into the context of distance education.</p>
<p>Conclusions</p>	<p>This research experience finds that action-research and case-studies have been presented on the articles contained in the Colombian TEFL journals which provide data about Colombian distance education and its variants, EFL</p>

	<p>autonomous learning, and teaching strategies to promote EFL autonomous learning.</p> <p>Specifically, the design of successful teaching strategies directed to promote autonomous learning requires taking into account different factors as the nature, conditions, and models of distance education, the concept of EFL autonomous learning, the instructor's roles and the tutoring function, the planning and the syllabus design, the self-access materials, contents, tools, institutional support, among others.</p>
Advisor	MA Liliana Isabel Moreno Cervera

ABSTRACT

Student, Félix M., *Teaching strategies used to promote EFL autonomous learning in distance education undergraduate students: An initial approach in the framework of the Colombian research context*. Licenciatura en Inglés como Lengua Extranjera, October, 2020, Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia.

This qualitative work deals with the teaching strategies used to promote English as a foreign language (EFL) autonomous learning in distance education. This makes sense within the Colombian context where most of the higher education students are heteronomous learners and do not reach the expected level as independent users of this foreign language. This work consists of a documentary investigation which takes data from Colombian research journals about teaching and learning foreign languages, to compile teaching strategies that provide the foundations to promote the EFL autonomous learning in undergraduate distance education students. To achieve this purpose, exploration, and analysis using a sample of nine (9) from 70 research articles according to various searching criteria were developed. During this process, data was compiled around three main constructs: distance education in Colombia, the characteristics of autonomous learning of English as a foreign language, and the teaching strategies applied. The findings around the first construct show that the Colombian distance education model used is characterized by the distance component added to the face-to-face component; about the second construct, autonomous English learning has a large number of psychological, cognitive, metacognitive, and social features; and the third construct, action-research and case studies show that promoting autonomous learning demands taking into account the nature and conditions of distance education, the concept of EFL autonomous learning, the

roles of instructors, the tutoring function, the planning, and the syllabus, self-access materials, contents, tools, institutional support, among others.

KEYWORDS: Teaching strategies, Autonomous learning, English as a foreign language, Distance education, Colombian TEFL research

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This monograph was possible thanks to The Lord my God, who makes all possible.

Thanks to UNAD and its ECEDU because they helped me reach the academic degree of B.A. in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. I offer my sincere gratitude to my tutor and advisor, professor Liliana Moreno Cervera who had provided me the guidance, direction, and correction that I have needed to fulfill the requirements of this monograph; without her support, this work would not have been possible. Finally, I want to thank my wife for her love, support, and patience during this learning process.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

This monograph explores the teaching strategies used to promote English as a foreign language (EFL) autonomous learning on distance education undergraduate students. The main construct is teaching strategies performed by the English instructors, not learning strategies implemented by the students. Methodologically, it develops documental research, an initial compilation that explores research articles and papers within the context of EFL autonomous learning in distance education in Colombia dating from 2000.

In particular, this monograph is focused to gather data about the teaching strategies to promote EFL autonomous learning on distance education undergraduate students; the idea is to develop an initial approach to the history of Colombian distance education, its definition, models, and its value; to establish the characteristics of EFL autonomous learning into this context, and the keys and procedures developed according to strategies that have been designed by Colombian academics and institutions.

To achieve the specified purpose, this apart considers the meaning of this study connected with the value of the research about teaching strategies for developing autonomous learning into the distance education context; the statement of the problem defines the constructs and the question is directed to inquire about teaching strategies to promote EFL autonomous learning in undergraduate distance education; and finally, it expresses the objectives addressed in this monograph which are distance education, EFL autonomous learning, and teaching strategies.

Significance of the Study

The monograph has been developed for some motives. First, it is an initial approach around meaningful experiences that have been provided by the Colombian TEFL research

focused on autonomous learning and distance education frameworks, and it could help build an initial approach around the strategic knowledge to promote this kind of learning. This work will explore meaningful and strategic models, keys, and procedures that would be analyzed, modified and, adapted into the distance educative context, because distance language learners need to be self-directed to be successful (White, 1995). Hence, it is an initial approach to the national pedagogical and didactical knowledge in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).

Second, related to the theoretic realm this work reviews basis from pedagogical, didactical theory, and TEFL knowledge about teaching strategies and autonomous learning, it conducts to examine various concepts as autonomous learning, heteronomy, transactional distance, teaching strategies, instructional scaffolding, the zone of proximal development. Effectively, the theoretical approach provides a meaningful interpretative background to reflect on the problem.

Third, global socio-economic and technological trends are dynamic forces that strengthen educational and linguistic markets. Undoubtedly, the EFL development runs into this complex global scene. Here EFL autonomous learning plays a relevant role, because enterprises, business, tourism, and commerce demand persons with abilities to establish intercultural communications with other people from foreign countries (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 1999). Into this context distance education had broken time and place barriers and provides learning opportunities, such as today during the COVID-19 crisis in 2020.

Fourth, Colombian language policies that have been implemented are answers concerning the challenges presented by globalization and competitiveness. Proof of this, Law 115 of 1994 named General Education Law (República de Colombia, 1995) states the first the legal basis, and later, the Law 1651 of 2013 named Bilingualism Law (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2013)

indicates that the Colombian citizens should communicate using a foreign language. Particularly, there are multiple challenges, one of them is to deliver bilingual education for children (Fandiño-Parra, Bermudez-Jimenez, & Lugo-Vásquez, 2012) and the other is stated by National Bilingual Program NBP (2004-2019) has proposed undergraduates should reach the level B2 (Cruz-Arcila, 2012).

Fifth in contrast to this purpose of the NBP, evaluation SABER PRO reveals Colombian students' lower performance. Most of the students of high school do not reach the level B1, despite they had been learning EFL for 648 hours for six years and the undergraduate students do not reach the level B2 (ICFES, 2019). Consequently, Colombian language policies do not fulfill the purpose that has been mentioned.

Sixth, according to Kumaravadivelu (2012), the development of autonomous learning improves a universal human characteristic and satisfies a human need: self-regulation of action and coherence. The quoted academic has suggested a strategic framework for teaching and learning L2, which contains 10 macro-strategies, one of them consists of "promoting learner autonomy". It establishes support to learners providing problems, encouraging, teaching-learning strategies, raising awareness of effective learning, and metacognitive strategies as planning and self-monitoring and use metacognitive strategies (Kumaravadivelu, 1994).

Seventh, this work is linked to the belief that autonomous learning could help learners foster their academic, linguistic, and communicational abilities to learn foreign languages, because it demands characteristics of an autonomous learner as motivation, commitment sense, self-direction, self-control, making decisions, organization, discipline. This training takes a relevant place into the context of distance education because distance learning context does not imply an instant exercise of autonomous learning by the learner (Vanijde, 2003; White, 1995), it

could be a response adopted and developed before requirements asked by self-instruction.

Overall, the exercise of teaching autonomous learning builds abilities, gives tools, strengthens study habits, and allows learners to reach higher levels of language proficiency.

Eight, teaching strategies to promote EFL autonomous learning into distance education needs a solid basis rooted on theoretical models and evidence provided by the research and there is a significative lack: “..it seems there are not enough models to enlighten teachers about the steps to follow to design courses that foster autonomy” (Ramírez-Espinosa, 2015, p. 116).

Undoubtedly, teachers, tutors, and instructors who try to promote autonomous learning in distance education should know an organized repertoire of teaching strategies, reflect on them, adapt, and innovate into their context. In consequence, the precedent possibly will help formulate appropriate goals, planning, arrangement, strategies, tactics, activities, and assessment. Strategic knowledge -provided by the research- helps teachers be more effective, providing an enriched input, and conduct the learning process, and students to foster their acquisition and learning inside and outside the classroom.

To conclude, the topic has been selected because it will have an impact on both personal and professional from the TEFL research realm. It helps acquire a useful basis for an effective future teaching practice, and research and write other works that explore and organize the teaching strategies applied to help learners to be independent on distance education. About the professional realm, the research of this study is a little effort to reflect on autonomous learning on TEFL research.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the advantages and solutions offered by distance learning as a high degree of flexibility, control over time, place, and pace education, the learner may perhaps lose motivation

due to lack of face-to-face contact, lack of faculty support, and potentially startup costs (Galusha, 1998). Distance education requires its students to perform an active role, take initiative, plan activities, use correctly information sources, understand information, state, and solve problems. But, through their academic process, they are heteronomous and instructor-dependents.

During the time that high school students have employed learning EFL, the most do not have meaningful progress on their interlingual development from the silent-period to the syntactical-period. It means that the time that has been employed does not help learners to pass through the process that gives them the ability to speak almost like native speakers (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 1999). For instance, even though undergraduate learners had taken 648 hours during high school and courses, they do not reach the level B2 (ICFES, 2019). In fact, according to CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), they are not EFL independent users.

This gap could be partially solved both if, on one side, students improve their autonomous learning to reach high levels of proficiency, and, on the other side, instructors strategically promote autonomous learning. Theorists define autonomy as “to be self-ruled or capable of regulating one’s thoughts, learning, and actions” (Oxford, 2003; p.80). Autonomous learning implies self-direction, self-regulation, and means being independent, autonomous, and effective during the learning of a foreign language.

There are numerous studies about autonomous learning in the national realm. In this context, there are applied studies focused on undergraduate students' autonomous learning in face-to-face environments. The most consist of action-research experiences that provide evidence for promoting and improving this ability strategically. But there are a small number of works about teaching strategies for improving autonomous learning on undergraduate students in the framework of distance education.

The previous ideas reveal a need to explore, analyze, and organize the available research about teaching strategies for promoting EFL autonomous learning in distance education. It makes sense within a research context where most of the works are centered on the learning process performed by the learners; most of them take data from face-to-face environments, and the ones about distance education are based on semi-distance, blended, or other models; and the least have a description and explanation about the procedures of the teaching strategies to be developed. These are the primary conjectures.

This work tries to build an initial exploration of the most important Colombian TEFL journals where some papers and articles have been written by Colombian researchers and institutions. This monograph shapes an initial and partial background about several teaching strategies to promote and develop the autonomy of students who learn EFL, mainly in distance education, including other models.

To review, this is an exploratory study developed from three main constructs:

- Distance education contextualized in the Colombian framework.
- Autonomous learning of distance EFL education undergraduate students
- Teaching strategies for promoting EFL autonomous learning

In summary, this monograph tries to answer the following question researching the most important Colombian TEFL journals:

According to Colombian research, specifically from the TEFL Colombian researchers and institutions, what are the teaching strategies used in EFL distance education to promote EFL autonomous learning in distance education undergraduate students?

Objectives

General Objective

To compile teaching strategies that provide the basics for promoting the EFL autonomous learning on distance education undergraduate students through the documental exploration of Colombian TEFL journals.

Specific Objectives

To determine the historical, conceptual, and main theoretical background of distance education into the Colombian context through exploration of the documentary mass on the field to achieve a general overview on how distance education teaching strategies work.

To characterize EFL autonomous learning in distance education according to Colombian researchers and institutions to understand its complexity and categorize its features.

To identify teaching strategies that promote EFL autonomous learning in distance education undergraduate students in Colombia through the gathering of keys, procedures, stages, and steps presented in academic journals.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

To gather the data and information about teaching strategies for promoting the EFL autonomous learning on distance education undergraduate students provided by Colombian researchers and institutions, this chapter has three main sections to attain the goals that have been stated in the previous chapter.

The literature review in this monograph develops a central function. It contains the most essential concepts, the theoretical background around the main constructs, and the data that has been gathered. Effectively, it is a framework to analyze what the research has stated about teaching strategies for promoting EFL autonomous learning on distance learning.

Foremost a theoretical background includes some of the main concepts and theories. This apart examines concepts as heteronomy, autonomous learning, teaching strategies, the instructional scaffolding, zone of proximal development, and transactional distance theory.

Effectively, this literature review presents first the definitions of autonomous and heteronomous learning, then the constructivist theories about learning; second, the context of distance education, and includes a short review of its historical background, definition, main models, and theories; third, in a summary, a general characterization of EFL autonomous learning in distance education into the mentioned context provided by the research. Fourth, an introductory definition about teaching strategies, the research context, and its outcomes, and finally, the compilation of the keys, and procedures to promote EFL autonomous learning of distance education undergraduate students.

Autonomous and Heteronomous Learning

Autonomy is a word from the Greek etymological root, “living under one’s own laws, self-governing” (Oxford, 2003). The contrary concept is named heteronomy, which means to be governed or ruled by someone else (Kamii, Clark & Dominick, 1994). For instance, normally heteronomous learning is performed by learners whose features are passive, unable to think themselves, and teacher-dependents. One definition of autonomous learning into the context of distance education has been provided by Del Mastro (2003), for whom autonomy is:

...the ability to make decisions that allow regulating own learning aimed at achieving certain goals into a context that has specific conditions. For this reason, students must be able to self-regulate their actions to learn, being increasingly aware of the decisions that they make, of the knowledge that they put into play and of the process they follow, of their difficulties in learning, and of the way that they learn to overcome those difficulties.
(p. 33)

As mentioned, there are numerous definitions shared by the researchers. Autonomy, following Oxford (2003), is equivalent to self-regulation and consists of being capable of regulating learning. Little (2017, 2000) establishes the features as responsibility, initiative, planning, monitoring, evaluating the own learning through reflective analysis. Peña-Dix Peña, Bruskewitz & Truscott (2016) view a motivated and responsible learner who able to execute practice and work collaboratively. Littlewood (1996) emphasizes the independent capacity to make decisions and actions, and he highlighted the components of autonomy: an ability which depends on knowledge and skills and willingness which depends on motivation and confidence.

Researchers from distance language education provide similar definitions of autonomous learning. Autonomy is an explicit intervention (Hurd, Beaven & Ortega, 2001), specifically the

ability and attitude to assume responsibility (Vanijde, 2003; White, 1995) focused on taking control over their learning process. This control requires knowledge about the nature of language learning and its learning strategies (White, 1995) and the creative use of them (Vanijde, 2003). Effectively, strategic language learning demands metacognitive knowledge, strategic competence, and reflection (Vanijde, 2003; Hurd, Beaven & Ortega, 2001).

Summarizing, learners themselves are assuming their responsibility and an active role, defining their own learning goals, participating actively, controlling to have into account the nature of language learning, using learning strategies, monitoring, and regulating their learning process. Table 1 shows the autonomous learning definition by diverse researchers.

Table 1

Definitions of autonomous distance learning provided by researchers

Research	Definition
White (1995)	"...relates to an attitude on the part of the learners towards taking control of the language learning process and assuming responsibility for the process. The ability to exercise autonomy requires the learner to have developed an understanding of the nature of language learning and of his/her role in that process, and as part of this to have developed an appropriate repertoire of language learning strategies" (p. 209).
Hurd, Beaven & Ortega (2001)	"Metacognitive knowledge, strategic competence, and reflection are all aspects of autonomy and refer to explicit intervention by the learner in her o his learning" (p.343).
Vanijde (2003)	"...capacity -a construct of attitude and abilities- which allows learners to take more responsibility for their own learning. (p. 76) Learner autonomy is based on qualities that are part of the learner's personality, such as willingness to accept responsibility in learning, awareness of the learning process, initiative, and creative use of strategies" (p. 82).

Vanijde (2001 cited by Vanijde, 2003,) describes completely the profile of autonomous language learners:

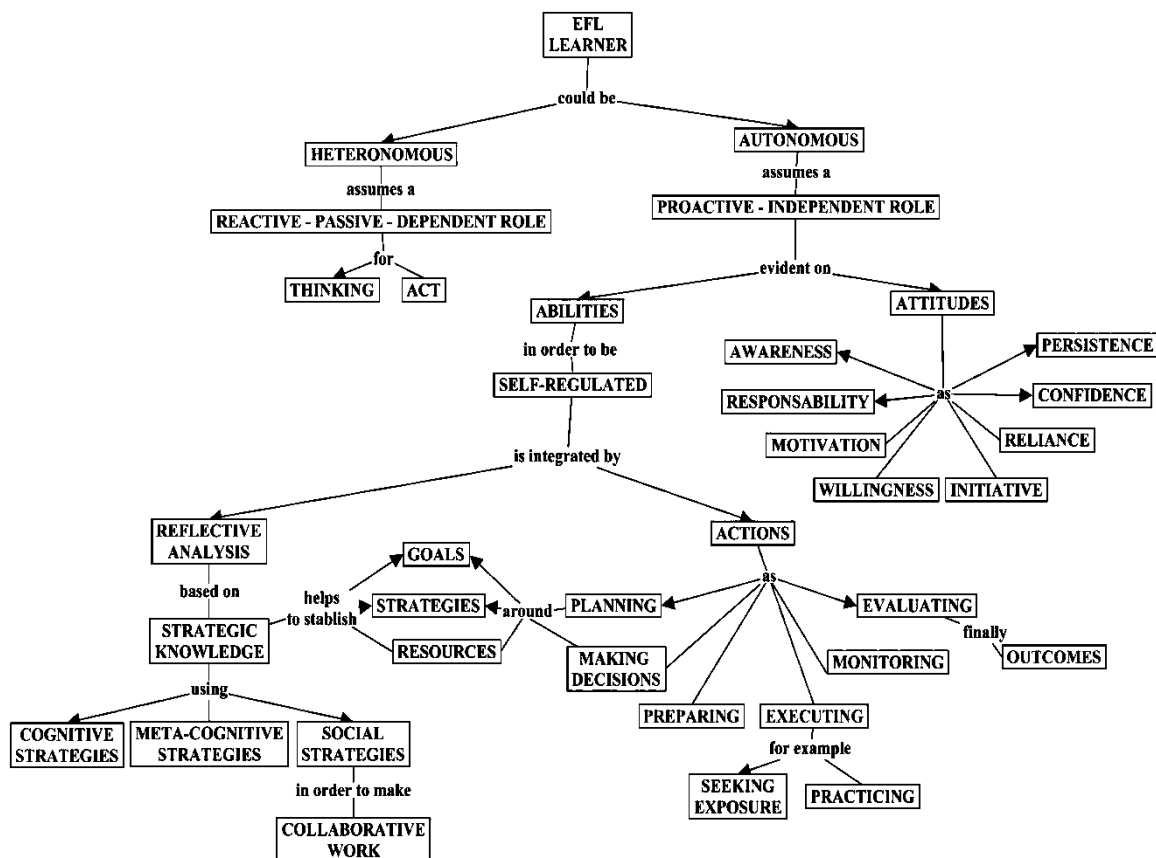
- Use patterns of strategy that include cognitive, meta-cognitive, or socio-affective strategy at a high level of frequency;

- Use various combinations of strategies;
- Use strategy flexibly and creatively;
- Are aware of the learning process and language learning strategy to use in dealing with tasks as shown by the use of task analysis and the statements identifying the reason for using particular strategies;
- Self-diagnose;
- Seek exposure to English;
- Are willing to accept responsibility for learning on their own;
- (at least) follow study material;
- Are self-reliant and good at self-management in distance learning;
- Are persistent and self-reliant in problem-solving; and
- Prepare before, and self-monitor when attending tutorials. (p.82)

In general, autonomy can be understood as a right, behavior, and ability to be self-ruled, and it should be noted by the learners' independence and proactivity for thinking, deciding, and acting, which are executed by themselves. Concluding from Peña-Dix Peña, Bruskewitz, & Truscott (2016), autonomy is evident if the learners show their motivation, understanding of their responsibility, abilities for driving and building the knowledge with the teacher in a collaborative way, when they take turns, execute codeswitching as a learning and compensatory strategy, and selecting materials for executing an organized practice. Taking the last features provided by the researchers, the next concept map (Figure 1) summarizes the last part and shows an enriched profile of an autonomous EFL learner.

Figure 1

Initial profile of a heteronomous and autonomous EFL learner (Own construction).



Constructivist Theories

The main concepts analyzed were elucidated by pedagogical theories. From the genetic epistemology approach, Kamii, based on Piaget's discoveries, has explained autonomy implies that learners themselves decenter, interchange viewpoints, take into account different factors, and the ability to make decisions. This phenomenon denies the model based on authority, rewards, and punishments which tries to fix learners into a determined pattern, and they become the recipients of dead knowledge (Clark & Dominick, 1994; Kamii & López (1982).

Kamii, Clark & Dominick (1994) and Kamii & López (1982) clarify that heteronomy and dependence are increased using rewards and punishments. Instead, they have suggested that teachers would promote autonomy diminishing their authority without allowing total freedom. These researchers emphasize that the teacher could create conditions and opportunities, encouraging learners to decenter, and coordinate themselves with their own rules, viewpoints, and answers into bilateral interaction, in other words, a dialogic, collaborative, and dynamic work. Also, they suggest that it helps students themselves to develop high-level reasoning through interaction, learn to make sense, and discover answers for their learning process.

The sociocultural-historical approach developed by Vygotsky and other academics build other ways to explain social strategies to develop autonomous learning. The power of social influence of education and socio-cultural context is the core, where learning arises from dynamic interactions between learners and more capable others (teacher, tutor, adults...). Learning is placed into a context where interactions, the others' use of language, and actions affect learners, instead, they take borrowed, appropriated, and converted those social relationships into mental functions (cognitive development) (Santrock, 2020). In other words, the theory explains learners become autonomous influenced by the sociocultural environment, and gradually autonomy becomes a mental function.

Another trend that belongs to the cultural-historical approach, it is represented by research-centered on learning as a social construct. In connection, Rogoff (1994) has explained that learning advances if the learners participate in common activities and efforts into a community of learners; Wenger (2011) introduced the community of practice as a group which interacts, share and learn how to do something related with their concern; and, Lave & Wenger (1991) have explained that learners should participate in communities of practice where

legitimate peripheral participation let them, as novices, to be full participants, and establish interactions and relationships with veterans, “activities, identities, artifacts and communities of knowledge” (Lave & Wenger, 1991; p. 1). Certainly, these relationships help students learn, and mastery knowledge, and develop their skills.

About the described branch, Oxford (2003) emphasizes that autonomy is going beyond the individual realm, because autonomy is related to participation within the community of practice and its relationships, where support learners to increase agency, it means learners move from non-participation toward complete participation into the community.

Associated with the cultural-historical approach, Vygotsky had theorized the zone of proximal development (ZPD) to explain the conversion of social relationships into mental functions. This theory explains: if the learner works without help the instructor reaches a lower level; however, the learner could progress and reach a high level, if he works with the help of the instructor (Santrock, 2020; Diaz-Barriga & Hernandez, 2002).

Associated with the previous idea, instructional scaffolding is the assistance provided by the more capable other or instructor. Scaffolding is a pedagogical theory developed by Brunner which consists of various kinds of assistance that can be removed as the learner becomes more self-regulated (Santrock, 2020; Diaz-Barriga & Hernandez, 2002). This assistance uses a mechanism named adjustment of pedagogical assistance. With this aid, the instructor gradually gives control to the learner. This theory establishes: if the support or help is appropriate at just the right time, the capable other will help the learner move through de ZPD (Diaz-Barriga & Hernández, 2002). It should be noted that to develop self-regulation, the same metacognitive learning strategies are required, and they are abilities to act intentionally and independently. It is named agency (Oxford, 2003).

To finish, it is relevant to underline the presence of interactivity within the pedagogic theories. It is a significant characteristic in all learning environments, included language distance education, which makes it a personal process, not an isolated process (Del Mastro, 2003). It means that a strategy to promote autonomy in distance education should take into account and take advantage of the interaction power between instructor-learners-peers-contents and tools.

Colombian Distance Education

History, definition, and characteristics

Distance education satisfies and solves educative needs and problems. Academics and organizations had explained face-to-face model limitations to solve coverage and quality (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2020), satisfy adults' educational needs (Garcia-Aretio, 2001; White, 1995), and demands have been asked by globalization and knowledge and informational society (Escamilla, 2007). Before the last trends, distance education represents an answer which overcomes the time and space constraints.

Distance education has crossed the fourth stage (García-Aretio, 2001). First, the correspondence education has consisted of delivering printed materials through mail services; second, audiovisual and multimedia education have used different tools as printed materials combined with audio and video within the formative process; in this stage, there are remote classrooms or distributed classrooms as examples of these efforts; third, telematic teaching or based ICT interactive model uses educative software as support; and fourth, web-based education integrates web tools (wikis, blogs, web conferences, social networks, ...).

Colombian distance education has been connected to the same evolution. Garcia-Aretio (2001) had indicated that Colombia has developed a genuine Latin-American model. This academic wrote that ACPO (Acción Cultural Popular) had developed radio schools in 1947, and

this model was replicated in other countries; then, Universidad Abierta de la Sabana had used the same model to provide education in 1975; Pontificia Universidad Javeriana had used TV in 1972, but between 1973-1975 eight Colombian universities provided educational distance programs. Universidad de San Buenaventura – Cali had started to teach a B.A. in Basic Education in 1981. In 1982, the Colombian Government created the Consejo Nacional de Educación Abierta y a Distancia, the Instituto Colombiano para el Fomento de la Educación a Distancia (ICFES) and issued regulations and did the inspection on distance education. The Government had created the Unidad Universitaria del Sur (UNISUR) and stated it like an innovation center and a system to develop. Then, in 1983 it had been created the Open and Distance Education Programs by Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander.

Finally, related to the last evolution, nowadays there is a wide offer provided by open and distance education by different Colombian universities. The UNISUR today is named Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia (UNAD), and it is the biggest online university in Colombia. Other universities that offer distance education are UNAB, UCN, IDEAD, among others.

Following Saba (2016), face-to-face education is placed into the agricultural and industrialized ages for solving the educational needs of traditional learners, using traditional methods, time, and place restrictions as schedules and classrooms. Saba indicated that the postindustrial age has different socio-cultural, economic, and educational needs and demands, for this reason, the main contrast is centered on nontraditional learners who at the same time are students and have family responsibilities, they work part-time or full-time and participate in institutions of civil society. While nontraditional methods -Saba points- broke place and time

restrictions, in effect, they satisfied the individual learners' needs: decrease the cost of going to college, the time to reach a degree, and it demands autonomy.

When adults want to satisfy their educational needs, it produces personal conflicts, because the satisfaction of their needs requires solving economic, temporal, and social constraints; in fact, distance education offers time and place flexibility to decrease these conflicts and solve those needs (Escamilla, 2007). Effectively from an axiological viewpoint, distance education must solve the educational needs of nontraditional learners like access, coverage, quality, and learning. Now pandemic context reveals the importance and propitiates of distance education for solving the educative needs of most of the population.

The least distinctive characteristics of distance education were defined by García-Aretio (2020):

- The physical separation between both the teacher/trainer and student/participant in space and in all of most of the training time, it depends on the case.
- The possibility of an independent study in which the student controls time, place, study rhythms, and, in some cases, itineraries, activities, evaluation time, etc.
- The support provided by an organization/institution that, through its human resources, plans, designs, produces materials (by itself or on request), monitors and motivates the learning process through mentoring, evaluates and accredits learning (didactic).
- Synchronous or asynchronous mediated communication and interaction (dialogue) between teacher/trainer and student and between them. The interaction also with the contents and with the technological resources. (p.24)

Distance education contrasts face-to-face education. About the traditional face-to-face model, the instructor and the learners both of them share the same physical place and time where the teaching and learning process is developed; instead, distance education breaks place and time restrictions giving opportunities to people who want to be educated and cannot access face-to-face education for different reasons.

To summarize the ideas, White (1995) has pointed out the categories of distance education which covers teach-yourself courses, open learning, and self-access centers, and has stated the most important characteristics of self-instruction:

- Learning takes place outside the face-to-face environment
- Students work without direct control of the instructor
- Learners' decision making about what, where, and when to study
- Need for self-direction by the learner
- Absence of a teacher to direct the learning process
- Apprentices isolation from the learning group. (p. 208)

The last ideas contain the most significant feature: the physical separation between teachers and students (García-Aretio, 2020, 2001; White, 1995). Due to separation, the distance learning context demands learners to re-evaluate their role and responsibilities.

One definition of distance education is “a mediated educational dialogue between the teacher of an institution and students, who are located in different places from those, and they can learn independently or in groups” (García-Aretio, 2020, p. 10). That definition, following this researcher, contains three main constructs that are necessary for distance education: dialogue is conceived as educative communication between teacher and student; didactic is a pedagogical

view directed toward learning, and mediation is related to technologies that support physical separation.

Finally, this educative phenomenon has important features (García-Aretio, 2020, 2001) which determines the identity of distance education. First, physical and psychological separation; second, independent and cooperative learning; third, mediated didactic dialog; fourth, technical media and technological resources and tools; and, fifth, institutional and organizational aids and support on the learning process.

Models: independent study, telecourses, open university

To explore the models, it is relevant to have into account the mention of the most common and significant features related to distance education. The absence of one component will configure another type of education and they must be present on each model (García-Aretio, 2020). Distance education has three main models:

The first model was named the independent study. Miller (1995) has said it offers learners the most control over the time, place, and pace of education, the learner works independently, and isolated from the tutor and other learners; it depends on reliance on written work and it replaces the traditional face-to-face lecture. This model belongs to the correspondence study model, called too independent study or independent learning. Students in the guide independent study learn alone using printed materials (Escamilla, 2007).

The second model or approach is named telecourses, according to the classification established by Miller (1995). Following this researcher, this model was integrated into three elements: text, study guide, and video lessons. The last element replaces the traditional face-to-face lecture. This model was used by large universities and community colleges. Escamilla (2007) pointed out this approach could be named remote classroom or distributed classroom; it is

like to face-to-face model and allows synchronous transmission of video and audio like a traditional classroom. It is selected by the institution.

The third model stated by Miller (1995) named this approach open university, it is related to the development of an asynchronous learning community possible thanks to the technological advance. Another term that has been used to name this model is Based ICT interactive model which uses the internet and its technologies and tools that learners could use to establish synchronous and asynchronous communication with other learners and instructors and access materials. It could be named based on network distance education or online model (Escamilla, 2007).

Semi-distance and blended approaches

Despite the face-to-face interactivity restrictions, a blended approach strengthens interactivity using different tools and technologies (Andrade & Bunker, 2009). Blended is named a mix or integration between both: distance education model and the traditional face-to-face model, whose main feature is taking advantage of each model. According to distance education theory, a distance education program could be classified as a semi-distance and blended learning, if the most of the learning process takes place in a physical separation between the participants (García-Aretio, 2001) and the less time takes place face-to-face encounters. In Colombia, distance education is developed using this model.

Main theories of distance education

There are different theories about distance education. One of them is the industrial teaching and learning theory by Peters. According to Peters distance education involves “planning, work labor division, massive production, automatization, standardization, and control” (1973 & 1971, cited by García-Aretio, 1999). Another is named guided didactic

conversation theorized by Holmberg (1995, cited by Saba, 2016) who set up as principle the personal communication between instructor and learner. “It involved non-contiguous communication supported by simulated communication through student’s interaction with study materials and real communication through written or telephone interaction” (García-Aretio, 1999, p. 46). Guided didactic conversation presents its profits as it allows understand and remember instructional information, organize the study material, and attain the instructional goals (Saba, 2006).

If the last theories are relevant to understand autonomy, the next is the most useful to understand autonomy and independence. The independent and autonomous features of distance learning had been highlighted by Wedemeyer (1981, 1971, cited by García-Aretio, 2001, 1999). For reasons as for physical separation, Wedemeyer has stated that correspondence education, based on printed materials, has allowed learners to elect place and time, and perform direction and control of his learning (García-Aretio, 1999). Another key to understanding autonomy in distance education is the theory of transactional distance formulated by Moore. This theory through variables as “dialog” and “structure” (Moore, 1997, cited by Garcia-Aretio, 2001, p. 103) explains the psychological distance between learners and instructors in distance education. Dialogue happens when the instructor and learner can interact and respond; and structure refers to the educational program’s responsiveness to a learners’ individual needs (objectives, strategies, and evaluation methods); and autonomy refers the learners’ ability to decide what to learn, how to learn, and how much to learn (Saba, 2001; Andrade & Bunker, 2009).

According to Saba (2016) and García-Aretio (2001), the last theory explains that transactional distance depends on the quantity and quality of dialogue between instructor and learner (learner’s control), and the structure provided by the instructional design (instructor’s

control). Experimental research concluded that there is an inverse relationship between dialogue and structure (Saba & Shearer, 1994, cited by Saba, 2016): the level of transactional distance decreases if dialogue increases, structure decreases, and the transactional distance increases if the structure increases, dialogue decreases. Instructional design on distance education demands to comprehend transactional distance to improve meaningful interaction (Andrade & Bunker, 2009).

Respect to the learner's autonomy, distance learning, said Garcia-Aretio (1999), will enhance some goals like:

- Achievement and prioritization of learning objectives
- Content sequencing
- The selection of resources appropriate to objectives and content
- Scheduling the when and how of the assessment
- The adaptation of learning to its time, rhythms, and style of learning. (p. 51)

To conclude this apart, distance education on the first stage allowed learner independence for the reason of the separation among instructors and learners. The last one uses time and place and takes control and direction of their learning. Another key issue is related to communication between them for developing a learning environment that promotes solid relations, empathy, independence, and autonomy. The transactional distance theory explains that distance education promotes autonomy if the learner establishes a dialog with the instructor, participates actively, and takes more control over objectives, methods, evaluation, and resources.

Towards a Definition of Teaching Strategies

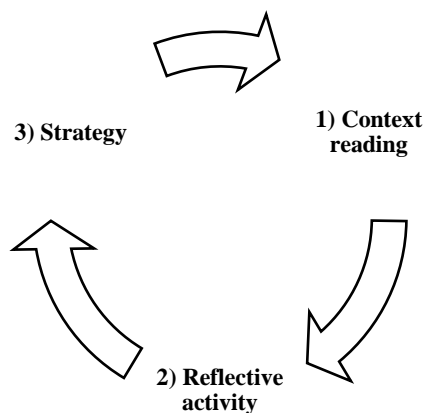
Initially is relevant to define what is a teaching strategy. Following Diaz-Barriga & Hernández (2002), teaching is an aid and help process that gradually should make adjustments

according to the learners' constructive activity to help them to reach meaningful learnings, but teaching is not only giving information, but it also implies to help students learn and develop themselves like persons. Second, although the strategy is a word that comes from military jargon, its meaning indicates that it is a plan with arrangements, procedures, steps, resources that help reach a goal. Strategies are "specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular and planned design" (Brown, 2000 p.113).

The last ideas could be enriched by researchers, Diaz-Barriga & Hernández (2002), for whom strategies are flexible and strategic procedures and arrangements that comprehend techniques, operations, and activities to give appropriate help to the learners' constructive activity and promote the most quantity and quality of meaningful learning on them, and they begin from a reflective process which goes through (Figure 2):

Figure 2

A model of teaching strategy process (Díaz-Barriga & Hernández, 2002).



For example, teaching strategies are debates, graphic organizers, group read, interactive language task, laboratory investigation, history, storytelling, problem-solving, Venn diagram, among others. These strategies are procedures that have been designed by an instructor for developing specific and meaningful learning. For this, according to the cyclical model has been

presented (figure 2), its conception requests a careful context reading which includes learners' features, and then a reflective activity to create and execute the teaching strategy. It requires solid knowledge and previous design to obtain the expected results, like impact self-directed learning and the critical ways for learning (Peña-Dix Peña, Bruskewitz, & Truscott, 2016).

Before taking into account other concepts, approaches are general and related to the philosophies of teaching; for example, content-based instruction, cooperative learning, multiple intelligences, natural approach; meanwhile methods refer to practical procedures for teachers. For example, audiolingual, direct method, grammar-translation, silent way, among others. Instead, strategies are specific actions; they are more particular, and this work focuses on teaching strategies for promoting EFL autonomous learning.

An approach to Colombian TEFL Research on Teaching Strategies to Promote

Autonomous Learning: An Initial Literature Review

This apart establishes an introductory approach about the research whose function is to provide models, data, and information about teaching strategies to promote autonomous learning by Colombian TEFL research.

For undergraduate learners who need to know how to apply reading strategies and take advantage of their independent work time, Aguirre-Morales & Ramos-Holguin (2009) have focused on guidance and training in reading strategies for promoting EFL autonomous learning in a semi-distance undergraduate program. They have developed qualitative research with two groups of business-administration undergraduate learners of a semi-distance program at a Colombian university. The purpose has been specified by the researchers is to help learners to initiate their autonomous English learning by guiding them in the practice of reading strategies.

The experience has revealed with the guidance on reading strategies that students have become autonomous. This experience has increased their metacognitive awareness skills, now they usually focus their attention on the meaning, use their prior knowledge, and combine and exchange reading strategies, not only the strategies suggested by the teacher; they contrast what they had learned, and which strategy had been applied is more effective. Besides, it has increased their confidence to work independently, to be more efficient, less dependent, and to increase their attitude and motivation.

Into the framework of ALEX Virtual English Program at Universidad Nacional de Colombia which is a hybrid model that integrates both online and face-to-face EFL courses, where most of the contents are provided online, Cantor-Barragán (2009) has presented a qualitative study about the importance of the discussion board tool, its features, and its importance within the transition from a face-to-face model toward a virtual education model. The mentioned experience has inquired about the learner's perceptions about this interactive tool to develop autonomous learning.

Cantor-Barragán has concluded that a discussion-board is a key mediator between the participants, which helped them to develop abilities, and skills, mainly autonomous learning, because students assume their responsibility for the time to participate, make decisions about the effort applied, reflect how interested, and committed they are with their learning process, they develop discussions, argumentations, negotiations through collaborative work, work interactions as a substitute of the face-to-face component, and create tolerance among them. To sum up, this tool helps to develop collaborative work, autonomous learning, and interaction.

By developing an innovative online-based peer-tutoring model, Herrera-Bohórquez, Largo-Rodríguez, & Viáfara-González (2019) have exposed qualitative-research which has

inquired, how the new model shaped autonomous learning of two groups of undergraduate pre-service teacher tutees who belong to an education program at a Colombian public university. This study has explored the connection between online peer-tutoring and autonomous learning and reflected about the possibility to integrate online technologies to support this kind of learning as a better option than the existing face-to-face peer-tutoring model.

According to Herrera-Bohórquez, Largo-Rodríguez, & Viáfara-González, this model is a valuable strategy because it has produced changes in different ways. It has mediated and influenced the students' engagement because they had spent time working on online tutoring, improved their self-discipline, commitment, perseverance, collaboration, and motivation, invested more time in self-directed practices, and transcended the classroom exploring topics and learning options, gained awareness of the potential on the online environments and its benefits (immediacy, accessibility, and comfort, and resources to learn). In summary, this model "...entails [...] critical and analytical capacity of tutors and tutees to play an active and responsible role in designing learning agendas rooted in learners' needs" (Herrera-Bohórquez, Largo-Rodríguez, & Viáfara-González, 2019, p. 17).

About the subject of Foreign Trade and the use of the Moodle educative platform, Correa-Diaz (2002) has developed an action-research project related to the development of competences of 70 students who were enrolled in the fifth semester in Administration of International Business at a private university in Bucaramanga. The goal has been stated was "to show that through the use of active teaching methods focusing on the development of competences we can improve the writing, speaking, and research competences in English of the students who nowadays take university subjects in a foreign language in Colombia" (p.163). To sum up, the purpose was to develop a model based on competences.

Correa-Diaz has concluded from this experience that the use of the Moodle platform has helped the learners to grow up their motivation and interest for their autonomous learning, also it has increased their levels of language proficiency, developed their language learning into the classroom and beyond the classroom, and it has helped build community through peer-peer interactions and conversational exchanges.

A study focused on the student-centered English language learning process in an autonomous and blended-model was developed by Olaya (2018). This experience was carried out with 25 undergraduate engineering students from a Colombian public university. This study has inquired, how autonomy in the student's learning process improves learner's English language performance. In other words, how autonomy has helped to foster English language competences.

This experience has allowed developing an encouraging blended-learning environment based on the student-centered approach and technology-based activities to improve autonomous learning. This environment has provided students with opportunities to learn, become responsible, motivated, critical, reflective, and independent. Collaborative activities have allowed learners to work with their instructor and peers, searching information, planning, and designing activities, "understand autonomy as a social ability" (Olaya, 2018 p. 51).

Olaya pointed out that instruction based on a student-centered learning approach, according to needs, expectations, and abilities, is a need to promote autonomous learning. This researcher has concluded that the use of technologies (blogs) help learners to take control of their decision, interests, and needs. Finally, all help promote self-regulation, self-assessing their learning process, establishing goals, organizing, regulating, cooperating with other learners, and self-assessing their learning process.

The role of blogs and web-resources in the development of autonomous learning awareness has been explored in a qualitative case-study by Ballén (2014) within the context of ALEX by the Department of Foreign Languages of Universidad Nacional de Colombia. This study was developed with 35 undergraduate students who were enrolled in the fourth level of ALEX into the workshop modality based on face-to-face and ALEX Virtual with the use of the Moodle educative platform. The experience has revealed that the use of technology-based activities, social networks, Web 2.0 tools, and computer-related tools has tried to conduct students through a process to become more independent, aware of their learning process, and improving their writing skills. They could produce their articles about their research.

Following Ballén, technology-based activities have contributed to the understanding of autonomous learning and make students more motivated to make their own decisions. Specifically, this educative strategy has raised positive attitudes while they have taken advantage of the technologies; they have identified themselves some ways to study languages and transferred the knowledge that has been acquired by them into an academic context. Based on evidence about the control exercised by the learners on the content and the process of learning, this researcher has stated that this strategy has motivated students to develop a continue working on their development of autonomous learning.

There is a step-by-step model for syllabus-design focused on fostering and promoting autonomy. This model has been designed by Ramirez-Espinosa (2015) due to the lack of it. This model was implemented at Universidad de Valle with 20 undergraduate pre-service English teachers whose features were to be freshmen learners in basic English courses of the foreign language program. The main goal was “to provide other language teachers with a step-by-step guide that might serve as a flexible model for designing syllabi based on the promotion and

development of learner autonomy” (Ramírez-Espinosa, 2015, p. 119). Here self-access centers have had a relevant role to foster autonomous learning.

Ramírez-Espinosa (2015) has explained that this syllabus design could be adaptable. It has shown that it reinforced autonomous behaviors inside and outside the classroom, increased visits to the self-access centers and the activities performed there, and became a group of freshmen into active agents. Also, it is necessary to implement a two-course path based on the development of learner autonomy. In the beginning, the teacher should assess up to where to an extent their practice, as well, it requires time in negotiation, role changing, and allowing learners to make a decision.

Related to the project “Inglés por módulos semipresenciales” which has been executed by the Languages Department in a Colombian private university, Campos & Granados (2006) have presented its outcomes. This work has developed a pedagogical proposal based on the communicative approach and with the use of English Discoveries Educative Software into semi-distant modules. The goal of this project was to “design a proposal for the teaching and learning of English in semi-distant modules making use of the software English Discoveries” (Campos & Granados, 2006, p.134). Through this experience, the experience has changed the learner’s way to learn English using semi-distance modules, and they could improve their level of English in a shorter time.

Campos & Granados (2006) have concluded different aspects. One of them has been the changes suffered by the initial proposal that has been stated (presentation-software-evaluation) as a product of the negotiation has been established by the teachers and students, and the new proposal was: software-tutorial-interaction- evaluation-consolidation. Another one is that technology has become a motivating factor and the modality of semi-distant has allowed learners

to manage their time, including the fact that some of them had had inconveniences before independent work. Another conclusion is that qualitative assessment has been useful because the learners can notice their progress. However, this project has reluctant some needs: to provide training in promoting autonomous learning, learning to learn, learning strategies, to create institutional policies, and establish contact with foreign institutions.

Finally, systematic evaluation of a self-access center was a small-scale project that had been executed on a private university, Posada-Ortiz (2006) through this work has fulfilled goals to identify the most common learning strategies used by the learners, to discover some strengths and weakness of self-access center. Data have been gathered through instruments as the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning designed by Oxford (used by Posada-Ortiz, 2006), and a survey about the types of student's activities and frequency of their visits.

Among the conclusions that have been provided by Posada-Ortiz (2006), the author has indicated that learners have presented some autonomy during the learning of EFL. They have used indirect learning strategies which included meta-cognitive, social, and cognitive strategies. Respect to this work, they have presented the need for counseling about language and technology. About the learners' perceptions, they have seen self-access centers as a good compliment, and they have need counseling related to language and technology.

Features of EFL Autonomous Learning in Distance Education

Aguirre-Morales & Ramos-Holguin (2009) focus on guidance in reading strategies to introduce learners to the first stage of autonomous learning. According to researchers, students become autonomous through an arrangement process, where the first stage is named semi-autonomy. In this research autonomous learning, described by Aguirre-Morales & Ramos-Holguin, is characterized by the learners' exercise of responsibility, their right to make decisions,

to determine their directions, understanding the sense, and meanings, and to implement their learning. Precisely, it implies that learners themselves can establish and manage their syllabus, organize, and choose materials, times, tasks, and levels.

Autonomy is considered by Cantor-Barragán (2009) as an “approach to support and guide the learning process” (p. 115) of an EFL blended course. This academic presents this learning evidenced on the discussion board and points that autonomous learners participate, analyze, and reflect on their learning and other learners’ interventions; they do the effort to investigate, to make contributions, to become responsible for their time, to make decisions related to the effort, among other features.

Into the framework of the online peer-tutoring model, Herrera-Bohórquez, Largo-Rodríguez, & Viáfara-González (2019) define autonomy as “...ability encompassing responsibility, persistence, and self-discipline towards one’s learning and goal-oriented action plans” (Herrera-Bohórquez, Largo-Rodríguez, & Viáfara-González, 2019, p. 22) and develop a more detailed and enriched description. Researchers suggest that learners have an initial insight, but it could be updated and changed qualitatively from theory to practice through a pedagogical intervention, indeed it increases opportunities and spaces to develop self-directed learning.

In connection, Herrera-Bohórquez, Largo-Rodríguez, & Viáfara-González (2019) describe psychological and social features. The precise characteristics as an intrinsic-motivation which determine interest, practice the language, and show themselves what they could achieve; commitment, extracurricular work, and their organization of learning, discipline, dedication, persistence, perseverance, and self-control and organization of learning and enthusiasm experienced by the learners. These learners need the last features to work comfortably and achieve long-term goals. Finally, in the social realm, collaboration is required because they

assure that learning English required independence, which is not a solitary enterprise. It is an interactive process that implies a comfortable atmosphere, collaboration process, affiliation, and offering mutual support to learn from others' mistakes.

The autonomous study has been considered by Correa-Diaz (2002) as a constructivist activity carried out by the learners and modality of development of their self-learning activity. The researcher points self-learning as a competence fostered by performing active teaching methods (lectures, seminars, workshops, ...) which are procedures and resources that belong to a plan of action, and this competence has constitutive elements like motivation, personality, self-concept, knowledge, skills. Hence, an autonomous learner can prepare, read, study, participate, dialogue, and communicate. It is a realm where the learner takes care of the regulation of their learning process.

Circumscribed in the literature, autonomy is considered by Olaya (2018) as a tendency, a continuous adapting, engaging, and routinized process which involves and encourages teacher-dependent learners, who are not interested in the subject, gradually in taking responsibility, independence, and proficiency, without any pressure over the activities. Here independence is not conceived as an isolated work where the students learn alone.

This researcher points that autonomy involves learners in a range of essential activities to reach a purpose because it is a routinized process that demands self-sufficiency and encourages learners to be responsible for their learning (Olaya, 2018). An autonomous learner is an independent, self-evaluator, and responsible learner of his learning process, who learns from the environment, the experiences, and from making mistakes. This learner can use strategies, methods, or tools and perform strategies and habits to foster language proficiency and it depends on the development of critical and self-reflect capacity (Olaya, 2018, p.51).

Also, Olaya (2018) gives the features for a successful self-regulated learner in his learning activity: active, effective, independent, responsible, taking on challenging task, defining goals, organizing learning processes, practicing, developing a deep understanding, making an extra effort, identifying weakness and strengths, using concentration strategies, using different approaches, knowing what is important in the learning activity and environment, having a realistic perception of his abilities, knowing when aid and support are required, cooperating with partners, and self-assessing and evaluating performance.

Ballén (2014) understood from different perspectives and associated with the use of technologies, about learner controls content and process of learning. The mentioned researcher refers to a “wider concept of autonomy” as a product of both supportive teaching and learner’s exercise. “Autonomy means that students take control of their learning through their use of ICT” (Ballén, 2014, p. 14). In this context, the last researcher states that learners use technologies, they could apply knowledge, develop collaborative work, transfer, build, and add knowledge; in this process, they become confident and learn from mistakes. Effectively the use of ICT’s helps promote positive attitudes, motivate learners, increase their autonomous learning awareness, make their own decisions, build knowledge, and increase their confidence and strong creativity. It is important to notice that autonomy is “a slow process of learning awareness” (Medina, 2009, cited by Ballén, 2014). Autonomous learning features are motivated, independent, free, aware, decide, choice, control, and monitor.

This research states the student’s consciousness of the learning process and their understanding of autonomy are shaped and characterized by technology-based activities. According to Ballén (2014), technologies-based activities as an initial point to make autonomous decisions about their learning, the research findings have taken two ways:

Linked with the success, Ramírez-Espinosa (2015) based on the literature conceives autonomous learning as the core of a new course and it demands a new approach and institutional support. This researcher from the experience developed with undergraduate learners states that autonomous learning is a behavior that initially corresponds to the passive freshmen students until becoming active agents. In other words, “it empowers him/her to be an independent user of the language” (Ramírez-Espinosa, 2015, p. 115). Effectively learner’s behavior could change, and they become active agents: more responsible, effective, and independent users of the language.

In the context of self-access centers, Posada-Ortiz (2006) mentions autonomy as an attitude to language learning. This academic presents some characteristics of the autonomous learner as the ability to formulate their learning objectives, select and implement their learning strategies, and identifying those which. Moreover, this attitude depends on other factors like personality and philosophy of the institution.

Finally, Campos & Granados (2006) do not define autonomous learning in the article. However, they provide some features. Autonomous learning allows the learner to manage their time, become aware of the ways to learn best, be committed, interact with the tutor and other learners, and develop independent work.

EFL Pedagogical Designs and Proposals to Develop Autonomous Learning from Distance Education

The findings reveal that there is a reduced amount of studies focused just on EFL teaching strategies directed through distance education EFL courses or programs to students who belong to undergraduate distance programs conceived in this way by the universities; however, the findings reveal that most studies are centered on undergraduate learners who belong to semi-

distance programs or face-to-face programs and they study EFL blended programs offered by their same institutions. It seems that the institutions have a Languages Department whose function is to provide EFL programs, some of them offered according to the distance education model, based on blended or online modality.

Aguirre-Morales & Ramos-Holguin (2009) create a teaching strategy centered on the guidance in reading strategies that help introduce students within the process to become semi-autonomous. In consequence, it is useful to take advantage of the independent work time. According to the mentioned academics, reading is a cognitive process related to others because readers select, combine, and use the strategies, while they improve their cognitive and metacognitive, and motivational functions. Punctually, reading strategies are exploiting transparent words, reading non-text information, skimming-scanning, using linguistic-clues, and guessing.

The guidance in reading as a strategy takes into account some basis related to materials, contents, tasks, exercises, and roles. First, the project establishes self-access materials which lead the reader during the task; they should contain objectives, meaningful language input, practice material, instructions, advice for learning, feedback, tests, advice about progression and record-keeping, reference material, indexing, and motivational factors (Dickinson, 1987, cited by Aguirre-Morales & Holguin Ramos, 2009, p. 44). Respect to contents, readings should be available, motivational, and meaningful to the learners; tasks should have exercises and accurate answers; the instructor should assume roles as facilitators and mentors whose function is to explicate how to learn and use the knowledge and guide and train the learner in techniques and strategies.

The pedagogical proposal has been designed by the researchers has the next three stages:

1. Diagnosis consists of obtaining data through informal talks, analyzing it regarding the learner's needs and their autonomous learning, and using conclusions to design a proposal.

2. Action follows the pattern instruction, exercises, and homework. It involves the implementation of five workshops designed to improve reading skills and independent work in semi-distance learning methodology following:

- a. Presentation of reading strategy, its description, and instructions using (L1) by the instructor (specific objective, examples, questions asked by the students).
- b. Article for practice the reading strategy.
- c. Exercises to be completed based on the reading.

Tutorial sessions or classes help guide the students and answer any clarifying questions.

Each face-to-face session includes questions whose function is to help learners monitor

themselves: “What a strategy is? Why a strategy should be learned? How to use the strategy?

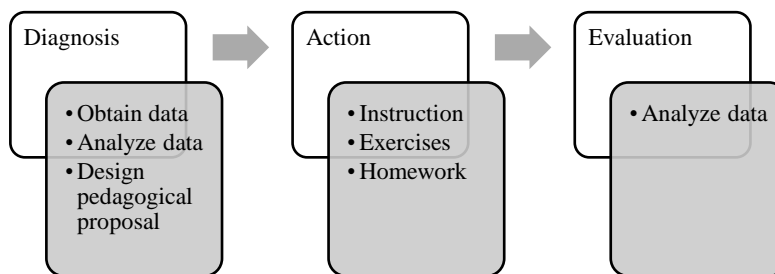
When and where the strategy should be used? How to evaluate the use of the strategy?”

(Aguirre-Morales & Ramos-Holguin, 2009, p. 47).

3. The evaluation consists of gathered and analyzed data provided by the application of workshops and other instruments like questionnaires.

Figure 3

The pedagogical proposal by Aguirre-Morales & Ramos-Holguin (2009).



As stated previously, Cantor-Barragán (2009) has studied the discussion board as a tool in EFL blended courses. In distance education, according to this academic, the discussion board is a tool whose function is to develop ideas interchange, develop debates, and build collaborative learning between learners and instructors asynchronously; it is flexible on time and an open field of expression. It could help teachers and tutor accompanying and encouraging learners to develop autonomous learning. “This interchange and meaningful communication help improve writing skills and autonomy but, overall, they promote critical thinking” (Cantor-Barragán, 2009, p. 111).

This strategy takes into account a context, elements, rules, roles, and evaluation:

- The strategy is rooted in a context that is ALEX Virtual English Program which is a blended EFL program with 70% online autonomous work and 30% face-to-face component (15% tutorial sessions and 15% cultural events).
- It is important to consider to establish a certain amount of interventions, consider the student’s prior knowledge, expectations, needs, interests, to select a topic centered on the learners, to keep the tendency to decrease participation, and provide feedback about grammar, vocabulary and provide review and solve doubts, among others.
- The tool is the discussion board as a place of interactive communication between creators and students, which should be two to preserve learners focused.
- The main rule is respectful communication.
- The roles are a creator who creates, manages, and regulates strategies, materials, and interactions, it could be a teacher or tutor who maintains a distance position and measured participation. Participants are students who interact by answering,

replying, and creating threads, they should manage time and effort to participate without limit.

- Concerning evaluation, writing is not graded; participation has a specific percentage in the whole course graded.

This pedagogical proposal has four components (Grupo de Desarrollo Académico GDA ALEX, 2004, cited by Cantor-Barragán, 2009, p.110):

1. Autonomous work by the students. It is executed by learners using designed modules that have been presented on Blackboard and other materials provided by the Language Department.

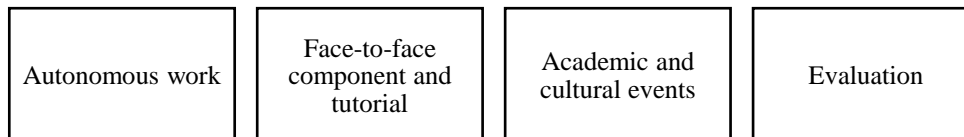
2. Face-to-face component. It consists of face-to-face tutorial sessions for the group (1-hour per week). This stage has maximum of 25 students and a tutor who supports teachers' work. Each tutor attends 8 hours per week (4 online and 4 face-to-face tutorial sessions) for answering questions about the platform and for the oral practice of the language.

3. Academic and cultural events. They consist of spaces where learners present projects, exhibitions, competences guided by the teachers and tutors.

4. Evaluation. It consists of two progress tests and final exam development.

Figure 4

Pedagogical proposal by ALEX Virtual English Program by Grupo de Desarrollo Académico ALEX GDA (2004), cited by Cantor-Barragán (2009).



The peer-tutoring virtual model designed by Herrera-Bohórquez, Largo-Rodríguez, & Viáfara-González (2019) is another tool which helps learners to foster autonomous learning. This

strategy helps support learners because its collaborative nature which allows to “a more capable other” works with learners hand-in-hand, providing scaffolding, and potentiating learning opportunities; it reduces asymmetric relationships among the actors; it allows to go beyond the academic realm and help learners have growth in other realms (metacognitive, emotional-affective, motivational, and professional); and it takes advantage of the new technologies (efficiency, time, location, among others), and redefines educational practices.

According to these researchers, it is important to have into account that this model allows developing abilities and learn to learn, all tools should be integrated, and all stages should be rooted in a purposive and well-structured plan. The online-tutoring peer model has the next stages, which integrate internet resources in each step (Herrera-Bohórquez, Largo-Rodríguez, & Viáfara-González, 2019):

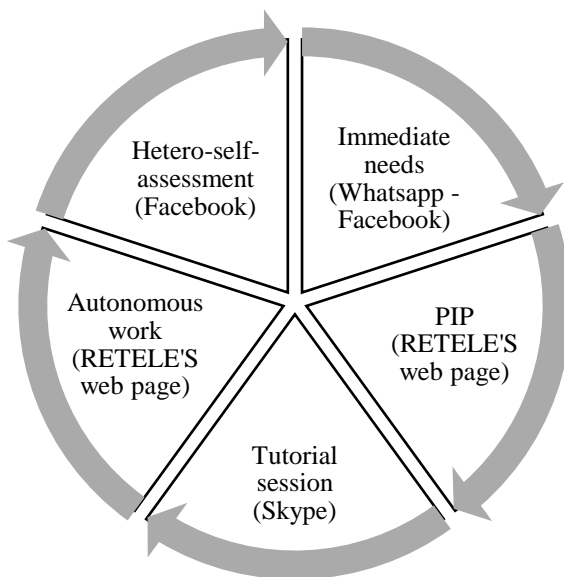
Tutorial session through online tools. Chats provide online encounters where the tutor offers immediate and permanent support and feedback. It allows identifying and addressing learners from:

- Immediate needs (Whatsapp, Facebook)
- Working on a personal improvement plan (PIP) (Website). PIP means “personal improvement plan” as an autonomous practice developed by the students. Learner planning and engaging in strength abilities and skills. It is developed on the website.
- Tutorial session through videoconference (Skype). Participants join videoconferences to develop activities to language practice, reflect, and learn how-to-learn.

- Autonomous work (website). It contains resources and links for self-access language practice and information, so tutees have options to solve learning doubts, and guidelines to learn how to learn.
- Hetero-self assessment (Facebook). It is reflection talking through Facebook to serve peer- and self-assessment purposes. In this space, the tutors propose common topics to reflect on language learning or autonomous work. A new cycle starts with new perspectives.

Figure 5

Online peer-tutoring model adapted from Viáfara & Ariza, 2008 by Herrera-Bohórquez, Largo-Rodríguez, & Viáfara-González, 2019, p. 20.



The strategy has been designed by Correa-Diaz (2002) entails the construction of a friendly learning environment that contains different resources, aids, and the use of the Moodle educative platform. In this project, it is relevant to consider some aspects suggested by Correa-Diaz (2002):

- Moodle is a tool for learning online, it allows interaction and collaborates in multiple ways, and it is used to support distance education. This tool has three columns (left: tools, center: content, right: tools).
- Only traditional lecture-based learning does not help reach the expected learning, it is necessary to renew using active teaching methods which are modalities (case studies, PBL, lectures, ...) to develop or achieve goals or competencies.
- Methods as procedures and resources could be used in different phases of a plan of action. They should be organized and integrated into other methods with the same goals. For example, a seminar could be prepared using projects, cases, or cooperative work.

The next table (Table 2) presents the methods that could be used, each one develops different skills and abilities, and the last-named self-learning is the most adequate to develop EFL autonomous learning:

Table 2

Teaching methods to the development of competences (Correa-Diaz, 2005)

Methods	Definition	Skills, abilities, and competences
Lectures	The teacher presents and explains the contents.	Communicate ideas, elaborate conclusion, learn to listen to others
Case studies and exercises	Learners analyze, diagnoses, understand, and solve problems.	Argue and elaborate conclusions in different situations for different audiences
Problem Based Learning	It helps learners to think about problems in the real world.	Presentation of information
Project-Based Learning	Projects deal with real problems. It requires the development of some activities at the time.	Oral and written expression, management of information
Cooperative learning	It allows learners to work to achieve group goals.	Oral expression, planning of the speech, invite pupils to express themselves
Self-learning	A learning contract is an agreement established between teachers and students.	Argumentation, use of information and communication technology

Then, the stages developed in the action research project to build the model (Correa-Diaz, 2002) are:

Information: it consists of informing about the project at the beginning of the semester.

1. Planning. It consists of establishing objectives to determine competences during the semester.

2. Selection of the activities to accomplish objectives. It consists of the election of the activities, its distribution, number of students, and didactic resources.

3. Determination of evaluation criteria. It involves activities as questioning, error detection, writing reports, oral presentation, and information search.

Figure 6

Action research project to build the model (Correa-Diaz, 2002.).

Planning	Selection of the activities to accomplish objectives	Determination of evaluation criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives (it states competences) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity (self-learning) • Number and distribution of activities • Didactic resources • Time assigned • Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities: • Questioning • Error detection • Critical comments • Oral presentation • Information search • Writing reports

The project developed by Olaya (2018) has been linked to the concept of student-centered learning because the activities are planned and executed according to the learners' needs and interests to produce on the students: autonomous behavior, desire for taking responsibility, collaborative work, and self-evaluation process.

Following the suggestions by Olaya (2018), this project has some important aspects that the instructor should perform through a guiding and assisting role:

- To have into account students' personality differences, learning strategies, cultural domains, and needs. Precisely, they need to develop observational skills to determine what is important and cognitive skills to identify and solve problems and determine the benefits of their situation as students. Also, they spend a lot of time using the internet.
- To incorporate dynamic activities before English courses which sometimes are not mandatory.
- To pay more attention to less autonomous learners and help them by bringing orientation on self-motivation, self-regulation, and time management.
- Many student-centered activities should be planned and improved to produce autonomous behaviors like the desire for taking responsibility, making decisions, selecting activities, controlling their learning process, presenting results, working collaboratively, reinforcing learning skills, and developing a self-evaluation, and encouraging a positive learning environment.
- To consider the benefits of student-centered learning because it increases learners' self-direction and responsibility-taking for the development of their learning skills, sense of self-control and control over learning, increasing their self-concept, motivation, collaborative work, and self-evaluation process.
- Implementation requires to have into account the next autonomous behaviors: cooperating with partners, self-assessing their process of learning, defining clear goals, and organizing learning processes, learners must define their goals or objectives, students must work in cooperation with their partners, and they have to evaluate their performance during the activity.

- Face to face sessions should be used to ask questions, clear up doubts, and reinforce the communication with the rest of the class.
- Blogs and other web-based tools could be to develop skills and abilities. This project to develop writing skills used a blog, which allows learners to express their ideas, help teachers ask learners questions, and they have the opportunity to increase the sense of collaboration.

Table 3

An EFL student-centered learning course or program (Marinko, Baužienė, Daniels, Gołębiowski, Hughes, & Rees, 2016, cited by Olaya, 2018)

Active methods or modalities
– Problem-based learning PBL
– Group project work
– Student-centered active learning
– Resource-based learning
– Case method,
– Roleplays
– Classroom workshops
– Group presentations
– Web-conferencing environment
– Self-assessment comments
– Peer-assessment
– Feedback comments
– Suggesting self-assessment grades
– Negotiating self-assessment grades

The pedagogic intervention entails on autonomous English course which follows a student-centered learning basis and includes different technology-based activities. It has three main stages that comprehend 16 weeks. The learners develop writing lab-reports as a tool for developing solving problems in six recursive ways. The intervention involves instructions and the expected outcomes related to the blogs, tools for motivating, and develop autonomous learning. The next (Table 4) is the syllabus designed by Olaya (2018):

Table 4

Activities developed during the intervention (Olaya, 2018)

Week	Activity
1	Assign task one Teaching how to create a blog
2	Peer checklist on task one To chat about doubts on the task
3	Talk about task one Group interview
4	Assign task two Doing lab experiments based on their major and interest
5	Create a blog
6	Peer checklist Group discussion about task two
7	Assign task three Collaborative work to improve blogs
8	Group checklist Group discussion on task three
9	Oral presentation of lab experiments on the blog
10	Written lab report checklist Visiting of the blogs of the group
11	Group interview
12	Self-assessment
13	Grouped assessment
14	Final feedback
15	Final group discussion

Another project has been developed by Ballén (2014), who used web resources and blogs to develop autonomous learning awareness. This case study has been developed within the framework of ALEX by the Department of Foreign Languages of Universidad Nacional de Colombia. It entails a workshop modality (face-to-face) and the ALEX Virtual English Program (Moodle fourth level of the ALEX Program). Thirty-five undergraduate students were enrolled in the fourth level of ALEX.

According to Ballén (2014), the instructor should have into account:

- Technology-based activities may shape awareness of their learning processes and their understanding of autonomy as a starting point in students' autonomous decisions.

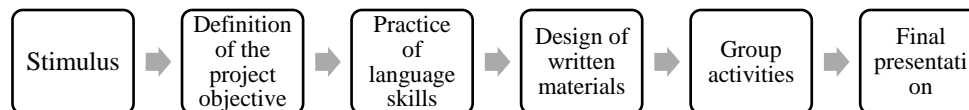
- The instructor should explain completely the project.
- The learning processes are procedures and strategies used to acquire new information. They depend on the learner's decision.
- An intervention process could be developed in the fourth stages: -Awareness awakening - Change of attitudes - Transfer of roles - Autonomy (Medina, 2009, cited by Ballén, 2014, p. 14).

The next is the pedagogical procedure has been followed in the project “Weblog: studying abroad” and its stages:

1. Stimulus. Task 1: The idea of the project was presented to the students and the task.
2. Definition of the project objective. Task 2: Students interviewed each other to find out about each other's universities and country preferences, activate a mini-blog, give a short introduction about the work they were going to do there, and registered.
3. The practice of language skills. Task 3: They chose a university, a program, research the country visiting different links, were asked to collect information in a chart, and to post it on their mini-blog.
4. Design of written materials. Task 4: Students research details about the university and the program selected and designed a graphic organizer and posted it on the mini-blog.
5. Group activities. Task 5: Students get prepared for an interview, research, collect and review information about the topic, and research possible answer for the interview.
6. Final presentation. Task 6: Students present the blog designed; the technology tools have been used. Products are shared with another class. Students reflect upon the use of technology in the English class using a rubric.

Figure 7

The pedagogical procedure followed in the project “Weblog: studying abroad” (Fried-Booth, 1986, cited by Ballén.).



Ramirez-Espinosa (2015) has focused the research project on the design of the autonomy-fostering syllabus. Through a model or guide that contains the step-by-step, this research provides the basis to design a syllabus that helps instructors develop learners' autonomous learning through stages as design, implementation, and evaluation and helps the learner achieve success. However, this work is about face-to-face environments, and it brings the basis of self-access centers, which are related to distance autonomous learning developed by EFL learners.

Autonomous learning should be the core of the design of new courses and institutionalized. It requires a new approach and institutional support (authority figures and official document) whose function is providing support and acts as a sponsor and official backing. Otherwise, it will fail because it will not be taken seriously by the learners.

The following are the five principles proposed by Cotterall (1995, cited by Ramirez-Espinosa, 2015): learner/teacher dialogue, learning a language study theme, classroom tasks and materials, student record booklet, and self-access center. Also, it takes into account other principles stated by Cotterall (2000, cited by Ramirez-Espinosa, 2015): learner goals, language learning process, learner strategies, and reflection on learning.

Here the self-access center provides students opportunities, tasks, and materials; learners can choose and access on their own for the development of autonomous behaviors during the learning and practice of a foreign language; for example, a small library, a reading room, and an online community.

The project was developed following the stages of action-research (Figure 8):

Figure 8

Action-Research process (Ramirez-Espinosa, 2015).

Diagnosis phase	Design and implementation phase	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis the freshmen's autonomy profiles and their self-perception • Analysis of self-access centers for language learning and practice, and their relationship with the syllabus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of the course syllabus • Preparation of task, authentic material, design of self-access activities for the self-access centers. • Talks that provided an initial learner training program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessed the experience and design of a second course. • New profiles of autonomy in order to determine the impact of the course.

The model for syllabus design developed by Ramirez-Espinosa (2015) is the next one (Table 5):

Table 5

The model with the steps of the syllabus design (Ramirez-Espinosa, 2015)

Stage	Step
Stage 1: setting the mood for autonomy	1. Diagnose your institution in terms of the opportunities that it offers (or might offer) for the development of autonomy.
	2. Establish the initial autonomy profile of the students.
	3. Equip your students with some learner-training workshops before starting the course.
	4. Design self-access materials for the self-access center and introduce your students to both of them.
Stage 2: design and implementation	5. Lead a needs-analysis with your group.
	6. Design a blueprint of your course syllabus in terms of contents, sequence, and evaluation.
	7. Have students select the goals of the course and let them have a say in the contents and the evaluation proposed in your syllabus blueprint.
	8. Implement the course through a TBL approach.
	9. Allow students to propose their materials and activities in the classroom.
	10. Provide feedback constantly and promote peer-evaluation in every class.
	11. Encourage your students to keep a journal.
Stage 3: evaluation of the experience	12. Establish the closing autonomy profile of the students.
	13. Evaluate the syllabus structure with your students.

Campos & Granados (2006) have designed a new proposal for the teaching of English based on technology. One objective was: "To apply learning strategies with the purpose of

fostering autonomous learning.” (Campos & Granados, 2006, p.134). At this experience, they asked how to try to incorporate learning strategies to foster autonomy.

The researchers should have into account:

- Bimodal education integrates the principles of distance learning and traditional education, in order words, the project promotes autonomous learning through the independent work out of the classroom, and they had some class attendance.
- The communicative approach because it develops communicative competences and into this context, productive skills (speaking and writing).
- To promote autonomous learning, it is necessary a systematic training on learning strategies. It will help the learner to work independently.
- Evaluation should be made into the process to identify strengths and weaknesses and the end of each module.
- Technology in foreign language learning provides an alternative classroom and learners like to use technology.

Linked to the last aspects, the next table shows the initial proposal designed by the researchers Campos & Granados (2006) that includes other considerations (Table 6):

Table 6

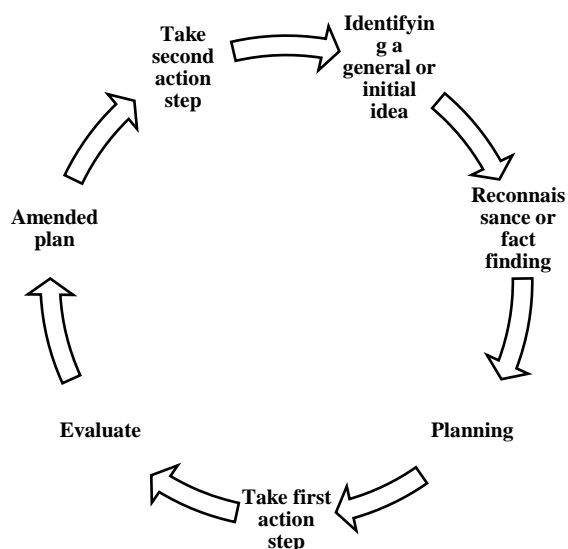
An initial proposal designed by Campos & Granados (2006)

Cycle	Presentation-software-evaluation
Content	Twice the amount of content in the regular program
Assessment	Portfolio, roleplays, software test, final grammar exam after each module
Times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Presentation: two hours – Evaluation: two hours – Computer: six hours
Teacher’s role	Guide and tutor
Student’s role	Autonomous

The research and pedagogical proposal are based on Lewin's model (1946 cited by Campos & Granados, 2006, p.137) (Figure 9):

Figure 9

Research and pedagogical proposal based on Lewin's model (1946 cited by Campos & Granados, 2006, p.137).



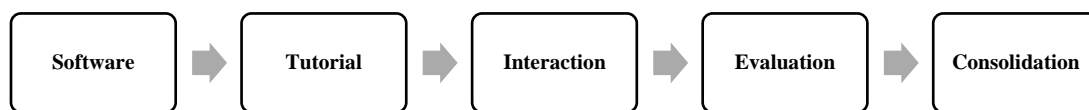
According to Campos & Granados (2006), the course consists specifically of:

1. Presentation session involves explaining a grammar aspect by the tutor and carried out the workshops designed.
2. The software consists of learners who go to the language laboratory where they practice the aspect studied with the exercises.
3. The evaluation contains tests given by the software about the topic learned.

Finally, the first and second proposal had changed through a dialog between instructors and learners (Figure 10):

Figure 10

The last pedagogical proposal was negotiated between both tutors and learners (Campos & Granados, 2006).



Finally, Posada-Ortiz (2006) focused his research on evaluation and self-access centers. In this research, a self-access center is defined as a learning environment that provides learning opportunities outside the classroom where students can improve their learning and autonomous learning through the access and use of materials and machines. This strategy could be classified as a distance learning for reason the separation between instructor and learner.

According to this work, it is significant to have into account that evaluation is a process whose goal is to improve foreign language teaching, and it is a systematic process that comprehends: gathering data about learning strategies, interpreting them, and making informed decisions based on information. Respect the self-access center, if it is not efficient, it requires analyzing the philosophy of the institution, the curriculum, and the role of the users. Self-access centers were created as a complement of classroom-based content to enhance autonomous learning. The next chart (Table 7) shows the typology proposed by Miller & Rogerson-Revell (1993, cited by Posada-Ortiz, 2006):

Table 7

Typology of self-access center (Miller & Rogerson-Revell, 1993, cited by Posada-Ortiz, 2006)

Typology	Definition
Menu-driven	It is a system in which the materials are classified, and the information stored electronically, and every time a learner needs to gain access to the system, they can refer to the menu.
Supermarket	It is a self-access system in which the learner has the opportunity to look around and choose what to study.
Controlled-access	It is a system where learners are directed to a specific set of materials by their tutors.
Open-access	It is part of a library. The material is open for use by students studying English and other library students.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

This monograph is about teaching strategies used to promote EFL autonomous learning in distance education undergraduate students within the Colombian TEFL research context. The data is provided by the main Colombian research journals in TEFL to make an initial approach to research teaching strategies focused on the development of EFL autonomous learning.

This is a qualitative research focused on textual data provided by written texts, “that contains information about the phenomena” (Bailey, 1994, p. 333). In connection, the research method adopted is named documentary research, which entails an initial literature review and a compilation of data and information related to teaching strategies to promote EFL autonomous learning that has been applied in distance educative environments.

To reach the goals, this review tries to gather the most important textual data provided by research about EFL autonomous learning, punctually data related about:

- Historic, theoretical and axiological data about Colombian distance education.
- Features about EFL autonomous learning on distance education undergraduate students.
- Keys, procedures, or steps about teaching strategies to promote EFL autonomous learning in distance education.

The data universe is composed of 70 research articles or papers gathered. The first criterion to obtain the research papers was to select the main Colombian academic journals on TEFL (Ikala, Profile, Gist, How, Matrices, Enletawa, Laclil, Colombian applied linguistics journal, Signo y pensamiento, Mutatis mutandis, Lenguaje, Folios, Enunciación, Actualidades pedagógicas, and Educación y educadores). Within each journal, the 70 papers were obtained

using different keywords and a mixture of them related to the general topic (“teaching strategies”, “autonomy”, “autonomous learning”, among other general keywords).

From the last 70 papers that were gathered, the sample is composed of nine (9) of them that were selected according to the following criteria and features. They should:

- Be written by Colombian researchers and institutions.
- Contain these keywords: “autonomy”, “autonomous learning”, “self-regulated learning”, “self-directed learning” into the title, abstract, or keywords.
- Be directed upon a specific population or program: distance education, undergraduate students.
- Be based on distance education models such as an independent study-guided independent study, telecourses, distributed classroom, open university-based ICT interactive model used on undergraduate programs which have EFL within their curriculum or EFL distance education programs or courses that complement undergraduates’ students’ education, including blended-learning, semi-distance, and distance learning.

Though blended learning models are not considered distance education by some authors, this work considers them because they provide valuable and available elements that are implemented in their distance component.

Likewise, this research only focuses on teaching strategies centered on the development of learner’s autonomy in the learning of a foreign language. For this reason, this work will not inquire about teaching strategies for developing different skills without relation to autonomous learning.

Table 8 shows the sample of articles selected according to the criteria established:

Table 8*Sample of articles analyzed*

Keywords	Article
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Autonomy - Competences - Teaching foreign trade in English - Using Moodle 	Correa-Díaz, A. (2012). Teaching Foreign Trade in English Through the Modalities Based on Competences and Using Moodle.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion boards - ALEX Virtual English program - Autonomy - Blended modality - Teachers' accompaniment 	Cantor-Barragán, D. (2009). Discussion Boards as Tools in Blended EFL Learning Programs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Autonomous learning - Distance education programs - Reading strategies 	Aguirre-Morales, J., & Ramos-Holguín, B. (2009). Guidance in Reading Strategies: A First Step Towards Autonomous Learning in a Semi-Distance Education Program.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Autonomy - Learning processes awareness - Technology in language education 	Ballén, D. (2014). The Role of Blogs and Web Resources in Students' Autonomous Learning Awareness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independent learning - Learner autonomy - Learning strategies - Self-access centers - Syllabus design. 	Ramírez-Espinosa, A. (2015). Fostering Autonomy Through Syllabus Design: A Step-by-Step Guide for Success.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Autonomy - Online environments - Peer-tutoring - Online implementation - Online English learning 	Herrera-Bohórquez, L. I., Largo Rodríguez, J. D., & Viáfara González, J. J. (2019). Online peer-tutoring: a renewed impetus for autonomous English learning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technology - Autonomous learning - Communicative approach - Bimodal education - Qualitative evaluation - Participant action research 	Campo, E., & Granados, C. (2006). Una nueva propuesta para la enseñanza del inglés basada en la tecnología.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Autonomous learning - Language education - Technology-based activities 	Olaya, M. L. (2018). Developing Autonomy Through Student-Centered English Language Learning Process for Engineering Students.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation - Self-Access Centres (SACs) - Autonomous learning - Learning strategies 	Posada Ortiz, J. Z. (2006). Evaluating students' autonomous learning through their uses of a self-access center. <i>Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal</i> , (8), 53-73. https://doi.org/10.14483/22487085.172

The data was gathered using a reading sheet were the researcher gathered textual data obtained during the systematic review. It is centered on the teaching strategies, practices, or

methods applied by the tutor, teacher, and instructor for promoting autonomous, self-regulated, self-directed learning, it excludes learning practices made by learners.

This work follows the next phases:

1. Exploring. It involves searching, selecting, and reading the papers according to the criteria.
2. Identifying. It consists to recognize or detect the most important data.
3. Compiling. It entails picking up and arrange the data obtained through the reading.

According to the object “Teaching strategies for developing EFL autonomous learning in distance education”, this work follows ECEDU’s research line Bilingualism in Distance Education Mediated by Technologies because the tutorial action and its strategies involve communication and action addressed on the construction and modeling of autonomous and critic thought and behavior on learners, and it contributes to strengthen and master a foreign language into the context of global dynamics.

As a result, this monograph intends to contribute to the research focused on the development of teaching strategies, models, and patterns to promote EFL autonomous learning in the context of distance education. This is a base to innovate, develop, and manage strategies to foster autonomous learning on distance education, which is mediated through different technologies (printed materials, mass-media, internet...).

CHAPTER IV

Results and Discussion

This chapter contains the most important findings and outcomes of this monograph in several parts. Although there are common elements in TEFL research on autonomous learning, for example, qualitative methods, action-research projects, case-studies, and based-technology activities, it is notable the diversity and dispersion in the research topics.

The first part will describe shortly the characteristics of the educative models explored on the research of teaching strategies to promote EFL autonomous learning on distance undergraduate education Colombian programs.

The second part will present a summary with the most remarkable features of autonomous learning in distance education according to Colombian TEFL researchers and institutions.

The third part will present the keys, procedures, stages, or steps used on teaching strategies to promote EFL autonomous learning of distance education undergraduate students in Colombia that have been identified.

Context of Colombian distance education model

If distance education has been defined by researchers from the characteristic physical separation between instructor and learners, the documental findings have revealed for the Colombian context a reduced amount of studies related to the most important models that have been referenced in the review.

The strategies that have been developed by researchers have taken programs, tools, and samples from programs based on hybrid models categorized “semi-distance” and “blended models”. In other words, these models involve a mix integrated between distance education and

face-to-face model. Despite other teaching strategies that were developed within the face-to-face traditional model, their programs have a valuable distance education component that undoubtedly complements and strengthens the educative action to develop autonomous learning and communicative skills.

Precisely, those models consist of EFL programs with a distance education component and a little face-to-face component supported with tutorial sessions. These programs were conceived by universities' language departments to fulfill the mandatory goals ruled mainly by Bilingual law and BNP. Other programs are not mandatory.

Despite the above, this work has tried to be focused and to pick up elements and keys from semi-distance, blended, and face-to-face to identify the most relevant and useful aspects to be implemented. The previous ideas make sense because those models have been categorized as distance education into the Colombian context.

Also, the programs where the strategies have been applied highlight different aspects to have into account in this research:

- First, following the industrial teaching and learning theory, it is evident the importance of planning to provide instructional design and structure on the syllabus; materials and the structure have been created by the teachers, tutors, and institutions according to learners' interests, needs, and learning styles.
- Second, according to the guided didactic conversation and the mediated didactic dialog with the theories, the central role has been given to the interaction between instructor and learner through face-to-face or synchronic mediated encounters named tutorial sessions. Here learners can ask questions, solve doubts, and

perform their autonomous learning through control exercised by them with the support of the tutor. It reduces the transactional distance between participants.

- Third, related to the last and according to the transactional distance theory, some strategies have still been well-structured and provide control by the tutor increasing the transactional distance; also the strategies consider and offer alternatives, options, and a dialogical component that decrease that distance and allow learners make choice, ask, participate, and suggest changes according to their interest, needs, and learning styles.

Features of EFL Autonomous learning on distance education

In an approximation to the characteristics of autonomous learning in distance education, research provides a great number of features gathered in the literature review. This part will be centered on common characteristics provided by the research. Effectively, after reviewing these features into the context of autonomous learning of EFL in distance education it is possible to find multiple characteristics of autonomous learning in different realms.

From the psychological realm, the most notable characteristics are motivation, responsibility, interest, independence, confidence, persistence, effectiveness, and active role. Other features are habits, discipline, proficient, realistic perception of abilities, comfortable work, and dedication; they are positive attitudes.

From the cognitive and metacognitive realm, autonomous learning implies to be aware; to make decisions about different aspects as the contents and the learning process; to choose materials, tasks, times, and levels; to organize and regulate learning process; to know what is important and when aid or support is needed; to use learning and concentration strategies,

technologies, and different approaches; to manage time and place among other resources; to learn from their own and others' mistakes and the environment.

Other characteristics are to be analytical, reflective, critical, creative, and able to identify weaknesses and strengths and to understand the sense and meanings.

From the social realm, autonomous learning entails cooperation, collaboration, and mutual support through interacting, building, transferring, and adding knowledge, and participation. Other characteristics are affiliation and willingness to dialogue. In summary, it is an exercise of self-directed learning activity, sufficiency, discipline, and evaluation.

Basics about teaching strategies that have been compiled

There are many keys and procedures to design teaching strategies to promote EFL autonomous learning in distance education. As most research compiled in this monograph, they belong to interventions based on action-research projects and case-studies developed by academics. The last provides evidence-based on solid knowledge and practices whose function is helping build strategies to promote autonomous learning in distance education.

Research to design teaching strategies to develop EFL autonomous learning in distance education suggests the following:

Current research advises that the instructor should perform different roles as a guide, support, mentor, facilitator, and tutor. Mainly, the instructor's functions are identified as learners' needs, interests, expectations, and prior knowledge learning strategies. According to the obtained data, they should plan, execute active teaching methods, introduce dynamic activities, develop reviews, evaluate teaching strategies to be applied, and provide feedback. The instructor should assume new roles as detailed as follows:

- As a researcher, the instructor should inquire about learners' needs, interests, styles, and autonomy through action-research projects and identify factors that produce heteronomous behaviors.
- As an instructional designer, the instructor should design a syllabus, self-access materials, technology-based environment, activities, and tasks for independent work whose feature is to be available to the learners whose function is to help learners perform an autonomous and independent work.
- As a facilitator and counselor, the instructor should motivate, encourage, empower, and assist learners and help them increase their awareness about the nature of language learning and autonomous learning and increase their responsibility.
- As an instructional guide, the instructor should instruct, conduct and train learners to improve cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies. Here the instructor should:
 - Use the online peer-tutoring model and help learners to design their personal improvement plan, through a guided didactic conversation or guided mediated dialog.
 - Instruct and perform a communicative approach to develop communicative competences, training, and guiding learners on listening, reading, speaking, and writing strategies.

Promotion of autonomy in education should not focus so much on tools; it should take into account such important dimensions as the construction of being, the teaching-learning of personal objectives, the benefit that learning a foreign language has for life, from the intelligent

use of available resources. During this process, adjustments should be made according to the learners' progress, for example, introducing changes in planning, doing measured participation, or assuming a distance position before the learners.

Within the context of the tutorial function, the instructor should work with learners making a personal improvement plan, providing scaffolding, teaching how to learn, using the knowledge, and potentiating learning opportunities to the learners. Here takes a relevant place a strategy named tutoring models for distance undergraduate students. The precedent ideas imply from the instructor knowledge about cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies, foreign language learning and acquisition, tutoring, planning, and technologies.

Related to the last point, teaching strategies should be based on a student-centered learning approach. It demands to develop diagnoses to identify learners' needs, interests, expectations, learning styles, and learning strategies. Linked to the instructors' role, this approach drives instructors to develop action-research to know learners' features.

The research presents different names about procedures, steps, and stages that have been established by researchers. For example diagnosis – action (instruction-exercises-homework) – evaluation – planning – selection of the activities to accomplish objectives – determination of evaluation criteria. Despite this variation, the stages and steps are rooted in a well-structured plan with “context reading-reflective activity-strategy”, or “planning –instruction – reflection”. But it is important to highlight the importance of diagnoses to design a proposal. It provides useful data and information to build planning.

Tools encompassing self-access materials, syllabus, platforms, or web resources are demonstrated by research to be stated as relevant in distance education. Effectively, they allow the learner to develop independent work and maintain them motivated. For this reason, self-

access materials, platforms, discussion boards, and web-resources require a design whose function is to allow self-learning. This component is related to the contents and tasks. Contents should be available, motivational, and meaningful to the learners, the task should include exercises that allow learners to practice.

However, all efforts are possible with institutional support as the main sponsor.

Finally, a successful teaching strategy to promote autonomous learning in learners who belong to an undergraduate distance program requires to have into account different elements according to the nature and conditions of distance education. Among them, EFL autonomous learning conception, instructors' roles, tutoring function, syllabus, self-access materials, contents, tools, and institutional support.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Recommendations

The monograph tried to compile teaching strategies used to promote ELF autonomous learning on distance education undergraduate learners. In this current context, global dynamics and changes ask educative demands which show the importance to be an independent language user, the need for distance education, and the poor preparation to teach in distance education environments.

The promotion of autonomy consists of the effort to fulfill these educational objectives and solve educational gaps. Specifically, it belongs to the framework of the development of EFL autonomous learning into the post-method era when autonomy becomes a central goal and macro-strategy. Indeed, Colombian educational plans have not ignored the National Bilingualism Plan which can be an answer.

A successful strategy to develop EFL autonomous learning on distance education depends on different factors. One of them is to understand deeply the autonomous learning, foreign language learning, and distance education, and their improvement demands effort, time, and practice.

Another one is to understand the benefits to promote autonomous learning. According to research, it increases motivation, engagement, and positive attitudes like self-discipline, commitment, perseverance, responsibility, confidence, independence, efficiency; improves critical and analytical capacity and abilities to work collaboratively; it develops communicational abilities as discussion, argumentation, negotiation, tolerance, and builds community; strengthens their ability to make decisions about topics, learning strategies, time and effort and design of their learning agendas; improves the work into the classroom and transcends the classroom and

strengths their performance by investing more time in self-directed practices, exploring topics and learnings options; and increases their level of language proficiency.

To design interventions, these should be based on action-research projects and case-studies developed by academics with solid knowledge and practices adjusted to the immediate reality. The last involves undoubtedly a change in the approach, from teacher or method-centered to a learner-centered approach which entails learners' interests, needs, and learning styles.

Some suggestions based on the theoretical review and the teaching strategies provided by Colombian researchers offer some ideas about the promotion of foreign language autonomous learning. It is essential to promote the understanding of learners that learning a foreign language is a life-project and about its usefulness. Contrary to marketing's promise, learning foreign languages takes time, effort, dedication.

About a few points of agreement, it is necessary to unify criteria when determining more broadly what is understood by autonomy since this will help determine the best options to study the phenomenon and carry out action-research that tends to train autonomous students.

If the instructor's role is capital to promote autonomous learning, they should be able to:

- Do action-research, performing a context reading, understanding learner's needs, interests, and learning styles, developing well-structured planning, organizing, conducting, and evaluating didactic strategies according to theories about autonomous learning, foreign language, and distance learning.
- Reduce and measure interventions, and offer options and alternatives -related topics, contents, materials, procedures, among others- that learners could choose according to their interests. Also, to consider the role of heteronomous factors as grades and rewards because they could reduce autonomy.

- Use technologies and tools (platforms, discussion boards, chats) in order to develop interaction and build, share, transfer, apply knowledge among participants and provide support related to this realm.
- Take advantage of face-to-face spaces to solve questions, problems, and doubts asked by the learners who belong to distance education programs or bimodal education, blended, or semi-distance models.
- Be an autonomous learner, who learns from the environment, mistakes, and their learners.

To conclude, this monograph was constituted as enriched research and reflective experience into the undergraduate program of B.A. in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. It contains different strategies, some of them have been applied into the framework of semi-distance and blended educative models, whose main feature is to integrate distance and face-to-face models where dialogue is the powerful key to reduce the physical and psychological distance allowing participation; at the same time, it has considered a wide concept of autonomous learning which arises a complex and dynamic integration among learners' psychological, cognitive, metacognitive, and social realms; finally, different teaching strategies focused on approaches, skills, tools, or functions, among others have been found. However, if the most common basics were inquired and applied by EFL tutors, they could promote motivation, communicative skills, and empower their learners to make them change from dependency toward independency; this could be the greatest expectation in the field of EFL distance education, in other words, to have students being actual autonomous learners.

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