



# Exploring Desirability and Feasibility of Learner Autonomy: College English Language Teachers' Beliefs in the Pakistani Context

## Research Article

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## Abstract

Globalization played an essential role in spreading the idea of learner autonomy worldwide. Though it is a new research trend in the domain of English Language Teaching in Pakistan but it has been practiced worldwide for approximately the last three decades. At present the importance and crucial role of promotion of learner autonomy cannot be denied in world academia. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning environment the focus of attention has been shifted from the teacher to the learner. In this context it is very significant to explore the beliefs of teachers in connection with desirability and feasibility of learner autonomy in Pakistan. A questionnaire was adapted for data collection purpose because in case of large sample questionnaires are convenient for data collection and analysis. For this purpose, the data were collected from 400 English Language Teachers at 50 public sector colleges in the Punjab, Pakistan, using a stratified random sampling technique. SPSS software was used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics such as percentages were calculated for sake of analysis and generalisation of the findings. The analysis of the results



informed that a majority of the teachers believed that learners' involvement in the process of decision making about the kinds of tasks and activities were the most desirable and feasible among all other items. On the other hand, a large majority of the teachers believed that to learn independently is the most desirable and feasible ability among the other abilities. From the findings of this research, it can be found that mostly the teachers believe that it is need of the hour to pay heed to the voices of their learners in the matter of decisions concerning the choices of their learning and prepare them for lifelong learning.

**Keywords:** learner autonomy, teachers' beliefs, desirability, feasibility, ELT

Language learner autonomy is fairly new concept in Pakistan. It has been a major trend of research in language teaching and learning for approximately thirty years. In the recent times, the significance and promotion of learner autonomy (LA) in language teaching programs has been recognized worldwide. This new wave of learner autonomy has paved the way for paradigm shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered language teaching and learning. This is all possible because of Holec's (1981) interpretation of learner autonomy as an "ability to take charge of one's own learning" (p. 3). As learner autonomy caters to develop democratic societies so it paves the way for lifelong learning. In this context, Benson (2011) stated that realization of learner autonomy could only be possible "by a shift in relationships of power and control" (p. 15).

As regards research in the domain of language education is concerned, learner autonomy has been the center of attention since the 1980s with the foundational work of Holec (1981). Since then, research in this area has been extensively conducted from diverse dimensions such as "*what (definitions), why (rationale for its promotion), and how (approaches to its development)*" (Wang 2016, p. 2). Language teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy have been paid little consideration across the world (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012a, 2012b). Hence Pakistan is not an exception from this reality. Thus, the concept of learner autonomy (LA) has not been fully explored by the researchers in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Pakistan.

### 1.1 Research Questions

The present study answers the subsequent research questions:

- What are English Language teachers' beliefs about the desirability of learner autonomy in Pakistan?
- What are English Language teachers' beliefs about the feasibility of learner autonomy in Pakistan?

## **1.2 Significance of the Study**

The beliefs of teachers about desirability and feasibility of learner autonomy are very important. These beliefs may affect their practices concerning the development of learner autonomy in the process of language teaching and learning. Considerable research has been done on the development of learner autonomy in Asian context but research regarding the beliefs of teachers about the desirability and the feasibility of learner autonomy is very limited. This area has been insufficiently explored in Pakistan as well.

This study is very significant because it contributes to comprehend English Language teachers' beliefs in connection with desirability and feasibility of learner autonomy towards the process of English Language teaching and learning in Pakistan. On the whole this research intends to shed light on English Language Teachers' understanding of learner autonomy; consequently, it contributes to the growing body of literature on the subject under discussion.

Furthermore, this study offers a chance to ELT practitioners, researchers, curriculum planners, ELT management, and the community of practice at large in Pakistan to orient them with this phenomenon. It aims to offer a deeper insight of learner autonomy to different stakeholders, aftermath that plays an influential role in reshaping language teaching and learning practices and planning in the country.

## **2. Literature Review**

This part of the paper throws light on the features of learner autonomy, teachers' beliefs and presents an overview of some studies in connection with teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy.

### **2.1 Learner Autonomy**

With globalization the notion of learner autonomy (LA) is rapidly expanding over the last few decades. Little (2007) reported that learner autonomy has gained much importance with the paradigm shift. Previously education was 'teacher-centered' now the focus is on the 'student-centered' teaching and learning. Autonomous learners are considered motivated and responsible learners and they show interest in personal learning. Every individual learner cannot develop autonomy on the identical lines as indicated (Benson, 2006; Nunan, 1997; Scharle & Szabo, 2000) in their respective works.

Some learners can learn by themselves while on the other hand many learners are unable to do so rather, they need support to be able to learn. According to Benson (2001) such dependence seems normal to develop autonomy. Learner training is required for acceptance of autonomy and learner autonomy requires suitable preparation to happen (Dickinson, 1987, 1995; Little, 1991). Further, Benson (2001) claims that learner autonomy is not a course of action rather it is a personal trait of the learner at large.

The process of learning necessitates special attention. It is generally believed that knowledge of learners depends on their own exposure of life. Benson (2001, p. 40) conveys that the “learners must be cognitively capable of performing actions that enables them to take control of their learning”. In this regard the teacher can prove himself a helping hand to facilitate the learners to cope with self-learning.

John (2003) identified four phases of individual learning and self-management. The first phase is concerned with the willingness and ability of the learner to learn. The second phase is about the availability and absorption of the new information and experiences on the part of the learner. The third phase deals with analysis the new information and its synthesis with the previous knowledge. The fourth phase corresponds with the ability of the learner to the application of this knowledge in different scenarios of everyday life.

According to Little (2007) the instructional ideologies behind learner autonomy are the active involvement of the learner and ‘reflective practice’. This reflection represents critical thinking and evaluation on the part of the learners about their learning. With the help of this learning process, the learners after doing the needful evaluation and planning can choose further course of action for improvement. Nunan (1997) makes it clear that the improvement of the learner requires to be examined from the class because the learners at this stage needs supervision and guidance. It is evident from here that learner autonomy does not require that learners might learn by themselves. The improvement of learner autonomy is an ongoing, slow and lifelong course of action.

Horinek (2007) believes that though there are many variations in the definitions of learner autonomy but responsibility of students for their personal learning is the pivotal point among them all. The role of teachers is crucial in this regard to prepare learners to take the responsibility of their learning. Only student-centered learning may afford such opportunities.

The idea of “learner-centered instruction” offers choice to the learners (Thornbury, 2006, p. 22) and it has been usually recognized as one of the rudimentary units of learner autonomy and the role of teacher is the placement of the learners at the heart of learning activity (Ejiwale, 2012). The purpose of “learner-centered instruction” is “providing learners with greater autonomy” (Thornbury, 2006, p. 115), further to motivate them and enables them to be accountable for their learning (O’Neil & McMahan, 2005).

The learners that are going to take part actively in the learning process, they might cultivate ‘critical thinking’ and ‘problem-solving’ skills (King, 1995). The importance of critical thinking skills cannot be overlooked. The learners who possess these skills are truly ready for lifelong learning (Tsui, 2003). In this regard Kamaravadivelu (2003) places promotion of learner autonomy among macro strategies of teaching and states that it “involves helping learners learn how to learn, equipping them with the means necessary to self-direct and self-monitor their own learning” (p. 39). The

conception of learner autonomy is best suitable in the course of language learning than any other field of learning because learning any language is a communicative act.

## **2.2 Teachers' Beliefs**

All individuals hold beliefs about their occupation. Similarly, teachers possess beliefs concerning their profession – teaching. According to Pajares (1992) this term ‘teachers’ beliefs’ is generally denoted as educational beliefs on the other hand in the words of Borg (2001) “teachers’ pedagogic beliefs or those beliefs of relevance to an individual’s teaching” (p. 187). The construct ‘teachers’ beliefs’ is considerably multifaceted and wide-ranging that a researcher has to take a specific dimension or scope of the field to investigate. There is a close association between teachers’ beliefs and their social systems (Ennis, 1994) further beliefs may excel in wake of economic and political scenarios and are restricted to teaching environs. Teachers’ beliefs are wrought according to their professional growth through observations, experiences or a chain of events that took place in their professional life.

According to Williams and Burden (1997) effective teachers require clarity of mind regarding how they perceive learning, merely then they can be familiar with the various modes of learning outcomes they need to achieve. All the actions of teachers whether done intentionally or unintentionally triggered by long standing beliefs. The nature of learning process is complex. This complex process brought about personal change that opens the doors for new understandings which is entirely a personal aspect. Being a complex process, learning is multidimensional and is always under the influence of its context of occurrence.

Woolfolk (2004) claimed that veteran teachers not only have command over the subject matter of the course they teach but also have the ability to relate it with the world view to actively engage students in the process of learning. Following are the domains of professional understanding that the experienced teachers are well-versed in:

- The academic subjects they teach
- General teaching strategies applicable across subjects
- Curriculum materials and programs suited for their subject and grade level
- Subject-specific pedagogical knowledge
- Understanding the characteristics and cultural backgrounds of learners
- The various learning settings such as pairs, small groups, teams, classrooms, schools, and communities
- The overarching goals and purposes of teaching. (p. 6)

Obviously, it is one of the distinctive marks of effective teachers that they create conducive learning environment in which learners cognitively and affectively grow. Such a learning scenario caters to develop good learners. Such a learning environment supports the learners to foster their own ways of thinking and doing.

Bullock (2010) pointed out that there has been an increasing trend in exploration of teachers' beliefs since 1990s. This tendency of research has developed from a rising attention to comprehend teaching, as it deemed essential to know the ways teachers think, understand, believe and act. Results of the studies determine that teachers' beliefs have impact on teaching behaviours and real-life teaching practices. Aguirre and Speer (2000) suggest that teachers' beliefs influence teaching practices. They mention that beliefs have a pivotal role to play in connection with teachers preferred practices. They further suggest that influential teachers have higher level of effectiveness.

Teachers at diverse localities with diverse expertise may comprehend learner autonomy in their own ways. So in this context it is quite likely to undertake a study to explore college English Language Teachers' beliefs towards the desirability and the feasibility of learner autonomy in Pakistan.

### **2.3 Past Studies**

This part of the paper presents an overview of the past studies conducted in connection with teachers' beliefs towards learner autonomy.

The study conducted by Camilleri (1999) is considered pioneer in this regard. This quantitative study collected data from six European countries i.e. Belorussia, Estonia, Malta, Poland, The Netherlands and Slovenia. The questionnaire consisting 13 items was used to collect data from 328 teachers. The focus of the questionnaire items was on teachers' perceptions regarding learner involvement in decision making about learning activities including establishment of course objectives to selection of course contents. This project was done under the control of the European Centre for Modern Languages but it was not clear stated that how many of the teachers that were selected as sample of the study were actually engaged in language teaching programs. Some proportion of the sample belonging to The Netherlands used to teach Economics. As far as findings of the study are concerned on the one hand teachers showed positive inclination towards involvement of learners in decision making in a variety of activities such as arrangement of desks in the classroom, periodical assessment of the learners and functioning of learning process. On the other side teachers showed no agreement about involvement of learners in the selection and choice of textbooks and making decisions about schedule of lectures. Many of the respondents were working in the state-run schools.

The same study was replicated by Camileri (2007) in Malta. The sample of the study was 48 which consisted of student-teachers and in-service teachers who had been engaged in the teaching of modern languages. Additionally, she had drawn a comparison of the results of this study with the

respondents of Malta in the previous study. The results of this comparison corresponded in connection with the aspects of autonomy and collective views of teachers. The respondents of the latter study appeared more assertive towards learner involvement in setting objectives of learning, self-assessment and choice of learning materials.

Martinez (2008) conducted research with 16 student teachers. These student teachers belonged to diverse backgrounds such as France, Italy and Spain. When the study was conducted, they were enrolled in a 32-hour course in relation to learner autonomy at a German university. Questionnaires, interviews and observations were used as data collection tools. The results of this study revealed affirmative attitude of student teachers for the development of learner autonomy.

Al-Shaqsi (2009) conducted research on the beliefs of teachers in connection with learner autonomy in the school sector of Oman. Survey was used to collect data from 120 English language teachers teaching in state run schools. A questionnaire was developed to suit this study. The questionnaire addressed main some stream components of teachers' beliefs about the characteristics of autonomous learners, their ability to execute tasks independently and the promotion of learner autonomy.

Balçıkanlı (2010) conducted a study in Turkey. The questionnaire developed by Camilleri (1999) was used in the quantitative phase of the study. 112 student-teachers of English Language filled this survey. Interviews of 20 respondents were conducted thereof. The interviews were conducted in five focus groups while each group consisted of four student-teachers. The analysis of the results obtained showed positive inclination of respondents towards involvement of learners in classroom activities on the whole. This study states that 'these student teachers felt very comfortable with asking students to make such decisions' (p. 98).

Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012a) conducted a study at language centre (LC) of Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) Oman. The data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. Sample of the study consisted of 61 English Language Teachers for quantitative phase while 20 teachers for qualitative phase of the study were selected out of 200 teachers employed at the centre. These teachers belonged to 25 different nationalities from all over the world. The study revealed that the teachers felt positive towards the feasibility of promotion of learner autonomy.

Feryok (2013) studied the role of English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in the promotion of learner autonomy in Japan. The study was conducted in an institution of higher education. The researcher conducted a case study for an in depth understanding of teachers' knowledge of learner autonomy. She put forwarded that teachers realize learner autonomy as "students' accountability for their own learning" (p. 213). She further disclosed that in order to develop learner autonomy the teachers themselves have control over classroom activities.

Yasmin and Sohail (2017) investigated teachers' beliefs about their practices in fostering learner autonomy. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data. The sample of the study was

16 English teachers. They were taken from four public sector universities across the Punjab, Pakistan. The findings of the study exposed that usually the teachers employed teacher-centered approach in the classroom. The results further suggest that the objectives of learner autonomy can be attained while providing appropriate training to the teachers.

### **3. Material and Methods**

This section of the paper provides in-depth information about the selection and choice of research methodology. The major focus of the present paper was to explore English Language Teachers' beliefs with reference to the desirability and feasibility of language learner autonomy across the Punjab, Pakistan. The current research employs quantitative research design. For this purpose, the researcher collected data through a questionnaire. This questionnaire was adapted from Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012a). The same questionnaire was previously used by Agustina (2017), Doğan and Mirici (2017), Szöcs (2017), Wichayathian and Reinders (2018), Alwasidi and Alnaeem (2022) and Alrashidi (2022).

Dornyei (2007) stated that "Quantitative research involves data collection procedures that result from primarily numerical data which is then analyzed primarily by statistical methods i.e. survey research using a questionnaire analyzed by statistical software SPSS" (p. 24).

#### **3.1 The Survey**

The survey method was used in this study to gather the views of teachers' beliefs in relation to the desirability and feasibility of learner autonomy. The survey is considered to be an appropriate method to obtain a vast amount of data (Antonius, 2003) and also to get a deep understanding of participant's opinions, perceptions, and attitudes (Wiersman & Jurs, 2009). The survey is an efficient and reliable technique to obtain large amounts of data without spending much energy, meanwhile, it provides with the most accurate data that can be generalized (Panacek, 2008). The reason of choosing this research methodology is to save time and to get a detailed insight of teachers' understanding about the above stated aspects of learner autonomy.

#### **3.2 Population and Sample**

All the English Language Teachers serving in the state-run colleges in the Punjab, Pakistan were the population for this study.

The sample for this study (n = 400) was selected through stratified random sampling technique from 50 public sector colleges across the Punjab, Pakistan. The sample was taken from graduate colleges that run Bachelor of Studies (BS) programs. Eight English Language Teachers those who teach BS level classes from each college were selected. In the selection of the colleges and English Language Teachers only one strata was followed i.e. college should run BS program and the respondent should teach BS classes.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

To analyze filled questionnaires statistically, both Excel and SPSS (Version 25) were used. Through the descriptive statistical analysis, the quantitative and numerical features of the data were described, analyzed, and summarized (Antonius, 2003; Johnson & Christensen, 2012, 2014; Walliman, 2006). The percentage was shown through the analysis.

### 4. Results and Discussion

This part of the paper presents an in-depth depiction of the results and discussion of the study. The results followed by the discussion have been reported here. The data analysed in this section were collected through a questionnaire.

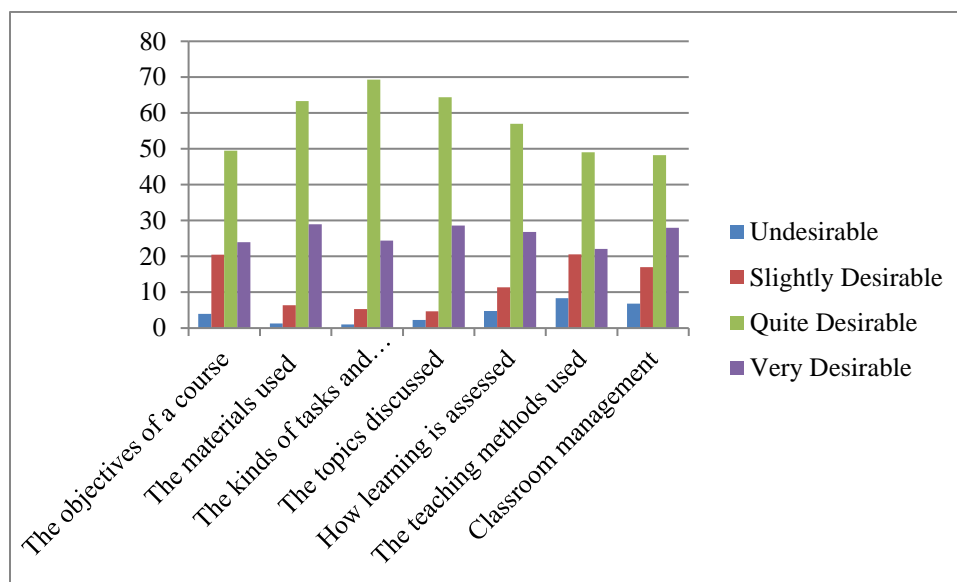
This part of the questionnaire consisted of two main components subdivided into further seven items each. The first component addressed “the desirability and feasibility of learners’ involvement in decisions about the objectives of a course, the materials used, the kinds of tasks and activities they do, the topics discussed, how learning is assessed, and the teaching methods used” while the other was ‘the desirability and feasibility of the learners’ have the ability to identify their own needs, identify their own strengths, identify their own weaknesses, monitor their progress, evaluate their own learning, learn co-operatively and learn independently’.

The responses for each item were collected on a scale ranging from ‘undesirable, to ‘very desirable’ and ‘unfeasible’ to ‘very feasible’. The results of these items have been presented here with the help of tables. Each table follows discussion of the findings. This organised presentation of results provides a thorough understanding of the beliefs of college English Language Teachers towards desirability and feasibility of learner autonomy in Pakistan.

Table 4.1 The Desirability of Learners’ involvement in Decision Making (%)

<b>Learners are involved in Decisions about:</b>	<b>Undesirable</b>	<b>Slightly Desirable</b>	<b>Quite Desirable</b>	<b>Very Desirable</b>
The objectives of a course	4.0	20.5	49.5	24.0
The materials used	1.3	6.4	63.3	29.0
The kinds of tasks and activities they do	1.0	5.3	69.3	24.4
The topics discussed	2.3	4.7	64.4	28.6
How learning is assessed	4.8	11.4	57.0	26.8
The teaching methods used	8.3	20.6	49.0	22.1
Classroom management	6.8	17.0	48.2	28.0

Figure 4.1 The Desirability of Learners' involvement in Decision Making (%)



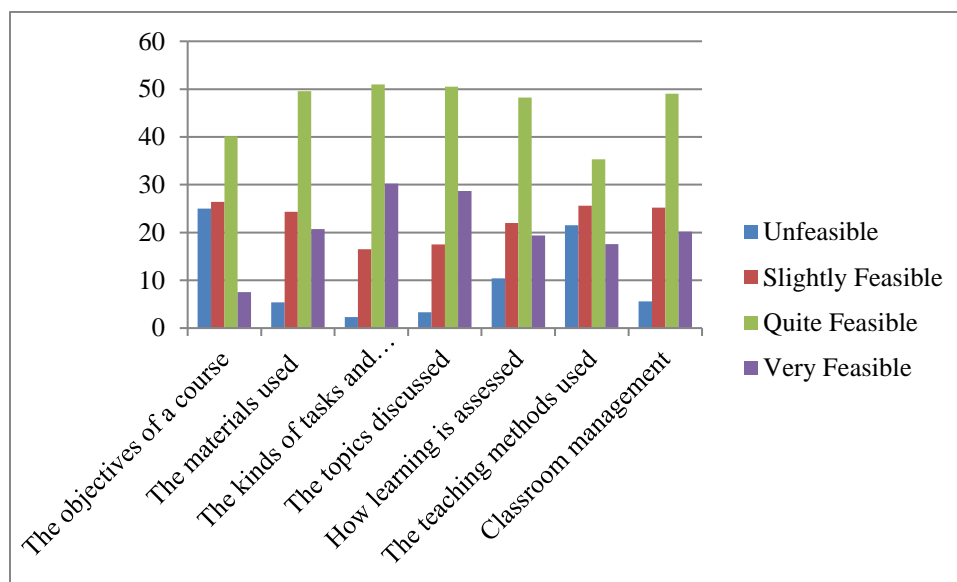
The responses gathered from the questionnaire as mentioned in the table 4.1 and figure 4.1 shows that the majority of 93.7% (comprising 69.3% & 24.4) college English Language Teachers believes that the learners' involvement in making decisions about the kinds of tasks and activities is the most desirable among all other items.

The learners' involvement in making decisions regarding the discussion of topics remained the second highest item where 93% of the teachers (comprising 64.4 & 28.6) showed the desirability. The item concerning the use of material with the score of 92.3% (63.3% & 29.0%) remained the third highest item followed by how learning is assessed 83.8%, classroom management 76.2% and the objectives of a course 75.5%. However, the desirability about the learners' involvement the teaching methods used 71.1 % remained the last.

Table 4.2 The Feasibility of Learners' involvement in Decision Making (%)

<b>Learners are involved in Decisions about:</b>	<b>Unfeasible</b>	<b>Slightly Feasible</b>	<b>Quite Feasible</b>	<b>Very Feasible</b>
The objectives of a course	25.0	26.4	40.1	7.5
The materials used	5.4	24.3	49.6	20.7
The kinds of tasks and activities they do	2.3	16.5	51.0	30.2
The topics discussed	3.3	17.5	50.5	28.7
How learning is assessed	10.4	22.0	48.2	19.4
The teaching methods used	21.5	25.6	35.3	17.6
Classroom management	5.6	25.2	49.0	20.2

Figure 4.2 The Feasibility of Learners' involvement in Decision Making (%)



The analyses in table 4.2 and figure 4.2 disclose the results of English Language Teachers' beliefs about feasibility of learners' involvement in decision making. The findings are almost similar to the findings mentioned the previous table and figure with few exceptions. According to the results mentioned above, a large majority of the teachers 81.2% hold belief that the kinds of tasks and activities they do ranked highly feasibly among the rest of the items in the table. The feasibility of learners' involvement in the topics discussed documented as the second highest with the sum of 79.2%. The third highest item which the teachers believe feasible is the materials used (70.3%). the subsequent items according to the teachers' beliefs are classroom management (69.2%), assessment of learning (67.6%), the use of teaching methods (52.9%) and the objectives of the course (47.6%). The last two items differ in sequence from the items mentioned least desirable.

The results mentioned in the above tables and figures depict that English Language Teachers in the colleges of the Punjab, Pakistan has strong belief towards the desirability and the feasibility of learners' participation in the selection and choice of different kinds of tasks in the classroom activities, the topics to be discussed in the classroom and the materials used in the process of language teaching and learning. The English Language Learners' involvement in the choice of activities, topics and materials will pave the way towards learner autonomy in any language teaching and learning program. This aspect further implies that the teachers believe in student-centred classroom instead of teacher a sole custodian of the class. Student focused language teaching and learning is one of the essential hall marks of learner autonomy. This aspect of teachers' beliefs echoes the ideas put forwarded by Dickinson (1987), Esch (1996), Pierson (1996), Gardener and Miller (1999), Voller and Pickard (1996), and Benson (2001). On the other hand, the teachers considered involvement of the learners in the decisions in relation to the aspects of the use of teaching methodology and the objectives of a course less desirable and feasible.

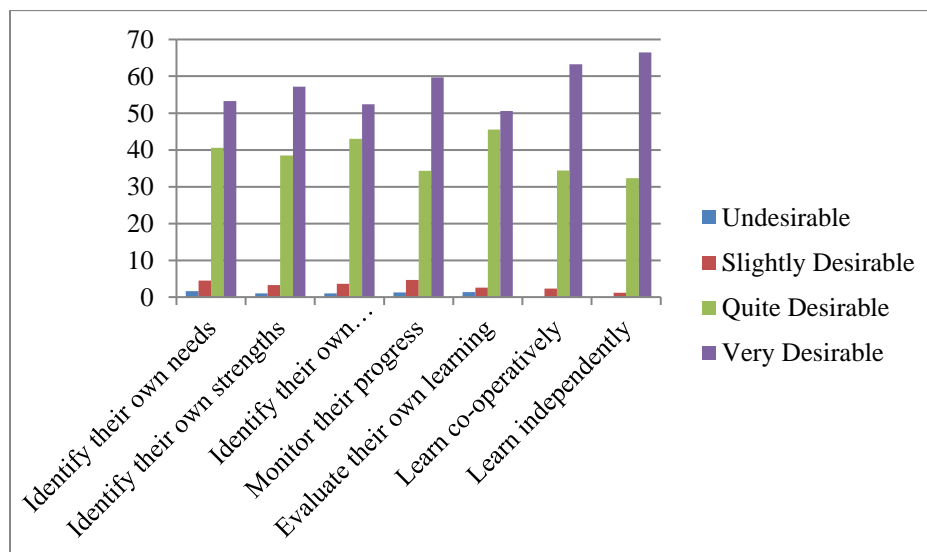
So far as the matter of less desirability and feasibility of learners’ contribution in the decisions towards the objectives of a course is concerned, this is all due to the constraints of the curriculum and course outline as the objectives of the course have already been there. In case of Pakistan curriculum has been set by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan and course outlines and objectives of the courses have been determined by the universities in the light of the said curriculum. The public sector colleges have been affiliated with different universities for undergraduate and graduate programs in Pakistan.

As the results indicate, there is low level of desirability and feasibility regarding the learners’ participation in making decisions about the use of teaching methods. The selection of an appropriate teaching method is the choice of the teachers. Teachers have to opt for the teaching methods keeping in view the content, the context, proficiency level of the learners, individual differences of the learners, and needs of the learners and to prepare learners for examination which is conducted by the concerned university at the end of the term.

Table 4.3 The Desirability of Learners’ Abilities (%)

Learners have the ability to:	Undesirable	Slightly Desirable	Quite Desirable	Very Desirable
Identify their own needs	1.6	4.5	40.6	53.3
Identify their own strengths	1.0	3.3	38.5	57.2
Identify their own weaknesses	1.0	3.6	43.0	52.4
Monitor their progress	1.3	4.7	34.3	59.7
Evaluate their own learning	1.4	2.6	45.5	50.6
Learn co-operatively	0	2.3	34.4	63.3
Learn independently	0	1.2	32.3	66.5

Figure 4.3 The Desirability of Learners’ involvement in Decision Making (%)



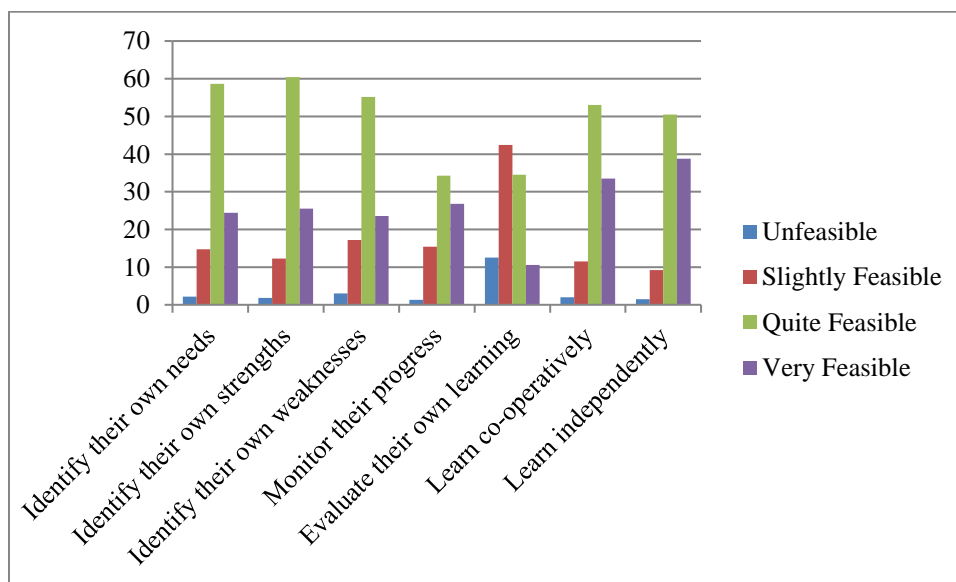
The responses collected through questionnaire as given in the table 4.3 and figure 4.3 represent college English Language Teachers beliefs about the desirability of learners’ seven different abilities. The analyses of the above results are an indication that a large number of teachers 98.8% believed that to learn independently is the most desirable ability among the others.

To learn co-operatively 97.7% was placed at the second most desirable ability. Learners’ ability to identify their own weaknesses 97.4% was figured out the third highest among the abilities. The desirability of learners’ ability to evaluate their own learning 96.1% ranked fourth followed by recognition of their own strengths 95.7% and to monitor self-progress 94.0% remained fifth and sixth respectively. So far as identification of their own needs was concerned, it was placed the last among the abilities above listed.

Table 4.4 The Feasibility of Learners’ Abilities (%)

Learners have the ability to:	Unfeasible	Slightly Feasible	Quite Feasible	Very Feasible
Identify their own needs	2.2	14.7	58.6	24.4
Identify their own strengths	1.8	12.3	60.4	25.5
Identify their own weaknesses	3.0	17.2	55.2	23.6
Monitor their progress	1.3	15.4	34.3	26.8
Evaluate their own learning	12.5	42.4	34.5	10.6
Learn co-operatively	2.0	11.5	53.0	33.5
Learn independently	1.5	9.2	50.5	38.8

Figure 4.4 The Feasibility of Learners’ Abilities (%)



The table 4.4 and figure 4.4 show the results of the feasibility of learners' different abilities as listed above. A large number of English Language Teachers 89.3% shared their beliefs in favour of learn independently as the top most among all other abilities. Learn co-operatively with the score 86.5% placed second among the abilities. Identification of their own strengths 85.9% ranked among all the abilities. Further results reflected that identification of their own needs 83.0%, identification of self-weaknesses 78.8% and to monitor self-progress were placed fourth, fifth and sixth respectively as given in the table. So far as evaluation of their own learning 45.1% was concerned it was placed seventh according to the beliefs of the teachers regarding feasibility of learners' abilities.

The results as analysed above depicted that college English Language Teachers had shown strong beliefs towards desirability of learners' abilities as compared to feasibility of the learners' abilities. It is surprising to note that learning independently and learning co-operatively were among the abilities as recognized the most desirable and the most feasible as well. However, the identification of needs remained the least desirable while evaluation of their own learning remained the least feasible among all other abilities.

This variation reminds Nunan's (1998) suggestion that desirability and feasibility is a matter not free from institutional and cultural constraints of the learners.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper explored English Language Teachers' beliefs towards the desirability and the feasibility of learner autonomy in the public sector colleges of the Punjab, Pakistan. On the whole this research indicates that college English Language Teachers have understanding of the concept of learner autonomy and they are aware of its desirability and feasibility in the context of teaching and learning of English Language programs at the college level. Teachers' positive beliefs about desirability of learner autonomy show that they understand the importance of independent and lifelong learning of their learners in language learning. For this purpose, they want active involvement of their learners in different aspects of language learning. Due to some constraints of curriculum, it is not feasible to involve the learners in every decision-making process. This signifies a gap between an ideal state of learner autonomy and its applied orientation that suggests its future alignment and application in language teaching and learning planning and practices.

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