

## **Relationship between autonomous learning and students' attitude towards learning English in 1st and 2nd year from public and subsidized high schools in the Araucanía region**

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### **Abstract**

This research analyzes the relationship between the students' autonomous learning and students' attitude towards learning English, from 1st and 2nd year in high schools from Temuco, Pitrufquén and San Ramon in The Araucania Region. This is a mixed study, therefore for the quantitative part, two instruments were used, one to measure the perceptions or attributes of students, due to its focus on the relationship between the autonomous work and attitudes towards English learning variables, and the other one to measure the presence or absence of autonomous work in the English class. The qualitative part was carried out interviewing six teachers, who teach secondary school students and have more than two years of experience. For the analysis of the data collected, two software were used: the SPSS program for quantitative data and the Atlas.ti program, for the analysis of qualitative data. The quantitative results indicate that there is a correlation between the variables of the students' attitude towards the English language and autonomous work. On the other hand, the qualitative results show that the teachers interviewed agree that the more positive the student's attitude towards the English class, the more autonomous work they will do based on their own interests.

## Introduction

In recent years, free access to information has allowed a greater development of autonomy in the learning process of each student, especially in the English language. This autonomy is defined by Hubbard (2004) as the student's ability to acquire the language deliberately and systematically outside the classroom, either with or without the guidance of the teacher, tutor, or classmate. Therefore, students with this ability understand learning as a personal responsibility that they must perfect throughout their lives (Martínez, 2021). Furthermore, this allows them to have greater control over their learning, moving at their own pace and on their own direction, forward or backward according to their needs, deepening or skipping aspects in relation to their interests (Chérrez, 2014). Being this an internal ability, which also has a connection to attitudes that are present when learning a language.

Students' attitude towards learning a foreign language plays a key role in language acquisition. According to Zainol et al. (2012) attitude is one of the key affective issues for success when you are learning a foreign language; playing a crucial role in the learning process since it is a predisposition towards an object which can be either positive or negative. According to Lukman (2019) if the attitude towards the language is positive, the learner shows a positive behavior regarding the target language, while if it is negative, they show little interest and commitment towards the study of that language. Due to the relevance of these factors in learning the English language, it is really important to analyze their relationship.

In La Araucanía Region, literature on autonomous work and its relationship with students' attitude towards English language learning is limited. First, only one study has been conducted regarding autonomous work, and it is not specifically focused on the English language. It is called “Desarrollo de la competencia de aprendizaje autónomo en estudiantes de Pedagogía en un modelo educativo basado en competencias” by (Reyes, 2017). On the other hand, in terms of students' attitude towards learning the language the closest research in La Araucanía Region is a study carried out in the south of Chile, called “University Students' Attitudes Towards EFL: A Case From the South of Chile” by Gómez and Sandoval (2020). For this reason, it is essential to study this issue in the region and it is also necessary to go deeper into how both variables are related.

The purpose of this research was to analyze the relationship between autonomous work and the students' attitude towards learning English language from 1st and 2nd high students in municipal and subsidized schools in La Araucanía region. Specifically, it sought to determine the perception of autonomous work of each student and how this is related to their attitude towards learning the language.

In addition, it was compared whether there are differences in these variables between men and women, also between the type of school the students attend. Then it was analyzed whether there is any correlation between the variables studied in the improvement of language learning from the perspective of the teachers. To complete this analysis a qualitative approach was applied through interviews with teachers of English Language subjects in the region. The use of mixed methods allowed a greater understanding of this phenomenon, as the results became known.

Knowing the results of this research allowed us to give real importance to autonomous work in order to promote better attitudes of students towards learning the English language. According to Martínez (2009), promoting student-centered learning involves a change in the role of the teacher now as a guide or tutor instead of being the source of knowledge. This means that language learning will become a student's personal behavior as an active and autonomous attitude Ruiz (1997), and therefore, human and material resources must be allocated in pursuit of language learning. In this way, the development of language learning would be highly enhanced due to the greater commitment that the student would have towards the acquisition of the English language.

## **Methodology**

### ***Participants***

In the quantitative section, we worked with 204 1st and 2nd year high school students from three schools, located in Temuco, Pitrufquen and San Ramon, in the La Araucanía Region, Chile. These students were chosen due to the characteristics we needed for the investigation, students between 14-16 years old, because at this age they are expected to be more open to the English language. A non-probabilistic convenience sampling was used, facilitated by direct access to the participants.

From the total, 87 (42,6%) were women and 117 (57,4%) were men. Furthermore, 109 (53,4) studied in Temuco, 54 (26,5%) in Pitrufquen and 41 (20,1%) in San Ramon. It is important to say that in this research, most of the students study in subsidized schools.

These students were chosen because of the existing relation due to our Intermediate practicum II. We used a non-probability sampling for convenience, which facilitated direct access to the students.

Regarding the qualitative aspect, the study was carried out with six English teachers from La Araucania region, who had at least two years of teaching experience in the educational system and who have worked with students from first year.

### ***Instruments***

As this is a mixed methods research, different instruments were used. A general sociodemographic questionnaire was used to collect data associated with each participant's profile (sex, school level, type of school). Moreover, other two quantitative questionnaires were used to measure the autonomous work and the attitude of the students towards English learning, questionnaire "Autonomous English learning questionnaire" (Appendix A), which was created in 2021 by Li and Park (2021). The instrument seeks to measure autonomous work with 15 Likert-type items (that vary from totally disagree 1 to totally agree 5) that are classified into 1 factor: Autonomous English learning. Previous applications showed adequate levels of validity and reliability of this instrument. Cronbach's alpha for the 1 dimension was above  $\alpha = 0,94$ . This result was found in the research of Li and Park (2021), who sought similar objectives.

The instrument contains 48 Likert-type items (that vary from 1, Disagree strongly to 5, Agree strongly). It has 4 factors: 1) Actitud hacia la comprensión de textos escritos en inglés ( $\alpha = 0,892$ ), 2) Actitud hacia la producción de textos escritos de inglés ( $\alpha = 0,895$ ), 3) Actitud hacia la comprensión de textos orales en inglés ( $\alpha = 0,913$ ), 4) Actitud hacia la producción de textos orales en inglés ( $\alpha = 0,896$ ). Previous applications showed adequate levels of validity and reliability of this instrument. Cronbach's alpha for the 4 dimensions was above  $\alpha = 0,847$ . Regarding the validity of the instrument, two experts in educational technology have validated the questions by implementing an inter-rater agreement model proposed by Infante and Zapata (2018).

Qualitatively, a semi-structured interview (Appendix B) was conducted based on the following research questions related to teachers' perceptions about the topic: 1. What is the students' attitude towards learning English in relation to autonomous work? 2. What elements facilitate the students' attitude towards English as a foreign language? 3. What elements complicate the use of autonomous work in regard to English as a foreign language? 4. What is the teachers' perception of their attitudes related to their autonomous work?. This instrument was subjected to a validation process.

### ***Procedure***

The participants were voluntarily recruited at their schools through prior communication with the school's authorities. All of them were invited and informed about the background and aim of the study. The questionnaires were applied at the schools' facilities during English class time. The survey application time was approximately 30 minutes. Subsequently, the data gathered was stored on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and then exported to the SPSS software.



In the case of the interviews, these were carried out in the face-to-face context, via zoom, meet, and via phone call. The development of the interviews was supported by the interview guiding instrument that served as a basic instrument for the formulation of questions, which considered emerging questions related to the information provided by each interviewee. Likewise, teachers' interviews were recorded on digital devices, transcribed into a word processor, and lastly exported to the Atlas.ti software.

### ***Analysis***

A quantitative data analysis was carried out using SPSS version 25 and it included the following procedures: first, the data was explored, verifying its correct entry. Second, the demographic data (place of school, sex, age) was subjected to frequency analysis. Third, each scale and subscale were subjected to Cronbach's alpha reliability test to check internal consistency (Cronbach, 1951). Fourth, for each factor on the scales, variables were created based on the average obtained from the items. Fifth, normality tests, independent-sample t test and Pearson test for correlations were performed with the created variables.

For the qualitative analysis, data was processed using the Atlas.ti software by implementing a content analysis method which was originally proposed by Mayring, who is described in Cáceres (2003). This analysis seeks to identify narrative pieces of texts that support the analysis of qualitative data through the creation of categories of analysis developed according to the research questions.

## **Results**

### ***Quantitative results***

Each of the 5 factors were tested through Cronbach's alpha reliability test. For the "Autonomous English learning questionnaire" we obtained a number of  $\alpha=0,941$ , which indicates a high level of reliability. Regarding the second instrument "Escala para medir la actitud de los estudiantes hacia el aprendizaje del inglés", The Cronbach's alpha numbers obtained for each factor were: Reading ( $\alpha=0,892$ ), 2), Writing ( $\alpha=0,895$ ), 3), Listening ( $\alpha=0,913$ ), and Speaking ( $\alpha=0,896$ ). As every obtained result was above (0,70), it indicates that each factor has a good level of internal consistency.

### *Descriptive Analysis*

#### *The attitude and autonomous work towards the English language.*

Table 1 shows the results obtained to measure the level of Attitudes towards learning English and Autonomous work, using two scales.

**Table 1**

*Level of attitudes towards learning English and Autonomous work*

		Female	Male	Public	Semi-private
Factor 1 (Reading)	Media	3.26	3.27	3.37	3.20
	S. Deviation	.88	.75	.79	.81
Factor 2 (Writing)	Media	3.23	3.10	3.25	3.10
	S. Deviation	.84	.79	.80	.81
Factor 3 (Listening)	Media	3.54	3.29	3.45	3.36
	S. Deviation	.83	.85	.79	.89
Factor 4 (Speaking)	Media	3.41	3.25	3.38	3.27
	S. Deviation	.80	.81	.80	.81
Factor 1.2 (Autonomous Work)	Media	3.10	3.08	3.20	3.01
	S. Deviation	.92	.87	.88	.90

In this table, it is shown the autonomous work, that indicates the media between women (M=3.10 SD=0.92) and men (M=3.08 SD=0.87), as for the type of school, students from public schools showed (M=3.20 SD=0.88) and subsidized schools got (M=3.01 SD=0.90). This scale has 5 points, in which the results are given either a high or low autonomous work ascendingly, where 1 is the equivalent to the lowest autonomous work and 5 the highest.

The second applied scale was the attitude towards learning English. This scale's results were measured ascendingly in 5 points, in which the lower numbers represented a negative attitude, and the highest numbers a positive attitude towards learning English. The first analyzed factor was Reading, where women got (M=3.26 SD=0.88) and men (M=3.27 SD=0.75). Second factor was Writing, where women (M=3.23 SD=0.84) and men (M=3.10 SD=0.79), regarding the comparison between types of school, the research reveals that public schools showed (M=3.25 SD=0.80) and subsidized (M=3.09 SD=0.81).

The third factor was Listening, in which women got ( $M=3.54$   $SD=0.83$ ) and men ( $M=3.30$   $SD=0.85$ ), regarding type of school, public schools ( $M=3.45$   $SD=0.79$ ) and subsidized ones ( $M=3.36$   $SD=0.89$ ). The fourth and last factor was Speaking, resulting in women ( $M=3.41$   $SD=0.80$ ) and men ( $M=3.25$   $SD=0.81$ ), on the other hand, by type of school, public schools showed ( $M=3.38$   $SD=0.80$ ) and subsidized ones ( $M=3.27$   $SD=0.81$ ).

### ***Group Differences***

In relation to Factor 1.2 (Autonomous work), resulted in women ( $M=3.10$   $SD=0.92$   $n=87$ ) and men ( $M=3.08$   $SD=0.87$   $n=117$ ),  $t(202)=0.16$ ,  $p=.87$ , 95% IC [-0.23, 0.27] which presented non-significant differences. In factor 1 (Reading), women ( $M=3.26$   $SD=0.88$   $n=87$ ) and men ( $M=3.27$   $SD=0.75$   $n=117$ ),  $t(202)= -0.05$ ,  $p=.96$ , 95% IC [-0.23, 0.22] did not present significant differences.

Comparing factor 2 (Writing) and sex, the research indicates there was not a significant difference between women ( $M=3.23$   $SD=0.84$   $n=87$ ) and men ( $M=3.10$   $SD=0.79$   $n=117$ ),  $t(202)=1.14$ ,  $p=.26$ , 95% [-0.09, 0.35]. From the 4 factors, Factor 3 (Listening) in relation to sex showed the biggest difference in significance, women ( $M=3.54$   $SD=0.83$   $n=87$ ) and men ( $M=3.29$   $SD=0.85$   $n=117$ ),  $t(187)=2.05$ ,  $p=.04$ , 95% [0.009, 0.48], the difference resulted on an adverse effect ( $d= -0.30$ ). The last factor 4 (Speaking) compared to sex shows that women have a better attitude towards speaking ( $M=3.41$   $SD=0.80$   $n=87$ ) than men ( $M=3.25$   $DE=0.81$   $n=117$ ),  $t(202)=1.41$ ,  $p=.16$ , 95% [-0.06, 0.39].

### Types of school

The differences between types of school are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*T-test for group difference by type of school*

Factors	Public		Semi-private		df	t	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
Factor 1 Reading	3.37	.79	3.20	.81	202	1.55	.12
Factor 2 Writing	3.25	.80	3.10	.81	202	1.32	.19
Factor 3 Listening	3.45	.79	3.36	.89	202	0.75	.45
Factor 4 Speaking	3.38	.80	3.27	.81	202	0.88	.38
Factor 1.2 Autonomous Work	3.20	.88	3.01	.90	202	1.52	.13

In relation to factor 1.2 (Autonomous work) resulted in, public schools (M=3.20 SD=0.88 n=82) and subsidized schools (M=3.01 SD=0.90 n=122),  $t(202) = 1.52$ ,  $p = .13$ , 95% IC [-0.06, 0.44] there is a slightly difference between both groups.

In terms of type of school and factor 1, public school showed a more positive attitude towards Reading (M=3.37 SD=0.79 n=82) than subsidized schools (M=3.20 SD=0.81 n=122),  $t(202) = 1.55$ ,  $p = .12$ , 95% IC [-0.04, 0.40]. Now, when comparing the factor to the type of school, the results for subsidized schools (M=3.10 SD=0.81 n=122) and public ones (M=3.25 SD=0.80 n=82),  $t(202) = 1.32$ ,  $p = .19$ , 95% [-0.08, 0.38] show that there is a non-significant difference between the groups. According to factor 3 (Listening), public school showed a more significant difference (M=3.45 SD=0.79 n=82), than subsidized school (M=3.36 SD=0.89 n=122),  $t(202) = 0.75$ ,  $p = .45$ , 95% [-0.15, 0.33]. Finally, the last factor 4 (speaking) compared to the type of school resulted in, public schools are more positive towards speaking (M=3.38 SD=0.80 n=82) than subsidized schools (M=3.27 SD=0.81 n=122),  $t(202) = 0.88$ ,  $p = .38$ , 95% [-0.13, 0.32].



### ***Pearson's correlations in the variables of study***

Table 3 shows the Pearson coefficients related to the correlation analysis between the variables used in this study.

**Table 3**  
*Pearson's correlations in the variables of study*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Factor 1 (Reading)	1				
Factor 2 (Writing)	0.84**	-			
Factor 3 (Listening)	0.82**	0.79**	-		
Factor 4 (Speaking)	0.84**	0.77**	0.89**	-	
Factor 1.2 (Autonomous Work)	0.77**	0.76**	0.77**	0.77**	-

Factor 1.2 Autonomous work, and Attitudes towards learning English (Factor 1 (Reading), Factor 2 (Writing), Factor 3 (Listening), Factor 4 (Speaking). Pearson's coefficients of correlations were used because the variables were distributed normally. As Table 4 shows, the strongest correlations are presented between the variable Factor 1.2 Autonomous work and Attitudes towards learning English Factor 4 (Speaking) ( $r(204)=0.77$   $p < .001$ , value that explains 59.2% of the variance, which means there is a good correlation between the variables. Then, the correlation between Factor 1.2 Autonomous work and Factor 3 (Listening) ( $r(204)=0.77$   $p < .001$ , with a variance of 59.2%, meaning a good correlation. After that, between Factor 1.2 and Factor 2 (Writing) the correlation is ( $r(204)=0.76$   $p < .001$ , value that explains 57.7% of the variance, showing a good correlation too. Furthermore, there is a correlation between Factor 1.2 (Autonomous work) and Factor 1 (Reading) ( $r(204)=0.77$   $p < .001$ , with a variance of 59.2%, which indicates a good correlation between the factors.

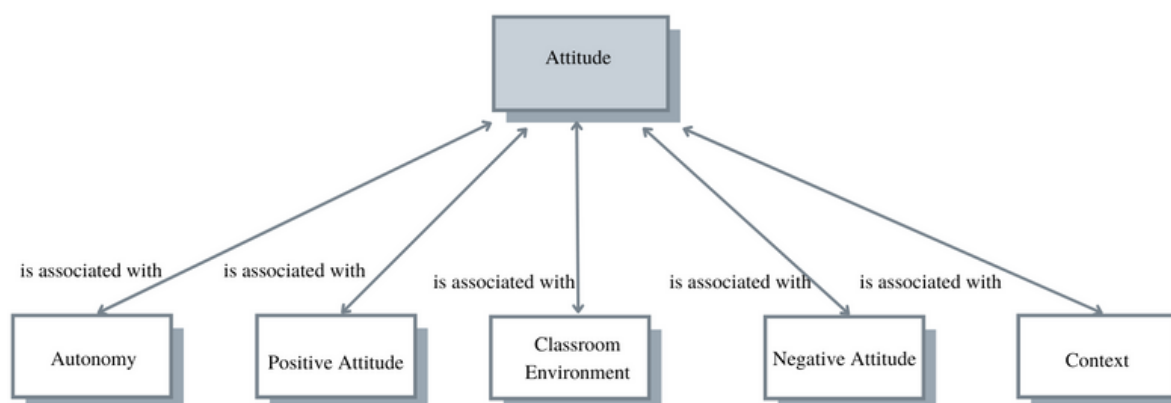
### ***Teachers' perception about students' attitude towards learning English in relation to autonomous work***

The qualitative analysis of this research was carried out using semi-structured interviews, which were applied to English teachers from different establishments in the Araucanía Region, who work specifically in the 1st and 2nd year high school, and who have three or more years of experience teaching the language. I) Attitude, II) Teachers' perception, III) Obstacles and IV) Facilitators.

In the following section, the results will be examined through the answers of the interviews, which will deliver a specific analysis on the specific research questions for each one, with its corresponding category.

**Specific question 1 results:** *What is the students' attitude towards learning English in relation to autonomous work?*

**Figure 1**



The attitude towards English is a highly important factor, according to what most teachers said, in the interviews. If the attitude is positive, the students' learning process is better. This is highly related to the process of learning a language and it depends on the positive attitude, as mentioned:

*".. By having this attitude, they also have a more curious mind." (Teacher N° 1)*

Based on one of the specific questions of the research "What is the students' attitude towards learning English in relation to autonomous work?", five categories emerged: 1) Positive attitude 2) Negative attitude 3) Autonomy 4) Classroom environment 5) Context. Each of these categories are highly important for the Attitude sub-topic, according to the information we collected from the interviews.

### **Positive attitude**

Teachers showed concern regarding students' attitude because when the attitude is negative their learning process is not as effective as if it were the opposite way. Most teachers said that it could be seen as low interest, disconnection with the subject and no participation. In connection to autonomous learning, teachers mentioned:

*"... That directly affects the cognitive issue because they don't have the development, they don't have the English training that, unlike other establishments that do have, uh, more or less certain English modules, so that's in terms of cognitive" (Teacher 3).*

### ***Negative attitude***

As mentioned above, the students' attitude is very connected to their learning process, so when they have a negative attitude, bad performance and low motivation to learn the English language, that is to say that negative attitude is related to a negative perception towards the language itself:

*"... Talking in class, like not following the flow of the session, disconnection, not doing the activities, having that attitude of denial or like I can't, or I don't know anything, I never liked the subject, I will never like it, things like that are what show that there is a bad reception, a bad reception of the subject." (Teacher 2).*

### ***Autonomy***

One of the variables we are working with is the autonomous work connected to the attitude. For this specific question, teachers were asked to describe what an autonomous learner would be like, mentioning: good attitude, participative and more capable:

*"... When they are willing to learn and have the attitude to face the challenge, they will work without you being 100% aware, but you trust them that they will do it." (Teacher 1).*

This answer shows the huge importance of putting the autonomous work and the attitude together.

### ***Classroom environment***

Another factor that may affect the students' attitude is the environment they study. This is not just about having a good relationship among classmates but with the teacher as well, who takes the role of tutor; this is highly connected with the teachers' influence and how the students behave or act inside the class:

*"According to the intra-classroom factors, I was thinking that, depending on the interpersonal relationships, the unity or disunity that there is in the course, how collaborative they can be, how they can help each other, and order of course, maintaining order, discipline" (Teacher 3).*

This proves that having a good environment and relation between peers help the students to have a better attitude, a more efficient autonomous work, free of mocking and the mistakes would be used for better.

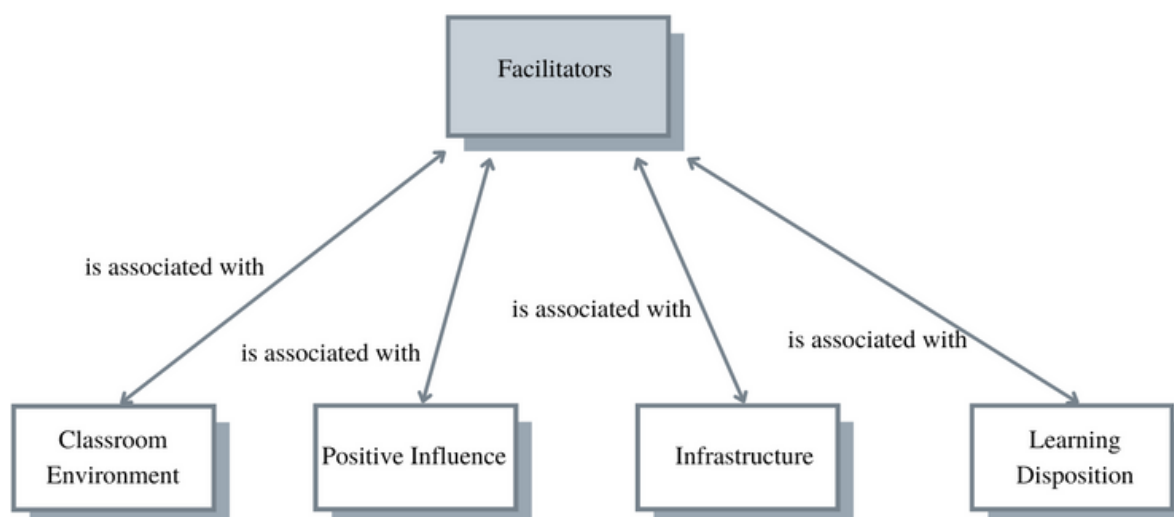
### Context

This is the most repeated factor, since its importance relies on considering each background knowledge, economic state, family and student's context. It implies knowing what they like, paying attention to issues that may explain their behavior like their special needs, and to diversify the classes to make them more inclusive:

*"... Where do they come from economically? Because students whose parents have university studies travel abroad, obviously they find a sense in learning another language other than English, because they are going to go out, or they also plan to go to university, CFT, and they will find a use for the language, therefore the attitude of the students towards the language is positive." (Teacher 1).*

**Specific question 2 results:** *What elements facilitate the students' attitude towards English as a foreign language?*

**Figure 2**



Among the interviews that were carried out, many answers came up about the aspects that facilitate autonomous work in relation to attitude. For the sub-topic "Facilitators" which is connected to the specific questions "What elements facilitate the students' attitude towards English as a foreign language?". 7 factors were found: 1) Infrastructure 2) Positive influence 3) Negative influence 4) Learning disposition. Teacher N° 3 said:

*"...In our case, our English room where they have the dictionaries at hand, you name it, a warm environment, with plenty of light, I find that this is very favorable for them." (Teacher 4).*

Regarding the facilitator, there were plenty of different opinions that led to believe that teachers are preoccupied about the positive effect that these factors have on autonomous work in relation to the attitude.



### **Infrastructure**

Some of the aspects that can facilitate the learning process is the design of the place where classes take place: good lighting, big rooms, access to different resources, etc. everything that can help students understand better. In this specific factor:

*“... Aspects that influence the positive attitude, of course, from the color of the room to the position of the blackboard, the position of the data in case we want to project something, well in my case we do not have the data anchored for example above so we try to find the best position for the students to feel comfortable and try to generate a positive attitude, the order of the room itself, I mean not only in terms of behavior, but also the organization of the tables, all those things, the room's size, I think those are the factors that affect the students' comfort and try to generate a positive attitude” (Teacher 4).*

These answers show the importance of having a well-organized classroom, good and useful resources that will help students have a cheerful outlook in relation to autonomous work.

### **Positive influence**

This aspect can be enhanced by creating a good environment, building trust among teachers and students, trying to change their perspective towards the language by making them see that there are many uses, and mixing the contents with their preferences.

*“... The more positive the student's attitude towards the language, the more he/she likes it, the more interest he/she shows towards the language, the more autonomous work he/she will develop.” (Teacher 4, paragraph 11).*

### **Negative influence**

There are negative factors that can affect the students' attitude towards their autonomous work. Some of these make students have a negative influence towards English. For example, using technology as a resource might have a negative influence when they become dependent on it or use it for other uses rather than for learning, as mentioned:

*“Technological resources have a positive influence because it is easy, I don't know a word, I look it up in the dictionary. I don't understand this, and the teacher doesn't look it up, I look it up myself, so the attitude is positive, for me it is also good for the autonomy of the student, but you must be careful because sometimes it goes from a positive attitude to an attitude dependent on technology.” (Teacher 1).*

This factor is also related to the influence they have gained through experiences in time, like bad memories from other teachers or maybe some kind of trauma related to the language.

### ***Learning disposition***

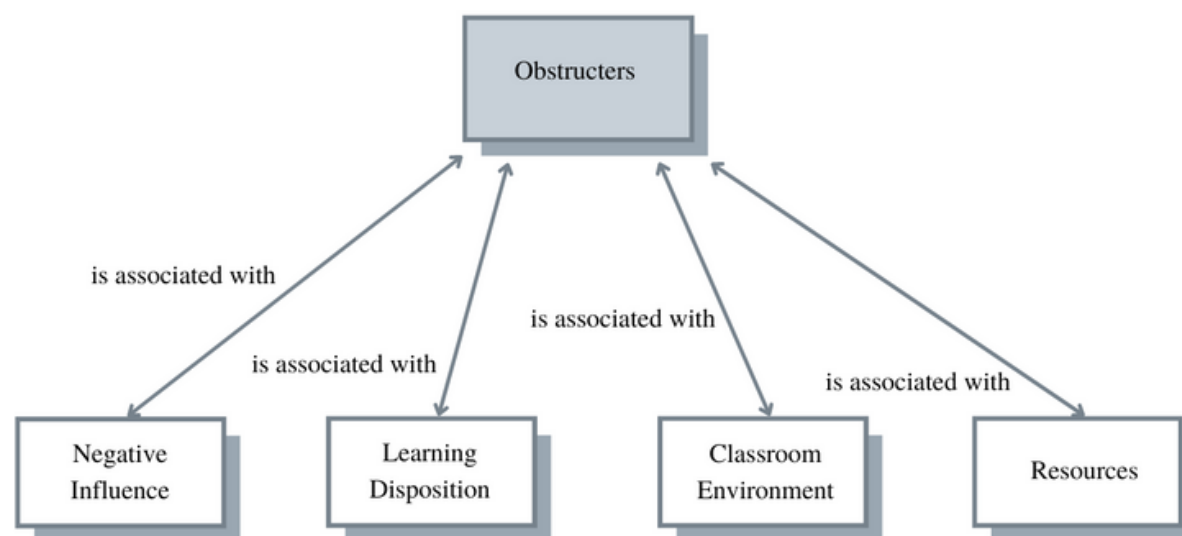
Students have different abilities that may be affected by their attitude towards learning a foreign language. Whether the attitude is positive or negative, it strongly influences the learning disposition, which can be defined as the willingness, as said:

*“... They ask a lot of questions, they always want to go beyond what you teach in the classroom, and specifically they want to know more than what the curriculum asks you, the plans and programs, they are always asking, they are autonomous, if you make a suggestion they take it, I mean suggestions like "you can use this application to further improve this aspect", they actively participate in class, they help other classmates to understand what you are doing.” (Teacher 1).*

So, if a student has a positive attitude towards the language, they will have a better disposition when learning it.

**Specific question 3 results:** *What elements complicate and facilitate the use of autonomous work regarding English as a foreign language?*

**Figure 3**



The use of autonomous work on the part of students learning English can be influenced by different factors. Based on one of the specific questions of the research “What elements complicate the use of autonomous work in regard to English as a foreign language?” four categories emerged 1) Resources 2) Classroom environment 3) Learning disposition 4) Negative influence.

### **Resources**

Another essential component is the availability of resources which can hinder the autonomous work of English learners. According to the teachers interviewed, it is very important to know how to use them and harness these resources to create a more significant learning process, as mentioned:

*“The lack of resources, for example, there are students who do not have English books, because they do not have them, the lack of access to the internet, suddenly the libraries do not have dictionaries, for example, if there is no internet, then I give the resources as physical ones.” (Teacher 1).*

### **Classroom environment**

According to our interviewees, the classroom environment is also a factor that can affect the student's autonomous work. It may affect in two ways, positively when the class is easy to take in, when the relationship between peers is good and respectful; but negatively if the students do not get along, if the teacher doesn't show interest, as said:

*“... Depending on the interpersonal relationships, on the unity or disunity in the course, how collaborative they can be, how they can help each other, and order of course, maintaining order, discipline.” (Teacher 3).*

### **Learning disposition**

We recognized that the learning disposition of the students is related to their attitude towards learning and autonomous work, this is supported by the interviewees' comments that students with a negative attitude towards learning are less disposed to learn independently:

*“... Depending on interpersonal relationships, unity or disunity in the course, how they can collaborate, how they can help each other, and order, of course, maintaining order, discipline.” (Teacher 4).*

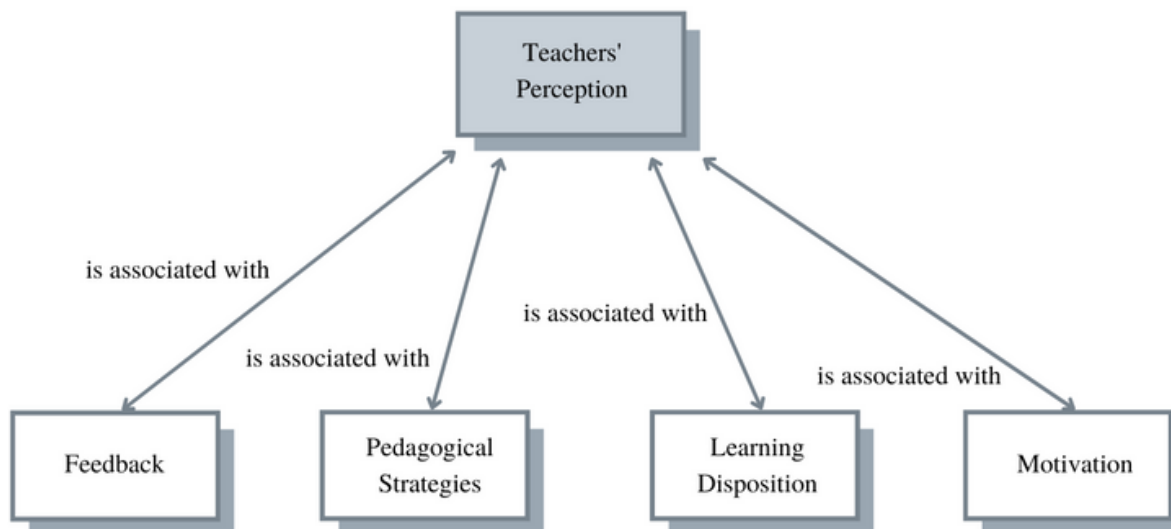
### **Negative attitude**

It is noticeable that if students had a negative attitude towards learning English, it could directly affect autonomous learning. This attitude is based on bad experiences, low interest on the language and its usage, as mentioned:

*“With the issue of technology, a student who has a negative attitude towards learning is also on the cell phone all the time, and those are the most common characteristics, I believe, of a student with a negative attitude.” (Teacher 4).*

**Specific question 4 results:** *What is the teachers' perception of the attitudes related to the students' autonomous work?*

**Figure 4**



Based on the specific research question; What is the teachers' perception of the attitudes related to the students' autonomous work? The following categories were identified: 1) Motivation 2) Pedagogical strategies 3) Feedback 4) Learning disposition.

### ***Motivation***

Motivation can be affected by the way classes are held, how the teacher interacts with students or what their parents have told them about learning a new language, as mentioned:

*“One of the strategies that I basically use is to give them certain points, certain things so that they are motivated and look for the important focus of autonomous work. I believe that this is the incentive that is commonly used.” (Teacher 4).*

### ***Pedagogical strategies***

The pedagogical strategies create a positive attitude towards English and their autonomous work. These strategies can be reflected on the different parts of the class (beginning, development of the class and closing).

*“The “warming up activities” improve the attitude of the majority, exemplify with things that catch the attention of the students.” (Teacher 6).*



### **Feedback**

Feedback is another important factor to create a positive attitude towards learning English and the autonomous work in the students since it gives students a sense of importance in terms of their performance, as said:

*“Try to congratulate them when they make progress, to promote the subject with them and to rescue what can be done more inside the classroom and take it to the day to day.” (Teacher 5).*

### **Learning disposition**

The learning disposition from students towards their attitude to learning English and maintaining a positive attitude towards autonomous learning is fundamental, as mentioned:

*“When they are not autonomous, for example, it happens to me that they wait for you to give them the answer, so their cognitive level is lower and this produces a lower level in the sense that they do not want to think more, they stay with the basics, with reporting, with recognizing, but they do not want to go further. So, the challenges that are presented to them in class, in general, they tend not to do because they give up before trying.” (Teacher 5).*

### **Discussion**

This research analyzed the relationship between autonomous work and the students' attitude towards learning English language from 1st and 2nd year high school students in public, and subsidized schools in La Araucanía region, including variables like positive and negative attitudes related to the four skills of the English language: Speaking, Writing, Reading, and Listening; the perception regarding autonomous work in the English learning attitude, which is understood as absent or present in students. Moreover, it compared whether there are differences in these variables between men and women, the type of school the students attend, and the correlation between the variables studied in the improvement of language learning from the perspective of the teachers. In the implications of this research we found that the autonomous work of the students not only demonstrates an interest in the English subject and therefore a better attitude towards the language, but also a development of responsibility and critical thinking, as stated by Benson (2013) that in developing autonomy, the students not only become better language learners but they also develop into more responsible and critical members of the communities in which they live. This means that students can expand their intrapersonal skills by learning autonomously, since they better develop their responsibility and critical thinking. Self-directed learners demonstrate a greater awareness of their responsibility in making learning meaningful and monitoring themselves (Shahrouri, 2016).

The literature review identified a group of variables that include the proposals used in this study. The attitudes towards English Learning can be observed in Gómez and Perez (2015), in relation to the results, there is not a significant difference between the studies, showing that students possess a favorable attitude towards English in general. Regarding perception of autonomous work, the literature in La Araucania region is quite limited in relation to this phenomenon, the closest study in this research field was a study by (Reyes, 2017), which is not focused on the English language, based only on autonomous work, its investigated sample corresponds to pedagogy students, in the results, similarities are presented since both investigations did not have statistically significant differences in the construct itself. In the same way, the differences between sex and the attitude students' have according to their autonomous work and students' attitude towards learning English is found in Gómez and Sandoval (2020), this study is based on university students and has equivalent numbers of participants men and women, but in both research, there are statistically no significant difference between female and male students.

Moreover, the differences between the type of school (public/subsidized) and the attitude students' have according to their autonomous for learning English, is found in Ibnian (2017), this study that addressed it is from Jordan, called "Attitudes of Public and Private Schools' Students towards Learning EFL", with some differences with the present study, in terms of field research, were the participants were from public and private schools. In relation to the results, the study from Jordan indicated that the private schools' students have more positive attitudes towards learning EFL than the public schools' students; contrary to our results which showed that public schools have more positive attitudes towards English learning.

To determine the correlation that attitude and autonomous work have towards the English learning process. Panyanak (2017), this research from Thailand studied both variables together. In spite of the differences in terms of sample and research field, both studies have the same results were that the majority of the respondents had a positive attitude towards autonomous English language learning and the correlation between the attitudes' factors and autonomous work showed good correlations, meaning that there is positive attitude towards the language.

In relation to the elements that complicate and facilitate the use of autonomous work in regard to English as a foreign language. A study by Azatova (2021) states that there is value in taking time out of the day to support students' setting of goals, monitoring, and reflection on these goals to stimulate self-regulation and autonomy as language learners. Likewise, both studies show that the students were consistently able to set goals using elements of the self-assessment tool they were taught and the strategies

they learned, monitor their progress, and then reflect on their growth as English language learners. There are differences in terms of field research, that the students who participated in this study belonged to 4th year high school students, and the present research was carried out with 1st year high school students.

Besides, teacher's perception of the attitudes related to the student's autonomous work, we found that there is no evidence of research about this from Chile nor other countries. The majority of the studies are based on the perception of the student themselves, but not on the perception of the teacher towards the attitude of students.

The implications of this research are the autonomous work of the students not only demonstrates an interest in the English subject and therefore a better attitude towards the language, but also a development of responsibility and critical thinking, as stated by Benson (2013) that in developing autonomy, the students not only become better language learners but they also develop into more responsible and critical members of the communities in which they live. This means that students can expand their intrapersonal skills by learning autonomously, since they better develop their responsibility and critical thinking. Self-directed learners demonstrate a greater awareness of their responsibility in making learning meaningful and monitoring themselves (Shahrouri, 2016).

Due to the previous search for information about autonomous learning in students and how this is related to their own attitude towards the English language, and the lack of material and research on these topics, we find it interesting to delve into the investigations of these topics, due to the fact that students are increasingly doing more autonomous learning at all times. The attitude of the students towards English is another topic that is very interesting to investigate, since it presents the way in which students' function in the classroom, as well as the level of motivation that they will have in front of the class, and in this way, they would develop more or less autonomous work.

Finally, different limitations within the course of this research arose. One of the main limitations was the lack of research and instruments related to the autonomous work of the students and attitude towards learning English in our national context. For that reason, it was difficult for us to have a previous perception about autonomous work' instrument in students and teachers, so our theoretical basis was based on foreign research. Another limitation was the difficult access to the establishments in terms of taking the questionnaires, which took us more time to collect the data necessary for the research. On the other hand, in relation to the quantitative sample, a limitation of the study was the inequality of participation among students from subsidized school (59.8%) and public school (40.8%).

## Conclusion

It may be stated that despite the fact that the results did not show a significant difference between the respondents in relation to the attitude and autonomous work, it is possible to partially corroborate the hypothesis, concerning the existence of a difference between the students' type of school in the use of autonomous work and their attitude towards learning English. This means that students from public school showed a more positive attitude towards the Listening skill. In relation to autonomous work, public schools turned out to be statistically more positive in the use of autonomous work than subsidized schools.

On the other hand, there is not a big difference in the quantitative approach, which was confirmed by the teachers in the qualitative approach in terms of sex in relation to the variables presented. This could be explained due to the inequality of participants, or because nowadays society has been modifying the preconceptions that were held in relation to sex differences. Teachers believe that there is no difference in terms of sex or in terms of the type of school, but the attitude of the students and the autonomous work depend on how the teaching process is carried out.

Furthermore, the strongest correlations are presented between the autonomous work and speaking skill variables. Thus, it could be concluded that the speaking factor could be influenced in a better way by a positive attitude when developing autonomous work in learning the language, because the students would be more predisposed to do this kind of work.

To summarize, in the teaching-learning process there are lots of factors that affect the process of language acquisition, starting from home to school, but as teachers we take into consideration that our challenge is to work in a better way to instill the development of autonomous work and stimulate positive attitudes towards English learning.



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