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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGES PEDAGOGY OF
NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

“STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR AUTONOMOUS WORK
PERFORMANCE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON SELF-
REGULATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING”

RESEARCH PROJECT

As a prerequisite to obtain a:

BACHELOR’S DEGREE IN PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND
FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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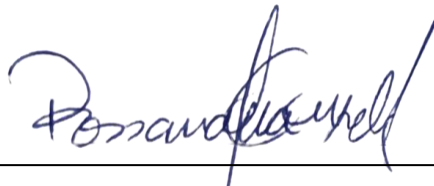
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ADVISOR'S APPROVAL

In my role as advisor of the research paper entitled STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR AUTONOMOUS WORK PERFORMANCE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON SELF- REGULATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING prepared by, LOOR MENDEZ LIZ MADELEY and YANCHAPAXI SUAREZ ALLISON LISSETTE an undergraduate students of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages Major at School of Educational Sciences and Languages at Universidad Estatal Peninsula de Santa Elena, I declare that after oriented, studied, and reviewed the project, I approve it in its entirety, because it meets the requirements and is sufficient for its submission to the evaluation of the academic tribunal.

Sincerely,



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Statement of Authorship

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Declaration

The content of the following graduation work titled “Students’ Perceptions Of Their Autonomous Work Performance: A Qualitative Study on Self-Regulation In Language Learning” my responsibility; the intellectual property belongs to peninsula de Santa Elena state university.



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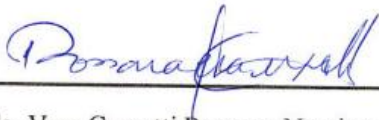
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Acknowledgment I

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to God for allowing me to achieve this important milestone in my life. Without his support, none of this would have been possible. I would also like to sincerely thank my thesis advisors, Msc. Rossana Vera and Msc. Ketty Vergara, for their valuable guidance and the knowledge they have shared with me throughout this process. Likewise, I am grateful to the professors of the National and Foreign Language Education program for their commitment and dedication to making this goal a reality. Finally, I thank my friends for their constant support and companionship along this journey.

Yanchapaxi Suarez Allison Lissette.

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Dedication I

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With love,

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Allison Yanchapaxi Suarez.

Abstract

This qualitative study explores how undergraduate students from the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages program at University Estatal Peninsula de Santa Elena (UPSE) perceive their autonomous work performance in English language learning. Despite the growing emphasis on learner autonomy and self-regulated learning in modern language education, many students continue to struggle with managing their independent study effectively. Through semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with five students from the university's Language Center (CDI), this research examines the self-regulation strategies they employ, the challenges they face, and their perceived advantages and disadvantages in developing academic self-efficacy outside the classroom. Findings reveal that students predominantly use digital tools (Duolingo, YouTube, podcasts) and authentic materials (movies and music) to enhance vocabulary and listening skills, favor short but consistent daily practice, and highly value conversation as the most effective learning technique. However, they also report significant obstacles such as environmental distractions, lack of immediate feedback, and fear of speaking due to anxiety about making mistakes. The study underscores the importance of understanding students' subjective experiences to design more supportive, context-sensitive pedagogical interventions that foster genuine autonomy and self-efficacy in language learning.

KEY WORDS: Autonomous learning, self-regulation, student perceptions, self-efficacy, and language learning.

Resumen

Este estudio cualitativo explora cómo los estudiantes universitarios del programa de pedagogía de Lenguas Nacionales y Extranjeras de la Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE) perciben su rendimiento autónomo en el aprendizaje del inglés. A pesar del creciente énfasis en la autonomía del alumno y el aprendizaje autorregulado en la enseñanza moderna de idiomas, muchos estudiantes siguen teniendo dificultades para gestionar eficazmente su estudio independiente. A través de entrevistas semiestructuradas e individuales con cinco estudiantes del Centro de Idiomas (CDI) de la universidad, esta investigación examina las estrategias de autorregulación que emplean, los retos a los que se enfrentan y las ventajas y desventajas que perciben en el desarrollo de la autoeficacia académica fuera del aula. Los resultados revelan que los estudiantes utilizan principalmente herramientas digitales (por ejemplo, Duolingo, YouTube, podcasts) y materiales auténticos (por ejemplo, películas, música) para mejorar su vocabulario y sus habilidades auditivas, prefieren una práctica diaria breve pero constante y valoran mucho la conversación como la técnica de aprendizaje más eficaz. Sin embargo, también señalan obstáculos importantes, como las distracciones del entorno, la falta de retroalimentación inmediata y el miedo a hablar debido a la ansiedad por cometer errores. El estudio subraya la importancia de comprender las experiencias subjetivas de los estudiantes para diseñar intervenciones pedagógicas más favorables y sensibles al contexto que fomenten la autonomía y la autoeficacia genuinas en el aprendizaje de idiomas.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Aprendizaje autónomo, autorregulación, percepciones de los estudiantes, autoeficacia, aprendizaje de idiomas.

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Introduction

In recent years, we have witnessed how English has taken center stage in different educational centers as a second language learning. We have observed that there is an increasing amount of educational material and research articles written in English. Therefore, students who are proficient in the language can access and understand this information without any problems, allowing them to access multiple educational programs, such as exchanges, as well as different work projects that require knowledge of this language.

In addition, the rapid growth of technology and online education has transformed the way students manage their independent work. Many students now use digital tools, online resources, and self-assessment activities to support their language development.

This research seeks to understand students' perceptions of learning a new language in an autonomous and self-regulated manner. They will describe the process they must follow to achieve optimal learning using different strategies and methods.

According to the students' opinions, which indicate that they face certain challenges in their learning, we understand that each person learns differently from another; one student is more auditory, while another is more visual. They work in different ways to achieve their goals. For example, they dedicate their time to developing different skills such as speaking, listening, and writing.

Their opinions will provide answers to the main objective of research, which is to understand their perceptions of their academic performance in terms of autonomous learning, and the advantages and disadvantages they face in achieving their academic goals.

To analyze how students plan, monitor, and evaluate their work, this research seeks to provide insight into effective teaching practices that can foster student autonomy. The findings

may also help educators design a learning environment that encourages autonomous learning, promotes motivation, and improves overall language proficiency.

Chapter I

The Problem

Research Topic

Didactic Resources and Speaking Skills

Title of your project

“Students’ Perceptions of Their Autonomous Work Performance: A Qualitative Study on Self-Regulation In Language Learning”

Problem Statement

In recent years, learner autonomy and self-regulated learning have solidified as essential components in language teaching, particularly in educational contexts that incorporate virtual or hybrid modalities (Lai & Zhu, 2023; Zheng et al., 2023). However, there remains a significant gap between the expectation that students manage their own learning and their actual ability to do so effectively.

While various digital tools have been developed to promote autonomous work, many students still struggle with setting clear goals, selecting appropriate strategies, monitoring progress, and self-regulating motivation during independent study (Chen et al., 2021; Oxford, 2022). This issue is especially pertinent in language learning, where consistent practice and self-reflection are crucial for developing communicative competence.

Despite this, current research tends to focus on the behavioral or structural aspects of autonomous learning, leaving the *subjective perceptions of students regarding their own autonomous performance* largely unexplored (Panadero & Schunk, 2024; Moos, 2021).

Understanding how students perceive their capacity for self-regulation during independent work, identifying their challenges, implicit strategies, and levels of self-efficacy is vital for designing

more effective and context-specific pedagogical interventions. Therefore, there is an evident need for qualitative studies that explore these perceptions directly from the voices of learners themselves.

Despite the growing emphasis on autonomy, research indicates that many language learners struggle to effectively regulate their independent study.

Furthermore, autonomous performance is frequently hampered by issues including weak goal-setting abilities, low self-efficacy, and short attention spans, particularly in settings with minimal direct supervision.

This raises a critical gap: despite the institutional focus on autonomous learning, there is little understanding of how students perceive their performance in independent language tasks and the author-regulation strategies they employ.

Although curriculum designs assume a certain level of autonomous competence, little is known about students' internal experiences, decision-making processes, or the contextual and personal challenges they face outside of the classroom. Without investigating these perceptions, educators run the risk of overlooking important factors that students themselves identify as influencing their learning, such as motivation, self-efficacy, strategic awareness, and resource accessibility.

Understanding these misconceptions is essential because they directly affect participation, perseverance, and academic success; incorrect judgments or a lack of awareness may hinder the use of strategies and long-term progress in language learning. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate students' perceptions of their autonomous work performance, with a special focus on the self-regulation strategies they use in language learning.

Justification:

Self-control and independence are becoming more widely acknowledged as essential components of successful language acquisition. Students' opinions of their independent work performance become crucial in systems where language proficiency must be maintained outside of the classroom.

However, there is still a large knowledge vacuum in the qualitative understanding of these perspectives, particularly with regard to learners' emotional health, motivational orientation, and self-regulation techniques.

First, learners' psychological resilience, anxiety management skills, and emotional control are all strongly correlated with self-efficacy, a fundamental element of self-regulated learning. EFL students with high self-efficacy are better able to control their language anxiety and show improved emotion regulation, which results in increased psychological resilience, according to a recent study based on Social Cognitive Theory (Xu & Xu, 2025).

Another qualitative study emphasized that students are better able to identify their areas of strength and growth when they reflect on their own learning (via planning, monitoring, and evaluation) strategies essential to autonomous learning (Wicaksono et al., 2023). These results imply that students' self-perceptions have a significant impact on how well they perform on their own.

Furthermore, studies looking into self-regulation and motivational factors offer deep, students centered insights. For example, qualitative research of Geek secondary school students found that relational settings (e.g., peer influence, teacher behaviors, and family expectations) and personal motivation factors are crucial for students' self-regulation and linguistic competence in students

(Katsantonis & McLellan, 2023). However, the methodology of this study and topic findings informs qualitative research into views of autonomy in language learning, despite the fact that it is situated within the formal educational setting.

Particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university settings, a socio-constructivist qualitative case study discovered that collaborative and reflective writing tasks enhanced first-years students` motivation, clarified their goal orientation, and enhanced their self-efficacy; these activities encouraged a variety of metacognitive strategies, such as goal setting, self-evaluation, and strategy use (Yang, 2024).

This demonstrates how context-sensitive, controlled learning environments can promote self-regulation and, subtly, more favorable opinions of independent performance.

Research on self-efficacy, self-regulation, and mindfulness further supports the emotional dimension by demonstrating that self-efficacy improves the psychological well-being of EFL learners by lowering stress levels and enhancing emotional stability in educational environments (Fan & Cui, 2024). Additionally, self-efficacy promotes planning goal setting, and learning persistence, all of which lead to improved psychological health (Tang & Zhu, 2024).

A careful qualitative study of how students see their own independent work is important for several reasons:

Connecting theory and practice

Even though self-regulation and autonomy models provide strong ideas, it is important to know how students understand and apply these ideas to make teaching more effective.

Creating specific strategies

Learning about students' challenges and strengths like changing motivation, beliefs in their abilities, emotional difficulties, or limits from their environment can help design better teaching methods that fit their needs.

Improving student control

Understanding how students think about their independence and self-management allows teachers to support their thinking skills, helping students not just use strategies but also think about how they learn.

Problem question

How do undergraduate students in the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages program at UPSE perceive their autonomous work performance in language learning?

Specific questions

1. What strategies do students use to manage their autonomous work in language learning?
2. What challenges do students face when working independently on language tasks?
3. What advantages and disadvantages do students identify in achieving self-efficacy in managing their learning beyond the classroom?

General Objective

To analyze undergraduate students' perceptions of their performance in independent language learning at UPSE, to identify the advantages and disadvantages that influence the

development of academic self-efficacy by studying their self-regulation strategies, motivational factors, and perceived challenges.

What: To analyze undergraduate students' perceptions of their performance in independent work in language learning at the UPSE.

So: To identify the advantages and disadvantages that influence the development of academic self- efficacy.

How: By studying their self-regulation strategies, motivational factors, and perceived challenges.

Specific objectives

1. To identify the self-regulation strategies that students employ during autonomous language learning.
2. To examine the main obstacles students, encounter when engaging in independent study.
3. Describe the advantages and disadvantages students have in achieving self-efficacy in managing their learning outside in the classroom.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

Background

Learner autonomy and self-regulated learning (SRL) have become central components of modern language education, particularly in virtual, hybrid, and post-academic educational environments where students are expected to take greater responsibility for their learning (Zheng et al., 2023). These models highlight the learner's capacity to establish objectives, choose techniques, track progress, and assess results autonomously – skills crucial for cultivating communicative competence in foreign languages. However, a persistent gap exists between the instructional expectation of autonomy and students' actual capacity to self-regulate effectively (Han, 2021).

Self-directed learning in higher education has been the subject of numerous recent studies highlighting its importance and the challenges faced by students. Research has shown that self-motivation, self-regulation, and the use of effective strategies are crucial for success in self-directed learning environments (Ruíz et al., 2024; Martínez et al., 2025).

The research indicates that the theory of self-regulation of learning (SRL) also proposes that students develop their cognitive side, along with motivation and in turn behavior in a certain time, involving planning, execution and self-assessment, so, from this point of view, it has proven to be indispensable during the stage of language learning, thanks to the understanding it gives students to adopt certain strategies that keep autonomous practice sustainable. In addition, self-regulation is directly related in a positive way to academic achievement, persistence, and the development of

self-confidence, even though the development of these skills remains a challenge (Litalien et al., 2024).

In a recent study on perceptions of autonomous learning focused on English language learners, Marsevani (2021) mentions that, although students show certain positive benefits with autonomy, most are dependent on teachers to be clear about objectives and methodological decisions. The aforementioned coincides with what has been presented in Asian and African contexts, where it can be seen that autonomy is not something defined in educational practices, making the autonomy gap and its application in practice demonstrate the relevance of investigating students' perceptions of their autonomous performances.

In a different context, Ababo and Aninaw Aninaw (2023) investigated autonomy in Ethiopian foreign language students. They found that, despite the recognition given to autonomy, several students agree that learning depends on teacher instruction. In turn, contextual barriers such as limited access to resources and the absence of strategic guidelines were pointed out, which hinder the development of self-regulation practices. Therefore, these results demonstrate that autonomy is not only dependent on individual elements, but also on the social and institutional level.

Nowadays, the introduction of new digital technologies has opened up countless possibilities for autonomous learning. Bowles (2024) argues that mobile apps and autonomous analysis contribute to planning, monitoring, and reflecting on learning progress through virtual environments. Even so, having technological resources does not help students develop a level of self-regulation that can be leveraged, leaving a gap between current technology and the ability to

self-regulate, reinforcing the idea of exploring the perception of personal autonomous performance as measured by technology.

Pedagogical basis

Constructivism

Among the various pedagogical theories surrounding the central issue in question, one of the most outstanding in relation to autonomous learning and self-regulation in language teaching is from the constructivist theory, which defends that the acquired knowledge is not received passively, but must be built as interactions with the environment and at the same time the inflection is acquired (Ronquillo et al., 2023). From this perspective, the teacher's role takes on greater significance, serving as a guide who facilitates acquisition, while the student focuses on his or her own planning, monitoring, and evaluation of his or her independent performance.

Student-centered learning

Likewise, from the point of view of student-centered learning, the idea is supported that pedagogical processes must be oriented towards personalization, reflection, along with active participation, because this approach establishes the relevance of opportunities so that students develop metacognitive competitiveness and strategies that stimulate their self-regulation, benefiting language learning in an independent and intellectual way (Tang, 2023).

Andragogy

However, another of the key theories in self-learning pedagogy is andragogy, proposed by Knowles, focusing on the ability of people to learn and direct their own training, especially in adults. Therefore, according to this theory, students can learn more optimally when needs are

identified, goals are set, and what they want to learn is linked to their context and motivations (Orellana, 2022).

Technology-mediated education

Current pedagogy in self-regulation adopts technology-mediated education, which understands digital resources not only as a support for autonomous learning, but as an environment that encourages it, so, from this point of view, modern pedagogical design when integrating it is largely based on gamification, on projects for the development of learning or blended learning (Lorena, 2023).

Theoretical basis

Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy over time has become an indispensable pillar in effective language teaching. This is the ability of students to carry out their own learning process, leading them to self-realization, which allows them to advance to higher levels in mastering the language they wish to learn (Villoria y Mendoza, 2022).

It is worth noting that this concept implies that independent study encompasses aspects of competence, strategies, and motivation, which effectively promote self-learning, allowing for ongoing language development beyond formal instruction.

Dimensions of Autonomous Learning

Currently, thanks to the emergence of the term autonomous learning, it is linked to three dimensions based on a person's learning, taking into account that it is learning that extends beyond one direction. Therefore, the dimensions are divided according to their practical autonomy: psychological, methodological, and social (Vega et al., 2025).

Then, it can be expressed that the dimensions of autonomy promote the aspects of self-regulation in learning, which is useful for studying languages because, thanks to the psychological dimension, on the one hand, it can reach a capacity and disposition to want to learn, on the other hand, in the methodological dimension. The ability to select effective learning strategies at a personal level is achieved, and finally, in the social dimension, the ability to participate jointly with more people is obtained but always maintaining the individuality of how they learn (Quispe, 2023).

Digital Learning Environment

Autonomy is not only based on a single environment to achieve good learning, because there are environments such as the digital one, which is the very integration of technology into learning, creating new opportunities and faster ways to grasp what we want to learn in an interactive way. A clear example is the use of AI to create study plans or create content adapted to the needs required by the individual, as well as personalized feedback and a way to self-monitor the progress achieved (Arias et al., 2025).

Therefore, it can be said that the practical nature of the digital environment, when used appropriately, is of great help in language learning, due to the way it can be adapted to the individual student.

Self-Regulated Learning

According to Frutos (2023), self-regulated learning (SRL) theory provides a solid foundation for understanding how students manage the mental learning and motivational processes that drive the desire to learn something and achieve self-set learning objectives. Hence, within its framework, these skills must include strategies such as self-monitoring, planning, time

management, and goals, encompassing all of these through three phases: foresight, performance, and self-reflection.

Components of Reading Response Activity (RRA) in Languages

According to González et al. (2022), applying RRA to language learning would involve specific adaptations, as it would address challenges in learning a second language other than one's native language. These strategies include metacognitive, cognitive, resource management, and motivational regulation.

A recent investigation, Murillo et al. (2025) mention that each strategy plays specific roles. Metacognitive strategy focuses on planning, monitoring, and evaluating progress; consequently, cognitive strategy is responsible for processing and organizing linguistic input; while resource management encompasses the use of technology, systems, and support materials; finally, emotional regulation focuses on persistence and commitment to learning the language(s) as a firm decision.

Self-efficacy and academic performance

According to Castro et al. (2022), positive personal perception and competence contribute to self-efficacy, playing a fundamental role in autonomous learning performance. They influence the determination of goals to achieve, the selection of strategies appropriate to what one wants to learn, and the persistence required to make autonomous learning successful in the context of language learning.

Student Perceptions

Understanding student performances is essential for developing effective autonomous learning environments, since each student's self-perceptions influence their level of engagement.

choice of optimal strategies, and the positive results demonstrated through acquired learning (Abata et al., 2024).

Challenges in Independent Language Learning

A diverse range of language learners face daily challenges when trying to learn a new language other than their native language. They explain that the most common challenges include unrealistic or vague goals, lack of motivation, a lack of vision for short- and long-term objectives, the complexity of separating language skills, and a lack of consideration of time and resources (Pérez et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, Duque (2023) mentions that effectively selecting and implementing strategies that contribute to learning will continue to be one of the most significant challenges for students with independent learning. They also emphasize that motivational challenges tend to increase due to limited external support. They also mention that the difficulty of managing distractions and the lack of immediate feedback are other common challenges.

However, Ortiz et al. (2025) express that although existing digital tools can facilitate autonomous learning, the overwhelming excess of them also generates a difficulty when choosing them, as well as the degree of difficulty of certain techniques that stops learning in a certain way.

Legal basis

Currently, most of the laws belonging to different governmental institutions of the state emphasize the relevance of education so that its population does not lack it, providing guidelines that keep the use of technological advances at the forefront and adapting the laws or regulations

according to what is needed, as is the case of the present topic of perception in students, therefore, the regulations and laws closest to the topic presented are the following:

Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador

El art.26 de la constitución ecuatoriana deja expresamente claro que la educación al ser un derecho para todas las personas, también es un deber que se debe cumplir, constituyendo un tema de prioridad para el estado ecuatoriano tanto en la política como en la inversión estatal, por lo que toda la comunidad ecuatoriana constituida de familiares e individuos tienen responsabilidad de ser partícipes del proceso educativo (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008). Por ello, al relacionar el artículo al tema planteado se puede expresar que toda persona tiene y debe estudiar para mejorar al grado de establecer metas que pueda alcanzar mediante el uso de estrategias de aprendizaje, así sea aprendiendo a lo habitual con maestro presente o con la autorregulación, o ambas para asegurar un aprendizaje efectivo.

Desde luego, el art.27 refuerza la idea de que la educación debe centrarse en la humanidad para garantizar su desarrollo, siempre y cuando exista el respeto a los derechos humanos, además de impulsar la paz, solidaridad, justicia y equidad de género, además de remarcar lo esencial de la educación para el enriquecimiento del conocimiento, el ejercicio de derechos, siendo un eje central que ayuda al desarrollo nacional (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008).

Por consiguiente, el art.343 expresa que el sistema de educación nacional tiene como finalidad desarrollar las capacidades individuales y colectivas de los ecuatorianos, para facilitar el aprendizaje, además de la generación de conocimiento y el uso de saberes, técnicas, cultura y artes, ya que se menciona que dicho sistema se centra en el estudiante integrando una visión intercultural y lingüística del país (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008).

Organic Law on Intercultural Education (LOEI)

La LOEI en su art.2 que habla sobre los principios deja claro que la actividad académica se basa en principios conceptuales, constitucionales y filosóficos que se imponen en el ámbito educativo como la a. universalidad, donde puntualmente se menciona que la educación es un derecho primordial que el estado debe garantizar, y que debe ser de calidad sin discriminación, de igual formato su literal h. ínter aprendizaje y multiaprendizaje es considerado para maximizar las capacidades humanas haciendo énfasis en el acceso a la información y el conocimiento con la final de alcanzar desarrollo colectivo y personal, lo cual, está muy relacionado al desarrollo autónomo del aprendizaje (Organic Law on Intercultural Education, 2011).

Finalmente, en su art.5 que toca el tema de la educación como obligación del estado, se deja entrever, que el estado ecuatoriano esta obligado a garantizar la educación, garantizando de esta forma que, en cualquier momento, se pueda acceder a ella y ser participe de procesos y servicios educativos (Organic Law on Intercultural Education, 2011).

Chapter III

Methodological framework

For this study, we'll be using a qualitative data gathering strategy. This approach is the most effective way to explore students' experiences when learning a new language independently, especially when it comes to increasing student motivation and engagement. In this chapter, I will walk you through the methodology we will use, covering aspects such as demographics and sampling, the data collection method, the tools we will employ, and the general type of research.

Method

Qualitative research

According to (Weng, 2024), qualitative methodology is fundamental to research because it allows for in-depth analysis of social phenomena and offers a comprehensive understanding of human behavior and social interactions. Through techniques such as interviews, focus group, and observations in various contexts, this approach facilitates actions. Its importance lies in its ability to place problems in a contextual and real-world framework, making qualitative methodology a flexible tool that can be adapted to different realities. Therefore, this study will use this approach to identify the difficulties students face when learning a new language, while promoting autonomy in English acquisition and reinforcing motivation to maintain attention and commitment to this process.

Type of Research

Phenomenological study

The phenomenological study is a description of the experiences of students in the development of their autonomous learning in English Language. According to (Neubauer, 2019), phenomenological research is based on how individuals understand,

experience, and identify a particular phenomenon and its meanings. The research by (Borges, 2020), indicates that phenomenological design investigates educational processes related to self-regulation and autonomy experienced by people within their study framework. Data collection will be carried out through open interviews, which allow students to express in their own words their experiences, the development of their independent work in the process of learning English. This will allow for better results from the study.

Data collection techniques

One-on-one Interview

According to (Kallio, 2021), individual interviews are very useful in qualitative research. These types of resources describe participants' experiences in depth and capture each person's perspectives on the topic study. This method provides a space for participants to express their experiences and the techniques used in their learning process.

Data collection in this research will be carried out conducted one-on-one interviews with six students from the (CDI) Centro de Idiomas at the Universidad Estatal Peninsula de Santa Elena, where they will share their perceptions regarding independent work in learning the English Language.

Instruments and Types of questions

Questionnaire/Open-ended questions

(Sonja Hahn, 2024) indicates that an open-ended questionnaire is a data collection tool where participants express their perceptions in their own words on a given topic.

By conducting this type of how participants manage their time and the insight into strategies used in each educational activity, as well as the difficulties and

advantages they encounter during the activity in the English Language Learning process. This format also requires research to examine the data using qualitative methods such as thematic analysis, to identify emerging patterns from the students' responses.

Data collection processing and resources

Basic Questions	Explanation
What?	Interviews
Where?	At “Universidad Estatal Peninsula Santa Elena” La libertad – Provincia de Santa Elena
When?	September,2025
How?	One-on-one interview, face-to-face
What for?	Examine the obstacles students encounter When engaging in independent study.

Population and Sample

The group of individuals that this project will focus on, based on their views and experiences with the self-directed process of learning a new language, is known as the study population. In this research, five students from the Centro De Idiomas (CDI) were interviewed. These students brought a variety of perspectives on learning a new language independently, along with their commitment to utilizing resources, staying motivated, and employing effective strategies.

Chapter IV

Analysis of Findings

This chapter focuses on analyzing the perceptions that students have about their own autonomous work performance when learning a language. Special attention is given to the role of self-regulation, since it is a key factor in developing independence, responsibility, and consistency in language learning. These findings are relevant as they provide insight into how learners manage their time, set goals, and monitor their progress.

Therefore, this research seeks to verify students' opinions and experiences, contrasting them with theoretical perspectives and bibliographical references, to better understand how self-regulation influences their autonomous learning process.

Interpretation of bibliography review

Question number one was, **what strategies do you use when studying a language on your own, outside the classroom?** Students 1,3,4 and 5 reported using **multimedia resources** such as movies, series, music, and videos to improve listening comprehension and reinforce vocabulary. Student 1 also mentioned reading articles, while student 5 practiced with short written exercises. In contrast, student 2 adopted a more basic approach, relying mainly on **daily goals and Duolingo**. However, students 3 uses reading comprehension resources, practices daily with short stories to include new words in their vocabulary. Sometimes, they listen to podcast or music in English to learn faster and remember the language better, and them share them with students 1, 4 and 5. For most university students, it is common to use podcast today to learn or practice a language. They look for topics of interest to listen to and learn through this resource at the same time. These responses reflect a common trend among autonomous learners: the integration of **authentic and entertaining materials** such as audiovisual

media and short readings, to support language acquisition outside formal instruction. This tendency aligns with recent research highlighting that “autonomous language learners often select authentic, engaging materials like films, songs, and short narratives not only to develop linguistic skills but also to sustain motivation and connect the target language to real-life contexts” (Lai, 2021).

Question number two was, **how do you organize your time when learning a new language?** According to the results, students 1,2,4 and 5 dedicated between **20 to 30 minutes daily** to language practice, emphasizing consistency over long sessions. This method not only kept their motivation high, but also led to significant improvements in skills such as listening comprehension and vocabulary retention. They indicate that practicing for this amount of time has brought and improved listening comprehension. For instance, these students shared that having short, consistent study sessions helped them develop habits without adding too much stress to their busy schedules, which is something many languages learners struggle with. Investigations recent studies support this strategy of brief practice. for example, a study by (Li, 2022) found that short and consistent sessions (20-30 minutes) significantly improve vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension, as they facilitate spaced repetition and reduce cognitive fatigue (R. Li, 2022, pág. 15). Student 3 stood out by committing **at least one hour per night**, showing a more intensive schedule. He divides his time between reading, listening comprehension, and vocabulary practice. Sometimes he reviews grammar and watches short videos in English. Having a set schedule helps him stay focused and progress step by step. All students highlighted the importance of **regularity to achieve optimal learning and vocabulary acquisition**, suggesting that even short daily practice is perceived as effective for maintaining progress.

Question number three was, **what resources do you frequently use to learn**

the language on your own? According to the responses, student 1 mentions a wide variety: Duolingo, Memorize, YouTube and podcast, online dictionaries, and language exchange platforms. These resources are popular for their accessibility and interactivity, allowing learners to engage with content at their own pace. Student 2 mentioned YouTube, Duolingo and podcasts as their main digital resources. This selection reflects a trend toward multimedia tools that combine visual, auditory, and interactive elements to reinforce learning. However, student 3 often uses online resources to learn English on their own. They use apps such as Duolingo and YouTube videos to practice vocabulary and listening comprehension. They also told us that two days a week they usually read short texts and make extensive use of online dictionaries for grammatical guidance. Students 4 and 5 say they help them improve their listening comprehension. Specifically, these students noted that such tools provide real-world exposure to spoken language, which is crucial for developing auditory skills in a self-directed environment.

Recent research supports the effectiveness of these freely accessible online applications. For instance, a study by (Godwin-Jones, 2022) examined emerging technologies in language learning and found that platforms like Duolingo and YouTube significantly enhance listening comprehension and overall proficiency, especially for learners with limited access to formal resources, by offering personalized and engaging content (Godwin-Jones, 2022, pág. 5). This indicates a strong dependence on freely accessible online applications, especially among university students with limited access to formal materials.

Question number four was, **how do you measure your level of English?**

Students 1,3,4, and 5 self-assessed their level as **intermediate**, citing the ability to understand texts and hold basic conversations, although they acknowledged limitations in **speaking fluency**. Student 3 also shared that he uses apps to take online placement

tests or practice exams like TOEFL or IELTS to check his grammar, vocabulary, and listening skills. He recommends using these kinds of resources to get a more accurate result of his progress in practice. **In this test mentioned by students 3, you will find different exercises for different skills, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. In the reading exercises, you need to concentrate hard to choose the correct answer. You must analyze the verb tenses to solve the exercise. This will be very useful for taking an official certification exam in the future.** This self-assessment method is common among learners, as it relies on personal reflection and practical experiences, but it can be influenced by emotional factors like anxiety. Only student 2 described their level as **basic**, expressing lower confidence and more limited comprehension, indicating that they understand certain words but lack the vocabulary to hold a conversation and therefore feel afraid to speak. This fear of speaking, often linked to psychological barriers, can hinder progress and lead to an underestimation of one's abilities. However, for all 5 students, the biggest problem is fear of starting a conversation. Such anxiety is a widespread issue in language learning, where learners may avoid practice due to the pressure of real-time interaction, potentially stalling their development in fluency and confidence. This variation highlights differences in **self-perception and linguistic confidence**, even among peers in similar academic contexts. Moreover, many students explained that fear comes from making grammatical mistakes or being judged by others when they are in an English conversation. They suggested some learning strategies to overcome these challenges, such as practicing more through group discussions, role-plays, or online exchanges. These strategies would help create a safer environment that allows students to gain confidence, improve their pronunciation, and develop communication skills in a more natural way.

Question number five was, **what learning methodology do you use to increase**

your vocabulary and skills? Students 4 and 5 emphasized **reading texts and noting new words** to later use them in phrases and sentences when engaging in conversation. This approach promotes active application, where learners integrate new vocabulary into real-life contexts, helping to solidify understanding and improve conversational skills. Student 1 specifically mentioned **spaced repetition and flashcards, while Students 3 preferred making vocabulary lists and repeating phrases** through writing and conversation. These methods, such as spaced repetition, involve reviewing material at increasing intervals to enhance long-term retention, which is particularly effective for building a robust vocabulary bank. Student 2 shares the learning methodology with **student 3**, using context-based learning and specific repetitions. By focusing on context, this technique allows learners to understand words in meaningful situations, reducing the risk of rote memorization and encouraging practical usage.

Overall, there is a clear preference for active vocabulary use, utilizing repetition to enhance practice rather than passive memorization. This aligns with modern educational strategies that prioritize engagement and application over simple recall, as active methods have been shown to lead to better skill development and confidence in language use. Recent research supports these student-reported techniques; for example, a study by (Nakata, 2022) demonstrated that spaced repetition and active repetition methods significantly improve vocabulary acquisition and retention compared to passive technique, with participants showing enhanced skills in both comprehension and conversation (Nakata, 2022).

Question number six was, **what activity or technique do you consider best for learning English, and why?** All students agreed that **conversation practice** is the most effective technique for improving English Language Learning as a foreign language. According, to (Nur Mulki, 2025), guided conversation helps increase fluency and

enhance vocabulary. Student 1 indicated that speaking with another person who is fluent in the language allows them to gain more confidence to improve and correct grammatical mistakes. Students 1, 3, 4, and 5 highlighted their role in building **confidence, fluency, pronunciation, and practical grammar use**. Many university students prefer to practice the language by speaking it. They indicate that the best way to learn is through speaking practice. There are variations of the language around the world due to different slang, and it is important to know them to communicate with about their culture. According to (Rizki Ika Febriyanti, 2024), **students** pay close attention to grammatical structure when participating in conversation so that they can respond without deviating from the context. **Student 2 suggested practicing with native speakers or foreigners** to achieve greater fluency. This consensus underscores the perceived value of **real-life communication** in language learning.

Question number seven was, **what is the best motivation for university students to learn English?** According to interviews conducted with five students, opinions are divided but there is a clear focus on motivation to learn a new language. (Arisandy, 2020), express a communicative motivation among students who want to be able to communicate with people from other countries, and also an interest in participating in cultural exchanges. Students 1,3,4, and 5 identified **academic and professional opportunities** as the main motivation, with Student 1 also mentioning **cultural exchange** and Student 4 adding **travel opportunities**. **Student 2 focused on scholarships and practicing with known people**. These responses align with the instrumental motivation typical of higher education contexts, where English is seen as a **key to future success**. It is important to emphasize that learning a new language opens many job opportunities, from working in person to working online on the other side of the world. Furthermore, students clarified that English serves as a bridge to interact with

the global community in addition to being a tool for job growth. They view English as a worldwide language that enables them to collaborate internationally and access information and entertainment. Since learning English boosts their confidence and facilitates better idea expression, some participants also cited personal development as a major motivator. Additionally, learning becomes more pleasurable and significant when exposed to English-language media, such as books, music, and movies. As a result, motivation to learn English transcends scholastic requirements and is a result of a desire for global communication, self-improvement, and a greater awareness of different cultures.

Question number eight was, **what kind of technique do you use to improve vocabulary when learning English, and why?** Students 1,4 and 5 used repetitions combined with visual or situational association. These types of learning techniques come easily to them, which means that they are more visual learners; that is how they retain information. For example, linking words to images or real-life contexts; to enhance memorization. According to (Wenwen Li, 2022), they say combining visual and verbal information makes it easier for us to memorize words. Student 1 and student 3 employed flashcards and have a notebook where they write down new words with their meanings and examples so they can remember them when practicing conversation. They also told us that they use videos in English and short readings from which they extract new words for practice; this is how they study every day. student 2 relied on scheduled repetitions and similar words. The underlying rationale across responses was that contextual and visual strategies make vocabulary more memorable and natural. (Teng, 2023), the use of multimedia resources and improves the retention and memorization of words easily. It also helps to think and develop other language-related skills, such as reading and writing.

Chapter V

Conclusions and recommendations

The overall objective of this research is to understand how students manage autonomous learning in their environment and the advantages and disadvantages they perceive in the learning process.

We interviewed five students who are seeking to improve their English language learning skills using different strategies in the virtual classroom provided by the university.

Conclusions:

The results show that students develop their language learning through the use of digital resources. Most of them use multimedia resources such as series, music and videos to increase their vocabulary and improve their listening comprehension, which is evidence of their preference for dynamic methods. But let's go further: in the interviews, one of the students told us how they use series not only to learn new words, but also to practice the natural rhythm and intonation of English language in everyday conversations. This highlights the self-regulation strategies they use, such as planning daily sessions or choosing resources that motivate them personally, which brings us directly to the first objective: identifying these strategies.

For example, students mentioned techniques such as setting daily goals, such as spending 20 minutes listening to podcasts before bed, which helps them maintain discipline in their autonomous learning. However, when examining the main obstacles, as the second objective indicates, real challenges emerged: distractions from the home environment, such as family noise or social media, which sometimes make independent study feel overwhelming. Two students told us that in their early attempts, they lost focus and ended up frustrated, highlighting how these common obstacles can affect

in learning outside the classroom.

The collection of information indicates that the organization time in terms of learning sessions is very important, and this is reflected in the daily practice of the language to improve the level of listening and speaking comprehension. From this, we can see how these students build their self-learning, aligning us with the third objective: describing the advantages, such as the flexibility of learning at their own pace, which gives them a sense of achievement and confidence, and the disadvantages, such as the lack of feedback and assessment, which can lead to doubts and isolation.

Based on the students' experiences, it was demonstrated that easy access to free applications such as YouTube or Duolingo to develop vocabulary and interest in improving learning English language outside the specific studio schedules of the sessions or the virtual classroom. In summary, these stories remind us that autonomous learning in real life situations, and common people struggling, adapting, and growing, strengthening their confidence and motivation in the long term.

Recommendations:

The use of technology facilitates the learning of a new language, but it is recommended to keep track of time to make the most of the use of these resources, for example, have a schedule established for the use of resources such as 15 minutes for podcasts and 30 minutes for videos to improve listening comprehension and increase vocabulary daily. Establish flexible routines that include breaks for rest, since, as we saw in the interviews, burnout is a common obstacle that can discourage even the most motivated individuals. This permit to maximize time and encourage self-regulation, aligning with the first objective.

It is recommended that students use standardized tests (Cambridge English Test or EF SET), to measure more objectively their level in learning the new language

and keep track of their progress through a digital portfolio or learning notebook, for students to record their progress, difficulties and achievements throughout the process.

To enrich this practice, we can suggest that inspired students keep a daily or weekly “reflection journal.” In this journal, they would record their academic progress, and to write about specific obstacles they face, such as procrastination, and strategies to overcome them, for example, joining online groups to share experiences and motivate each other.

In addition, to enhance self-efficacy according to the third objective, let's encourage them to celebrate small victories, such as completing and passing a module on Duolingo, and to recognize personal advantages, such as the empowerment that comes from autonomous learning, while mitigating possible disadvantages through the support of an online community.

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Annexes

Annex A: Certified Anti-plagiarism System



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La libertad, 31 de octubre de 2025

En calidad de tutor/a del Trabajo de Integración Curricular denominado STUDENTS` PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR AUTONOMOUS WORK PERFORMANCE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON SELF- REGULATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING elaborado por las estudiantes LOOR MENDEZ LIZ MADELEY y YANCHAPAXI SUAREZ ALLISON LISSETTE de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación e Idiomas, de la Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, me permito declarar que una vez analizado en el sistema anti plagio COMPILATIO, luego de haber cumplido los requerimientos exigidos de valoración, el presente trabajo de investigación, se encuentra con 0 % de la valoración permitida, por consiguiente se procede a emitir el informe, para proceder a la revisión por parte del especialista.

Atentamente,



TUTOR

Lcda. Rossana Vera Cruzatti, MSc.

Annex B: Questionnaire

Topic: “Students’ Perceptions of Their Autonomous Work Performance: A Qualitative Study On Self-Regulation In Language Learning”.

Sample: five students at University Estate Peninsula Santa Elena.

Questions:

1. **What strategies do you use when studying a language on your own, outside the classroom?**
2. **How do you organize your time when learning a new language?**
3. **what resources do you frequently use to learn the language on your own?**
4. **How do you measure your level of English?**
5. **What learning methodology do you use to increase your vocabulary and skills?**
6. **What activity or technique do you consider best for learning English, and why?**
7. **What is the best motivation for university students to learn English?**
8. **What kind of technique do you use to improve vocabulary when learning English, and why?**

Annex C: Interviews transcribed

Interview of students

Students 1

1. I use mobile apps, watch movies and TV shows in English, and listen to music to improve my listening comprehension. I also read articles and short texts to expand my vocabulary.
2. I spend at least 30 minutes a day practicing, during which time I listen, read, and write, trying to pay attention and learn as much as possible.
3. I use various apps such as Duolingo, Memrise, online dictionaries, educational videos on YouTube, and platforms for chatting with native speakers. I also use podcasts and songs in English to help me.
4. I consider my level to be intermediate, as I can hold basic conversations, understand simple texts, and communicate in everyday situations.
5. I apply the spaced repetition technique, use flashcards, and try to use new words in sentences.
6. I consider conversation practice to be the most effective, as it helps me gain confidence, improve my pronunciation, and expand my vocabulary and grammar in a practical way.
7. The main motivation is that it helps me open doors to better academic and job opportunities, as well as facilitating cultural exchange.
8. I use the technique of associating words with images and real situations that occur in everyday life, as this makes memorization easier. I also repeat new words in different contexts so that they become more natural and practical.

Student 2

1. I use daily goals. Sometimes I practice some English and review with Duolingo.
2. I spend about 20 to 30 minutes a day listening, reading, learning vocabulary, and sometimes speaking.
3. From time to time, I use Duolingo and watch YouTube videos.
4. I consider myself to be at level one because I understand more or less something and can practice by reading and exchanging words.
5. I learn words in context and sometimes review them with specific repetitions.
6. To speak English more fluently, you should practice with a native speaker or with people from abroad.
7. The motivation for university students would be to access scholarships and practice more with people they know.
8. I use scheduled repetitions and similar words to improve my vocabulary.

Student 3

1. When I study a language on my own, I usually practice with videos, music, and simple readings to reinforce what I've learned in class. When I study English on my own, I use different strategies. I read short articles and watch videos in English to improve my understanding. I also make flashcards with new words and practice them every day. Sometimes, I listen to podcasts or music in English to learn pronunciation and new expressions. These strategies help me learn faster and remember the language better.
2. I organize my time very carefully, dedicating at least an hour every night to practice consistently. Sometimes I review grammar watch short videos in English. Having a

fixed schedule helps me stay focused and progress step by step.

3. I use apps, online dictionaries, YouTube, and podcasts in English. I often use online resources to learn English on my own. I use apps like Duolingo and YouTube videos to practice vocabulary and listening comprehension. I also read short texts or articles on the internet to improve my reading skills. Sometimes, I use online dictionaries to look up the meaning and pronunciation of new words. These resources make learning more interesting and easier for me.
4. I consider my level to be intermediate because I understand quite a bit, although I still lack fluency when speaking. I usually measure my level of English by observing how well I can communicate in different situations. For example, I pay attention to how easily I can understand movies, podcasts, or conversations with native speakers. I also take online placement tests or practice exams like TOEFL or IELTS to check my grammar, vocabulary, and listening skills. Additionally, I notice my progress through my academic tasks, such as writing essays or giving presentations in English. When I can express my ideas more clearly and confidently, I know my level is improving.
5. I make vocabulary lists, repeat phrases many times, and practice with exercises, writing, and conversations.
6. The technique I consider best is talking with other people because it helps me gain confidence and fluency at the same time.
7. The best motivation is to think about the academic and career opportunities that English can open up.
8. I use flashcards because they allow me to review new words quickly and conveniently. I often use flashcards and online applications to improve my

vocabulary. I have a notebook where I write down new words with their meanings and an example sentence. This technique helps me remember the words better and use them when speaking and writing. I also practice reading with short stories or watch videos in English.

Student 4

1. When studying a language on my own, I use the strategy of listening to music, watching movies, and practicing with short writing exercises to reinforce what I have learned.
2. I organize my time by setting short but consistent schedules, dedicating at least thirty minutes a day.
3. I use mobile apps, online dictionaries, and educational videos on YouTube.
4. I assess my level of English as intermediate because I understand quite a bit, but I still need to improve my fluency when speaking.
5. I use the methodology of reading texts in English and writing down new words to practice them in sentences.
6. I consider conversation practice to be the best technique because it helps me organize my thoughts and gain confidence and fluency.
7. The best motivation for university students is that English opens academic, professional, and travel opportunities for them.
8. To improve my vocabulary, I use the technique of repetition and association with images, because it facilitates memorization and understanding.

Student 5

1. When studying a language on my own, I use the strategy of listening to music,

watching movies, and practicing with short written exercises to reinforce what I have learned.

2. I organize my time by setting short but consistent schedules, dedicating at least thirty minutes a day to it.
3. I use mobile apps, online dictionaries, and educational videos on YouTube.
4. I assess my level of English as intermediate because I understand quite a lot, but I still need to improve my fluency when speaking.
5. I use the methodology of reading texts in English and writing down new words, then practicing them in sentences.
6. I consider conversation practice to be the best technique because it helps me organize my thoughts and gain confidence and fluency.
7. The best motivation for university students is that English opens up academic, professional, and travel opportunities for them.
8. To improve my vocabulary, I use the technique of repetition and association with images, as it facilitates memorization and understanding.

