

UNDERGRADUATE PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT LEARNER AUTONOMY DEVELOPMENT IN EFL LEARNING

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 22/11/2022	Learner autonomy plays a vitally important role in supporting learners in language acquisition. Understanding beliefs of in-service and pre-service language teachers about learner autonomy is necessary. The current study, therefore, aims to investigate undergraduate pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy development in EFL learning. The study was conducted at Ho Chi Minh City of Technology (HUTECH University) with the participation of 84 undergraduate pre-service EFL students (PETs). Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected through the employment of the questionnaire and interview; for data analysis, "descriptive statistics" and "content analysis" were employed. The findings of the study revealed that except neutral beliefs about several aspects related to the nature of learner autonomy and challenges in learner autonomy development, the PETs held positive beliefs that EFL teachers must have different roles and responsibilities, and employ different strategies to develop learner autonomy for EFL learners. Particularly, the PETs also believed that "it is quite desirable and feasible for EFL learners' involvement in decision-making and ability to develop learner autonomy". Based on the findings, pedagogical implications are made for both EFL teacher educators and pre-service EFL students to develop learner autonomy in EFL learning.
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NIỀM TIN CỦA GIÁO SINH CHUYÊN NGÀNH GIẢNG DẠY TIẾNG ANH VÀO SỰ PHÁT TRIỂN NĂNG LỰC TỰ CHỦ TRONG VIỆC HỌC TIẾNG ANH CHO NGƯỜI HỌC

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THÔNG TIN BÀI BÁO	TÓM TẮT
Ngày nhận bài: 22/11/2022	Năng lực tự chủ của người học đóng vai trò cực kỳ quan trọng trong việc hỗ trợ người học thụ đắc ngôn ngữ. Hiểu biết về niềm tin của giáo viên và giáo sinh chuyên ngành ngôn ngữ về sự tự chủ của người học là cần thiết. Do đó, nghiên cứu này nhằm tìm hiểu niềm tin của các giáo sinh chuyên ngành giảng dạy tiếng Anh về phát triển năng lực tự chủ của người học trong việc học tiếng Anh. Nghiên cứu được thực hiện tại trường Đại học Công nghệ TP.HCM với sự tham gia của 84 giáo sinh. Dữ liệu định lượng và định tính được thu thập qua bảng câu hỏi và phỏng vấn; dữ liệu được phân tích thông qua việc sử dụng "thống kê mô tả" và "phân tích nội dung". Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy ngoại trừ niềm tin ở mức trung lập về một số khía cạnh liên quan đến bản chất tính tự chủ của người học và những thách thức trong quá trình phát triển sự tự chủ của người học, các giáo sinh có niềm tin tích cực rằng giáo viên tiếng Anh có các vai trò và trách nhiệm khác nhau trong việc phát triển năng lực tự chủ cho người học. Họ tin rằng để thúc đẩy sự tự chủ của người học, giáo viên phải sử dụng các chiến lược khác nhau. Đặc biệt, nghiên cứu cũng chỉ ra các giáo sinh có niềm tin rằng "sự tham gia của người học tiếng Anh như một ngoại ngữ vào việc ra quyết định và khả năng phát triển năng lực tự chủ trong học tập là điều hoàn toàn cần thiết và khả thi". Dựa trên những phát hiện này, các khuyến nghị sư phạm được đưa ra cho cả giảng viên đào tạo giáo viên và giáo sinh chuyên ngành tiếng Anh trong việc phát triển năng lực tự chủ của người học tiếng Anh.
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1. Introduction

Learner autonomy (LA), as the capacity of learners to take control of their learning, is widely acknowledged as a desirable goal of foreign language learning [1]. LA has received much attention amongst researchers, scholars, teachers and students both in EFL teaching and learning and in EFL teacher education. Especially, LA is seen as a way to empower students, make them responsible for their own learning, and provide them with life-long learning skills [2]. LA has become an ultimate goal in education in general and foreign or second language in particular [3]. That is why promoting LA in an EFL classroom is a must. Nonetheless, we cannot expect EFL teachers to promote autonomy in their classrooms if they have not been previously trained to do so and do not deeply understand the nature of LA as well as other issues related to LA development. For EFL teachers, to promote LA among learners, they have to understand the concept of LA, their responsibility and roles. They must also have belief that there are strategies that would be effective for them to use and challenges they may face in LA development, and that LA is worth combining in their instruction.

Regarding teachers' beliefs, Borg [4] stated that teachers' beliefs influence their practices. It has been proved that teachers' beliefs interact with and influence learning goals and actions in the classrooms. Their beliefs are demonstrated in teaching and learning activities. LA development relies heavily on teachers' beliefs [5]. Particularly, teachers may have different beliefs about LA. If they do not have sufficient knowledge about LA, their beliefs and practices may be inconsistent, or their beliefs are not in line with their practices [6]. Therefore, beliefs about LA development have become an interest in the field of EFL teaching and learning; and understanding teachers' beliefs about LA is really necessary. In addition, teacher beliefs play a prominent role in pre-service teachers' planning, preparation, and practice. The beliefs that pre-service teachers hold can affect their response to teacher education courses. That is because new ideas being provided in the courses may be filtered through the individual teachers' beliefs during the training [7]. PETs' beliefs are often based on their previous experiences as English learners and can negatively affect their students' experiences in the EFL classroom [8].

PETs' beliefs influence what they say and do in the classroom, which, in turn, shapes their beliefs in teaching in their future jobs. Zheng [7] stated that PETs have been found to hold significant beliefs about learners and learning; about teaching; about subject; about learning to teach; about self, about teaching role and about professional development. However, rarely have studies on PETs' beliefs about LA in EFL education been conducted. PETs' understanding and beliefs about LA are of vital importance. Their practices in their future career will be shaped by the ways of perceiving LA. Nevertheless, most of the studies in the field of beliefs on LA have aimed to examine EFL students' and in-service teachers' perceptions of LA and beliefs about LA; very few, if any in the context of the study, have ever approached these beliefs from the perspectives of undergraduate PETs who have just finished their teaching practicum at language centers or schools. Therefore, the present study is an attempt to fill the existing gap. It attempted to address the two following research questions:

1) What beliefs do pre-service EFL teachers have about learner autonomy development in EFL learning in terms of (a) nature of learner autonomy and (b) teachers' responsibilities, challenges, and strategies?

2) To what extent do pre-service EFL teachers find it desirable and feasible for EFL students to develop learner autonomy in EFL learning?

The present study is expected to shed light on the general existing pattern of the way PETs view learner autonomy and contribute to the pedagogical knowledge and professional development of EFL teachers, which is always a concern in EFL teacher education programs.

2. Research methodology

2.1. Research context and participants

The current study was conducted at Ho Chi Minh City of Technology. It is a private multidisciplinary university located in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. "English language" is one of

the majors taught at the university. The students who enroll in the Faculty of English Language (FoEL) can choose one of the four sub-majors, including “English for business”, “English for tourism and hospitality”, “Translation and interpretation of English”, and “Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL)”. It takes all the students majoring in the English language 4 years to complete the program which consists of 45 courses. Before graduation, all the fourth-year students are required to take an internship. Those students who major in TEFL must participate in an eight-week teaching practicum. Convenience sampling was employed for the study, i.e., all the fourth-year TEFL students of Cohort 2018 at FoEL were invited to participate in the study. The sample of the study consisted of 84 fourth-year students majoring in TEFL.

The number of female students was 66 (78.5%), while that of males was 18 (21.5%). Their ages range from 22 (84.5%), 23 (8.3%) to 24 (7.2%). All of them took part in this study just after they finished their eight-week teaching practicum at schools and English centers.

2.2. Research instruments

This study employed the closed-ended questionnaire and interview to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaire was adapted from the studies by Borg and Al-Busaidi [2], Borg and Alshumaimeri [9], and Saraswati’s study [10]. It consists of three parts. The first part inquires about the pre-service EFL teachers’ personal information. The second part includes 25 items asking the pre-service EFL teachers about their beliefs about LA in terms of nature of LA, and teachers’ responsibilities, challenges and strategies in LA development; the third part consists of 28 items asking the pre-service EFL teachers about their beliefs about desirability and feasibility of LA in EFL education. Cronbach’s Alpha indexes of the questionnaire were at **.861** for 25 items of the second part and **.921** for 28 items of the third part, so the reliability of the questionnaire was very high. To obtain triangulation of data for the study, the semi-structured interview was used for collecting qualitative data. It consists of 9 specific questions directly focusing on addressing the two research questions. In addition, the participants’ responses from the interviews were checked by both the researchers together with one more lecturer from the faculty.

2.3. Procedures for data collection and analysis

Data for the study were collected in September 2022 just after the pre-service EFL teachers finished their teaching practicum. It took them around 25 minutes to complete the questionnaire; among 89 copies of the questionnaire administered to the pre-service EFL teachers, 87 copies were returned and 84 of them were valid. Among 84 pre-service EFL teachers, 10 of them volunteered to join the semi-structured interview.

With respect to data analysis, SPSS software was used to analyze the quantitative data. Descriptive statistics with Mean (M), and standard deviation (SD) were calculated. The mean scores were interpreted as follows: For 25 items asking the pre-service EFL teachers about their beliefs about LA in terms of nature of LA, and teachers’ responsibilities, challenges and strategies in LA development, and based on the calculated interval coefficient for four intervals in five points ($5-1=4$), intervals with the range of 0.80 (4/5) were arranged. The following criteria in the Likert scale were used to interpret the data: strongly disagree (M=1.00 -1.80), disagree (M=1.81 - 2.60), unsure (M=2.61- 3.40), agree (M=3.41 - 4.20), and strongly agree (M=4.21 - 5.00). In addition, for 28 items asking the PETs about their beliefs about desirability (14 items) and feasibility (14 items) of LA in EFL education, intervals with the range of 0.75 (3/4) were arranged. The following criteria in the Likert type scale were used to interpret the data: undesirable / unfeasible (M=1.00 -1.75), slightly desirable / slightly feasible (M=1.76 - 2.50), quite desirable / quite feasible (M=2.51- 3.25), very desirable / very feasible (M=3.26 - 4.00).

“Content analysis” was employed for analyzing the data collected from the interviews. The pre-service EFL teachers were coded as from PET1 to PET10, and the interview questions were coded as from IQ1to IQ9.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs about nature of LA, teachers' responsibilities and roles, challenges, and strategies in LA development in EFL education

PETs' beliefs about the nature of LA, and teachers' responsibilities and roles, challenges, and strategies in LA development are clarified through the data collected from the questionnaire and interviews.

Beliefs about the nature of learner autonomy

Regarding quantitative data, it was found that all the PETs clearly understood about what LA means. They agreed that "LA means learners' willingness and ability to take responsibility, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate their English learning" with $M= 3.74$ and $SD = .907$. In addition, they believed that "LA can be achieved by learners of all cultural backgrounds" with $M= 3.51$ and $SD = .835$, and they disagreed that and "LA is a concept which is not suited to Asian English learners" with $M= 2.60$ and $SD = .851$. However, with respect to which learners can develop LA better, the data revealed that the PETs were unsure about whether "LA can be developed by learners of all ages" and "LA is only possible with adult learners" with $M= 3.40$ & 2.77 and $SD = .983$ & $.570$ respectively; and they were also unsure about whether "developing LA needs the teacher's support" and "LA implies a rejection of traditional teacher-centered methods of English teaching" with $M= 2.92$ & 2.96 and $SD = .722$ & $.987$ respectively.

Regarding qualitative data, all 10 PETs reported a similar understanding of the definition of LA. For instance, in terms of IQ1 "what does LA mean in your opinion?", some PETs reported that "LA means students actively take the responsibility of their learning (PET1), play the main role in their learning process (PET2), have ability to insist on completing their plans (PET3), set their own learning goals, take control of their own learning pace without needing the immediate support from the teacher (PET4), learn by themselves and choose what they want to learn (PET5)". Regarding the background of learners, 9 out of 10 participants reported that learners of different backgrounds can develop LA, nonetheless, Westerners tend to be more autonomous than Asian ones because Western learners are taught to be independent from their early ages. For example, PET10 said, "Western students have better LA than Asian ones because they are taught to be self-reliant at early ages at school and home through various activities like doing their own household chores, choosing books they want to read. Meanwhile, Asian parents often interfere with their children's learning by forcing them to study what parents want without considering their own needs (IQ3)." In addition, all the participants believed that both adult and young learners can develop LA; however, adults can develop LA better than children because adults are aware of the importance of learning and they have more experience in learning. For example, PET9 said, "Adult learners can develop LA better than young learners because adults often set clearer learning goals and come up with more specific tasks to achieve their goals. LA requires a lot of fundamental knowledge and skills which are already available in adults through their long-term learning while young learners are too young to understand what knowledge/skills needed for LA (IQ2)." Finally, with respect to the teacher's roles, all the 10 interviewees reported that LA development helps create learner-centered language classes, however, it still needs the teacher's support with different roles. For example, PET1 said, "Although learners play the major role in LA, they still need teacher's guidance, management and advice (IQ4)".

Beliefs about teachers' responsibilities and roles in LA development

Quantitative data collected from the questionnaire revealed that all the PETs believed that the teacher must be responsible and have different roles in LA development for EFL learners. Teachers "play different roles, such as guides, facilitators, instructors, monitors, evaluators" in supporting "learners to become actively involved in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating their English learning" with $M = 3.99$ & 3.95 and $SD = .920$ & $.956$ respectively. Additionally, teachers

are responsible for “determining the objectives, choosing the content, and selecting the methods and techniques to be used in the English lesson” and “monitoring and evaluating learners’ English learning progress” with $M = 3.87$ & 3.83 and $SD = .653$ & $.639$ respectively.

Data collected from the interviews are consistent with the quantitative data. All the 10 interviewees reported that teachers must have different roles and be responsible for LA development for EFL learners. For instance, “*Teachers can help students understand their responsibility in learning... (PET1), ...find the right way to learn by themselves (PET2) ..., or choose a suitable material for their learning (PET3) ...; and teachers motivate, encourage learners to involve in learning activities (PET10), (IQ5).*”

Beliefs about teachers’ challenges in LA development

In terms of beliefs about challenges teachers may face in LA development, three aspects were investigated, including learner-related, teacher-related and context-related challenges. Quantitative data showed that “teachers’ lack of knowledge about LA” and “the stipulated EFL syllabus” are the main constraints to develop LA with $M = 3.46$ & 3.48 and $SD = .884$ & $.963$ respectively. Meanwhile, the PETs are unsure about the other challenges, including “learners’ English proficiency”, “teachers’ lack of technology application”, “school examinations of English”, “the government’s educational policy on EFL teaching and learning” with $M = 2.93$, 3.12 , 3.33 , 3.33 & 3.40 and $SD = .759$, $.911$, $.883$, $.948$ & $.808$ respectively.

Regarding qualitative data collected from the interviews, the participants believed that challenges might come from the learner, teacher and context. For instance, several students reported, “*learners’ low awareness of LA (PET1)*”, “*poor learning environment (PET10)*”, “*lack of parents’ support and collaboration (PET10) ...*”, “*learners’ little effort and low awareness and age (PET2) ...*”, “*teachers’ teaching methods and attitudes...(PET3), (IQ7).*”

Beliefs about teachers’ strategies in LA development

Regarding 7 strategies suggested in the study, all of them were believed to be essential for developing LA. The three strategies “training teachers to improve knowledge and skills about LA” “training learners to develop their skills and strategies to become autonomous”, and “learning how to learn English” were agreed by most participants with $M = 3.88$, 3.73 & 3.74 and $SD = .842$, 3.73 & $.823$ respectively. The other strategies were also believed to be necessary, including “providing activities which give learners opportunities to work together and learn from each other”, “providing co-operative group work activities inside and outside the class”, “organizing learner-centered English classrooms”, and “out-of-class tasks requiring learners to use technological devices” with $M = 3.61$, 3.65 , 3.52 & 3.48 and $SD = .964$, $.951$, $.885$ & $.911$ respectively. More interestingly, data collected from the interviews are in alignment with those from the questionnaire. Accordingly, all the interviewees proposed strategies for LA development such as teaching strategies to learners, helping learners set up learning goals, using different teaching techniques and activities. For example, several PETs reported, “*...having many activities for pair/group work to let students learn from each other (PET6), teaching them how to use English dictionaries to look up the unknown words by themselves, or use grammar books for further practice (PET1), ...creating extra-curricular activities for students to practice language skills by themselves (PET8) and so on (IQ6).*”

3.1.2. Pre-service EFL teachers’ desirability and feasibility for EFL learners to develop LA

Desirability and feasibility of learners’ involvement in decision making

Seven items were repeated on both the desirability scale and the feasibility scale of learners’ involvement in decision making in “the objectives of a course”, “the materials used”, “the kinds of tasks and activities they do”, “the topics discussed”, “learning assessment”, “the teaching methods used” and “classroom management” with $M = 2.95$ & $SD = .845$ for desirability and $M = 2.64$ & $SD = .812$ for feasibility. It can be found that the participants believed that it is **quite** desirable and feasible for learners’ involvement in decision making of the seven aspects; and in all cases, the mean scores showed that the PETs were more positive about the desirability of

learner involvement than they were about its feasibility. Specially, learner involvement in decision making was seen to be most desirable in relation to “the topics discussed” and “the kinds of tasks and activities they do” with $M = 3.05$ & 3.00 and $SD = .863$ & $.892$ respectively and to be most feasible in relation to the same two aspects with $M = 2.70$ & 2.74 and $SD = .847$ & $.730$ respectively. Most interestingly, when the two scales of desirability and feasibility of learners’ involvement in decision making were compared (using a paired items t-test), there was a statistically significant difference between the PETs’ beliefs about the desirability ($M = 2.95$) and feasibility ($M = 2.64$) with $t = 4.528$ and Sig. (2-tailed) P-value = $.000$.

In terms of qualitative data, more or less, at a certain level, all the interviewees believed that learners could involve in decision making in several aspects such as choosing learning goals, learning activities, learning materials, learning strategies, types of assignments. For example, students can choose “*the activities that they want to join (PET2), ... their timeline and learning materials (PET3), ...outside-class activities (PET4), ...learning styles and assignments (PET5), ... learning goals and methods (PET10), (IQ8).*”

Desirability and feasibility of learners’ ability

Similarly, seven items were repeated on both the desirability scale and the feasibility scale of learners’ 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” with $M = 3.10$ & $SD = .823$ for desirability and $M = 2.69$ & $SD = .802$ for feasibility. For this category, the participants also believed that it is **quite** desirable and feasible for learners’ ability to do the seven tasks. And in all seven tasks, the mean scores showed that the PETs were more positive about the desirability of learners’ ability than they were about its feasibility. More interestingly, regarding the desirability of learners’ ability to do the seven tasks, the mean scores range from 3.01 to 3.20 and SD ranges from $.714$ to $.878$, which indicates that the levels of agreement of the PETs are consistent. Similarly, regarding the feasibility of learner ability to do the seven tasks, the mean scores range from 2.61 to 2.81 and SD indexes range from $.714$ to $.857$, which indicates that the levels of agreement of the PETs are also consistent.

Most interestingly, when the two scales of desirability and feasibility of learners’ ability were compared (using a paired items t-test), there was a statistically significant difference between the PETs’ beliefs about the desirability ($M = 3.10$) and feasibility ($M = 2.69$) with $t = 5.976$ and Sig. (2-tailed) P-value = $.000$.

With respect to data collected from the interview, all the 10 interviewees expressed that EFL learners are able to do different tasks during the process of learning. For instance, they are able to “*...set up their learning schedule (PET1), ...choose learning activities (PET2), ...track their learning progress (PET5), ...look for learning materials (PET7), ...evaluate learning materials (PET8), find ways to improve skills and monitor learning progress (PET9), analyze their strengths and weaknesses (PET10), (IQ9).*”

3.2. Discussion

To be successful in EFL education, it is essential that pre-service EFL teachers must know how to promote LA among their learners. To complete this task effectively, they must have beliefs and understanding about the nature of LA, their responsibility and roles as well as challenges they may face and strategies they can use. The current study has indicated several significant findings that are consistent with those of previous studies on similar issues in other contexts (e.g., [2]; [9]; [10]).

Regarding beliefs about the nature of LA, all the PETs believed that to become autonomous in learning, learners need to take responsibility, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate their English learning, and that LA can be achieved by learners of all cultural backgrounds. These findings are consistent with those of the study conducted by Saraswati [10], showing that EFL teachers’ beliefs about the nature of LA are positive. With respect to other aspects related to the nature or LA, it is evident that many PETs had positive beliefs that teacher’s support and roles are

important for LA development, learners of all ages can develop LA and that LA development is the rejection of teacher-centered classes. Nevertheless, it is unavoidable that some PETs were still unsure about those aspects. It might be because those PETs misinterpreted the LA concept and principles or during their learning process, they might lack autonomous learning experience or they might not realize whether their instructors are autonomous or not. Obviously, EFL teacher educators need to pay to this issue because learning experience helps PETS understand the nature of LA and be aware of LA development.

In terms of beliefs about responsibility and roles of teachers in LA development, the finding of the study is in line with that of Saraswati's study [10], showing that all the PETs positively believe that to foster LA, EFL teachers need to play different roles, such as guides, facilitators, instructors, monitors, evaluators to help learners plan, implement, monitor and evaluate their English learning. There is evidence that the PETs have understanding of what LA requires them to do for learners, which is crucial for effective integration of LA into EFL courses in the future.

With respect to beliefs about challenges, teachers may face in LA development for learners, among 6 items of beliefs, the PETs have positive beliefs that teachers' lack of knowledge about LA and the stipulated EFL syllabus are the main constraints to developing LA. Meanwhile, they are unsure about the other challenges, such as learners' English proficiency, teachers' lack of technology application, school examinations of English, and the government's educational policy on EFL teaching and learning. This finding of the study is not similar to that of Saraswati's study [10], revealing that the teachers have an agreement on the six items about challenges to fostering LA. This finding of the current study implies that the PETS have not been involved in teaching so they might not witness or experience those challenges occurring in the EFL classes; and it might be because that autonomous learning has not very much been paid attention to during the TEFL courses.

Regarding beliefs about strategies used to foster LA among EFL learners, all the seven supposed strategies were believed to be essential for fostering LA. It is implied that learners cannot develop LA independently without the teacher's roles and use of different strategies, and that the more effort is made the more learner autonomy may be developed. In addition, it is evident that such strategies as training teachers to enhance knowledge and skills of LA and training learners to develop skills and strategies to become autonomous in learning were most believed by the PETs. This finding is consistent with that of the study conducted by Balçıkanlı [11] and Saraswati [10].

Finally, concerning beliefs about the desirability and feasibility of learners' involvement in decision-making and ability to develop LA, the finding of the study revealed that all the PETs believed that it is quite desirable and feasible for learners' involvement in a range of language course decisions and for learners' ability to do tasks needed for LA development. More interestingly, the finding of the study is aligned with that of Borg & Al-Busaidi [2], Shahsavari [12] and Saraswati [10], showing that PETs held more positive beliefs about the desirability of student involvement in decision-making and ability than about feasibility. Obviously, in practice, teachers are less optimistic about the feasibility of implementing learner autonomy than they are about its desirability [9]. Based on the findings of the current study and of others in different contexts, it can be said that it is evident that in several EFL contexts, in-service and pre-service EFL teachers have similar beliefs about desirability and feasibility of learners' involvement in making decisions and ability to develop LA.

4. Conclusion

The current study highlights undergraduate pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs about LA development in EFL education. The findings of the study revealed that apart from some PETS' neutral beliefs about five aspects of the nature of LA and five challenges in LA development, the PETs held positive beliefs that EFL teachers must have different roles and responsibilities to develop LA for EFL learners. They believed that to foster LA teachers must employ different strategies (e.g., training learners to develop their skills and strategies to become autonomous learners). Particularly, the findings of the study also showed that PETs held a belief that it is quite

desirable and feasible for EFL learners' involvement in decision-making and ability to develop LA. Nonetheless, the PETs in the context were still unsure about several challenges in LA development. The findings of the study may imply that if PETS are not involved in a self-reflection of their own beliefs about LA development in EFL education, including beliefs about the nature of LA, teachers' responsibilities, challenges, and strategies in LA development, any effort to promote autonomous learning in their future EFL classrooms may be a failure.

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations are offered to EFL teacher educators and undergraduate pre-service EFL teachers. Firstly, it is recommended that PETs need to improve their knowledge and skills of using strategies that help them develop LA. They should take the initiative to involve in learning course decisions and demonstrate ability to do different tasks and apply strategies in their learning. By doing so, they are able to understand the nature of LA and gather experience for teaching their learners in the future. Secondly, the extent to which learner autonomy is promoted in language learning classrooms will be influenced by teachers' beliefs about what autonomy actually is, its desirability and feasibility [2], and teacher education is more likely to have an influence on teachers' practices when it is based on an understanding of the beliefs that teachers hold [13]. It is, therefore, essential to design professional development activities aimed at promoting learner autonomy at teacher training courses. Both teacher educators and PETs must see learner autonomy as a desirable educational goal and a capacity that enhances the process of EFL learning. What is more, teacher educators of TEFL courses should foster LA in their classes. They need to have good understanding of LA, and they should have a belief that their students are able to develop LA themselves. They use their beliefs and experiences to support their teaching practices and thus to foster LA for their undergraduate pre-service teachers. Finally, limitations cannot be avoided in doing research. This study was conducted at only one university in Vietnam with the participation of 84 PETs, so it can be said that the scale of the study is so modest; more extensive research is needed in the future. More samples drawn from other universities should be made available so that the findings can be generalized to more similar EFL contexts.

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