

Luz Edith Herrera Díaz

Self-access language learning

Students' perceptions of and experiences
within this new mode of learning



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SECTION I

“THE WHERE”

INTRODUCTION

The topic of learner autonomy has been the foundation for the promotion and implementation of self-instruction and/or self-direction as modes of learning foreign languages, and Self-access Centres (SAC) as a resource for achieving this kind of learning around the world. Mexico, as part of this globalized world, has invested a great amount of time and money establishing several self-access centres all over the country. Most of these centres are at State-public universities; the University of Veracruz (UV) being one of them.

The University of Veracruz through its Language Centres opened four Self-access Centres (CADI = Centro de Autoacceso de Idiomas) in 1999 and at present, has nine CADIs working throughout the state of Veracruz. These CADIs are used by students who are studying English 1 and 2, which are compulsory subjects in all Bachelor degree programs. They are also used by people studying a foreign language at the Language Centres, who may or may not be students at the university. I will refer to the latter as “external students”. I should mention that the former students are a priority at the CADI since English 1 and 2, as mentioned before, are compulsory subjects in their BA programs.

While working as a counsellor at the self-access centre at the University of Veracruz (in Mexico), my constant contact with students who were trying to learn English by means of a self-instruction mode led me to reflect on several issues. First, I reflected on my own lack of ability and preparation for learning a foreign language, not only without a teacher but without a group of classmates, and on my own role as a counsellor of people studying on this mode. On the other

hand, I considered the students' desire, preparation and ability to learn English through this self-instruction mode. At first, these were the concerns on which I based the first research questions that guided my initial steps in this study: *How do students studying English as a foreign language perceive the self-instruction mode? What is the difference in their perceptions between students who chose to study on this mode and those ones who had to do it? What is the difference in their perceptions between students in basic levels and those in more advanced ones? and What is the students' attitude towards this innovation –the self-instruction mode of learning and the use of the Self-access Centre?*

However, once I had started doing the field work, I realized that what the university (UV) was offering the students regarding the English courses and how this was being fulfilled were other issues which intrigued me and became the foundation of a new research question. As well, I noticed that I was looking at the students' own experiences within the new type of courses, not at their attitudes and that there were only two students of intermediate levels who were enrolled in the 'autonomous' courses. Consequently, a new question arose and the original research questions evolved; one of them became useless and another one changed its focus. The following became the research questions that I endeavour to answer through the current study:

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. Are the new 'autonomous courses' (based on principles of self-direction and SALL) functioning according to what the university intends to?
2. How do students studying English as a foreign language perceive the self-instruction mode?
3. What is the difference in their perceptions between students who chose to study on this mode and those ones who had to do it?
4. What are the students' experiences within this innovation –the self-instruction mode of learning and the use of the Self-access Centre?

Considering that I am not aiming to 'measure' anything but to study the events in their natural setting, to attempt to understand students' perceptions and to make sense of or to construe their experiences in the specific context where they evolve, I decided to adopt a qualitative mode of research in order to answer these research questions. In this research, I used some data collection methods which are commonly used in ethnographic research, namely: moderate participant observation

and semi structured interviews (discussed further in Sections 4.2.1, page 110 and 4.2.2, page 112)

The data collection phase took place at CADI-VER where, as mentioned before, I work as a counsellor. I interviewed university students who were taking English 1 and 2 as well as a few who had already finished, and a few external students who were studying EFL at the Language Centre. I also interviewed some of the counsellors working there and the Coordinator of the Language Centre, who was a counsellor at the CADI when it first opened. (Section 4.3.2, page 117)

Regarding the observations, I was able to observe the different areas (Video, Audio, Computers, etc) in which CADIs were divided while students were working there. Moreover, I observed several counselling sessions coordinated by counsellors in whose groups the participants (interviewees) were enrolled. (See 4.3.2, page 117)

Before I explain how this thesis is organized, I would like to pause and mention some points regarding the style in which it is written. First of all, this work is a depiction of my passing through all the process of incorporating this new mode of learning/teaching English at the institution where I carry out my professional activity, the Self-access Centre, and in my academic and even in my personal life. Secondly, I was involved in every stage of the work presented here. Therefore, my voice and subjectivity take a significant role in it, and because in some parts of it I describe my own story, I decided to use the first person pronoun throughout this work. Finally, the reader will find that in several sections my own activity, knowledge and experiences are interwoven with the literature and theoretical support of this study (Section II), resulting in a quasi-narrative-style of written text (Holliday 2002: 16, citing Denzin), which facilitated me to put in order and make sense of my ideas, the information and the knowledge that I was acquiring.

The issues formerly mentioned are presented and described in detail in the Sections and Chapters that comprise this work. In order to give a structure to the present text and facilitate not only its reading but my own writing, I divided it into five Sections, which intend to answer the questions formulated for each of them and which are distributed as follows.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

Section I: “The Where” → Where was the study carried out?

- Introduction
- Chapter 1: Context of the study

Section II: “The Which” → Which concepts, notions and ideas presented in existing literature about the topics under consideration (autonomy, self-directed learning, SALL, SAC) were relevant to the study?

- Chapter 2: Basic notions
- Chapter 3: Different Perspectives

Section III: “The How” → How was the fieldwork carried out?
How was the data analyzed?

- Chapter 4: Methodology: Theory and practice in the data collection
- Chapter 5: Methodology: Theory and practice in the data analysis

Section IV: “The What” → What was found out from the data gathered in the study?

- Chapter 6: Students’ perceptions of the no-class mode
- Chapter 7: Students’ experiences within the no-class mode

Section V: “The Why” → Why were the findings significant, relevant and novel to current knowledge about the topic of self-access learning as an innovation in tertiary education?

- Chapter 8: Implications: a holistic perspective
- Conclusions

In sum, this thesis consists of:

- I. “The Where” – Context of the Study
- II. “The Which” – Background of the study
- III. “The How” – Methodology: Theory and Practice
- IV. “The What” – Themes, Findings, Interpretation and Discussion
- V. “The Why” – Findings, Research Questions, Implications, Suggestions and Conclusions

As illustrated above and in the chart below, these five Sections comprise two parts each; an introduction, the conclusions and eight chapters which are distributed among these five Sections and are subdivided into more specific topics (as shown in the index).

I. “The Where” Section comprises this Introduction and Chapter 1, which relates to the context where this study was carried out, that is to say, the circumstances in which and the place where I collected the data. Going from the general to the more specific, I start by giving a succinct account of the State of Veracruz in the Mexican Republic. I continue by portraying the City of Veracruz because my workplace is located there. Then, I give some general information about the history and structure of the University of Veracruz, its Language Centres and Self-access Centres. Finally, I explain the situation of the Language Centre in Veracruz City and its respective Self-Access Centre (CADI-VER). Along with the description of these places, I try to explain why their features are relevant and how they are connected to the students at the CADI-VER.

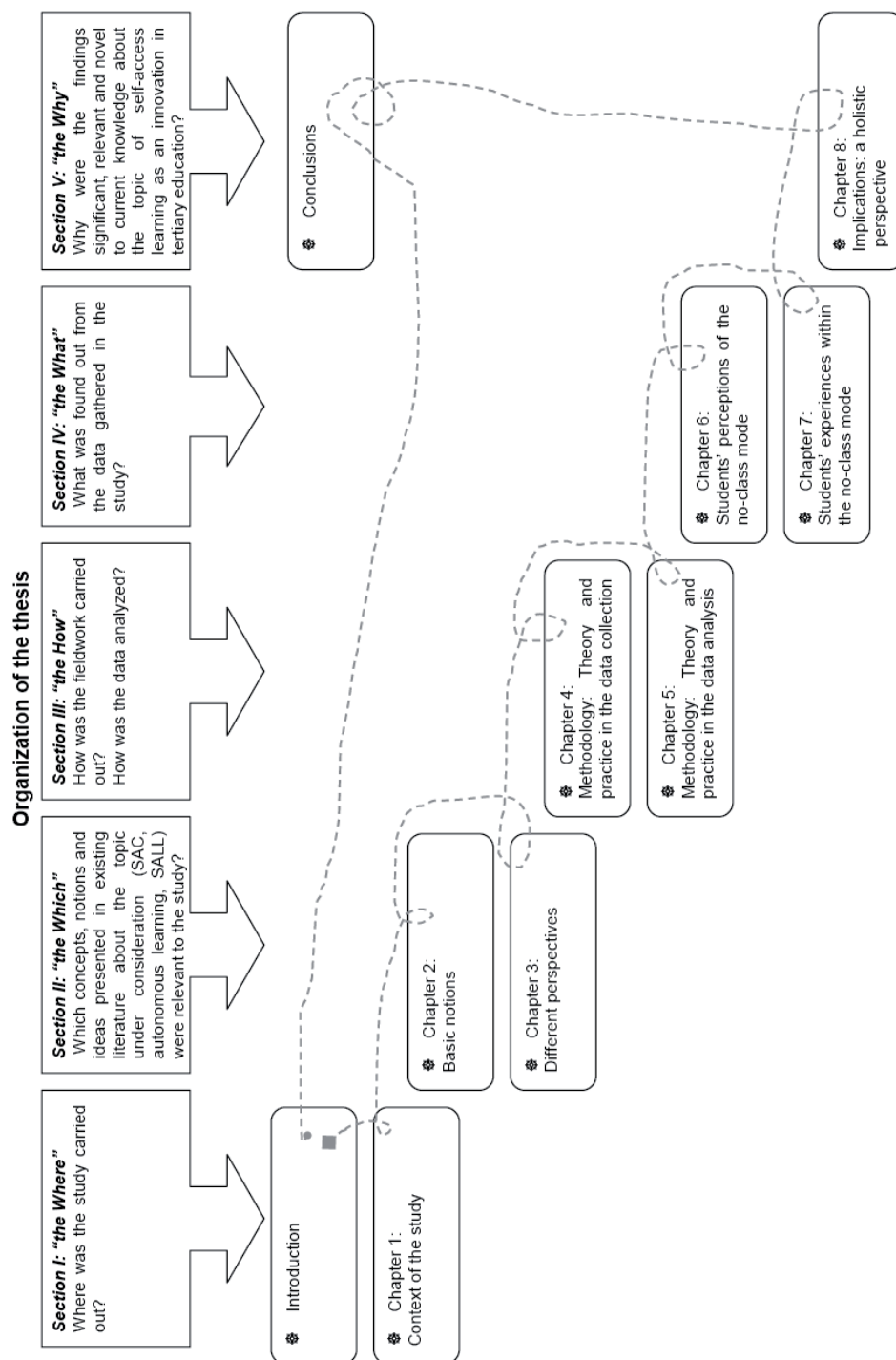
II. “The Which” Section is named as such because considering the many concepts and definitions related to learner autonomy, self-instruction, self-directed learning and self-access, I elaborate on the ones which I am dealing with in order to frame the theoretical background of my study. The name of the section also relates to the fact that I explain which of these concepts are central, and how they were intended to be put into practice (Chapter 2) and which have actually been put into practice in the CADI where I work and where my data was collected (Chapter 3). In other words, in Chapter 2 -‘Basic Notions’-, terms such as autonomy, self-instruction, self-access language learning, self-access materials and self-access centres are discussed. In Chapter 3 -‘Different Perspectives’- I deal with newer views on self-directed learning and I outline the actual implementation of the Self-access Project in Mexico as an innovation, particularly at the University of Veracruz and more specifically at the CADI-VER. All these issues are elucidated along with the story of my learning them and using them.

III. “The How” Section, as the word itself expresses, deals with the forms, ways, methodology and approaches I employed to collect and to analyse the data. In Chapter 4 -Methodology: Theory and Practice in the Data Collection- I describe the approach and theory behind the research methods relevant to my study. Then, I give an account of how I proceeded to gather information from the participants and by what means. That is to say, here I narrate the actual process of carrying out my data collection by interviewing and observing the participants in the concrete context where this study took place. In Chapter 5 - Methodology:

Theory and Practice in the Data Analysis – I explain not only the procedures but how I adapted and used them throughout the different stages of the processing of the data, while collecting it and when I had all the data already collected. As well, I here relate the actual process of the analysis of the data and the themes that were uncovered through this process.

iv. “The What” Section illustrates what I found out from the data. Both chapters, Chapter 6: Students’ perceptions of the no-class mode, and Chapter 7: Students’ experience within the no-class mode – correspond to the two main themes that emerged from the data analysis and to what I consider the two main research questions that guided this study (2 and 4). Respectively, these two chapters encompass several sub-themes that have to do with my interpretation of what the participants (students and counsellors) told me about the innovation they were part of. As will be noticed, in both chapters each sub-theme is supported by the data (excerpts from the data I gathered), which in fact gave rise to these themes and sub-themes, by my comments about them and, when pertinent, by a discussion which refers to relevant literature. What was uncovered is summarized in the Findings that appear at the end of some of the sub-sections.

v. “The Why” Section aims to discuss the outcomes of my study from a more holistic perspective, that is, taking into account the various issues I learnt while doing every part that constitutes this research. Thus, in this Section, consisting of Chapter 8 and the Conclusions, I aim to explain why this study is relevant in the current English Language Teaching (ELT) educational milieu, first by contrasting my findings with what the new system (‘autonomous’ courses/learning) claims to be; then by answering the research questions that led the current study, connecting what I consider to be the most significant outcomes of this study to the impact that these themes may have on a local context and on a wider context. I finally offer some suggestions regarding some areas of research related to the topic in question (the implementation of SAC/SALL and the new mode of learning/teaching foreign languages derived from these) that could broaden its understanding, first in the immediate local context and then in the general ELT world.



1

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

As I consider it important for the reader to get a clear picture of where this research took place and under what conditions, the present chapter consists of a brief overview of the State of Veracruz (in Mexico), of the City of Veracruz; of the University of Veracruz (UV), of which the Language Centres and Self-Access Centres (SAC) form part, of the Language Centre-Veracruz (in Veracruz City), and particularly of the SAC-Veracruz (CADI-VER), where this study was carried out.

Because this research is related to foreign language learning, in this chapter I make reference particularly to educational aspects related to EFL teaching-learning in Mexico but particularly in Veracruz.

1.1 VERACRUZ, MEXICO

The University of Veracruz (henceforth UV), where this research is based, is located in the State of Veracruz. This state forms an extended coastal strip in the south east of the Mexican Republic next to the Gulf of Mexico, with an area of 72,420 Km² - 3.7% of the total area of the Mexican Republic – (see map in Appendix 1). Because the conditions and characteristics of the University, as well as of all its entities, for instance the Language Centre-Veracruz and the Self-access Centre, are defined by their own locations and the characteristics of these places, I want to start by giving a short description of this broader area, the State of Veracruz.

1.1.1 GEOGRAPHY, POPULATION AND ECONOMY

Veracruz has great natural richness, varied topography and climates, mostly warm and humid. The state comprises seven regions according to their physical and cultural characteristics. Several of the students attending the UV and therefore the Language Centres come from any of these regions, and in almost all of them there is a University campus.

Veracruz is an economically and culturally important state. It is the third most populated state of the country, with 7.1 million inhabitants (census 2005), distributed in urban cities (59%) and in small and isolated rural towns (41%) (Veracruz/Datos Relevantes). Veracruz is one of ten states with a large indigenous population (10.9% of the total population) in Mexico (Estado/El Entorno y la Población). Since the population of the State of Veracruz is integrated by a diversity of people from the regions that make it up, the student population of the UV is a mixture of people from these diverse areas; the majority of students are from urban cities, the minority from rural areas and a few students have indigenous backgrounds.

The capital of the state is Xalapa, where most of the state and government institutions are centralized. The main campus of the University of Veracruz is located there. But the most populated and important city is the Port of Veracruz due to its commercial and tourist development. In order of importance the above-mentioned cities are followed by Coatzacoalcos, Cordoba, Orizaba and Poza Rica (Estado/El Entorno y la Población). In each of them there is a Language Centre and its respective Self-access Centre.

Veracruz occupies the sixth place in the national economy. The main productive activities are the petrochemical industry, electricity generation, agriculture, livestock farming, fishing, and the metal industry (Estado/Economía Veracruzana). In these activities the use of foreign languages has not been so necessary, except for reading technical information and among people in managerial positions. It is just in recent years that English started to gain popularity among other sectors of the population involved in other activities (e.g. tourism, commerce).

Tourism in Veracruz is one of the sources for economic and social development, but most of the tourism that gets to Veracruz is national; that means that the income is not as significant as if international tourism visited it. In addition, the need for speaking English or any other foreign language is not as palpable as in some other cities or towns of the Mexican republic. Consequently, not many people in Veracruz are interested in learning a foreign language. However, as I

mentioned before, more and more people are beginning to study a foreign language, particularly English, in order to gain access to better job opportunities and/or scholarships.

1.1.2 EDUCATION & FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The educational system in Veracruz is one of the biggest in the country. As can be seen in Table 1-1, it caters for approximately 2.2 million pupils at preschool, primary, secondary, high school, technical and undergraduate levels in more than 21 thousand schools where 110 thousand teachers give classes (Census 2005).

Table 1-1. Number of schools, pupils and teachers in the State of Veracruz (from Anuario Estadístico Veracruz de Ignacio de la Llave, edición 2005)

Educational Level	Schools	Pupils	Teachers
Preschool	7 022	215 642	13 257
Primary	9 800	1 053 614	45 321
Secondary	2 498	397 016	19 885
High School	1 357	237 000	15 000
Technical	37	9 323	827
Undergraduate (University)	305	112 000	11 181
Postgraduate	95	4 337	1 420

Since the basic education (preschool, primary and secondary levels) is the priority for the government, 8 of every 10 children from 6 to 17 years have access to basic education. Besides the University of Veracruz, there are other smaller and private universities as well as Pedagogic Universities (those that train people to become teachers) and Technological Institutes attended by pupils over 17 who have already completed high school. Most of these educational institutions are located in the most important and largest cities of the state.

In schools all over the Mexican republic, including Veracruz, foreign languages are included in the national curriculum as compulsory subjects in secondary school (3 years) and in high school (2 - 3 years), both in public schools as well as in private ones. But in many private schools a foreign language, usually

English, may be taught from the preschool level on. As mentioned before, English is the most popular foreign language in Mexican public schools, but French is another option in some schools.

In both levels, secondary and high school, English programs are mostly aimed at developing reading skills. The programs are designed by the Education Secretariat (SEP), and at secondary level text books are written to fulfil the official syllabus. All schools must follow that syllabus, although they may choose the textbook they want to use. In high schools, the programs tend to be more flexible, which means that schools are free to decide the content and to choose the book that would fit their program, though the focus is frequently still on reading comprehension. Unfortunately, many teachers do not have a good command of the target language and many students seem to care very little about this subject. They often think that other subjects such as mathematics, science, history and Spanish are much more important and necessary. Therefore, they are more interested in passing English than in learning it (Clemente, 1998).

Nowadays not only do all the secondary and high school national curriculum include a foreign language as a compulsory subject but most universities do too. Even if some of these universities focus on reading comprehension, others promote the practice of the four skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking). Most of the time, the Language Centres of the universities are the ones in charge of designing the programs and exams, deciding the textbooks and materials and providing the courses. At universities, the teachers tend to have a better command of the subject than the ones at secondary and high school levels. Most of them have a bachelor's degree in Languages (English, French, etc), or at least, have taken complete English courses and/or teacher training. However, many students still consider studying English or any other foreign language as a less important subject, as 'padding' and as 'extra'. Unless they have chosen to study the target language either because it is important for them, or because they like it and they want to do it, or because they have already learned it, they may not perform very well during the courses.

1.2 VERACRUZ CITY

Though Veracruz City, the most important city in the State of Veracruz, presents many of the general features described above, I will detail the location, the economic situation and the state of school education in the city where this study was

carried out. This way the reader may become acquainted with the actual context of this study.

1.2.1 GEOGRAPHY, POPULATION AND ECONOMY

One of the most important urban areas in the State is Veracruz-Boca del Rio, formed by two different towns which due to their growth have become a common area that henceforth I will call Veracruz. It was founded in 1519 by the Spaniards who entered the Mexican territory through this port. It is basically a valley with warm-hot humid weather located in the central coast of the state with an area of 284 Km² and 654,216 inhabitants (census in 2005) approximately divided into urban population (93%) and rural population (7%), from this total only the 2% is considered as indigenous population.

I should mention again that the student population at the University and consequently at the Language Centre-Veracruz is as varied as the population of the city. Most students belong to the middle-class and are from urban areas. A smaller proportion belongs to the working-class and there are also some students with indigenous backgrounds from rural areas.

Veracruz has become a modern city and the most important port, whose incomes basically come from industry (metallurgy, iron and steel) and commerce (fishing and farming), followed by services and tourism. On the subject of tourism, Veracruz City is the most important tourist centre of the state, thanks to its outstanding historic antecedents, traditions, beaches, people, music and colonial buildings. Despite this, very few international tourists visit the port, and consequently, local people do not have a great need to use foreign languages, although, as mentioned before, some people in the city are now interested in studying English.

1.2.2 EDUCATION & FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Because it is one of the most important cities of the state, the education coverage is considered to be good. All educational levels are available in Veracruz City, as seen in Table 1-2, where it is clear that the number of schools and teachers are in accordance with the number of students registered in the different levels.

Table 1-2. Number of schools, pupils and teachers in Veracruz City (from Anuario Estadístico Veracruz de Ignacio de la Llave, edición 2005)

Educational Level	Schools	Pupils	Teachers
Preschool	256	24 568	1048
Primary	323	75 384	2 835
Secondary	121	33 360	2 123
High School	94	20 460	1 857
Technical	9	2 543	194
Undergraduate	12	12 500	1 711
Postgraduate	8	658	230

The most important and popular schools are the public ones, though private ones are gaining ground in the education market, as they usually offer extra subjects such as music, English, dance, etc.

As mentioned in section 1.1.2 (page 17), the teaching of a foreign language, English in the case of Veracruz, is compulsory at secondary and high school levels and became compulsory at undergraduate level just a few years ago (1998).

Despite the fact that for obvious reasons English has become a very important language internationally (c.f. Pennycook 1994, Phillipson 1992), some university students in Veracruz do not seem to be aware or convinced of this condition and they still do not care for learning it. As in secondary and high school, they think that other subjects are more important and that English is only to be passed.

As this discussion suggests, the general situation of EFL teaching/learning in the State of Veracruz is not very encouraging but some steps such as doing research, implementing innovative teaching/learning methods and policies are being taken in order to improve it. For instance, this research is aiming to look at the implementation of a new place and mode of learning the target language at the University of Veracruz, respectively named Self-access Centre, and self-access language learning (SALL), which, due to its development at the Language Centre-Ver, I will call 'no-class mode' (for details see section 3.2, page 72).

1.3 THE UNIVERSITY OF VERACRUZ (UV)

As the University of Veracruz is the institution in which the Self-access Centre, where I carried out this research, is located, I will now portray its general features. The University of Veracruz is one of the five most important universities in Mexico. It was founded in 1944 with only two Schools: the Law school and the Arts school. Due to the high demand for higher education (as undergraduate level is called in Mexico) in the state of Veracruz, the University of Veracruz directed its growth towards 17 cities grouped in the five main poles of economic and social development, where five campuses are currently working: Xalapa, Veracruz-Boca del Rio, Córdoba-Orizaba, Poza Rica-Tuxpan and Coatzacoalcos-Minatitlan. As mentioned in 1.1.1 (page 15), these campuses are located in some of the regions in which Veracruz is divided in order to cover, as much as possible, the demands of students who live in distant villages and towns.

Nowadays, the University of Veracruz has a student population of approximately 70 thousand pupils distributed in the five campuses. Some of them come from small towns or villages around the city where their campus is located; and most of them are part of middle-class or working-class families. The staff is composed of lecturers, researchers, music players, sports instructors and technicians and they make up a total of 6,300 people. The administrative staff numbers 4436 people (Universidad / Acerca de la UV).

At the moment of writing, the University offers 60 options for Bachelor degrees and 8 Technical 'careers' whose programs include English as a compulsory subject for two semesters and they are grouped in six different areas (Arts, Biological Sciences, Health Sciences, Economic and Administrative, Humanities and Technical); 61 Postgraduate programs (Specialties, Master degrees, and PhD degrees); 2 Centres of Musical Initiation; 5 Arts workshops; 1 School for Foreign Students; 1 Foreign Languages Department; 6 Language Centres; and 9 Self-access Centres. On the subject of research, the University of Veracruz has: 3 Research Centres; 19 research Institutes; 2 Laboratories; and the Museum of Anthropology (Universidad/Acerca de la UV).

In Veracruz Campus there are 13 faculties, 4 research institutes, 1 Centre of Musical Initiation, 1 Language Centre, 2 Self-access Centres, 1 Arts Workshop and 1 USBI (Unit of Library and Informatics Services). The Language Centre where I have worked as an EFL teacher and as a counsellor in its Self-access Centre (CADI-VER) is located in this campus. Therefore, it is the campus where my fieldwork took place.

During the 90's, the University of Veracruz as well as other Institutions of Higher Education (universities) in Mexico faced new challenges derived from the changing conditions of the social, economic and political environment, international competition and lack of funding. These changing conditions resulting from globalization have pervaded the educational terrain in general and the language learning and teaching sphere in particular, and this in turn, has affected the choices made by institutions as they allocate resources for language education (Block and Cameron 2002: 5). Based on that, the UV put forward a new "Development Plan 1997 – 2005" and started an innovation process which included, among other things, the implementation of a new education model called "Flexible Integral Education Model (MEIF) (Beltrán, 1999). This model includes for all Bachelor's degree syllabus; the use of a credits system; the flexibility (in theory) to choose convenient subjects and timetables; the teaching of two courses (1 semester each) of English as a foreign language (EFL) as a compulsory subject (English 1 and English 2) and the creation of the Self-access Centres. Because the Language Centres with their respective Self-access Centres are in charge of providing English 1 and English 2 courses to all university students, they have become important elements in the university structure and they are described in the next section.

1.3.1 LANGUAGE CENTRES AND SELF-ACCESS CENTRES AT THE UV

As mentioned above, some of the modifications that the University of Veracruz has undergone have to do with the learning-teaching of English, which takes place at the Language Centres and Self-access Centres (at the University). For that reason, this section illustrates the general organization and functioning of these centres, as the broader structure of which the Language Centre and Self-access Centre in Veracruz City, where this research was carried out, are part.

In order to promote the teaching and learning of foreign languages, the University of Veracruz, through the Humanities Area, offers the services of six Language Centres (also called Foreign Languages Teaching Centres) teaching several foreign languages; English being the most popular; and nine Self-access Centres, most of them under the coordination of their respective Language Centre and a School for Foreign Students, teaching basically Spanish, Archaeology and Mexican History/Culture.

The Language Centres (in campuses: Xalapa, Orizaba, Veracruz, Córdoba, Poza Rica and Coatzacoalcos) all offer English and French courses, and some of them offer courses of other foreign languages such as: Italian, German, Portuguese, Chinese and Japanese.

The teachers at the Language Centres used to be people who had a good command of the language they taught, sometimes they had some kind of training as language teachers but they did not always hold a Bachelor's degree. Through the years, teachers and counsellors have entered a professionalization process and most of them have already obtained COTE (Certificate of Overseas Teaching English) diplomas, and/or Bachelor's degrees, Master's degrees, and a few PhD degrees. Many of these teachers later became counsellors in the Self-access Centres.

The Language Centres give service not only to university students but to any adults who want to study a foreign language (external pupils). Nonetheless, the University priority is aimed at the students who are enrolled in its programs (Bachelors, Masters, PhDs). Because of that, the Language Centres give courses which are compulsory (English 1 and 2) or elective (any of the foreign languages mentioned above) to all the students enrolled in Bachelor's programs, either by the 'class' (classroom) mode or by the 'no-class' (autonomous) mode in the Self-access Centres (for details on this topic see section 1.3.1.2, page 27).

Due to the number of students taking English 1 and 2 courses, the Self-access Centres have become an important facility at the University, and self-access learning and self instruction, two of the most acclaimed learning modes, which is one of my concerns in the current study. As I mentioned before, the Self-access Centres are part of the Language Centres even if the former are located at the USBIs and not at the Language Centre premises. The nine Self-access Centres are called CADIS (Centro de Autoacceso De Idiomas) and this acronym is followed by the name of the city where each of them is located (e.g. CADI-VERacruz).

The Self-access Centres were all conceived as a National project, as I explain in section 2.5 (page 49). Not all of them were opened at the same time but most of them (Cordoba, Veracruz, Xalapa, Coatzacoalcos) were opened in September 1999, and Orizaba and Minatitlan started working in May 2000 (Hernández Alarcon, 2003). They were all created sharing the same theoretical foundations and aims, as shown in Table 1-3 below. They all have the same type of physical structure and facilities (furniture, electronic devices, working areas), but they may have different materials, classification of materials, organization and even a different approach to counselling students. The same as Language Centres, Self-access Centres all over the state of Veracruz give service to university students as

well as to external people, who are usually keener on attending the CADI. Nevertheless, the focus of the university is on those who are studying their Bachelor's degrees at the UV.

Table 1-3. University's claims regarding the principles, aims and operation of the SACs and the 'autonomous' (no-class) mode of learning foreign languages

NO-CLASS MODE CLAIMS Claims of the system (according to the UV discourse, taken from Centros de Auto-acceso/Antecedentes)
1) It is an innovative project looking for offering an alternative in foreign languages learning.
2) The project aims to link the learning processes to electronic and technological means.
3) The students make decisions regarding their learning in the University.
4) Learning a foreign language has become a necessary element in the university students' formation.
5) Knowing a foreign language, especially English enables the students to appropriate knowledge through publications, to communicate and to discover other ways to perceive the world.
6) Self-access centres (SACs) are the spaces where foreign languages can be learnt. They count on three basic elements: materials, equipment and academic support (counselling)
7) Within the University, SACs are part of the changes regarding the curriculum and the perspective that they promote is the flexible one.
8) The constructivist pedagogic model that underpins the self-access project is based on the idea that knowledge is the object of a negotiation among the different actors participating in the process of formation.
9) SACs were conceived as an important resource to support the development of strategies that promote the autonomous learning through subjects such as: English 1 and 2.
10) The aim is that students acquire the linguistic competences of the language (English) and at the same time they incorporate strategies that help them develop an attitude of autonomy.
11) This kind of learning focuses on the student's specific needs; gives the student independence regarding the available space, time and infrastructure; and facilitates self-correction through computers.
12) The counsellor does not correspond to the traditional figure of the teacher, so her relationship with the student is mainly through the counselling session and the (clear and precise) pathways that she suggests. Counsellors' duty is to guide the autonomous or semi-autonomous work of the SACs' users, as far as they need help to do their work.
13) The fact that university students are starting to combine two approaches to learning; autonomous and directed will have repercussions on their formation.
14) Self-access learning does not assume a lonely work, without other people's support, or an immediate transition.

The counsellors at the CADIS are, as noted above, mostly people who previously worked as teachers at the Language Centres and were trained to become counsellors. Because of this interconnection between the Language Centres and Self-access Centres, I described them together and I now continue to consider the ones in Veracruz City, since this is the actual setting of this research.

1.3.1.1 LANGUAGE CENTRE-VERACRUZ

The Language Centre – Veracruz is the place that contains and coordinates the CADIS where I did the observations and whose students I interviewed. Hence, in order to give a picture of the context of my study I will briefly talk about its development (Centro de Idiomas Veracruz/Antecedentes, Centro de Idiomas Veracruz/Cursos).

LANGUAGE CENTRE-VERACRUZ' SETTING UP

After the first Language Centre was opened in Xalapa City in 1979; on October 1st 1980 a Language Centre was opened in Veracruz City aiming to support the community and the university students in the learning of foreign languages. Language Centre-Veracruz started offering two types of English courses: one focused on conversation and communication -Conversation English- and the other one focused on reading comprehension -Academic English- (Centro de Idiomas Veracruz/Antecedentes)

In 1989, the Language Centre moved to its own new building at the campus Mocambo (see photos in Appendix 2), where the first CADIS was constructed later on. Since then, the Language Centre-Veracruz has given service to the university community as well as to the community in general (external students) in the same building. At present (2005), it serves around 3,553 students; 1,203 of them are university students (English 1 and 2) and 2,340 are external adult students.

LANGUAGE CENTRE-VERACRUZ' STAFF

Quite similar to what I described in section 1.3.1 (page 22), very few teachers at the Language Centre-Veracruz have not obtained a Bachelor's degree; many of them have an ELT degree, others a Pedagogy one and some others have degrees in

areas not related to language teaching; some teachers have a Master's degree; but all teachers have obtained the COTE Diploma and have experience in language teaching.

COURSES OFFERED AT LANGUAGE CENTRE-VERACRUZ

Nowadays, besides offering Conversation and Academic English, French, Italian and German courses, the Language Centre-Veracruz is in charge of providing English courses (English 1 and English 2) to all university students enrolled in Bachelor's degree programmes. Conversation English, Academic English, French, and English 1 and 2 courses are offered in two learning modes: the class (classroom) and the no-class ('autonomous'). The former refers to those courses which are given in a classroom by a teacher, while the latter refers to those courses in which students do not attend classes but they attend either of the two self-access centres (CADIS) and have counselling sessions. Trying to be congruent with the definition of 'autonomy' and practical, I do not refer to the latter as autonomous students; I refer to them as no-class students, therefore I refer to students who indeed take classes as class students. The mode of learning employed by the 'no-class students' and their perceptions of this are the elements that I am intending to understand in depth.

I must mention that all students participating in this study are all studying in the no-class mode and most of them are taking English 1 or 2; though some of the participants are also external students who are taking Conversation English courses. Their courses are similar to the 'classroom' ones in that the programs, exams, the length of the course (80 hrs/semester) and materials are the same. English 1 and 2 are one semester each and both courses follow programs very similar to the programs of the two basic levels of the Conversation English courses that are given to external students. The language courses consist of 5 basic levels of one semester each, excluding the Academic English course that consists of three levels. These courses take the students from a basic level to a low intermediate level (400 hrs of learning English). There are also two advanced English courses which, as with the basic ones, can be studied in either the class ('classroom') mode or the no-class ('autonomous' mode at the Self-access Centres.

1.3.1.2 *THE SAC AT THE LANGUAGE CENTRE– VERACRUZ (CADI-VER)*

In this section I aim to give the description of the exact place where my data collection was carried out; the Self-access Centre-Veracruz called CADI-VER (Centro de Autoacceso de Idiomas-Veracruz), in order to facilitate the understanding of further sections related to the data collection as well as to the data collected.

CADI-VER SETTING UP

CADI-VER was created as an additional service of the Language Centre and started operating in September 1999 with four counsellors, who had taken the SAC training course in 1998, one technician and two ‘academic assistants’ (henceforth only called ‘assistants’). In November they started giving service to 28 (MEIF) students from the Physical Education school and 124 from the Language Centre. The former studied English 1 (then called ‘Taller I’), the latter studied the first level of the Conversation English course, in which the attendance at CADI was compulsory. As I understand, the attendance at CADI became compulsory because as an innovation it had to be known by students so that they could become aware of the benefits they might obtain from it. In levels beyond the first, attendance was not compulsory; since students already knew the CADI, they would attend because they wanted to.

AIM OF CADI-VER

The aim of CADI-VER is to offer a new mode of language learning, whether as a practice centre to reinforce whatever has been covered in class, and/or as a learning centre for those who want to acquire extra-class knowledge or learn in a self-directed mode. It also intends to offer a place where learners may develop abilities for learning autonomously. (Hernández Alarcon, 2003)

EXPANSION OF CADI-VER

In January 2003, a second CADI was opened at the USBI (henceforth CADI-USBI, see photos in Appendix 4) to accommodate the expanding number of users who were studying English 1 and 2 as compulsory subjects. The CADI at the Language Centre (henceforth CADI-CI, see photos in Appendix 3) would give service only

to the (external) students from any level of the Language Centre. For practicality, I usually refer to both CADIS (CADI-USBI and CADI-CI) only as CADI-VER. These two CADIS are the places where the participants usually worked, and where I did the observations.

MATERIALS AT CADI-VER

At CADI-CI, besides having materials for all English and French levels, the CADI-VER also has some materials for Italian, for KET and PET exams and for the Institutional TOEFL exam, which is offered there. The different materials are distributed in the Areas of work (see Table 1-3 below) and the worksheets are kept in binders which are available to all users on bookshelves in the Multiple Use Area. (as suggested by Carvalho, 1993) (to see the distribution of Areas in CADI-VER see photos in Appendices 3 & 4).

At CADI-USBI, the materials are exclusively for basic levels (English 1 and 2) and are also divided into the same areas (see Table 1-3) as the ones at CADI-CI (see photos in Appendices 3 and 4).

STAFF AT CADI-VER

All the counsellors (three in each CADI) have been teachers at the Language Centre, and they continue teaching a class in Addition to their full time jobs as counsellors. They received the self-access training course given by the British Council in 1998, and have kept on preparing themselves to play their new role. Their duties are to design, make and maintain materials, to give counselling to students, to introduce new students to the CADI-VER (through an introduction session) and to do research.

The technicians (one in each CADI) should be professionals in the computer area and they are in charge of: keeping the equipment (TV sets, VCRs, DVDs) in good condition, recording and copying audio and video materials, developing programs (software) and advising the students as well as the counsellors in the use of equipment, basically the computer programs (as suggested by McCall, 1992).

The assistants (two in each CADI) should have a bachelor's degree but this is not necessary. They supply materials (CDs, Videos, DVDs and cassettes) to the users, help them locate materials, keep their records (logs) of time and work, answer many questions, register users and take their photos.

The CADI-CI has a capacity of 80 users per hour, while the CADI-USBI has a capacity of 110 users per hour. Since the number of no-class students has increased

every semester and they have to work in all the areas of the CADIs (see Table 1-4), these are sometimes too crowded, especially in CADI-USBI. At present, approximately 370 users a day are served at both CADIs. By the beginning of 2005, the approximate number of users was 2,400; 1,200 from the Language Centre and 1,200 from the university (MEIF / English 1 and 2) (Weiss Jauregui 2005). These figures show how important the no-class mode of learning English has become at the University and why my interest in delving into this area has led me to carry out this inquiry.

Table 1-4. Areas at CADI – Veracruz

AREA of:	CADI – Language Centre	CADI – USBI
Computers	19 seats, 19 computers / 40 CDs	33 seats, 33 computers / 34 CDs
Listening (Audio)	15 seats, 15 tape-CDrecorders/330 tapes & 35 CDs	15 seats, 15 tape-CD recorders / 20 tapes & 45 CDs
Video	10 seats, 10 VCRs & TV sets / 115 videotapes	13 seats, 13 VCRs & TV sets / 120 videotapes
Conversation/ Counselling Room	10 seats (2 round tables with 5 seats each), Worksheets for all the different levels of English courses, a whiteboard	10 seats (2 long tables with 5 seats each), Worksheets for English 1 and 2 courses, a whiteboard.
Multiple Uses	26 seats (4 round tables with 5 seats each and 6 seats at long tables dividing the area) / Binders of Pathways, 1500 worksheets in binders of subjects such as Exams, Grammar, Reading, Listening, Vocabulary, TOEFL & Learning to Learn.. Some of them for French & a few for Italian and German.	36 seats (9 tables with 4 seats each) / Binders of Pathways, 800 worksheets in binders of Exams, Grammar, Reading, Vocabulary & Learning to Learn
Check in / Check out	2 computers, a couch.	2 computers.
Counsellors' office	3 computers, scanner and printer, a round table with 4 seats, 2 bookshelves,	3 computers, scanner and printer, a round table with 4 seats, 2 bookshelves, a filing cabinet.
Assistant's & Technician's Offices	2 separated offices next to each other. The Technician's one is used to keep users' bags. The Assistant's one is used to keep material and as a reception area	1 common area where users' bags and material are kept, and where users are received

(See photos of Areas in Appendices 3 & 4)

SUMMARY

In this chapter I have tried to situate the place where this study was carried out. First, I presented those features of the state of Veracruz and Veracruz City that determine the kind of students that attend the University of Veracruz as well as the structure of the University itself.

Secondly, considering that the Self-access Centre where I work is a part of a very large institution, I presented a general panorama of the University of Veracruz; how it is constituted; how the Language Centres are integrated to it and how the Self-access Centres emerged and provided an additional service for the students learning foreign languages.

I concluded with the description of the specific place where I collected the data: the CADI-VER, which is part of the Language Centre-Veracruz. I want to make clear that such a description is complemented by the explanation of the project for the implementation of the innovation (SAC and SALL) and the actual functioning of the Self-access centre (CADI-VER) which are discussed in greater depth in the following chapter (section 3.4.1, page 82).

SECTION II

“THE WHICH”

The previous Section was about features related to the place where this research was carried out. It introduced the topic at issue and the questions that guided the current study. Then, chapter 1 broadly described the state, the city, the institution (university) and the Language Centre where the Self-access Centre (CADI-VER) is located in order to understand how the latter, which is the context of this study, is constituted.

This second Section deals with the literature review which I undertook with the intention of understanding in greater depth the issues related to the topic of this research; self-directed learning, self-access learning, and self-access resources as some of the innovations in ELT. This review also fulfilled my need to find the theoretical background for my thoughts and assumptions in these areas.

A lot has been written and discussed in relation to autonomy, self-directed learning, self-access learning, and self-access resources. There are different conceptions and terms related to these subjects. From all these, this Section -“The Which”- considers those which have been significant to me, not only for this study but through my working as a counsellor at the Self-access Centre (SAC). Moreover, this chapter explains which of these notions have actually been put into practice in the SAC where I work (CADI-VER) and where my data was collected.

In order to understand, organize, give meaning to and explain what I have read, learnt and experienced with regard to the topics formerly mentioned not only during my work as a SAC counsellor but during my work as a researcher, and following what Ochs and Capps say about “...the dynamic nature of narrative as

a sense-making activity” (2001, 35); I decided to write this chapter in a narrative style, or rather a quasi-narrative style.

Hence, the present Section, comprising chapters 2 and 3, is the story of my trajectory through the process of the establishment of the Self-access Centre-Veracruz (CADI-VER), the process of implementation of what was intended to be ‘self-directed learning’ as a new mode of learning languages (especially English), and also the process of my studying this topic. Because I am part of this group, when referring to the teachers and/or counsellors at the Language Centre-Veracruz, I will be using the pronoun ‘we’. Concepts, definitions and assumptions related to the topics just mentioned are interwoven with this account; in particular those concepts which have been relevant to my work. It also provides, as part of my story, a brief account of the Self-Access Centre (SAC) project in Mexico, particularly at the University of Veracruz and at its Language Centre-Veracruz (Language Centre-Ver), as an innovation in language teaching.

Section II is therefore divided into two chapters, two phases of my life regarding this issue:

Chapter 2. - As an EFL teacher and a SAC counsellor

Chapter 3. - As a SAC counsellor and a researcher

Chapter 2 comprises the period of time since I was first introduced to this topic at the training course that the British Council gave to us -the teachers at the Language Centre-Veracruz- when they were about to open a SAC there, until the end of my first year as a counsellor at the SAC (CADI).

Chapter 3 comprises the period of time since I started my second year as a SAC counsellor until the time when I collected the data for the present study. As you go through this chapter, it can be noticed that there is a shift in my conceptualization of the notions underpinning the subject of this study -self-directed learning and self-access Centres (SACs).

2

BASIC NOTIONS

As mentioned above, this chapter is a narrative of the fusion of my own experience, my knowledge of the subject of study and the literature that backs them up. For that reason, I start by describing when and how I got in touch with self-access and the literature related to it; that is, what I was taught and was supposed to become (as a counsellor). Then I proceed to explain how my understanding of relevant issues developed through my review of the literature.

In 1998 I became involved in “self-access” issues for the first time. The University of Veracruz as many other universities in Mexico in the face of “Globalization”, had entered an innovation process, that is, a modernization process through the “Program of Consolidation and Projection towards the century XXI, 1997 – 2001” (Contreras, 1999). This program puts into practice, among other modifications, a “flexible” structure and a new curriculum for all Bachelor Degrees, which incorporates two courses of EFL as compulsory subjects in all the undergraduate programmes. These two Basic English courses are given by the Language Centres with the support or through the Self-access Centres (SAC), as explained in 1.3.1 (page 22).

As part of the project mentioned above, Self-access Centres (SACs) were set up as a support to Foreign Language teaching/learning, especially English. Certainly, the project also included the training of teachers who would become counsellors at these SACs. It was the British Council who was in charge of giving us the training course called “Self-access” in 1998.

I should mention that most of the teachers of the Language Centre, including me, attended the course with certain fears and even resistance. We might have

imagined based on the subject (and name) of the training course that our jobs as foreign language teachers might be at risk (they may not need our services anymore; they would replace our teaching with the SAC). Besides, it was something new, it was a change and we were not positive or enthusiastic about it, in fact we were sceptical about its effectiveness. As Markee suggests, if teachers/counselors are considered as potential adopters, “potential adopters will *perceive* some innovations as bad, threatening, or unwarranted.” (1997: 47, author italics). But we had to do it and I tried to open and motivate myself towards this new affair by thinking that someday I might be a counsellor; which I do not regret since I indeed became a full time one.

The training course introduced us to the subject by explaining notions basically developed in the European School, which was led by researchers based in CRAPEL (Nancy, France) such as: Holec (1980, 1981, 1987), Riley (1995), Gremmo (1995); and some others based in the UK and Ireland such as: Dickinson (1987, 1988, 1993), Little (1989, 1990, 1991, 1995), Sturtridge (1992) and Sheerin (1989, 1991, 1994). From these notions the focus of the course was on those practical aspects which explained how to implement, start and run a self-access centre more than on the theoretical basis of autonomy and self-directed learning. In accordance with Clemente’s account concerning the implementation of self-access centres in Mexico, these training courses all over the country functioned like that because “the project in Mexico was not mature enough to overcome that stage of technicality and practicality.” (1998, 17).

Thus, we started by reviewing concepts such as: autonomy, semi-autonomy, self-directed learning, self-instruction, learning to learn, self-access, self-access centres, self-access materials, self-access facilities, counsellors and counselling sessions.

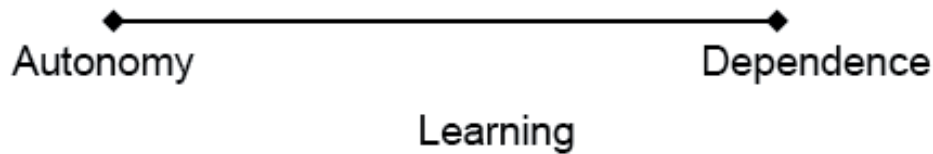
2.1 AUTONOMY / AUTONOMOUS LEARNING

Since ‘autonomy’ is a term that has been used, in fact was originated, in different arenas besides the educational one, I now want to explain how I understood it and how I started giving meaning to it within the languages learning/teaching milieu.

2.1.1 AUTONOMY

After the introduction to the course, given by the British Council's team of trainers/lecturers who in this case were the 'innovators' (Hannan and Silver, 2000) or the 'outside change agents' (Markee, 1997: 45), the training course started by explaining what 'autonomy' in learning meant. Based on what I already understood as autonomy, I recognized it, as shown in Fig. 2-1 below, as the counter-edge, the opposite of traditional-dependence in the learning continuum.

Fig. 2-1. Autonomy / Dependence phases within the Learning continuum



I immediately related it to the general term "autonomy" which has been widely used in areas such as politics, computing, religion, psychology, education and even mathematics. A general meaning of this term would be: the condition of something that does not depend on anything else. It is defined as "the quality or state of being self-governing; the right of self-government; self-directing freedom and especially moral independence" (Longman Dictionary, 2005).

Since there is a range of meanings for the concept 'autonomy', I here refer to the connotation that is relevant to my field –education and language learning. The history of the term, in this area, can be referred back to the post-ww II period when social rights movements arose and education started to be considered an empowering tool which moved to an awareness of its worth. Collins & Hammond confirm the latter by saying that "...the ultimate purpose of education is the betterment of society, and that critical awareness and social action to promote emancipation are desirable results of any educational intervention" (1991: 13).

Following that tide, from the 70's on, there have been several innovations in adult education. Some of them were based on issues such as social awareness and resulting in the insistence of "the need to develop the individual's freedom by developing those abilities which will enable him to act more responsibly in

running the affairs of the society in which he lives” (Holec, 1981:1). Some others, based on pedagogical issues, maintain that

...adults demonstrably learn more, and more effectively, when they are consulted about dimensions such as the pace, sequence, mode of instruction and even the content of what they are studying. (Candy, 1988: 75)

Believing that an individual’s freedom had to be developed by somebody else, the place of the learner had to be redefined and the concept of autonomy became so important that the learner and the management of her language learning – a learner-centred approach – (cf. Nunan 1988, 1994, Littlejohn 1985) arguably became more significant than the teacher and the language teaching.

At this stage, the idea of autonomy was brought into play within the language learning milieu and different definitions permeated it. In foreign language education, learner autonomy has become, as Little (1991) says, the new “buzz-word” which has transformed old practices in the language classroom and has given rise to self access facilities around the world. It is not the intention of this work to study in depth the various factors and disciplines that have influenced the development of foreign language learning / teaching in the last 50-60 years. But among those domains which have particularly influenced the evolution of autonomy in the field of language learning, I can mention: political developments, societal demands, sociolinguistics, and psychology (cognitive, constructivist, humanistic) (cf. Reinders, 2000).

I was able to go through some conceptions of autonomy as our self-access training course developed and I learnt some others on an individual basis. The following is one of the most popular definitions; according to Henri Holec, autonomy is an acquired ability to take charge of one’s own learning. That is to say,

...to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, ie: determining the objectives; defining the contents and progressions; selecting methods and techniques to be used; monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc); evaluating what has been acquired. (1981: 3)

It was clear for me that responsibility was a major condition for autonomy to be achieved. And I confirmed this when I noticed that Dickinson also described autonomy as “...a situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all the

decisions concerned with his (or her) learning and the implementation of those decisions” (1987: 18); although he talks about autonomy as a situation and not as an ability as Holec does.

Critical reflection and psychological elements were added by Little to the previous definitions but still using the idea of capacity, so he states that

...autonomy is a capacity – for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails, that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning. (1991:4)

Another author for whom ability plays a crucial role in the conceptualization of autonomy is Nunan (1995), who states that learners who are able to define their own goals and to create their own learning opportunities have become autonomous. In line with Reinders (2000) it seems to me that having a capacity/ability to do something should be accompanied by the disposition and/or desire to carry it out.

Still at that moment, it seemed to me (and I think to some of my colleagues too) that it would be difficult to undertake such a demanding task (exercise autonomy and facilitate our students do the same) but at the same time I knew that our students would never be in the position to decide on all aspects of their learning due to the functioning of the educational system in which we were (and still are) immersed. It is this kind of system that Little describes, in which “the curriculum is not only imposed on the learner ... but has been drawn up without specific regard to his individual experience, needs, interests, and aspirations.” (1991: 7). That is to say, every undergraduate, and in fact all the programmes at the University of Veracruz are already planned and set, without asking the students’, and many times, not even the teachers’ opinions.

Things in the course became harder when we learnt that

...autonomy is achieved little by little,.. through practice and careful preparation of the teacher and the student; and the first step in this process is the liberation of the classroom to allow the development of the student’s independence and responsibility. (Dickinson, 1987:19)

Especially the possibility that classrooms and classroom work (classes) became less and less important worried us, since our suspicions of turning out to be

unnecessary (as EFL teachers) and of losing our jobs increased (Aston, 1993). This might have been one of the reasons some teachers did not find it convenient (for their job security) to introduce elements to train the learners towards a gradual development of autonomy until reaching full autonomy in their classes (Ibid). In fact many teachers even when the SAC was already working would not encourage its use among their students, or incorporate any kind of learner training elements into their classes, as Ellis and Sinclair (1991) suggest.

I then tried to pick out, from the diverse concepts and definitions that we had been introduced to, the elements that suited my context the most. And finally, I preferred to consider Sionis' (1990) description of autonomy. He says that reaching autonomy is a complex process that includes the identification of our own needs, the self-determination of goals and the election and putting into practice of the most suitable learning method as well as a self-evaluation procedure. Although it was still demanding, I perceived it as a more doable, and maybe a more realistic idea. First of all, he, as well as Dickinson (1987), talks about reaching/achieving, which led me to think of the development, the progression, the process one would have to go through. Then he includes a needs analysis, gets rid of the pretentious idea of *deciding everything* (related to learning within an education system) and talks about deciding one's own goals. Finally, he introduces the term 'suitable' which to me, sounds more respectful of one's own style and preferences.

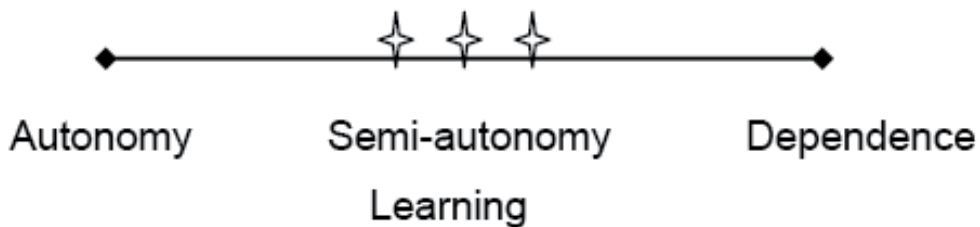
2.1.2 AUTONOMOUS LEARNING / SEMI-AUTONOMY

Regarding the term 'autonomous learning', I would say that even though Holec (1981) asserts that the word autonomous is an adjective that can only be applied to people, it is commonly used to refer to the learning that takes place on an autonomous basis. In fact, it was the term that we would conventionally use at the SAC in the Language Centre-Ver (CADI-VER) at a later time. However, trying to be steadfast to its original meaning, it is not a term that I will be using in this study, as I consider that such kind of learning has not been achieved in my context so far.

After having felt intimidated by and doubtful about the concepts above-mentioned (too ambitious, in my opinion), we learnt that semi-autonomy is the phase in which students are preparing themselves to achieve autonomy (Dickinson, 1987), which I depict in Fig. 2-2 below. In this phase, students count on materials

and guides to help them make decisions regarding their learning (Wenden, 1987). At that moment I naively believed that such a stage was closer to what we would be able to achieve at the SAC in my Language Centre. I still thought (and think) autonomy, understood as it has been described so far, was (and is) far away from our context at the University of Veracruz, and that semi-autonomy has not developed as such an intermediate phase, as students are not actually getting prepared to become autonomous.

Fig. 2-2. Semi-autonomy phase within the Learning continuum



The following step was to define the difference, if any, between some of the terms that have been in use around the issue of adult education. In this study I do not intend to elaborate on some of these terms, (self-management, self-learning, individualized-learning, etc.) because, as I previously mentioned, I want to focus on those conceptions that became particularly relevant to me.

2.2 SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING / SELF-INSTRUCTED LEARNING

Differences in terms and conceptions regarding autonomy in language learning have given rise to the inclusion of other words in this milieu and they have also become a topic for discussion. As mentioned above, it is not my intention to delve into all these terms but to focus on those which became meaningful at the University of Veracruz.

2.2.1 SELF-DIRECTION / SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

I have already mentioned Holec's indication of not using the term 'autonomous-learning' to refer to the learning process; he instead suggests that self-directed learning should be used to refer to learning taken charge of on an autonomous basis. He also points out that "a learner may have the ability to take charge of his learning [carrying out self-directed learning] without necessarily utilizing this ability to the full [exercising autonomy] when he decides to learn." (1981: 4). So, different degrees of learning may result, basically decided by the learner.

I found myself a little more comfortable with Dickinson's view of self-direction as an attitude because that has more to do with a personal decision, although he keeps on talking about 'all the decisions' when he states that self-direction

...describes a particular *attitude* to the learning task, where the learner accepts responsibility for all the decisions concerned with his learning but does not necessarily undertake the implementation of those decisions. (1987:11, my italics)

I understood and agreed with him as well as with Nunan and Lamb (1996) who suggest that at the end of the day it is the learner and only the learner who has to do the learning, and that every kind of educational act should lead learners towards self-directed learning. However, I consider, as Dickinson aptly comments, that only very few people are naturally self-directed and that many learners who turn to self-instruction do it for their own convenience and not because it appeals to them. He even suggests that

...[i]t is not desirable to thrust self-instruction and self-directed learning on to learners who are resistant to it, and it is very important ... not [to] confuse the idea, or our enthusiasm to introduce it, with the learner's ability or willingness to undertake it. (1987: 2)

Therefore, he suggests that some kind of preparation (training) should be included in our learning programs to help learners achieve autonomy. Even counting on this kind of preparation, I was sceptical and I felt a little confused, as I had never experienced this kind of learning mode in formal education. I could not visualise how learning English through this mode could be achieved at the Language Centre by university students who might be learning a foreign lan-

guage for the first time, had a limited time to learn, and had mostly been learning in a traditional other-directed mode.

2.2.2 SELF-INSTRUCTION

Then we moved to discuss the concept of ‘self-instruction’ which Dickinson defines as a neutral term which refers to

...situations in which a learner, *with others*, or alone, is working without the direct control of a teacher... [either] for short periods within a lesson, for whole lessons, or in the extreme case of learner autonomy, where he undertakes the whole of his learning without the help of a teacher. (1987: 5, my italics).

As another mode of learning, it gave me the impression that this was no different than what I had experienced not only as a teacher but as a student too. The same author talks about homework as an old example of a self-instruction activity (Dickinson, 1987). In my view, self-instruction (as defined above) would be the most feasible in my context (the Language Centres of the University of Veracruz). And as I experienced it as a counsellor at CADI-VER afterwards, it is the mode of learning that prevails there; although we insist on calling it ‘autonomous learning’ for the reason that the students do not attend regular classes. Nevertheless, I am aware, and probably my colleagues are too, that what we practise in our SAC is not the closest to the concept of autonomy (as described so far).

In order to attain any of the previously mentioned modes of learning, namely, self-direction (the term which I will be using in this thesis as an equivalent of autonomous-learning) and/or self-instruction, it seemed necessary to prepare students for these.

2.3 LEARNER TRAINING / LEARNING TO LEARN / LEARNING STRATEGIES

Assuming a more independent stance, as Sheerin calls it, an “unaccustomed role as directors of their own learning” (1991: 153) in this enterprise of self-direction and self-instruction could cause several problems to students (cf. Krowitz 1978, Bodman 1979, Holec 1987). Therefore, several authors agree that learners need

support and guidance. This assistance is usually called 'learner training' which in this case is regarded as a means to equip learners with the tools for undertaking their own learning (Sheerin, 1989).

Such training usually consists of guiding the learners in the process of learning how to learn, a notion that was developed based on Rogers' view about the continuous process of education whose goal is the facilitation of change and learning (1969). In this sense learning how to learn, how to adapt and change and how to seek knowledge, are characteristics of educated people.

Due to the importance of learner training as an element to enhance autonomy, there have been proposals to implement learner training sessions in and during classes, that is to say, to develop learner autonomy inside the classroom for use outside. In fact Ellis and Sinclair (1989) wrote a complete course in learner training (*Learning to learn: teacher's and student's books*). At the same time, Wenden (1991) suggests what can be done with groups of students to help them achieve autonomous learning based on the investigation of students' learning strategies and attitudes necessary for autonomy. The fact is that there is a considerable amount of literature assisting teachers as well as learners in the managing of learner training and learning strategies (Dickinson 1987, Wenden and Rubin 1987, O'Malley and Chamot 1990, Oxford 1990).

On the one hand, Holec (1980) divides learner training into two levels: the psychological and the technical. The former refers to a gradual deconditioning of the learner, that is, her re-examination of her prejudices and preconceptions, while the latter refers to the strategies that a learner is to use in order to learn more effectively.

On the other hand, Dickinson (1988) says that learner training should include three main components: training in processes and strategies for language learning, raising learner awareness of the functioning of the target language, and focusing on the theory of second language acquisition. It seems to me that learners would have to spend more time in training than in actually learning the target language. However, he argues that "preparing learners for learner autonomy one is also giving them the tools to be more effective learners whether they work in an evidently autonomous mode or in a teacher-led classroom." (Dickinson, 1994: 39). It is to be observed that after some time the term 'training' has been changed to 'preparation' which seems to me to take much more account of student intelligence.

Another element was added to this subject of learner preparation, or rather learner support in Esch's terms, when she talks about providing structures for

interaction between teachers (counsellors) and learners, especially in language learning where “genuine social interaction with learners” should be part of dynamic support systems (1994: 51).

In order to structure such learner training, different taxonomies of learner strategies have been formulated (cf. O'Malley and Chamot 1990, Oxford 1990), some of which are separated into cognitive and metacognitive, placing most importance on the latter. For instance, Wenden (1991) divides learning strategies into: cognitive and self-management and she states that both strategies require the good language learner to use metacognitive knowledge defined as “learner beliefs or knowledge about the language learning process” (Ibid: 49). Besides limiting the use of such strategies to ‘good learners’, she says that the forms this knowledge acquires (personal, strategic and task) can only be applied effectively when the learners are positive about determining what should be done and about their capabilities in doing so. In my view, this author gives few possibilities to achieve autonomy as she does not consider those students who are not ‘good learners’ or those who are not very assertive.

So far, it would seem that learner autonomy somehow depends on learner training, or rather on learner development, a term which I find more suitable according to Sheerin's distinction between ‘development’ and ‘training’ (to pass on to the students a defined set of skills which is already done) (1989). However, I agree with Little (1990) that autonomy is not something that teachers can ‘do’ to learners, even though I also believe that learners may need some help in developing skills to manage their own learning programme (Hill, 1994). I still claim that in our real circumstances, most of the students at the Language Centre-Ver do not have that much time to devote to studying English. If they were to go through all the training suggested above (Dickinson 1988, Holec 1980) in order to learn how to learn, I wonder if they would not get tired or confused before they actually started learning the target language. In fact, at the CADI-VER we have ‘learning to learn’ materials and we offer counselling services at the students’ request but we have not implemented training courses.

The combination of the factors explained above (autonomy, self-directed learning, self-instruction, learner training, learning to learn) crystallizes in the creation of self-access facilities and the elements derived from it, namely: self-access language learning (SALL), self-access centres (SACs) and self-access materials.

2.4 SELF-ACCESS / SELF-ACCESS CENTRES AND MATERIALS / SALL

Since self-access centres became the place where students were to carry out some of their work as ‘autonomous students’ and a different mode of learning derived from it, this section aims to explain some of the ideas related to these terms.

2.4.1 SELF-ACCESS / SELF-ACCESS CENTRE (SAC)

The reason why I have succinctly explained core elements in this ‘new’ view of learning languages in the previous sections, is that self-access is a consequence of the attempt of their implementation. In general, the term self-access refers to the organization of learning materials and equipment to make them available and accessible to students without necessarily having a teacher there. In Sturtridge’s words, the term self-access centre refers to the “system which makes materials available to language learners so that they can choose to work as they wish, usually without a teacher or with very limited teacher support” (1992: 4).

Several authors talk about self-access centres in a similar way, as the area in which specially designed, adapted or processed materials can be used by learners in such a way that they can direct and assess their own learning with or without help (Sheerin 1989, Booton and Benson 1996, McCafferty undated, Dickinson 1993). Others perceive the potential of self-access as a motor for change for students as well as for teachers to move towards independence. Nevertheless, they point out that “self-access can never be the only way to learn; it is one way – but it is a way which can encompass many ways, and therein lies its greatest strength.” (Barnet and Jordan, 1991: 312)

Looking at the background of self-access centres, it can be said that their predecessors are the language laboratories that responded to a behaviouristic, lock-step approach to language learning. However, comparing SACs to other resource facilities Gremmo and Riley (1995) would rather talk about libraries since these were a basic manifestation of autonomous and self-directed learning, but of course they also mark their differences.

2.4.2 TYPES OF SELF-ACCESS CENTRES (SACS)

The physical environment, materials and approach of SACS may differ enormously, although the ones constructed and established at the University of Veracruz share the same approach, plan and organization, but they do not necessarily have the same materials or size of buildings. The implementation of a SAC depends basically on the ideologies underlying the system within which it is set. That is to say, “the beliefs about learning which are held by those who set up the system” (Sturtridge, 1992: 4) can define the role that the SAC will play. Therefore, depending on this ideology, the needs perceived and the teaching situation to which it is related, a SAC may function as an instruction centre; as a practice centre; as a skill centre or as a learning centre; all of them sharing the characteristic of fostering autonomy and the skills of self-directed learning (Booton and Benson, 1996). This promotion of autonomy and self-directed learning is done by enabling the learners to use the centre whenever they decide to and to progress at their own pace. At the same time the type of centre will delineate the staffing, the preparation of both staff and learners and the materials to be offered.

A different SAC typology is described by Miller and Rogerson-Revell (1993): the menu-driven (CRAPEL – University of Nancy, France); the Supermarket (STTI – Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia); the Controlled-access (very much the conception of the SAC I work at CADI-VER) and the Open-access (British Council in Hong Kong). Almost the same description of systems is offered by Dickinson (1993), who describes also the CRAPEL system, the Cambridge system (called Open Access Sound and Video Library), the British Council system (designed by McCafferty) and the Moray House College, Edinburgh system. In our training course we also saw some explanations of self-access systems used at different school levels, such as: the Circle Model, the Flower Model, and the Private Study Model (Dickinson, 1993)

2.4.3 SETTING UP OF A SAC

Regarding the setting up of a self-access centre, Holec (1985) mentions three requirements: an infrastructure of appropriate materials and resources; teachers trained in providing support (as counsellors), and effective means of informing potential users about the system (publicising), that is, the diffusion of the innovation (cf. Lamie 2005, Markee 1997, Rogers 1995) (for details on this topic see section

3.4, page 80). Further on, I talk about the two first requirements mentioned above: self-access materials and teachers' preparation and their role as counsellors.

Due to the popularity that SACs acquired from the 80's onwards, there are several suggestions regarding the setting up of a SAC and its subsequent production and layout of materials (cf. Sheerin 1989, Sturtridge 1992, McCall 1992, Booton and Benson 1996, Carvalho 1993, Esch 1994). They all present a variety of ideas about factors (e.g. needs analysis, budget) to be considered in implementing whatever system of SAC is decided on, how to decide on the type, how to prepare, adapt, classify, catalogue, organize, level materials, how to organize the access and the information systems, etc. These ideas were the ones we took as a basis to set up our SACs at the Language Centre-Veracruz with the supervision of the British Council. However, I consider that such ideas remained at the physical, technical and technological level.

2.4.4 SAC MATERIALS/RESOURCES

When we think of self-access resources, we immediately consider the technology utilized, e.g. the hardware, the computers, the video and sound equipment (TV sets, VCRs, DVD players, tape recorders, CD players) (Moore, 1992). When talking about materials, it could be specially designed, adapted or processed materials (books with answer guides, worksheets, pathways, etc.) and authentic materials (text books, magazines, newspapers, novels, etc) (cf. Sheerin 1989, Sturtridge 1992, McCall 1992, Booton and Benson 1996, Carvalho 1993). The materials and hardware available in a self-access centre are important, still some authors focus on the procedures in which the facilities may be used; that is, "the accessibility and relevance of materials; learner training and learning strategies; [and] alternative uses of self-access facilities" (Barnett and Jordan, 1991: 305) are central in setting up a SAC.

2.4.5 SAC STAFFS' PREPARATION

As mentioned in 2.3 (page 42), students who are to use SAC facilities should be trained or rather prepared (because the word training connects me with the idea of a physical and not a very intellectual activity) in order to become familiar with the materials as well as with the strategies which might be most useful to them

(learning to learn). It is not only the learners who need preparation, but the staffs of a SAC do too (Sturtridge 1992, O'Dell 1992). Whoever forms part of the staff at a SAC, e.g. the teachers, the counsellors, the administrators, the technicians and/or the librarians may need certain skills (organizing, housekeeping and learning facilitating), certain preparation and support (Sturtridge 1992, McCall 1992),

This is true especially for the teachers who would need to change their traditional roles; according to Stevick (1976) the teachers must change from being paternal, assertive, dispensers of all knowledge and promoters of dependence, to be fraternal, permissive, resourceful, consultants and trainers for independence. In brief, teachers must become facilitators, advisors, counsellors, who must know about student counselling, needs analysis, resources management, etc. (Sheerin, 1989).

2.4.6 SELF-ACCESS LANGUAGE LEARNING (SALL) - CONTROVERSIES AROUND IT

Derived from self-access centres, the term self-access language learning (SALL) stands for the kind of learning that takes place precisely in a SAC. In this respect Sheerin says that "[t]he essential prerequisite to self-access learning is the provision of self-access materials within an organized framework so that students can get what they need." (1989: 7).

SALL seems to arouse controversy in two aspects: the cost-efficiency and the development of autonomy. Regarding the former, there are authors (e.g. Aston, 1993) who see this mode of learning as a cost-saving proposition which eventually could substitute for direct teaching. Whereas others like Gardner and Miller think that

...[i]mplementing SALL should not be seen as a cheap alternative to teaching. It should be seen as a useful complement to teaching which enhances language-learning opportunities and provides learners with the independent learning skills to continue learning languages after they have finished formal studies. In this light it may be judged to be relatively cost efficient. (1997: 32)

Regarding the latter, some comment that although this mode of learning is supposed to promote learners' autonomy, this is not necessarily the case. Students may be working by themselves in a SAC but still doing what their teachers told them to do (Reinders 2000). That is to say, "a self-access centre could be used as a

teacher-directed source of individualised homework activities, but this would in no way constitute self-directed learning” (Sheerin, 1994: 144)

In any case, there are positive postures towards SALL. Even if it is not undertaken with the aim of becoming autonomous learners,

...[s]elf-access learning is the practical solution to many language teaching problems: mixed-ability classes, students with different backgrounds and needs, psychological and personality differences between students, etc. (Sheerin, 1989: 7)

I think the latter is as true as Gardner and Miller’s view of SALL as a mode of learning that offers varying degrees of guidance but still encouraging students to move towards autonomy (1997). The achieving of such autonomy, in my view, will not depend on the mode of learning itself, nor on the SAC where students may work, but on their attitude, their decision and the education system in which they may be immersed.

Having considered how the self-access centres are constituted in general and the elements and notions that are related to them, I will now talk about the specific case of the process of implementation of the self-access centres in Mexico, of which the CADI-VER, the place where this study was carried out, forms a part.

2.5 THE SAC PROJECT IN MEXICO & AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VERACRUZ

The self-access centre where this study is based (CADI-VER) is part of a National Project in Mexico. As an innovation to the curriculum of university studies based on a top-down decision, self-access was imported (from Europe) and imposed on students (and teachers) in many state universities and some private institutions. For that reason I consider it important to mention how this process developed. Therefore, this section is an account of the course of implementation of the Self-access Centres in Mexico, basically at State Universities. (Most of the information included in this section was provided in personal discussion by Dr. Patricia Grounds, who being intensely involved in such projects has a wide and deep understanding of the process).

The implementation of Self-access Centres (SACs) at the University of Veracruz was part of the National Self-access Project that aimed to set a more innovative curriculum in Mexican State Universities by improving the quality of

teaching and learning at this tertiary level. This project was developed during the years 1993 -1997, when the General Director of Higher Education at the Mexican Secretariat of Education (Secretaría de Educación Pública, SEP) with the support and guidance of the British Council (BC), who playing the role of outside change agents (Markee 1997: 45), sponsored the project.

The project was conceived as a response to the need to raise the level of English among university students who were not taking advantage either of scholarships to foreign countries or of the latest publications in their fields (Clemente, 1998). So, this project aimed to increase the possibilities of learning English, which at the same time was a consequence of Mexico's taking part in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994. As a result, it was thought that universities would not be able to cope with this massive demand for English instruction and it was assumed that "[e]ducational technology ... would provide the necessary resources to address the problem" (Grounds, 2001:12).

At that time the idea of updating (English) instruction methods was already present in Mexican educational policies which sought to foment the teaching and practice of more autonomous skills. For this purpose, teacher training and development programs for EFL teachers were provided by the British Council and some other UK TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) institutions. As a complement to these programs, the Self-access Centres would be endowed with modern resources and materials useful to the teachers in training as well as to the potential students/users. In conclusion, the National Self-access Project would give support to the Professionalization of the Teaching of English at Mexican State Universities (Grounds, 2001).

In a formal ceremony the SEP, the British Council-Mexico and the chancellors of 34 Mexican Universities including a Technological Institute signed a two-year agreement in November 1993. The latter consisted of the establishing of every party's role in the project. That is, the Mexican Government through the SEP would provide the funding for initial training courses, follow-up consultancy visits, both offered by the BC, and the purchase of equipment and materials. Each of the 34 universities would donate the areas for building or installing their respective SAC, and they would ensure adequate staffing for the new SAC. As previously mentioned, the British Council would provide the training and consultancy services.

As Grounds comments, the chancellors, the Language Departments, the staff and the students at the state universities would be direct beneficiaries of the whole project. Chancellors would improve standards and profile in their local

institution; Language Departments and teachers would take advantage of new techniques and resources; the students

...would have the option of continuing to study by attending traditional classes, or of studying in a more independent learning mode, or of combining the two forms of learning according to their preference. (Grounds, 2001: 13)

But the first beneficiary would be the SEP that

...would be able to show tangible results of its innovative updating policies in education through the very existence of such resource centres, as well as the extensive in-service development courses for existing staff and innovative training programmes for new academics;... (Grounds, 2001: 13)

Once the project was put into effect some issues started to arise. Some of these issues could be taken as constraints or as promoters for the development of the project. When they were observed by the Project Coordinator, she described them in terms of how the development of each individual SAC at its respective state university could differ according to their internal characteristics such as:

Priorities and financial resources of each state university.

- The suitability of the SAC project within the current chancellor's institutional development plan and priorities.
- The departmental heads' and their staffs' motivation and attitudes to the innovation and its academic needs (production of materials, pathways and development of orientation courses and counselling services).
- The individualism of each language Faculty and/or Language Centre.

The previous features resulted in huge SACs (350m² / 150 workstations, variety of materials), but other small ones (80 m² / 25 workstations). Some of these SACs were fully integrated into the Language Centre programs or into the undergraduate curriculum as part of a compulsory subject (English), some others were not clearly settled, and each of them offered a different range and quality of services. It is to be noted that this occurred within the same project (one of its aims was to standardize materials, study guides and orientation/counselling materials nationwide) and following the same guidelines (Grounds, 2001). Even though the global project was a national one, it seemed that the individual state development plans had become more important.

During the implementation of the SAC project and as part of its plan, some of the work undertaken included:

- Individualized visits of the Project Coordinator to each university in order to promote the planning of each local project by its own staff, as well as to give concrete suggestions on design and technical issues according to the idiosyncratic characteristics of each project site.
- The design and distribution of a bi-monthly project newsletter, 'Network News', among project participants for them to discuss matters related to their respective SACs.
- A Needs Analysis in each of the 34 locations that resulted in recommending each university to design, together with the Project Coordinator, a five-year plan.
- The construction of suitable buildings and their equipment according to their respective annual strategic plans and budgets by BC trained personnel.
- The design and organization of national training events in self-access principles, regional meetings and a national SAC conference.
- Follow-up consultancy visits by regional trainers and six-monthly visits by the Project Coordinator, resulting in a total of 100 hours of formal training, workshops and consultancy visits.
- An evaluation of the quality of the training by a SEP-appointed Mexican Educational Consultant with the participation of the Project Coordinator, during the second year of the project.
- The extension of the agreement, covering one more year of training and extra personalized consultancy (to tackle specific needs), as the result of the necessity of further support to sustain such innovation.

Besides all the work mentioned above, some other activities were completed due to the SEP's request of a fourth year of consultancy. These activities had to do with the continuation of activities from earlier stages as well as with other new ones. The former included: fomenting links with state university authorities, consultancy of SAC teams and the circulation of the newsletter. The latter included among other activities: setting up a project to evaluate the effectiveness of the Mexican National SAC Project, encouraging universities for implementing internal evaluation projects, reporting the progress and results of the project to authorities and promoting mutual support among the universities of every region.

As I mentioned before, some of the activities were the continuation of activities that had already been set up as part of the initial project and some were innovative and

...were directed towards creating better conditions for the sustainability of the SACs within their own institutions and regions, and this naturally included provision for further professional development of staff. (Grounds, 2001:16)

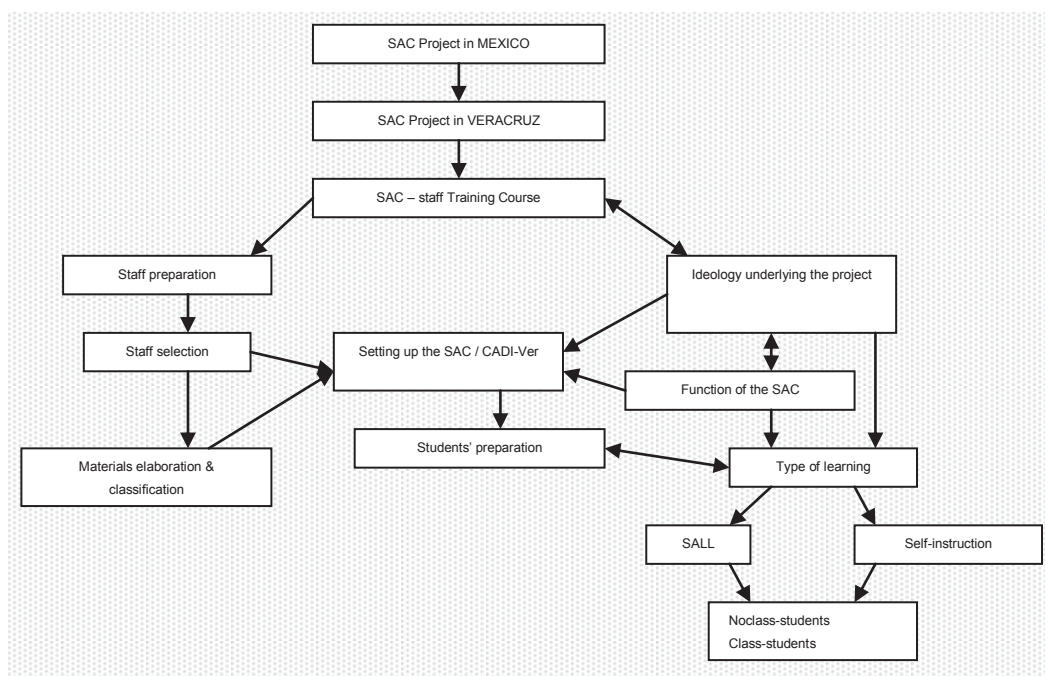
As some evidence of the impact of the innovations of the Mexican National SAC Project, it can be mentioned:

- There is an annual National SAC event at different Mexican universities.
- There is a bi-annual SAC Forum at the State University of Puebla.
- There are several presentations on SAC-related areas in major conferences across the country.
- Some BA TEFL programmes are trying to incorporate some kind of SAC training for undergraduates.
- Some SAC-related areas are being used as research and thesis topics.

Last but not least, Grounds points out the “enormous differences in impact from state to state” (2001:18), which we can now consider.

2.5.1 THE SAC AT THE LANGUAGE CENTRE- VERACRUZ (CADI-VER)

Now that I have described the process of implementation of the SAC project in Mexico and therefore in Veracruz, I would like to draw attention to the last point mentioned above regarding the different impact that the project produced in the different states of the Mexican Republic (Grounds, 2001). Even though the process of implementation in terms of political and bureaucratic matters was a general mission, the economic and social aspects turned out to be more localized. As Hill says, “[the] centres take a variety of forms when adapted to local conditions...” (1994: 216). Therefore, in this section I aim to describe what the actual implementation of the issues related to self-access discussed above turned out to be in my context, at CADI-VER. In this way the perceptions and attitudes developed by the students working at CADI-VER might be more understandable. The following chart (Fig. 2-3) shows the progression of the process of this implementation, starting from the general National Project.

Fig. 2-3. Process of Implementation of the SAC-Veracruz

First, the definition of self-access centre that I find closer to the reality in my context is the one suggested by Sturtridge, who defines it as a “system which makes materials available to language learners so that they can choose to work as they wish, usually without a teacher or with very limited teacher support” (1992: 4).

Even though it is true that our students do not decide on the contents of their programme (cf. Higgs, 1988), they are able to work at any time they wish, and to use any material they want to (if available at that moment) with the help of a counsellor when they require it, or once a week in the case of certain students (for details on this issue see section 2.5.1.2, page 57).

Then, on the subject of the system of the SAC in the Language Centre-Veracruz (henceforth CADI-VER – Centro de Autoacceso De Idiomas-Veracruz), I can say that although by 1993 Dickinson said that McCafferty’s (undated) system had not been able to be tried (by the British Council), I consider that some of the elements posed in his project mixed with some others taken from the CRAPEL system were considered in the setting up of the CADI-VER. To be precise, from the CRAPEL system we adopted the ideas of: the role of the helper (in our case counsellor),

the learners' situation of semi-autonomy, the self-assessment; from McCafferty's system we also keep the function of the counsellor (very similar to CRAPEL's), the division of materials in levels (from beginner to advanced), and the concept of 'pathway' (Dickinson, 1993).

2.5.1.1 ROLES OF CADI-VER (PRACTICE CENTRE / LEARNING CENTRE)

It is not my intention to describe each type of centre mentioned in section 2.4 (page 45) in detail (cf. Sturtridge 1992), but briefly to describe what the practice and learning centres consist of, since the former is the one we would originally implement at CADI, and the latter, or rather a mixture of both is the one we ended up with (Hill, 1994).

At first, during the training course, we were told that the SAC in our Language Centre would function as a 'practice centre', as a support to the students who took regular classes, in Sturtridge words, "...concerned with work involving an extension of what is covered in class..." (1992: 5). That is, students would attend the CADI-VER whenever they wanted to reinforce, to practise what they had learnt in class. The fact was that once the courses started, for some students (mainly beginners and advanced ones), it was compulsory to work at CADI-VER at least once a week during the course (a semester). The explanation was that this was the way to get the students to know the innovation so that they could decide if they wanted to use it.

Then, when the undergraduate students started to take 'English 1 and 2' as compulsory subjects of their programme and they had to pass them in order to continue with their studies, the classes offered at the Language Centre became insufficient for the actual demand and they were sent to study at the CADI-VER as 'autonomous students'. As I mentioned before, they are called 'autonomous' not because they are self-directed learners (Holec 1981, Dickinson 1987, Nunan and Lamb 1996) but because they do not take regular classes, they do not have a teacher and they are supposed to learn English at the SAC. So, the CADI-VER became a 'learning centre' "completely independent of taught classes, and ... intended for learners who do not attend classes but who come in to study on their own." (Sturtridge, 1992: 6).

With the exception of the Conversation Area, where students may work in pairs with the respective worksheets, although they do not often do so, at CADI-VER

pair and group work are not fostered since it is aimed at the students' working by themselves (I wonder if that is a form to help them become autonomous). Thus, what happens at CADI-VER does not agree with McCafferty's assertion that one of the functions of a centre is to bring students together, to offer a place to meet (McCafferty n.d.). In accordance with that idea, Barnett and Jordan think that "... self-access does not have to be *individual*", that its uses can apply to small groups or to pairs, especially on video and computer materials (1991: 311, author's italics). This seems to me as an ideal condition to work in a SAC, though I find it possible only if special areas were set aside for that purpose, and that is not the case at CADI-VER.

THE STUDENTS AT CADI-VER

As I pointed out in section 1.3.1.1 (page 26), trying to be respectful to the conceptualizations of autonomy and autonomous learner and in order to avoid confusion, I will refer to the students described above as 'no-class students'. Consequently, for practicality I will refer to those who take regular classes as 'class-students'.

As mentioned before, no-class students must study the set program by themselves, supposedly wherever they want but preferably at the CADI-VER. I should mention that some students who own the textbook and could work somewhere else, attend the CADI-VER not only to use the materials there but to clock up hours to get extra points to be added to their final grades. A similar case is described by Reinders (2004b), who suggests that this is a good way for students to get credit for their work, which I do not consider autonomy oriented. In the case of class-students, they can also get extra points for their final grades if they accumulate a certain number of hours and/or activities at CADI-VER. In order to keep track of the hours and activities students have accumulated, there is a computer program, also similar to what Reinders (Ibid.) describes concerning a SAC in a university in New Zealand. In addition, the students, with the assistant's help, keep their records on their paper logs.

With regard to the mode of learning that turned out to be carried out at the CADI-VER, I would say that due to the site where it takes place it agrees with the notion of SALL (Sheerin 1989, Reinders 2000) and due to its conditions and features it seems to be based on self-instruction (Dickinson 1987).

2.5.1.2 COUNSELLING AT CADI-VER

In section 2.4 (page 45), I already mentioned the need to help students get familiar with the whole system of a SAC; after all, they are being introduced to a different mode of learning within the formal educational system. As Esch says,

...self-access systems are well adapted to promote a new learner culture because they require users to be actively engaged in the management of the learning task and to accept responsibility for their decisions. (1994: 50)

So far, at CADI-VER, a learners' preparation course has not been set up, but a formal introduction to the centre, for the learners to get to know the materials and their location, is given either as a video group session or as an individual one, and some 'learning to learn' materials (binders) are always available to students but very little deals with skills that learners may need in order to make choices about when to learn, how to learn, how to monitor progress and evaluate their outcomes, which according to Victori and Lockhart (1995) would be desirable. I do not mention 'what to learn' because the contents of the course are already set.

Considering that we teachers/counsellors have a key role in the exploitation of the centres (O'Dell, 1992); part of our duties is to offer counselling sessions. Counselling at CADI-VER is given at the request of class-students, something that rarely happens since these students do not often ask for a counselling session. Whereas for the no-class students (grouped according to level and schedule) a counselling session (30–60 min) is given per week. Although this is not a compulsory session, students who attend are given points to add to their final grades.

Each counsellor has a personal approach in their counselling session. We know that theoretically our work is to help learners to develop their learning skills to become self-directed learners, and that our roles and the role of teaching have necessarily changed (Abercrombie 1981, Crabbe 1993, Little 1995). However, in our counselling sessions at CADI-VER, we may deal with learning strategies, with grammar explanations or with conversation practice, according to the students' needs and/or to each counsellor's preference.

The conditions for becoming counsellors at CADI-VER have been explained above in 1.3.1.2 (page 27). Regarding our work, it consists of producing materials suitable for self-access work (Carvalho, 1993); in giving counselling sessions to all English, French and English 1 and 2 no-class students; in giving counselling

to any user who requests it; and in doing some kind of research (Sturtridge 1992, Sheerin 1989, Hill 1994). The actual work of counsellors has been shaped by the circumstances and real needs of the context although there sometimes seems to be some kind of conflict between the counsellors' fondness for theory and their genuine disposition to support learners.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, I intended to integrate my experience with my literature review. The former refers to my experience during the setting up of the self-access centre at my workplace, the Language Centre-Veracruz; first as a teacher being trained for the innovation, that is, as an 'implementer' (Markee, 1997: 44), and then as a SAC counsellor at the CADI-VER. The latter refers to my reading of concepts such as: autonomy, self-directed learning, self-instruction, self-access centres and their setting up, self-access language learning (SALL), counselling and counsellors, among others, while doing the current study. These were discussed according to different authors' ideas and the actual implementation of the same concepts in the context of study.

Regarding the notion of autonomy, I understand that it is a personal condition and/or attitude of any human being that cannot be taught. Thus, I concur with Little's (1990) idea that autonomy is not something that teachers can 'do' to learners, as well as with Breen and Mann's (1997) idea that autonomy is a quality of a person, a way of being. Consequently, I think that students need support and preparation (not training) in order to get familiar with SACs (Hill, 1994), as with any kind of innovation, but this does not mean that it will lead them to autonomy or to self-directed learning if they do not decide so. This view of autonomy is my starting point in this study, although it may be modified in the light of the discussion in chapter 4.

At this stage, I can say that under the real conditions of my context (CADI-VER), it may not be possible to practise self-directed learning as conceived by Dickinson (1987). At the University of Veracruz and so at the Language Centre-Ver, most aspects of what students are to study as well as when to study (the pace) are indeed decided by someone else but the students themselves. So, the mode of learning that prevails at CADI-VER is *self-instruction* (Ibid) and SALL, due to the place where it is undertaken (Sheerin 1989, Gardner and Miller 1997).

When I refer to self-instruction I mean that ‘no-class students’, as I decided to call them, already know what and when they must study, as their counsellors have already given them the programme of the course and the schedule for their weekly counselling session (cf. Higgs 1988), resulting in self-instruction. In this case, they work with the textbook wherever they want to, and some times they work with the self-access materials at CADI-VER which I then consider as practicing SALL. Regarding class-students, they only attend the CADI-VER to reinforce what they have studied in class. However, it might be possible that any student went to CADI to study something extra to their class and their programme, in which case they would be acting as self-directed learners, something that does not happen very often.

As far as counselling and learners’ preparation is concerned, we counsellors at CADI-VER play our new role trying to follow the theory, but as we are not able to follow everything the literature says, we struggle to adapt our actions to the real circumstances and needs of the context. So far, we have not been able to establish a learners’ preparation program or course. Although in the literature it is called learner ‘training’ (Dickinson 1987/1988, Wenden and Rubin 1987, O’Malley and Chamot 1990, Oxford 1990, Sinclair 1989, Wenden 1991, Holec 1980), I have decided to use the term ‘learner preparation’ (Dickinson, 1994) or ‘learner development’ (Sheerin, 1989) instead, since the connotation of the latter reminds me of a physical, mechanical and even manipulative activity rather than of an intellectual one; besides, as Little says, the term itself (learner training) is “against the spirit of autonomous learning schemes” (1991: 52).

In relation to the functions of a SAC, I certainly concur that

...[t]he learner needs people to talk to, to listen to, to discuss, and exchange information with, to write to, to practice with, to learn from. It is a function of the centre to bring learners together; to provide a meeting place: initially at least to create the basis and purpose for activities and to provide either monitoring or endorsement of activities... (McCafferty, undated: 24)

Unfortunately, in my opinion, the statement above is incompatible with what regularly takes place at CADI-VER, since we do not accomplish such a function. We do not encourage learners to work together or to meet in groups often, on the contrary, they are asked to keep quiet and not to gather; and when we do suggest that they get together in conversation sessions, it seems that students do not realize the importance of this kind of practice. This is one of the features of SALL that I find unsuitable and contradictory, at least at CADI-VER.

We can now turn to the second part of the literature review carried out during this study. The following chapter (Chapter 3) is related to the literature I found more suitable to what my actual context (CADI-VER), and work as a counsellor there, turned out to be after the implementation of the innovation, and to my own development throughout this study. Autonomy (a concept which is almost inseparable from self-access, at least in theory), self-access as an innovation, and the modes of learning practiced at CADI-VER are again discussed, but this time from a more current perspective, a perspective based on the resulting experience of their actual implementation.

3

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

In the previous chapter I tried to explain what I call basic notions related to self-access. I call them basic because they are the notions I was introduced to when I first came across this topic, that is, when we (the teachers at the Language Centre-Veracruz) were trained to become part of the implementation of the SAC in our Language Centre. These were also the conceptualizations I took into consideration during my first year as a SAC counsellor. Notions such as: autonomy, self-directed learning, self-instruction, self-access centres and the practicalities of setting one up, self-access language learning (SALL), counselling and the role of counsellors were discussed throughout my own development and view. Authors such as: Holec, Dickinson, Sturtridge, Little, Sheerin, among others, have been constantly mentioned as they are the ones who have devoted some of their studies to these topics.

In the present chapter I intend to discuss those notions (based on the ones in chapter 2) which may have undergone name changes, or to which new concepts have been added (e.g. independent learning, individual learning), but from the perspective and stance I assumed after having worked as a SAC counsellor for over a year and while doing this study. As Little asserts, "...redefinition of terms is a central concern of all theory; for only by a process of constant reflection and clarification can we hope to maintain an adequately coherent overview of any field of activity." (1991: 1). Therefore, I could say that at the moment of writing, these have become new conceptualizations, the ones I constructed through the development of this study as I found out that they were closer to what actually

happened in my context (CADI-VER); in other words, these notions reflect what I have learnt and what, in my view, the CADI-VER (SAC) and the mode of learning taking place there are like.

I also want to point out that several ideas and conceptualizations discussed in this section come from some of the authors who were mentioned in the previous one. However, this time some of them have changed, enriched their views and stances (and so have I), since they have already experimented and in some cases evaluated the outcomes of the implementation of the initial ideas they proposed. That is to say, after the implementation of diverse SACs and the modes of learning implicated in them, they have been able to observe the results, to reflect on them and to be more critical in this respect, as can be seen in the following section.

3.1 DIFFERENT VIEWS ON AUTONOMY

Since 'autonomy' is the notion around which other terms and a different approach to learning have come into view in the area of teaching-learning foreign languages, this section considers some of the diverse perspectives that are discussed in this field.

3.1.1 AUTONOMY

The notion of autonomy, some of its definitions, and the use that has been given to them in the educational milieu, especially at the beginning of its inclusion in this field (80's – mid-90's), have been discussed in section 2.1 (page 35). In the present section, more recent versions on this topic are commented on, including learner independence, which despite the difference of terms considered by Lamb (2003), I take as the equivalent of 'learner autonomy'. However, it does not mean that I discard information and knowledge that were developed in the first period of the inclusion of the word 'autonomy' in the language learning-teaching terrain; since I still find many of them relevant to my study and valid to my current conceptualizations.

Some of these more recent versions I refer to, as mentioned above, are those which in my view, are reflections and reconsiderations of the ones that had been commented on before, but this time, from a more critical, experienced-based, and sometimes flexible stance. Several of them have been presented in a com-

pilation of papers made by Benson and Voller (1997); others are papers from the conference 'Autonomy in Language Learning 1994' contained in a book edited by Pemberton et al. (1996); others are papers presented at the Independent Learning Conference 2003; and some others are articles that have been written after having experienced the implementation of self-access centres and the fostering of self-directed learning.

3.1.2 AUTONOMY IN EDUCATION

It is in the area of education where this term has widely been used and exploited, and I would say that it has even been institutionalized in the last 20 years. Through these years the ideas of autonomy and independence in applied linguistics and in language learning have had different definitions depending on the perspectives underlying them. These concepts have become as popular as the Communicative Language Teaching approach as a result of the development of the same patterns of change, the increasing demand of language learning (especially English) and the growing importance of media and information technologies (Benson and Voller, 1997). Thus, within educational arenas, the description of autonomy has developed from being a capacity to take charge of one's own learning (Holec, 1981), to being a desirable individual goal due to philosophical, pedagogical and practical reasons (Cotterall, 1995: 219), then to being a transformative way towards social autonomy (Benson, 1996), and who knows how it will be conceptualized in the future.

Among the diverse conceptualizations of autonomy that have arisen in the ELT milieu, I would like to mention the one suggested by Widdowson (1996) who finds autonomy and authenticity incompatible, and appealing to contrary realities. I also want to mention Benson's description of autonomy as the acknowledgement of the rights of learners within educational systems (1997), considering the fact that "the self-directed learner may choose classroom instruction" (Dickinson, 1987: 11). This position is also consistent with Pennycook's claim that there might be students "who independently [choose] to come to a teacher to learn and would prefer that teacher to teach in a 'teacherly' way." (1997: 43). Both these last statements sound so fair that I find them rather far from reality in the educational setting where I carried out this piece of research (CADI-VER). There, some students have no option but to take their English course(s) in the no-class mode, which is incongruously called 'autonomous mode' (as explained before, no-class mode and no-class students are terms which I created as a result of my inquiry

in the actual field of this study). However, I still think that even in this case students may be able to reach, or rather, exercise some type and degree of autonomy, understood as Boud and Cotterall describe it in the following paragraph.

Related to the use of the notion of autonomy in education, Boud comments that “[t]he main characteristic of autonomy as an approach to learning is that students take *some* significant responsibility for their own learning over and above responding to instruction.” (1988:23, my italics). Also talking about learning, Cotterall recognises that in several contexts many opportunities are given for “the learners to assume control of *some* of the decisions surrounding their learning.” (2003:1, my italics). At this stage, it has been a relief to me to notice that there are descriptions of autonomy in the learning field, which make use of the word ‘some’ instead of being as absolute as others, since from what I have seen, it is only some or a few decisions that can be made by learners, and even by teachers and counsellors, at least as far as the institutional systems are concerned.

Then, based on the various conceptualizations of autonomy in the educational field, there is the idea of autonomous learner/learning. Among others, Cotterall and Reinders (2000) define autonomous language learning as that in which motivated learners consciously make informed decisions about their own learning. In spite of the idea that autonomous language learners are by definition motivated learners (Ushioda, 1996), which may be the ideal case of autonomous learners, I would remove the word ‘motivated’ from this description, since I think that even unmotivated learners can make informed decisions. As Boud says, “[a]ll students are capable of working independently; it is not the exclusive province of the most able.” (1981: 27).

Regarding the role that willingness and consciousness have in the development of autonomy, Littlewood (1996) comments that the main factors for autonomy to be reached are the learners’ ability and willingness to assume responsibility for their learning, and that willingness depends on motivation as well as on the confidence to take responsibility for their choices. On the other hand, “[f]or learners to become conscious of their learning and to make informed decisions, they need to have certain skills or be given the opportunity to develop them” (Anderson, Reinders and Jones-Parry, 2004: 4). However, I think that if, in the worst of the cases, learners are not given the opportunities to develop their decision making skills, they can always look for chances. On the contrary, if a student does not want to take charge of anything she is allowed to do regarding her learning (there are several aspects which, even if a student wanted to take charge of, are beyond her possibilities), she may not exercise any degree of autonomy.

Another factor, maybe the most important to ponder in the development and achievement of autonomy, or at least in its search, is the learners' personal constructs. It is clear that learners have different attitudes, expectations, interests and preferences on what and how to learn. As Nunan and Lamb say, "each learner is an island.... and constructs an individual vision of reality in an individual way" (1996: 157). Thus, it should not be expected that all learners (and people in general) all over the world view and achieve autonomy or any degree of autonomy in the same way.

3.1.3 OTHER VIEWS ON AUTONOMY IN THE EDUCATIONAL FIELD

Based on the statements above, I think that before trying to apply (import) any new idea, approach, methodology or materials in the education field, it must be considered where these ideas and propositions in the TESOL field come from, whom they were originally created for and where they are intended to be implemented. In this case (autonomous learning and self-access), it is not difficult to realize that as usual, these concepts come from the Western world (powerful countries where English is the native and/or the official language - centre countries), expressly USA, UK (Jones 1995, Pennycook 1997) and France (where these ideas were set at CRAPEL), where the ideas of independence and autonomy are of great value, among other reasons, due to their convenient exportation to periphery countries (cf. Canagarajah 1999, Pennycook 1997).

Unlike some authors (Knowles 1975, Holec 1981, 1985, Dickinson 1987), Benson and Voller (1997), Pennycook (1997) and Chanock (2003) do not agree with the identification of responsibility, which is present in several descriptions of autonomous learning, as a condition to achieve the latter, with independence as part of our natural psychological development, but they identify both terms as cultural assumptions, specifically as modern Western values. Furthermore, Chanock (2003) envisages the possibility of spreading these assumptions to the detriment of learners in other cultures, where autonomy might not be welcomed (cf. Pierson, 1996). She suggests that instead of letting our practice be guided by ethnocentric assumptions and by the stereotypes of the learners' cultures, we (teachers and counsellors) should learn about these cultures and use that knowledge as "a dynamic and shifting background" in order to help the students when they consult us. (Chanock, 2003: 5) (cf. Spack 1997, Zamel 1997). This conception

agrees with Holliday's view of taking into consideration not only the national or regional cultural influences on the communities who are to adopt an innovation, but the different cultural influences (smaller cultures) that intervene in finding 'the appropriate methodologies' (autonomy, SALL and SACS) to be implemented in a specific context (1994: 56).

In that respect, I would also say that we, our practices and the establishment of alternative innovative learning facilities should not be guided only by the theoretical notions and the rhetoric surrounding these topics (autonomy, self-directed learning, independence, self-access centre) (Spack, 1997). Instead, we should take into account the context, the whole place (the 'ecosystem' as named by Holliday and Cooke, 1982) where innovations are to be implemented (Lamb, 2003) (cf. Yim Ping Chuk, 2003). In Sinclair's view, when promoting autonomy (or implementing any kind of innovation), we should take into account the "interpretation of the particular cultural, social, political and educational context in which it is located" (2000, 6). Lamb (2003) suggests that in order to make sense of the context and its influences on the integration of autonomous learning, the 'topography' (broader context) of its developments should be analysed; the drivers (socio-economic, theoretical, professional, political, educational and technological) which propel such developments should be explored; and new research methodologies for us to interpret the above should be employed.

Thus, we should have a "sound, culturally sensitive foundation" (Jones, 1995: 229) to implement any innovation, if we do not want to fall into the danger of assuming "that autonomy is an interculturally valid objective..." (Jones, 1995: 233). Under these circumstances, if we do not contextualize and 'land' the ideas and suggestions that we receive from the Western world there is another danger which Pennycook warns against when he says that

...the promotion of learner autonomy around the world may become yet another version of the free, enlightened, liberal West bringing one more form of *supposed* emancipation to the unenlightened, traditional, backward and authoritarian classrooms of the world. (1997: 43, my italics)

This has to do with the idea of spreading western concepts in a culturally intrusive manner, thinking that these are superior to the ones prevailing in the non-western world (Holliday, 1994).

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, some new insights have been integrated into the autonomy/independence terrain. Some of these are: the politi-

cal element, the change in the distribution of power as a result of the change in the roles of teachers and learners, and the social implications of language learning (Benson and Voller, 1997). Along this line, and akin to Benson (1997), Pennycook suggests that in the “mainstream of applied linguistics thinking, autonomy has become psychologized, technologized and universalized” (1997: 35), and I would add, institutionalized, meaning that the institution (in this case the UV) has adopted and adapted it as of its own, and it is now functioning according to the institution’s principles, norms and convenience. They suggest that the use of the term ‘autonomy’ and the practice of it should not be narrowed to defined personal needs. Instead, it should be seen more critically, and go beyond, towards some social/cultural change. However, it seems that some other authors like Breen and Mann (1997), who also agree on developing and promoting the ideals of autonomy, take into greater consideration the complexities and constraints upon them. And so do I, especially when I think of some educational systems, like the one I am immersed in, where many directions, instructions, programs, orders, courses of action, curricula, etc. are decided and set down by the people in charge (in the power position) of the educational system, on a top-down basis.

Besides the desire and interest in fostering individual autonomy in the language learning environment, a different perspective on promoting autonomy is proposed by Benson (1996) who instead of using the term ‘responsibility’ on the management of learning, uses the word ‘control’ and asserts that such control is not achievable by acting by oneself but by acting collectively, or by interaction, discussion and negotiation with others as also suggested by Little (1996). That is to say, “[a]utonomous learners are characterized by an independence that is at once constrained and enriched by interdependence.” (Little, 2003: 223) (cf. Boud, 1981).

Another aspect that has been looked at, referring to autonomy in language learning, is that of the socio-cultural context in which learners are situated, as they are not in isolation but in collaboration with others when learning (Pal-freyman, 2003). This author focuses on the local interpretations and implementation of that which “was *easiest to administer* and which was *most aligned with other organizational concerns*” (Ibid: 197, author’s italics). For his part, Holliday maintains that the discourse on autonomy is embedded in the wider discourse of English-speaking Western TESOL whereby teachers (mostly non-native speakers) “can be trained to deliver ‘learner training’...” (2005: 79), becoming some kind of “crusaders in their quest to *change* their students into ‘better’ thinkers and ‘learners’” (Ibid: 80, author’s italics). Therefore, the notion of autonomy

could be another example of the dominant discourse within TESOL, produced and ‘diffused’ by the dominant Western native-speakers’ aiming at controlling the non-native ‘others’.

At present, in addition to the theoretical development around the subjects of autonomy and independence and consequently of self-access and its implications, there are some academics (teachers/counsellors) who have done some more practical work. Some have carried out evaluation of materials and self-access facilities (cf. Gardner 1999, Gardner and Miller 1999, Reinders and Lewis 2004). Some others have designed instruments to assess “learners’ capacity for self-direction” (Lai, 2001: 34), and they have even constructed rating scales for that. Others have suggested guides on how to establish and run a self-access centre (e.g. Gardner and Miller, 1999), quite similar to the ones edited by the British Council in 1992-1993 which I read when I took my first self-access training course. And some others have produced materials to be used either at a SAC, in a classroom, or else outside these two with the recommendation that the users (teachers/counsellors) adapt them to their specific needs. These materials can be photocopied and they consist of worksheets that not only promote the learning of language but autonomy/independence too (Harrison, 1997). They can also be tasks separated according to the students’ level and grouped into areas like: Learner training, Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking, Vocabulary, Grammar, Paralinguistics, and Self-assessment (very similar to the work areas we have at CADI-VER) (Gardner and Miller, 1996).

I finish this section by mentioning some ideas from two of the sources I have read, which resonated on me because I find them close and relevant to my view and to my context. One is Benson and Voller’s introduction to their book; the other is an article written by Barbara Sinclair in which she talks about a book related to an autonomous learning project in a university in Helsinki. In the first, the authors comment on the flow of methods and materials from the West to the less economically developed cultures of the world, resulting in the transmission, (or imposition) of ethnocentric concepts such as autonomy and self-access (learning). Then they deal with the uncertainty of these so called concepts, which are in constant transition (Benson and Voller, 1997: 11-12), But then I wonder, what is not?, what is not in transition in these extremely dynamic times?

In the second one, Sinclair mentions the ten principles of autonomy that form the basis for the Autonomous Learning Modules project at the Language Centre of the Helsinki University. Since these principles seem to include most of the topics discussed in this section I will use the ones I consider useful as a means of summarizing it:

- autonomy is a capacity that has to be [recovered]
- the road to autonomy is a process
- autonomy inevitably involves change in power relationships
- autonomy requires supportive structures, both internal and external
- autonomy requires conscious awareness of the learning process
- autonomy has both individual and social aspects
- autonomy has to be adapted to different cultural contexts. (Sinclair 1999: 323, citing Karlsson, Kjisik and Nordlund 1997)

To the information above I want to add an argument with which I soundly agree, mainly because I believe that autonomy is a human act that we lose throughout our school and/or family life and that what we need to do is to get it back. As Holliday argues,

...[a]utonomy cannot therefore be *created* in the educational setting. It can only be encouraged, perhaps nurtured, or perhaps capitalized upon, because its origin is elsewhere, within the world which the student brings with him/her. (Holliday, 2003: 124, author's italics) (cf. Holliday, 2005)

3.1.4 AUTONOMY AT CADI-VER

As you may have observed in section 2.5.1 (page 54), I did not mention the concept of autonomy nor of self-directed learning. That is because I consider that these two closely related ideas or concepts are not actually carried out in my context, especially as they are ambitiously conceived by Holec (1981, 1985) and Dickinson (1987). I could even say that the terms responsibility, autonomy and self-direction at the University of Veracruz have become “a rhetorical convention rather than a reality” (Little, 1991: 49) in the foreign languages teaching milieu. However, trying to be optimistic, based on what Little (Ibid.) says about the possibilities of promoting and achieving a certain degree or kind of autonomy, I do not discard the possibility that the students and the counsellors develop some kind of autonomy (psychological and social), or the possibility that the counsellors give support to students for them to develop it. And this could be done “by processes of negotiation that invite learners to explore and make explicit their personal constructs” (Ibid: 37) during the learning process.

Thus, considering what Little (1991) and Breen and Mann (1997) discuss about the possibilities that teachers as well as students take individual initiatives, inter-

pretations and decisions even within tertiary school systems, I can foresee that favouring autonomy in diversified versions is feasible. I can think of counsellors taking these individual initiatives, interpretations and decisions regarding their actions and attitudes towards the students in the counselling sessions (learners' preparation). As well, the students could decide on their actions and attitudes towards the program they have to cover, their learning and the interactions they establish with other students and with the counsellors.

I believe that all the above is possible, provided that autonomy and subsequently self-direction refer to attitudes rather than to techniques or modes of instruction (Dickinson, 1987), and to a universal capacity (Little, 1999) rather than to a special ability. In fact, my view of autonomy in the real circumstances of my context is not related to Holec's expectations and conditions that he prescribes as necessary to reach an autonomization of learning, explicitly:

- firstly, the learner must have the ability to take charge of his learning, ie he must *know how* to make the decisions which this involves;
- secondly, there must be a learning structure in which control over the learning can be exercised by the learner, ie in which the learner *has the possibility* of exercising his ability to take charge. (1981: 7, author's italics)

Even if a student knew or had developed the ability, with or without assistance (Benson 2001), to take charge of her learning, which I consider viable, I think that in our school system, students (mostly youngsters 18-25) could not fulfil the second condition. What I indeed agree with, is what Holec (1981) mentions as a third condition in which the learner should want to take charge of her learning; since I think desire and willingness are the most important conditions to move any human being to take action.

In sum, I would say that even if autonomy is neither exercised nor fostered in its full conception (according to some of the concepts that have been discussed so far) at CADI-VER and maybe at all CADIS in the university, some people there (students, teachers, counsellors) could achieve some degree of autonomy. I here want to explain that the notion of autonomy that I refer to when talking about that which could be achieved in the context of the current study relates particularly to autonomy in learning. This concept is a combination based on my own understanding and on Little's (1991) and Sionis' (1990) descriptions of autonomy (mentioned in section 2.1.1, page 39). Thus, it is described as the capacity to reflect, to be critical, to identify needs and goals, to make decisions and elections (of the

most suitable learning method) and to put them into practice as far as the person's own physical, intellectual and emotional possibilities and the external circumstances allow her to do so.

Some counsellors are indeed trying not only to foster autonomy among their students but also trying to achieve and be aware of their own autonomy (Breen and Mann, 1997). I think it is worth taking into account what Chanock (2003) and Knight (1996) say, that independence and autonomy in learning do not have to do with the absence of guidance, but with respecting the learners' decisions of taking or not any kind of guidance as they wish.

Having talked about autonomy, which has been the basis of the discourse around the implementation of self-access centres at the University of Veracruz, I proceed to talk about the mode of learning that has actually been practised and which has derived from both: the ideology underpinning such implementation and the real circumstances in the daily learning environment there.

3.2 THE NEW MODE OF LEARNING PRACTICED IN MY CONTEXT

In the current foreign language learning milieu, a different, if not new, mode of learning has been developed at CADI-VER as a result of:

- the implementation of the SAC (CADI-VER) (for details see section 2.5.1, page 54),
- the existence of no-class students there (for details see section 2.5.1, page 54), and
- the notions related to learning (autonomously, independently, without a teacher, etc.) (for details see section 2.2, page 40)

As mentioned before, for my convenience and understanding I will call it 'no-class mode' of learning. It could be said that it is mostly a combination of SALL (Self-access language learning) (Sheerin 1989, Gardner and Miller 1997) and self-instruction (Dickinson, 1987). The former, is defined by Cotterall and Reinders as the learning which

...takes place in a Self-access centre. A self-access centre consists of a number of resources (in the form of materials, activities and help), usually in one place, that accommodates learners of different levels, styles and with different goals and interests. It aims at fostering autonomous language learning. (2000: 38)

The latter is connected to the possibility that even if it fosters autonomy, it does not mean that there is a direct relationship between SAC and autonomy (Sheerin 1997, Sturtridge 1997, Reinders 2004). Sometimes, as Sheerin (1997) says, a SAC can be used to do homework or any other teacher-directed activities resulting in self-instruction, which means working without the presence of a teacher (Dickinson, 1987). This lack of connection between SAC and autonomy may also be observed in the case in which students are forced to learn autonomously in a SAC with a completely counterproductive result (Benson and Voller, 1997).

In my view, this is exactly what has happened at CADI-VER; students do either teacher-directed activities or program-directed activities from which there is a significant lack of what Littlewood (1997) identifies as 'experiential' activities, (productive skills: oral and writing) (cf. Vinkenvleugel, Lotovalé and Jones-Parry, 2003), with materials that sometimes leave no room for students to make decisions (Gremmo and Riley, 1995), and they do not practice a systematic self-assessment but sometimes wait until the end-of-course summative assessment (cf. Harris 1997, Srimavin and Pornapit 2003). Furthermore, in most cases, they work by themselves not because they want to but because they do not have any other choice (no place for them in a regular class, or attending at CADI is a compulsory part of their course). That is why I say that students at CADI-Ver are learning, or rather studying English in this no-class (SALL) mode of learning within a self-instruction paradigm.

Regardless of the mode of learning in actual practice in our self-access centre (CADI-VER), learners as well as teachers/counsellors should be prepared to face the innovation. We may not always do what the theory points out, but we do need support in undertaking any kind of new activity or change in our duties. Thus, the following section is about the preparation of students, considered as the clients (Markee, 1997), so that they can understand and undertake the new (different) mode of learning; the preparation of teachers and counsellors, who play the role of implementers (Ibid.), so that we can implement and promote the innovation and support the learners in their task by understanding the role of counselling.

3.3 LEARNERS' DEVELOPMENT / TEACHERS' DEVELOPMENT

The preparation that individuals have in order to face an innovation and make this more feasible is crucial. In other words, the more equipped the people involved in the adoption and implementation of an innovation are, the more probabilities of success they have. The following sections refer to the two groups of people who are directly and primarily involved in the implementation of self-access centres and SALL.

3.3.1 LEARNERS' DEVELOPMENT

As mentioned in section 2.3 (page 42), I do believe that learners need some help with their incorporation to self-directed learning, as with any innovation they are to deal with, and that this introduction should be gradual, bit by bit (Dickinson, 1988). Several authors talk about this field of learner development (preparation) and I agree that teachers and/or counsellors play a key role in helping learners to learn autonomously (Benson 2001, Gardner and Miller 1999, Sinclair, McGrath and Lamb 2000), since as Trebbi points out “to be *in* charge, however, is one thing; to be able to *take* charge of one’s own learning is another.” (2003: 169, author’s italics). And in order to enable students to take such charge and to improve their language learning performance, the implementation of learner development programs can be effective (Benson, 2001).

Relative to the learners’ emotional and personal features, Cotterall comments on her conviction that “affective preparation for assuming control of one’s learning is an essential first step.” (2003: 1). Another opinion in this respect is that “the knowledge and personal qualities that learner involvement requires cannot be taken for granted and need to be developed over time” (Tudor, 1996: 34). This seems to me that fostering autonomy is moving towards more open, personal-related arenas.

However, the idea of implementing learner training and/or learner development (the term suggested by Sheerin, 1989, 1997 and which I prefer) programs, as several authors have suggested, based on different techniques, principles, components, strategies (cf. Dickinson 1988, Ellis and Sinclair 1989, Oxford 1990, Wenden 1991, Tudor 1996, Benson 2001), seems to be so complex, so technical, sometimes so patronising and to take so long that it becomes more problematic than helpful

(Dickinson, 1988a), unless it is a programme that has already been implemented in a real context and for this reason may be more practical and practicable, as in the case of some reports of SACs and Language Centres (cf. Vinkenvleugel, Lotovale and Jones-Parry, 2003). Consequently, the implementation of such programs may not be practicable in the education system where I am immersed, in which there are almost always time limits and programs to follow and complete; except for the cases in which learners may not belong to any program of study (undergraduate, postgraduate) and might be in a position to take their time to study a foreign language.

Furthermore, it seems to me that this insistence on helping the learners to study in a self-directed mode and to become autonomous falls into contradictions. As Hill mentions, the inevitable paradox of learner autonomy initiatives having been teacher-led and the fact that much of the literature regarding this topic “focuses principally on the means by which teachers can enable learners to take increasing charge of their own learning” (1994: 213)

Although it is a fact that in my context (Language Centre/University of Veracruz) students are not allowed to decide the curriculum nor the subjects’ programmes, I agree that it is necessary to provide or bring learning strategies closer to learners for them to identify their own preferred ways of learning, and for them to define realistic goals and time frames (Nunan, 1988) within the actual course that they want or have to take. Assistance for students to become aware of their capabilities, of their own strategies, or maybe to remind them that they can make decisions and exercise their autonomy, is what I really consider a core element in any kind of learner preparation, in any kind of course, in any kind of educational act.

3.3.2 COUNSELLING

Derived from the aspects related to learner development mentioned above, there are the concepts of counselling, counselling sessions (O’Dell, 1992, Abercrombie 1981, Crabbe 1993, Little 1995), and of course, the role of counsellors, sometimes called ‘advisors’ (cf. Reinders, Hacker and Lewis, 2004, Voller 1997, Riley 1997) (for details on these issues see sections 2.3, page 42 and 2.5.1.2 page 57). The interest in counselling has increased as a result of the interest in fostering autonomous (language) learning (Reinders, 2004c). Some different perspectives and studies regarding the function of counselling sessions and subsequently, that of the counsellors, have been incorporated into this field. For example, it has become

important to provide, as Esch (1996) says, a learning environment supportive of autonomy. Such an environment should be driven by choice, flexibility, adaptability/modifiability, reflectivity and contribution. It is also important to encourage learner willingness and ability to manage their learning for themselves, to boost their confidence in their own ability to learn independently, and to provide them with opportunities to do so and to reflect on their learning (Cotterall, 2003).

In this case the main responsibilities of a counsellor are: “[to help] the learners to refine the statement of their problem, [to analyze] its possible causes and [to identify] suitable strategies to solve it.” (Ibid.: 3). Even if the counsellor managed to do all these duties, Cotterall still recognises, and I agree with her, that in counselling sessions for foreign language learners, who have few opportunities to apply their learning, “independence can only be promoted in general theoretical terms.” (Ibid.: 4).

Another interesting suggestion for counsellors who want to foster autonomy among their students, is that we should be aware, that is to say, investigate their educational background, the attitudes and beliefs that they bring into their language learning (Carter, 2001), in other words, their personal constructs (cf. Chanoock 2003, Holliday 1994, Pierson 1996). It sounds like a factor to have in mind as a counsellor, although it is not always the case that counsellors count on enough time to be able to carry on such an investigation. Yet, it is a suggestion to be considered with the purpose of finding the way to put it into effect.

On the other hand, from Dam’s point of view, the development of learner autonomy depends on teachers’ developing awareness of their new role. Thus, teachers or counsellors who want to promote self-directed learning (autonomy) have as important a responsibility as the learners themselves, as they should

...encourage learners to reflect on their learning, understand the process of learning and the functions of language, and adopt patterns of learning in which they themselves take initiatives and feel in control of their progress. (2003: 135)

In some recent studies it is mentioned that students usually appreciate and find it helpful to have counselling sessions (sometimes called advisory sessions) in which they find support in achieving some kind of self-study skills (Cotterall 2003, Mack and Turnbull 1999) and/or opportunities to practise conversation skills (cf. Pemberton and Toogood, 2001). On the other hand, for Voller (1997) and Riley (1997) it is not only the learners who find something positive in a counselling session, since both, the counsellor and the learner, have something to contribute.

While Voller (Ibid.) pays more attention to interpersonal relationships between both parties; Riley (Ibid.) concentrates on the processing and distribution of social knowledge. Thus, a new relationship between learners and counsellors is of importance if autonomous learning is to work (Benson and Voller, 1997).

For the purpose of improving the counselling sessions, Kelly (1996) describes some macro and micro-skills that teachers/counsellors should develop in order to give support to the learners on the basis of one-to-one therapeutic counselling, which I consider beyond the possibilities of someone, teacher or counsellor, who does not have a knowledge of psychology. Besides, I agree with Riley's (1997) argument that we counsellors may not have the right to intervene in matters of personality and individual autonomy. Nevertheless, as mentioned below, I think teachers and especially counsellors need to develop skills (get prepared) that enable them to assist students in their exercise of SALL and in their search for autonomy.

There are also some other studies which have dealt with counselling sessions, trying to find better approaches to counselling. Analysing the discourse of counselling (advising) can be of help in the development of training materials or activities and even programs to be followed during a certain course (Pemberton et al., 2001). Doing something similar to the study above but focussing on how learners characterize the task of learning in a certain context, Crabb, Hoffmann and Cotterall found that the students' short-term goal "...is to pass a test and be accredited by an institution, even though their long-term goal might be to use the language effectively for real communication." (2001: 14). Based on these findings, they suggest, similarly to the other suggestions mentioned above, that a counsellor needs to unfold the learner's problem(s), establish the learner's goals, and explore their beliefs about language learning through the counselling sessions (Ibid.), although, isn't this like doing all the students' work for them? The former suggestions seem to me that instead of supporting, guiding and/or accompanying the learners throughout their own processes, the counsellors should take control and do things for them, which is contradictory to the idea of fostering autonomy. It is clear then, that a counsellor's role and work are beyond the knowledge of the target language and for that reason counsellors should also get constant support and preparation, if not from experts at least from colleagues and among ourselves, but I insist, this does not mean that counsellors' work is to do the job for the students.

In another analysis of the interactions between counsellors and learners during counselling sessions, Clemente found that

...for educators to take on a counselling role, it is crucial to raise awareness of the dynamics of learning cultures, and of how counsellors' and learners' actions are framed by their broader social and cultural context. (2003: 214).

In accordance to the concept of 'small cultures' (Holliday, 1999), Clemente argues that counselling learning cultures are constructed in those spaces in which both counsellors and learners express themselves, and where institutional and individual negotiation as well as flexibility should lead to a really supportive counselling session.

On the other hand, there are also reports commenting on problematic aspects of counselling. It is mentioned that sessions may lack clear objectives; that students attending these may not attain the appropriate study techniques and that they have found the sessions impractical (Reinders 2004b). This may be the result of irregular attendance, poor advertising of the sessions, the vagueness of the explanations of the sessions themselves, the brevity or lack of introductory session(s) and/or the little time that students devote to the sessions (Voller, Martyn and Pickard 1999, Fu 1999).

Finally, counsellors in this new profession may need to play different roles depending on the students they are working with and the circumstances of a certain situation.

In other words, helping learners become more autonomous does not occur in a vacuum, as the advisors, as well as the students, are influenced in many ways, from many sides... (Reinders, Sakui and Akakura, 2004:6),

In the study carried out by these authors, they found out that counsellors themselves are aware that they sometimes have to act as 'cheerleaders', as 'fellow travellers', as 'factory assembly workers', and as 'ghosts' (pushing the students to engage in autonomous learning). In assuming the latter role they "felt the strongest ambivalence and contradiction in reconciling theory and practice" (Ibid.). I have to admit that this feeling has invaded me many times, and that I have not been able to do anything but let myself be guided by the situation.

3.3.3 TEACHERS' DEVELOPMENT

More than counsellors, classroom teachers are in frequent contact with students. Therefore, it might be easier for the former to establish rapport and encourage the latter to undertake some independent learning (Lee, 1998). Without a doubt, teachers should also be prepared to assist learners; for that reason it is necessary to consider not only an initial teacher training, such as the one we were given before the setting up of the SAC, but a continual support for teachers in this area (McGrath, 2000). In this respect, Gardner and Miller comment that

[t]eachers should be sensitized to their own beliefs and attitudes as a first step in becoming aware of any changes in their roles when working with their learners in self-access mode. (1999: 43)

Logan and Moore carried out a study in a language school in New Zealand on developing a series of workshops for teachers who would be involved in helping learners to learn. This study shows that teachers felt that the workshops had been useful "because they contextualised and justified their own beliefs and practices and in some cases extended their knowledge" (2003: 6).

Along the same lines, Fullan and Hargreaves talk about the importance of teacher development (training courses, workshops, teacher-exchange, etc) in the successful implementation of an innovation (i.e. SALL and SACs) by stating that "successful change involves learning how to do something new." (1992: 1). They pay special attention, as well as McGrath (2000), to the continuous support that teachers should get during the course of the implementation, but they recognize the lack of such teacher preparation in most innovation attempts. Unfortunately, I think this is the case for the implementation of SACs and SALL at the Language Centre-Veracruz and perhaps at the whole University, given that teachers had few training courses/sessions prior to, at the beginning of and after such implementation. Apart from annual conventions or seminars that have taken place in other universities, there seems to have been little tracking to the innovation.

3.4 SELF-ACCESS: THE INNOVATION

In section 2.4 (page 45) I have already discussed several factors and concepts that theoretically make up a self-access centre (SAC), namely: autonomy and self directed learning (the latter as a consequence of the former), self-instruction, self-access resources and materials and self-access learning (SALL). In this section I plan to discuss some of these notions but incorporated with notions such as change, innovation and diffusion, which relate, in a more integrative view, to what I have experienced in the field of study (CADI-VER).

It has become common to link autonomy and independence to SALL and SAC, and all these to the role of technology; although it is not true that the use of self-access centres and the practice of self-access learning necessarily lead to autonomy (Benson and Voller, 1997). As with the rapid development of technology, the spreading of self-access centres has been significant, since these could represent an economical solution (it is indeed since there is no need to pay more teachers' salaries) to large scale language learning needs in language teaching institutions, "a solution which is justified pedagogically by its association with the keyword of autonomy and independence" (Ibid.: 6). This is very much the case at the University of Veracruz, where there are so many students who have to study English as part of their undergraduate programs that they cannot find place in class groups and have to study by themselves at the self-access centres (CADIS).

Besides the diverse names that have been used to refer to self-access facilities, ('individual learning centre' or 'independent learning centre'), there are other more updated conceptions of what a self-access centre is, or rather, should be. For instance, according to Cotterall and Reinders, a self-access centre consists of

...a number of resources (in the form of materials, activities and support), usually in one place, that accommodates learners of different levels, styles and with different goals and interests. It aims at developing learner autonomy among its users. (2000: 25).

It is also thought that

...[o]ne of the main advantages of self-access in a tertiary context is that it provides flexibility; students can use the facilities at their leisure and work according to their needs. Staffs are usually available to provide guidance. (Reinders, 2004b: 4).

This is only partly true for the CADI-VER since the students can seldom work on the basis of their needs. Due to its great demand, it gets crowded and there are some constraints concerning the time that students can use the facilities. Besides, even though the counsellors are there to assist learners, they almost never ask for our help. In my view, the above-mentioned descriptions are still idealised conceptions of a self-access centre.

At this point I would prefer to talk about the actual situation in the context of the present study rather than about what is supposed or should be according to the various authors that have studied and written about self-access and its implications. Sturtridge explicitly talks about the situation in Mexico regarding self-access in language learning at the tertiary level system. She mentions the number of well resourced self-access facilities that have been set up at different universities and that each one has been planned to meet its particular needs. She also points out that regional work groups and frequent conferences have been useful in establishing a network between the universities to exchange ideas and discuss problems (1997: 68) (for details on Mexico's SAC project see section 2.5, page 49). However, as Clemente comments, "it is an *outsider* account" (1998: 13), and we, the people who have been truly involved in the self-access project in Mexico, have been able to experience and observe it from the inside.

Authors who have been more critical in this respect describe the self-access resource centres in general as

...the most typical means by which institutions have *attempted* to implement notions of autonomy and independence over the last twenty years to the extent that 'self-access language learning' is now often used as a synonym for 'autonomous language learning'. (Benson and Voller, 1997: 15, my italics)

The above seems an accurate description to me, especially because they talk about an attempt rather than about a reality. And in my view, it is what has been done in the SACs at the University of Veracruz, by confusing studying by oneself (without taking regular classes) with autonomous learning. It is to be remembered that the promotion of autonomy depends on the way we do self-access (cf. Sheerin 1997, Sturtridge 1997). That is to say, the principles, ideologies and practices which underpin and are undertaken, as well as the materials and their use in such self-access facilities may or may not promote autonomy.

3.4.1 SELF-ACCESS - THE INNOVATION, THE CHANGE

Innovation, as many other concepts, has been described and explained in a variety of forms. For instance, Hannan and Silver (2000) refer to innovation as a short term strategy for maximizing profit or overcoming an immediate crisis. For Rogers “[a]n *innovation* is an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption.” (1995: 11, author’s italics). At the same time ‘change’ is conceived as a difficult process which may involve educational, political, national, institutional and personal issues; and that “challenges the very fabric of our society and our roles not only as professionals, but as people” (Lamie, 2005: 6). Thus, for this author, with whom I agree, innovation is a specific instance, act or action which is part of the process of change. According to Rogers, innovations are characterized by:

- their relative advantage (is it better than the idea it supersedes?)
- their compatibility (is it consistent with the existing values, past experiences and potential adopters’ needs?)
- their complexity (is it difficult to understand and use?)
- their trialability (is it experimented with on a limited basis?) and
- their observability (are the results visible to others?).

Thus, depending on how the innovation is “perceived by individuals as having greater relative advantage, compatibility, trialability, observability, and less complexity” it will typically be adopted more rapidly than other innovation (Rogers, 1995: 16).

According to Sikes, talking about innovation in education is to talk about changes that are put into operation in the system, for it to develop at the same level that societies in the world do (1992). Innovation in higher education can mean “a planned or deliberate process of introducing change, directed towards (but not necessarily achieving) improvements or solving or alleviating some perceived problem” (Hannan and Silver, 2000:10). In that sense, curriculum can be a vehicle for change, but it should be considered that innovation at this level is rather simpler than innovation at the operational level (Trebbi, 2003); it is not the same to plan as to implement. Anyway, we need to bear in mind that

...[i]n some cases, innovations which are intended to facilitate learning may be so disturbing for those affected by them – so threatening to their belief systems – that hostility is aroused and learning becomes impossible. (Coleman: 1996, 11)

Regarding curricular innovation, Markee defines it as

...a managed process of development whose principal products are teaching (and/or testing) materials, methodological skills and pedagogical values that are perceived as new by potential adopters. (1997: 46)

Pertaining to implementation of innovations in the educational milieu, particularly in language learning, I can say that anything related to self-access, i.e. SACS, SALL, self-access materials and resources, are some of the innovations which have been incorporated into language learning-teaching during the last two decades.

In the field of foreign language learning, Forbes and King think that due to the changes embedded in this process, “helping people learn foreign languages [is] very similar to helping people manage change generally...” (1994: 54). According to them, people who are involved in learning a foreign language should be able to manage change more effectively because learning a foreign language itself implies managing many internal changes; thus, they may deal with innovations with less difficulty. However, Hill thinks that opposite to what happens in the commercial world, in education “we have been notoriously unable to manage innovation successfully.” (1994: 216). If this is true, it might respond to the lack of contextualization of the innovations to be adopted in a particular education institution.

3.4.1.1 PROBLEMS WITH INNOVATION

As far as the problems of innovations in education are concerned, one is discerned by Sikes, who says that making changes is a normal state, but that the new aspect of innovation in education

...is the rate and frequency with which changes are being introduced and imposed through governmental and state legislation; the way in which these changes reflect a worldwide trend towards centralized control of education;.... and the degree to which they directly affect....the careers of all teachers, heads/principals....” (1992: 36)

To this list I would add the students, the clients who are also affected by any change carried out in the curriculum. This author argues that there are two major negative aspects involved in the innovation subject. Firstly, the fact that most of these innovations are imposed due to factors such as: “economic trends, historical events, different political parties coming into power, social and cultural develop-

ments, demographic trends, or technological advances” (Sikes, 1992: 37). It is the combination of some of these factors into which I consider that self-access and its related issues fall.

On the subject of the economic trends that incite the imposition of the innovation, Aston (1993) mentions that SACs can be looked at either as a means of improving learning or as a means of cutting teaching costs by potentially substituting for direct teacher operations. I indeed think that the CADI-VER had both aims from the beginning of its establishment, but because of the great number of students who had to take English courses; SACs at the University of Veracruz have focused on the second function. This can be observed when the students who, as a result of the lack of room in the classes (lack of classrooms and teachers available), are sent to the no-class (‘autonomous’) courses without being offered any other option, that is, as an imposition.

Regarding the technological and cultural developments that motivate the imposition of SAC, it can be said that for class students, the CADI-VER was (or rather is) more the kind of system where “...learners can be taught as it were by remote control, and the learning materials we shall mostly provide will be fully-developed language courses of a more or less traditional kind...” (Singleton and Little, 1989: 32). So, the class students can go to CADI-VER, and use the equipment and materials there to work on those aspects of language which are particularly problematic for them (c.f Sturtridge, 1992), which I found of great help considering that the students may go because they decided to. On the other hand, not all of these students attend the CADI-VER because they want to but because they are also sent to add up hours to get some extra points (credits) for their final grade, which I consider deviates from the original aim of self-access and learning.

Secondly, Sikes (1992) focuses on the impact that the innovations have on the teachers, who are simultaneously “the subject and the agent of change” (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992: 36). Sikes explains that teachers are the ones who have to implement the change(s) though they may not have been involved in their formulation, that is why they are also called the ‘implementers’ (Markee, 1997:44). For this reason, their motivation, training and finance should be considered (Lamie 2005, citing Kennedy 1999). They even may be asked to make changes which they may not find appropriate or possible. “And, inevitably, the very fact that they are required to implement these imposed changes means that their professional freedom and autonomy is further curtailed.” (Sikes, 1992: 37). Again, I would extend this observation also to the students, who, in their position of subjects of the change, are also victims of all these impositions and they may suffer all the

consequences (good or bad) that these may bring. In short, the real agenda for introducing change into a school implies a change in the culture of the institution and the people within it. Therefore, their beliefs and actions must be taken into consideration along the process of the implementation (Fullan, 2001) (cf. Chanoock 2003, Holliday 1994, Pierson 1996).

In order to exemplify the role that self-access has played as a problematic innovation in the educational system, I will compare it to a piece of technology (considering that technology is usually taken as a practical solution to a problem) playing some part in educational change. In this respect, Bax (2000) suggests that for technology to succeed as an innovation, and become 'normalised', it would have to meet two conditions: the people deciding the change (adopters in Markee's terms, 1997) must be aware of its limitations and perceive it as a partial solution; and the people implementing it (teachers) must pay attention to social and interpersonal areas, not only to the technical ones. Thus, as I see it, once the teachers/counsellors (implementers in Markee's terms, 1997) have integrated the innovation (SAC) into their regular practice and have promoted it appropriately, the students may be able to make use of it on a regular basis and even make it their own as a normal learning tool (cf. Markee 1997). The problem is that this has not occurred yet; not many teachers/counsellors have incorporated self-access to their regular work and not many students have made regular use of it as a decision of their own.

3.4.1.2 EFFECTING THE CHANGE

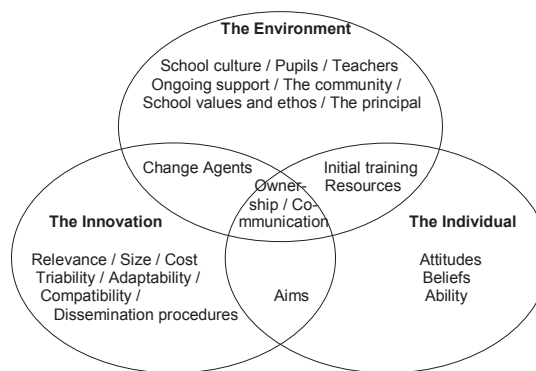
When talking about changes in the education milieu, four broad phases for the change process and the concept of outcome were envisaged by Fullan (1982: 39). These can be described as:

- I. Initiation, mobilization or adoption: leads up to and includes a decision to adopt or proceed with a change.
- II. Implementation or initial use: involves the first experiences of attempting to put an idea or program into practice.
- III. Continuation, incorporation, routinization, or institutionalization: refers to whether the change gets built in as an ongoing part of the system or disappears by way of a decision to discard or through attrition.
- IV. Outcome: refers to different types of results, and can be thought of generally as the degree of improvement in relation to given criteria. Results could

include student learning and attitudes, new skills, or satisfaction on the part of teachers and other school personnel.

In the ELT terrain Lamie summarizes the factors that may affect curriculum change, dividing them into three overlapping areas and she depicts them in the following diagram (2005: 56) (Fig. 3-1)

Fig. 3-1 Factors in Curriculum Change



Then, for effecting change Lamie (2005: 22) suggests some strategies devised by Chin and Benne (1969), such as:

- the power-coercive: based on application of power and political, economic and morals sanctions; typical in state-level legislation changes.
- the rational-empirical: based on information as motivator of change for relatively passive rational people; typical in seminars, resource centres.
- the normative-re-educative: based on active participation of individuals whose beliefs and attitudes are considered; typical in collaborative, problem-solving projects. In Kennedy's opinion this strategy offers the greatest potential for change (1987).

According to these phases and strategies, and though it may sound strong, I would argue that the SAC (CADI-VER) in the Language Centre-Ver. is now, at the moment of writing, in Phase III, since it has already been built in as an ongoing part of the system; and that the implementation of self-access at the University of Veracruz employed the power-coercive strategy but disguised as the rational-

empirical one. The authorities in the educational system (adopters) decided on the change (SAC Project) and implemented it without taking into account teachers' or students' opinions. However, they informed and trained us teachers trying to make us feel that they were taking us into consideration. Also related to the outcomes of the adoption of SACs as a change process at the University of Veracruz, I can relate it to the phase III (continuation, incorporation, routinization or institutionalization) suggested by Fullan (1982: 39), since I think it was a change "which [was] not technically well developed....[but] it [was] put into practice" Fullan (1982: 14). When I say technically, I do not only refer to the equipment or materials but also to the whole planning of the change.

In retrospect, I can now realize that during the implementation of CADI-VER (and maybe of all self-access centres at the UV), the situation regarding the conditions that Fullan (1982, 2001) mentions as suitable for a successful change to take place developed as follows: opportunity (time) for training and interaction was given just at the beginning of the process, it was not continuous (as it should be); we did not have enough time to select and develop a congruent program, or to redefine the change. However, we have been able to look at the change (the adoption of SACs and SALL) from a distance of five or six years and we have managed to reconsider and to adapt the aims and functioning of the system (SACs and SALL).

Among the multiple factors that may affect and determine the progression of any change in the education arena and which I find relevant to my context, I can mention: the change process (exercising power, strategies, aims, implementation procedures, and change agents); external factors (global, national, community and school); and internal factors (attitudes, ability, knowledge, relevance, benefits, training and support) (Lamie, 2005: 34). The combination of these elements may or may not favour the outcomes; we must consider that "[i]nnovations are not necessarily always beneficial" (Markee, 1997:46).

It is clear that there is an urgent need to carry out some investigation of the social context in order to reduce the risk of failure when implementing any kind of innovation (Holliday, 1996b). Thus, if a certain innovation is not bound to the social context where it is to be implemented (Fullan 1982, 2001, Kennedy 1987, Lamie 2005, Markee 1997) there is a risk for its rejection, in other words, the occurrence of 'tissue rejection' (Holliday, 1992). That is to say, that even well intentioned curriculum innovations may fail to take root in their host institution if they are not grounded in the target local framework (Coleman 1996, defining Holliday's use of the concept). This will be the basis of the discussion in section 3.5 below (page 93).

In the case of the SAC in my context (CADI-VER), it might be convenient or at least desirable that it ceased to be an innovation, that it ceased to be treated as "...a separate concept and field for discussion" (borrowing Bax's words when he talks about computers in language learning, 2003: 23), and became 'normalised', "hardly even recognised as a technology, taken for granted in every day [study] life" (Ibid.). And this is likely to happen when the self-access centre, as Bax mentions of computers in CALL, is "treated as always secondary to learning itself, when the needs of learners will be carefully analysed [or recognized] first of all, and then the [SAC] used to serve those needs" (Ibid.: 24). For this normalisation to take place, Rogers (1995) suggests the process through which an innovation can be diffused and accepted in a certain society, a point that is discussed below.

3.4.1.3 DIFFUSING THE INNOVATION (SAC)

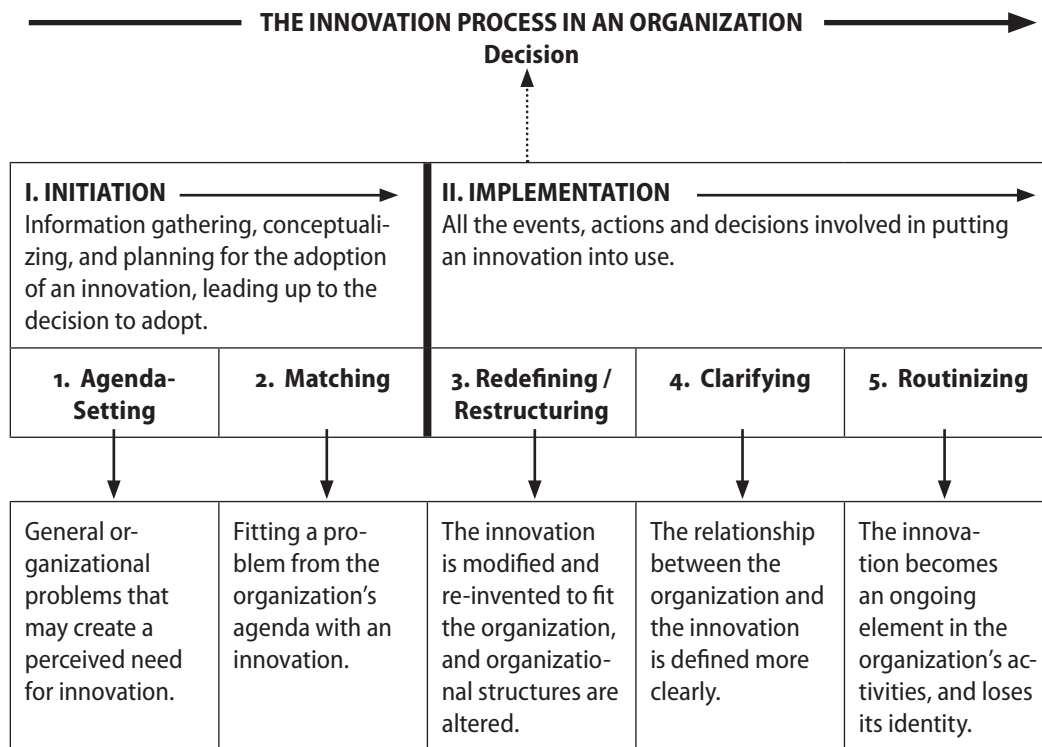
Connected with the matters discussed above about the phases of the change process and with the concept of innovation, the topic of diffusion is defined "as the process by which an *innovation* is *communicated* through certain *channels* over *time* among the members of a *social system*." (Rogers, 1995: 10, author's italics). From this definition the main elements which make it up are the following:

- innovation.- "idea, practice or object perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption" (Ibid.: 11),
- communication channels.- the means by which messages get from one individual to another.
- time.- period (of time) in which the following processes take place: the innovation-decision process by which an individual passes from knowledge of an innovation, to persuasion, to decision, to implementation and to confirmation of its adoption or rejection; the innovativeness of an individual or other unit of adoption, that is the relative earliness/lateness with which an innovation is adopted; and the innovation's rate of adoption in a system, that is the number of members of the system that adopt the innovation in that given period.
- social system.- set of interrelated individuals, informal groups or organizations "that are engaged in joint problem-solving to accomplish a common goal." (Ibid.: 23)

This author also suggests that the process of innovation in organizations is identified by the sequence of decisions, actions, and events in this process. This

sequence is constituted by five stages, two in the initiation subprocess and three in the implementation subprocess. It is thought that the latter stages cannot be undertaken until the former have been settled, either explicitly or implicitly. The following chart (Fig. 3-2) shows these five stages in the innovation process in an Organization (Rogers, 1995: 392). Based on this model I will try to trace the process that the SAC at the Language Centre-Veracruz (CADI-VER) has followed within the University of Veracruz.

Fig. 3-2. The innovation process in an organization



Considering the SAC (CADI-VER) and the notions around it (autonomy, SALL, self-instruction), as the innovation in my context, the Language Centre-Veracruz and the University of Veracruz as an organization, I will try to explain the own process of CADI-VER by adapting Rogers' model of the innovation process in an organization (1995) Fig. 3-2 above to the actual circumstances of my case.

- I. Initiation: information gathering, conceptualizing and planning.
- AGENDA SETTING: The University of Veracruz as part of and with the National Educational System realize the low level of English of most students in the country and consequently the need for providing English courses for all undergraduate students but without having enough financial resources and personnel to cover all the demand.
 - MATCHING: Permeated by the global influence of the notions of 'autonomy', 'self-directed learning' and 'self-access centres', the University supported by and with external (Western) institutions as the British Council plan the strategy(ies) to teach English to as many students as possible.
-►Decision to adopt the innovation – Self-access Centres –
- II. Implementation: events, actions and decisions involved in putting an innovation into use.
- REDEFINING / RESTRUCTURING: Teachers are trained, self-access centre is opened, it is attempted to follow the precepts learnt in theory, but finally adaptations have to be undertaken. Students taking classes at Language Centre are incorporated into the SAC (some of them compulsorily). Undergraduate students have to take English courses and in the face of the lack of classrooms and teachers, they are sent to study by themselves at CADI-VER through self-instruction, aided by counselling sessions.
 - CLARIFYING: A new mode of learning is developed and established at CADI-VER ('no-class' = SALL + self-instruction). Counsellors as well as students become more used to this.
 - ROUTINIZING: It seems that the whole system works more harmoniously, as if we had settled down. Yet, several students do not like it and prefer regular classes.

Parallel to Rogers' model above, Lamie (2005: 50) offers a summary of strategies for educational implementation, which she relates to the strategies for effecting change (Lamie, 2005:22) mentioned before. The following Table 3-3 shows these three strategies.

Table 3-3. Strategies for educational implementation (Lamie 2005)

Implementation Strategy	Defining Characteristics	Main Advantages	Main Disadvantages
Research, Development and Diffusion (R, D and D). - Based on the power-coercive strategy.	• Focus on the organization and innovation • Centre⇒ periphery • Unidirectional • Imposing • National • Instrumental	+ Easy to structure and package + Centrally controllable + Based on sound research + Widespread dissemination possible + Training funded	- Assumes a passive recipient - Information diluted - High cost - Lack of school and individual ownership - High resistance quotient
Social Interaction. - Based on the rational - empirical strategy	• Focus on the organization and innovation • Centre⇔periphery • Bi-directional • Reciprocal • Regional • Interactive • Diffusing	+ Potentially effective cascade model + Reaches all levels of the education system + Reduced training costs + Encourages ownership + Attempts to involve the users more directly	- Assumes rational recipients - Presupposes the presence of networks - Possibility of information being lost - Lack of consultation - Medium resistance quotient
Problem – Solving. - Based on the normative-re-educative strategy	• Focus on the individual • Periphery⇔periphery • Multi-directional • Action research • Local • Individual.	+ Encourages ownership and collaboration + Promotes collegiality + Directly confronts attitudes and beliefs + Encourages ongoing support and feedback + An awareness of local context	- Lack of overall control - Difficult to execute on a large scale - Reliance on change agents and may be subject to individuals - Teachers may possess limited research skills

In my understanding of this scheme of strategies, if I were to place the implementation of CADI-VER within this, it could be said that the Research, Development and Diffusion (R, D & D) strategy is the one that prevails, since the implementation covers the following features:

- it adopts a power-coercive change strategy in which power, political and economic and moral sanctions may be applied,
- it is essentially top-down, “with those at the top, in the position of power, imposing change on a client-user or consumer, though what is imposed is

generally carefully packaged to look both attractive and reasonable” (Lamie, 2005: 41-42) so as to appeal to the passive but rational recipients on whom it is to be imposed,

- it has poor and ineffective dissemination strategies as it does not encourage participation of users,
- it was imported from centre countries and was part of a National programme,
- it has taken a long time for the school and for the individuals to appropriate it (feel ownership).

In contrast, as I observed it as a counsellor at the CADI-VER, the parts of the process of its implementation which do not agree with this model are:

- there was not enough research or planning,
- it did not have a clear route from conception to adoption,
- it did not pass through defined stages (in theory five as is supposed to be according to Rogers’ model described above),
- it has been adapted according to the circumstances on a trial-error basis.

This being explained, I will now try to describe the implementation of the same CADI-VER, but from a different perspective.

3.5 REVISITING THE SAC PROJECT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VERACRUZ

In sections 1.3.1.2 and 2.5 (pages 27 and 49) I have already described the physical structure, the project, the implementation and the functioning of the SAC at the University of Veracruz but in particular at the Language Centre Veracruz, the CADI-VER. In this section I intend to integrate to the former descriptions about the subject of the present study, diverse points of view and topics such as ‘small cultures’, resistance to innovations, and an ecological approach towards innovations, which in my view, should be taken into consideration precisely when planning to implement any innovation (change) such as self-access and its subsequent subjects (autonomy, SALL, self-directed learning, etc.). And I say ‘should be’ because I think they were not considered at the moment of implementing the SAC at the Language Centre-Veracruz (CADI-VER).

I do not want to make such a generalization when talking about all the self-access centres opened at the University of Veracruz or all around Mexico, although I suspect that some of them may experience similar situations. At least as far as

the implementation of CADI-VER is concerned, I presume that neither the change agents (British Council) nor the adopters (SEP, University authorities) took fully into consideration the local cultural, social, economic factors that prevail here. When I talk about the local features of the place, I mean those which are characteristic of this particular 'small culture', this small social grouping (Language Centre-Veracruz and its community) with its own cohesive behaviour and its own dynamics (Holliday, 1999).

In Mexico the SAC Project as well as other projects such as TESOL Diploma courses, ELT Diploma Distant courses, BED. TESOL courses have been imported from and funded by the UK, through the ODA, the British Council and diverse British Universities which have been in charge of running them (Pincas, 1995). The point here is that in the implementation of some of these projects (if not in all) the view of the exporters/outside change agents seems to be that of the know-all, the experts, the educators and superior to the importers (cf. Holliday 2003, Pennycook 1997). Because of this, many aspects from the context in which the innovations are implemented (mostly in an imposed mode) are not taken into account. This, together with the imposition condition might increase the probabilities that the outcomes turned out to be disappointing. In some cases this can result in some kind of resistance (cf. Hannan and Silver 2000, Markee 1997) to such innovation, or rejection as it is called by Rogers (1995) or 'tissue rejection' as identified by Holliday (1992). And none of these terms implies that the innovation necessarily has to be removed, but at least, it might not function as it should, neither for the change agents nor for the adopters who may not welcome the change and therefore may not adopt it convincingly.

In order to avoid these disappointing outcomes it should be considered that

...[w]hen making recommendations for innovation in English language methodology, we must carry out the equivalent of an *environmental audit* of the impact of our proposed changes. In other words, we must seek to predict what the knock-on effect of methodological change is likely to be. (Coleman: 1996, 13, my italics)

Accordingly, I consider that making use of an ecological approach (Holliday and Cooke 1982, Tudor 2003) when planning and implementing any kind of innovative project in the educational milieu could be of great help in obtaining better outcomes from a given project, above all, for the learners and local teachers/counsellors involved.

The ecological perspective on language teaching focuses attention on the subjective reality of the participants in their specific settings, making it necessary to adopt a “local” approach to pedagogical decision making (Tudor, 2003). For the practical implementation of an ecological approach in language teaching, several factors need to be searched and considered, such as:

- the relation between theory and practice;
- the development of a research agenda that permits us to access the complex human realities of teaching and learning in that particular context;
- as much as possible, the students’ and teachers/counsellors’ concerns, attitudes and perceptions, their personal constructs; and
- a rethinking of the bases of pedagogical decision making (Tudor, 2003).

Furthermore, according to Holliday and Cooke (1982), a means analysis, besides the needs analysis, is necessary to find out the feasibility and sustainability of the project. With the knowledge and acknowledgement of “the uniqueness of each teaching situation” (Tudor, 2003: 10), it is hoped that a locally relevant and meaningful approach to teaching can be developed. Concurring with the previous ideas, on an optimistic but also more local-grounded basis I would think that the setting of CADI-VER (and maybe the SACs at the University of Veracruz in general) and its resultant learning mode could have developed more efficiently, smoothly and above all, more suitably for the stakeholders (the students, the counsellors, the technicians, the assistants and the administrators involved); if these had been given the opportunity to generate their own projects and decisions propitiating a long-term maintenance of the innovation and a sense of ownership (Markee, 1997) which might be an example of autonomy.

But it is pointless to imagine and talk about what could have happened or been; as a Mexican saying, and one of the students/participants said: “I don’t go back, not even to get impulse” (my translation). Since the CADI-VER has been set and has not functioned in accordance to principles such as those referred to in section 3.5 (page 93), I consider we should think in retrospect, learn from the experience, from the resulting facts, from the outcomes of this study and then restate the present functioning of the SAC and the no-class mode practised in the context being considered, the CADI-VER, and why not of the SACs at the University of Veracruz.

This way, several modifications and adaptations could be made to the whole self-access system in order to generate modes of studying and working that suited the students (of foreign languages not only at the Language Centre but at the University), the users of the self-access centre and the people working there (counsellors, teachers, technicians and assistants), and that really fostered critical thinking

and autonomy. In this case, I understand autonomy as the responsible execution of one's own decisions which are made in a particular, interactive social context, and not only being 'a rhetorical convention' as Little calls it (1991: 49).

SUMMARY

This second chapter of the literature review (Section II) shed light on other conceptualizations related to the subject of study, i.e. autonomy, SALL, SAC and topics closely related to these last two: students' development, teachers' development and counselling as the mediator between the students and the counsellors. Regarding the conception of autonomy, I offered the notion that became suitable to the context of this study. As mentioned in section 3.1.4 (page 72) autonomy is described as the capacity to reflect, to be critical, to identify needs and goals, to make decisions and elections (of the most suitable learning method) and to put them into practice as far as the person's own physical, intellectual and emotional possibilities and the external circumstances allow her to do so.

I also entered the field of change and innovation in education, specifically in Language Learning, in which I treat self-access as one of these innovations but in an imposed version, as I think was the case of the CADI-VER, the SAC at the Language Centre where I carried out this study. I tried to position it in its corresponding phase according to Rogers' and Lamie's models of diffusion and dissemination of innovations. Similarly, I compared CADI-VER with technology, to situate it within the process of normalization which technology arguably goes through; arriving at the conclusion that because it was an imposed innovation and the local, particular factors of the context were not taken into consideration, it has not been normalized yet, but has been institutionalized (become part of the system). I would dare to say that in my opinion the SAC system at the University of Veracruz has been adapted in the course of action to the point that it has been 'Mexicanized'.

Finally, in line with Tudor's argument (2003), I suggest that for an innovation to proceed successfully, an ecological approach should be considered both during its planning and its implementation. But I do not mean that such an approach should be used just to investigate the conditions and adapt the project to them. I rather suggest that supporting the local participants to become aware of their possibilities and then generating their own projects and decisions is a path to the exercise of autonomy.

Having offered a theoretical framework for the development of the present study, I now turn to consider the methodology that underpins my data collection as well as these data analysis.

SECTION III

“THE HOW”

Having reviewed in the previous Section some issues such as: self-instruction, self-directed learning, autonomous learning, self-access learning and self-access centres; all related to the innovative mode of learning EFL that was implemented or rather generated at the University of Veracruz (where this study was carried out), we can now turn to the description of the methodology that I used to undertake the current study.

This Section deals with the way in which I went through the processes of collecting and analysing my data, therefore it is divided into the two corresponding chapters (4 and 5). In short, this Section is related to how I collected the data and how I carried out the data processing, that is to say, Section III endeavours to answer the following questions:

- How was the data collected? → Chapter 4
- How was the data analysed? → Chapter 5

As will be seen in the following two chapters; in chapter 4, I explain the ways, the methods I made use of when I was gathering data in the field, whereas in chapter 5, I explain those procedures, those methods I made use of when I was processing the data I was able to collect.

4

METHODOLOGY: THEORY AND PRACTICE IN THE DATA COLLECTION

As mentioned above, this chapter, as part of Section III (the How), deals with the whole procedures that I went through in order to gather the data I needed for the completion of the current study. I first describe the approach and theory behind the research methods relevant to the planning and the implementation of my study, and to my own characteristics as the researcher. That is to say, as I located this study under the umbrella of qualitative research, in section 4.1 (page 99) I discuss those aspects within qualitative research that were relevant to the study and the way I sought for the study's rigour and trustworthiness.

Then in section 4.2 (page 110), I talk about interviewing and particularly semi-structured interviews; about observation and particularly moderate participant observation and about document collection as these were the specific methods I planned to utilize to collect the data.

Finally in section 4.3 (page 115), I give an account of how I actually obtained information from the participants and by what means. To be precise, here I relate the authentic process of carrying out my data collection by interviewing and observing the participants in the concrete context where this study took place.

I now turn to the first topic which permeates the rest of the sections to be dealt with in this chapter.

4.1. THE QUALITATIVE PARADIGM

This work in particular is a study that relates to a group of human beings, namely young adult students of EFL in a specific educational setting, the self-access centre in the Language Centre-Veracruz, from whom I intended not only to get some information but to get a deeper understanding of their experience within the innovation they were immersed in from their own perspective (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 44) and of how they “[felt] about the information they [provided]” (Holliday, 2002: 4). In other words, the research questions that guided this study (“How do students studying in the no-class mode perceive this mode of learning English?” and “What are their attitudes towards this mode?”) were aimed at discovering and understanding the participants’ experiences in context. Therefore, I needed a type of research that led me to “[...] explore, catch glimpses, illuminate and then try to interpret bits of [that] reality” (Holliday, 2002: 5), and I therefore considered that a qualitative research mode could best suit this study.

Due to the fact that this study is therefore grounded in a qualitative framework, I want to point out some of the salient features that characterize this paradigm, especially those relevant to this specific study. Qualitative research has become a popular way of looking into many of the issues that worry researchers as well as academics (Richardson, 1996). The conception of qualitative research has been broadly explored and contrasted with its supposed counter-paradigm, quantitative research. According to Denzin and Lincoln, the former stresses “the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (1994b: 4); whereas the latter tends to be based on the idea that data may be controlled, objective and leading to obtain generalized outcomes, and that human beings are ‘not supposed to’ interfere with the physical reality ‘out there’ (Richardson, 1996).

Some writers suggest that research done under the quantitative framework intends to ‘reflect’ the reality as a mirror does, “or as if the truth about a phenomenon is simply waiting to be discovered” (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004: 73); it tends to be based on a ‘normative’ idea in which reality may be mastered by the right research instruments, statistics and experiments. On the other hand, the research done under the qualitative paradigm is purportedly a production or a construction of the reality presented or rather, represented in the reports; it is based on an ‘interpretive’ belief that the realities being studied “can only be *superficially* touched by research which *tries to make sense* [of them]” (Holliday, 2002: 5, my italics).

There are several key features that differentiate these two research paradigms (c.f. Denzin and Lincoln 1994a, Holliday 2002, Maykut and Morehouse 1994, Patton 2002, Richardson 1996, Robson 2002), but it is not my intention here to offer an exhaustive contrast of the two. However, it is to be mentioned that both these paradigms look at events and situations in life from different perspectives, each of them providing diverse outcomes that may be useful according to the purposes of the study. That is to say, there are at least two different alternative approaches to doing research and trying to understand the world that surrounds us; the selection of one or the other will depend on the aims and characteristics of each research inquiry. Due to the elements that characterize the research inquiry in this work, I would rather concentrate on the qualitative paradigm in which this study is embedded.

4.1.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research intends to look deeply into the quality of the social life in particular settings, permits the exploration of the important themes that may emerge, those mysteries of reality “to which the researcher must submit, and can do no more than interpret” (Holliday, 2002: 6). It studies small and/or particular groups of human actors in natural settings, in their everyday world, in a particular time. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 3), qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the researcher in the world with an interpretive, naturalistic approach towards it; thus the researchers study things in their natural settings and attempt to make sense of them, or to interpret those things in terms of the meanings that people bring to them. In a similar way Maykut and Morehouse describe qualitative research as that which

...looks to understanding a situation as it is constructed by the participants [...], it] attempts to capture what people say and do, that is, the products of how people interpret the world. (1994: 18)

Qualitative inquiry then, seeks to understand the meanings and significance of certain humans' actions from their own perspective (Lankshear and Knobel 2004, Maykut and Morehouse 1994, Richards 2003, Robson 2002), which is done by employing a range of methods, and its analysis is based on a range of features. As Denzin and Lincoln put it,

...[q]ualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter...[it] involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts - that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994b: 2)

Due to its versatility, qualitative research “crosscuts disciplines, fields, and subject matters.” (Denzin and Lincoln 2000: 2). It subscribes to several schools of thought, each of them with its own epistemological viewpoints, but all of them coincide in their rejection of

...the belief that human behaviour is governed by general, universal laws and characterized by underlying regularities. Moreover, they would agree that the social world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated; and that their model of a person is an autonomous one... (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000:19)

Based on various commonalities shared by some philosophical underpinnings and methodological techniques and practices encompassed by the notion of qualitative research, Mason (2002) suggests a ‘loose working definition’ in which qualitative research is:

- Grounded in an ‘interpretivist’ philosophical position, since “it is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted.” (Mason, 2002: 3). Here I want to point that each piece of qualitative research focuses in a particular portion of this social world of which interpretation is done by the researcher. In this study, for example, the portion of social world was the group of students of EFL who took their courses in the no-class mode; the focus of the study was on these students’ experience of this new mode of studying English and I was the one who intended to understand and interpret the information I obtained from these students.
- “Based on methods of data generation which are both flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced...” (Mason, 2002: 3). Due to the characteristics of this social group, I was able to interview some of its members and to observe their performance in the context being considered.

- Based on ‘holistic’ methods of analysis, explanation and argument building involving understandings of complexity, detail and context.

Thus, according to this author, “[q]ualitative research aims to produce rounded and contextual understandings on the basis of rich, nuanced and detailed data.” (Mason, 2002: 3), an aim which suited my intention in this study since, as I previously mentioned, I indeed meant to understand as much as possible how it was that the no-class students perceived and experienced studying English in this mode of learning (self-instruction/SALL). Furthermore, I found the qualitative approach suitable for my work, embedded as it is in the field of language teaching because, as Richards (2003) comments, a qualitative approach may permit us to get closer to what goes on in places such as classrooms, though in this case, instead of classrooms they were self-access centres (CADI-VER).

As has been mentioned before, qualitative research, “as a set of interpretive practices, privileges no single methodology over any other” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994b: 3), it may be used in various disciplines. For that reason, when doing qualitative research, diverse approaches, methods and techniques such as: ethnomethodology, phenomenology, hermeneutics, feminism, deconstructionism, ethnographies, interviews, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, survey research and participant observation, among others, can be utilized (Denzin and Lincoln 1994b, Maykut and Morehouse 1994). In the following section, I intend to address those elements that, owing to their relevance in this specific study, I decided to draw on during its implementation.

4.1.2 SITUATION OF THIS STUDY

In view of the fact that this study is set in a qualitative framework, as mentioned in the previous sections, I now intend to situate this within the array of elements covered by the umbrella of the qualitative paradigm, and according to the conditions under which this study was carried out. I first talk about the traditions that mostly frame this work and then, considering that qualitative research is as dynamic and shifting as this social world that it intends to understand, I attempt to situate this study with regard to when it was carried out.

4.1.2.1 *THIS STUDY WITH REGARD TO THE TRADITIONS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH*

Among the diverse issues covered by the qualitative research umbrella, Cresswell (1998) portrays some core traditions as those historically situated approaches to research that employ a set of research methods. Based on these traditions, Richards (2003) suggests that the following ones are most relevant to our work in TESOL: ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, case study, life history, action research and conversation analysis. Some of the common means of data collection used in these traditions are: observation, interview, recording documents and journals.

With the aim of integrating and defining my research methodology, I draw on features from basically two of the traditions mentioned above which I consider relevant to this study, explicitly some elements from ethnography and some others from case study, elements which may overlap and be utilized in other traditions. I intend to bring together procedures from these two traditions, taking into consideration that in a flexible design a tradition need not be 'pure' (Robson, 2002).

**ETHNOGRAPHIC ELEMENTS IN THIS STUDY*

Ethnography seeks to describe, understand and interpret cultural and social groups, that is, the behaviour of a particular social or cultural group in their own natural environment, very frequently from the researcher's perspective as a member of the group (participant observer) (Richards 2003, Robson 2002, Patton 2002). In this sense, it could be said that throughout the current study, I, as the researcher, aim to understand and interpret the views and behaviour of a group of students who took their English courses in the new no-class mode in the self-access centre at a Language Centre (CADI-VER) of the University of Veracruz.

The ethnographic approach is widely used in disciplines such as anthropology and sociology and it primarily uses intensive participant observation (fieldnotes) and interviews, regularly during extended time in the field, as means of data collection; the researcher in this tradition is known sometimes to 'go native', that is, she becomes, or tries to become and act as a member of the community being study, although this is not always the case (c.f. Richards 2003, Robson 2002, Patton 2002). One of its goals is to produce 'thick description' (Geertz, 1993), in order to facilitate the comprehension of that social group's behaviour, its culture. The descriptive data is analysed through categorization of key themes and events, to

proceed to its description and interpretation, which may include extracts from fieldnotes, narrative vignettes and samples of talk (Richards 2003, Robson 2002, Patton 2002).

Owing to the long periods of time that doing ethnography requires (Richards, 2003), this qualitative study is not designed to be ethnography, but its design is informed by an ethnographic approach, considering that

...[a]n ethnographic approach is suitable [...] *because* it looks deep at the dynamics of social context [...] *and because* its qualitative, interpretive nature helps one to realise the complexity of social context... (Holliday, 1994: 203)

Thus, I have given this study an ethnographic orientation by taking into account methods typical of ethnography, e.g. interviewing and observation, in order to obtain as many first-hand, deep insights as possible about this particular social context, the no-class students in CADI-VER.

I can put forward other reasons for claiming that I use an ethnographic approach based on the process I plan to follow during the fieldwork. According to Robson “using an ethnographic approach is very much a question of general style rather than of following specific prescriptions about procedure.” (2002: 186). In terms of process, I aim to get out into the field and stay there for some non-continuous periods of time; to do moderate participant observation (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002), which implies that I can be involved with the group exclusively as a researcher but looking at the students’ day-to-day life at CADI-VER; to focus on a group who shares a learning-culture (among other ‘small cultures’ in which they might have coincided); and the focus of my study may evolve as I continue my involvement in the setting. In addition, I attempt to describe the work done in such a way to achieve a ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1993) (cf. Holliday, 2002) in order to unfold as trustworthy a study as possible.

*CASE STUDY ELEMENTS IN THIS STUDY

According to Robson (2002), case study has raised controversies since its conception, but I have considered the idea that it is a tradition (historically situated approach to research, employing a set of research methods) which intends to develop an in-depth analysis of a single case (situation, individual, group, etc.) or multiple cases, to provide a detailed description of it/them. “A case study is both a process of inquiry about the case and the product of that enquiry.” (Stake, 2000:

436), and it is frequently used in political science, sociology, urban studies and in evaluations. Multiple sources may be used as means of data collection, e.g. documents, archival records, interviews, observations, physical artefacts (cf. Robson 2002, Patton 2002).

Due to the fact that there are many self-access centres all through the Mexican Republic and some of them belong to the University of Veracruz (they are distributed in different cities in the state of Veracruz as mentioned in section 1.3.1, page 22), I only consider the self-access centre in Veracruz (CADI-VER) as my object of study, as the “integrated system” to be studied, “[i]t is one among others” as Stake (2000: 436) describes it in his explanation of case study.

As mentioned above, in this study I make use of interviews, observations and students’ reports (documents) review, and a plan to approach the field, though it can be modified and adapted according to the actual circumstances during the fieldwork. The data might be portrayed and discussed through particular themes that emerge from the analysis of the data themselves. All these elements which are present in this study fit into the parameters of case study. In Robson’s words,

...[i]n one sense, all enquiries are case studies. [...] They typically take place in a specific setting, or small range of settings, context is viewed as important, and there is commonly an interest in the setting in its own right. (2002:185)

Since this is a study of what is going on (the students’ perceptions and attitudes) in a particular community of learners studying EFL through an innovative mode of learning (no-class/SALL) in a particular setting (CADI-VER – Language Centre) and in a particular institution (University of Veracruz) within its real life context and I used different methods of evidence (data collection), I consider that this may be defined as a qualitative case study.

Robson (2002: 181, based on Hakim 1987) depicts six types of case studies: individual case study, a set of individual case studies, community study, social group study, studies of organizations and institutions, studies of events, roles and relationships. Since I consider that the descriptions of these types of case study overlap, I would say that my study may be a mixture of a study of an event and a study of an institution, explicitly, the implementation of an innovation (no-class EFL courses) in the University of Veracruz (specifically in the CADI-VER); and it could also be a set of individual case studies since it focuses on the perceptions and experiences of a small number of individuals who are experiencing the same no-class mode of studying EFL.

As a set of individual case studies that aims to explore possible perceptions and experiences preceding a known situation (imposition and utilization of an innovation), this study intends to produce a detailed account of the target situation within this group of individuals (cf. Robson 2002, Patton 2002), therefore, I considered each participant's perspective about and performance within the context at issue. In brief, I consider this work can be presented as a case study within a qualitative framework not only for the features I have just mentioned but because "[t]he results of a qualitative research study are most effectively presented within a rich narrative, sometimes referred to as a case study." (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 47).

4.1.3 RIGOUR AND TRUSTWORTHINESS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The trustworthiness of the outcomes (findings) of qualitative research has been a topic of great debate, especially if it is considered that validity and reliability, which are explained below, are core characteristics of quantitative research, as has been accepted for so long. There are extreme positions regarding this issue; whereas some researchers find it completely irrelevant to consider canons of scientific inquiry (e.g. Holliday, Denzin, Lincoln, etc.), others try to find ways to fulfil some kind of evaluative criteria, or to use different terms in order to avoid the words 'validity' and 'reliability' (Robson, 2002). For instance, Lincoln and Guba (1985) use the terms 'credibility', 'transferability', 'dependability' and 'confirmability', which even in a redefined version have been used widely in the qualitative research field.

However, I coincide with Patton's view that these are alternative terms for 'validity' and 'reliability' (2002: 546). For the moment, I am inclined to include these concepts within the terms 'rigour' and 'trustworthiness' (c.f. Holliday 2002, Maykut and Morehouse 1994, Patton 2002, Robson 2002); rigour referring to the provision of detailed and systematic strategies and methods for doing fieldwork and then analysis (Patton, 2002), and trustworthiness referring to the credibility, the believability of the findings of a certain research study (Lincoln and Guba 1985, Maykut and Morehouse 1994). I now will try to explain how the notions of validity, reliability and generalizability are intended to provide trustworthiness to the current study.

**VALIDITY*

Whereas in quantitative research the validity of the results obtained depend on the careful construction of the instrument which is to measure exactly what it is supposed to measure (Patton 2002, Robson 2002), in the qualitative research field, the researcher is the instrument, therefore the 'validity' depends on the skill, competence and rigour of the person doing the research. It also depends on her interpretation arising from the setting (Patton 2002, Robson 2002, Mason 2002); on the researcher's showing her workings and justifying, as far as possible, the steps taken; from the choice of the social setting, to the choice of the research activities and to the choice of the emerging themes and focuses, all of this by demonstrating how the overall strategy suits the social setting and the researcher-participant relationship (Holliday, 2002).

It then could be considered that the validity of my study depends on the consistency of the description I might be able to offer of what I may see or hear (recordings and/or fieldnotes are important); I would think of this consistency as the 'thick description' (Geertz, 1993) that the researcher could provide (cf. Holliday, 2002). That is why I endeavour to explain as clearly and broadly as possible; first the choice of the no-class courses as the field of my work (for details see the Introduction, page 8), then the steps I followed while collecting the data (section 4.3.2, page 117), as well as the procedures to be used to explore these data (section 5.1 page 142).

Triangulation may be an option to enhance the rigour of a piece of research as it involves the use of multiple sources to obtain data in the same setting (c.f. Robson 2002). I indeed intended to use three different means of data collection, explicitly; interviews, observations and the students' reports review; even though I did not pursue triangulation.

Among the threats to the validity of a qualitative research piece, Lincoln and Guba (1985) mention:

- 'reactivity' as the way in which the researcher's presence may interfere with the researched setting and the behaviour of the people involved;
- 'respondent biases' as the respondent's obstructive and/or withholding attitude towards answering or providing information when the researcher is perceived as a threat, or as the respondent's desire to please the researcher; and
- 'researcher biases' as the researcher's assumptions, predispositions and/or preconceptions.

With the intention of minimizing these three kinds of problems, I have done the following:

- With the purpose of reducing the reactivity factor, before I started the observations, I pasted, on the information board in the CADI (in front of the check in/out computers), a notice saying that a research student would be doing some observations in the areas and thanking them in advance for their collaboration (see notice in Appendix 8).
- Regarding the observations of the counselling sessions, it was not possible to be unnoticed as these are set groups in which their members knew each other, besides there might have been some of my participants there, for that reason I thought it would be better that the counsellor in charge introduced me and explained my intentions there.
- In order to reduce, as far as possible, the ‘respondent biases’ element, which I consider difficult because it depends less on me, I explained to the participants the purpose of my study, I told them about the confidentiality of the information they would provide me and the possible anonymity of their names.
- As regards the researcher biases, I paid attention to my own performance and kept reflecting on my work.
- I should insist that I sought to reduce these problematic factors as far as it was in my possibilities, but it does not mean that I could eradicate them all.

**RELIABILITY AND GENERALIZABILITY*

Reliability, as well, is a term widely used in quantitative research meaning that an experiment and its corresponding measure tools can be repeated or administered on different occasions obtaining the same results, that is, there is consistency in the results (Robson 2002). For the characteristics of this qualitative inquiry, I would rather do without this concept except for the consistency that can be achieved by the presence of the same researcher as the human-as-instrument (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 46) all through the study, relying on my audition (listening to people), observation (observing what people do), inductive (exploring the data inductively) and reflective (self-reflecting) skills.

Generalization, a term also very common in the quantitative approach involving statistical treatment, is only considered in this study in the way Robson (2002, citing Maxwell 1992, 1996) refers to ‘internal’ generalizability as the possibility of generalizing conclusions within the setting studied; or by relating the outcomes of this study with the outcomes of a certain study with similar characteristics.

After having located my study within the array of facets that constitute the qualitative approach to researching, I will now describe the specific means of data collection that I made use of during my fieldwork.

4.2 RESEARCH METHODS RELEVANT TO MY STUDY

As mentioned in section 4.1 above (page 99), there are certain research methods that seem to be characteristic of the qualitative paradigm. Based on the theoretical notions (reviewed in the literature) concerning such methods, it is the purpose of this section to portray the means by which I planned to gather the data in the course of my fieldwork.

Considering methods as the variety of approaches used to gather data whose analysis and interpretation may lead to explain and perhaps help to solve a particular problem and/or develop some kind of knowledge (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000), I intended to make use of those associated with interpretive paradigms, widely used in ethnographic work, i.e. interviewing and observation. With the intention of complementing the data gathered by the former methods, and because they were available to me, I decided to go over some documents, such as the students' CADI logs (work reports).

4.2.1 OBSERVATION

Observation is not only an everyday human activity in which by using our senses (vision, hearing, smell) we can apprehend the different events taking place around us. If we still use these senses to get some specific information and focus our observation in certain situation we may get some insights into it and use that information for any purpose we consider convenient.

At the beginning of my planning I had considered that even when I was open to any kind of observable event that occurred in the setting during my observation I would have liked to have a semi-structured observational framework, that is to say, a set of observable behaviours/conducts through which I could identify the participants' attitudes. According to Cherulnik (2001) behavioural observation is that which leads you to count the number of times a specific behaviour occurs, or record the time spent on a particular activity. In this way observers can evaluate the behaviour of research participants,

using rating scales, such as nominal ones (best used for qualitative research) or checklists.

As I explain in section 4.3.1 below (page 115), I tended to conceive and explain things in a more structured way; that is why I started looking for possibilities for doing the observations in some set and schematic form. Soon I understood, however, that in order to get a better insight into the phenomena I was studying qualitatively it was advisable not to take preconceived ideas to the field so far as possible; I should be open to anything that might emerge (Holliday, 2002). After reflecting on that, I believe that I was able to widen my perspective about research in general, therefore I decided not to make use of set and structured procedures to do the observations, instead, I tried to be ready to perceive any emerging events during my field work (Holliday 2002, Maykut and Morehouse 1994, Robson 2002).

*PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Observation is a method of gathering data while doing research and its variants are widely used in areas such as anthropology, sociology and psychology to mention some. One of these variants is participant observation. DeWalt & DeWalt (2002) consider that participant observation is a basic tool in qualitative research as it can facilitate the learning of some aspects of the life routines of certain groups of people. Within the paradigm of qualitative inquiry, observation is one of the methods used with the intention of gaining a better understanding of the nature of the phenomena under study; of trying to enhance the quality of the data obtained during fieldwork through other method(s), and of facilitating its interpretation. (cf. Patton 2002, Robson 2002, Lankshear and Knobel 2004).

Since this study aims to find out how a group of people, in this case students, perceived and faced their work as no-class ('autonomous') learners in an environment where they were supposed to work on their own, I decided to make use of the strategy of *moderate participation* within participant observation. DeWalt & DeWalt (2002) define 'moderate participation' as a category in which the researcher is present at the scene of action, is identifiable as such, but does not actively participate nor engage in anything that people being observed are doing there. It does not mean that the observer/researcher can never interact with the people in there.

Using other words but similar to the concept of moderate participant observer, I meant to play the role of what Adler & Adler (1987) identify as a *peripheral mem-*

ber. That is to say, I may not have been a central member in the group to whom I observed but I could become part of the scene and interact there as to be recognized by members of the community, especially in the counselling sessions.

4.2.2 INTERVIEWING

When thinking about the methods of collecting data that would be relevant to my particular inquiry, I noted the view that interviews are conversations that constitute the art of asking questions and listening (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). In this respect Maykut and Morehouse (1994) state that being able to inquire sensitively, to listen to other people and to understand their experience are characteristics of a good qualitative interviewer. Thus I decided that doing interviews would fulfil the requirements of this study, but also would suit my own personality (conversationalist and inquisitive, for details see section 4.3.1, page 115). I could see myself sitting in a café or in a park bench next to any of the students/participants talking comfortably about their views on the self-access centre and their work there, and listening to whatever they wanted to tell me, whatever they considered important.

Another reason for using interviewing was the possibility it gives the interviewer to distinguish other elements that could not be observed, e.g. feelings, thoughts and intentions. We cannot observe “how people have organized the world and the meaning they attach to what goes on in the world” (Patton, 2002: 341), however we can ask people about those things, perhaps getting the information (the ideas) they want to talk about and then we can try to understand and interpret what they have said.

On the other hand, I had to take into consideration that through interviewing the researcher obtains the information, and only the information (feelings, views, experiences, ideas, knowledge, assumptions, opinions) that the interviewee (participant/informant) wants to say, wants to share, wants the researcher to know. Furthermore, I was aware that interviewing was not as simple an activity as having a daily conversation since it implies entering into the other person’s perspective and then trying to interpret it from the researcher’s particular ideological position (Coffey and Atkinson 1996, Patton 2002, Robson 2002).

There are several types or interviews, ranging in a continuum that goes from informal and unstructured to formal and structured/standardized open-ended, passing through semi-structured/general and interview-guide ones (cf. Nunan

1992, Cherulnik 2001, DeWalt & DeWalt 2002, Patton 2002). Because what I intended to do was to get the participants to share their opinions and views about the no-class mode EFL courses with me, by giving them “a degree of power and control over the course of the interview” (Nunan, 1992: 150), I considered using a semi-structured interview (see Interviews’ Schedule in Appendix 7). This type of interviewing includes having a list of questions and/or prompts to cover the topic addressed considering that the same basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each interviewee; nevertheless, it does not have to be intrusive or directive (Cherulnik 2001, DeWalt & DeWalt 2002, Patton 2002).

As I mention in section 4.3.1 (page 115), by the time I did this research I had already worked at the CADI as a counsellor for almost two years and I had already had several experiences in which I was able to establish enough rapport to have comfortable, enlightening conversations about diverse topics with several students. When I say ‘establish rapport’ I mean what DeWalt & Dewalt define as ‘achieving rapport’ for that situation

...when the participants come to share the same goals,.....when both the informant and the researcher come to the point when each is committed to help the other achieve his or her goal, when the informants participate in providing information for “the book” or the study, and when the researcher approaches the interaction in a respectful and thoughtful way that allows the informant to tell his or her story... DeWalt & Dewalt (2002:40)

Because I felt that I had been able to achieve rapport with students sometimes before, I was confident in being able to do so this time. Even so, I had to keep in mind that this time my role was not as a counsellor but as a researcher and that I had to get rid of my professional expectations and purposes as a member of the staff working there. That is to say, I just had to initiate and guide the conversation, and this did not mean to bias the conversation or to have them say what I wanted to hear because in fact, I aimed to hear anything they wanted to say and I did not know what it would be.

4.2.3 REVIEW OF STUDENTS’ WORK REPORTS

The written documents I looked at were the students’ work reports that were processed on the computers located at the Check in/out Area of the CADI-VER.

They were monthly reports which included information related to the total time the students had worked at the CADI in a certain period of time and the areas they had worked on (e.g. vocabulary, grammar, video, audio, etc.). Even when the computers automatically reported times, I was aware that regarding the students' work, the reports may have reflected only what the students themselves wanted to report; they might have decided to lie with regard to the Areas or number of worksheets they had done and nobody else could notice it.

I decided to consider these documents as another piece of data because as Robson (2002) mentions, written documents are not affected by the fact of being used, that is to say, you can consult the documents and these will remain exactly the same as they were before you read them. Besides, the participants' opinions and behaviours which I might listen to and observe would not be affected by my checking the reports. I indeed wanted to use the information obtained by this means to complement, as far as possible, the information I was able to gather through the interviews and observations.

This section has described my initial thinking as I planned the process of data collection. However, while implementing my plans a number of issues arose which occasionally caused me to modify my approach, and these are considered in section 4.3.2 (page 117) below.

4.3 CARRYING OUT THE DATA COLLECTION

Once I have described the methods that were planned to be used in the achievement of the fieldwork, in this section I intend to describe how I indeed integrated these theoretical subjects with my actual fieldwork in order to offer a more comprehensive view of the latter.

In order to make the changes and adjustments that I went through during the data gathering process more comprehensible to the reader, I start by making a succinct description of myself as the researcher in the field. I give an account of some features of my life, my views and my personality which I consider to be relevant within the development of this study, especially during the collection of the data and their analysis. Then, I continue this section by narrating the actual process of the collection of data; I explicitly illustrate and comment on the different stages I went through to gather the data.

4.3.1 POSITIONING MYSELF AS THE RESEARCHER IN THE FIELD

This section intends to be a link between my own personal constitution and my performance as a researcher of the current study. I mention those features and aspects of myself which I consider relevant to the whole research process and particularly to the actual process of interviewing and observing the participants who enabled me to accomplish my data collection.

I must say that at the beginning of this process of doing research (a PhD), the positivistic/quantitative perspective that I had developed as a food engineering student years before permeated my work and in some occasions hindered my understanding not only of the qualitative paradigm but of its location in this post-modern era that we are living in (c.f. Denzin and Lincoln 2000, Truet 1996). My first approach to the design of the methods for collecting my data was therefore influenced by a more structured and 'objective' viewpoint (cf. Denzin and Lincoln 1994b, 2000, Holliday 2002, Mason 2002), though I was soon able to appreciate and take on a more flexible design derived from a qualitative approach.

4.3.1.1 MY CLOSENESS TO THE PARTICIPANTS (NO-CLASS STUDENTS)

At the time of writing, I have worked for the University of Veracruz at the Language Centre-Veracruz as an EFL teacher for fourteen years and as a SAC counsellor at CADI-VER (SAC) for three years now. For that reason I was able to have a close contact with the students who were trying to learn English in the no-class mode, just studying by themselves and attending the CADI-VER and some counselling sessions. I believe that this contact, the relationship I was able to establish with such students besides my good experience as a class-student (of EFL), were some of the reasons for my becoming interested in gaining a deeper understanding of how they handled and perceived this mode of learning, especially when it had been imposed on them.

4.3.1.2 ME AND THE MEANS OF DATA COLLECTION

Since one of the means of collecting data that I used was interviewing, I find it pertinent to say that I like to converse and I am keen on putting questions, as

many as my interlocutors allow me to; nonetheless I am aware of the fact that it might be impolite for some people and I tried not to become indiscreet. I can say that many people have told me that they like my asking them questions because they find it easier to talk about themselves, to express themselves and they feel important and comfortable. I do believe that talking is a means of organizing our own thoughts, besides of course, of communicating them. I consider that this feature of mine was, on balance, of great help during my field work.

Another method that I used to collect the data in this study was observation. And as I mentioned before, in spite of having initially conceived the possibility of using a pre-set attitudinal observation schema, I managed to adopt a flexible observation procedure, open to any events that took place. On the other hand, I am usually a watchful person, though I am sometimes over-critical and I have a tendency to presuppose or take things for granted. Therefore, I had to work hard in this respect, though the readings and seminars during my PhD studies and the actual conditions in the field facilitated my sharpening my observational skills (for details see sections 4.3.2.4 and 4.3.2.6, pages 119 and 122). I think this research process has been not only a process of observing and understanding others, but of observing, understanding, recognizing and re-orienting myself and my work.

After introducing myself as the researcher in this study, I proceed to relate the whole development of the data collection I undertook as part of my fieldwork.

4.3.2 ACTUAL PROCESS OF MY DATA COLLECTION

The actual process of collecting the data turned out to be a mixed experience of surprises and accomplishments. Surprises, because as you will read later on, I expected to find a place that I was supposed to be completely familiar with but it was not like that when I got there. Besides, I found out that even when I had the theoretical background to carry out the data collection, there was nothing like being in the field and approaching it as it showed up, as suggested by the concept of 'emergent design' (Lincoln and Guba 1985, Maykut and Morehouse 1994). Accomplishments, because even though I sometimes felt doubtful and had to reorient my work, I got valuable information for the purpose of this piece of research. For the reader to have an ample idea of what my data collection consisted of, I will describe it thoroughly from the very first moment I got to the research field.

4.3.2.1 GETTING READY TO START THE DATA COLLECTION PHASE

Before I turned up at the Self-access Centre (CADI-VER) in the Language Centre-Veracruz (Mexico), I had spent a term at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) in the UK reading, getting information on my topic (autonomy, self-access, SALL, self-instruction, innovations management) and on research methodology, and discussing with my supervisors topics related to my work. In short, I was trying to get ready to do the fieldwork, preparing the research instruments I would use during this phase; by this time I already knew that I would make use of observation and semi-structured interviewing (for details on these topics see sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2, pages 110 and 112).

4.3.2.2 TURNING UP IN THE FIELD

I got to the Language Centre-Veracruz in March 2005, believing that it would be easy to enter the field, the CADI-VER, and start collecting data straight away. However, after greeting and being welcomed by all the staff working there (the administrative staff, the counsellors at the CADI, the teachers and the coordinator), I had a feeling of strangeness; they treated me as if I were not part of their group anymore. After that, I visited the coordinator of the Centre and talked to her about my stay in the UK, but basically about my project; I briefly explained what I intended to do regarding the interviews and the observations I had already designed to do. She listened to me and said that she would have to talk about it with the counsellor in charge of the CADI, and then she would get back to me. Then I talked to the counsellor in charge of the CADI and did the same; I barely described the methodology I would follow to collect the data. He also listened to me, asked a few questions about the times and places for the interviews and said that he would talk to the coordinator.

At that time, I wondered why we had to go through all these talks if I only wanted to collect my data and I knew how to do it. For some reason and not paying attention to what I had read about the requirement of formal agreement from someone to gain access (Robson 2002, Bell 1999), I did not ask for permissions in a formal way. I forgot that people would be doing me a favour and that they would need to know what they would be asked to do, how much time they would be devoting to this and what use would be made of the information they provided (Bell, 1999).

The result of skipping that step was that I was not getting what I wanted, when I wanted. Both the coordinator of the Language Centre and the counsellor in charge of the CADI asked me to have a formal meeting first with them together and then with the 5 counsellors working in both CADIs (at Language Centre and at USBI). Furthermore, they asked me to write a formal letter explaining what I was planning to do and when, what I needed from them (i.e. any documents or access to certain information), how and where I would approach the participants, and a possible timetable for the observations. Of course, this was what I should have done from the beginning.

4.3.2.3 *MEETING WITH THE BOSSES*

In order to fulfil the formal requirements of the institution, as it should be, at the meeting with the coordinator and the counsellor in charge, I gave them the letter they had asked for. In the letter I included, as they had requested, some parts of my research proposal for them to get a more detailed idea of what my work consisted of and a flexible schedule for the interviews and observations. They asked me a few questions about the way I would select the participant students and the participant counsellors, and I explained it to them.

The counsellor in charge did not like the idea of me interviewing the counsellors or the fact of not including all of them. Thus I explained the reasons and the importance of having the counsellors' views on the students' attitudes, as a way of complementing what I would get from the students and from the observations; as well as the importance of getting as much information as possible since I was going back to Canterbury and I did not want to regret not having got certain information. This time they looked as if they were satisfied with the explanation as well as with the documents I had given to them.

4.3.2.4 *BECOMING A STRANGER (AN OUTSIDER)*

After the session with the coordinator and counsellor in charge of the CADI, I was informed that there was no place for me to work; they could not offer me any office or even a desk to work there. I did not have my workplace anymore - no computer, no desk, no filing cabinet, no place for me to work there. Again, I felt as if I did not belong to that place any longer.

The coordinator then sent me to talk to the director of the USBI (a big library with different facilities, such as computers, separate small work-stations, etc) to see if he could give me a bureau or any workplace, but there were not any workplaces available. In that moment I really started feeling a stranger there; no workplace, the staff at the Language Centre where I had worked for more than 13 years, greeted me as if I did not work there anymore and even my colleagues at the CADI made me feel outside of their group of counsellors; besides, the students in turn did not identify me as a CADI counsellor.

To my relief I recalled that “even where the researcher scenario is familiar, the researcher must find ways of recovering the stranger position” (Holliday 2002: 13), so at that moment I realized that I should take advantage of all this situation since it could be of great help to position myself in the field as a researcher and not as a counsellor working there. It indeed helped me to achieve a certain degree of strangeness, to feel more as an outsider who was then able to perceive (observe and listen to) things from a different perspective.

4.3.2.5 MEETING WITH THE CADI COUNSELLORS

In my view, the meeting with the counsellors was peculiar. First, some of them did not want to start the meeting if any of them was missing since they did not want to have any misunderstandings; at that moment I did not see what misunderstandings there could be, nonetheless I had to wait until all of them were able to meet.

At the beginning of the session, some of them seemed untrusting and unwilling to collaborate. I explained to them the purpose of my study, the research questions and the methods I was going to use to collect the data. They asked me how I would choose the participants and how I would approach them. But when I answered their questions it seemed they did not agree on the procedure I would use to approach the students who would be chosen as participants and they started questioning it.

Regarding the procedure to approach the students, at first I was planning to wait for each student outside the room where they had their counselling session, and at the end of it the counsellor in charge of that session would indicate to me who the selected student was and I would enter the room, introduce myself and talk to him/her about my research, my selecting him/her and what his/her participation would consist of. When the counsellors questioned me, I felt rather

offended, how did they dare to question me and doubt about my decisions on my methods? I was the researcher! But they continued to suggest another way to approach the selected students, and finally I had to acknowledge that their idea was better than mine and that I should be flexible and opened to new ideas and forms since as Robson (2002) says, in flexible designs, the detailed framework of the design emerges during the study.

Almost at the end of the meeting I asked them if they would give me an interview, but someone asked me why I wanted to know their opinions if I was aiming to find out the students' perceptions. I replied that it would complement what students told me, and that I was interested in listening to what they perceived as the counsellors, the people who were experiencing the innovation close to those students who were studying EFL in the no-class mode (no-class students). Besides, I also explained that I wanted to come back to England with as much data as possible, since I might not be able to go back to Mexico to collect more data. Nonetheless, someone answered that he did not want to be interviewed and I felt confused, annoyed; I was really experiencing what I had read, that "the initial period of fieldwork [could] be frustrating and give rise to self-doubt" (Patton, 2002:313).

As I just mentioned, I was confused and even upset; I think I was not prepared to receive a negative reaction from my colleagues. I was thinking what to respond when one of the counsellors started reminding me of that occasion when an EFL teacher there at the Language Centre-Veracruz who was doing a PhD in psychology did her field work precisely in the same Language Centre. She interviewed almost all the teachers there, without explaining clearly what the study was about and its aim. At the end when she took her thesis to the Language Centre to be read, we realized that she had done a personality profile of each one of us; consequently many teachers who identified themselves in the text and were being described as neurotic, narcissistic or any of these psychological features, felt extremely offended. Just then I understood his reasons and told him that this time I was telling them exactly what my study aimed to research and that I was interested in knowing what they thought of the autonomous students but that I would respect their decision to participate or not in this study.

After that I felt that we had already established some rapport and they kept on giving their opinions on when and how to approach the students who were selected to participate. As I paid attention to them, considered their ideas and took notes, I think they started feeling that they were being part of the study and all of them agreed on being interviewed.

4.3.2.6 REFLECTING ON MY “COMING BACK HOME”

At this stage of the data collection, before I started to contact students and to make appointments for the interviews, I took some time to reflect on the events during the first days of my “coming back home”. I found out that I felt overconfident about my familiarity with the place, my workplace; that I had not had a formal attitude towards the access negotiation, the request of permissions. In fact I had assumed that I would need the counsellors’ permission to observe their counselling sessions but not to observe the areas or to interview the students; then I realized that it was more difficult than I expected.

Feeling that I was not accomplishing what I intended, the way I had conceived it, I remembered the last Thursday meeting I had before I went back to Mexico to collect my data with some PhD colleagues and the head of the research department at CCCU, who asked me about my expectations when I went back to the CADI in Veracruz. I replied that I would observe the different areas at the CADIS and that I thought I would see how students use the materials, if they used them properly or if they wasted time; during the counselling sessions I would see if students participated and had studied what they were supposed to. Then he told me that it was exactly what I should not do; get there to the field with preconceived ideas and expectations, especially from my counsellor point of view. He insisted that this time I was not going to the CADI as a counsellor but as a researcher, therefore I had to become a stranger.

Later on in my reflection, I understood what Holliday means when he talks about the convenience of ‘making the familiar strange’ the fact that I “must find ways of recovering the stranger position” (Holliday, 2002: 13), and I recognized that being able to step out of my normal role as a CADI counsellor would help me attain a critical awareness of the research field. I realized that even when I thought that I had already assumed my role as a researcher, I was still feeling too familiar with my work area and that since I was researching in my own organization this was causing me to overlook some aspects. Thus, I was able to identify that the next step was to eliminate preconceived ideas (Bell, 1999).

After all, I had to be grateful not only with my co-workers but with all the events that had taken place in my first contact with the research field, because without having the intention, they helped me to become aware of the filter my counsellor role represented to my research, to reorient my work in the field, and to position myself as the researcher, not any more as the CADI counsellor, not anymore as the other counsellors and staff’s co-worker.

4.3.2.7 *SELECTING THE 'PARTICIPANTS'*

I took up my work again and since I had purposefully built a sample that included only those people involved in the innovation (the no-class mode courses and its respective use of a self-access centre) under consideration (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 56, Patton 2002), I proceeded to select the participant students at random, in which “each member of the population under study [had] an equal chance of being selected...[and] each selection [was] entirely independent of the next.” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000:100). Nevertheless, I was aware that this was rather an ‘approximation of randomness’ (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 56).

Once the secretaries had given me the lists of the groups of the no-class students from the Language Centre (external students) as well as those from the university - English 1 and 2 (MEIF), I worked on them group by group. Since on the lists each student already had a number, I just wrote each number on a piece of paper, I folded the papers, put them in a box, shook it and took only one folded piece of paper. According to the number on the paper I looked for the corresponding name, I looked for her/him and I asked for her/his participation.

Since the counsellors working at CADIS were six; three at CADI-USBI, and three at CADI in the Language Centre, I could have considered all of them but unfortunately the group of one of them, which I was supposed to observe, was cancelled, and the other counsellor was quite new in the position, so I decided not to interview them. I then interviewed the four remaining counsellors, one of them in charge of both CADIS. I also decided to interview the coordinator of the Language Centre who consequently was the coordinator of the CADIS too, and who had been a counsellor during the first year of the CADI-VER existence.

4.3.2.8 *CONTACTING THE PARTICIPANTS*

Paying attention to what the counsellors had suggested in the meeting with them, I wrote letters addressed to each student (see Appendix 5) and gave them to the counsellors for them to give the letters to the corresponding student at the end of their counselling session because as they said, students already knew their counsellors and felt confident with them. Otherwise if I just approached them without being introduced by someone they already knew, they might have felt shy or too pressed.

Thus, each counsellor gave the letters to their students, briefly explained to them what it was about and introduced them to me. I did what I had already

planned; I followed some of the suggestions given by Cherulnik (2001) such as: introducing myself, explaining my research project, asking them if they wanted to participate in my project and telling them how important it was for me to count on their participation. I told them that I was a PhD student; what I intended to do; the aim of the study; what their participation would consist of, that is, they would be interviewed twice: once during the third or fourth week of classes and then during the penultimate week of classes, just before their final exams; and I made clear that the information they would tell me would not affect their course nor their grades at all, that it was absolutely confidential. It can be said that I had an informal interview with them (Richards, 2003; DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002, Patton 2002), as some kind of introductions and informal conversations in which I had minimal impact on the topic and the interaction. Finally, I asked them if they would be willing to participate and collaborate with me and we talked about the next interview.

During this brief chat (5 minutes) I tried to be clear, friendly, sincere, and to fit in with their plans (Bell, 1999). I always let them choose the day, time and place they preferred for the interview, though sometimes they asked me what was convenient for me and seemed to prefer my proposition. After that, we made the appointment for the first interview, and I thanked them for their availability. From the 24 selected students, 22 said yes and 21 actually attended the interviews. All of them were kind, some of them were more timid than others, but most of them tended to be participative and even talkative.

In this first contact, once the students had accepted that they would participate in this project, I also asked them very few questions; for instance: if they were studying on the ('autonomous') no-class mode because they had chosen to, or because they had not had any other option; what major they were studying and what semester; where they were from; where they lived; where they had studied High school and if this was the first time they studied something on the 'autonomous' mode, which was affirmative except for those who had also done their previous course on this mode.

4.3.2.9 CARRYING OUT THE INTERVIEWS

**PREPARATION OF QUESTIONS, PROMPTS AND DEVICES*

As mentioned in section 4.2.2 (page 112), I did semi-structured interviews, hence during the first phase of my PhD studies, I prepared the topics, questions and

the prompts to be used in the interviews, that is, an interview guide/schedule (see appendix 7) which listed the issues that were to be explored in the course of the interview (Patton, 2002). I also made a possible schedule to carry them out, though I was not able to follow it because I had to adapt to the participants' times, the holidays and the events that came out unexpectedly.

The three recording devices that I used were: a small voice recorder, a laptop and a notebook (sheets of paper). The advantages of the recording devices I made use of can be summarized as follows: *tape-recording* preserves both the interviewee's and the interviewer's actual language and contributions, and can be reanalyzed after the event; while *note-taking* allows us to record central issues, facts and context of the spoken statements (Nunan, 1992).

*INTERVIEWS WITH EX-STUDENTS

Once I had arranged the interview meetings with the students, I started the first phase of the interviews (see summary of interviews in Table 4-1 below). I started by interviewing two of my ex-students, who had already finished both courses, English 1 and 2; for them it was the only interview. These took place in a coffee shop (for details see Appendix 6) and developed smoothly and fluently, since both interviewees already knew me, and we had engaged in a respectful and friendly relationship when they were my students the year before. However, there were some points during the interview when I needed to prompt them to "develop a point further..." (Richards, 2003: 56).

*INTERVIEWS WITH THE COUNSELLORS AND
COORDINATOR OF THE LANGUAGE CENTRE

Next, I interviewed the coordinator of the Language Centre, who had also been a counsellor for the first year of the CADI. This also took place in a coffee shop. After that, I interviewed 4 counsellors, 2 who work at the CADI-USBI and 2 who work at the CADI in the Language Centre. The first two were interviewed at a coffee shop too; whereas the other two remained in the CADI facilities. Then I went on with all the students who were at that time studying either English 1 or 2, or any other Conversation English course on the no-class mode (see summary of interviews in Table 4-1 below). (For details see Interviews' Log in Appendix 6).

The interviews with the counsellors and Coordinator of the Language Centre were done in English in a comfortable atmosphere. I asked them if there was any

problem in recording the interviews, to which they said no. The counsellors were relaxed and most of them concise and clear in what they were saying to me. I believe that they were sincere and told me what they indeed thought. Some interviews were more extensive than others, sometimes there were a few interruptions (e.g. noise around, voices from other tables, one of the counsellor's baby).

During the interviews I sometimes had to prompt, explain the questions, reword them, or ask some extra ones in order to get as much information as possible or because I was very interested in what they were saying and wanted to explore deeper in that. I took a few notes during the conversations. At the end, I thanked them and said goodbye, reminding them that I would attend some of their counselling sessions (I had already asked them for their authorization during the meeting with them) and that I would be around the CADIS.

**INTERVIEWS WITH THE STUDENTS CURRENTLY STUDYING*

As I mentioned before, I interviewed only once those students (ex-students) who had already completed both courses; English 1 & 2. Subsequently, I interviewed all students currently studying; I did it twice, first during the third or fourth weeks of the term and then, on the penultimate week of classes (see summary of interviews in Table 4-1 below). They were a total of 19 students in this situation, which means that I got 38 interviews, all of them in Spanish. The questions were the same, they might have been paraphrased, but they were basically the same (see Interviews' Schedule in Appendix 7). Sometimes, depending on what the participants were saying, and if I found it relevant and interesting, I asked some extra questions.

I carried out the interviews in different places, according to the interviewees' preference and convenience (some cafeterias, in the Counselling Rooms at both CADIS, and at one of the common areas at the USBI, for details see Appendix 6). Participants decided where we would meet, though sometimes they preferred to ask me and leave the decision to me. In some of these places it was noisy and the recording was more difficult to understand afterwards, but fortunately, we did not have any trouble with communication or concentrating on our conversation.

**DURING THE INTERVIEWS – FIRST PHASE*

At the interviews, I first greeted them and talked about something like where they came from, how they were doing at school, etc. in order to establish rapport and start the interview in a comfortable atmosphere (for details on this issue see sec-

tion 4.2.2, page 112). I asked them if they had any questions before we started (but they normally did not), and if I could record our conversation, to which they fortunately said “yes”. I turned on the voice recorder and we started our conversation. Occasionally, I had to repeat or paraphrase the original question because I noticed that they were hesitant and doubtful, as if they had not understood clearly what I was asking. Some other times, I had to prompt them to continue speaking.

Most of the interviews flowed very well. I seldom felt that I had not got enough information, just in the few cases in which the participants were too shy or spoke very little with so short or incomplete sentences. From time to time, when there was something I wanted to write down while participants were speaking, I took some notes (particularly interesting comments, some particular expression, gesture or intonation, or when they had any special attitude or behaviour that caught my attention), avoiding losing eye contact or attention to them (Patton 2002, Richards 2003, Bell 1999, Mason 2002). At the end of all the interviews, I thanked them for having permitted me to interview them and for having attended our appointment as it was of great importance and help for me, and I said goodbye.

In the first phase of the interviews I reminded them that we would have a second interview a week before they finished classes and that I would contact them in advance to arrange our meeting. I also repeated, as I had already told them in our first contact, that they might see me around in the areas at CADIS or in their counselling sessions but that I would not be observing them in particular and that it would not affect their course at all. When necessary, after the interview I checked my notes or added comments.

**DURING THE INTERVIEWS – SECOND PHASE*

The second set of interviews took place in an even more relaxed way. To contact students for these interviews, I met them in their own counselling sessions and we arranged our next meeting. The process was very similar to the one on the first interviews, as mentioned in the previous paragraph; just that this time participants and I seemed more familiar with each other and with the topic. Some of these second interviews tended to be a little shorter, and they were carried out in the places mentioned above. It was not always the same place of the first interview, as they decided where and what time to meet; some of the interviews were just after their counselling sessions (for details see Table 4-1 below). Again, I sincerely thanked them and said goodbye; as well, some participants thanked me for giving them the opportunity to express their thoughts.

*Table 4-1. Summary of Interviews carried out
March-June 2005*

No	WHEN	WHERE	WHOM Type of Participant / Group- Counsellor	DURATION min.
1.	21-03-05 M	Italian Cafe	Amelia Counsellor	28 – 30
2.	21-03-05 M	Café Andrade	Isabel Counsellor	34 – 35
3.	24-04-05 M	Counsellors' office	Rossi Counsellor	27 – 30
4.	26-04-05 T	Italian Cafe	Mary B. Coordinator Ex-counsellor	20 – 25
5.	28-04-05 Th	Counsellors' office	Eugenio Counsellor in charge	27 – 30
6.	22-03-05 T	Italian Cafe	Ex-St. 1 Brenda	9 – 15
7.	22-03-05 T	Italian Cafe	Ex-St. 2 Guty	20 – 25
8.	22-03-05 T F 24-06-05	School's Cafe	St. 3 Im IN150 Amelia Jose J.	15 – 20 10 – 12
9.	22-03-05 T Th 23-06-05	Cafetos Cafe	St. 4 Im IN145 Amelia Salve	18 – 20 15 - 18
10.	23-03-05 W W 29-06-05	CADI – CI	St. 5 Im IN142 Eugenio Miguel	9 – 12 8 – 12
11.	23-03-05 W F 24-06-05	CADI - USBI	St. 6 Im IN153 Isabel Guadalupe	11 – 15 8 – 10
12.	28-03-05 M M 27-06-05	CADI – USBI	St. 7 Im IN147 Isabel L.Eduardo	6 – 8 8 – 10
13.	28-03-05 M F 24-06-05	Cafetos Cafe	St. 8 Im IN143 RosaE J.Andres	27 – 30 13 - 15
14.	29-03-05 T M 27-06-05	CADI – USBI	St. 9 Im IN156 Isabel Azucena	8 – 10 8 – 10
15.	29-03-05 T F 24-06-05	Cafetos Cafe	St. 10 Im IN250 Isabel Artemio	13 – 15 12 – 14
16.	29-03-05 T F 24-06-05	CADI – USBI	St. 11 Im IN255 Isabel Pablo de J	11 – 14 10 – 14

17.	29-03-05 T F 24-06-05	CADI – USBI	St. 12 Im IN255 Isabel Yaneth	7 – 10 5 – 7
18.	29-03-05 T M 20-06-05	CADI – USBI	St. 13 Im IN243 Amelia Victor L.	5 – 7 10 – 12
19.	23-03-05 W W 29-06-05	Cafetos Cafe	St. 14 Im /C541 Eugenio Yolanda	16 – 18 8 – 10
20.	22-03-05 T W 29-06-05	School's Cafe	St. 15 Ch IN148 Eugenio Fanny	15 – 17 8 – 10
21.	23-03-05 W Th 23-06-05	CADI – USBI	St.16 Ch IN249 Amelia Diego R.	7 – 9 6 – 8
22.	25-03-05 F M 27-06-05	CADI – CI	St. 17 Ch IN242 RosaE Arisai	12 – 14 9 – 11
23.	28-03-05 M Th 23-06-05	Cafetos Cafe	St. 18 Ch IN248 Amelia Elizabeth	13 – 15 10 – 12
24.	29-03-05 T M 27-06-05	CADI – CI	St. 19 Ch IN252 Eugenio J. Jesus	18 – 20 20 – 22
25.	29-03-05 T F 24-06-05	CADI - USBI	St. 20 Ch IN251 Amelia Lidia E.	9 – 11 8 – 10
26.	28-03-05 M Th 23-06-05	CADI – CI	St. 21 Ch /C341 Eugenio Enriqueta	20 – 22 20 – 22

Codes: M=Monday, T=Tuesday, W=Wednesday, Th=Thursday, F=Friday, Im=Imposed; Ch=Chose
 Im=Students on whom the autonomous course was imposed.
 Ch= Students who chose to study in the autonomous courses.

4.3.2.10 CARRYING OUT THE OBSERVATIONS

*BEFORE THE OBSERVATION OF THE AREAS

Before I started observing the areas, I pasted some announcements (see sample in Appendix 8) on the boards at the reception areas of both CADIs, saying that there would be a person observing the areas. The purpose of it was to let students/users know that I would be around and they did not get surprised when they saw me there. Nevertheless I must say that they sometimes seemed curious when they realized that I was not working as one of them but writing down on my computer, or maybe because they did not recognize me as a CADI counsellor and it was not normal that a common user had a laptop with her. It was of great help and advantage for me to be able to carry my laptop wherever I went and to take notes as I observed, though it sometimes raised certain curiosity, as I mentioned above.

I do not discard the possibility that this factor might have affected the natural environment at certain points and to some degree.

**THE OBSERVATIONS OF THE CHECK IN/OUT AREA*

As I explained in section 4.2.1 (page 110), during this phase I practised what could be called Moderate Participant observation. I started observing the Check in/out area (CHIOA) (for details see Table 4-2 below) (For Codes of the Areas, see Appendix 9) since it was the first step the students took when attending the CADi. At the beginning I wrote my field notes on a notebook, but then I realized that it was perfectly possible to take my laptop with me, and I started writing everything directly on my computer, which as said before, made things a lot easier. Some users, as I previously mentioned, looked at me with some curiosity or oddity but as I was not staring at them they did not pay that much attention to me, they just went on doing whatever they had chosen to do.

**THE OBSERVATIONS OF THE DIFFERENT AREAS*

I continued to observe the diverse areas at both CADis, namely: the Computers Area (CA); the Video Area (VA); the Listening Area (LA) and the Multiple Uses Area (MUA) (Table 4-2) (for Codes of the Areas, see Appendix 9). I did not observe the Conversation Area because it was almost never used. I stayed in the areas for different periods of time. It depended on whether the areas were getting empty or if I was watching the same events occurring again and again; that is to say when I thought that same behaviours were already repeated and I found nothing new or different, I stopped observing that area, it was something similar to what Lincoln and Guba (1985) term 'redundancy' when talking about the completion of data analysis as no new or relevant information is being uncovered (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 144).

During the observations I always tried to keep quiet, discrete and not intrusive. I got to the areas; found a place to seat at a corner and put my laptop; sat down and started to observe, trying not to stare at anybody but looking at them discretely and pretending to be working and I wrote as much as possible. Fortunately the students-users of the different areas that constitute the CADi did not wear any distinctive item and did not belong to any set group, so they did not know everyone there, besides they normally concentrated on their individual work and did not pay attention to the other users of the CADi.

Table 4-2. Observations' Schedule

	Work Area / CADI	Observed on:
Codes: CI = Centro de Idiomas (Language Centre) USBI = Unidad de Servicios Bibliotecarios e Informatica (Library) CADI = Centro de Autoacceso de Idiomas (Self-access Centre)	MUA = Multiple Uses Area / CI	16.06.05 / 17.06.05
	MUA = Multiple Uses Area / USBI	16.06.05 / 23.06.05
	VA = Video Area / CI	21.06.05
	VA = Video Area / USBI	14.06.05
	CHIOA = Checking In-Out Area / CI	27.04.05
	CHIOA = Checking In-Out Area / USBI	27.04.05
	LA = Listening Area / CI	21.06.05
	LA = Listening Area / USBI	14.06.05
	CA = Computers Area / CI	8.06.05
	CA = Computers Area / USBI	3.06.05
Counselling Session/ counsellor	Group	
CAm	IN145	14.06.05
	IN150	16.06.05
	IN249	15.06.05
	IN254	17.06.05
CIs	IN141	14.06.05
	IN147	16.06.05
	IN151	16.06.05
	IN156	17.06.05
	IN250	15.06.05
	IN255	17.06.05
CRo	IN143	14.06.05
	IN242	13.06.05
	IN247	15.06.05
CEu	IN148	16.06.05
	IN252	17.06.05
	IN341	16.06.05
	IN541	21.06.05

Counting on those favourable features, I almost always entered the areas as if I were another student there and I was able to stay in the areas as long as necessary without being very noticed, except for those students who were participating in the study and already knew what I was doing there. Sometimes if a student or students stared at me or looked at me insistently I tried to smile kindly and I looked at another place or continued writing on my computer. I never had any trouble or bad incidents. A few times when students who were just playing around realized that I was looking at them and that I had noticed that they were not working, they felt ashamed, kept quiet and pretended to go back to work.

As mentioned before, even though I tried my best not to interfere in the students' performance in the field it was not possible to avoid it completely, so I was aware of that possibility of the 'reactivity' element in the research setting (for a discussion on validity see section 4.1.3, page 107). Only two or three students asked me something about the materials or the location of these, they might have identified me as a member of staff there. On the other hand, students approached me and asked about my stay there just twice; maybe because they noticed that I was not working with any of the materials of the CADI-VER or basically because I was the only one working on a laptop, to which I replied with the true explanation.

**THE OBSERVATIONS OF THE COUNSELLING SESSIONS*

Regarding the observations of the counselling sessions (for details see Table 4-2 below), they also took place without troubles. Since I had already asked the counsellors for their authorization to observe their own sessions, I was able to enter the room(s) and find a place to sit. I normally sat at a corner far from where the students and the counsellor sat, so that I did not disturb the normal flow of the session. The first time I entered each counselling session, though the students might have read the notice on the information board or might be participants and already knew me, the counsellor in turn introduced me by telling the students that I was doing some post-graduate studies and I needed to observe some counselling sessions, not a particular person, and that my observations would not interfere at all in their work (the development of the session, the course or their grades).

The students whom I had already interviewed knew me and were aware of my task there since I had explained it to them; so, they said hello and went on with their work. Nevertheless, some of the students who did not know who I was

looked at me with certain curiosity but without paying much attention to me, though I was aware of the possibility of my presence affecting the natural development of the session ('reactivity').

As well as in the observation of the working areas at CADI-VER [the Computers Area (CA); the Video Area (VA); the Listening Area (LA) and the Multiple Uses Area (MUA)], I entered the room(s), I proceeded to observe, again trying not to stare but to be discreet and prudent and I wrote on my laptop. It was such an advantage that I could use my laptop all the time because I was able to write really quickly and I then had all the fieldnotes clear, ready to print and review. Occasionally, the counsellor in turn would look at me and make some kind of gesture, depending on what was going on at that moment.

Some other times, when the students were doing an activity, completing an exercise, writing or doing some pair work, the counsellor approached me and made some comments trying to include me in her session, to which I tried to reply briefly and politely. Sometimes these were related to the innovations that had been put into action while I was away from the CADI; or related to the performance of that particular group or certain student/s in that group; or they asked for my opinion on that session (a typical question in Spanish "how do you see this or that?"), or they just made a joke. Then she/he went back to work with the students and I continued taking notes.

Counselling sessions varied a lot depending on the level and group of students, but above all, they varied according to the counsellor's style and stance regarding the notions of autonomy, self-instruction and counselling itself. Thus, I could observe counselling sessions which were similar to a class. Students had doubts about the grammar points they had covered the previous week, the counsellor explained and sometimes did some oral activities to check their understanding. In some other sessions, they took advantage of the fact that they were together and did some oral (conversation) activities, which at the same time were useful for the counsellor to check the learners' progress.

Other sessions were more focused on learners' preparation (or development) since the priority was on the students' learning strategies and their doubts related to this; where to find certain information or type of activities and they talked about the problems they were having with their studying/learning style. However, all the sessions had something in common, in all of them the students' logs were checked, that is, the counsellors checked and kept records of the time the students had accumulated working at CADI-VER, or the number and type of activities they had done during the previous week.

At the end of the sessions, the counsellor usually came to me and asked for my opinion of the session or of the students, or they sometimes asked me what I had observed. We talked about that particular session, the group or the students for a while. It was somehow weird for me, because I felt as if they were asking me for my outsider opinion but at the same time with the assumption that I was involved in this kind of issues; that I knew what they were talking about; and I did indeed. However, I tried not to get involved too much as that made me feel again as a counsellor there and I had worked hard trying to detach from this position as much as possible. To be honest, the fact that the counsellors asked or commented with me made me feel good and it turned to be interesting because it often helped me complement the information I was obtaining in the field.

**AFTER THE OBSERVATIONS*

After the actual observations and note-taking in the working areas at CADI-VER [the Computers Area (CA); the Video Area (VA); the Listening Area (LA) and the Multiple Uses Area (MUA)] as well as in the counselling sessions, I frequently took some time to add some comments or things I remembered and I had not had time to write down during the observation. I picked up my things, I thanked the counsellor(s), in the case of counselling sessions, and I left the room or the working area.

4.3.2.11 REVIEWING THE STUDENTS' RECORDS (WORK REPORTS)

The third element that I was able to obtain, as a complement to the interviews and observations, was the students' records of work and attendance at the CADI during the four months that my fieldwork lasted. These records show the students' times for checking in and out of the CADI, the time they spent there each session, the total time accumulated by each user and the areas utilized in each session (for a sample see Appendix 10). Students can see their records any time they enter their code number on the computers in the Check in/out area and they can be retrieved from these computers by the counsellors or by the technician when it is necessary to check some student's work at CADI (for credits and grades issues) but mostly by the counsellor in charge of the CADI, who produces statistics and general reports. In fact, the reports were kindly given to me by the counsellor in charge of CADI.

At first I was not sure of the use I would give to these reports; I then realized that they might be useful to compare what students had said about their work and activities in the CADI with their actual work at CADI, or to identify the students' preferred areas of work, the time they dedicated to work at CADI and how much work they registered they had done.

In sum, the account in this section showed the way I proceeded in order to gather the data I endeavoured to obtain and the events that took place in the field meanwhile. The following section shows the steps I took aiming to respect ethical factors present in this study and to make it trustworthy.

4.3.3 DEALING WITH ETHICAL ISSUES AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

** FULFILMENT OF ETHICAL ISSUES*

Due to the fact that any research involving individuals must assure that they, as a result of being participants of the study, will not be harmed in any aspect; that they as well as their decisions, comments and actions will be respected and even protected, in this section I intend to describe the actions I took in order to comply with the ethical aspects applicable to my study.

As can be noticed in section 4.3.2.3 (page 119), my entrance to the field did not comply with the suggestions (requirements) some authors (Robson 2002, Bell 1999) offer in order to gain access; I did not ask for permissions in a formal way, I was not convincing enough and I was overconfident in my being part of the staff in the Language Centre-Veracruz. However, after fulfilling some formal requirements (writing a letter explaining my research project, having a meeting with the counsellors), as it must be, I was able to manage to be supported not only by my bosses (the coordinator and the counsellor in charge of CADI) but by my colleagues, who were also participants in this study.

Once I had selected the potential participants (for details see section 4.3.2.7, page 123), the first things I did so that they made informed decisions and to show my respect for them, was to thoroughly explain to them my aims within the study and how I intended to achieve them, to be precise, what my study consisted in (for details on this topic see section 4.3.2.8, page 124). Hence, when the persons decided to participate, they already knew what their contribution would consist of.

In the first interview with each participant, I explained to them that their participation in my project and the information they provided me would not jeop-

ardize them or their development as university students at all. I also told them that despite the confidentiality of the information they would provide, my study would produce a written thesis on which some pieces of that information would appear, consequently I asked them about the possibilities to keep their real names and the photos on their CADI work reports or to have them anonymised in the text of the thesis. To my convenience (as it was easier for me to handle the information each person had given me by remembering and relating their faces and their behaviour to their names), all of them except for two counsellors agreed on my using their original names and keeping the photos on their work reports (see samples in Appendix 10). It gave me the impression that they felt proud to be participating in a research project and that their names appeared in the report (in my thesis). However, as it can be observed in the next chapter, I did not use complete names but codes formed by the initial letters of their names when I was working in the analysis of the data.

After having gained access to the field, contacted the participants, and in order to let all the users of the CADI know that some research would be taking place there and that a person (me) would be doing observations around the areas, I posted a notice informing so on the information boards located in the common areas of the CADIs (see announcement in Appendix 8) (for details see section 4.3.2.10, page 129).

As might have been noticed in section 4.3.2 (page 117), I endeavoured to perform carefully and tactfully throughout the whole interaction with the participants:

- During the interviews (section 4.3.2.9, page 125), I kept the participants informed of whatever I intended to do with the information they provided me; I asked them permission to tape record the interviews and to take notes when necessary; I respected every comment or decision they made, and I did not force any reply or situation. As far as I was able to perceive, they usually talked to me confidently.
- During the observations (section 4.3.2.10, page 129), as I mentioned above, I informed the CADI users about my observing around the areas, I tried the most to be unobtrusive, respectful but attentive.

**PURSUING TRUSTWORTHINESS*

As has been discussed in section 4.1.3 (page 107), those studies done through a qualitative approach may achieve trustworthiness, that is to say, their readers may be convinced that the outcomes of such studies are credible (Lincoln and

Guba 1985, Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 64). In my pursuit of trustworthiness, I endeavour to offer in this thesis a consistent description of my work all through this research, explicitly, the planning of the study itself, the procedures I followed during the data collection and the data analysis.

I here want to describe what I did in order to cope with the circumstances and/or factors that might hamper the achievement of validity in my work, or as Lincoln and Guba (1985) call them: 'threats to validity': reactivity, respondent biases and researcher biases. I consider that in a study informed by the qualitative paradigm one should take into consideration the meaning those terms such as 'reliability' and particularly 'validity' (because I find it more applicable to my study) have under such a paradigm (for details on concepts see section 4.1.3, page 107).

With the intention of avoiding repetition, I am going to discuss now what I did in the actual data collection phase apart from what I had already planned and indeed implemented.

I sought to reduce the 'reactivity', 'respondent biases' and 'researcher biases' factors mentioned above, which does not mean that I was able to eliminate them, by doing the following:

→ On the topic of reactivity, when I did the data collection, not many students apart from the participants recognized me as a CADI counsellor; the users of the CADI did not use any kind of uniforms or distinctive items which facilitated my going unnoticed in the areas at CADI most of the times. In addition, not all the students at CADI knew each other and they were usually concentrated in their work, so they did not pay much attention to other people there.

→ On the other hand, the fact that some Ss, mainly the participants, and all the counsellors knew me as a counsellor at CADI, made it possible to stay in the counselling sessions for long periods of time without appearing as a strange, uncomfortable person.

→ In the counselling sessions the counsellor in charge introduced me in a clear, concise and convincing way, so in my view, the students there behaved as usual; though I think that I could have asked the counsellor if what I had perceived regarding the students' behaviour in that session was accurate.

→ Even when I always kept in mind the fact that there is a continuum between the different levels of participation during observation, in order to keep track of the level of my involvement in the group being observed I sometimes took notes of my own work as an observer (self-reflection) especially when the counsellor whose session I was observing came to me and made comments or when some student asked me something.

→ What I did to try to reduce the respondent biases is associated to some of my actions I described in my dealing with ethical issues above; such as: explaining thoroughly the aims of my study and their participation in it; assuring them that their participation in the study would not affect their normal development as university students (for details on this topic see section 4.3.2.8, page 124).

→ In the interview sessions, the participants took the time they needed (10 to 35 minutes) to answer and comment on the topics I had asked them. I showed interest in the participants' contributions (and I indeed was involved), and I tried, as much as I possibly could, to keep an impartial but perceptive attitude towards the information they were sharing with me. I tried to make them feel comfortable and, as I said before, certain that whatever they told me would be confidential, would not be used against them and that I or my work would not interfere in the development of their course, their grades, their trajectory at the university, or their work in the case of the counsellors.

→ In my attempt to lessen my biases, I worked hard trying to follow some of Robson's (2002) recommendations, such as: frequently reflecting on my own and my work, assuming a critical stance towards my own performance in the field as well as during the analysis and interpretation of the data. This, I believe, was better done precisely when I was listening to the recordings of the interviews and reading my fieldnotes, writing notes, and when I was writing some of the sections of this report (e.g. 4.3 and 5.2).

With regards to the conditions of reliability and generalizability, as mentioned in that segment in section 4.1.3 (page 107), I considered them in terms of the consistency that can be achieved by the presence of the researcher as the human-as-instrument (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 46) all along the study, and the 'internal' generalizability as the possibility to generalizing conclusions within the setting studied (Robson 2002, citing Maxwell 1992, 1996).

In order to recap the elements that constitute the current chapter, we can proceed to the following summary.

SUMMARY

In line with the title of this chapter, I have illustrated the theoretical underpinnings of data collection as well as the actual procedures I undertook in this phase of my field work. I first presented what I planned to do according to some literature related to methods for collecting data, followed by the description of the

implementation of my plan with the corresponding adjustments, that is to say, what I actually did when I was collecting the data in the CADI-VER (self-access centre in Veracruz).

I started section 4.1 (page 99) by discussing those features of the qualitative paradigm which I considered relevant to my study, such as the traditions and the moments within this approach to researching in which I located my study and the rigour and trustworthiness this should attain.

Then in section 4.2 (page 110), I discussed the research means, also within this approach, I aimed to make use of and indeed used for collecting the data in the field, the CADI-VER; explicitly, interviewing, observation and documents review. Among the diverse types of interview and observational methods, I specified that I used semi-structured interviews, moderate-participant observation and that I reviewed the students' work reports of CADI.

At last in section 4.3 (page 115), I narrated the whole process of my data collection, from my preparation as the researcher and the design of the instruments to gather the data, to my actual work in the field (i.e. gaining access into the field, positioning myself as a stranger, reflecting on my performance, selecting and contacting the participants, carrying out the interviews and the observations, and the review of students' work reports).

As can be noticed in this chapter, I endeavoured to describe what I did in the data collection phase as explicitly as possible, that is, I showed part of my workings (Holliday, 2002) as accurately as I could, as much as I was aware of them, trying to develop the rigour necessary to provide enough elements to make this study trustworthy. In order to enhance such trustworthiness, a detailed and also consistent description of the procedures for analysing the data I was able to gather is offered in the following chapter.

5

METHODOLOGY: THEORY AND PRACTICE IN THE DATA ANALYSIS

In the same line as chapter 4, which has situated this study within the qualitative research approach and shown how the means to collect the data were used, this chapter, also part of Section III (the How), deals with how I did the processing of the data. That is to say, I describe the procedures I went through in order to analyse the data that I was able to gather during the fieldwork of this study. This description of how I carried out the processing of the data is included in the current chapter because describing the procedures I employed is part of the methodology that underlies this study. In this chapter I endeavour to describe how the themes and sub-themes that are considered in this study were uncovered throughout the processing of the data. On the other hand, this chapter attempts to add elements for this study to achieve rigour and trustworthiness within the qualitative paradigm (Holliday, 2002: 47) by showing my workings all through my study as much as it has been feasible to me.

In this chapter, section 5.1 starts with a description of the approaches that permeated my processing of the data. That is to say, I discuss the elements that I meant to adopt and adapt from those procedures such as the constant comparative method (Lincoln and Guba 1985 based on Glaser and Strauss 1967, Maykut and Morehouse 1994); the concepts/coding method suggested by Coffey and Atkinson (1996), and the approach suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) because they suited my analysis of data during the data collection stage (section 5.1.1, page 142), as well as later on when I had already collected all the data (section 5.1.2, page 144).

I then explain and illustrate how I actually implemented the analysis of my data in section 5.2. All the stages through which this process passed are described in each of the sub-sections (5.2.1– 5.2.14) and examples of what was obtained (e.g. highlighting, codes, categories, themes) in such stages are offered for the reader to have a more comprehensible view of what the procedures for analyzing my data were. Since this chapter explains how, through the processing of the data, the themes and sub-themes were gradually uncovered; it lays the ground work for the following two chapters that constitute Section IV, in which the data themselves and the outcomes inductively derived from them are presented.

5.1 PROCEDURES FOR ANALYZING MY DATA

In this section, I intend to describe, explain and illustrate the methods that permeated my data analysis and which I made use of to process the data during and after my fieldwork. Since this report of the analysis process was formally written after I carried out the procedures, the reader might sometimes find the theory behind my work intertwined with my actual carrying out the procedures, during which I tried to adapt such theory to the conditions of my work as it developed.

First, in section 5.1.1, I explain how I started to process the data while I was still obtaining them, to be exact, how I started to notice and discern some pieces of information that seemed important and interesting to me. This occurred either while I was listening to the interviewees or doing the observations in the different areas of the self-access centre, or the counselling sessions that I was watching at that time (c.f. Lincoln and Guba 1985 based on Glaser and Strauss 1967, Maykut and Morehouse 1994).

Then, in section 5.1.2, I explain which approaches influenced me the most during the formal processing of the data, once I had collected them. As can be observed later on, I was informed predominantly by the concept / coding method suggested by Coffey and Atkinson (1996), I also got some influence from the constant comparative method (Maykut and Morehouse 1994, Lincoln and Guba 1985) and from several strategies suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). At the end of this section I discuss how I deal with my pursuing of trustworthiness through the consistency of this part of my study, the data analysis.

5.1.1 WHILE COLLECTING THE DATA

This section aims to explain how, without being aware of it, I started to use some analytic strategies on the data I was obtaining during the collection phase; that is to say, I was starting to process them even though it was not my main purpose. I should mention that even when I had in mind the fact that data analysis according to the constant comparative method is a continuous process which develops simultaneously with the data collection (c.f. Lincoln and Guba 1985 based on Glaser and Strauss 1967, Maykut and Morehouse 1994), I had not realized that what I was doing at that time with the data I was obtaining was using some kind of method I was developing as I needed it. At that point I was not yet trying to follow any formal procedure, but I later became aware that even though I was not sticking to any formal method for analyzing data, everything I was doing with the data was developing my own method to process them. It was like a 'preliminary' stage of the proper analysis of the data. In fact, this phase is recognised as a 'discovery moment' since it is helpful to identify potentially important experiences, ideas, concepts or themes in the data (Maykut and Morehouse 1994: 132).

5.1.1.1 STAGES OF THE PRELIMINARY DATA ANALYSIS

This processing occurred during the different stages (described in section 4.3.2, page 117) I went through during data collection, for instance:

- Sometimes while listening to the interviewees, if a participant was talking and said something that specially caught my attention, I would make a note on that person's interview-sheet, which was originally the notification letter I gave the students who had been selected to be participants (for a sample see Appendix 11).
- On few other occasions while listening to the recordings of the interviews, if I heard something particularly interesting and important to me, I would also take notes on that participant's interview-sheet (for a sample see Appendix 11).
- Some other times while transcribing any of the interviews, again, if I read something particularly interesting and important to me, I would underline some words or phrases and/or I would write down some notes on the margins of the sheet (for a sample see Appendix 18).
- At times while I was observing any of the areas at the self-access centres (CADIS) or any of the counselling sessions and I was writing down my obser-

vations' notes (field notes), I took extra notes and wrote down (on the same observation format) comments that I considered relevant, or only words that came to my mind as a result of what I was watching; it seems that in this way I started identifying units of meaning (for a sample see Appendix 17).

As mentioned before, although I was not aware of it at that time, these acts of highlighting and noting down were what Maykut and Morehouse call a 'helpful action' on the part of the researcher (1994:123) as regards the ongoing data collection. And despite the fact that I did not do this in order to redirect the subsequent data collection or with the intention of continuing collecting data as the constant comparative method suggests (Lincoln and Guba 1985, Maykut and Morehouse 1994), I indeed made a few adjustments in my subsequent data collection according to what I had started to notice in the data already collected.

The former events took place during a period of approximately seven months; five months, the length of the semester at the University of Veracruz during which I was collecting the data; and two subsequent months when I organized the data and during which the whole experience of collecting the data in the fieldwork settled in my mind. Subsequently, I went back to Canterbury and I started the more formal data processing procedure, which I describe in the following section.

5.1.2 WITH THE DATA IN MY HANDS

The procedures I made use of as a method of processing the data at the same time I was obtaining them have been explained in section 5.1.1 above. At this point, I aim to describe what I did once I had already collected all my data, which is what I mean by the phrase "with the data in my hands". In other words, I intend to explain the formal method I followed in processing and analysing the data; considering the notions I had obtained from the preliminary processing while the collection of such data (for details see section 5.1.1, page 142) as a starting point. As pointed out before, this description will function as the foundation to the next chapter, in which the inductive uncovering of broad themes and their derived sub-themes, and the attainment of my findings are considered.

When I started the formal processing of my data, as I said before, a preliminary data analysis procedure had taken place in a concomitant way while I was interviewing and observing the participants (for details see section 5.1.1, page 142). At that moment I was not committed to any particular recognized method established by any one researcher, but I was instead following an informal but

methodical procedure which helped me highlight important pieces of information and understand what I was learning from the participants.

Despite the fact that, as I mentioned before, at the beginning I had not defined the method I would use to analyze the data, I consider that this personal method of processing them, together with the formal and more informed procedure I followed afterwards were embedded in what Goetz and LeCompte (1981) call an inductive-generative-constructive-subjective dimension (c.f. Lincoln and Guba 1985): *Inductive* because opposite to starting with hypotheses (deductive analysis), my starting point was the data themselves and from these I aimed to find out any relations and future categories and constructs, which situates the method within the *generative* dimension (Lincoln and Guba 1985: 333); *constructive* because I was trying to build on some kind of units, conceptual categories and/or themes based on what the data were dictating to me, so, I was trying to adhere to and interpret the participants' opinions in order to reconstruct them later on, which makes this a relatively *subjective* approach (Lincoln and Guba 1985: 334).

5.1.2.1 APPROACHES RELEVANT TO MY DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

I would not say that I rigidly adopted one specific method to develop the analysis of my data; instead, I was operating in agreement with Coffey and Atkinson who suggest that from the several strategies available to tackle the qualitative data analysis, a qualitative researcher may use the one or ones which best suit her and the research project "in order to explore different facets of our data" (1996: 14), I was guided mainly by three methods which for me were complementary and very helpful since I was able to adjust them to the particular needs of this study.

Informed by the constant comparative method firstly suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967) (cf. Maykut and Morehouse 1994, Lincoln and Guba 1985) but with no intention of generating any particular theory (as it originally aims to, according to the grounded theory notion), and by the idea of coding and linking concepts and data offered by Coffey and Atkinson (1996), I explored my data by considering some of their elements which suited my own research project. In other words, both methods provided me with strategies to conduct an inductive analysis of the data I had obtained. These two former methods can be characterized according to the typology of qualitative analysis proposed by Crabtree and Miller (1992) as kinds of 'editing approaches'. This characterization suits the way I made use of such methods since they are interpretive, flexible and do not consider

predetermined codes but codes which are based on the researcher's interpretation of the meanings or patterns in the data.

Before I go on describing step by step what I actually did during the data analysis process, I must say that besides being guided by the methods described above, some of the steps I followed fit in Miles and Huberman's list of "a fairly classic set of analytic moves" (1994: 9). For instance; I gave codes to the set of materials obtained from the observations and the interviews I carried out, and I added comments and/or reflections on the margins of my field notes and transcripts (the two former activities are part of what these authors call data reduction) as it can be observed in Fig. 5-1 in section 5.2.3 (page, 150). I also went through the materials trying to identify similarities, patterns, themes, relationships and/or differences between the concepts and groups I had formed and presented them in a chart/matrix (this could be part of what they call data display) as it can be observed in Fig. 5-6 and Fig. 5-7 below in section 5.2.9 (page, 157). I gradually elaborated a set of generalizations trying to cover the consistencies I detected in the data, and I tried to link these generalizations to a formalized body of knowledge in the form of constructs, themes and sub-themes which will be discussed afterwards in sections 5.2.11 and 5.2.12 (page 159 and page 160), this is part of what they suggest as conclusion drawing (Robson 2002: 459, 476, summarizing Miles and Huberman 1994).

5.1.2.2 DEALING WITH TRUSTWORTHINESS

As discussed in section 4.1.3 (page 107), it is important to provide elements which achieve rigour and trustworthiness in any qualitative study. In this case I attempted to meet this aim by implementing all procedures in a methodical and disciplined manner, trying to conduct the analysis process in such a way that I could increase the trustworthiness of my study and that the research process became transparent enough to the reader (Coffey and Atkinson 1996: 13, Maykut and Morehouse 1994: 145-146). In brief, for this study to attain trustworthiness I have attempted to provide detailed descriptions of the methodology underlying the whole study (methods I used to collect and process the data), I aim to illustrate its outcomes thoroughly, in addition to the explanation of the purpose of this research project.

From the various aspects of the research process that contribute to trustworthiness according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Miles and Huberman (1994), I want to mention those that I took into consideration and the rationale for it:

- The use of random sampling, for each member of the no-class students' community had the same chance of being selected (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000:100), (for details on the participants' selection see section 4.3.2.7, page 123).
- The utilization of different methods of data collection, such as: interviews, observations and documents' review; for they were complementary of each other and would allow me to gain a more rounded and contextual understanding of this focus of inquiry (Mason, 2002), to therefore offer a more consistent and complete account of the study.
- The collection of first-hand data (directly from the participants); for I had the opportunity to get personal contact with the people involved in this study (no-class students), to then try to understand what was going on among them in the real field (CADI-VER) (Richards, 2003).
- The construction of data display matrices; for it were more straightforward for me to graphically observe and be able to interconnect all the diverse codes and subsequent sub-themes (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 9).
- The consideration of surprises, negative evidence and/or atypical data; for I got a more down-to-earth perception of the context and the events taking place at the CADI-VER, and more down-to-earth understanding and interpretation of these.

After explaining the academic foundation for the analysis of data, I can now turn to the description and illustration of my actual implementing and adapting the procedures for such an analysis.

5.2 ACTUAL PROCESS OF MY DATA ANALYSIS

Having discussed the general principles I followed during the data analysis process, I can now outline the procedures I actually put into practice for the exploration of the data. The number of interviews and observations I was able to carry out and were taken into account for their analysis can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5- Number of Interviews and observations carried out in this study

• Division of Interviewees				
Codes:				
Bas = Basic levels (courses 1 & 2)				
Int = Intermediate levels (courses 3, 4 & 5)				
Ch = Chose to study on this mode				
Im = Were imposed to study on this mode				
Ss who have already finished their course		Ss currently studying their course		
Type of Ss	No. of Ss	Type of Ss	No. of Ss (interviews)	
Bas Ch	1	Bas Ch	6	(x 2)
Bas Im	1	Bas Im	11	(x 2)
Int Ch	0	Int Ch	1	(x 2)
Int Im	0	Int Im	1	(x 2)
Total Ss	2		19	
Advisors	4	Coordinator	1	
Total number of Interviewees			26	
Total number of Interviews			45	
Observations of Areas		12 →	2 VA 2 LA 2 CA 2 CHIOA 4 MUA	
Observations of Counselling Sessions		17		
Total number of Observations		29		

As it can be noticed in the former table, the total number of interviews that I worked with was 45, whereas 29 observations were analyzed.

The following sections (5.2.1 – 5.2.14) correspond to each of the stages I underwent during the analysis process, such as: highlighting the data materials (interview transcripts, observation sheets/fieldnotes and summary sheets); different levels of coding pieces of information in the data, uncovering categories and subsequent themes. These stages are presented in a chronological order (see Table 5-10 below), although in my ongoing work some of them sometimes overlapped

in a natural and necessary way. I give some examples of the unitizing, coding, categorizing and displaying of the data as the precursors of the re-integration and re-construction of the same data.

After I describe and illustrate how I actually carried out the processing of the data, in the penultimate section (5.2.13, page 161) I explain how these procedures led me to the sub themes and themes which emerged from the data themselves, as a result of the data's fragmenting and reconstruction, which I portray in Fig. 5-9. Finally, in section 5.2.14 (page 166), I present Table 5-10, which by way of summary, shows the chronology of all the stages and events that took place in this phase of the treatment of the data.

5.2.1 CODING THE DATA MATERIALS

Considering what the constant comparative method suggests in regard to the coding of data pages according to their sources, I adopted a coding strategy from the beginning of the collection stage (Maykut and Morehouse 1994: 127) for most of the data materials I took into consideration. The data materials I refer to are the following documents:

→The students' work reports, which did not need coding as they had all the information and the students' photographs included (see samples in Appendix 10);

→The observation sheets; from the CADI in the Language Centre (CADI-CI) (see sample in Appendix 14), from the CADI in the USBI (CADI-USBI) (see sample in Appendix 15) and from the Counselling Sessions (see sample in Appendix 16)

→The interview transcripts; the students' interviews (see samples in Appendix 12) and the counsellors' interviews (see sample in Appendix 13)

→The interviews' sheets, which were originally the notification letters that I gave the students to inform them that they had been selected as candidates to participate in my research and to ask them if they wanted to participate (see samples in Appendix 11).

And all of these documents included the following information:

- The Date when the interview or the observation was carried out,
- The Time when the interview or the observation started and when it finished,
- The Place (CADI-USBI or CADI-CI) where the observation was carried out,
- The Place where the interview was carried out,

- The name of the Area or the name of the Counsellor where the observation took place or the name of the student interviewed,
- The Group and the Level of English of each counselling session observed.

5.2.2 HIGHLIGHTING THE DATA MATERIALS

Once I had all the observation sheets (CADI Areas and Counselling Sessions) and the interview transcripts printed, I was able to work on paper, so I proceeded to read, re-read and underline with different colours and to circle any words and/or phrases which seemed interesting to me. It should be remembered that I had already underlined some words or phrases and noted down some thoughts while I was collecting the data (as noted in section 5.1.1, page 142), that is, by this time I already had an initial discovery sheet of recurring ideas, opinions and attitudes (Maykut and Morehouse 1994: 135). An example of this stage can be seen in Fig. 5-1 and Fig. 5-3 below.

Notice that Figures 5-1, 5-3, 5-4, 5-6 and 5-7 below are sections that were taken from documents such as the ones described in section 5.2.1 above and which complete samples are shown in Appendices 17 and 18.

5.2.3 REVIEWING THE DATA MATERIALS

After I had already identified some interesting pieces of information (words, phrases) and trying not to succumb to my own bias and not to have preconceived expectations but to maintain an open, sensitive attitude to what I was reading and listening to, that is, to what the data were telling me, I proceeded to re-read my field notes (Observation Sheets), the interview transcripts and to listen to the recordings of the interviews repeatedly.

It is worth mentioning that for me it was extremely helpful to listen to the interviews' recordings as many times as I considered necessary, because this, as well as re-reading the field notes, permitted me to identify and highlight several pieces of information, that is, "meaningful bits of [my] data" (Coffey and Atkinson 1996:26) or as Lincoln and Guba term them "units of information", which "[...] serve[d] as the basis for defining categories" (1985: 344).

One more time I wrote comments in the margins of the sheets and I highlighted pieces of information which attracted my attention by underlining and/

or circling these units with different colours, each colour having been assigned to a certain concept, notion or theme, e.g. yellow for words/phrases related to the counselling sessions; red for words/phrases related to their feelings or preferences; dark green for words/phrases related to the students' expectations of and achievements in the no-class courses, pink for words/phrases related to students' logs, etc; examples of these are shown in the following parts of an interview transcript in Figure 5-1 and of an observation sheet (field note) in Fig. 5-3 (see complete samples of the Interview Transcripts and Observation Sheets in Appendices 12, 13 and 14, 15, 16 respectively).

Fig. 5-1. Part of a student's Interview Transcript

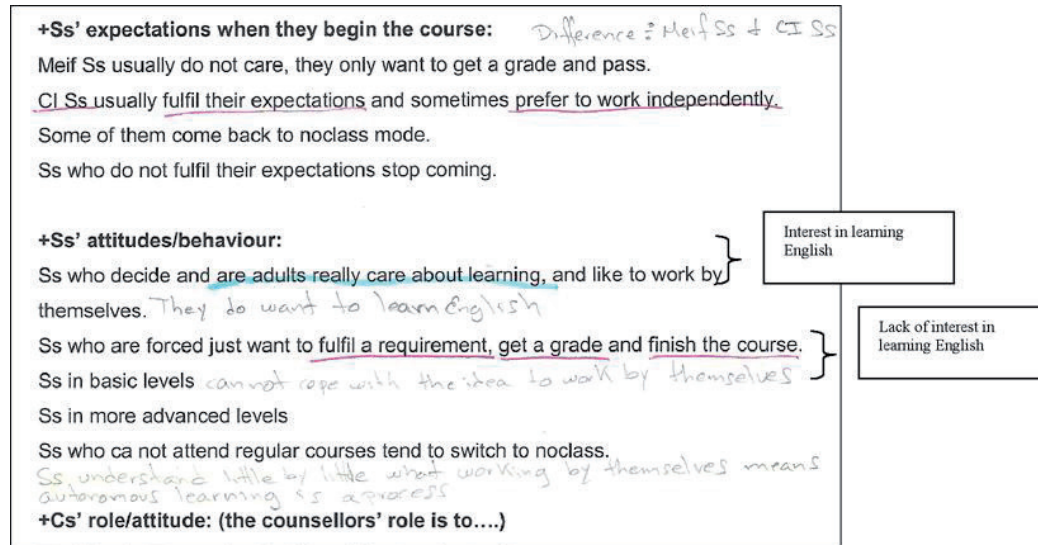
INTERVIEW	MY COMMENTS
E.- Pablo...ehm in the first interview we had, we were talking about what you expected from this course and what you were getting , now that you have finished and you are about to take the final exam, what do you feel? What do you think you have got from this course?	Expectations / Achievements g+
P.- what I got?... headaches hehehe	Autonomous mode (AM) = Sad experience
E.- yes? Hahaha	
P.- hehe, I feel that the progress was average ...no...I am not going to question that it is a learning...because at the beginning I thought it was not going to work for me... certainly it worked but it is not the same, I would have preferred to have a class with a teacher , because the counselling sessions ehmm, did not help me a lot...don't tell the teacher	So Progress uncertainty Prefers "class" mode Cs don't help

5.2.4 SUMMARIZING THE DATA

Besides the coding of the actual interview transcripts and field notes, it was useful for me to write some summary sheets from listening to the interviews' recordings; this can also be seen as part of the data reduction activity (c.f. Miles and Huberman 1994, Robson 2002). On those sheets I also noted down phrases or themes which had already emerged and that I had already identified in the transcripts, as well as some new ones. From these phrases, as well as from the original statements on the transcripts, I underlined salient units of meaning and subsequently I coded them and/or identified first/second-level codes and sometimes

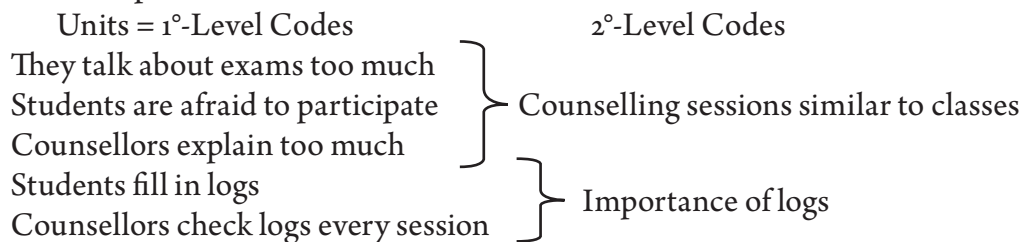
subsequent themes, as can be observed in the example of a counsellor's interview summary-sheet in this stage in Fig. 5-2 below.

Fig. 5-2. Part of a counsellor's Interview Summary-sheet



With some 'units' already recognized and highlighted and by comparing them, I started trying to group the similar ones, those that coincided in something arriving at some kind of vague preliminary categories (which later became first and second-level codes).

Examples of these units are:



5.2.5 LABELLING THE DATA: FIRST-LEVEL CODES

Paying attention to what I had underlined and circled, and to those vague, preliminary units/codes, I started writing down labels (or first-level codes according to Miles and Huberman, 1994) to the units, which consisted of words but mostly of groups of words, phrases, e.g. 'Ss haven't worked'; 'Ss want to fulfil the requirement/pass the course'; 'Cos (counsellors) ask about Ss learning', etc. All first-level codes I identified and worked with were drafted based on recurring pieces of information related to the same topic and they can be seen in Table 5-9.

This attaching of codes on the margins of the transcripts, field notes or interview summary-sheets helped me to identify and reorder the data, to think about it in new and different ways (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 29). Fig. 5-3 below is an example of one of my field notes at this stage, here it can be noticed that some phrases or words were underlined and/or circled with different colours, as mentioned in the previous sections (5.2.2, page 150 and 5.2.3, page 150), it can also be observed that on the comments column I wrote phrases which tried to recap those pieces of information, especially those which were recurring and seemed more significant to me, which I call 'first-level codes'.

Fig. 5-3. Part of a Counselling Session's Observation Sheet (field notes)

CADI-USBI		
Date: 14.06.05	Time: 11:00	Group: IN141
Level: IN100	Area: Counselling Session/ Isa	No. of Ss: 5
Comments:		
11:00	There are 4 girls seating, the Co gets to the room, greets and <u>asks</u> them what they learnt in the Conversation Club, she tells them that they just came because they are about to finish the course "hasta que les esta llegando el agua al cuello" (until water is coming to your throats), she asks their <u>logs</u> one by one: she calls them by their names and <u>checks</u> their logs. She also <u>asks</u> for the <u>grade</u> they got <u>on the exam</u> (self assessment exam for each unit).	logs
11:10	Another girl gets to the room. Three of them look as if they're friends and constantly talk to each other but <u>lowly</u> . The Co <u>keeps on checking logs</u> , she takes notes on her list (the activities & areas they've done). She tells them that they <u>haven't worked</u> in certain areas; in fact she claims that they or <u>some of them</u> <u>haven't worked enough</u> . She <u>asks</u> them if they have any doubts and <u>asks</u> them some questions	gregarious logs/cont. keep record

5.2.6 LABELLING THE DATA: SECOND-LEVEL CODES

After I had noted down the first-level codes, I grouped them according to their similarities (regarding the topic they were about) into a smaller number of themes,

that is, I formed pattern coding groups (second-level codes), e.g. ‘Students’ negative perceptions of no-class mode’; ‘Counsellors’ role’; ‘Lack of interest in learning English’, etc. All second-level codes I identified and worked with were drafted based on related first-level ones and they can be seen in Table 5-9.

As Coffey and Atkinson assert, I was “concerned primarily with the identification of a simple conceptual schema” (1996: 28), thus I meant to identify fewer and more general phrases which contained the preceding first-level ones. It is to be noted that first-level codes as well as second-level ones may be concepts which are identified or constructed founded on theoretical frameworks, the same research questions which guide the project or the data themselves (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 31). In this case, my second-level codes derived from the data and were guided by the research questions of this study.

The following Fig. 5-4 shows an example of one of my transcripts during this stage. Again, it can be seen how I colour-highlighted some words and/or phrases, how I attempted to take them in the first-level codes (on my comments column) and how some of the latter were recapped in the second-level codes that are contained in the small boxes on the right of the comments column.

Fig. 5-4. Part of a student’s Interview Transcript

INTERVIEW	MY COMMENTS
E.- Pablo...ehm in the first interview we had, we were talking about what you expected from this course and what you were getting , now that you have finished and you are about to take the final exam, what do you feel? What do you think you have got from this course ?	Expectations / Achievements gt
P.- what I got?... headaches hehehe	Autonomous mode (AM) = Bad experience
E.- yes? Hahaha	
P.- hehe, I feel that the progress was average...no....I am not going to question that it is a learning...because at the beginning I thought it was not going to work for me....certainly it worked, but it is not the same, I would have preferred to have a class with a teacher , because the counselling sessions ehmm, did not help me a lot...don’t tell the teacher	St progress uncertainty Prefers “class” mode Cs don’t help

Sts’ negative perceptions of the no-class mode.

Counsellors’ role

5.2.7 INVENTORYING THE DATA

Once I had noted down codes on the interview transcripts, the field notes and the interview summary-sheets, I continued to copy them down in a kind of an inventory on sheets of paper that in a certain moment became some kind of tally sheets (left column of Fig. 5-5 below). Then on these sheets, trying to find out how recurrent these codes were, I ticked them according to the participants who had talked about each of them or to their appearance on my fieldnotes. After the first-level codes on the left column in Fig. 5-5, there are some numbers which illustrate this step, explicitly, these numbers indicate how many participants mentioned each topic and how often such topics appeared in my fieldnotes. This procedure gave me a pretty good idea not only of the recurrence of the codes, but of the importance these topics could have for the participants.

5.2.8 GROUPING THE CODES (FIRST/SECOND-LEVEL)

Subsequently, I attempted to clearly illustrate on paper all these pieces of information (concepts, ideas) that I had recognized so far. I made a list of all the codes that I had identified as first/second-level codes so far and tried to make connections among themselves, that is, all the similar and related codes were put together (I did this on the computer, as it is easier to order words). This exercise was of use to confirm which words/phrases belonged to each of the code levels (first or second), to re-accommodate them if necessary, or to rephrase particularly the second-level codes. It is to be mentioned that the connections, patterns, codes and categories that I identified, emerged from the data themselves and they were not pre-established by me.

The following Fig. 5-5 (a fragment of Table 5-9 in section 5.2.13, page 161) shows the divisions between the groups of codes and how several first-level codes belong to a certain second-level code, besides, it shows the recurrence of these topics.

Fig. 5-5. Part of Table 5-9

Ss seem focused = 20	
Ss want to learn English = 4	
Some Ss really work = 30	Interest in learning English
Learning English is important/ necessary = 3	
Materials are in good condition = 2	
Ss haven't worked/studied = 7	
Control of attendance = 8	
No interest in English = 5	
Ss pretend to be working = 15	Lack of interest in learning English
English is not a priority for Ss = 8	
Ss don't have time to attend CADL = 3	Fulfilment of a requirement
Talking about passing the course = 4	
Ss fill in logs = 8	
Ss seem bored = 3	
Ss work on something else but English = 1	

5.2.9 DISPLAYING THE DATA

According to Huberman and Miles' three basic analytical sub-processes (1994), I had already completed the 'data reduction' one and at this point I went on to do what they call the 'data display'. I organized the data I had coded and categorized in the interview transcripts and the summary sheets (for details see section 5.2.6, page 154) in a table with rows and columns, in a matrix (c.f Coffey and Atkinson 1996, Miles and Huberman 1994, Robson 2002). In one matrix I correlated the names of the participants (no-class students and counsellors) with the first-level codes and at the same time these codes were separated according to the second-level code they belonged to (see the complete sheet in Appendix 19).

In the Fig. 5-6 below it can be observed that the names of the participants, their counselling groups (before the names) and their corresponding codes (after the names) are distributed on the rows according to the type of participants they were: chose (they chose to take the no-class course); imposed (they had to take the no-class course); ex-students (they had finished their no-class courses), and the counsellors. On each column one can see a different first-level code; at the same time, these codes are grouped in a pink bracket according to the second-level code they belong to. Then the ticks indicate who mentioned what (for the complete Matrix sheets see Appendix 19).

[illegible]

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Fig. 5-7. Part of a Sheet from my Data Analysis Notebook (Matrix – Incidence of Themes)

	So On	So In	Co	T
1. Have a number of what it's about	1	2	3	4
2. Similar to a class-explanations	1	3	4	6
3. Fulfill the requirement - Pass	2	3	5	6
4. Come to do what I want to do	4	1	0	5
5. Be easier / Be more difficult	2/1	1/2	3/2	5/3
6. Learn English / Not learn	3	1	4	8
7. Fulfillment of their Expectations	3	3	6	9
8. Learn about themselves, their capacities	1	4	0	5
9. Learn a lot	2	2	0	4
10. Learn a basic things - Vocab	5	2	0	7
11. Reinforced what they already know	5	3	8	8
12. Become more Responsible/mature	4	7	11	12
13. Become more Organized	3	7	10	10
14. How easy make	2	1	3	3
15. Course is Easy	2	3	0	5
16. Course is difficult - Time seems	3	5	3	9
17. Course is Difficult - for study alone	3	3	12	15
18. Convenient / Practical for home-schedules	6	4	0	5
19. Course is useful for learning	1	4	0	5
20. Lack of Meaning - Too from schools	2	3	5	5
21. Good for busy people / Bad	3/1	1	4/1	5/1
22. English (learn) is not a Priority after other	3/1	4	8	8
23. Learning Eng. is Important & Necessary	1	2	3	3
24. No class Made worse / doesn't work	1/1	2	3/1	3/3
25. Awareness of own needs & possibilities	3	3	6	7
26. Awareness that Learning depends on themselves	4	1	0	2
27. And they can decide what to study & when	5	6	11	12
28. And of themselves & their capacities	2	3	5	6
29. Against Disappointment & of course	5	0	9	9
30. And that Revision Preparation is Needed	0	4	7	9
31. Important to look up the activities	3	3	2	8
32. But it Worked more than I thought	3	6	2	11
33. Grammar, Vocabulary, Reading, Writing, Spelling	3	4	7	14
34. No time to go to CADL	1	2	3	3
35. CADL is good for Practice	0	3	0	3
36. Mothers only - are good/arent good	3/1	3/3	3/3	3/3
37. CADL is OK / is small	1	3/3	3/3	3/3

5.2.10 NAMING CATEGORIES (PRELIMINARY, SUB-, AND CATEGORIES)

After reviewing the array of first/second-level codes, which can be thought of as preliminary or initial categories in the list (Fig. 5-5) as well as in the matrices (Fig. 5-6 and Fig. 5-7), I endeavoured to compare them among themselves again, to find more commonalities and relationships, and I proceeded to link the phrases codes as second-level which I considered that could belong to a same sub-category. I then named it, and this way I was able to create several categories. This activity was similar to what Lincoln and Guba identify as the categorizing task (1985: 347).

For instance, phrases like ‘This course fits the schedule of students’ major subjects’ and ‘Course is practical and convenient’ were some of the ones which were coded as first-level and later belonged to the second-level code that I named

‘Schedule aspects of the course’ and this second-level code together with another second-level code that I named ‘The courses features’ gave rise to a sub-category named ‘Ease and convenience of the no-class courses’. And the latter one in conjunction with other three sub-categories (‘Importance of learning EFL’, ‘Difficulty and inconvenience of the no-class courses’ and ‘Fulfilment of students’ expectations’) are included in a broader category called ‘Students’ perceptions of the no-class mode’, which in fact became one of the two themes that drove this study. Another sample of this stage can be clearly observed in the chart in Fig. 5-8 below and in the complete version in Table 5-9. I want to point out that what I called categories and sub-categories then became the themes and sub-themes respectively, with which I developed the rest of the analysis in this chapter and the discussion of such themes in the following ones (chapters 6 & 7).

5.2.11 REFINING CATEGORIES, UNCOVERING THEMES

Once more, I compared the preliminary categories (second-level codes) I had established in the previous step (section 5.2.10, page 158) among themselves, e.g. the second-level code that I named ‘Schedule aspects of the course’ and the second-level code that I named ‘The courses features’, and I tried to refine these preliminary categories by putting together those which were related to the same topic and could be embedded in a broader, more general category. As for instance, the examples of the two second-level codes just mentioned were put together in a broader sub-category named ‘Ease and convenience of the no-class courses’. In line with Coffey and Atkinson (1996), I would say that the categories that emerged in this study were partly based on the research questions that inspired this research project, or even on the questions used in the interviews. Others derived from the terms some participants actually used and some others arose from the data themselves and my interpretation of them.

At this point of refinement and decision, a few sub-categories disappeared because of lack of relevance or because the preliminary categories (second-level codes) contained in them were relocated (e.g. ‘Opinions about the CADI’, ‘Students’ likes and dislikes’); whereas others got stronger because several preliminary categories fitted within them or due to their relevance in this particular study (e.g. ‘Importance of learning EFL’, ‘Experiencing autonomy’)

5.2.12 DESIGNATING HIERARCHIES TO THE CATEGORIES

As a result, at that moment I already had 3 levels of categories: the generic or broader ones (e.g. 'Students' perceptions of the no-class mode' and 'Students' experiences within the no-class mode'); the sub-categories which were embedded in the former ones (e.g. 'Control over students', 'Preparation to face the innovation', etc.) and at the same time contained the more specific second-level codes which I called 'preliminary sub-categories' (e.g. 'Importance of logs', 'Lack of information and misunderstanding', etc.). At the first level of specificity, I had a group which consisted of the detailed first-level codes that were identified at the first stages of the analytic process. The latter, though extremely useful and important in this coding/categorizing process, were not considered any more in the naming of themes as they were too specific (e.g. 'Students prefer to work alone', 'Students fill in logs', 'Course is good for busy people', etc.) and they were already integrated in the broader sub-categories (sub-themes).

As mentioned before, the first generic categories and their sub-categories, which emerged from the data, became respectively the themes and sub-themes that will be discussed in the following two chapters which are named after each of these two main themes: 'Students' perceptions of the no-class mode' and 'Students' experiences within the no-class mode'. Regarding the whole processing of the data, Coffey and Atkinson comment that once the data has been displayed in a coded form, the categories can be retrieved, split into subcategories, spliced, linked together, they can be abandoned, changed, re-sorted, renamed and so on (1996: 46), and that is precisely what I have done throughout these two last steps.

Similar examples to the ones that have been offered in sections 5.2.10 (page 158), 5.2.11 (page 159) and in this penultimate section can be observed in Fig. 5-8 which illustrates a fragment of the resulting Table 5-9 (in section 5.2.13 below). This figure might be useful to understand the coding/categorization process, that is, the way I passed from the first-level codes stage (first column), to the second-level codes (second column), then to the sub-categories (third column) and finally to the categories stage (fourth column), from the more specific to the more general.

Fig. 5-8. Part of Table 5-9 (the coding/categorization process)

Preliminary Categories			
First-level Codes	Second-level Codes	Sub-Categories = Sub-themes	Categories = Themes
Ss seem focused = 20 Ss want to learn English = 4 Some Ss really work = 30 Learning English is important/ necessary = 3 Materials are in good condition = 2	Interest in learning English	6.1 Importance of learning EFL	6. Students' perceptions of the no-class learning mode
Ss haven't worked/studied = 7 Control of attendance = 8 No interest in English = 5 Ss pretend to be working = 15	Lack of interest in learning English		

5.2.13 MOVING TOWARDS INTERPRETATION

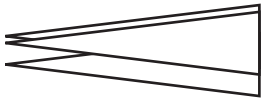
After all, I endeavoured to carry out the interpretation of the displayed data and to draw conclusions. Displaying the coded and categorized data as I did, facilitated the process of moving from coding to interpretation since I was able to 'interrogate' the data and to visualize relationships, patterns, contrasts, regularities, irregularities, themes and conceptual and theoretical coherence in the data (Coffey and Atkinson 1996: 47). This, accordingly, led me to the definition of the themes and sub-themes that will be discussed later on (in chapters 6 and 7).

As mentioned before, I had in mind that to move towards interpretation I should go beyond the coding and categorizing, I should transform the coded data into meaningful data (c.f Coffey and Atkinson 1996, Maykut and Morehouse 1994, Miles and Huberman 1994, Robson 2002); therefore, I endeavoured to carry out the interpretation of the displayed data and to draw conclusions, the third analytical sub-process suggested by Huberman and Miles (1994). At this stage I tried to understand, generate meaning and interpret what the participants might have wanted to show me from their reality, in other words, I moved back to what the whole picture may be (Coffey and Atkinson 1996:46).

This process could be summarized as follows: after de-contextualizing the data (segmenting portions of data), they were re-contextualized (organized, sorted out and reassembled) (Coffey and Atkinson 1996 recapping Tesch 1990). For the same actions Maykut and Morehouse (1994: 143) use the metaphor of an accordion in which after pulling apart the bellows (segmenting/unitizing the data) these are squeezed together to create a different but accurately reflected sound-view of the original data. This is what I intended to do when organizing the data into two broad themes with four sub themes for the first one (Students' perceptions of the no-class learning mode) and six sub themes for the second one (Students' experiences within the no-class learning mode), as can be noticed in the upcoming Table 5-9.

The detailed description of the outcomes (sub-themes, themes and findings) of the current analysis is offered in the following chapters (Chapters 6 and 7), in which I intend that the themes and sub themes, that have been uncovered throughout the process of the data analysis, can make sense and can be coherently interwoven with the excerpts of the data that I include to give support to these same emerging themes, sub-themes and their deriving findings. Notice that what I call findings could be compared to the "outcome propositions" in the constant comparative method described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994: 144).

Table 5-9. Organizing, coding and categorizing the Data

Organization of data into codes, categories, sub-themes & themes			
SPECIFIC/DETAILED →→ More			→→ BROAD/GENERAL Fewer
First-level Codes	Second-level Codes	Sub-Categories = Sub-themes	Categories = Themes
Ss seem focused = 20 Ss want to learn English = 4 Some Ss really work = 30 Learning English is important/ necessary = 3 Materials are in good condition = 2	6.1.1 Interest in learning English	6.1 Importance of learning EFL Finding 1	6. Students' perceptions of the no-class learning mode
Ss haven't worked/studied = 7 Control of attendance = 8 No interest in English = 5 Ss pretend to be working = 15 English is not a priority for Ss = 8 Ss don't have time to attend CADI = 3 Talking about passing the course = 4 Ss fill in logs = 8 Ss seem bored = 3 Ss work on something else but English = 1 Ss want to fulfil the requirement/ pass the course = 6 Important to clock up hrs – credits = 8 Book and workbook are the most important materials = 11	6.1.2 Lack of interest in learning English Fulfilment of a requirement		
This course fits the schedule of Ss' majors subjects = 12 Course is practical & convenient = 15 Course is easy = 3 Course is good for busy people = 4 Course is useful for learning = 5 No-class mode works = 3	6.2.1 Ss' schedule aspects 6.2.2 Features of the course	6.2 Ease and convenience of the no-class courses Finding 2	
Course is difficult due to time issues = 5 Ss don't have time to attend CADI = 3 Lack of planning (distances) = 5 No-class mode doesn't work = 3 Course is difficult due to the newness = 9 Working alone is difficult = 4	6.3.1 Distance between Ss' schools and the CADI 6.3.2 Lack of time to attend the CADI 6.3.3 Lack of the constant presence of Ts	6.3 Difficulty and inconvenience of the no-class courses Finding 3	

Ss are ok with their achievements = 8 Ss think they got what they expected or even more = 6 Ss didn't get what they expected = 7 Ss prefer classes = 12	Fulfilment of students' expectations	6.4 Fulfilment of students' expectations Finding 4	
Ss need some support = 5 Ss can work in their own way = 3 Ss reflect on & talk about their own learning = 8 Ss can decide what to study & when = 12 Ss prefer to study/work in group = 9 Ss prefer to work alone = 3		7.1 Experiencing Autonomy Finding 5 & 6	7. Students' experiences within the no-class learning mode
Cos check logs = 32 Ss fill in logs = 8	Importance of logs	7.2 Control over students	
Cos push Ss to work on certain areas = 8 Counting activities/hours = 4 Ss are against imposition & accumulation of hrs = 9 Keeping a record of Ss' points = 4 Ss fill in logs = 8 Assistants stamp logs = 7	Control over Ss' activities	Finding 7	
Keeping a check on Ss (invigilating) = 3 Assistant threatens Ss to deduct time due to misbehaviour = 1	Surveillance		
Ss check in/out = 15 Keeping a record of Ss' points = 4 Ss fill in logs = 8 Control of attendance = 8	Keep records of attendance		
Cos talk about Ss' development = 5 Cos have Ss reflect on their learning/studying = 4 Ss talk about their own learning = 8 Ss talk about advantages of no-class mode = 3	Reflectivity	7.3 Beyond learning English: Awareness and Reflectivity Finding 8 & 9	
Doing mechanical actions = 12 Awareness of own needs/possibilities = 7 Awareness that learning depends on themselves = 12 Awareness that they can decide what to study and when = 12 Awareness of themselves and their capacities = 6 Awareness that previous preparation is needed = 9 Ss are against imposition & accumulation of hrs = 9	Lack of reflectivity Awareness		

Ss need some support = 5 Ss have no idea of what it's about = 4 Ss want to come & do whatever they want = 5 Ss think course was easier/harder = 8 Fulfilment of Ss expectations = 8 Awareness that previous preparation is needed = 9	Lack of information / mis-understanding	7.4 Preparation to face the innovation Finding 10	
Ss prefer to study/work in group = 9 Ss prefer to work alone = 3 Ss prefer classes = 12 Ss prefer to study/work alone = 6 Ss like the no-class mode = 13 Ss need some support = 5 Ss answer doubtfully & shy = 2 Ss play around = 15 Some Ss are serious & quiet = 15 Some Ss really work = 30 Areas remain quiet = 15 Ss pretend to be working = 15 Ss seem bored = 3 Ss answer incorrectly = 5 Poor understanding and production = 5 Poor participation = 3 Ss cheat = 5	7.5.2. CADI & Ss' attitudes, gregariousness, preferences, performance	7.5 The no-class courses in action Finding 11	
Cos assess/check ss' knowledge = 5 Cos ask for doubts = 20 Cos give academic support to Ss = 12 Cos are polite & patient = 10 Ss ask their doubts to Cos = 5 Co is an important guide, model = 28 Ss need some support = 5 Co Ses similar to classes = 15 Co Ses are to ask & solve doubts = 18 Co Ses are to reflect on learning = 3 Co Ses are useful = 13 Co Ses are important & necessary = 13 Co Ses are to learn from the group (interaction) = 11	7.5.1 Counsellors' role Co Sessions' role → Similarity to a regular class		
Co Ses similar to classes = 15 Ss ask their doubts to Cos = 5 Urgency to cover the units = 2 Counting activities/hours = 4 Regular/common use of materials = 17 Ss must do a pre-set number of hrs = 1 Book and workbook are the most important materials = 11 Talk about exams = 30 Talking about passing the course = 4	7.5.1 Similarity to a regular class - Co Sessions Program-oriented course Exam-oriented course		

CADI is good for practice = 3 Materials at CADI are good = 3 Materials at CADI aren't good = 3 CADI is ok = 6 Ss complain about mistreatment (bossy staff) = 5	CADI	
Ss learnt about their capacities, about themselves = 5 Ss learnt a lot = 4 Ss learnt basic things = 7 Ss reinforced what they already knew = 8 Ss became more responsible/mature = 12 Ss became more organized = 10	Gains on personal development 7.6 Taking ownership of the innovation Finding 12 & 13	

5.2.14 SUMMARIZING THE DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

To end this section, a detailed chronology of the events occurred in this phase of the treatment of the data is presented in Table 5-10 below. In this chart I point out the date or period of time when the events took place, then, a brief description of those events, the actions or steps I took through the process; and in the third column (My achievements/my findings') I mention the results I obtained from the actions I carried out, such as the codes, categories or sub themes I found at that time. The procedure is divided in two stages: what I was doing with the data at the time I was gathering them, and what I did with the data once I had already collected them.

Finally, I want to point out that the lists, tables and charts that I developed were useful and helpful all through the process of the analysis of my data, and particularly at the last stages of the analysis. By looking at and comparing them I was able to get a wide and deep picture of my data, their elements and my outcomes.

Table 5-10. CHRONOLOGY OF THE DATA PROCESSING
While collecting the data (March-June 2005) & with the whole data already collected (August - Nov 2005/ Feb - Nov 2006)

WHEN	EVENT	WHILE COLLECTING THE DATA	My ACHIEVEMENTS / My FINDINGS
2005 21/03	Interview: CAm, Cls. Take notes afterwards.	Find similarities and differences in these counsellors' opinions	
28-31/03	Transcribe interviews, take notes and underline important and interesting aspects	Identify Cos' role according to themselves → explain, train vs. guide, motivate; solve doubts.	
12/04	Interview: SBr, SAg, SJo, SSa, SFa. Take notes afterwards. Compare Ss' views.	Identify some Ss' preferences: "Autonomous" is very good; good materials and facilities; some complaints about staff.	
13/04	Listen to interviews: SMi, SGU, SYo, SDi. Take notes afterwards.	Recognize different position and opinion between the adult St and the youngsters. Some Ss expected something different from what they got in this learning mode.	
15/04	Interview: SAl. Listen to the interviews' recordings again.	Identify similarities and differences in Ss views. Start recognizing repeated phrases: need more counselling sessions, time is a problem, good to come when we can.	
18/04	Interview: CEu, SEd, SAn, SEl, SEh. Take notes afterwards	A Co's phrase attracted my attention: Loss of autonomy as people grow up and pass through different education levels (school prevents students from autonomy)	
19/04	Interview: SAz, SAr, SPa, SYa, SVi, SJe, SLi.	Identify more repeated phrases but also some contradictions: good to come whenever we can vs. we do not have time to come to CAD	
21-26/04	Transcribe some interviews, take notes and underline important and interesting aspects	Self-directed learning as a process. Counsellors' development and growth. Lots of complains about the imposition and treatment on the staff's part.	

26/04	Interview: CMa, CRo.	Recognize important information: Contradictions on the Cos' role: explain, guide and instructions vs. counsel, advise and support in becoming aware and autonomous
27/04	Observations in USBI & CI - Check In/Out Areas	Ss are satisfied with CADI
3/06	Observations in USBI – Computers Area. Underline interesting things	Start recognizing repeated phrases: importance of logs → check and control
8/06	Observations in CI - Computers Area. Write some notes on the margin of my "Observation Formats"	Realize that assistants and counsellors keep an eye on Ss at CADI. Ss act quite mechanically → routines Ss help each other → gregariousness
13/06	Observations in USBI Counselling sessions	Count activities instead of hrs → but still check and keep records of what Ss do.
14/06	Observations in USBI – Video & Listening Areas and USBI & CI Counselling sessions. Underline interesting info.	Identify and note down some recurring information (word, phrases, passages) Ss' interest, attention and work vs. boredom & fulfilment of requirements. Find interesting repeated attitudes (actions) among Ss. Again, Ss work in teams.
15/06	Observations in USBI & CI Counselling sessions. Write ideas on the margins.	CoSes too similar to Classes Importance of grades and points (credits)
16/06	Observations in USBI & CI - Multiple Uses Areas and USBI & CI Counselling sessions.	
17/06	Observations in CI - Multiple Uses Area and USBI & CI Counselling sessions.	Some counselling sessions are so much as a class!! . Exam-directed program Too much explanation to Ss about the exam → pampering and patronizing attitudes
20/06	2 nd interviews: SVI Read my field notes. Write some notes on the margin of my "Observation Formats".	Control over activities in addition to attendance and amount of activities and hours. This system may encourage Ss' self esteem/image positively or negatively.
21/06	Observations in CI – Video & Listening Areas and USBI & CI Counselling sessions. Underline some phrases with colours.	Importance of exams → pass the subject vs. learn it. Reflect on learning – some importance to reflection, learning strategies and self-awareness is given in some CoSes
23/06	Observations in USBI – Multiple Uses Area 2 nd interviews: SSa, SDi, SEI, SEn.	Continue recognizing units and start grouping them (preliminary categorization) Notice some stress on Ss, as final exams approach → pass the subject vs. learn it.

24/06	2 nd interviews: SJo, SGu, San, SAr, SPa, SYa, SLi.	Notice recurring ideas (opinions, views): Ss against imposition, complain about time issues
27/06	2 nd interviews: SEd, SAZ, SAi, SJe.	Lack of information about the new mode of learning (no-class)
29/06	2 nd interviews: SMi, SYo, SFa.	Some Ss' dissatisfaction
WITH THE DATA ALREADY COLLECTED (WITH THE DATA IN MY HANDS)		
12-30/08	Read my field notes. Underline with colours. Study more about data analysis methods (Maykut & Morehouse and Coffey & Atkinson)	Start a more informed unitizing of the data → First-level codes Corroborate the lack of importance of & interest in learning English. Cos know what Ss need. Ss are afraid & expect a class
06-30/09	Transcribe some interviews	Identify recurring opinions: again time constraints and benefits / Pros & Cons Autonomy is good for individual learning styles. Generate more units of meaning.
03-28/10	Listen to the interviews over and over again; as listening, take notes of salient aspects. Start identifying relevant quotations	Foresee some redundant topics: importance of logs → checking what Ss do; gregariousness → Ss tend to work together; Simulation → Some Ss pretend to be working (fulfilment of requirements); Some Ss work hard → own decision; lack of interest in learning English. Work out second-level codes and further categories
07-25/11	Underline transcriptions and field notes with colours. Each colour points out a topic. Group recurring phrases and/or words → Categorizing Start copying relevant quotations	Reinforce what I had noticed regarding repeated phrases: Ss' & Cos' attitudes: gregariousness, control, invigilation, lack of interest in learning but still some different cases. Make out some broad categories: Logs are so important → keep a record of what Ss do → <i>control</i> No interest in learning English → only in <i>fulfilling the requirement</i> . <i>Invigilation</i> and <i>control</i> at CADI Contradictions → Ss' <i>expectations</i> Difficulties in adopting this innovation.
2006		
04-26/02	Listen to interviews again; reread fieldnotes.	Some preliminary charts organizing the themes and sub themes.

01-26/03	Identify more units of meaning/1°-level codes (words/phrases) & make lists of these to group them into 2°-level codes. Continue copying relevant quotations.	Lack of information about the innovation (SAC & SALL) and preparation to face it. Ss awareness of the whole issue → the imposition, the abrupt change, the difficulties & advantages. Incongruities (time, location, commuting, CoSes, Auto-nomy vs. control).
02-20/05	By comparing among themselves, group the similar 2°-level codes into sub-categories and these last ones into categories.	2 Themes, 11 sub themes (4 for one theme & 7 for the other) Preliminary writing with the interweaving of the categories with the quotations
23-31/05	Select definite quotes to give support to sub-themes (=sub-categories)	Get the sub themes with their corresponding quotations.
01-18/06	Write an outline of chapters 6 & 7 (Findings)	
20-30/06	Write a first draft of the chapters 6 & 7.	47 Findings
03-11/07	Session with my 2 supervisors, take notes of suggestions and comments	My supervisors suggested improving and completing chapters 6 & 7. I got a clearer idea of the structure and contents of these chapters -what's missing and what's unnecessary
05-17/09	Re-compare and reorganize the list of Codes (Units). Review the quotations; rename some sub themes and get rid of others.	Get a list on the computer with more defined groups of codes, consequently, more defined sub-categories / categories, creating some new ones and disappearing others. Awareness → Self recognition of capacities.
19-29/09	Refine list of Codes, sub-categories=sub-themes & categories= themes.	2 Categories/Themes, 10 Subcategories/Sub-themes (4 and 6 for each category) Review, rewrite and reduce number of Findings
03-28/10	Write the procedure of the data analysis	Get part of chapter 6 and a section of chapter 7. Reflect on and enrich my data analysis.
04-29/11	Write a 2 nd version of chapters 6 & 7 – paying attention to my supervisors' suggestions and to the new findings of this further revision.	14 Findings For details on codes (1° & 2°-level), sub-categories (Sub-themes) and categories (Themes) see chart 5-9.

Having accurately shown the process I went through in order to uncover the two broad themes and their respective sub themes throughout the analysis of the data gathered in this study, we can now turn to the description of these themes.

5.3 THEMES WHICH EMERGED FROM THE DATA

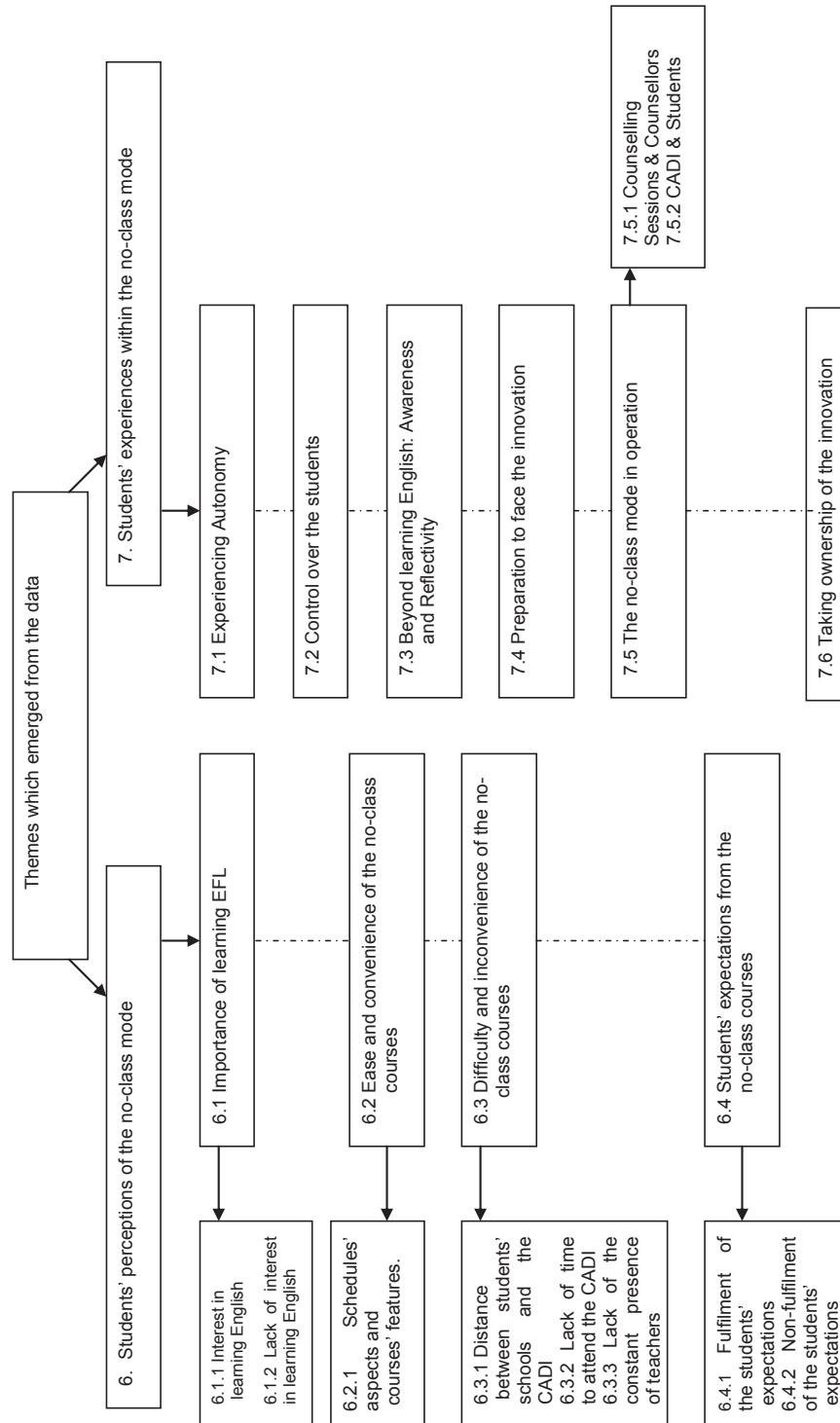
The focus of this research, as has been mentioned throughout this work, is on the students' perceptions of and attitudes towards the implementation of an innovation such as the no-class mode of studying EFL, as I call it, and the self-access centre. Thus, most of the information I obtained is based on observing and interviewing the students who were involved in this mode of studying and in the use of the self-access centre (CADI). However, I also considered of relevance to know what the counsellors, also involved in this issue, thought in this respect. This, I think, helped me to better understand the subject being discussed.

The themes presented in chapters 6 and 7 of the following Section IV are the ones which were uncovered during my processing of the 'raw' data I gathered by means of the methods described in last chapter 4. Guided by the initial focus of this inquiry and by the outcomes from the analysis of these data, the themes have been divided into two segments in which data converged to give them the support to make them into the central themes in this study. These two broad themes have become the topics and the names of each of the following chapters:

6. Students' perceptions of the no-class mode
7. Students' experiences within the no-class mode

In turn, each of these themes has been further sub-divided into more specific themes and sub themes. The chart 5-11 below shows a general panorama of the themes which emerged from the data and are considered in this work.

Chart 5-11. Distribution of the themes which emerged from the data



5.4 REFLECTING ON MY PROCESS OF DATA ANALYSIS

It was when my supervisors asked me to show my workings in order to demonstrate where the themes and sub themes I was presenting in this chapter came from, when I recalled the importance of imprinting a ‘seal of trustworthiness’ to any piece of research. This is especially true for qualitative research, which lacks of possibilities to demonstrate validity, reliability and generalizability as quantitative research usually does (Robson, 2002). Hence, in order to maintain the rigour necessary to demonstrate that the outcomes of this qualitative study were not made up or copied from somewhere else, but were the result of utilizing methods (for data collection and for data analysis) that suited the social setting under consideration (the students in the no-class mode in the Self-access Centre-Ver) (Holiday, 2002: 8-9) and could be credible, I endeavoured to explain and illustrate in detail the procedures I carried out all through this stage of the data analysis. I bear in mind that it is not only at the data analysis stage when the procedures and the actions taken have to be explained and justified, but since it is the issue under discussion now, I concentrate on it in this section.

It is clear that “a richly detailed report is an essential requirement” to make the research process as transparent as possible (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 146), that is why I attempted to write a complete and comprehensive account of the steps I took and of the events that occurred during this phase of the current study. According to the aspects of the research processes that contribute to trustworthiness proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), it seems that I have accomplished: ‘the building of an audit trail’, since I kept a full record of my activities while carrying out the study (e.g. interview transcripts, fieldnotes, the coded data, the lists of units/codes and sub-categories, the matrices, the charts and tables displaying the data I was processing); and the use of multiple methods for data collection and data analysis (as suggested by Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). Therefore, the presence of this chapter in Section III is due to my commitment to achieve the trustworthiness and credibility of this study, as much as feasible for me.

On the subject of my reflectivity during this part of my research work, I think I should reveal the difficulty and fulfilment I found throughout this process of analysing the data. I sometimes found it difficult because it was a long and sometimes repetitive work; transcribing, listening to the interviews over and over, going over the field notes and the transcripts again and again, thinking and re-thinking about the possible relationships and divergences among them, and comparing and re-comparing the codes and categories I was forming based on the data themselves.

At the same time I had a sensation of fulfilment because every time that I listened to the interviews or that I read my field notes, I re-constructed the image of the real scenes and I consider that I was able to grasp the information, the ideas that were embedded in those texts. It was also exciting to see and hear, that is, to discover some things I did not expect, for instance, the level of awareness of several students and even of some counsellors who realized the actual functioning (or dysfunction) of the no-class system. There were some phrases and pictures that went with me for some time during this process and were helpful in my understanding of the students' views of and performance within the new mode of studying English.

I recognize that my method at the beginning was not precisely systematic but in some way I was trying to organize and develop a useful procedure. However later on, I tried to adapt the elements I found suitable, for my research design and the data I had, from methods such as the 'constant comparative method' (Lincoln and Guba 1985 based on Glaser and Strauss 1967, Maykut and Morehouse 1994); from the concepts/coding method suggested by Coffey and Atkinson (1996), and from the approach suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). At that time, I was able to split the data apart in order to arrive at the varied pieces; codes, sub-categories, categories, sub themes, which afterwards would be joined together in broader themes and interwoven with the extracts of the same data to give me a re-constructed picture of them.

Actually, at the time I wrote this chapter, I did not have a clear idea of when exactly the different units, codes and categories were uncovered; in the first phase, while I was collecting the data, or in the second phase when I was doing a more informed and formal processing of the data. However, I must say that this going back and forth the different pieces of data, going over the charts, tables and lists (data displayed) I progressively produced, undoubtedly helped me to arrive to the final presentation of the themes and sub themes that emerged from this process of data analysis.

SUMMARY

The aim of this chapter has been to describe and illustrate as clearly as possible all those procedures that were followed throughout the exploration of the data gathered during my fieldwork. As the name of the chapter suggests, it was an account of the methods that permeated the procedures for analysing the data and of the actual implementation of those which were relevant for the processing of these data.

The first section (5.1, page 142) dealt with the methods; or rather the elements of those methods which I incorporated to my data processing work during the data collection phase (section 5.1.1, page 142) and once I had all the data collected (section 5.1.2, page 144). The elements of the methods that mostly informed this data analysis, such as the concept – coding (Coffey and Atkinson 1996), the constant comparative (Maykut and Morehouse 1994, Lincoln and Guba 1985) and some strategies suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) were explained in section 5.1.2 (page 144).

The second section (5.2, page 148) was basically related to the practical aspect of the data analysis. That is to say, I here tried to narrate thoroughly the actual procedures carried out for the analysis, so that the uncovering of the sub-themes and themes could be traced. Each sub-section (5.2.1-5.2.14) coincided with a stage of the analysis; starting from the coding of the data materials; finishing with the uncovering and naming of subcategories and categories which later became the sub-themes and themes; and passing through the coding, displaying and grouping of the data.

The two last sections 5.2.13 (page 161) and 5.2.14 (page 166) offered two illustrative and summarizing Tables; 5-9 and 5-10 respectively. The former illustrated the four hierarchies into which the data developed throughout their analysis, from the most general to the most refined (first-level codes, second-level codes, sub-categories/sub-themes and categories/themes), and shows the elements contained in each. The latter was conceived as a chronological outline, since it depicted the sequence of the events arisen and the actions carried out throughout the same analysis process.

Having described the procedures for analysing the data, I can offer in the following Section the comments and discussion of the two main themes (chapters 6 and 7) and their respective sub-themes which were uncovered through the current analysis, and this is supported and illustrated by the presentation of relevant extracts of the data.

SECTION IV

“THE WHAT”

In the previous Section (III), I have described and illustrated the methodology that underpinned this study; that is to say, the methods, the procedures I followed first to collect data in the field through means of data collection such as interviewing and observation, then to analyse those data through elements adopted and adapted from methods such as the concept – coding method suggested by Coffey and Atkinson (1996), the constant comparative method (Maykut and Morehouse 1994, Lincoln and Guba 1985) and some strategies suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). We can now turn to a comprehensive panorama of the themes that emerged from the exploration of the data.

This Section deals with the outcomes obtained after having analysed the data in an integral way, therefore, I am here reporting, commenting and discussing (especially in chapter 7) the data as indicated below:

- Reporting the data by presenting some evidence of what I was able to observe and listen to, i.e., extracts from the students' and the counsellors' opinions, perceptions and attitudes uncovered through the interviews with them, and through the events registered on my fieldnotes during the observations I carried out;
- Commenting on these data by adding my own remarks to some of the excerpts presented as mentioned in the previous paragraph; and
- Discussing the data, according to the themes in which I organized them, by referring back to the literature that was reviewed in Section II and to other relevant literature.

In a few words, this section aims to answer the following questions:

- What was found out from the data gathered in the study? → Chapters 6 & 7
- What is my interpretation of the outcomes → Chapters 6 & 7
- What is the relation of the outcomes of this study with some of the existing literature → Chapters 6 & 7
- What do the data say about the students' perceptions of the no-class mode of studying EFL? → Chapter 6
- What do the data say about the students' attitudes and experiences within the no-class mode of studying EFL? → Chapter 7

As will be noticed in the two chapters comprising this section, the two main themes, which became the names of Chapters 6 and 7, and their corresponding sub-themes are treated in each chapter respectively. In Chapter 6 the sub-themes and data passages related to what the students perceived from the no-class mode in which they studied EFL are discussed; whereas in Chapter 7 the sub-themes and data passages related to the experiences the students had within this same mode of studying EFL are considered. In both chapters there may be several discrepant data which are included in an attempt to keep in line with the diversity inherent to all issues pertaining to human individuals.

It is worth mentioning that even when the outcomes referred to in Chapter 6 were not particularly surprising or unexpected and they perhaps may replicate what other people have found (c.f. Cotterall 1995a, 1999, Reinders 2000, Fernandez-Toro 1996, Wenden 1986, Sinclair & Ellis 1984, Broady 1996), I thought I should not leave them out since the participants had considered these topics important enough to talk about them. However, you may find that most of the sub-themes appearing in this chapter (6) are not discussed with reference to the literature but only introduced and commented. On the other hand, what I regard as most interesting and additional to our understanding were the outcomes dealt with in Chapter 7, where I indeed report, comment and discuss the data from which they emerged with reference to the literature. Another aspect to point out is the fact that due to the interrelation of some of the sub-themes in both chapters, these sometimes overlap; so you may find that even when addressed from different perspectives, similar data and commentaries are found throughout some of the sections constituting these two chapters.

Due to the fact that both chapters constituting the current Section (IV) share the same background regarding the type of data considered and the procedures through which these data were analysed (my workings), succinct descriptions of both issues are offered below; notice that their detailed discussion can be read

in sections 4.2 (page 110) and 5.2 (page 148). Furthermore, both chapters, 6 and 7, have the same structure in the way the sub-themes, their supporting data, my comments and the respective discussions are displayed, therefore, an explanation of how these are presented in this document and the rationale for this presentation is offered here, before the actual development of the two chapters.

**DATA UNDER CONSIDERATION*

It is worth mentioning again that the sources of data I counted on for their exploration were basically three:

- the interviews (the interviews are divided into two types: the interviews to the students and the interviews to the counsellors),
- the observations (field notes) and
- the students' work reports (also called students' reports).

The detailed discussion on the means for collecting data can be reviewed in section 4.2 (page 110), and their implementation in sections 4.3.2.9 – 4.3.2.11 in Chapter 4.

**SUMMARY OF MY WORKINGS*

Having thoroughly discussed the general principles and procedures I followed to analysing the data of this study in section 5.2 in the preceding chapter; I can now outline by way of summary, my workings during the exploration of the data in the following chart 6-1 (which has been summarized from the complete Table 5-10 in chapter 5).

Chart 6-1. Summarized CHRONOLOGY OF THE DATA PROCESSING
(Taken from Chart 5-10 in chapter 5)
While collecting the data (March – June 2005) and with the whole data
already collected (August - Nov 2005 – Feb - Nov 2006)

WHEN	EVENT	My ACHIEVEMENTS / My FINDINGS
2005	WHILE COLLECTING THE DATA	
21/03-26/04	First interviews to students and interviews to counsellors, take notes of info that impacted me. Transcribe some interviews.	Identify similarities and differences in the participants' views; some students' preferences and complaints. Recognize some contradictions and repeated phrases.
27/04-23/06	Do observations of different Areas at CADI and of different Counselling Sessions. Underline interesting statements (words, phrases). Take notes on the margin of my Observation Formats.	Start recognizing repeated phrases and students' and counsellors' attitudes (gregariousness, routines, control and surveillance, CoSes too similar to Classes)
20/06-29/06	Second interviews to students. Take notes of info that impacted me.	Continue recognizing meaningful words or statements and start grouping them (preliminary unitizing and categorization)
WITH THE DATA ALREADY COLLECTED (WITH THE DATA IN MY HANDS)		
08-09	Study data analysis methods. Transcribe interviews.	Start a more informed unitizing of the data. --> First-level codes
10	Listen to the recordings of the interviews over and over again and take notes of salient aspects. Start identifying relevant quotations	Obtaining relevant data. Grouping first-level codes into second-level codes (categories)
11	Underline with colours transcriptions and fieldnotes. Start Categorizing and copying relevant quotations.	Obtaining relevant data to support and illustrate the possible categories/themes that were emerging.

2006		
02-03	Listen to interviews again; reread fieldnotes. Identify and list more units of meaning and copy relevant quotations.	Some preliminary charts organizing 2 broad themes and their corresponding sub themes.
05	Compare and group similar units to form categories. Group categories into sub-themes and select the quotations for these sub themes.	2 Themes, 11 sub themes (4 & 7) – got 47 Findings Preliminary written texts interweaving categories & the quotations
06-07	Write a first draft of the chapter 6 & 7. Session with my 2 supervisors.	Supervisors' suggestions to improve and complete chapter 6 & 7. I got a clearer idea of the structure and contents of chapter 4
09	Re-compare, reorganize and refine list of units (codes), and categories (sub themes and themes)	More defined list of groups of units (2 nd -level codes) & categories: 2 Categories/Themes, 10 Subcategories/Sub themes (4 and 6)
10	Write the detailed procedure of the data analysis (as part of chapter 5).	Get part of chapter 6 and a section of chapter 7.
11	Write a 2 nd version of chapters 6 & 7 – based on this further revision and my supervisors' suggestions.	14 Findings. For details on codes, sub-categories=sub-themes and categories= themes see chart 5-9 (chapter 5)

**STRUCTURE OF CHAPTERS 6 AND 7*

As can be noticed, Chapters 6 and 7 have been named after the two major themes that were uncovered through the analysis of masses of raw data in this study; therefore the different sections in chapters 6 and 7 correspond to the sub-themes which belong to each of these major themes. This means that what was recognized as the sub-themes after the processing of the data (see table 5-9) have become the themes in this chapter and some of the second-level codes have become the sub-themes which comprise each of these themes, as can be observed in chart 6-2 below, to which I will often be referring for the sake of clearness and congruence.

In order to have a clear understanding of the themes and their emerging findings, excerpts from the data will be presented first, followed by such finding(s). Taking into account that it is the data which drove me to the findings and that the data are the source of the findings themselves, I think that the excerpts of these data should precede such findings, so that the origin of the findings can be clearly identified. Notice that the data, as well as the finding(s) derived from these are all related to the theme and/or sub-theme under discussion in each section.

Because the data have indicated so, the outcomes have been separated in the two broad “themes”/“Chapters” mentioned above: ‘Students’ perceptions of the no-class mode of studying EFL’ (Chapter 6) and ‘Students’ experiences within the no-class mode of studying EFL’ (Chapter 7). At the same time each theme consists of more specific, explanatory sub-themes which as they are discussed in each section, evidence, comments and discussion (where pertinent) for each are given and set out in the following order:

- First, I mention the excerpts taken from the interviews with the students, that is, the students’ voices. Since these interviews were carried out in Spanish, the extracts are all translated by me (samples of the original interview transcripts can be found in Appendices 12 and 18).
- Secondly, the excerpts taken from the interviews with the counsellors (carried out in English), that is, the counsellors’ voices are presented (samples of the original interview transcripts can be found in Appendix 13).
- Thirdly, the excerpts taken from my observation notes (field notes) are shown (samples of the original observation sheets can be found in Appendix 14, 15 and 16).
- Then, details of the students’ work at the CADI-VER (SAC in the Language Centre-Veracruz) which are registered in the students’ CADI work reports

may be presented if applicable (samples of the students' CADI work reports can be found in Appendix 10).

- After that, the data are commented.
- Next, the data are discussed with reference to literature (when pertinent).
- Finally, the finding(s) uncovered are introduced.

This does not mean that for each theme there is always information from all the four sources mentioned above (students' interviews, counsellors' interviews, fieldnotes and students' reports). It depends on the availability of evidence related to each theme, therefore for some topics there might be excerpts taken from one or another source or maybe of two or three or even the four different sources of information I counted on.

Given that it is not the purpose of this work to show all the passages (pieces of evidence) related to every theme, I tried to select the ones which were more representative and powerful to me. Bearing in mind that each quotation has its individual characteristics, I used them as samples of the themes that emerged from the data themselves.

**PRESENTATION OF DATA*

To recapitulate, once that a theme/sub-theme has been identified, it is discussed with reference to the data relevant to that topic, and the layout for their presentation is summarized and exemplified as follows:

1. The theme or sub-theme which is presented as a section heading with a reference number (e.g. 6.1.1 Interest in learning English);
2. When available, the student's or students' remarks (quotations) are introduced by using the letter 'S' standing for student and the two first letters of their names (e.g. SAG: "I never...");
3. When available, the counsellor's or counsellors' comments (quotations) are introduced by using a code always starting with the letter 'C', standing for Counsellor to differentiate their voices from the students' ones, and followed by any two letters from their names, the first one in capital letter too (e.g. CRO: "the materials...");
4. When available, quotations taken from my observation notes are introduced by using the words 'Field note' and its corresponding code of the counselling-session group or the area where the observation took place (e.g. Field note MUA-USBI: "In the areas..", where MUA refers to Multiple Uses Area and USBI is the Unit of Library and Informatics Services –for codes of Areas see the Notes below or Appendix 9);

5. When available, information from the students' reports is introduced by using the letters SR, standing for the words Students' Reports (e.g. SR).
6. Relevant comments on the sub-theme and data under consideration are offered.
7. Relevant discussions of the sub-theme and data under consideration, referring back to the literature in Section II or to other related literature, are offered.
8. Finally, the finding or findings derived from the data being considered are presented in a numbered form for later reference (e.g. **Finding 3:** *There are factors...*).

IMPORTANT NOTES

→ TRANSCRIPTIONS CONVENTIONS:

... = Pause

..... = Long Pause or Hesitation

[...] = Omitted Material

[] = Added Material or comment

() = Non-verbal Material

→ ABBREVIATIONS:

USBI = Unidad de Servicios Bibliotecarios y de Informática = Unit of Library Services and Computing	CADI = Centro de Autoacceso De Idiomas = Self-access Centre of Languages
S = Student	MUA = Multiple Uses Area
C = Counsellor	CA = Computers' Area
SR = Students' report	CHIOA = Check In/Out Area
CI = Centro de Idiomas = Language Centre	VA = Video Area
IC = Inglés Conversación = Conversational English (counselling group)	LA = Listening Area

Chart 6-2. Organization of Themes and Sub-themes in Chapters 6 and 7

Presentation of Data in Chapters 6 and 7		
Second-level Codes = Sub-themes	Sub-themes = Themes	Themes = Name of Chapters
6.1.1 Interest in learning English 6.1.2 Lack of interest in learning English Fulfilment of a requirement	6.1 Importance of learning EFL <i>Finding 1</i>	6. Students' perceptions of the no-class learning mode
schedule aspects The courses' features	6.2 Ease and convenience of the no-class courses <i>Finding 2</i>	
6.3.1 Distance between Ss' schools and the CADI 6.3.2 Lack of time to attend the CADI 6.3.3 Lack of the constant presence of Teachers	6.3 Difficulty and inconvenience of the no-class courses <i>Finding 3</i>	
Fulfilment of students' expectations	6.4 Fulfilment of students' expectations <i>Finding 4</i>	
	7.1 Experiencing Autonomy <i>Finding 5 & 6</i>	7. Students' experiences within the no-class learning mode
Importance of logs Control over Ss' activities Surveillance Keep records of attendance	7.2 Control over students <i>Finding 7</i>	
Reflectivity Lack of reflectivity Awareness	7.3 Beyond learning English: Awareness and Reflectivity <i>Finding 8 & 9</i>	
Lack of information / misunderstanding	7.4 Preparation to face the innovation <i>Finding 10</i>	

Ss' attitudes, gregariousness preferences, performance	7.5 The no-class courses in action <i>Finding 11</i>	
Similarity to a regular class - Counsellors' role Co Sessions' role		
Similarity to a regular class - Co Sessions Program-oriented course Exam-oriented course CADI		
Gains on personal development	7.6 Taking ownership of the innovation <i>Finding 12 & 13</i>	

On this basis we can now start to examine the first broad theme and its underpinning data.

6

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE NO-CLASS MODE

This chapter, as part of Section IV (the What), has to do with what the outcomes from the process of analysing the data were. It specifically concerns one of the main themes that emerged from these data: what the students' perceptions of the no-class mode in which they had been immersed during their EFL courses were. As I mentioned above in the introduction of this Section, the procedures I followed to analyze, to process the data, that is to say, my workings have been shown in the previous chapter (section 5.2, page 148). The structure of this chapter and its organization for the presentation of the processed data has been detailed above as well.

Another issue that has also been commented above is that the outcomes referred to in this chapter might seem predicable and not particularly original since they might have been found and treated by other people before (c.f. Cotterall 1995a, 1999, Reinders 2000, Fernandez-Toro 1996, Wenden 1986, Sinclair & Ellis 1984, Broady 1996), and that they are not always discussed with reference to the literature but only introduced and commented on. However, I did not want to omit them since I perceived that for the participants these topics were important enough to comment on them, sometimes emphatically.

The first section (6.1) of the current chapter discusses and illustrates, by means of data extracts relevant to the first theme, the importance of learning English as a foreign language for the students (participants in this study) who are obliged first, to study English as part of their majors' programs and then, to do so in the no-class mode of learning English.

In section 6.2, I introduce the second theme that emerged from the data and which deals with the benefits that no-class students discovered in this new mode of studying English, the no-class mode. However, the third theme to be discussed in section 6.3 deals with the negative aspects that students also identified during their no-class courses.

Finally, section 6.4 refers to the fulfilment, if any, of what the students expected to get or to experience within their no-class courses, which is the fourth theme related to the topic under consideration in this chapter.

As will be observed, some of the sections are subdivided according to the sub- themes which shape each of the wider themes, as can be noticed in chart 6-2 above. Excerpts of the data are shown with the purpose of supporting each of the themes.

As this chapter is related to what the students' views are regarding this recent mode of studying, I consider it could shed light on one of the main questions of this study: *How do students studying English as a foreign language in the no-class courses perceive this new mode of studying EFL?* And on this subject (students' perceptions of the no-class mode of studying EFL) we can now turn to the first theme that constitutes this chapter, which can be seen in Chart 6-2 as the first item in the 'Theme' column. A more detailed illustration of the sections/themes distribution of this chapter can also be seen in Chart 5-11 (Chapter 5).

6.1 IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Since this study has been approached qualitatively and is therefore founded on my interpretation of the participants' views and experiences, I want to make clear that the topic being discussed in this section is based on the opinions of the students and counsellors who participated in it and on my own perception of it. Notice that I am referring to the importance that learning English as a foreign language (EFL) has for the students/participants themselves in contrast with the supposed significance and importance that English (EFL) has in the general plan of the University of Veracruz (UV) and generally, for the educational milieu worldwide (cf. Canagarajah 1999, Pennycook 1994, Phillipson 1992).

6.1.1 INTEREST IN LEARNING ENGLISH

One of the issues that were mentioned and observed throughout this study referred to how interested the students taking the no-class courses were in studying and learning EFL. In this respect, only a few students mentioned that they really expected to learn English when talking about their expectations, for instance these students said:

SAR: I want to learn a lot of English, to finish all the courses and ... until I become a 'gringo'... (jejeje, laughs)

SEN: ... then I said: I am going to go to learn English and I'll be able to express myself in English [...], I watch movies and series and I want to understand them better. [...] what I want is to go to USA and that if somebody tells me something I can understand her...

As shown in the passages above, for different reasons and with different motivations but there were some students for whom learning English was important, it appears that they really aimed to learn English in their courses. It can be noticed that the students' parameters are usually the USA and the American people (gringos). They aim to be able to understand and be understood basically by Americans, in fact when they talk about studying and working abroad, it seems that their first option is our northern immediate neighbour, the USA. This is not strange, as for the geographical closeness and the influence this country has had on Mexico (c.f. Alducin 1989, De León 1994). Unfortunately, I think this is one of the atypical cases of students who indeed wanted to learn English.

Another sector of students that showed interest in learning English was that which I call the language centre students and comprises any adult people (older than 18) who normally register in the language centre because they want or need to learn a foreign language and not because this is a subject that they have to take compulsorily. Most of these seemed more involved and interested in their English courses, as pointed out in the following extracts:

Field note 1C541: Co talks about the purpose of communicating [...]. Ss pay attention and the man [a student] says something. They speak in English ... and participate a lot.... They keep on talking about the course and this autonomous mode of learning.

Field note CA-CI: A boy is working on a program, he's got the earphones on, he seems very attentive looking at the screen [...] A woman is also with the earphones on and working on a program, she's very attentive and clicks on the answer she's chosen [...] Other two boys are working at their computers. One is writing something and the other is looking for the right answer, both are using the earphones; they're attentive, quiet and working.

Both extracts above are clear examples of the difference the counsellors marked, as it will be seen in subsequent passages, between the university students (MEIF students) and the language centre ones. While many MEIF students looked as if they did not care, were bored, fed up and distracted, especially in the counselling sessions, the language centre ones seemed to study harder, to be more focused, and more interested in taking advantage of the materials at CADI and they appeared more involved in their counselling sessions. In my view, this is natural if we take into consideration that no matter what their motives are, most language centre students decide by themselves (and this is very important) to study English and pay for that, whereas the MEIF ones have to take English as another subject of their majors programs.

The abovementioned conditions could be related to what Canagarajah (1999) found out when looking at conflicting curricula. In his discussion he talks about periphery students in a tertiary level ESL course coping with a textbook and curricula developed in the centre and recommended by a funding agency. In my case, it is about a new mode of learning-teaching EFL and self-access materials also developed in the centre and recommended and coordinated by a funding agency (British Council) in which students “acknowledge the value of English to empower them personally and socially...” (ibid: 95). However this does not discard the opposition to the innovation that students can display, that is the students’ dual attitudes when facing an innovation, imported from the centre, which may threaten the students’ own socio-cultural milieu (ibid: 96, 97).

6.1.2 LACK OF INTEREST IN LEARNING ENGLISH

Despite the concern in learning English shown by some students such as the above-mentioned ones, the vast majority of the students, although they did not say it overtly, did not demonstrate any interest in learning English; and some others talked about the problem that taking the English courses constituted

to them and their concern in only passing the subject, as is revealed in the following excerpts:

svi: I think it [coming to class] would make me waste my time, because I study in the morning and work in the afternoon, so I don't have time for English ...

sai: ...my first [expectation] was to cover [fulfil] my credits, it has always been to finish, to finish this subject and that's it...

These comments above suggest that these students' priorities were their majors, the subjects of their programs and their jobs (in case the students had a job). Although not literally stated, it appeared that for a number of students it was more important to finish the course and complete their programs than to learn the language. In other words, they were worried about passing the subject (English 1 or 2) and fulfilling the requirements of the program, but they were not interested in learning the language, a situation which seems unsurprising to me. As Canagarajah points out, the students adopted an "accommodative learning strategy that fails to engage with the course reflectively for critical learning" (1999: 97). However, considering that they already had to take the courses at no cost, it looked as if they did not care at all about taking advantage of them, or as if they were not aware of the 'need' to learn English, according to the notion of English becoming the international language par excellence and its dominant position in science, technology, medicine, computers, research, books, periodicals, software, transnational business, trade, shipping, aviation, diplomacy, international organizations, mass media entertainment, news agencies, journalism, youth culture, and education systems (Phillipson 1992: 6). This lack of interest in learning English also differs from the University's assertion in relation to the undeniable value of it as the language for accessing the new knowledge (c.f. Beltrán 1999: 50).

On the same subject, two counsellors, who made the difference between Language Centre students and MEIF students (university students) and among different faculties (departments), said:

CEU: ...and MEIF [university] students?... they don't give a damn!, they don't care, they just want a grade and that's it; they have no idea of what they will do here...

CMA: I think that they don't have much interest in learning English anyway at 18 from most faculties, from some faculties yes, for example administration... [...] I think in

general at 18 and they've come from high school where they have to take English and they think it's just something they have to do, and maybe some people in some faculties think it's just a subject 'as filler' that they have to do to pass their course.

Through these statements it can be seen that counsellors realized either through students' comments or through their observations, that some students, especially the university ones, were not interested in learning English but in fulfilling the requirement in order to finish their studies and graduate. By the words the first counsellor used, it seemed to me that he felt some kind of anger and disappointment; as an EFL teacher, he probably had to struggle with this kind of students trying to help them learn, and when he realized that they did not care about learning, he might have felt that his work had been useless.

Although the second counsellor showed more comprehensiveness regarding the students' age and their previous school education, still she observed that English might be a useless subject for many youngsters. Again, referring back to section 1.2 (page 19) in chapter one when I claim that English has not become a priority for Veracruz citizens to communicate or to find average jobs, I can better understand the lack of interest of many students who are more worried about fulfilling primary needs.

Some of my fieldnotes also illustrate this lack of interest in studying English on the part of the university students:

Field note IN147: At the end of the session, they [the students] take their things and they leave. It seems to me that they don't care about the session or even the subject at all; they have such bored faces!!

Field note VA-USBI: Two girls sit next to each other, start playing the videos and start talking, they put on the earphones but only in one ear so that they can keep on chatting; they pretend they're watching the video and writing or rather looking at the worksheet, but they are chatting (whispering) all the time. However other students seem to be working: they watch attentively, rewind the videotapes and write on their worksheets.

Concurring with the differentiation that the first counsellor above made between MEIF (university) students and the language centre students, I also observed that the former tended to demonstrate less concern about learning English when they were at the CADI but this was more obvious when they were in their counselling sessions.

This condition might turn to be controversial since not each and every MEIF student always acted like this or these were always the same circumstances, as it occurs in any human-nature affair. Evidently, there were occasions during my observations in which MEIF students gave the impression to be focused and working with the diverse materials available at CADI. In fact, the difference between MEIF students and language centre students was not that manifest when observing the areas at CADI, since working at CADI is so personal that it can turn to be not obvious or it can camouflage whatever they are actually doing (apart from CADI activities). As was mentioned in the last excerpt above, there were indeed some MEIF students who seemed not to be working, but generally, there were others that looked as if they were engaged with their work, whatever the activity or the area they were doing. It was in the counselling sessions where the students' apathetic attitudes were more obvious, as shown in the first excerpt above.

The passages above are some samples that show the students' lack of interest and involvement in learning English, at least in this period of their school education. It should be mentioned that only four students out of the twenty one who were interviewed brought up their intention or interest in learning English (section 6.1.1, page 187), and that the main reason for university students to study English might merely be the fulfilment of a requirement, as students and counsellors pointed out. This in turn, might affect the whole perception that students have of the no-class system and the stance they take faced with it.

On the other hand, I must say that even when most of the students did not show any interest in learning English, some of these students, who still were worried about passing the subject and fulfilling a requirement, emphasized their wishes for the future as follows:

spa: Well, in my case I worry more about finishing [passing] the subject rather than exactly about learning it, though I know I have to learn English [...] I'll learn later, after I finish my career.

sje: ...really, sincerely...English was not my priority in that moment [...] though I would like to study the following levels but now I have a lot of assignments from my other subjects...

It seems to me that these students recognized the importance of learning English, at least according to what Pennycook (1994) calls the dominant discourse of English as an international language that has circulated in Mexico for more

than 50 years, and internationally been assumed by many who look at the spread of English as natural, neutral and beneficial. This is especially true if we consider, as mentioned above, that the access to technology, science and communication is noticeably mediated and/or facilitated by this language, which concurs with the English-functional arguments that

...credit English with real or potential access to modernization, science, technology, etc., with the capacity to unite people within a country and across nations, or with the furthering of international understanding. (Phillipson 1992: 272)

Some of the students-participants gave me the idea that they acknowledged such need or significance to learn English, but for the time being, they were more interested in their majors and their core subjects (c.f. Little 1991: 38-43). All of this made me think of the legitimacy of such a need to learn and to use English for the students who graduate from the University of Veracruz (UV). As mentioned in sections 1.2.2 (page 20) and 2.5 (page 49) and in diverse parts throughout this thesis, the inclusion of English as a subject in all majors' programs, the implementation of the self-access centres and the emerging no-class mode of learning at the University of Veracruz was a project widely fostered by the British Council and sponsored by the Education Ministry, though It appears that there is no evidence (I could not find it) of a previous needs analysis based on the students' conditions or on average employment requirements in Veracruz.

I should point out that the story of foreign organizations, especially American and English ones, such as the Mexican-American binational Centres and the British Council respectively, directing what our Mexican educational system must do regarding ELT and probably other subjects, dates back to 1942-1945. Since then, based on the supposed importance of understanding and speaking English, Mexico as a 'periphery' country has 'bought' to 'centre' countries (terms according to Canagarajah's usage, 1999), primarily to the United States of America and England, many ELT/TESOL packages, i.e., methods, methodologies and materials for students' use as well as for teachers' training, contributing to perpetuate the hegemony of these countries (Phillipson 1992).

In fact, a clear example of this kind of importation is the abovementioned national self-access project that Mexico embarked on and in which a lot of human and financial resources have been invested, despite the probable lack of usefulness and local convenience, as shown by some of the data in this study. In line with Pennycook, who claims that only from a naïve perspective could

it be thought that the choice of English as an international language is done on a purely economic, political, cultural and ideological-free basis as well as on the equal position of the countries involved (1994: 8 -11). In my view we, those involved in TESOL matters (either in power or teaching positions), should start developing a "critical awareness of the implications of the global spread of English" and establishing "some way of teaching English that is not automatically an imperialist project" (Pennycook 1994: 24, 69). However, many English teachers and linguists have not become aware of (or conveniently pretend not to be aware of) the deliberate policy of the centre countries to promote the widespread use of English for economic and political purposes (Phillipson 1992), or are rather attuned to and comfortable with this, therefore with the cultural and political effects of this matter. These effects are especially true in the professional domain, in which power relationships (access to social and economic prestige, to further education and/or information, and to job opportunities) are exacerbated, and in which the dominance of the North American media has been encouraged (Pennycook 1994: 13, 21).

Unsurprisingly, this is the discourse that has prevailed not only at the University but in several educational organizations and levels. It has to do with success and well-being and both of these conditions are certainly related to incomes. Thus, studying, or rather learning English is the key to better opportunities, to a 'better life'. However, what I have noticed among the average students (notice that most of the population attending the UV are considered to be middle class), who may get a bachelors' or even a Masters' degree, is that they do not often apply for scholarships abroad, do not usually get jobs or travel abroad but stay in Veracruz or in any other cities in Mexico where they can get jobs in which they seldom need to use English. Nevertheless, concurring with the recent understanding of English as a 'global commodity' and ELT as a good business (Pennycook 1994: 146-155), it can be assumed that with this project, the British Council has got good profits and the University of Veracruz and the whole Mexican Educational System has appeared as being updated in terms of ELT and as being consistent with the centre, developed countries' discourse of globalization (c.f. Canagarajah 1999, Pennycook 1994, Phillipson 1992).

As commented above, I wonder if all this institutionalization of EFL courses including the no-class mode and the self-access centres that the Education Ministry in general and the University of Veracruz in particular have endeavoured in implementing, really responds to necessities of the different university communities, particularly of the students' community at the UV; because based on the

discussion on English usage in Veracruz city in section 1.2.2 (page 20) and on the above-mentioned passages it seems not to be the case. This reminded me of one of the points that Canagarajah makes when talking about the decision making of curricular issues which instead of being founded on sociolinguistic realities of the community, they are “shaped considerably by various state, commercial, and educational agencies” (1999: 79).

Based on the opinions and the fieldnotes related to the students’ lack of interest in learning English, which makes up the first theme in chart 6-2; ‘importance of learning EFL’, I can now summarise the main finding in this area as follows:

Finding 1:

Contrary to the expectations of the project (self-access centres and no-class courses) and its advocates’ discourse of the importance of learning English, the vast majority of students seemed to be interested mainly in passing the subject, in fulfilling one of the requirements of their majors rather than in learning the language.

Having presented the data and the finding related to the significance that learning English as a foreign language (EFL) has for many university students, I can now turn to the second sub-theme which deals with some of the advantages that students identified in this new mode of studying English: the no-class courses (autonomous courses).

6.2 EASE AND CONVENIENCE OF THE NO-CLASS COURSES

Since some of the questions I asked to the interviewees were about their expectations from and their views about the no-class courses as the new mode of studying English that they were involved in, some of what they perceived as positive and negative aspects of it are offered in this work, although most of them were not precisely unexpected and sometimes the opinions turned out to be contradictory, as it will be noticed in the extracts below. Based on some information regarding the ease and convenience of this type of courses which was uncovered from the data, in this section I aim to discuss the theme (second in chart 6-2) that deals with what I considered as positive features of the innovation (the no-class courses).

6.2.1 SCHEDULES' ASPECTS AND COURSES' FEATURES

Here, ease and convenience refer to the students' idea that this learning mode would be, or rather was, easy and practical in terms of time/schedules, particularly with respect to the other subjects (of their respective majors) and because of some of the characteristics of the courses themselves, as the following students declared:

SAR: I wish it had been easier, last semester [English 1] wasn't hard at all, but this one [English 2] is more complicated.... I must work harder.... but for me it's very practical, because I take many subjects and my schedules are crazy, so for me it's very practical...in the autonomous [courses] the advantage is that it's only 1 hour a week and one can determine how long and when one can come during the week...

SFa: ...[I expected] that it would be easier, that is, that as I would work by myself, I would just take exams, but now I see that there are some requirements. Anyway there are a lot of materials and we are only nine in my group [counselling session] the close contact with the counsellor is really good; she can pay attention to us because we are a few.

Both quotations above seem to show two conflicting aspects: a complaint about the course and learning English not being easy even in this type of courses, and the advantages that these courses presented for them. Since I will comment on the negative aspects of these courses in the following section, I will now focus on the positive ones. Both students mentioned the advantages they had found in these courses, basically regarding the management of their time, that is, being able to attend whenever they wanted and for as long as they could, and the small groups in the counselling sessions, therefore the possibility to have more attention from their counsellor. The second student recognizes the availability of lots of materials, which I consider as one of the best features of the CADI. However, these extracts also suggest that the students expected the course to be easy (easier), with less or no rules and requirements to fulfil (further discussion on the fulfilment of students' expectations is offered in section 6.4 below). For instance the second student seems to be complaining about the need to accomplish certain requirements. She might not have remembered that after all, the no-class courses are fixed in a whole curriculum, in an education system, and for that reason there are rules and requirements to accomplish.

A factor that seems to have been encouraging for the students when they registered (either because they had to or they decided to) in the no-class courses was that it was advantageous and practical that the hours of these courses fitted their other subjects' schedules and they were able to manage their times (timetables) conveniently, as the two excerpts above show. They frequently mentioned this, regardless of the difficulty they found in the contents of the course (if any), or in the fact that they had to study by themselves. Of course there were exceptions as for some students, who even in this flexible type of courses found it complicated to attend their counselling session once a week or the CADI whenever they decided to. Again, as discussed in the previous section (6.1.2, page 188), the lack of interest in learning English was perceptible; it looks as if English were not as important as the other subjects in their majors or as their jobs (several students at this level already worked).

Counsellors also agreed that they had observed or heard that students expected this kind of course to be easy and that these indeed became suitable; in this respect they commented:

CIS: Some of them let me know that they thought it was a lot easier, because in their faculties they said 'oh you just have to go once a week, so you don't have to worry about it... but it's not just a matter of coming once a week, well... although this is comfortable for them.

CRO: ...they think they are coming just once a week and just listen to the teacher and that's it [...] At some point they realize that it's very convenient for the rest of their subjects.

Because counsellors were usually in touch with the no-class students, they could sometimes hear and perceive what students thought of their courses, as they stated in their comments above when talking about attending only once a week and the ease that this type of courses represented to them. Both passages reveal the contradiction that I made reference to at the beginning of this section; on the one hand the students complain about the courses 'not being as easy as they had thought' (further discussion on the fulfilment of students' expectations is offered in section 6.4, page 205), but on the other hand, it looks as though they identified the convenience of the no-class courses in terms of time management.

It seems there was misinformation or lack of information and preparation regarding these new courses (subject that will be treated afterwards in section

7.4, page 237), and as a result students had created diverse unfounded expectations. In any case, it seems to me that students emphasized the fact that this type of courses allowed them to coordinate their timetables better, considering that the core subjects of their own majors were definitely more important than English, if we can say that English had some weight in their careers.

Based on what the students as well as the counsellors said regarding how suitable and easy the students perceived this mode of learning to be, I can outline the second finding, which is drawn from the second theme in chart 6-2: 'Ease and convenience of the no-class courses', as follows :

Finding 2:

Most students seemed to have recognized the value of the no-class courses based on the convenience and easiness (regarding the management of their time and schedules) that they attributed to these courses, rather than on their contribution to their learning English or on the own features of this type of courses.

I have here described some of the students' expectations and optimistic opinions regarding the no-class mode of studying English that came into sight in this study, namely, the ease and convenience of the no-class courses. Both of these features were related to the attendance to the counselling sessions and the CADI, which was necessary but quite flexible in terms of schedule, and to the work students were to do in order to pass the course. The next section will now refer to the third theme (according to chart 6-2) which refers to some unenthusiastic opinions that some students revealed when talking about their impression of the innovation they were part of, that is, the cons, the disadvantages they perceived of the no-class courses.

6.3 DIFFICULTY AND INCONVENIENCE OF THE NO-CLASS COURSES

Among the diverse opinions that students put across in this study, I identified two broad areas that divided the students' perceptions of the innovation they were experiencing while studying English as a compulsory subject in their respective majors' programs. No surprise is that these two converse areas concern the positive features or what they perceived as advantages of the new mode of studying

English and the negative features or what they perceived as disadvantages. As presented in the previous section, when discussing the theme of the ease and convenience of the no-class courses, it was encouraging for the students that the no-class courses turned out to be convenient, suitable and flexible in terms of schedules and time management. However the difficulties and inconvenience of the no-class courses were aspects that students also pointed out and which are discussed as the third theme (chart 6-2) in this section.

6.3.1 DISTANCE BETWEEN STUDENTS' SCHOOLS AND THE CADI

Among the most common problems that students mentioned when giving their opinions about the no-class courses, I was able to identify how difficult it was for them when they had to commute from their schools to the Language Centre or to the USBI where the CADIs are located and where the counselling sessions took place. This was stated by some students like this:

SED: The idea [to work in the self access centre] is good, but the distance from our schools was not considered. ...mmm yes, CADI is far from my school [...] I don't have time to come because of the distance, and I couldn't make [accumulate] enough hours of work.

SPA: ...the course is good but the defect is...that it isn't well organized according to our major's program, [...] they are too many subjects, and, and the location of my school is too far, and the time... more than anything is the time [...] [I'm] in Administration, there in the north, and there isn't a direct bus, you have to take 2 or walk a lot... imagine!!! we need around 3 hours to come to CADI, and our other classes??...

These students, as many others, gave the impression that they were not only mentioning but complaining about the distance between their schools and the CADIs and this was inevitably linked to time issues. Most times students came to CADI after they had taken some of their classes at their schools (Psychology, Administration, Biochemistry, etc...), which are not close to the CADI but in different parts of the city (there is not an all-encompassing campus), and they had to go back to their schools to take more classes after their counselling sessions or their stay at CADI, as the student in the second extract strongly points out. Even when it seemed that the schedule to attend the CADI was flexible and that students should

attend only one counselling session per week at a certain time, it also seemed that the issue of the distance mentioned before and the lack of direct and fast transportation caused the students to waste a lot of time. This, in turn, may have given the students more reasons or excuses to describe the no-class courses as problematic.

As well as some passages in the previous section (6.2.1, page 195), the two excerpts above show a contradictory opinion of the no-class courses; even though some students may have perceived this innovation as a convenient one, they criticized the distance and as a consequence the attendance to CADI as a time consuming activity, which seemed less important than attending the other core subjects of their respective majors, as these students made clear.

Something to notice is that it appears as if both students were evaluating the organization and planning of the whole system in which the no-class courses play a part. I agree with them when they said that some real conditions of the context where the innovation was implemented (at the UV) were not taken into consideration when planning the whole thing; the courses, the buildings, the materials, etc. (for further discussion on this topic see section 3.5, page 93), sometimes causing difficulties in the implementation and/or continuation of the innovation (c.f. Fullan, 1992, discussed in section 3.4.1, page 82). In this respect, although we are not dealing with classrooms per se, we are still talking about an innovation in language teaching, therefore I concur with Holliday's assertion about English language teaching methodologies requiring to be finely tuned to the various needs of individual classroom cultures, that is to say, "they need to be appropriate to local cultures in very specific terms." (1994: 53). In the particular case of this study, the implementation of this new mode of studying foreign languages (no-class mode) and the new resources (SAC materials) available for this should be appropriate to the local circumstances of the community where this innovation was to function, namely, to the students, the teachers (counsellors), and the administrative and physical facilities.

6.3.2 LACK OF TIME TO ATTEND THE CADI

Besides the connection between the distance (Schools – Language Centre/CADI) and the time that was manifest in the quotations above, the factor of time was brought up by other students, but this time referring specifically to the workload in their other subjects:

sje: ...it's nuts to be handing in assignments, final exams [...] now that final exams will be over, we'll be more stress-free, but before that, I really didn't have the time, or maybe the organization... of the time, always... I should be more organized...

sjo: ...I was lacking time [...] yes I needed time to dedicate to English. I had a lot of homework in my school...

In the former passages it can be noticed that the factor of time seemed not to be related exclusively to the distance between CADI and the students' schools or homes but to the activities and assignments they had to accomplish in the core subjects of their majors, which constituted their priority. Once more, the little importance that learning English represented for some students seemed apparent, at least compared to the other subjects pertaining to their respective major's programs, since their priority and main concern were to study and pass the latter. It gives the impression that the first student was reflective about his attitude and recognized that it was not only a matter of having lots of assignments but of organizing his time, which was particularly difficult for him; he looked like regretting and assuming it had been his fault not to devote enough time to studying English. I should mention that several students seemed to be very reflective when being interviewed, as it will be noticed and discussed in section 7.3 (page 232) in the next chapter.

On the topic of time constraints, the state of affairs at CADI in the Language Centre-Veracruz seems similar to the one in the Language Centre at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology described by Toogood and Pemberton as for the insufficient time that is allocated to the English courses, which does not permit the students to have a sense of achievement and/or progress neither at CADI nor at the counselling sessions (2002: 109). In both cases, the problems resulting from time constraints were that students:

- did not attend the self-access centre and/or the counselling sessions as much as necessary to work on the materials and contents that they had to;
- did not get enough support from the counsellors to get prepared for this new mode of studying/learning as they did not have time to "provide input on strategies and materials for a wide range of language skills [or] initial and ongoing advice to individual students" (ibid) as regards learning to learn;
- did not develop confidence and autonomy most of the time.

As can be discerned, in agreement with Toogood and Pemberton (2002), I consider that the issue of time constraints is still one of the challenges to be met

when incorporating or rather re-contextualizing SALL (or self-directed learning) into the curriculum at the UV. One more time, although it might sound repetitive, I consider that the lack of planning according to the local features of the UV and its people, specifically of the community in Veracruz city and its schools and Language Centre, that is to say, the fact that the social context of Veracruz and its educational milieu was neither acknowledge nor addressed contributed to the unsuitability of the innovation (no-class mode and SAC) (c.f. Holliday 1992, 1994: 2, Tudor 2003) and/or to some kind of resistance to it, as Hannan and Silver (2000) call it (for a detailed discussion on this topic see section 3.5 page 93).

6.3.3 LACK OF THE CONSTANT PRESENCE OF TEACHERS

Another problem that several students remarked was the difficulty they had when studying without the constant presence of a teacher; these are some examples of what they said:

SDi: ...working by myself was hard because I didn't know any English, you see!! [...].ufff, studying by myself is very difficult because there is no teacher to tell me everything and to teach me, especially the pronunciation... mmm it's very difficult, very difficult and the exam is coming!!.

SPa: ...you have to study... and try to find the way of... how, how to be able to... [...] the course is ok...from my point of view, the programs, the materials are good, but at the same time one has to sit down and analyze how to use it by oneself, but then one comes [to the CADi] and is in a hurry, trying to move forward as much as possible because the course goes, goes ... and it's gone!!

In the preceding passages, these two students seemed to have found it very difficult to do without the help of a teacher during the course. Since for most students it was the first time they took a course in this way, that is, without regular classes and without a teacher, they (and the counsellors too) may have found it complicated to work in this new mode. Both students stressed with displeasure the absence of a teacher to explain to them, to correct them; in the first selection it looks not only as an expression of dissatisfaction but of frustration and affliction. In the second one, the student seemed to relate the issue of time with the difficulty that figuring things out without a teacher's help implied. I noticed that

the student in the second passage often pointed out the positive elements of the no-class mode before he talked about its drawbacks. This gave me the impression that these students were concerned not only about the suitability of the courses in regard to schedules and time, as pointed in section 6.2.1 (page 195), but in studying and passing the exams. However, in both these students' attitudes there seemed to be a marked dependence on the figure of the teacher; at this point "it may be difficult to shake their belief that the teacher's job is straightforwardly to prepare them to do well in the exams" (Little 1991:47) which of course had been encouraged all the way through their students' life (primary, secondary and high school), and suddenly they had to do without it!

As I previously mentioned, by the time the students started their no-class courses, their educational trajectory had always been with institutionalized learning, in a class-mode with a teacher in front of them (c.f. Little 1991). In fact, in Mexico and consequently in Veracruz, compulsory-formal education (schooling) is founded on schools, classrooms, classes and teachers. I do not mean that it had to be like this forever, and that there should not be changes, but I consider that it was unfair to push the students to take these no-class courses without being prepared beforehand, an issue which will be discussed in section 7.4 in the following chapter.

Counsellors also perceived the difficulty that students had when studying without a teacher and they commented:

CEU: ...definitely, students in basic levels cannot cope with the idea of working by themselves, it's hard, hard.... But, but Language Centre students do better.

CRO: Well...it's obvious that students who are forced to take the autonomous, and mmmm...it's the majority, see?, they have more difficulties to adapt to this mode [...] yes, students need somebody to guide them... they look for it!!

These two passages demonstrate that counsellors also seem to have noticed the students' sensation of difficulty when not having a teacher constantly at hand, the same as Toogood and Pemberton identified; the students still needed a structured support since we were dealing with "students socialized into seeing teachers as the directors of the learning process rather than advisers,..." (2002: 9). One more time it appears that counsellors tended to make noticeable differences between MEIF students and language centre ones. In the first quotation, this counsellor made a distinction not only between the MEIF (university) students and the language centre ones but between the students in basic levels and the ones in more

advanced levels. This sounds logical as the higher the level, the more knowledge of the language they should have had and the more probabilities to be on track than those students who were beginners.

As the second counsellor commented, there is certainly a difference; while MEIF students must take the subject, Language Centre students generally take English because they have decided to, because they want to. I would say that the latter case is a better start in this new mode of studying, therefore, students in this case may have felt more comfortable and confident when working by themselves than MEIF students who had to take not only the subject (English) but in the no-class mode.

Nonetheless, a discrepant case must be considered; there was a student (and there were others) who did not have the same conception and attitude as the previous students indicated. In fact, she commented:

SEN: For me it's great, because I don't have to wait for the teacher to tell me what to do, because maybe I already know what she's explaining or maybe I have more trouble understanding something and the teacher goes very fast and doesn't stop [...] I like it very much to have access to the counsellor only when I want!!...(smiles)

The passage above can demonstrate that even when most students found it difficult to deal with the courses without the constant presence of teachers, there were also, although very few, students who felt comfortable when working by themselves and having the freedom to study and work with any materials and topics they considered suitable or necessary for them. We should not forget that according to Little, "learning should be more focussed and more purposeful, and thus more effective [...]" (1991: 8) when the agenda is set by the student herself. Unfortunately in an institutionalized educational system as the one being considered in this study, in which the "curriculum is not only imposed on the learner from outside, but has been drawn up without specific regard to his individual experience, needs, interests, and aspirations" (Little 1991: 7), and in which teachers have played a central role in the learning process, students have very little opportunity to decide on the course of their studies, or rather are not used to, or prepared for doing so (including doing without a teacher).

Having shown the drawbacks that some students highlighted in this study, I now enunciate what I found out in relation to this third theme (according to chart 6-2) which deals with the difficulty and inconvenience of the no-class courses that students perceived:

Finding 3:

The no-class courses' lack of planning, especially in terms of the location of the buildings involved, the programs, the students' interests, the students' preparation for the change and the relevance of the subject (EFL), was a significant reason behind their difficult and slow 'routinization' and the scarce development of autonomy.

The current section has discussed the unfavourable aspects of the no-class mode of studying English that the students revealed while being interviewed. Aspects such as: the distance between the students' schools and the CADI, the little time that students dedicate to this subject and the absence of a teacher were some of the difficulties and inconveniences that students identified and experimented as the receptors of this innovation at the university. As part of the theme concerning the students' perceptions of the no-class mode of studying, the following section relates to what the students had anticipated from this and the accomplishment of these expectations.

6.4 STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS FROM THE NO-CLASS COURSES

Having mentioned the positive and negative features of the new no-class courses that students drew attention to in the interviews, the focus here is on whether what students had imagined the no-class courses would be like and/or what they might obtain from them was accomplished or not. In other words, when the students started their no-class courses they, at least, knew the name of this type of courses ('autonomous courses') which might have suggested what these would be like. Besides, many students had heard comments from others who had already taken these courses, and/or a brief explanation from the staff in the registration office, and they had taken the CADI introductory session. With this information in mind, the students generated a series of thoughts which not always agreed with the actual characteristics of the courses. These circumstances were closely related to the views that the students developed and the way they felt about and appraised the innovation in question.

6.4.1 FULFILMENT OF THE STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS

As students got to the courses with certain expectations, I considered it important to ask them to what extent those expectations had been fulfilled or agreed with what they had actually got during the courses and how they felt about it. Several students talked positively in this respect, for instance:

SED: I already had the idea that I had to work by myself, that I was going to learn as much as I wanted; that I had to attend the counselling sessions to solve some doubts, but the one who would learn was I myself, not because I had to attend an everyday class..... and it [the development of the course] is just as I thought!!

SJO: mmm... more than anything I didn't expect a counselling session at CADI but something like tools to reinforce my knowledge, and it has been accomplished for example with the audio system, the computers and all the materials that we can find here, it has been as I expected...

Contrary to what I expected, in the preceding extracts it can be noticed that although these were university students who had to take English as a compulsory subject, they seemed to be positive in their appraisal; they talked about the previous knowledge they had when they started the courses, and how with this as a basis, they obtained pretty much what they expected from their courses, they indeed looked pleased. In the first case, it was interesting to find that he was rather aware of himself as the learner and that learning depended on him, and that he understood the role of the counselling session and was happy about it. In the second excerpt, there was an emphasis on the tools (resources/equipment) and the materials; whereas the counselling sessions appeared as an extra bonus.

Some counsellors agreed on such a fulfilment of the students' expectations, though they insisted on making the distinction between the Language Centre students who usually took English courses because they were interested in learning and they wanted to, and the MEIF (university) students who had to take the courses as part of their majors' programs; under these circumstances such a distinction indeed seems sensible to me. However, as usual there were some exceptions, as there were also MEIF students who were interested in learning and who showed a more positive attitude towards the no-class courses. Some counsellors talked about both cases, the Language Centre students and the MEIF students, as follows:

CEU: Language Centre students, aha... they usually fulfil their expectations, they are satisfied with what they're doing, some of the students prefer to continue working as autonomous because they like it better, specially adults,...

CAM: ...somehow it happens [the fulfilment of their expectations], specially for those [MEIF] students who work really hard, there are some people really interested in this experience and even though they don't know [English] or it's difficult for them to learn, they work hard, well we try to help them; at the end they are very motivated and they would like to continue learning English.

In these extracts, it gave me the impression that the first counsellor made a marked difference between the university students and the students who studied English because they wanted to (normally Language Centre students) by saying that the latter really cared about their English courses and consequently about the fulfilment of their expectations; whereas the second one recognized those MEIF students who worked hard, expected to learn, and were interested in fulfilling their expectations (unfortunately these are a few). As I mentioned before, these different views may be understandable considering, to start with, the longing situation and the probable motivations of both type of students (the Language Centre students and the MEIF students). In addition, the former students usually get to levels further than 1 and 2, whereas the latter students are in a mandatory situation where their main motivation might be to pass the courses 1 and 2 and hardly ever get beyond these levels.

Having commented on the cases in which there seemed to be some agreement between what students had envisaged their no-class courses could be like and what they actually turned out to be, I now mean to talk about those converse cases in which students did not seem to have a sense of accomplishment.

6.4.2 NON-FULFILMENT OF THE STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS

As may have been noticed in section 6.2.1 (page 195), in which the focus was on the convenience of the no-class courses as regards the flexibility of time and the students' schedules, some students as well as some counsellors pointed out the students' hope that the no-class courses were easier than they really were. In other words, despite the advantages the students recognized in these courses, they also thought that the contents of the course were more difficult than they

had expected and that there were requirements and rules to comply with that they did not expect to have. Furthermore, some other students felt they had not obtained what they had conceived and expressed some disappointment, as it is shown in these passages:

SPA: (smiling) what I got?....headaches....hehehe! [laughs]...I feel that my progress was average, no?, I am not going to question that there is some learning because at the beginning I thought it was not going to work for me, certainly it worked, ...

SAN: from this course I didn't get a big thing sincerely, it was only a review a reminder of what I had already seen [learnt], the only thing I liked was its schedule flexibility [...] but that it was useful, or I had learnt much....no, unfortunately no, because it was only a review.

Regarding what the students obtained from their no-class courses, it can be observed in the previous quotations that it seems as if some students not only did not obtain what they expected but did not feel pleased with their experience in their courses; to a certain extent they showed some disappointment and nuisance. I was bewildered by the first student, whose comment was so negative, but personal, honest and funny. It gave me the impression that he was aware of his little progress although he had originally thought he would not do any. In the second case, it seems to me that the student summarized his dissatisfaction by sincerely saying that the course was a useless review for him, which several students (maybe those who already knew some English) also expressed. I consider that the mismatch between the students' expectations or preconceptions was mostly caused by the deficient or rather the lack of information and preparation, regarding this new mode of studying (together with the use of the SAC), that students had when they embarked on these no-class courses (a further discussion on this topic is offered in section 7.4, page 237). Furthermore, since the name of the courses or mode of studying –'autonomous'– suggested a certain 'teaching/learning rhetoric' (Marsh et al. 2001) which diverged from the actual 'educational rhetoric' that students were used to and had experienced before, these students perceived a mismatch that might have caused their misunderstanding of the whole system or rather their rejecting it (c.f. Marsh et al. 2001).

Through the interviews it was noticeable that most students, whether they were pleased with their 'autonomous' courses or not, whether their expectations had been fulfilled or not, but especially the ones whose expectations had not been

fulfilled, expressed, in one way or another, their preference for classes. The following are samples of this:

sja: ...at the beginning I thought it was not going to work for me, but it certainly worked, but it's not the same, I would've preferred to have a class with a teacher and classmates, because the counselling session ...ehhmm... didn't help me much... don't tell the teacher eh! [secretly, in very low voice]

sje: Yes, I really think that I would take the other course in a class,... it's not a criticism of the course, but actually...it's not the same, one gives it more priority or... one takes it more seriously in a class, that is, I have the English class at certain time, it's not like: let's see when I'm going to make hours [clock up hours] of English... it's different, mmm...

These passages suggest that there were some students who, despite their identifying good points of the no-class courses, made their preference for classes clear; either for their inclination to have a teacher constantly guiding them and classmates to share with and talk to, as mentioned in the first excerpt; or as commented in the second case, for their need to have fixed and structured schedules, programs and duties to take the course seriously and commit themselves, which is contrary of what the autonomous (no-class) courses claim to offer (for details on the no-class courses' claims and facts, see section 8.2.1, page 267). The latter comment made me think about my own case, especially when doing my PhD studies, since I am the kind of person who needs a structure for me to commit myself with a certain activity and organize my own time, that is, for me not to feel so loose. Then I thought of the people in similar conditions who may be working as counsellors and I wonder if we are fostering autonomy or at least helping the students to become more reflective besides our trying to meet institutional requirements, because as Toogood and Pemberton point out:

...working out ways to meet institutional requirements and overcome constraints is vital if self-directed language learning is to be integrated effectively into the curriculum. (2002: 110).

Something else to point out is the first student's concern about my keeping the information in secret, especially his comment about his counsellor. He might have imagined that as a counsellor too I could be his counsellor's friend; hence, I

had to reinforce my position as a researcher and my vow of discretion and loyalty to them and to the information they provided me (for details on this topic see section 4.3.3, page 135).

It was also interesting to detect that there were several participants who frequently used impersonal pronouns to give their opinions. It could be that they did not want to assume the whole responsibility of their own words; or that they wanted to place the weight of their perceptions on somebody else, like sharing blame in order not to feel so guilty to say unpleasant, negative comments; or that they preferred to generalize the comment as if several people thought the same but they were the spokesperson, as occurred with the student in the second extract using the pronoun 'one'.

Regarding the students' preference for classes a counsellor also mentioned:

CMA: I think there are few students who would say that they prefer the autonomous. [...] it seems to be that as long as they [students] started working in groups of 10, [...] they stayed longer [...] they may feel that they belong to a group, a group makes you feel more secure, better, having a buddy to share things with....

Considering this counsellor's comment and contrasting it with those passages which refer to the suitability of the no-class courses (in section 6.2, page 195), I would say that there were indeed some MEIF students who felt comfortable with these courses, and it was mostly due to convenience and schedule issues. Nevertheless, a few students wanted to keep on taking their following courses in the no-class mode and in these cases it seems to me that it was because they had understood the functioning of the courses, the ways to obtain credits (points) to add to their exams' grades and they were just interested in getting prepared to pass the exams and the courses.

One of the reasons for students to prefer classes seemed to be the sense of belonging to a group, as mentioned by this counsellor and one of the students above. I consider it is important to keep in mind that "[n]o individual is completely independent or autonomous, but rather, interdependent and contextualised within a social setting" (Marsh et al, 2001: 381). Factors such as the need and/or pleasure to be together with other people, gregariousness, sharing and even chattering are typical of the 'veracruzana' culture (from Veracruz), therefore, classrooms which are comprised by people from Veracruz usually display some of these characteristics. In line with what Holliday asserts about classrooms being a "microcosm of wider society" (1994: 19), I think that the small cultures such as

the groups of students from Veracruz are permeated by values, customs, beliefs and traditions of the local community, among other cultures which also interact to define each classroom culture. Thus, I could say that having the students work by themselves (as many times they work in isolation at the CADI) is like ignoring the abovementioned features, which results in the inappropriateness of the new methodology (Holliday 1994). In other words, the students who are used to taking classes as the prime means to learning usually find it difficult and objectionable to take their English courses in the no-class mode.

Bearing the ideas revealed in these passages in mind, I can therefore offer a fourth finding which encompasses the theme related to the students' expectations, which is the fourth theme that appears in chart 6-2:

Finding 4:

The no-class mode of studying EFL failed to meet several of the students' expectations, and this had a significant impact on their perception of the whole project resulting in their partial acceptance of this mode and their preference of the class mode.

After looking at the fulfilment of students' expectations, it seems to me that despite the convenience and positive aspects that some students recognized in the no-class courses, only a few students thought their expectations had been fulfilled. Interestingly, several of both type of students, the ones who found it convenient and accomplished their expectations and those who did not like this mode at all, declared a marked preference for the 'regular classes'. There seems to be varied reasons for this predilection, such as: the need for the presence of a teacher, the need for fixed schedules and duties, the need for belonging to a group and work with other people and the lack of desire to assume more responsibilities.

SUMMARY

The general theme treated in the current chapter related to the students' perceptions of the no-class mode of studying EFL, that is, how the students perceived these courses, their views while they were studying in this new mode. Throughout my understanding of what students expressed as their opinions and thoughts about the innovation they were experiencing, I was able to discuss themes such as:

- the scarce importance that learning EFL had for most of the students participating in this study;
- the ease and convenience that some recognized in the no-class courses due to their flexibility in time-handling aspects and its counterpart, the difficulty and inconvenience that these courses represented for them due to commuting issues and to the load of work in the core subjects of their respective majors; and finally
- the students' sense of fulfilment in regard to what they expected from this new mode of studying EFL, which in turn resulted in most of the students' preferring to take their courses in the well-known class-mode.

Having examined the students' perceptions of the innovation they had been involved in or were in fact experiencing, it seems to me that during the planning and implementation of this new mode of studying English, the social requirements of the students and the educators of the recipient institution, in this case the University of Veracruz, were not wholly taken into account; therefore the no-class mode turned out to be an unsuitable one for the actual local conditions, (the actual context of the Language Centre-Ver and the UV schools located in the Veracruz–Boca del Río area). Considering the new mode of studying/teaching English (no-class mode and SAC) as a methodology, I consider unavoidable to recapture Holliday's argument that "...any methodology in English language education should be appropriate to the social context within which it is to be used..." (1994: 1).

However, as it will be discussed in section 7.6 (page 254) further on, the above-mentioned does not mean that everything related to this innovation has been unbefitting, the new no-class courses have been appropriated by the students in such a way that students have conveniently taken advantage of it.

Since the findings in this study are the synthesis of the sub-themes and their supporting data, which in turn are embraced by the theme being considered in each section, for the sake of reference a list of all the findings I was able to attain in this chapter is reproduced in section 8.2.1 (page 267).

Having discussed some of the most recurrent students' views on the topics aforesaid and having summarized them in the findings achieved in this chapter, it is time to turn to the following general theme (chapter) related to those aspects of the no-class learning mode that, according to their own accounts and to my perceptions, the students were actually experiencing.

STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES WITHIN THE NO-CLASS MODE

In the preceding chapter I have discussed the students' opinions, explicitly, how they perceived the no-class mode of studying EFL, including what they expected from it when the courses started and what they had attained. This was done based on the information obtained from some general questions that I asked the students participating in this study during the interviews with them; on additional information provided by some counsellors; as well as on my observations in the field (fieldnotes). We can now discuss the way these students experienced their studying EFL in this new no-class mode.

This chapter, as part of Section IV (the What), also concerns what was obtained, the outcomes from the process of analysing the data I gathered during the fieldwork of this study. It specifically deals with the other main theme that emerged from these data: the students' experiences within the innovation (the no-class mode) in which they were implicated during their EFL courses. As mentioned in the introduction of this Section, the procedures I followed to analyze, to process the data, such as the coding, the division into first-level and second-level codes and the grouping into topics, that is to say, my workings have been shown in chapter 5 (section 5.2, page 148); whereas the structure of this chapter, as well as of chapter 6, and the organization for the presentation of the processed data have been detailed in the same introduction of the current Section.

In this chapter not only the students' voices but the counsellors' voices as well as my observations converged to shape the situation that the students experienced as the receivers and performers of the innovation. That is to say, in this

section I endeavour to present a picture of what students thought of and experienced within the actual no-class learning mode, in its respective self-access centre and counselling sessions. Pieces of this picture are encompassed in the findings related to each of the themes in the present chapter.

As in chapter 6, the current chapter gathers several themes and sub themes (as shown in chart 6-2), all related to what students thought of their own work, what they did as 'autonomous' students and how they lived this experience; what the counsellors believed in this respect, and what I was able to observe and understand during their stay at the self-access centre (CADI) and at their counselling sessions. Themes are described in detail, supported by excerpts of data in the corresponding sections and sub-sections (as illustrated in chart 6-2), and then commented and discussed with reference to the literature.

Section 7.1 (first theme in chart 6-2) deals with those factors that I consider that enabled students to experience certain degree of 'autonomy', as conceived in the language education milieu (for details on this issue see sections 3.1, page 63 and 3.2, page 72). Section 7.2, on the other hand, discusses the control that appeared to be exercised over the students in these no-class courses that claimed to be founded on notions of autonomy and self-direction (second theme in chart 6-2).

The students' development within the no-class mode is the third theme (as shown in chart 6-2) to be discussed in section 7.3 and it deals with those demonstrations of awareness and reflectivity that students displayed while experiencing and talking about their no-class courses.

Then in section 7.4 (fourth theme in chart 6-2), I discuss the issues that emerged in relation to how prepared the stakeholders of this innovation were to face this new mode of studying English; whereas in section 7.5 I talk about the situations that I was able to notice during the actual development of the no-class courses.

Finally in section 7.6, I aim to demonstrate that despite the lack of preparation to take on the innovation, its lack of contextualization and the disadvantages that the no-class mode of studying English and its respective courses could entail, the recipients, i.e. the students, the counsellors and maybe the different schools at the UV, have been able to take ownership of the innovation, that is to say, to appropriate it.

Since the findings of this study arise out of the interweaving of the themes, their respective sub-themes, the data underpinning them and my interpretation of the latter, I include, as part of the summary, a list of all the findings I was able to attain through the exploration of the themes comprised in this chapter. We can now start with the discussion of the first theme: 'Experiencing autonomy'.

7.1 EXPERIENCING AUTONOMY

Even when several features of the context where this study was carried out and the actual development of the no-class courses seemed contradictory to the concept of autonomy, as it will be discussed further in the following sections, in my view there were also some elements which illustrate how autonomy, within the framework of learner autonomy and in the sense of the capacity to reflect, to be critical, to identify needs and goals, to make decisions and elections (of the most suitable learning method) and to put them into practice as far as the person's own physical, intellectual and emotional possibilities and the external circumstances allow her to do so (working definition introduced in section 3.1.4, page 72), was exercised by the students in the setting of this study.

I guess some of the students involved in this study had a clearer idea of what autonomy meant in this context and expressed their exercise of it, as can be read in the following quotations:

SAi: The tools are there and one knows if we use them and what time, how long and how to use them according to your own capacities. If I organize myself I can do the things by myself [...] for me it's easier because I know myself, I know my moments, I know how to organize myself [...] and for me it's easier to take it in this mode than depending on a fixed schedule or on other people...

SAG: ...in a class, it's ok, but there are things that if you have already understood... why to see them again? Preferably you move forward to whatever you want, audio, vocabulary or video; or if there is something that you don't remember very well, you go back to it and review it... It depends only on you!...

In some way all these students appeared to coincide in the idea that in this mode of learning they were able to do anything they decided regarding the load of work, the time they wanted to devote to this and the activities or areas they wanted or needed to work on. Furthermore, they both mentioned their awareness of themselves, of their needs and of their capacities which was of great help when studying by themselves. They sometimes contrasted this learning mode with normal classes by saying that in normal classes they had to wait for and to depend on others, which did not happen in the no-class learning mode. It was interesting for me to realize some students' appreciation of the variety of materials available to them, as well as their emphasizing the

advantage of not having to depend on anybody else's pace of work or level of comprehension.

The excerpts above suggest that these students (and some others) were able to set their own agendas (as much as they were permitted since, as mentioned before, in most institutionalized systems, the programs of the courses, the exams and the dates were already set) and hopefully, as Little mentions, their learning "should be more focused and more purposeful, and thus more effective both immediately and in the longer term." (1991: 8). As far as I observed, some students cared about learning and/or reinforcing their knowledge of English and they indeed made decisions about it and were responsible for their studying.

Once again, some students were using impersonal or distancing pronouns (one or you) to express their own ideas and their own experiences. As I said before, it seems that they did not want to carry with the whole load of what they were declaring or that they were generalizing their own ideas. Hopefully, they had known many students with the same position and that is why they were able to talk for them, maybe they wanted to act as the spokespersons.

It seemed that 'autonomy' (as understood in the ELT milieu) was put into effect by a few students who certainly decided to take advantage of the time and materials available and to work with anything they wanted to, as these students said:

SEN: At CADI I can look up all the words that come to my mind [...] or any extra information depending on what I want or that I don't understand. [...] and in the counselling sessions I can ask the teacher my doubts, very specific... I learn more...

SAI: [when I am at CADI] I look for the materials I'm going to use, as I have the guide that all autonomous students have,...yeah... it helps me a lot... then I spend time firstly on doing [working on] the [student's] book and the workbook, always like this; book and workbook and then I do extra worksheets... as many as I can.

These students in the passages above described how they made the most out of their counselling sessions as well as of the CADI; either by working with the materials they needed or by asking their doubts and trying to learn from their classmates. This suggests that students who wanted to take advantage of the no-class system were able to benefit from its components (self-access centre and counselling sessions). It might not have been a matter of liking English, but of making out the real situation they were facing and the need to overcome it, which looks as if they were aware and they took the responsibility of their studies, as some of the

definitions of autonomy suggest (c.f. Holec 1981, Gremmo and Riley 1995, Esch 1996, Dam 2003). In any case, the students' statements look as if they thought or felt they were exercising their autonomy.

The exercise of autonomy in such a productive way can also be noticed in my following fieldnotes:

Field note CHIOA-CI: A girl checks in, looks for an audio-book, asks for the tape to the assistant and finds a place to seat. It seems she has previously decided what to do, what materials to work on.

Field note LA-USBI: One of the girls who has been working very focused, writes on her log, turns off the tape recorder, gives back the tape and changes to another area (MUA). The girl next to her does the same. They start working with other materials.

The preceding fieldnotes are only two of the many I wrote while observing the different areas at CADI and several counselling sessions, in which students' constant and conscientious work seemed to be in progress because they had decided so. Maybe that was because they were really interested in learning as much as possible. No matter if the motivation for acting that way might have been the requirement they had to fulfil within the curriculum of their respective majors, the fact was that they seemed to be taking the responsibility of their progress as students.

Counsellors also realized how some students made their decisions and put them into practice, either in their counselling sessions or at the CADI, on this matter they mentioned:

CEU: Language Centre students, [...] specially adults, they like to work independently, ok?... I have some young students too and they also like to work independently, ok? few students anyway...

CAM: [MEIF] no-class students usually work more independently and harder [than MEIF class students], they show more interest and they tend to take care of the materials...

As has been noted before, some counsellors tended to make a distinction between students who had decided to study English (language centre students) and those on whom it had been imposed (university/MEIF students), which I find understandable; and also between adults and younger adults, as mentioned in the first

passage. However, the second passage refers to MEIF students among which there also seemed to be some students who liked to work independently, without taking a class, and to decide what they wanted to work on.

However, there were some other students who did not have this attitude, such as the ones mentioned by this counsellor:

CIs: [...] they usually do grammar, grammar and grammar. In fact they like that they can do and practice whatever they want, well... when they want!! [...] Some students are reluctant to work, they just don't want to do anything, they don't care.

I noticed that in the previous passage the counsellor seemed to highlight the fact that students liked it when they did things because they really wanted to, although they rarely wanted to. It is possible that since they had to accomplish a program and to pass the subject (English) they still perceived it as an obligation and this may have diminished the sense of independence and the desire of working on something that they themselves had not decided to study.

Another aspect that, though strange, attracted me was the students' neglect of their duties. For instance, the last quotation suggests that some students did not care about learning English, not even about fulfilling the requirements for passing the subject. It seems to me that it could be a way of making own decisions and maybe of resisting the imposition of an innovation for which the students themselves were not ready or willing to undertake (Dickinson, 1987:2). In some way, it gives the impression that the students were exercising their agency though not favouring their autonomy in terms of language learning, if we consider that this term (autonomy) has been used as an ability to take charge of one's own learning (Holec, 1981). This could be one of the results of the mismatch between the project for the implementation of the self-access centre and the 'autonomous' courses and the social context of foreign language teaching and learning of the specific host institution (cf. Holliday, 1994).

My observations also registered how the students came to this kind of decisions, even at the expense of not getting credits for their participation in the counselling sessions or for their work at the CADI, as reported in the following fieldnotes:

Field note IN150: [in a counselling session] One boy is drawing on a piece of paper, well he's signing, like practicing his signature, I thought he was taking notes... maybe he's decided not to pay attention!. [...] Other boy is also drawing on a piece of paper;

when the counsellor asks if they have any doubts one of them asks her about the lists for the final exams [...] Even when the boys are not looking at her but drawing, it seems they pretend to be paying attention.

Field note VA-USBI: Two girls sit next to each other, start playing the videos and start talking, they put on the earphones but only in one ear so that they can keep on chatting; they pretend they're watching the video and writing or rather looking at the worksheet, but they are chatting (whispering) all the time. However other students seem to be working they watch attentively, rewind the videotapes and write on their worksheets.

As can be observed in the previous excerpts, some students, even though they attended the counselling sessions and the CADI, refused to do the corresponding work there. It is to be mentioned that other students did not regularly attend either their counselling sessions or the CADI. Again, it looks as if these students, exercising their agency, made their choices and sometimes ended up doing what they wanted, which I think the system propitiated by forcing them first to take the English courses, then to take them in the no-class mode and finally to attend the CADI and the counselling sessions, which in principle was conflicting with the autonomy conception of detachment, critical reflection, decision-making and independent action mentioned by Little (1991) (for a detailed discussion on autonomy in language learning see sections 2.1, page 35 and 3.1, page 63). They could have decided to study, work and learn as much as possible, but in these cases they might have decided to be physically present to add credits for their grades and not to pay attention, not to work and just to kill time there (in the counselling session or at the CADI) as long as they did not disturb or affect others, although sometimes they did. Again, as natural as human diversity, other students decided to work and pay attention and they actually did so.

I must admit that at first I had thought the students' doing anything they wanted, whatever they decided to do even at the expense of not getting credits for their participation in the counselling sessions or for the work done at CADI, or even at the expense of failing the subject; in short, the students' playing around, not working, maybe wasting time, could have been an example of the exercise of their autonomy. That is to say, they might have been deciding not to work and not to pay attention, not to engage in the whole system; as I said before, they could be resisting the imposition of the subject and/or the innovation (the no-class mode) and that was part of their autonomy. Alternatively, they could have known enough English

to pass the final exams or this might have been only a matter of lack of maturity, of seriousness and of interest. However, I soon understood that this students' attitude was not related to autonomy, at least not with the meaning that has been attributed to the term in the language learning milieu, but they were indeed exercising their agency, and faced with that, the system (the counsellors and teachers in the Language Centre) could only act in response by giving them low or failing marks.

It seems to me that, as Marsh et al. commented after researching this topic among undergraduate students at Nottingham Trent University, in the context under consideration,

...[n]otions of autonomy and independence have no objective existence for students in their lived world. Yet the terms feature strongly in the teaching and learning discourse with which students have to engage. [Thus, for] many students, the terms are reducible to attendance requirements, that is, something about doing, rather than being. (2001: 387)

There was another counsellor's opinion which was noteworthy and it was related to the absence of autonomy in some students' everyday performance within their no-class courses. This counsellor commented:

CEU: but it's natural, no?...look, when children are in Kindergarten they are free, they can play and do many things they want, very nice; then, in Primary school ...there you are... orders, prohibitions, 'you have to memorize this and that'; in High school – worse, no?- you have to study many different subjects, there are a lot of contents, homework and rules and more rules to observe, finally, you get to the University and suddenly in English [courses]... well, now you are autonomous!! and you go 'what's that'? It's a shock for the students.

Here again, it gives the impression that this counsellor had a clear idea of what the new mode meant to some students, that is, the difficulty it represented for them to start studying without taking classes and without having a teacher at hand constantly. As the counsellor seems to conceive it and I agree with him, there is a decrease of autonomy as people grow older and pass through the different education levels constituting certain education systems, as if school prevented people from autonomy (c.f. Coleman 1996, Little 1991) or as if school erected a barrier between learning and living by basing the learning process on teaching (Little 1991 citing Illich 1979). This sounds contradictory to the idea of getting informed,

getting mature, becoming educated, as schools claim that people enrolling the education system will become.

The passages above led me to the findings that encapsulate the issues related to the way the students experienced autonomy in their no-class courses, the first theme in this chapter (as shown in chart 6-2), and I now summarize as follows:

Finding 5:

Some students were able to achieve some degree of autonomy, though 'autonomy' in this context seems to refer to actions such as: choosing when, how long and what to work on at the CADI; deciding to actually work or to pretend to be working in order to accumulate credits; determining their attendance and participation in the counselling sessions; and trying their best to pass the subject.

Finding 6:

Some of the possible causes for students' failing to carry out the no-class courses might be:

- their resisting the imposition of the innovation*
- their misinterpreting the notions of autonomy as used in the educational setting*
- their identifying the mismatch between the 'discourse of the new mode of studying' and their experience as students in an institutional context.*

As far as autonomy in practice within the no-class mode of studying in the context of the current study is concerned, it can be said that the findings in this section sum up its situation. Conversely to this theme, the next section is about one of the factors that contradicts the essence of autonomy (as used in the educational setting); the control that was exerted on the no-class students.

7.2 CONTROL OVER THE STUDENTS

The students' achievement of some degree of autonomy and the possibility of their exercising it, as was noticed in the preceding section, did not avoid the exertion of some control over the students. This control was also detected in this setting

and is treated as the second theme (according to chart 6-2) in the current chapter. In other words, one element of this learning mode that was recurring throughout this study was the practice of control of the whole no-class system (no-class learning mode and its infrastructure: self-access centre and the counsellors, assistants, technicians, administrators working there) over the students. By the no-class system I also refer to that fraction of the wider education system in which the no-class mode was embedded, and which had to do with the planning, the organization, the decision making and the support of the latter. It is worth noting that in a system which claimed to be based on the notion of autonomy and whose name was in fact 'autonomous mode', the exercise of control and surveillance was more palpable and more open to criticism.

Examples of this control can be described through these students' statements:

SAi: ...I became more responsible because they put pressure on us, I mean they force you to study and to study the basic things... what they are going to ask you [in the exams].

SPA: ...it [the CADI and the no-class mode] is like a father with a belt in his hand telling you to do the things...

SEL: mmm... I feel uncomfortable with this issue of being asked to do certain number of hours or activities... and the counselling sessions, well... they're ok, they are useful to have control on what students have to study.

As can be noticed in the excerpts above, some students mentioned the subtle coercion they felt they were subjected to. For instance, in the first passage the student recognized a positive feature of the system, such as becoming more responsible, but at the same time she brought up the topic of pressure, force, obligation and fixed requirements which she must conform to. It seems to me that even when she generalized her statement by using the pronouns you and us, when she used words such as 'put pressure on' and 'force you' she expressed her acknowledgement of not doing the things for her own decision or desire but because some external factors pushed her to do so.

The other two students overtly mentioned the form or forms of control and pressure that were exerted on them, and their feelings regarding these issues. It seems to me that the second quotation summarized, in a very Mexican saying,

what the no-class mode meant to this student; an element of demand to do certain things, of surveillance of what must be done and of punishment when things were not obeyed and/or accomplished as they were supposed to. This student's metaphorical interpretation of the no-class system seems to resemble what García, analyzing Foucault, mentions about "examination and surveillance trying to achieve a monitoring of the subject in order to know if this conforms to the rules, if she deviates from them, if she mends her ways by means of new treatments." (2002: 57, my translation). Transferred to the data being discussed, the no-class system (logs, check in/out computers and counsellors' keeping records of students' work) or the father (in the student's statement) could be the surveillance element monitoring the students, those students who do not work 'properly' would be the ones who deviate from the norm, and the counsellors' suggestions, advice, scolding or the belt in the father's hand could be the different, new treatments.

If we consider the no-class system with its mechanisms of control as a new methodology, from a Foucauldian perspective, it could be said that within these new methodologies, mainly originated in central (western) countries which are embedded in liberal-democratic consumer capitalism, order and control are less direct and more diffuse than in other types of societies (Anderson, 2002: 290), although it does not mean that some students (objects of such control) can realize that. Actually, the fact that students realize that power is being exerted on them may give rise to diverse forms of behaviour and resistance, in which they become active subjects of these new power relationships rather than passive recipients of power, as suggested by Foucault (Mills, 2003).

As has been discussed before, some of these 'commodities' (educational programs, methodologies, ELT, etc) (Block, 2002, Anderson 2002 citing Usher, Bryant & Johnston 1997) are some of the products that periphery countries adopt, or rather 'buy' without taking into account the local context where they are to be implemented (for a detailed discussion on this topic see section 3.5, page 93). This may bring about the necessity of adapting them under more costly (financial and human) circumstances.

This idea was also manifest when some of the counsellors' declared:

CIS: We have decided not to check more hours, now we are more interested in the activities they have done during the week...

CAM: ...one of our duties is to check if they [the students] have worked and what [activities and areas] they have done during the week...

In these passages it can be noticed that counsellors, maybe with good intentions towards the students and believing that they were fulfilling their duties as counsellors, tended to exercise control and dominion over the students. They were the ones who made certain decisions which students were to comply with, and they were the ones who were in charge of verifying that such requirements and regulations were fulfilled, as if the students themselves were not capable of doing so. For instance in the first extract, the counsellor seemed to be pleased of having changed the emphasis on the time (hours of work) towards the work (activities, worksheets). It is worth noting that sometimes these conditions may not have been directly decided by the counsellors themselves but by a superior agent, such as the MEIF commission, or the coordinators or the people in charge of the planning and the support of the whole program.

Both passages gave me the impression that some counsellors, as the first one stated, were sometimes more interested in checking the activities and assignments students had done and which were reported on paper (the logs) and given credit for (some points to add to final grades), than in the students' progress in their critical thinking or in their learning and use of the language. This makes me think again that perhaps the aim of these English courses (no-class and class) was more focused on facilitating the students to pass the subject, to fulfil a requirement and not on enabling the students to learn and to use the target language. If that were the case, I believe that the implementation of this innovation (which may be called program, system or methodology) might have responded to the university's intention to look as a very progressive and updated one, which went along with the globalizing educational trends that conceive languages as commodities (Block and Cameron, 2002: 4-7), but did not have enough foundations for this to function appropriately (c.f. Holliday 1994, Tudor 2002), (for details on this issue see section 6.3, page 198).

I want to complement these indications of control with some of the numerous notes of my observations, either of the areas at the self-access centre (CADI) or of the counselling sessions, in which the practice of subtle control and surveillance over the students was noted:

Field note CA-CI: ...all the students in this and in all the areas, especially in the CHIOA, write on their logs, they are supposed to write down the key of the worksheet they have done and the time they've been there.

Field note CHIOA-USBI: The assistant stamps a student's log, and when she's about

to give her bag back to the girl, she suggests her to do another activity to complete the time, since the computer doesn't register less than 30 min.

Field note IN100, IN200, IC300 and IC500: In every single counselling session the students' logs are checked; counsellors ask the students to pass their logs to them, then they write down on their lists in order to keep a record of whatever the students have done at CADI. There are counsellors who spend so long in this issue, and they scold or give suggestions to the students based on these logs...it's incredible how important the logs are in this system!!!.

According to the preceding quotations, whether the students were to complete a certain number of activities instead of hours or to cover different areas of work (e.g. vocabulary, grammar, video, audio, etc.), it seemed that it was pre-established by someone else but the students, as it occurs in the self-instruction mode, but contradicting again the original conception of autonomy (for details on these notions see sections 2.1, page 35 and 2.2, page 40). The students were constantly supervised through their logs and conducted by guides, pathways, textbooks' programs and counsellors, and sometimes even by the assistants, as shown in the passages above, which demonstrate the great importance of the management of such logs as instruments of control and inspection. This, in turn, could be a manifestation of how this pedagogy (no-class mode of learning EFL) may be disguised with a costume of free choice, in which the individualized learner, with very little freedom, is manipulated in a technology of the self, that is to say, "[l]earner-centeredness [...] imposes a form of behaviour on people and inculcates self-regulation" (Anderson, 2002: 290) in such a way that it can be misinterpreted as if it were actually fostering independence and autonomy.

I was astonished when I realized the time and energy devoted to the management of logs, on the side of the students as well as on the side of the counsellors and assistants, as shown in the preceding extracts. It appears that what could (or should) be just an administrative procedure became the core activity in the no-class courses, where the counsellors usually had the control and kept the records of students' performance and development. This agrees with Anderson's view that the

power-autonomy dichotomy reveals how autonomy in the teachers' [counsellors'] understanding of the construct, was not necessarily created in the learner-centred [notion] because the teacher [counsellor] always had authority... (2002: 290)

The issue of completing certain time periods, as mentioned in the second excerpt, was not only established by people (counsellors, coordinators, etc.) but programmed on the computers. Thus, if the students did not work for a minimum pre-established time (30 minutes), the computer did not register any minutes and the work done in that session would not count for their accumulation of time/credits. I think this is, in small scale, an example of 'the surveillance societies' (Lyon, 2001) in which the administrative and control processes depend on communication and information technologies, mainly the computers. In this case it is the check in/out computers, which must be used by all students-users and keep the records of the students' stay and work at CADI.

As mentioned above, it was the logs and the check in/out computers in which the students had to report whatever they had done at CADI if they wanted to accomplish some credits for their final grades; and they were the logs and the counsellors' lists which constituted an instrument for the counsellors to keep a record of students' work and to have certain control over them. This situation coincides with Lyon's description of surveillance as "any collection and processing of personal data [...] for the purpose of influencing or managing those whose data have been garnered" (2001:2), since once the counsellors had these data, they were able to suggest (or sometimes require) some kind of particular work ('for the students own sake'), scold them for not having done what they were supposed to, and add the points (credits) to their marks. But that was not all, the students were to work in diverse areas not because they chose to, but because it was supposed to be the best way they could practice the four skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) and learn English; hence, it gave me the impression that sometimes it was what the counsellors suggested to or sometimes demanded from students what they actually did, as shown in the third extract.

The following information taken from the reports provided by the check in/out computers also illustrates this kind of controlling system (samples of students' CADI work reports can be seen in Appendix 10):

Name of the student: Navarro Tellez Yolanda

Level: 1C500 Group: 41

Kind of course: English Conversation

Time (accumulated so far in the second part of the semester): 16:03

Time accumulated for the first partial exam: 26:58

Total time accumulated so far: 43:01

Number of times she has attended CADI: 44

Areas utilized by the user: Learning to learn = 4, Audio = 11, Reading = 18, etc.

Entries to CADI: 16;

Date of attendance: 27/05/05;

Time of getting in (checking in): 12:43;

Time of leaving (checking out): 13:28; and

Time of this session: 00:45

This information, taken from one of the computer's reports produced for each student-user of the CADI, illustrates how the students' work and activities are recorded in the computers, written on their logs, and then, approved and stamped by the assistants, to finally be supervised and controlled directly by the counselors when they made the final passing/non-passing decision. This kind of surveillance gives me the impression that fits into Lyon's description (2001: 4-6) when he talks about the 'coordination' and reshaping of social relations through the increasing use of new technologies, computers in this case, which in turn have encompassed and overcome the use of schedules and timetables. In this way, as I have explained before, the activities and time can be checked and controlled even when a person (a counsellor or an assistant) is not physically present in that precise moment and place, since this person will have access to the information stored in the computer and will be able to retrieve it when she/he wishes.

All these measures, strategies and instruments (time-keeping, self-control over one's posture and bodily functions, concentration) can be said to be disciplinary practices coming from outside in which 'control' is internalized and assumed by each individual and whose aim is "the disciplining of the self by the self" (Mills, 2003: 43)

Another account of the surveillance taking place in the setting of this study can be read in the following extracts of my fieldnotes:

Field note MUA-USBI: The assistants are working on the computers; suddenly one of them starts walking around the CADI just to see what the students are doing... they must be working quietly???

Field note MUA-USBI: [...] the other 3 friends are still joking and laughing; suddenly the assistant walks in and everybody stays still, nobody talks except one of the boys who is so distracted fooling around, but his friend touches him with a pencil and then he realizes that the assistant is there. She walks straight to those 3 boys and asks them

to be quiet; she tells them that she will subtract 15 minutes to their times because they haven't been doing anything but playing.

These excerpts seem to illustrate how the assistants (in this case, although it could also be the counsellors or even the technicians) oversaw the students and tried to control their discipline by scolding them and by subtracting time from their records. It must be mentioned that these surveillance actions seemed to be facilitated by the construction and arrangement of the CADI buildings where the rooms (areas and offices) were divided by short walls (1 meter tall) with huge windows, through which the counsellors and assistants were able to constantly keep an eye on the students who were in the areas. Due to the accessibility of the view of the areas and the people there, who hardly noticed they were being watched, this 'functional' architecture reminded me of the conception of Jeremy Bentham's prison "in which prisoners supposed that they were under the all-seeing gaze of an inspector" (Lyon 2001: 7) who was in a central tower from where he was able to watch all the prisoners in their cells that surrounded the tower but without being noticed. Even if the prisoners were not being watched, they watched themselves and functioned within the norms.

Thus, "[d]eveloped within the setting of the prison, disciplinary regimes now permeate [...] the school, the university." (Mills, 2003: 44). This, in turn, led me to extrapolate Foucault's analysis of the 'panopticon' (1991) to the spatial arrangement at CADI, where the counsellors or the assistants, had a clear and ample view of each of the students/users at the CADI who usually worked separately, individually; therefore they could be watched or rather monitored and then required to do what they were supposed to do. Otherwise, even if the students were not watched all the time, they knew it was a possibility, as abovementioned, they had internalized the disciplinary practice and they themselves often self-controlled and tried to behave according to the norms. But, in a system claiming to be founded on autonomy notions, independence and self-direction; were the students expected to be doing something in particular? Should they be controlled? by whom?

In the first passage, once more, it looked as if the students were supposed to be working in a certain way, otherwise they must be penalized. It looks as if these university students (young adults) were treated like little children who had to be supervised on every action they did (which I think should not happen); or as if there were correct forms that must be followed to do the work, to study; or as if they were so noisy and mischievous that they had to be disciplined. I wonder if this has anything to do with fostering autonomy and self-direction. Under these

circumstances, it is unavoidable for me to refer to 'the fallacy of independence' which is discussed by Marsh et al. who say that promoting the rhetoric of the 'independent autonomous learner' leads the students to form different meanings and contradictory discourses, since on the one hand the discourse seems to promote 'choice, freedom and democracy' whereas in practice the students move towards individualism and competition (2001: 384). In the CADI-VERACRUZ, for example, the students can only choose when to be there and work, and sometimes the materials to use, but they have to do it mostly in an individual basis and supervised (or rather controlled) by a counsellor. We are then, facing a discourse which seems to be impracticable, or at least difficult to translate into consistent and effective practice in the context under consideration (c.f. Marsh et al. 2001).

Considering the above discussed matters, I find it pertinent to transfer Anderson's argument (which is based on Foucault's, 1991) about learner-centeredness as a "cultural product of late-modern capitalism where freedom and democracy seem questionable in the light of teacher control and authority" (Anderson, 2002: 289), to the no-class mode of studying EFL at the Language Centre-Veracruz where it is expected that students "must be *trained* to be autonomous and free" (ibid, my italics) and the counsellors and assistants must supervise and guide them, i.e., the system is supposed to encourage autonomy and empowerment. However, what actually happens is that the institution, through the counsellors, monitors and keeps the control of the students, and empowerment is encouraged through self-control and individualization. It appears that the encouragement of autonomy and independence in the context at issue has been superficial and sometimes has camouflaged the control that is still exerted over the students (and the society). I therefore concur with Little when he mentions that:

The transfer of responsibility for learning from the teacher to the learner has far-reaching implications, not simply for the way in which education is organized but for power relationships that are central to our social structure. (1991:7)

Those power relationships and the control that they entail are embedded in 'discipline', which at the same time is a type of subtle power that guarantees its presence through an "attentive gaze, a constant observatory" (García, 2002: 75 my translation). In other words, it could be said that the no-class mode, as part of a powerful national educational institution, reproduces such a disciplinary scheme, but this time, through a discourse that supposedly favors independence and autonomy (control disguised as modernity and technology).

The following finding sums up those elements relating to the control that is applied to the students in the no-class mode (second theme in chart 6-2):

Finding 7:

Contrary to the claim that the no-class mode was based on and fostered principles of autonomy and independence, important factors which suggested that surveillance and control were subtly exerted over the students in the no-class mode were revealed.

The present section has attempted to illustrate what appeared as the practice of control and surveillance in a system which claimed to foster independence and autonomy and which is in fact called 'autonomous'. Despite this situation, there were some indications of the students becoming conscious of their own development, so I now want to introduce the theme of awareness and reflectivity which also emerged from the data analyzed in this study.

7.3 BEYOND LEARNING ENGLISH: AWARENESS AND REFLECTIVITY

In the two previous sections we have talked about the limited degree of autonomy that students were able to exercise and the subtle control and surveillance exerted over the students respectively. However, both of these situations did not exempt students from being reflective and becoming aware of several issues as regards the innovation they were experiencing and their own processes as learners. This theme (third theme according to chart 6-2) is the subject of the current section in which I aim to reveal how this innovation, at a certain point, seems to have promoted students' reflectivity and awareness further than just trying to help students learn English.

Several students mentioned the capacity they had developed to recognize their own needs and achievements regarding their English learning, as they mentioned in these excerpts:

SAR: I like to come like this [whenever she can/wants] very much, because I know how long I can stand being in the CADI, how long I'm going to be studying and what I need to reinforce, the things I already master I leave them aside and I devote time to other

things [...] then I know when, what and how long I need to study [...] I can visualize it, it all depends on me [...]. [It's been useful] in other subjects and in my life, I can visualize the things in which I'm failing and to what I have to devote more time...

In this first passage, it gave me the impression that the student talked about her being aware of her weak areas and how to handle them, she appeared to know that she was the only responsible one for her learning, a situation which was not very common among the students. Furthermore, she seemed pleased to recognize that she was able to extrapolate her experience and learning (recognizing her needs and possibilities) in the no-class English courses to other subjects.

In the same area under discussion other students expressed:

sje: ...the organization of the materials, [...] permits that one recognizes the way one learns the best; some people are visual, others are ear learners, then for example if I learn better by listening, I go to the tape recorders; and if I learn better by watching, I go to video or computers [...] thus this allows you to recognize how you learn or how you better take advantage of what is given to you; moreover, it can be useful for other subjects or experiences in general.

SPA: ...I have my theory that we all learn in different ways, not everyone can learn... if you learn easy just like that without translating, for me it doesn't work; I have to translate to understand and then a grammar explanation more than anything [...]... I feel it was a test for myself to see what I'm capable of...

The students in the two excerpts above made the point of the different learning styles that they were able to recognize, especially the second one, who as a psychology student seemed more familiar with such terms. Furthermore, they mentioned how the availability of diverse materials and resources at CADI had enabled them to identify their own styles and to take advantage of these.

In different forms and with different terms the three students in the passages above suggested how the no-class learning mode and its system had contributed in their recognising not only some elements regarding the language learning processes, but about their own aptitudes, capacities and needs with which they seemed to be pleased. It looks as if they were aware of the fact that learning depended basically on them, and most of them seemed to be talking in a very personalizing way, like taking complete ownership of the ideas they were expressing. Such awareness, as Dam (1995: 80) points out, could be used when planning

any further learning and could, in fact the students mentioned it, benefit them in other aspects of their lives apart from the foreign language learning context.

It was interesting for me to notice that part of their awareness seemed to have arisen from their studying English in this new mode of learning, which I find as a gain in their development not only as students but as individuals. The way some students appeared to have been able to expand their awareness of themselves as students to other subjects besides English and the fact that a few students seemed to feel challenged by the new mode of studying were also remarkable.

Some students also mentioned the difficulties they identified all over the course as well as their preferences, as it is shown in these declarations:

sja: I feel that maybe it didn't work for me because I am in this kind of transition period in which I'm withdrawing from the teachers. But I think it could work, I feel it could, because at work, we won't have a teacher to tell us what it's about...

sje: ... but coming from a traditional way of learning, led by a teacher, then facing and becoming responsible was really difficult ... I'm not accustomed to it; [...] I guess I was not ready to take the course in the no-class mode; I would've preferred classes.

The two students in the passages above suggested that due to their backgrounds as students immersed in traditional education systems, of which they seemed pretty aware, the new system of the no-class learning mode turned out to be difficult and/or incompatible with their deep-rooted ways of studying and learning strategies.

I must say that these comments were noteworthy since all of them appeared reflexive and deep. In the second quotation it seemed to me that he was not only thinking about his own way of studying but about his whole educational trajectory and his lack of preparation for the new no-class mode, a topic which will be discussed later on. On the other hand, it looked as if the first student talked deeply about his awareness of the transition in which he was involved as a reason for not having succeeded in his current course, and the possible future situation that he may face after graduating, that is, he was "aware of the social requirements of the different situations in which [he may be] called upon to use the target language" (Little 1991: 27). In short, I can say that these students appeared to have very clear ideas about the conditions they were experiencing during this period of their school lives.

Another element coming out of the data, that in my view enhanced the students' criterion and initiatives in their students' lives, was their capacity to reflect

and make decisions and evaluations founded on these reflections. The following extracts indicate what I observed concerning this issue:

Field note IN148 : The boy tells the counsellor how difficult he's found to study English, so the Co asks him how he studies, what exactly he does to study grammar, vocabulary, listening. The boy tells him what he does step by step, so Co questions him about some of his methods. It seems they're talking about learning strategies.... interesting!.

Field note IC341: Suddenly she [a student] tells him [the counsellor] that she only wants to know where she can find information and exercises related to present perfect. Counsellor tells her about a book and 2 worksheets; (her doubt was so specific, she knew exactly what she wanted, what she needed). Then she says she would prefer to go and work in the Reading Area, so the counsellor says ok...

Although there were very few counselling sessions in which I was able to observe how issues related to awareness and reflectivity were promoted and/or treated, as will be explained later on in section 7.5.1 (page 242), the previous extracts may demonstrate how such issues were tackled by allowing students to decide what to do in the sessions and by questioning them about their learning processes with the purpose of having them reflect on their own development. It is important to keep in mind that

...[w]ithin formal education contexts, [...] it is fundamental to autonomous learning that the learner should develop a capacity to reflect critically on the learning process, evaluate his progress, and if necessary make adjustments to his learning strategies. (Little 1991: 52)

After I was in those few counselling sessions in which these kind of reflective attitudes were observed, I realized how interested some students appeared when they were given the opportunity to think of themselves and their own work and to talk about it (cf. Carter, 2001). Besides, it may have been the chance to get some feedback not only from the counsellors but from their classmates, or it might have been an opportunity for the students to hear others' reflections and compare them with their own cases (c.f. Dam 1995).

Regarding self-awareness, it was surprising to see such an independent student (second passage), so certain of what she wanted or needed to study and of

her decision to study it by herself in books or any material the counsellor could suggest and were available at CADI. The counsellor's attitude also seemed to me as a very responsible and respectful one, since he only replied to what the student asked him.

The students also seemed to be aware of the inconsistencies of the system; to illustrate that, I include the following extracts, taken from the students' commentaries, in which they said that the imposition of a mode of learning which was supposed to be based on autonomy was incongruent:

ssa: Maybe they should have it [the no-class mode] as an option, for people who are more capable, it's unfair, because there are people who can't do it and they just have to do it, they don't have option, and if you fail you have to study the whole course again...it's cruel...

sAn: ... only if they had it as an option, but no... you have no choice, it's by force, an imposition, we have to take it because there is no more place in the classes... and it's autonomous??

These students as others expressed their annoyance with the imposition of this type of courses. They thought that the no-class mode should have been an option and that it might work for those who decided to take their courses in this mode but not for those who were forced to do it. They indeed complained about such an imposition which in the first place appeared to be contradictory to the principles of autonomy, especially the second student who questioned the term 'autonomous' (for details on this term see section 2.1, page 35 and 3.1, page 63). Regarding the students' awareness in terms of the inconveniences that this system implied for them, it has already been discussed in section 6.3 (page 198), in particular in section 6.3.2 (page 200), in which the lack of planning of the whole system was pointed out. In line with some of the issues discussed in the previous section (7.2), it seems that the control put forth by the no-class system, as an imposed innovation (c.f. Anderson 2002), reached its highest point even before it was in practice, because from the outset, the no-class courses were imposed on many students who actually wanted to register in a class-course.

It was fascinating to notice how the student in the first passage talked for their classmates, for the 'weak ones', the ones who could not do so, in her view. This opinion made me think of two situations: first, I thought she was possibly being arrogant because she was considering herself among the people who were 'more

capable'; but then, I considered that she might have perceived that some of her classmates were having a hard time while trying to study in this no-class mode, and she was being sympathetic. Her brave comments about the unfairness and cruelty of the imposition of these courses, as well as the second passage in which the term autonomous was interrogated seemed to suggest that these students were not only reflective or aware of the actual situation of the no-class system, but disappointed and annoyed.

After illustrating these subjects of the students' awareness of and reflectivity about the no-class system, their own studying processes and their position as students faced with the implementation of this innovation, the following statement can summarize what I found out, which in essence covers the third theme of this chapter (see chart 6-2):

Finding 8:

Despite the difficulties faced by some students undergoing this new mode of learning EFL, there seemed to be a significant enhancement of some students' capacity for making decisions and evaluations, and for developing reflectivity and awareness of their own learning processes and of their situation as university students throughout their no-class courses.

The current section has discussed what I consider an encouraging issue that emerged in this study, the awareness and reflectivity that students seemed to demonstrate within the context of the no-class courses. On the contrary, the following section relates to a topic which does not appear so encouraging, since it talks about how unprepared the students were to cope with the no-class courses when they started taking them.

7.4 PREPARATION TO FACE THE INNOVATION

Having talked about two factors that can be considered to enhance students' perspectives and possibilities not only as students but as individuals: the conditions of awareness and reflectivity that students achieved throughout the no-class courses they were taking, I can now turn to the fourth theme of this chapter (according to chart 6-2). This theme, conversely to the former one, discusses a factor that seems to have obstructed and lessened the students' development

within the no-class mode; it is the lack of preparation that the stakeholders of this innovation, especially the students, underwent when they started to deal with the no-class courses.

The students' deficient preparation or learner training, as it is usually called, was a theme that students, as well as counsellors, referred to, or rather complained about, with certain feeling of annoyance. Regarding how prepared the students taking their English courses in the no-class mode thought they were, and how much they needed such preparation, some of them said:

SJO: I feel that it didn't have much [information about the autonomous courses], I don't know... I mean... something like advertising, or a method to provide information to us. Then, truly when they mentioned to me 'autonomous', I didn't know what it was, what this system meant or how it worked... [...]... for future school terms, it would be good that they gave information in each department, no?... so everybody would know this other method of study that they may have to adapt to, and it wouldn't be a surprise.

SAN: ...of course, later you find out the good things, but I wish that before we started the course, somebody, maybe the secretaries had told us: 'you know guys there are two types of learning modes, one is the autonomous that is like this and like that..., and the other is the class mode that you already know that you have a teacher'... and so on and so on... [...] they should say the pretty things of this method, don't you think so?

Once that students had registered in the no-class courses and were about to start using the CADI there was a two-hour introduction session (called 'induction course' and which later became a video that students could watch either in groups or individually), however, the students in the extracts above, eager for further information, expressed their desire to have a more complete session or even more than one, specially before they enrolled in an 'autonomous' (no-class) course. They complained about the lack of information and preparation concerning their forthcoming independent work (without teachers and classes) which appeared to make them feel afraid, anxious and insecure. It was common that students did not even know anything about the schedules' availability and registration dates for the English courses. This may have been why they wished they had got information in their own schools (departments) not having to wait until they got to the Language Centre and the CADI.

In tune with what some authors (e.g. Dickinson 1987, Sheerin 1989, O'Malley and Chamot 1990, Wenden 1991, Little 1991) comment about the training (which I'd rather call preparation) that students need when embarking on a project of this kind (for details on this issue see section 2.2, page 40 and 2.3, page 42), some students constantly remarked that if they had been more prepared and informed about what this mode of learning implied, they could have had more possibilities to take advantage of the course itself, of the materials, of the counselling sessions, and it might have been less problematic for them to learn what they were expected to. That is to say, with a proper planning, students should have received previous as well as continuous guidance and orientation throughout the process of implementation of the new mode of studying foreign languages.

Conversely, in the extracts above it seemed clear that students had no information at all of what the no-class (autonomous) courses and the self-access centre were about, their functioning, their philosophy and their demands, before they started their courses, which seemed to make them feel frustrated. It must be taken into account that, as I have mentioned before, most of the students taking the no-class courses came from traditional high schools where they had always taken classes and had teachers; therefore, the limited explanation given by the staff in the registration office, usually secretaries who did not know much about the autonomous mode and the CADI (last excerpt), appeared to be neither useful nor enough to facilitate this transition.

The students in these excerpts gave the impression of being so aware of and so discontented with this fact that they looked as if they were giving advice concerning what the people in charge of the courses should do in order to improve those flaws. They compared it with some kind of advertising in which the good features should be pointed out; in particular the second student seemed explicit as regards what he wished he had obtained.

Counsellors agreed on the idea that students should be better prepared to take any course in this mode of learning since it was new for them; they pointed out:

CRO: ...well first of all, they don't know what CADI is, they don't know exactly what they are going to do, they have a completely different idea of what they are expected to do.... students need training, steps to follow, some kind of guide, otherwise they get lost, they don't know what to do [...] ... they have no idea because they have a very bad background [from previous school education],...

CEU: ... becoming autonomous is not immediate, students understand little by little what working by themselves means, you know?, autonomous learning is a process. [...] Students need some foundations, they need to know some basic things before they start working as 'autonomous'.

As shown in the previous quotations, it did not appear strange to me that so many people talked about the lack of information and preparation that they were victims of, particularly the students, who as the "subjects of the change" (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992:36) were not taken into consideration during the planning of this innovation. It appears that both counsellors recognized the limited information and preparation that students had when they started the course. They coincided in saying that students should have been trained (prepared) as regards the innovation before they started trying to learn by themselves and using the CADI. Concurring with Little's view of the mismatch between the term 'learner training' and the "spirit of autonomous learning schemes" (1991: 52), the term 'training' gives me the impression of a very mechanical and mostly physical activity, and I prefer to use the terms preparation or development for such an intellectual enterprise (as mentioned in section 2.3, page 42).

The counsellor in the first extract pointed out the traditional school system in which the students had mostly developed, and she seemed to blame this system for the students' ignorance of and their performance within the new system (no-class mode). I think she emphasized that the students needed training, guidance and as a result they needed them, the counsellors, as if they were necessary in the students' orientation and as if the students again had to depend on them. Even though I agree that students need support (in Esch's terms, 1994: 51) and that "without expert guidance few learners [would] be able to identify a specific learning strategy, let alone evaluate its effectiveness" (Little, 1991:52), it sometimes gave me the impression that some counsellors tended to underestimate the students' capacities, or that it was them who were not prepared to release the students from their direction and 'lose' the control they were used to having.

At the other extreme, the counsellor in the second passage seemed to understand that the students got used to working in the new mode in a slow process. Unlike the other counsellor, he did not appear to act as a protagonist in this process; as if he thought that guiding the students was not part of his role as a counsellor and that the students had to move forwards by themselves. I believe that if

the counsellors avoided positioning themselves in the extremes of what theory (regarding counselling, SALL) suggests and adopted logical, contextualized, well-balanced actions, there might be better results for the stakeholders.

On the other hand, looking at my fieldnotes and basically at the students' reports, I realized that students almost never used the 'Learning to Learn' worksheets, which were available to them and could have helped them familiarize themselves with the no-class mode. The following are excerpts illustrating this:

Field note MUA-CI: ... the 'Learning to Learn' binders have already gathered dust... jejeje; but, well students have to advance in their programs, there might not be time for extra materials but for the necessary and basic ones.

Students' reports: Five students out of twenty one have ever worked on 'learning to learn' and apparently they take a long time in doing so.

In the discussion above, it was stated that students had not got the appropriate preparation that enabled them to study in the no-class system, nevertheless according to the extracts from my fieldnotes and the records from the check in/out computers above, it looked contradictory that even though some students recognized their need for preparation in order to work in these new courses more effectively, they did not take advantage of the materials they could use to improve in this area. It appears that students did not like to do 'learning to learn' worksheets and when they did, they took a long time working on them; or maybe they did not know or realize that working on learning strategies might have helped them to be better equipped to study in this new mode of learning, although the counsellors suggested that they should do so.

Another reason for students not to work on learning to learn worksheets might have been that their priority was to cover as many textbook-based material and activities as possible in order to get credits and to pass the exams, and not precisely to reflect on their learning strategies. Once the students were in the no-class mode, they had to work as efficiently as possible, no matter whether or not their work was effective. In other words, many students only wanted to pass their courses, as has been discussed in a previous section (6.1), and some of them might not have had enough time to be on track with the weekly advance and to do extra activities such as the learning to learn ones, or to work on the materials (activities) to reinforce or practice the basic knowledge they might have acquired, even if they could get extra credits.

I can now recapitulate these observations and opinions regarding the fourth theme of this chapter (according to chart 6-2), which discusses the preparation the students had when they started and throughout their no-class courses, in this finding:

Finding 9:

A substantial output of the research suggested that significant problems in the no-class courses were: the stakeholders' lack of preparation to embark on the innovation, their reluctance to use the CADI materials which could have been of help in this preparation and the scarce efficacy of the introduction course.

After discussing the little or sometimes nil preparation in relation to the functioning of the no-class mode that students manifested when they began and during their courses, in the following section, I will examine the functioning of this innovation according to what I actually observed and to what its stakeholders thought while they were going through it.

7.5 THE NO-CLASS MODE IN OPERATION

As has been reviewed before, several students were aware of their need for preparation to tackle this new type of courses, although it seemed they did not take advantage of the materials (learning to learn) and counselling sessions which could have helped them to facilitate their work within the no-class mode. It is precisely the students' actions within the no-class mode and the role of the counselling sessions which concern this fifth theme (as in chart 6-2): 'The no-class courses in operation'. Thus, this section is like an umbrella covering some data related to what I consider the four main components of the innovation (no-class learning mode) in the Language Centre-Veracruz: the students, the counsellors, the counselling sessions and the CADI, four elements which converged in giving the new mode of studying EFL its particular characteristics in the context under consideration.

7.5.1 COUNSELLING SESSIONS & COUNSELLORS

Despite the conceptions on which the no-class courses, in particular the counselling sessions, were theoretically based (for a detailed description of these notions, see section 2.3, page 42), an aspect of the no-class courses which I observed as a constant, was the similarity between counselling sessions and the respective counsellors and the (common) classes and the respective teachers. This theme did not emerge from the students' opinions, but basically from the fieldnotes resulting from many of the counselling sessions I had the opportunity to observe and from the contradictions I detected among the students' and the counsellors' views and these fieldnotes. It is worth mentioning that the current subject matter is closely related to the one in section 6.4 in the former chapter, in which I commented on what some students expected from the innovation they were involved in and the fulfilment of those expectations.

First of all, I must say that only a few students mentioned that they expected something comparable to a class when they attended their counselling sessions, but they had found out that it was not like that. The following are samples of this situation:

SYA: ...I thought that we would come only one day but that the counsellor would explain to us, not only if we had doubts but that they would teach us the topic in general, somehow quickly, and then we would have some knowledge about it... but no.

SBR: Truly?... I expected something like a class, I had in mind that it was autonomous but as I had no idea...as usual...jejeje!! but I expected a normal class of English, well...shorter.

It seems that explanations, presentations of topics and grammar, among other class activities, were some of the things the students in the passages above imagined they would find in their counselling sessions. In other words they thought they would attend a class with the only difference that it would be only once a week and with fewer students in the classroom, though as far as they conceived it, it was not as they had imagined; they thought their counselling sessions did not turn out the same as regular classes. Based on the two excerpts above, especially on the first comment, one could presume that counselling sessions were not similar to common classes at all. However, as it will be commented below, I consider the counselling sessions indeed resembled common classes in several features.

Some counsellors also expressed that during the counselling sessions they could realize that students expected to have common classes and commented:

CAM: ...so at the beginning they think that teachers, well counsellors will help them or will explain everything, that's the problem, so when you explain the way we work they are a little afraid of that... They are expecting that you help them and explain everything as a regular class, as if they were in a regular class.

CRO: [...] the idea they have in high school is completely different of what the idea of learning English is here at the university, so they think it's going to be the same: teacher says something, they repeat, teacher explains, they do an exercise and that's it.

As can be noticed in the previous excerpts, it looks as if counsellors also thought that even when students expected that, counselling sessions were not similar to common classes. In contrast, I observed that in the actual counselling sessions there were lots of similarities with 'regular classes'. This seems to suggest that the counsellors were so engaged with the theory on counselling and their new role as counsellors, and that the students were so influenced by the novelty of the no-class courses, or rather highly misinformed, that they might not have realized the similarities between the two modes of learning (class and no-class), or the few differences between them in the context of the Language Centre-Ver and the CADI.

Coming back to the counselling sessions which I had the opportunity to observe, as I mentioned above, I insist that I found them to be quite similar to classes, as many of my fieldnotes from the counselling sessions show:

Field note IN141: Co(counsellor) asks the ss (students) some questions in order to practice imperatives. Taking turns, they, very quietly and shy, try to answer but are very doubtful. They don't participate very much.

Field note IN156: Co dictates some questions, ss work on them, [later] Co asks them to say their answers; a girl says her answer, Co corrects when necessary and models the language; the rest of the group listen and correct their own sentences.

Field note IN242: A boy tries to cheat, looking at the girl seating in front of him, but she's too far, he can't see.

According to the previous extracts, what I was able to detect in the counselling sessions was that counsellors mostly acted as teachers: explaining, correcting, scolding, advising, guiding, helping, solving problems, modelling the language and having the students practise (ask/answer) in turns as in a class; whereas the students behaved as if they were also taking classes: depending on the counsellor's explanations or examples on the board, participating in turns, working in pairs or small groups (when time permitted it) and sometimes cheating and chatting. The frequency of occurrence of the two last actions made me think of the great sense of gregariousness that prevailed in several counselling sessions and in some areas at CADI as will be seen in some passages below.

By the time the teachers became counsellors, most of them had been working as English teachers and making use of diverse teaching methods for a considerable time, which was deeply embedded in their schemata, so was their class-student role in the students'. It might have turned out difficult to switch to the new roles to be played within the no-class mode (autonomous learning) and the self-access centre. As a consequence, the dynamics of the counselling sessions and of the whole system seemed to be permeated by the conceptions and usage of such teaching methods (e.g. Audio Lingual, Task Based, and basically Communicative Language Teaching), but mixed with the information that counsellors had acquired (in their SAC training) and the lack of information about the new no-class mode that students 'suffered'. I presume that this combination resulted in the students' and especially the counsellors' emphasizing that the counselling sessions did not resemble the common class mode, furthermore, maybe they focused on the few new features such as: the frequency of the session (only once a week), the size of the groups (maximum ten students per group), the absence of grammar presentations a priori, the students' relative freedom to choose the activities to work on at CADI and the optional attendance to the sessions (for a description of the counselling sessions at the CADI-VER, see section 2.5.1.2, page 57).

Programs and Exams also seemed to play as important roles as they did in regular classes. Programs constituted the foundation and organization of the whole course, and they must be followed and finished in time for students to be able to take the exams, which of course were based on these programs. Exams, in turn, constituted an instrument to know who passed and who had to repeat the course. Since the final exams were approaching, I observed that the topic of final exams was inevitable in all the counselling sessions at that time. The following are examples of the fieldnotes which illustrate these issues:

Field note 1N255: ...Co tells them that they have very little time and they have to cover 2 units because they're a little behind... [...] Co tells them to study certain units and structures that may appear in the exam.

Field note 1N254: As final exams are coming, all the counsellors talk about them, either at the beginning or at the end of the session; giving advise, tips, reminding the rules and talking about points and grades.

As can be observed in the first passage above, a counselling session was typically based on the unit that corresponded to that week (one unit must be covered per week according to the programs of the courses) and the students were supposed to have reviewed this by the time they got to the session. As well, it can be noticed how, as in classes, everything was aimed at covering the contents included in the exams. Considering that this whole program (the whole innovation) was embedded in an educational policy, its institutionalization, its structure and its operation may be considered as normal, even though the original principles underlying it have not been fully taken into account.

Giving tips to pass the exams and telling them the rules and the best ways to obtain points to add to their final grades over and over, as shown in the last quotation, seemed to me as some kind of pampering acts; some counsellors did this more than others, but most of them tried to facilitate students' passing the course. These circumstances gave me the impression that counsellors, as well as the authorities of the university, pretended to confer great value to the learning of EFL, when in fact, the important issue was to have the students pass the subject, in which students were interested too, as discussed in depth in section 6.1 (page 186).

It is worth considering that there were a few sessions in which the counsellors tried to follow the principles suggested in the SAC training course and in some of the literature on Autonomous Learning, SALL and learning strategies (e.g. Stevick 1976, Sheerin 1989, Oxford 1990) regarding what a counselling session 'must be'. However, in my view, this tends to be quite prescriptive and static to be implemented in all counselling sessions without taking account of their particular/local contexts and dynamics.

In contrast to regular classes, which do not usually deal with these matters, I was also able to appreciate that at least a few counselling sessions dealt with learning strategies and students' awareness of their own learning processes, as the following fieldnotes point out:

Field note IN148: Co talks to a boy about the few hours he has worked in CADI, and asks him if he thinks he has improved; but the boy remains quiet, serious as a scolded child and kind of accepting his mistake, [...] The boy tells the Co how difficult he's found to study English, so Co asks him how he studies, what exactly he does to study grammar, vocabulary, listening. The boy tells him what he does, kind of step by step, so Co questions him about some of his methods. It seems they're talking about learning strategies.....mmm! very interesting.

The excerpt above demonstrates that in this counselling session the counsellor was concerned about having the students reflect on their own work and ways of studying, although the students still behaved as if they were scolded. For instance, in this case the student looked ashamed as if he had done something wrong, even when the counsellor was not pointing at any mistake. I believe that students are so used to being reprimanded and to feeling or making the teachers think that they feel bad and guilty, that it is hard for them to reflect on their own learning processes and to openly talk about them with their teachers (counsellors in this case). It gave me the impression that the counsellor and the student were talking about the student's learning strategies, even though they did not use these words. As I said before, these conversations were scarce during the counselling sessions, but it sounded as if the student were involved in the topic and the counsellor were interested in the student's commentaries. This may illustrate that the counselling session did not have a planned agenda but a flexible one which actually depended on the students' needs and queries, which seems to be in agreement with Benson's suggestion that "students might be less resistant to methods where they are encouraged to criticise and negotiate received models of learning" (1995).

As mentioned in section 3.3 (page 74) and in a paragraph above, the figure of the counsellor was another element of the new no-class mode of learning English and played a central part in the counselling sessions, thus, a counsellor's role was supposed to be different to a teacher's role. Regarding the role that counsellors and counselling sessions appeared to have within the no-class system, many students perceived it as a very important one as they commented:

SAN: ...the counselling session is important and necessary, yes because, because the teacher is going to solve everything, yes, all your doubts, the structures, the why this and why that. [...] We first speak in Spanish and then she says, 'well, we saw this unit, ok? is it true that you learnt?, well, she asks you, she evaluates you... [...] when I get

to the teacher she tells me 'look, you're wrong because you don't pronounce correctly, you're missing this and that...

SAI: mmm [the counselling sessions] help me a lot because sometimes I don't realize why I failed and she [the counsellor] can tell me what I have to reinforce, the speaking or the writing... besides I learn from the group by listening to my classmates. [...] Today I had many doubts and she [the counsellor] solved those doubts, she kind of guides me and then I follow the pathways [...] my counselling session helps me in directing me towards some ways to learn better and sometimes she suggests what materials I should use...

The passages above, illustrate that these students (like most of them) considered that the counselling sessions were important and necessary, and that the counsellors' role was that of a doubt and problem solver, a guide, a needs' analyst, a facilitator, a corrector and an evaluator. The importance of learning from the group was also mentioned, which made me think that some students still preferred to study in groups and not alone as the no-class mode mostly required. Both comments give the impression that students still depended on the counsellors as well as they used to depend on the teachers in the traditional classes, and that some of the counsellors' duties were still so much alike the teachers' ones, especially explaining, correcting and evaluating. Maybe the students did not realize that, but it seems to me that they gave a lot of weight to the counsellors and their function, considering that they were immersed in an autonomous mode of learning; but again, it would be extremely difficult to become critical and to decide how best to go about their learning without a proper orientation (Little, 1991: 55). After all, I think that the interaction between the students and the counsellors led to students' better development and performance within this new mode of studying.

On the topic of the counsellors' self-appraisal, which I started to comment above, most counsellors conceived their own roles as core parts of the learning mode under discussion, as can be seen in the following passage:

CAM: ...actually our role is to help them, yes... to guide them, to be like their friend, making them feel confident; we should supervise them and advice them to work on different areas, otherwise they only work on grammar. We also have to check their logs. We are not here to criticize them but to help them find a balance; to suggest that they participate in the counselling session and give credit for their participation. And of course we have to check the workbook and all the work they have done along

the week; explain what to do, how to work on the computers; model the language; be prepared to solve unexpected problems and we should be responsible.

This excerpt may provide a clear idea of what the counsellors thought of themselves in this new role that they had been assigned, and it coincided with the students' perceptions of the counsellors and their duties presented above. It seems to me that there were still some duties which counsellors as well as students thought of as part of the counsellors' roles and that resembled those of traditional-class teachers and did not help in the conception of autonomous courses (e.g. checking homework and every assignment they do, explaining or telling students what to do in every case and as soon as they ask, without letting them find out by themselves, etc.). This is probably one of the reasons for my refusing to call this new mode of studying the 'autonomous mode' and my insisting on naming it, the 'no-class mode'. Yet again, I think that a lot of weight was put on the counsellors' role and activities, that the students still appeared as dependent and sometimes pampered individuals, although there was a tendency to highlight the counsellor's figure as different from the teacher's one.

Having discussed two of the elements (counselling sessions and counsellors) which constitute the no-class system, we can now tackle the other two elements: the CADI and the students involved in this innovation.

7.5.2 CADI & STUDENTS

Having described some of the most significant issues regarding the counselling sessions and the counsellors, two of the constituents of the no-class system that could be of help in complementing the students' independent work, I will now talk about another component of the innovation, the place where most of the duties of this no-class mode were carried out, namely the CADI (the self-access centre). It would be impractical to talk about the CADI without mentioning its protagonists, the students, who have vastly contributed in conferring its particular characteristics to the CADI itself, and in my view, to the whole system.

As explained before (section 2.4, page 45), the CADI is the place where a wide variety of materials are available to the students and where the students could really study and/or accumulate time or activities in order to get credits to be added to their final grades. Some students expressed their opinions as regards their work at CADI as follows:

ssa: It's supposed that the autonomous [system] is you alone, you sit down and study by yourself, and I'm not used to it, I like to study with somebody... [...] I've been lucky because I always come with my friend and we work together and help each other, if one of us stumbles... the other can help and explain...

sje: Yes, I felt ok working alone at CADI, because I'm this kind of person who gets distracted very easily... I'm, let's say... very talkative and if I met a friend at CADI, I started talking and....mmm it became difficult to work.

Given that the preceding excerpts involve personal preferences, and in this case they are opposite, I divided the students' inclinations in two groups; the first one belongs to the kind of students who preferred to study in groups, they seemed to have a great sense of gregariousness and/or of collaborative work, to feel more secure when they could count on somebody to solve doubts or just to share knowledge and to practice with; whereas the second extract belongs to the kind of students who seemed to feel better studying alone in order to focus better and not to feel the need of their classmates' support. Unfortunately for those students who liked to work in pairs or small groups, the CADI did not have almost any area where this type of work could be done, except for the Conversation Area, which was rarely used and was not set properly (Barnett and Jordan 1991, Carvalho 1993, Moore 1992), that is, it was not an area separated from other areas; in fact it was in the same room together with the Video Area and the Counselling one. Besides, as it will be illustrated in the passages below, students must remain quiet because of the disciplinary rules there, a factor that could have hindered any kind of work which implied oral communication and interaction.

Regarding the CADI and the students working there, some counsellors commented:

CIs: I've observed that students usually like it that they can practice whatever they want and that there are a lot of materials... but they still don't recognize what they need... you see, they do a lot of 'grammar' and not 'listening', although they need it... ahhh and of course they don't like 'learning to learn' or 'exams'. [...] ahhh some students get together, 2, 3 or 4 students get together to work and to study... and sometimes there's a leader, but they become noisy (face of displeasure).

In the extract above, this counsellor's conflicting ideas are noticeable; on the one hand she seemed to identify the students' satisfaction for their freedom to choose

what they wanted to do, but on the other hand she talks about her perception of the students not being able to identify their own needs; which seems to me as if she were underestimating the students' capabilities. Furthermore, she distinguished students' preference to work in the company of other classmates, but she did not seem to like people chatting.

On the subject of students' making use and taking advantage of the CADI, the following counsellors commented as follows:

CAM: No-class students work more independently and harder, they show more interest and tend to take care of the material, on the contrary, the class students (who attend the CADI to practice or reinforce) waste more time, get more distracted, play around and destroy materials.

CMA: ...well, I've seen that students are mostly concentrated on what they are doing, they seem to be working most of the time and they almost never damage materials or furniture.[...] I'm surprised that materials and installations are in a good state, and that might mean some kind of satisfaction, no??

The counsellors in the excerpts above seem to be talking about some issues that have been discussed before (in section 7.1, page 216), for instance the fact that there seemed to be many students who certainly worked and focused while they were in the CADI, whereas some others just stayed there to consume time. The same as other counsellor whose comments were mentioned above, the counsellor in the first extract differentiated class students (MEIF students who take regular classes) from MEIF no-class students, by saying that the latter seemed to take more advantage of the CADI and were more independent. They might have had the opportunity or necessity to work alone and they had learnt, in some way or another, to do so; otherwise, they had no other option to learn the target language and/or to pass the subject. It must be considered that either language centre students or MEIF students who were registered in normal classes could also attend the CADI and also got extra credits for their work there (time or activities that they accomplished). Even when it was not overtly mentioned, it gave me the impression that this counsellor identified those ones who worked and used the materials at CADI properly as no-class students, whereas the rest of the students who did not work because they were playing around as the class students. Nevertheless, I detected that there were some no-class as well as class students who pretended to be working and were discreetly wasting time without being noticed. Thus, I do not think

there is a definite connection between being no-class or class student to make the difference in their attitudes towards the CADI, although, as I just commented above, I do recognize that for the no-class students the CADI and the materials in it are their possibility to overcome this phase of their academic life.

On the other hand, the second counsellor suggested that many students were thoughtful, respectful and interested in keeping the materials in good condition because they were useful to them. I agree with her comment that students might have been so pleased with the materials that they took care of them, and once more I draw attention to the fact that for many students, particularly the no-class ones, the CADI and its materials were their 'pass' to learning and to completing their majors' programs.

It appears that counsellors noticed some of the students' likes and dislikes as well as the different attitudes they had when facing with the innovation. Through my observations I was also able to recognize some of these students' attitudes, as shown in the following passages:

Field note CHIOA-USBI: Another girl checks out. Everybody [the students] does it so mechanical, they look serious, unless they are with other users/classmates /friends with whom they are talking. Some of them look kind of tired or bored, very few look enthusiastic)

Field note MUA-USBI: ...they keep on talking slowly. It's nice to see that they help each other; they have something like 'collaborative learning'.

Field note CA-CI: A man and a girl are working on the computers but they're talking and looking at the girl's screen, they seem interested and helping each other. [...] He keeps on telling her something while she's trying to do it on her computer...

As mentioned in some of the passages above and as these last three extracts confirm, there seemed to be some sense of gregariousness and collaboration among many students. They sometimes tended to talk to each other or among themselves in small groups and they appeared to be discussing what they were working on and to be helping each other. However, these actions, mainly when they were making noise, and this is especially true for younger university (MEIF) students, were often repressed due to the regulations of the CADI and to the invigilation carried out by the assistants and sometimes by the counsellors (for a detailed discussion on this topic see section 7.2, page 223). Maybe for that reason most of the areas in

the CADI were generally quiet and students were serious, which sometimes made me think the students looked bored (first excerpt), though it might have been because they were concentrated on their work.

It appears reasonable that places such as libraries and self-access centres, in which users must respect others' work by keeping silent to avoid disturbing them, do not allow users to be talking or playing around and making noise. However, the information from the excerpts above suggests that there should be certain areas in the CADI where students could work in groups and could talk and exchange ideas more freely; because even when there was a Conversation Area, as mentioned above, I consider that maybe it was not used due to its proximity to the Video Area which must remain quiet.

The passages presented in this fifth section (fifth theme in chart 6-2) are samples of the data which indicated what was taking place in the counselling sessions (where counsellors and students converged to complement the learning process in the no-class mode) and at the CADI (where students carried out some of the work they must do as part of their no-class courses). These issues encapsulated in the theme: 'The no-class courses in operation' can be summarized in the following finding:

Finding 10:

Contrary to the system's claims and despite the changes this new mode of studying implied and the stakeholders' trying to conform it, the customary idea of the class-teacher-student triad seemed to be so embedded in the counsellors' and the students' schemas that, maybe involuntarily, it was still put into operation in the counselling sessions as well as in the CADI, making the new no-class mode similar to the regular class system.

As has been described, the students' experience of the different components of their no-class courses were not always what the system expected them to be or the system itself claimed to be, but it was the way the innovation was being developed. However, the stakeholders, especially some students, seemed to have adapted such system to their own interests, and achieved some degree of appropriation of this, as it will be discussed in the following section.

7.6 TAKING OWNERSHIP OF THE INNOVATION (NO-CLASS LEARNING MODE)

Although there might be other features of the two spaces (Counselling sessions and CADI) where the counsellors and the students converged to accomplish their work within the no-class system, in the previous section I have focused on those characteristics which emerged as the most significant according to the data analyzed. Now, in this last section of chapter 7 (as shown in chart 6-2), I aim to deal with the data that showed how the stakeholders who were actually undergoing the no-class learning mode and its self-access centre, explicitly, the students and the counsellors, seemed to have taken some degree of ownership of the innovation pertaining to this study. In other words, I am here presenting evidence that students and counsellors seemed to have appropriated this mode of studying English in such a way that in spite of its difficulties and inconsistencies, they appeared to be able to take advantage of it according to their own interest and convenience.

On the topic of the appropriation of the no-class mode, that is, the advantageous use of it and the beneficial outcomes that students obtained from it by adapting it to their own needs and interests, students said:

SYO: I like it a lot, it fits together with my work schedule ...in fact, it adapts to my needs.

SBR: There should be more books, novels or magazines; I used them when I had to accumulate more hours to get my points [credits]... and it was cool!!

SDi: I think this mode is good because you go when you can and stay the time you can...well yes, it's convenient, no?

The previous quotations seem to suggest that students found the convenience and the qualities of the system, not precisely in the materials or in the contents of the course or the counselling sessions but in some other features. It gave me the impression that they were rather talking about the gains they got through and within their courses and how they made the most of the no-class courses, especially in terms of time practicalities and accumulation of credits than about their achievements.

Other students referred to what they had learnt in addition to English in these no-class courses and made the following comments:

SEN: Through this method I have learnt to be more responsible, as I am autonomous and it's by myself, I have to devote the time as to another subject and then I take it seriously.... And I try to do the same with other subjects, to work by myself.

SYO: ...it [the no-class course] has helped me to discipline myself, because I tend to be so disorganized, so with this course I have to be more organized...

SSA: ...I have acquired the responsibility to learn by myself. I now realize how much I can do, how far I can get [...] and I can identify, well something like that, my own qualities and use them after my own interests...

These quotations were revealing as regards what some students seem to have learnt further than English, which I considered as an important gain. That is to say, it seems they did not only learn English, whatever the level or contents of the language they could have learnt, but they also became more disciplined, responsible and/or organized in terms of their time and their learning strategies. It also appeared as if these students could apply this learning to other subjects besides English, which they valued as an extra bonus of the new mode.

Another aspect that was significant for me and has been discussed before was the development or enhancement of these students' capacity to be aware of their own possibilities, weaknesses, interests, likes, qualities, desires and objectives (for a detailed discussion on this topic, see section 7.3, page 232). In short, they seemed to be self-aware, as the student in the last passage mentioned. I observed that all the statements in the comments above were structured in a very personal way; using first person and giving personal accounts of these achievements, which makes me think that this condition was not only important but internalized in the students' schemata.

Counsellors also talked about how the students had made the most of their no-class courses, as can be seen in the following passages:

CRO: The system has had progress, it has evolved... the method and the students [...] they can now work better and take advantage of the CADI and also of the counselling sessions....well those who want...

CMA: [...] materials and furniture are in excellent condition and that might mean some kind of satisfaction. [...] there has been some evolution and there's a better understanding of the mode.

The counsellors' voices in the preceding extracts dealt with the evolution of the system, the students' progress and possible satisfaction. It seems that they recognized that students were working better than in the previous years when the no-class mode had just been implemented, as a result of, among other things, their getting familiar and used to the CADI, to the counselling sessions and to the work these implied. They used words such as evolution, efficiency, progress, satisfaction and understanding, which, in agreement with what the students above said, suggest that the innovation generated gains and advantages for the students.

According to Fullan's phases of the change process, the former situation pertains to the third one, the 'incorporation or routinization' phase (1982: 39) since, as mentioned before, despite the difficulties and inconsistencies of the no-class mode, the students were already making use of it as an ongoing part of the system (the university, its bachelors' programs and its language centres) in which they were implicated (for details on this topic see section 3.4.1.2, page 86). I would rather say that the system was not only being used and incorporated, but it had been adapted to the local conditions and needs, and the students were indeed taking advantage of it, what I identify as the appropriation of the no-class mode of studying. As Markee points out, "Finally, end users rarely adopt innovations 'as is'. Given the choice, they typically adapt innovations in order to make them more relevant to their own needs." (1997:46).

I want to make clear that in my view there is a huge difference between 'adapting -appropriating' an innovation (e.g. a new methodology, a new system) and 'contextualizing' it, since the former implies that it was originally foreign to the setting when it was implemented, whereas the latter took into account the local conditions (the social context) of the whole receiving area from the beginning (Holliday, 1996b), or adopted a 'local' approach when making decisions in the pedagogical field, as Tudor (2003) conceives it from an ecological perspective (for a detailed discussion on this topic see section 3.5, page 93). I contend that if the latter actions were taken, many difficulties, time, effort and resources would be saved and there would be less risk of failure and rejection (Coleman 1996, Holliday 1992) as discussed in section 3.4.1 (page 82).

I think that unlike the students, who normally pass through the no-class mode only for two semesters, the counsellors have participated in the implementation and development of the no-class mode since its launch, hence, they have been able to witness the changes, progress and evolution, as they mentioned, and the difficulties they have gone through. For that reason I considered their opinions as significant as those of the students'. However, only one counsellor seemed to

recognize how the counsellors themselves had also participated in the evolution of the no-class mode and had also taken advantage of it, as he pointed out:

CEU: We counsellors have changed a lot, we've grown... actually we've learnt a lot. I consider that we give better counselling. Yes, because at the beginning we learnt from books, but now we know from our experience [...] we understand better what we're doing.

This counsellor suggested that not only the students but the counsellors had grown up and progressed along with the development of the new system. Besides, it appeared that in some degree the counsellors also promoted such development by means of their gaining experience and knowledge; knowledge which had been obtained not only through books but through their daily work as counsellors.

Finally, I will show some extracts of my fieldnotes which refer to what, as above mentioned, I recognized as the appropriation of the innovation by its stakeholders:

Field note IN148: Counsellor asks them if they have any doubts; a girl asks him something very specific and Co explains. [...] A girl, who is only listening, seems to be sleepy and bored, so Co tells her that if she doesn't have any more doubts, she can leave and she says ok and leaves the room.

Field note CA-CI: The 4 remaining students in the CA (computers' area) seem concentrated, they're quiet and using different programs, they look interested and focused.

Field note VA-USBI: A boy and a girl seem extremely bored, they are with the ear-phones on but they're not paying attention. In fact, she's yawning and falling asleep. He is looking at some other point but the TV, but they're adding points up.

As described in the previous passages, some students used the system to their convenience and according to their own interests. They decided how to use their time at CADI as well as in the counselling sessions, it does not mean that they were using them properly, as they were supposed or expected to, but they were taking advantage of them as far as they wanted, according to their purposes. For example, the student in the first excerpt did what she considered necessary according to her interests, even if she decided to leave the session earlier she must have had a reason and she seemed pleased with that. Both the counsellor and the student

were sensible enough: the counsellor recognizing that the girl did not need or want to stay there anymore, and the girl being confident enough to leave freely. I wonder if she was aware of the probable consequences of her actions (missing some participation points, explanation, review and/or practice), but it seemed to me that she would take the responsibility of her actions and the consequences.

Then, the students in the video area (VA, third excerpt) just wanted to accumulate time and they were able to stay there without doing anything but 'killing time' (as we say in Mexico), which I consider a waste of time and resources. However, getting credits (by accumulating time/activities) might have been what they needed and/or wanted, or maybe what they thought was convenient for them. In any case, I consider it if not as an act related to autonomy as conceived in the educational milieu, as an exercise of their agency.

On the other hand, and as has been mentioned in section 6.1.1 (page 187), there were some students (second excerpt) who seemed to be interested in learning and making the most of their time and the resources offered by the system (the CADI and the counselling sessions). In these cases, they might have considered that it was the best way to take advantage of their no-class courses and this might be their own way to appropriate the innovation.

My understanding of the preceding passages, related to the sixth theme of this chapter (see chart 6-2) and which deals with the students' appropriation of the innovation (no-class mode) they were involved in, can now be recapitulated in the following findings:

Finding 11:

An unexpected result was that most of the stakeholders, among the counsellors as well as the students, seemed to be taking ownership of the innovation by gaining knowledge and experience, by participating in the system's development, and (especially among the students) by doing what they considered appropriate and convenient for them, which was mostly related to time and credits issues.

Having detected those elements that seemed suitable and convenient for the no-class students, I can now point out that the stakeholders of the innovation at issue appeared to have adapted and appropriated it according to their own interest and convenience. In other words, this last section of chapter 7, suggests that the innovation, which was not rejected by the adopters (authorities) was not useless,

since many no-class students indeed obtained some benefits and gains from the innovation. I can now turn to the conclusion of the current chapter.

SUMMARY

The theme covered in the present chapter concerns the students' lived experience of the no-class mode of studying EFL, that is, how the students reacted and acted faced with their no-class courses, including their components: the counsellors, the counselling sessions and the CADI. Throughout my understanding of what students did and commented regarding the new learning mode they were experiencing and of some of the counsellors views, I was able to uncover sub themes such as:

- the degree of autonomy the students were achieving;
- the form of control the system exercised over the students;
- the awareness and reflectivity the students developed within this new mode of English courses;
- the preparation the students had in order to cope with their no-class courses;
- the functioning of the actual no-class system with the students' and the counsellors' performing in the counselling sessions and in the CADI; and
- the stakeholders' appropriating of the innovation.

As well as in chapter 6, in order to gain a better comprehension of the theme in question, some of these sub themes, in turn, were subdivided in more specific ones, for a detailed distribution of themes and sub themes refer to chart 6-2.

Last but not least, I consider it important to mention that the excerpts from the data offered in these chapters (6 and 7) have been chosen according to my understanding, my interpretation and my evaluation of their relevance. Consequently, they have an inevitable element of subjectivity, although I have striven to keep as committed to the original participants' ideas as my researcher's condition has allowed me to.

For the sake of reference I reproduce the findings from this chapter in section 8.2.1 (page 267). Having presented and discussed the data that stood for each theme in this chapter and the findings which emerged from these data, I can now offer a closing holistic discussion of such themes in the following chapter.

SECTION V

“THE WHY”

In the previous Section (IV) I have illustrated the themes that emerged from the analysis of the data I was able to gather (Section III) during this study and I have supported these themes by relevant extracts of the data and their respective commentary and discussion. I now intend to discuss the outcomes of my study from a more holistic perspective; that is, taking into account the various issues I encountered while doing this research, in every part that constitutes it, in every Section included in this document. Thus, in this Section, consisting of Chapter 8 and the Conclusions, I aim to explain why this study is relevant in the current ELT milieu by connecting what I consider the most significant outcomes of this study to the impact that these themes may have on a local context and on a wider context.

In other words, in this closing Section I endeavour to explain why I considered it significant to research the Language Centre students' perceptions of and attitudes towards an innovation such as the self-access language learning (SALL) (including the use of the self-access centre (SAC) and the consequent appearance of the no-class courses) which was implemented at the University of Veracruz. In Chapter 8, I do so, first, by contrasting my findings in this study with the system's claims, i.e. what the new educational model ('autonomous courses/learning') claims to be, and then, by answering the research questions that led the current study. Based on the outcomes of the study and on the answers to the research questions, I talk about the implications that the present study may have on the immediate context, as well as on the wider world of ELT. Then, some suggestions

regarding further research related to the topic in question (SALL, SAC) in general but particularly in my local context are offered.

In the final Section, I intend to conclude the study and examine the conclusions I reached by succinctly recapitulating the main issues of each chapter comprising the current study. Having introduced this closing Section, we can now turn to Chapter 8.

IMPLICATIONS: A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE

Having presented, commented and discussed the data and the themes which were uncovered through their exploration in the two previous chapters (6 and 7), I now approach the end of the current study and I can now look at it in retrospect as a whole. Based on this panorama, as mentioned in the introduction of Section V, this chapter aims to explain the reasons why I consider the current study to be significant in the wider Language Learning arena.

In the first section (8.1) of this chapter I try to address those factors that I consider to have represented any constraints for my study. Factors such as time, some participants' behaviour, the handling of the data once I had it all compiled, and my own preconceptions and beliefs are considered in order to offer as clear an acknowledgement as possible of the whole research process and the potential effects that these limitations could have had on it. In section 8.2, I aim to look at the outcomes of this study, namely the findings that I achieved after analysing and discussing the data, and to make use of them in order firstly to answer the research questions that guided the current study and then to contrast them with what the no-class system claims to be in my context.

Section 8.3 deals with the impact that this study may have, first on the local context and then on the general context. The implications on the local context refer to the influence that this study's outcomes may have on the immediate environment where this study was carried out, e.g. the CADI-VER (self-access centre-Ver), the Language Centre-Veracruz, the rest of the CADIs and Language Centres of the University of Veracruz. On the other hand, the implications on a wider

context refer to the influence this study's outcomes may have in general on the world of EFL education.

This chapter's last section is 8.4, in which I offer some suggestions in three aspects: recommendations for improving or taking advantage of the innovation that has been adopted (SAC and SALL) for my local context, that is, the CADIs at the University of Veracruz; recommendations regarding SAC and SALL for the general context of EFL teaching/learning. Then, based on the limitations, the progression and the outcomes of this study, I proffer some recommendations for doing further research on the topic under consideration.

8.1 LIMITATIONS OF MY STUDY.

As mentioned before, after having carried out this study step by step, I consider that I can now see it in retrospect and be critical about it. It is in this sense that I want to point out the limitations that I can now identify. Such elements have to do with time constraints; participants' attitudes towards me (the researcher, a CADI counsellor and a colleague) and the research itself; my handling of the vast amount of data I collected; and my own preset assumptions about the functioning of the new mode of learning ('autonomous' or 'no-class mode' as I call it), which is the topic of this study.

8.1.1 TIME CONSTRAINTS

Due to the fact that I had a certain limited time to do the study and consequently I had to allot a certain time to collect data, it is probable that I could not deeply cover the two sectors of students who study EFL in the no-class mode and are CADI users (university-MEIF students and Language Centre students), therefore I focused on the university students who have to take two compulsory English courses and are mostly forced to take them in the no-class mode. For that reason I was not able to make a comparison between these two groups of students with regards to the probably different views that they may have.

It is also likely that I could not go deeply into all the topics that were brought up in the data and I concentrated on those which I considered relevant to the inquiries of this study. Besides, it may have been worth following the same participants who were in English 1 to the next level (English 2), but I had to finish collecting

the data in order to analyse it and finish writing the thesis within the allotted period. Another element related to time constraints could be that there were a few times when students being interviewed were in a hurry and did not dedicate enough time to talk over the questions I had posed; as well, I did not have time to program more interviews with each participant, which might have permitted me to have more data regarding the participants' processes of integration into the new mode of studying English. As a matter of fact, I will address some of these issues in the suggestions for further research in a subsequent section.

8.1.2 PARTICIPANTS' BEHAVIOUR

Despite the fact that during the interviews I tried to reduce the respondent biases as much as possible (as discussed in section 4.3.3, page 135), I think it is worth considering the possibility of their occurrence. Even when only some of the participants that I worked with were either counsellors at the CADI, who knew me as one of them, or students, who also recognized me as a counsellor, they, more than the other participants (students who just knew me as a post-graduate student doing this research), might have answered to please me or with the intention of using me as a spokeswoman of their complaints. On the other hand, there is the possibility that some participants might not have taken the interviews seriously or as an important activity for them, as Patton mentions, "...interviews can be greatly affected by the emotional state of the interviewee at the time of the interview." (2002: 306) and sometimes the researcher cannot change that condition completely.

Regarding the observations, it has also been discussed in section 4.3.3 (page 135) that even though I was able to stay in the different areas at CADI and in the counselling sessions without causing much discomfort or inconvenience, as far as I was able to notice, most likely the students and even the counsellors could have behaved in an altered way, giving me a distorted idea of the situations. In this respect, I should have asked the counsellors if the observed counselling sessions had developed normally or they had noticed that there had been alterations in the students' usual behaviour.

Since I consider that even if these conditions can be softened, diminished, they may not be entirely avoided, hence, it is important to keep in mind that "[a]ny real world study must obviously take serious note of real world constraints." (Robson, 2002:54).

8.1.3 HANDLING THE DATA

Since I was able to collect a considerable amount of data: 45 interviews and 29 fieldnotes (for details see table 5, page 147), at the moment I started their exploration, i.e. to organize them, to read and listen to them, to differentiate them by underlining with colours, to code and group them; I am not sure that I had not lost some degree of accuracy, especially when categorizing and identifying the themes (for a detailed discussion of the analysis of the data see section 5.2, page 148). For instance, when I started using the different colours, it was difficult for me to keep the same colour codes on all the different sheets (field notes and interview transcripts), until I was able to identify each colour with a category and I wrote it down on a sheet of paper that I had in front of me all that time.

On the other hand, when grouping the diverse categories that emerged, some of them seemed to belong to different groups and it took a while for me to sort this out. Besides, I had so many sheets of paper with lots of notes on the margins and colour markers that I sometimes got confused. Maybe if I had organized the fieldnotes and interview transcripts gradually as soon as I was getting them, or if I had kept a proper notepad, I could have saved some time and uncertainties.

8.1.4 PRESET ASSUMPTIONS

As mentioned in section 4.3.1.1 (page 116), by the time I embarked on this study, I had already worked as a counsellor at CADI for almost three years and I had closely worked with some students taking their English courses in the no-class mode. Furthermore, by this time I had also identified my own lack of enthusiasm in learning a foreign language in an 'autonomous mode' (no-class mode). That is to say, I constantly tried to think of myself as a student of French or German, particularly in the basic levels but without taking classes, without a teacher's guidance and without the richness of a group of people coping with the same task; consequently I frequently found myself rejecting such a possibility. As a result, even when I tried my best to function as a counsellor according to what I had learnt (for details on this topic see sections 2.5.1.2, page 57 and 3.3.2, page 76), I usually felt empathy for those students who had to take their English courses in this new mode and seemed to be having a hard time doing so.

In addition, I was able to observe and detect the students' effort to passing the subject above their desire to learning English, and the difficulties they nor-

mally had when trying to articulate a spoken phrase, so I started questioning the implementation and the actual functioning of the no-class courses and eventually I generated some assumptions concerning this matter and therefore had some prior expectations of the outcomes, for instance: this mode of studying English does not work for most of the students, most students do not like this kind of course, students cannot learn a foreign language in this way, students do not realize what is going on within this system, the no-class system was only implemented to cover requirements and appearances.

On the other hand, as discussed in section 4.3.2.4 (page 119), I was aware of the need to detach myself, as much as possible, from preset assumptions and expectations, from my counsellor's position and to become a stranger. I indeed worked on that, as can be read in sections 4.3.2.4 (page 119) and 4.3.2.6 (page 122). I was so aware of this issue that I endeavoured to let the data lead me and not the other way around, certainly, as far as my human condition made it possible.

However, the outcomes of this study overcame my expectations and my assumptions, because not only were the themes uncovered from the data, but I discovered issues that I did not have in mind at all (section 6.1, page 186; section 7.3, page 232; section 7.2, page 223; section 7.6, page 254). The outcomes of the current study are the subject of the following section, to which we can now turn.

8.2 OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY

Having acknowledged the limitations that this research may have had according to what I perceived, at this point I intend to connect the outcomes of this study, including the findings that I stated in chapters 6 and 7 (see list of the findings on pages 267-269 below) to the research questions in order to proceed to answer them, and to the no-class system as it is actually implemented in the context of this study.

8.2.1 REVISITING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS WITH REGARD TO THE OUTCOMES

In order to answer the research questions that guided this study, I now present the four questions that I finally stated in the introduction of this thesis and under each question I offer what I consider to be the corresponding answer based on the outcomes (findings) revealed through the data. Intend

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. **Are the new ‘autonomous courses’ (based on principles of self-direction and SALL) functioning according to what the university intends to?**
2. **How do students studying English as a foreign language perceive the self-instruction mode?**
3. **What is the difference in their perceptions between students who chose to study on this mode and those ones who had to do it?**
4. **What are the students’ experiences within this innovation –the self-instruction mode of learning and the use of the Self-access Centre?**

Based on the data discussed and the findings offered all through Chapters 6 and 7, I now endeavour to bring this research to a close by answering the questions that conducted it. For the reader to refer back effortlessly to the corresponding findings and relate them to the themes (sub-themes) that originated them, the findings with the sections to which they belong to are listed below.

FINDINGS IN CHAPTER 6:**Finding 1 → 6.1 Importance of learning English as a foreign language (page 186)**

Contrary to the expectations of the project (self-access centres and no-class courses) and its advocates’ discourse of the importance of learning English, the vast majority of students seemed to be basically interested in passing the subject, in fulfilling one of the requirements of their majors rather than in learning the language.

Finding 2 → 6.2 Ease and convenience of the no-class courses (page 195)

Most students seemed to have recognized the value of the no-class courses based on the convenience and easiness (regarding the management of their time and schedules) that they attributed to these courses, rather than on their contribution to their learning English or on the own features of this type of courses.

Finding 3 → 6.3 Difficulty and inconvenience of the no-class courses (page 198)

The no-class courses’ lack of planning, especially in terms of the location of the buildings involved, the programs, the students’ interests, the students’ prepara-

tion for the change and the relevance of the subject (EFL), was a significant reason behind their difficult and slow 'routinization' and the scarce development of autonomy.

Finding 4 → 6.4 Students' expectations from the no-class courses (page 205)

The no-class mode of studying EFL failed to meet several of the students' expectations, and this had a significant impact on their perception of the whole project resulting in their partial acceptance of this mode and their preference of the class mode.

FINDINGS IN CHAPTER 7:

Finding 5 → 7.1 Experiencing Autonomy (page 216)

Some students were able to achieve some degree of autonomy, though 'autonomy' in this context seems to refer to actions such as: choosing when, how long and what to work on at the CADI; deciding to actually work or to pretend to be working in order to accumulate credits; determining their attendance and participation in the counselling sessions; and trying their best to pass the subject.

Finding 6 → 7.1 Experiencing Autonomy (page 216)

Some of the possible causes for students' failing to carry out the no-class courses might be:

- *their resisting the imposition of the innovation*
- *their misinterpreting the notions of autonomy as used in the educational setting*
- *their identifying the mismatch between the 'discourse of the new mode of studying' and their experience as students in an institutional context.*

Finding 7 → 7.2 Control over the students (page 223)

Contrary to the claim that the no-class mode was based on and fostered principles of autonomy and independence, important factors which suggested that surveillance and control were subtly exerted over the students in the no-class mode were revealed.

Finding 8 → 7.3 Beyond learning English: Awareness and Reflectivity (page 232)

Despite the difficulties faced by some students undergoing this new mode of learning EFL, there seemed to be a significant enhancement of some students' capacity

for making decisions and evaluations, and for developing reflectivity and awareness of their own learning processes and of their situation as university students throughout their no-class courses.

Finding 9 → 7.4 Preparation to face the innovation (page 237)

A substantial output of the research suggested that significant problems in the no-class courses were: the stakeholders' lack of preparation to embark on the innovation, their reluctance to use the CADI materials which could have been of help in this preparation and the scarce efficacy of the introduction course.

Finding 10 → 7.5 The no-class mode in operation (page 242)

Contrary to the system's claims and despite the changes this new mode of studying implied and the stakeholders' trying to conform it, the customary idea of the class-teacher-student triad seemed to be so embedded in the counsellors' and the students' schemas that, maybe involuntarily, it was still put into operation in the counselling sessions as well as in the CADI, making the new no-class mode pretty similar to the regular class system.

Finding 11 → 7.6 Taking ownership of the innovation (no-class mode) (page 254)

An unexpected result was that most of the stakeholders: the counsellors as well as the students seemed to be taking ownership of the innovation by gaining knowledge and experience, by participating in the system's development, and especially the students by doing what they considered appropriate and convenient for them, which was mostly related to time and credits issues.

ANSWERS TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

2.- How do students studying EFL perceive the self-instruction mode?

Since only a few students mentioned that they were interested in learning English, while others said that they wanted to fulfil the requirement and pass the subject, and the rest of them did not even talk about any concern in learning the language, I presume that several students, especially the MEIF (university) students did not think that learning EFL was a major concern for them (see Finding 1). Therefore,

the students' perception of the self-instruction mode of learning English could be predisposed by this condition.

Regarding the positive aspects of this innovation, it seems that some students considered that the suitability of the no-class courses was linked to the fact that their flexible schedules fitted the schedules of their majors' subjects, which certainly were their priority (see Finding 2).

On the other hand, the negative aspects that students perceived were that they found the distance between their schools and the CADI (SAC) as an impediment to attending their counselling sessions or the CADI to do enough work; the workload of their majors was too much and they did not have time for English. In addition, they mentioned that not having a teacher, that is, working alone and not being familiarized with the new mode of studying caused them to feel uncomfortable with the system (see Finding 3).

There were students who looked as if they had a high opinion of the no-class mode and felt that their expectations had been satisfied, though some of them still preferred classes. Conversely, there were others who explained that they had not got what they had in mind and as well as the other students declared that they preferred to take classes (see Finding 4).

3.- What is the difference in their perceptions between students who chose to study on this mode and those ones who had to do it?

First, I must say that the majority of the students who chose to study in the no-class courses were in the second level, whereas the majority of those who had to study in this mode were in the first level (for details see Table 4.1, page 127); therefore the former already knew what these courses were about. By exploring the data, it seemed that the students who chose the no-class courses were more satisfied (with regard to the easiness of the courses, to their working alone at CADI, to the fulfilment of their expectations and to what they had learnt) than the students who compulsorily studied in this mode; but oddly, they mentioned the difficulty of studying without a teacher more frequently. Fewer students from the group who had to take this kind of course looked as if they preferred the class-mode. I would say that the students who chose the no-class courses were already familiarized with the system and had a different level of awareness.

Both groups of students pointed out the advantage of this type of courses regarding schedules' matters, their concern in passing the subject and fulfilling a requirement (see Findings 2 and 4).

4.- What are the students' experiences within this innovation –the self-instruction mode of learning and the use of the Self-access Centre?

According to what I observed, regarding the autonomy that students were able to achieve, it seems that it depended on both; the students' willingness and the degree that the same system allowed. Hence, the students could decide if they attended the CADI and their counselling sessions, the time they devoted to work on the materials they chose and it seems to me that they decided if they wanted to work and make the most of their time and the resources available, or if they just wanted to accumulate credits to pass the subject or even if they wanted to play around and waste their time. The data suggest that most students exercised their autonomy by deciding to attend the CADI, to work on the materials they chose as long as they wanted or needed, and to attend the counselling sessions sometimes to work and sometimes just to get credits for their attendance (see Finding 5).

Faced with the control that seemed to be exercised over the students, they looked as if they had understood the game and they played the role they were supposed to and that was convenient for them, although some students appeared to be aware of it, disagreed with it and complained about it (see Findings 6 and 7).

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, awareness of the imposition and control of the system seemed to be present in some students, as well as their reflecting on their own learning processes and the situation they were living, though the students who had to study in this mode seemed to be more aware of their needs and capacities than the students who chose this mode. The data regarding this issue may demonstrate that a few students used the counselling sessions to reflect on their learning, nevertheless many of them developed awareness about themselves and about this new mode of studying English (see Findings 8 and 10).

Throughout this study I was also able to detect that the students involved in this innovation appeared to lack the necessary or even the minimum preparation to be able to cope with the no-class courses. Therefore, not only were several students aware of it but complained about it. Alternatively, some students seemed to do some compensatory actions in order to get benefits from the system, explicitly, asking the counsellors and following their advice, getting together with some of their classmates who had more experience in these courses and imitating them, or finding a way to best deal with their courses (see Findings 9 and 11).

On the topic of the operation of the actual no-class system, there seemed to be several issues related to the students' performing in the counselling sessions

and the CADI. For instance: some students' tendency to get together to work even in the CADI where they were supposed to work silently and its counterpart, those students who liked to work alone; some students who really worked and took advantage of the time and the materials available at CADI and those who just stayed in the counselling sessions and the CADI because they only wanted to get credits; many students who behaved as if they were in a class while they were in their counselling sessions (which looked very much as classes); and some students still depending on the counsellor and giving too much importance to the counselling sessions (see Findings 11 and 10).

8.2.2 NO-CLASS MODE SYSTEM CLAIMS / NO-CLASS MODE SYSTEM FACTS

In this section I intend to answer the first research question that conducted the current study:

1.- Are the new 'autonomous courses' (based on principles of self-direction and SALL) functioning according to what the university intends to?

For that reason, I proceed to compare the discourse the University offers regarding the subject of this study, i.e. Self-access Centres and the mode of learning foreign languages (in particular English) derived from their use (no-class mode) and which is introduced in section 1.3.1 (page 22), with the outcomes (findings) derived from the analysis of the data gathered in this study. As it can be noticed in Table 8-1 below, the left column describes the information that the University includes in its institutional discourse; whereas the right column offers the version drawn from the research outcomes. As well, the finding and/or the theme where the corresponding issue is discussed in depth are offered. For facilitating the reference to the findings and the themes, these can be found in the previous section (8.2.1) above.

Table 8-1 University's claims / Outcomes from the study

NO-CLASS MODE CLAIMS <i>Claims of the system (UV discourse: taken from Centros de Auto-acceso/ Antecedentes)</i>	NO-CLASS MODE FACTS <i>Findings of the research (outcomes from the study: based on data)</i>
<i>1) It is an innovative project looking for offering an alternative in foreign languages learning.</i>	For several students at the Language Centres (UV), it is not an alternative but their only option; it is sometimes compulsory to take classes in the autonomous courses (no-class courses) and to attend the SAC(CADI). <i>Finding 6 / section 7.1 (page 216)</i>
<i>2) The project aims to link the learning processes to electronic and technological means.</i>	There are computers, CD players, TVs and DVDs in the CADI, though sometimes they are not enough to cover the demand. Counting on these electronic and technological resources have indeed made the students' work easier and more practical, which benefits them in terms of time and schedules management. <i>Finding 2 / section 6.2.1 (page 195)</i>
<i>3) The students make decisions regarding their learning in the University.</i>	Since the programs for the subjects (English, French, etc) are already established, the decisions the students can make are restricted to when, how long, what materials to work on at CADI, and their attendance to the counselling sessions. <i>Finding 3 / section 6.3 (page 198)</i> <i>Finding 5 / section 7.1 (page 216)</i>
<i>4) Learning a foreign language has become a necessary element in the university students' formation.</i>	The importance of knowing foreign languages is clear, especially those used in academic, financial and leisure domains. However, it does not mean that it must be their priority for all the students at the university. <i>Finding 1 / section 6.1.2 (page 188)</i>
<i>5) Knowing a foreign language, especially English enables the students to appropriate knowledge through publications, to communicate and to discover other ways to perceive the world.</i>	As well as in the former claim, the importance of English is undeniable as an international, academic and economically strong language (spoken in Centre countries), and there are people/students who perceive it that way and try to learn it. However there are always people who think they do not need to learn English and do not pay attention to such an activity. <i>Finding 1 / section 6.1 (page 186)</i>

6) <i>Self-access centres (SACs) are the spaces where foreign languages can be learnt. They count on three basic elements: materials, equipment and academic support (counselling)</i>	Most of the SACs at the UV have focussed on providing well equipped spaces and a variety of materials for learning and/or practicing English, thus many students attend and use such materials and resources. However, I wonder if students not taking classes but only using the SAC can learn and later use a foreign language, or they can only pass the required exams. <i>Finding 2 / section 6.2 (page 195)</i> <i>Finding 11 / section 7.6 (page 254)</i> <i>section 2.4 (page 45)</i>
7) <i>Within the University, SACs are part of the changes regarding the curriculum and the perspective that they promote is the flexible one.</i>	As said in the third claim above, the flexibility means that the students can make some decisions on time and materials issues, but there are serious incongruities related to distances, grading (counting attendance, hours and points to get credits for final grades), and there still seems to be a significant control over the students. <i>Finding 2 / section 6.2 (page 195)</i> <i>Finding 3 / section 6.3 (page 198)</i> <i>Findings 5 & 6 /section 7.1 (page 216)</i>
8) <i>The constructivist pedagogic model that underpins the self-access project is based on the idea that knowledge is the object of a negotiation among the different actors participating in the process of formation.</i>	It does not appear that when deciding to adopt this innovation the adopters (the authorities) took into consideration the students' views and needs. Then, regardless the counsellors' good intentions, there seems to be too little negotiation among the students and them. <i>Finding 3 / section 6.3 (page 198)</i> <i>Finding 4 / section 6.4 (page 205)</i> <i>Finding 10 / section 7.5 (page 242)</i>
9) <i>SACs were conceived as an important resource to support the development of strategies that promote the autonomous learning through subjects such as: English 1 and 2.</i>	Despite the existence of worksheets and books on the subject of learning strategies and learning to learn at CADL, very few students make use of them, it might be because there are programs to complete in certain times and this does not leave time for doing extra activities but the required ones, or the students' lack of interest in developing better ways to learning. <i>Finding 9 / section 7.4 (page 237)</i>

10) <i>The aim is that students acquire the linguistic competences of the language (English) and at the same time they incorporate strategies that help them develop an attitude of autonomy.</i>	As well as in the previous claim (9), there seems not to be an interest in developing learning strategies, but above all, I consider that students are in such a hurry trying to complete the program of the subject (English 1 or 2) and accomplish activities that help them learn the language and accumulate credits, that they do not even realize that these materials (learning to learn) exist. Furthermore, neither do many counselling sessions devote time to develop this kind of strategies, nor to foster autonomy (as defined in section 3.1.4, page 72), since, as mentioned before, there is still a tendency to control the students and their work. <i>Finding 7 / section 7.2 (page 223)</i> <i>Finding 9 / section 7.4 (page 237)</i> <i>Finding 10 / section 7.5 (page 242)</i>
11) <i>This kind of learning focuses on the student's specific needs; gives the student independence regarding the available space, time and infrastructure; and facilitates self-correction through computers.</i>	In claim 3 I have already pointed out that it does not appear that students' needs were considered for the implementation and adoption of the innovation. As mentioned in claim 2, there are indeed computers and materials that permit self-assessment, although they are not always enough. On the other hand, some students complain about the distances they have to commute and the time it takes them to attend the CADI. <i>Finding 2 / section 6.2.1 (page 195)</i> <i>Finding 3 / section 6.3 (page 198)</i>
12) <i>The counsellor does not correspond to the traditional figure of the teacher, so her relationship with the student is mainly through the counselling session and the (clear and precise) pathways that she suggests. Counsellors' duty is to guide the autonomous or semi-autonomous work of the SACs' users, as far as they need help to do their work.</i>	Regardless of the preparation that teachers got in order to become counsellors, it is difficult to change a role that has been played for so long; in addition, the students seldom ask for a counselling session but they attend the weekly one that counts for their final grades. As mentioned in claim 10, little time is devoted to learning strategies or to fostering autonomy during the counselling sessions. <i>Finding 7 / section 7.2 (page 223)</i> <i>Finding 10 / section 7.5 (page 242)</i> <i>section 2.5.1.2 (page 57)</i>

13) <i>The fact that university students are starting to combine two approaches to learning; autonomous and directed will have repercussions on their formation.</i>	As I have stated in this study, I do not consider that the kind of learning that takes place at the Language Centre is autonomous. I indeed conceive it as a new mode of learning (no-class mode), based on and permeated by the directed learning that has been practiced for a long time and I do not think that its result is really learning (English) but facilitating the fulfilment of a requirement. What I certainly was able to observe in this new system was the enhancement of some students' awareness, reflectivity and capacity of organization. <i>Finding 6 / section 7.1 (page 216)</i> <i>Finding 8 / section 7.3 (page 232)</i>
14) <i>Self-access learning does not assume a lonely work, without other people's support, or an immediate transition.</i>	In the particular context of this inquiry, students rarely ask for counselling sessions. Most of the students' work at CADL is done in a solitary style. There are not areas where students can work in small groups (pairs, triads), except for the Conversation Area which is seldom used. Furthermore, students are not allowed to talk among themselves in the different Areas at CADL, so that they do not disturb other users. Regarding the transition, I think students do not get any kind of preparation to get involved in this new learning mode, so they have to integrate to these courses unexpectedly and get familiar with it during the course. <i>Finding 4 / section 6.4 (page 205)</i> <i>Finding 7 / section 7.2 (page 223)</i> <i>Finding 9 / section 7.4 (page 237)</i>

From the above table, the inconsistency between the university discourse and the facts derived from and supported by the data can be noticed. I therefore consider that a reappraisal and the consequent reorientation of the project (the no-class system) are necessary actions to be taken during the 'routinizing' stage the system is going through (for details on this topic see section 3.4, page 80), so that it fosters the students' learning and independence, issues that will be discussed in the following section.

8.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Having attempted to answer the research questions by means of the outcomes of this inquiry, and after comparing them with the claims that the University makes regarding the innovation that was adopted, in this section I aim to consider the repercussions that these outcomes may have on both, the local context of the study (University of Veracruz) and the wider context of the EFL teaching-learning milieu.

In my view, there is no point in just complaining about or pointing out the incongruities and flaws of what has been done, i.e. the implementation of the innovation (no-class courses and SACs) as it occurred. I would rather refer to the possible modifications and restructuring that may be performed on the same no-class system and on the implementation of innovations in general, based on the outcomes of the present study.

8.3.1 LOCAL CONTEXT: THE LOCAL IMPACT OF THE RESEARCH

Because my study was carried out in the State of Veracruz, Mexico, specifically in the Language Centre in Veracruz city, I mean to explain the implications of the outcomes of this study, the connections between these and the establishment of self-access centres and the mode of learning that derived from them in the University of Veracruz and maybe in other universities around Mexico.

Based on the outcomes of the current study I may suggest that the 'autonomous mode' of learning/teaching foreign languages (especially EFL) has been institutionalized in such a way that it turned out to be suitable to the educational system in general and to the university's system in particular, in spite of its divergence with the promotion of 'autonomy'. For this reason, I suggest that the university (maybe several other universities) should do local needs' analyses, evaluations of the actual development of the no-class system (autonomous courses and SACs) and by interweaving them, they should redesign and make them more suitable to the conditions of the context, more congruent with their principles and more available as a choice (see *Finding 4*). In such a new design, maybe other foreign languages and modes of teaching/learning would have to be included in the schema (see *Finding 1*).

It would also be necessary to consider the infrastructure actually available and reorganize the courses, counselling sessions and attendance to the SAC according to real factors (see *Findings 2 and 3*). More materials that demanded more creativ-

ity and research from the students should be offered in a variety of forms (worksheets, digital versions, audio and/or video). The above mentioned elements are what Markee calls 'the secondary' innovations, whose function is to enable 'the primary' ones (1997: 53). I could say that due to the importance that the national SAC project achieved in Mexico and the money invested on it, there was no lack of these secondary components.

The time to attend the SAC should not be controlled and the activities done and time spent there might not be counted or used to give credits to be added to their grades, so that students, from a more proactive stance, may attend and work at the SAC for their own initiative and decision, which may result in the lack of necessity to watch them over (see *Findings 5 & 7*). In this way students would be exercising autonomy presumably for their own sake.

Since students are not able to make decisions regarding the programs of the subjects and the time to complete it and to take exams, they should be able to decide on other aspects further than when to attend the SAC and the activities to do during a session there (see working definition offered in section 3.1.4, page 72) (see *Finding 5*).

For the above described conditions to become feasible the system and its possible benefits should be clearly explained and described as a source of tools for learning, practicing and/or reinforcing, so that the students (and the counsellors too) knew its uses and advantages not only for their learning foreign languages but for their learning in general and for their integral development (see *Finding 8*). I presume that some time should be devoted to achieve this understanding and help the students become familiar to the whole mode of studying (see *Finding 9*). That is to say, it might be necessary to offer not only an introductory session but a workshop in which the counsellors guided and accompanied the students throughout the process.

After taking the workshop(s), regular counselling sessions should not resemble the normal classes (see *Finding 10*), not because the normal (traditional) classes do not produce learning, but because counselling sessions are part of a different mode of studying/learning and not of a teaching model. Therefore, counselling sessions may not have to be planned ahead, unless the purpose of the student asking for it were known, and they should promote awareness and reflectivity as a daily practice (see *Finding 8*).

In order for counsellors to promote the development of more independent students and engage in a more independence driven EFL teaching system, I also suggest that counsellors ought to reflect on their theoretical knowledge about

counselling, be convinced of the system or model in which they are to engage, and taking advantage of their familiarity with their students they ought to adapt theory to practical procedures according to the local, actual context. I think that an element that must characterize a counsellor is her openness, awareness and conviction of the fact that being an independent (autonomous) person does not imply to be alone but to interact (and inter-depend) with others, and that deciding to be autonomous when studying can indeed produce learning.

From the above, the heads of department (adopters) and the counsellors (implementers) should encourage the students to work in pairs or small groups and adapt spaces (rooms) for this kind of practice. More individualized sessions should be offered to the students and more time should be devoted to talk about their expectations and goals regarding their studies (not only English), their particular needs, strengths and weaknesses. Unfortunately, for this to happen, more financial resources must be assigned to education and to specific projects, which is difficult in developing countries.

From the previous implications for the local context, I want to add that it would be a good idea to be able to design our own innovation (system, methodology, approach, materials) by making a critical use of the knowledge, experience, theory and financial support from centre countries, by trusting the local people's capacity and competence and above all, by taking into account the local features (e.g. small culture, personal constructs, the particular social and economic conditions, educational background) of the specific context where the innovation were to be implemented and probably adopted (see *Finding 11*). In other words, I consider that it is time to start generating our own suitable, feasible projects and implement and evaluate them founded on our local criteria and actual results. I am not suggesting that we should set apart from the global mainstream educational trend, but in fact to take an active part of it.

After dealing with the immediate context of the present study (Mexico), I now turn to a more general context within the EFL world.

8.3.2 WIDER CONTEXT: THE IMPACT OF THE RESEARCH ON THE WORLD OF EFL

One of the elements that make a research meaningful is the impact that its outcomes may have on its area of study. This is why section 8.3 comments on the implications that the current study may have in the local context (previous sec-

tion 8.3.1) as well as in the wider context of ELT which is discussed here. Since not all the schools (universities, colleges, language centres or high schools) where SALL and SACs have been settled hold the same characteristics (sociocultural, economic, political, etc.), it is always important to address the local context where an innovation is to be adopted (for details on this topic see section 3.4, page 80).

Imported programs, technology or any innovation need to take into consideration the features of the places where they are to be implemented by being sensitive to the contexts and by creating a 'sense of local ownership' in order to prevent or minimize 'tissue rejection'. In other words, innovative projects which could be meaningful and acceptable to the host institution in the long term (Holliday, 1992: 403) might be more successful when implemented and adopted.

It is commonly found that centre developed countries transfer institutional models, resources and educational ideologies to underdeveloped periphery countries (Markee, 1997: 63), and SAC and SALL are examples of this. Unfortunately, it is not always the case that these kinds of importations turn out to be suitable for the adopter context (see *Finding 3*). On the one hand, as has been mentioned several times, the local context is not taken into consideration for the planning and implementation procedures, which may produce the innovation rejection. And on the other, the strategies used for effecting change may be coercive and forced which may lead to perceive the innovation as an imposition.

As was discussed in relation to the implications for the local context, I propose that change agents, especially outside change agents (who for financial reasons are the most common), instead of only exporting and trying to sell their innovations (in ELT) just as they conceive them, they should first get involved in the target users' environment in order to learn and understand what they really need (see *Finding 4*) and under what circumstances they will make use of the innovation. In that case, they could act not only as change agents but as consultants who together with the potential adopters anticipated the possible obstacles, generated the change and made the process of implementation flow more efficiently. In fact, despite the lack of familiarity with the potential adopters' conditions, change agents usually convince them of the innovation's (supposed) suitability and sometimes with the adopters' (authorities) consent the innovation is adopted in a top-down style. In this case, I consider that forcing an adoption does not permit the adopters to develop their own system, as it should be.

Taking the current study as an example, I contend that in periphery countries the teachers usually end up implementing the decisions that are handed down

to them, and in the case of counsellors, most of the time they are not prepared or convinced to play their new roles and to diffuse the innovation. Maybe that is the reason why some systems turn out to be mixtures and adaptations that in the best case become suitable to the adopters' context and a feeling of ownership is developed (see *Finding 11*). Sometimes it might be only for the convenience that the innovation represents to the users (see *Finding 2*), but not precisely for the original reason: the enhancement of learning EFL (or other foreign languages).

Another implication of this study within the ELT arena may be the fact that after an innovation has been implemented, adapted, and appropriated in a certain context, it should aim to keep congruent with its new features and not insist on keeping inadequate original elements such as names (see *Findings 5 and 6*), procedures, etc, just to pretend that it is functioning like 'everywhere else'.

8.3.3 AUTONOMY, EFL AND EDUCATION

Now that the possible impact that the outcomes of the current research could have on the EFL milieu has been discussed and revisiting sections 7.1 and 7.2, I endeavour to relate these to the even wider context of education. As can be reviewed, section 7.1 (page 216) relates to data which indicated that there was in fact a certain degree of autonomy experienced by some students in some areas of their lives as university (EFL) students (see working definition offered in section 3.1.4, page 72). On the other hand, section 7.2 (page 223) relates to the control that the system (university and educational) paradoxically exercises over the students within the no-class ('autonomous') mode of studying.

Considering that the meaning that has been given to the notion of autonomy in the educational milieu including the language learning area is related to critical reflection, decision-making and independent action (Little, 1991), some data in this study revealed that there were indeed many people (students) who acted and made decisions by and for their own. That is to say, some students decided to take advantage of the no-class courses, either to learn English as much as possible according to the programs, or to pass the subject as easily as possible. Others decided not to engage with the system, not to fulfil the requirements, even at the expense of not passing the subject, although this attitude may not have to do with the conception of autonomy that has prevailed or rather that is expected within the educational milieu. However, it must be taken into account that the system (autonomy in learning) itself proves to have internal mismatches between

the concept of autonomy (independent/self-directed learning) displayed in the discourse of educational institutions, and which was adapted from the general meaning that the term has (see section 2.1, page 35 for details on this topic), and the execution, the implementation of this notion.

To start with, autonomy has become part of the discourse of many educational organizations, therefore, it has been institutionalized in such a way that it serves the purposes and interests of the institutions rather than to the individuals' ones. The schools usually have predetermined programs and requirements which are hardly ever based on the students' needs and preferences but which the students must accomplish, though they can decide on a few aspects of their courses (schedules and some materials) (Marsh, 2001: 387).

Secondly, many schools, whatever the level, can now say that they are part of the most modern educational trends since they have 'autonomous systems of learning/studying', but I wonder if the aim of these institutions is to promote the development of autonomous, critical and decision-making persons. Because according to what I learnt from some studies (Pierson 1996, Reinders 2004b, Trebbi 2003) and to the data from this study, even within this new 'autonomous' (no-class) mode of studying, a good dose of control is exercised over the students involved in it, who in turn resist it in a variety of forms (see section 7.2, page 223 for a detailed discussion on this topic). As Foucault suggests, at universities as well as in other institutions, there are disciplinary practices dispersed throughout society in which power is enacted, thus resisted in every interaction (Mills, 2003). Based on this, it can be said that students may resist the imposition of the new mode of studying by adapting it according to their interests and convenience, though these do not have to do with learning the target language or becoming independent students.

An example of the disciplinary practices abovementioned is the distribution and construction of the studying spaces (self-access centres) which I compared with the panopticon, that prison in which a guard in a central building with big windows had a perfect view of the prisoners in the cells located in the surrounding buildings (for details on this topic see section 7.2, page 223). According to Foucault (1991), in this kind of buildings the individual internalizes the disciplinary gaze and feels that she is being watched although the guard (counsellor, assistant) is not there. Consequently, the individual (student) becomes her own oppressor and conforms with the system by trying to behave as it requires her to. However, as I previously said, in these power relations there is always the possibility of resistance, which students usually take.

In the light of my data I would argue that autonomy, as practiced in some educational systems and in the foreign language field, does not concur with the common conception of the term: “the quality or state of being self-governing; the right of self-government; self-directing freedom and especially moral independence” (Longman Dictionary, 2005), or even the conception permeating the same foreign language teaching/learning arena. Instead, I presume that the notion of autonomy as an institutionalized practice has been adapted and appropriated by each locality according to their own features, needs, interests and convenience, sometimes enhancing learning and sometimes only helping the institution to fulfil administrative (sometimes political) requirements.

The current work is one of the investigations that have been carried out in the subject of SALL, SACS and autonomy in language learning, thus we can now turn to consider ways in which this thesis, but mainly its subject of study might be complemented, enhanced and enriched by suggesting some possible future directions in researching this subject of study.

8.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In the previous section I have commented on the implications that I suggest the current study could have in the context of the University of Veracruz and other universities in Mexico, and in the general context of foreign language teaching/learning. I can therefore draw to the close of this thesis by giving some suggestions of areas where further research would appear to enrich the subject of SALL, SACS and autonomy in foreign languages learning. As in the previous section, these are divided in two sub-sections. The first one deals with the suggestions that I consider could suit the immediate context (SACS and Language Centres at Universities around Mexico and maybe in other periphery countries). The second one refers to the suggestions that I offer for a wider context in the ELT and/or other foreign language teaching/learning.

8.4.1 LOCAL THINKING: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT.

Future research in Mexico needs to be carried out in order to: 1) Foster the possibility of critical reflection before importing any new system; 2) Re-conceptualize

and reorganize the system and its foundations so that it becomes suitable to the particular end-users; 3) Unify a national decision for creating our own innovations. My research into SALL, SACs and autonomy in ELT suggests that the following areas could benefit from more investigation in SACs and Language Centres around Mexico:

- Some students, whose only source of learning has been the SAC and some counselling sessions, have learnt EFL and can use it for communicating. In these cases, it would be interesting to know what learning strategies the students used and what their views of and experience within the new mode of learning/teaching EFL are. In other words, the views and experiences of students who have succeeded in learning EFL exclusively through SALL should be explored.
- There are some students who do not do very well within the no-class mode (SALL), thus, the reasons for not learning the target language through SALL and for not finding it of help during their EFL courses could be situations to delve into.
- Regarding the SAC, it might be of interest to look into the skills that are better developed at and/or through SAC and the reasons for that, as well as into the most popular areas at SAC and the reasons for that.
- Focusing on the students, it might be interesting to investigate the students' needs in order to feel they are progressing in their learning when trying to do it within the SALL mode, and the factors that can motivate students to use the SAC further than getting credits (accumulating points), as shown in the data.
- Since the attendance to CADI is required to get credits in some of the courses (class and no-class), it may be useful to observe the functioning and development of the CADI if its use were not compulsory and surveillance did not take place there.
- Another area of interest is the counsellors at CADI; for instance, the counsellors' perceptions and views on the implementation and actual functioning of the SAC and the no-class mode, and the counsellors' appropriation of and experiences within the latest innovation at the UV: SACs and no-class learning mode.
- Considering that the innovation being considered in this research was imported from the centre and implemented as a top-down imposition, it might also be relevant to make a comparison between the outcomes from implementing an imported innovation which was foreign to the context and the outcomes from implementing an innovation which were contextualized (*a priori*) and developed in a bottom-up approach.

8.4.2 WIDER THINKING: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WIDE CONTEXT OF ELT

An attempt to better identify and understand the subject under consideration is by doing some further research, which may shed light on what should be done in order to overcome any existing problems, to make the necessary changes, adaptations and to improve the situation. Thus, I now broaden the suggestions for the general context of EFL to carry out some research in the following areas:

- Due to the fact that the adoption of centre-imported innovations do not always work properly in the adopters' context (c.f. Canagarajah 1999, Holliday 2005, 1994, 1992a), finding out the strategies for creating a local sense of ownership of imported courses, methodologies, etc. could be of help in their processes of implementation.
- Since autonomy, the SALL mode and the use of SACs have been circulating in the languages' learning/teaching milieu for more than a decade so far, I consider that delving into the outcomes of the implementation of SACs and SALL in other countries (periphery and/or centre) after 5-10 years; into the modes of learning that have emerged after implementing SAC and SALL in periphery as in centre countries, and into the outcomes of a comparative study among the evaluations of diverse SACs could shed light on a better implementation and functioning of these.
- On the other hand, it might also be interesting to explore the outcomes and benefits that exporters of innovations, particularly of SAC and SALL, have attained from it.
- As suggested before, knowing and understanding the counsellors views regarding the whole SAC and SALL system could as well, inform a better way of implementing, or rather redefining, reorganizing and redirecting these new modes and resources of learning/teaching foreign languages.
- Another field for research could be the functioning and evaluation of SAC and SALL within younger students (elementary and high schools), which has not been implemented in Mexico yet.
- Innovations are exported to and imported from different countries and institutions (universities, research institutes, organizations, agencies, etc), thus, the understanding of the cultural boundaries of different contexts when aiming to adopt an innovation may facilitate their processes of implementation and may increase the possibilities of success.
- The constant development of concepts, methods, methodologies and mate-

rials in the education arena has resulted in the switching of the concept of 'autonomy' particularly in the foreign languages milieu; therefore it might turn out to be significant to delve into these changes for the last 2 years.

- The factor of teacher Autonomy as a 'must' for the development of learner autonomy (Naoko, 2002) is another topic to be researched in order to think about its feasibility.

As a way of bringing this thesis to a close, this chapter has discussed the answers to the initial research questions through the findings of the present study. It has also commented on the implications that its outcomes may have in the local as well as in the wide context of ELT. I can therefore now offer the general conclusions of this study.

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has depicted the development of a research carried out in the Language Centre-Veracruz at the University of Veracruz. The focus of this research was on the perceptions of and attitudes towards a new mode of studying EFL (SALL and SAC) that students involved in the implementation of this innovation had (see description of the context in Section I, Chapter 1). Based on concepts such as autonomy, self-access language learning, self-access centres, management of curricular innovation and some others that have pervaded the arena of foreign languages learning (see the discussion of these notions in Section II, Chapters 2 and 3) and on the outcomes (see the presentation and discussion of the outcomes in Section IV, Chapters 6 and 7) emerged from the analysis of the data that were collected for this research (see the explanation of the methodology for data collection and data analysis in Section III, chapters 4 and 5 respectively), I inferred that what the Language Centre-Veracruz (and perhaps all the University) was offering as 'autonomous courses' were in fact 'no-class courses'. The 'autonomous mode' of learning/teaching foreign languages (especially EFL) had been institutionalized in such a way that it became suitable to the university's system in spite of being divergent to the notion of 'autonomy' and its promotion.

In other words, the University of Veracruz decided (top-down) to implement an innovation (EFL courses in the autonomous mode of learning/teaching which entailed the use of SAC) that claimed to be based on and promote autonomy, therefore reflective thinking. However, it seems that this innovation, imported from the centre and promoted and coordinated by the British Council, did not

take into consideration the cultural background and the agendas that students from Veracruz (periphery students) brought to the EFL courses (Canagarajah, 1999: 84), i.e. the local context where the innovation was to be adopted. Therefore, as above suggested, the 'autonomous courses' turned out to be an institutionalized system that was adapted to the conditions prevailing at the University of Veracruz (particularly at the Veracruz Campus) and appropriated by the 'subjects' and the 'agents' of the change (Sikes, 1992), that is, by the students and the teachers/counsellors (see section 7.6, page 254 for the discussion of taking ownership of the innovation).

Most of the students, as suggested by Canagarajah (1999), holding ambivalent possibilities for resistance or accommodation, opposed the new mode of studying English by not attending the CADI (SAC in the Language Centre) and the counselling sessions and/or by not taking advantage of the materials and the availability of the counsellors; for justifying both behaviours they pointed out the inconveniences they found in the new no-class courses, as shown in Chapter 6. At the same time, some students appropriated it by taking advantage of the opportunity to attend the SAC at any time they had the chance, and to the counselling sessions just to get credits in order to pass the subject effortlessly. This may show "the limitations of adopting deterministic models of center domination in ELT" (Canagarajah, 1999: 99).

Regarding the counsellors, they appropriated the no-class system by switching from being too devoted to the theory, what they had learnt during the training course given by the British Council (see Chapter 2), to adjusting and adapting to the actual students and conditions they were facing during the courses. In fact, I consider that they learnt and evolved along with the students in order to make the most of the innovation (see section 7.5.1, page 242 for details on this topic), in which a lot of financial and human resources had been invested.

One of the findings which seemed to me not only unexpected but revealing was the subject of the control and surveillance exercised over the students within this mode of learning/teaching which supposedly promoted autonomy (see section 7.2, page 223 for the discussion of control over the students). Drawing on Foucault's analysis of power relations, I contrasted the power/opposition relations established at the CADI with the examination of students' logs and the observation of students through the big windows at the CADI. The constant checking of the students' logs in order to keep a record of the time and number of activities they had accomplished, and the counsellors' suggestions, sometimes instructions of what to do at the SAC (CADI) were some of the most remarkable manifestations

of control. Whereas the invigilation of the students through the glass windows when they were at the CADI, which I have compared with the Panopticon analyzed by Foucault (1991), was one of the signs of the surveillance under which the students experienced the no-class mode of studying.

Comparing this situation with Mills' explanation of Foucault's ideas regarding a new form of internalised disciplinary practice, it could be said that the students acted as if they were constantly being surveyed even when they were not. This demonstrated that such a spatial arrangement entailed "a particular form of power relation and restriction of behaviours" (2003: 45). Thus, the existence of dispersed power relations throughout the University (and the Language Centre) appeared to lead to a diversity of resistance. A sample of the latter could be the fact that faced with the control exercised over the students, they looked as if they had understood the game, conformed with the system and played the role they were supposed to, but it was done at their convenience (a matter of schedules and credits). Furthermore, some students appeared to have achieved some degree of autonomy and awareness (as discussed in sections 7.1, page 216 and 7.3, page 232, respectively), so, they disagreed with and complained about the new system (see Findings 6 and 7).

I have endeavoured that in the conclusions of this study the issues described comprise its most significant and revealing outcomes. If this research can contribute to enhance the understanding of SALL, SACs and the management of curricular innovation, leading to enabling future adoptions of innovations to do so in more advantageous conditions, this will constitute an additional achievement of the current work.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

MAPS OF VERACRUZ, MEXICO





APPENDIX 2

PHOTOS OF LANGUAGE CENTRE-VERACRUZ



APPENDIX 3

PHOTOS OF CADI-VERACRUZ. CADI AT THE LANGUAGE CENTRE (CADI-CI)



Entrance door



Technician's Office & Assistant's Office



Aisle to the Check in / out Area



Conversation Area & Video Area



Waiting room of the Checking in / out Area



Counsellors' Offices



Counselling Room



Aisle to the Multiple Uses Area



Video Area & part of the Computers Area



Computers Area



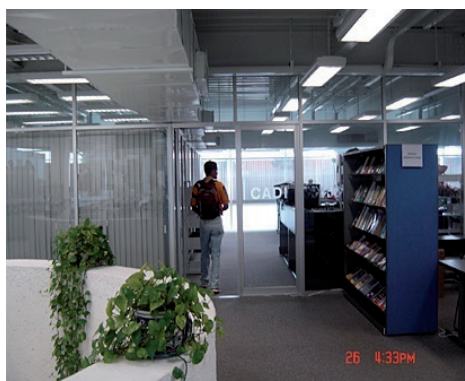
Materials' Shelves & Multiple Uses Area (MUA)



MUA & Listening Area (at the back)

APPENDIX 4

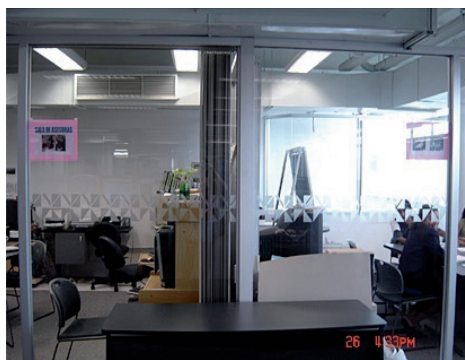
PHOTOS OF CADI-VERACRUZ. CADI AT THE USBI (CADI-USBI)



CADI Entrance door in the USBI



Technician & Assistant's Office (reception)



Counsellors' Office & Counselling Room



Check in / out Area & Assistant's Office



Video Area (left) & Computers Area (right)



Listening Area (front) & Video Area (back)



Multiple Uses Area (MUA) at the back

APPENDIX 5

STUDENTS' NOTIFICATION LETTER (ADDRESSED TO
EACH STUDENT SELECTED TO BE PARTICIPANT)

Boca del Río, Ver. a 20 de Marzo de 2005

CENTRO DE IDIOMAS – VERACRUZ

CADI

Nombre de la/el estudiante: _____

Nivel/Grupo: _____ Asesor/a: _____ No. en CADI: _____

Por este conducto me es grato comunicarte que has sido seleccionada/o al azar como candidata/o para participar como informante en la investigación que me encuentro llevando a cabo para efecto de mis estudios de Doctorado en Lingüística Aplicada. Por ello te solicito de la manera mas atenta tu autorización para concertar una cita contigo; en el entendido de que tu decisión de participar o no será absolutamente respetada.

Mucho agradeceré que me comuniques cuando, a que hora y donde podríamos platicar para efectos de explicarte y comentarte en que consiste la investigación y tu participación en la misma, y de esa manera puedas decidir si aceptas colaborar conmigo.

Fecha: _____

Hora: _____

Lugar: _____

Agradeciendo de antemano tu atención,

Atentamente

L. Edith Herrera Diaz

Asesora del CADI-VER.

Anotaciones:

APPENDIX 6

INTERVIEWS' LOG

INTERVIEWS' DESCRIPTION

MARCH – JUNE 2005

All Interviews RECORDED with a Voice recorder, Notes were taken.					CODES: Mr=March, A=April, My=May, J=June Mr=Monday, T= Tuesday, W=Wednesday, Th=Thursday, F=Friday		
No.	WHEN (planned)	WHEN (actually)	WHERE	WHOM	TYPE of Participant	DURATION	COMMENTS
1.	Mr- F 11 11:00AM	21-03-05 M	Italian Cafe	Amelia Couns.	Counsellor	28 – 30 min.	Mexican, BA in EFL - teacher for 15 years, CADI counselor for 3 years
2.	Mr- F 11 15:00 PM	21-03-05 M	Café An- drade	Isabel Couns.	Counsellor	34 – 35 min	Mexican, BA in EFL - teacher for 30 years, CADI counselor for 3 years
3.	Mr- F 11 13:00 PM	24-04-05 M	CADI – Counselors’	Rossi Couns.	Counsellor	27 – 30 min	Mexican, BA in EFL - teacher for 20 years, CADI counselor for 6 years
4.	Mr- F 11 19:00 PM	26-04-05 T	Italian Cafe	Mary B. Coord.	Excounsellr Coordinator	20 – 25 min	Mexican, BA in EFL teacher for 30 years, CADI counselor for 3 years, Coordinator of Language Centre – Veracruz up to 2005
5.	Mr- F 11 17:00 PM	28-04-05 Th	CADI – Counselors’	Eugenio Couns.	Counsellor in charge	27 – 30 min	Mexican, BA in Pedagogy, EFL teacher for 25 years, CADI counselor for 6 years, in charge of CADI-Veracruz up to 2005.
6.	Mr-M 14 09:00AM	22-03-05 T	Italian Cafe	St. 1 Brenda	Finished	9 – 15 min	Concrete, clear, sincere Studied English in Secondary & High School, Studies Psychology 4° Sem.

7.	Mr-M 14 13:00 PM	22-03-05 T	Italian Cafe	St. 2 Guty	Finished	20 – 25 min	Expanded, Studied English in Secondary & High School, Studies Psychology 4° Sem.
8.	Mr-M 14 17:00 PM	22-03-05 T F 24-06-05	School's Cafe	St. 3 Jose J.	Imposed IN150 Amelia	15 – 20 min 10 – 12	Studied basic English in High School, Works as a waiter, Studies Civil Engineering 2° Semester
9.	Mr-T 15 11:00AM	22-03-05 T Th 23-06-05	Cafetos Cafe	St. 4 Salve	Imposed IN145 Amelia	18 – 20 min 15 – 18	Studied basic English in Secondary & High School, Studies Accounting 2° Semester
10.	Mr-T 15 14:00 PM	23-03-05 W W 29-06-05	CADI - CI	St. 5 Miguel	Imposed IN142 Eugenio	9 – 12 min 8 – 12	Studied English -3° level- in a private institute (Franklin), Studies Pedagogy 2° Sem
11.	Mr-T 15 19:00PM	23-03-05 W F 24-06-05	CADI - USBI	St. 6 Guadalupe	Imposed IN153 Isabel	11 – 15 min 8 – 10	Interesting, serious wording Studied basic English in High School, he Studies Nursing 4° Sem
12.	A- M 11 09:00AM	28-03-05 M M 27-06-05	CADI - USBI	St. 7 Eduardo	Imposed IN147 Isabel	6 – 8 min 8 – 10	Studied English in several private institutes (Harmon Hall) but he only gets to level 1, Studies Business Administration 4° Sem
13.	A- M 11 13:00 PM	28-03-05 M F 24-06-05	Cafetos Cafe	St. 8 JAndres	Imposed IN143 RosaE	27 – 30 min 13 – 15	Long, interesting, funny, relaxed & complain- ing Studied English in High School and got to a good (upper beginner) level, Thinks this course is easy for him, Studies Pedagogy 2° Sem, Works as salesman in stadium. 21.
14.	A- M 11 17:00 PM	29-03-05 T M 27-06-05	CADI - USBI	St. 9 Azucena	Imposed IN156 Isabel	8 – 10 min 8 – 10	Studied English in High School and in a private institute, Studies Clinical Chemistry 2° Sem , she's from Alvarado

15.	A - T 12 11:00AM	29-03-05 T F 24-06-05	Cafetos Cafe	St. 10 Artemio	Imposed IN250 Isabel	13 – 15 min 12 – 14	Studied English in High School & it was useful for IN100, Studies Naval Engineering 2° Sem. He's from Lerdo de Tejada, He's 19.
16.	A - T 12 14:00 PM	29-03-05 T F 24-06-05	CADI - USBI	St. 11 Pablo de J	Imposed IN255 Isabel	11 – 14 min 10 – 14	Very Interesting (Inconsistencies of the system) Studied basic English in Secondary and High School, Studies Business Administration 4° Sem, He's from Ver. He's 19.
17.	A - T 12 19:00PM	29-03-05 T F 24-06-05	CADI - USBI	St. 12 Yaneth	Imposed IN255 Isabel	7 – 10 min 5 – 7	Studied English in High School and in a private institute level 1, Studies Nutrition 2° Sem, She's from Ver. She's 21.
18.	J - W 08 09:00AM	29-03-05 T M 20-06-05	CADI - USBI	St. 13 Victor L.	Imposed IN243 Amelia	5 – 7 min 10 – 12	Studied English in High School, Studies Computers systems 4° Sem, He's from Lerdo de Tejada.
19.	J - W 08 13:00 PM	23-03-05 W W 29-06-05	Cafetos Cafe	St. 14 Yolanda	Imposed IC541 Eugenio	16 – 18 min 8 – 10	Studied English with a private teacher, took classification exam, Studied Tourist Business Administration. She's middle aged, Works in Travel agency & housewife
20.	J - W 08 17:00 PM	22-03-05 T W 29-06-05	School's Cafe	St. 15 Fanny	Chose IN148 Eugenio	15 – 17 min 8 – 10	Studied English in High School and in a private institute (Franklin) basic & intermediate levels for 4-5 years, Studies Accounting 2° Sem.
21.	J - Th 09 11:00AM	23-03-05 W Th 23-06-05	CADI - USBI	St. 16 Diego R.	Chose IN249 Amelia	7 – 9 min 6 – 8	Studied basic English in Secondary and High School, Studies Business Administration 4° Sem, Works at the stadium.
22.	J - Th 09 14:00 PM	25-03-05 F M 27-06-05	CADI - CI	St. 17 Arisai	Chose IN242 RosaE	12 – 14 min 9 – 11	Studied English with a private teacher up to level 4, Knew everything in IN100, Studies Nutrition 2° Sem, She's 19.

23.	J- Th 09 19:00PM	28-03-05 M Th 23-06-05	Cafetos Cafe	St. 18 Elizabeth	Chose IN248 Amelia	13 – 15 min 10 – 12	Serious, not expressive, looked like not interested, short answers, didn't look at me. Studied English in High School, Studies Psychology 4° Sem.
24.	J- W 08 17:00 PM	29-03-05 T M 27-06-05	CADI - CI	St. 19 J. Jesus	Chose IN252 Eugenio	18 – 20 min 20 – 22	Very Interesting. Foster.... Studied basic English in Secondary and High School, he likes English, Studies Psychology 4° Sem.
25.	J- Th 09 11:00AM	29-03-05 T F 24-06-05	CADI - USBI	St. 20 Lidia E.	Chose IN251 Amelia	9 – 11 min 8 – 10	She looked pretty nervous, sweating Studied basic English in Secondary and High School & in a private institute, Studies Accounting 4° Sem, She's 20.
26.	J- Th 09 14:00 PM	28-03-05 M Th 23-06-05	CADI - CI	St. 21 Enriqueta	Chose IC341 Eugenio	20 – 22 min 20 – 22	Long & disperse, she tends to tell stories about other things Studied basic English in Secondary and High School, this is 2 nd time she studies as "autonomous", She just finished Mechanical electrical Engineering, Tantoyuca, 24

APPENDIX 7

Interviews' Schedule QUESTIONS FOR Students (Ss)		QUESTIONS FOR Counsellors (Cs)
RESEARCH ??		
What are Ss expectations from their work at CADI ?	✓ What do (did) you expect from your work at CADI? Why? ✓ Cuales son (eran) tus expectativas de tu trabajo en el CADI? Porque? ◦ In our first interview you told me your expectations about your work at CADI were XXX, now that you have finished your course, do you consider they have been fulfilled? Why? ◦ En nuestra primera entrevista me comentaste que tus expectativas de tu trabajo en el CADI eran XXX, ahora que has terminado tu curso, consideras que estas se llenaron? Por que?	In your experience, what do you know or what do you think Ss expect from CADI? Have you heard what Ss' expectations from CADI are? What do you think about the fulfillment of those expectations?
*What are Ss perceptions (views, opinions) of this mode of learning (self-instruction)? *What are Ss preferences in this mode of learning? *What are the differences in their perceptions between Ss who decided to study in this mode and the ones upon whom it was imposed? *And what about the differences in their perceptions between Ss who are in basic levels (1 & 2) and those who are in more advanced ones (3 & 4)?	✓ What is your opinion / what do you think about this mode of learning English? ✓ Cuales tu opinión / que piensas de esta modalidad para aprender ingles? ✓ What do you think about working on your own? ✓ Que piensas acerca de trabajar solo (por ti mismo)?	What is your guess about Ss' opinion on this mode of learning (self-instruction)? Do you think there are differences in their perceptions/ views between Ss who decided to study in this mode and the ones upon whom it was imposed? What are they? Do you think there are differences in their perceptions/ views between Ss who are in basic levels (1 & 2) and those who are in more advanced ones (3 & 4)? What are they?

RESEARCH ??	Interviews' Schedule QUESTIONS FOR Students (Ss)	QUESTIONS FOR Counsellors (Cs)
*What do Ss do when they are at CADI?, What do they prefer to do?, What do they like to do there? , Why?	✓ What do you do when you are at CADI? Why? ✓ Que haces cuando estas en el CADI? Por que? ✓ What do you do when you are in your counseling sessions? Why?	*What is your opinion on what Ss do at CADI? *What do you think about their(Ss') preferences, likes, dislikes, behavior at CADI?
*What do Ss do when they are in their counselling sessions? What do they prefer to do? Why? What do they like to do there?	✓ Que haces cuando estas en tus asesorias? Por que? ✓ What is your opinion of the counseling sessions? ✓ Cual es tu opinión acerca de las asesorias?	*What is your opinion on what Ss do in their counselling sessions? *What do you think about their(Ss') preferences, likes, dislikes, behavior in their counselling sessions? *What do you think of the role of counselling sessions in this mode of learning?

APPENDIX 8

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THE OBSERVATIONS AT CADIS

CADI – VERACRUZ

**A LOS USUARIOS DEL CADI SE LES INFORMA QUE POR
RAZONES DE ESTUDIOS, EVENTUALMENTE ESTARÁ
UNA ESTUDIANTE DE POSGRADO LLEVANDO A CABO
OBSERVACIONES EN ESTAS INSTALACIONES.
POR SU COMPRENSIÓN, GRACIAS.**

APPENDIX 9

CODES OF THE AREAS AT CADIS

Coding	System	for	my	observations
CODE	MEANING			
a'o =	assistant's office			
c'o =	counsellors' office			
VA =	Video Area			
MUA =	Multiple Uses Area			
CHIOA =	Checking In-Out Area			
LA =	Listening Area			
CA =	Computers Area			
ConvA =	Conversation Area			
CI =	Centro de Idiomas (Language Centre)			
USBI =	Unidad de Servicios Bibliotecarios e Informatica			
CADI-CI =	Centro de Autoacceso De Idiomas del Centro de Idiomas (Self-access Centre of the Language Centre)			
CADI-USBI =	Centro de Autoacceso De Idiomas de la USBI (Self-access Centre of the USBI)			
Ss =	Students			
St =	Student			
Co =	Counsellor			
Cos=	Counsellors			

APPENDIX 10

2 SAMPLES OF THE STUDENTS' CADI WORK
REPORTS (WORK REPORTS)

Estadísticas Por Alumno

Estadísticas Por Usuario

Cve. Usuario: 9132

Nombre: NAYARRO TELLEZ YOLANDA

Nivel	Grupo	Tipo	Tiempo
IC-500	41	INGLES CONVERSACION (IC)	16:03

Primer Parcial : 26:58
TOTAL : 43:01

Numero De Veces Que Ha Asistido Al CADI 44

Areas Utilizadas Por El Usuario

Area	Cantidad
APRENDER APRENDER	4
AUDIO	11
VIDEO	4
COMPUTO	3
LECTURA	18
ESCRITURA	9
GRAMATICA	13
VOCABULARIO	5
CONVERSACION	6
EXAMENES	3
REVISTAS-LIBROS CONSULTAS	1

Ingresos Al CADI

FecIngreso2	Ingreso	Egreso	Tiempo
27/05/05	12:43	13:28	00:45
31/05/05	09:26	10:18	00:52
01/06/05	08:11	10:33	01:22
02/06/05	13:07	13:48	00:41
06/06/05	10:26	11:09	00:43
09/06/05	12:24	13:42	01:18
13/06/05	10:18	11:28	01:10
15/06/05	11:42	12:53	01:11
17/06/05	10:37	11:28	00:51
20/06/05	11:25	12:22	00:57
21/06/05	09:42	10:30	00:48
22/06/05	12:22	13:11	00:49

Estadísticas Por Alumno

Estadísticas Por Usuario

Cve. Usuario: 4651

Nombre: DOMINGUEZ GUERRA FLORENCIA ENRIQUETA

Nivel	Grupo	Tipo	Tiempo
IC-300	41	INGLES CONVERSACION (IC)	24:13

Primer Parcial : 25:14
TOTAL : 49:27

Numero De Veces Que Ha Asistido Al CADI 22

Areas Utilizadas Por El Usuario

Area	Cantidad
APRENDER APRENDER	0
AUDIO	10
VIDEO	0
COMPUTO	1
LECTURA	5
ESCRITURA	5
GRAMATICA	3
VOCABULARIO	7
CONVERSACION	0
EXAMENES	6
REVISTAS-LIBROS CONSULTAS	10

Ingresos Al CADI

FecIngreso2	Ingreso	Egreso	Tiempo
03/05/05	08:45	13:11	04:26
19/05/05	09:16	10:40	01:24
19/05/05	11:18	14:10	02:52
26/05/05	09:57	12:41	02:44
26/05/05	12:42	13:26	00:44
02/06/05	08:35	09:53	01:18
02/06/05	10:42	13:39	02:57
03/06/05	08:57	12:56	03:59
16/06/05	08:55	10:48	01:53
16/06/05	11:33	14:26	02:53
23/06/05	09:23	10:53	01:30
23/06/05	11:39	13:38	01:59

APPENDIX 11

SAMPLE OF THE STUDENTS' INTERVIEW-SHEET
(ORIGINALLY THE NOTIFICATION LETTER)

Boca del Río, Ver. a 20 de Abril de 2005
1° y 2° Entrevista

CENTRO DE IDIOMAS VERACRUZ
CADI

Interesting

Nombre de la/del estudiante: Hernandez de Jesus Andres

Nivel / Grupo: IN/43/Rosa E.V. /Mar. 13:00 No. en el CADI: 9527
Pedagogía 2º Sem. Impassad.

Por este conducto me es grato comunicarte que has sido seleccionado/a al azar como candidato/a para participar como informante en la investigación que me encuentro llevando a cabo para efectos de estudios de Doctorado en Lingüística Aplicada. Por ello te solicito de la manera mas atenta tu autorización para concertar una cita contigo; en el entendido de que tu decisión de participar o no será absolutamente respetada.

Mucho agradeceré que me comuniqués cuando, a que hora y donde podríamos platicar para efectos de explicarte y comentarte en que consiste la investigación y tu participación en la misma, y que de esa manera puedas decidir si aceptas colaborar conmigo.

Prepa en Omeacac-COBAEV 7
Fecha: 28.03.05 luna
Hora: 13:30
Lugar: Cafetería USB1

Estudié Inglés en la prepa pero llego a un buen nivel. Este nivel se le hace sencilla
1ª vez que estudia en modalidad Autónoma.

Trabaja en el estadio - vende hor
Agradeciendo de antemano tu atención,
21 años

Atentamente

L. Edith Herrera Diaz
Asesora del CADI - Ver.

Complains alot, as if I could help. → he asks me to do something about it.
Sometimes uses bad words he's kind of angry but he laughs/smiles
Talks + talks + talks
Funny expressions

Col. 1º Mayo Boca del Río.
tel. 2299-08 26 59

APPENDIX 12

2 SAMPLES OF STUDENTS' INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS
(ENGLISH-TRANSLATION & SPANISH-ORIGINAL)

2 nd Interview to student Pablo (P)		24-06-05
INTERVIEW		MY COMMENTS
E.- Pablo...ehm in the first interview we had, we were talking about what you expected from this course and what you were getting, now that you have finished and you are about to take the final exam, what do you feel? What do you think you have got from this course?		
P.- what I got?...headaches hehehe		
E.- yes? Hahaha		
P.- hehe, I feel that the progress was average...no....I am not going to question that it is a learning...because at the beginning I thought it was not going to work for me.... certainly it worked, but it is not the same, I would have preferred to have a class with a teacher, because the counselling sessions ehmm, did not help me a lot...don't tell the teacher		
E.- no, not at all, this is really private ehh, it is super private, of course no one will hear anything about it, it's absolutely private		
P.- I think it was... the truth ...this is because we don't know how to use, don't have the methodology to use everything that is here, it's too much information to follow the book, and then.....I discovered this at the very end, when I read in the book that.....we had to get support from the other...things		
E.- yeah.....from the extra material that is there....from the same unit		
P.- yes		
E.- ahhh ok.....do you think it would have been important that someone had explained it to you or told you this at the beginning?		
P.- in fact they explained it to me, right?...but...I insist there are some beliefs that for learning English it's not good.....you don't have to translate everything, but I have my theory that we all learn in different ways, not everyone can learn...if you learn easy just like that without translating, for me it doesn't work, I have to translate to understand and then a grammar explanation more than anything.....because....I can have lots of vocabulary but when I try to form sentences...the rules..... fail		
E.- ok Pablo...if you had to make an evaluation of this course.....what would you say about it?		

P.- well....in fact the course is good, but the defective thing is...that it is not well organized according to our study program....I mean for the major(career), that is to say, the time, it is.....they are too many subjects...and the location of my faculty is too far, and the time....more than anything it's the time....if one had a dedication or the time to come 2 hours a day during all the week... I feel that the progress would have been better, but it's that....I mean the course is ok ahmm....from my point of view, the programs, the materials are good,...but at the same time one has to sit down and analyze how to use it, but then one comes in a hurry and trying to move forward as much as possible because the course goes and.....it's gone

E.-....do you think it is more demanding than the "presencial" (classroom class)? I mean in the "presencial" in some way they have a schedule and they have to come to class every day....

P.- and....you have that in mind, that you have to come and here.....practically.... because you don't have that responsibility you come.....whenever you can...but yes.... mmm.....it's more demanding because you have to study....and try to find the way of.... how... how to be able to.....

E.- you told me that the counselling sessions didn't help you too much?

P.- upsss! no

E.- they didn't play any role? What role did the counselling sessions play in your course?

P.- mmm... the counselling sessions were....only a review and....ehmm at the same time you don't know what they are talking about...you cannot have doubts because you don't know what you are talking about, I mean if you yourself don't understand the things..

E.- even though you had gone over all the contents before? The week before? Even though you had checked the unit?

P.- the problem is that you go over the unit, but there are some things that you don't see because sometimes I only came 2 or 3 hours per week, I insist it's the time the one that doesn't.....that you don't have, thenI repeat, it's the bad planning that... ehmmm I had told you that I was "autonomous" not by my own choice, because I chose it, but because there was no place then.....

E.- would you take a course.... again in this mode?

P.- probably, I think that what you get a lot in a bachelor's degree is maturity then....

E.- in this kind of mode?

P.- yes....it is maturity, because we are accustomed to the teachers pushing us, I feel that maybe it didn't work for me well because I am in this kind of transition period when I am withdrawing from the teachers, but I think it would work, I feel it would, because at work, we won't have a teacher to tell us what it is about, but the counsellor should have this function to tell us how to reach that, how to take advantage,..... to get this....progress.....not only to tell us to practice grammar, you have to do this you don't have to do that, but they should to tell us how to...when we seat down.....how to

E.- do you feel that besides English you learned anything else in this course?

P.- yes, you learn culture.....other people's culture, to see the other...the other languages how other people who are not Latin learn English, then with their points of view...of understanding that language, how to learn it, you learn culture more than anything

E.- anything else you have learned in this mode of....?

P.- self-learning.?....mmmm... that I am bad at English

E.- hahahaa no, not at all, the thing is....as you say...we are not prepared

P.- yes

E.- it is hard

P.- And.....it's the bad organization, planning more than anything..... one's as well as the system's, but.....they say it's not good to go back not even to take impulse but... because sooner or later there is the change and that's what we are afraid of....the change.....in anything, so, maybe I would take another self-learning (autonomous) course it may not be English but other subject

E.- you took English 1 course in the mode..?

P.- presencial (classroom class)

E.- ok I see....

P.-yes

E.- how did you live the experience of studying by yourself, of working alone?

P.-well.....I feel it was a test for myself to see what I am capable of, and to see how....to take in the information...of..of not knowing

E.- ehm.....how did you live the experience of working alone?

P.- well.....

E.- when you came to CADl, did you come by yourself or with company?

P.- mmmmm no...I came with my classmates, mm well sometimes I came alone and sometimes with someone, I think that you come to study, so this is the good think that you don't come to waste your time....on the "autonomous" mode

E.- a ok

P.- I think that is the aim what it was created... for you to give yourself your own space...but I feel they close too early

E.- poor counsellors you want them to sleep here....

P.- but they close at 8 or 7

E.- here? Nooo they close almost at 9? 8:40 or something like that

P.- mmm I don't know, but they told me at 8, mmm but it's not for the hours I mean because of the schedules, of come to make hours (complete a determined number of hours)

E.- yeah... what faculty do you come from?

P.- sorry?

E.- what faculty are you in?

P.- in administration, there in the north, and there is not a direct bus, you have to take 2 or walk

E.- hey Pablo, have you seen that... some students come and.....they are like wasting time, lots of time, chatting, joking.....

P.- well that is because.....in the "presencial" mode I saw it, they ask a minimum of hours that are like...to help the regular students, right? Because if they don't get a good grade in the exam, some hours would help, so it is like an imposition to...to come to make hours and being here 2 hours or make 15 practical hours,... so, that is a little boring...then, instead of studying or learning or reinforce their learning they.....they just waste time, so they don't concentrate on practicing, that's why...because they are being asked for hours...

E.- the self learners work differently, they work more you think?

P.-yes....because actually what we learn by ourselves is what is going to decide if we pass or not, because we have to learn or learn, that's it, the "autonomous" is like a dad with a belt

E.- haha

P.- that tells you to do the things, it's as I see it, and...it has its pros and cons (its good things and its bad things)

E.- is there anything else you would like to add Pablo?

P.- ehmmm no, I feel that....I hope a can help you with your mission

E.- yes. Thank you very much...I hope so too hahaa

1st interview to student Lidia (IN251) 29/03/05

INTERVIEW

MY CO- MENTS

E: Lidia cuando empezaste este curso de manera autónoma que esperabas del curso? Que idea tenias del curso, cuales eran tus expectativas?

L: pues... este.....pues aprender este bastante no? Entonces ya sabia algo de ingles pero si este algunas cosas que no sabia aprenderlas y..... en lo que sabia como tenia tiempo de que no estudiaba ingles pues este.. repasarlo no? Estey si en el primer curso si este se aprende bastante

E: el primero lo hiciste presencial o autónomo?

L: autónomo

E: autónomo también?

L: aja

E: y tu lo tomaste autónomo porque quisiste?

L: si porque quise

E: si? Que fue lo que te....te inclino a tomar los cursos como autónoma?

L: pues que.....no me exigían un horario, y que podía yo venir las horas que quisiera y este..... pues en el horario que yo pudiera no? Este que se adecue a mi horario de escuela y a mis horas libres

E: ósea que cuando tu empezaste este nivel 2 como autónoma tu ya sabías de que se trataba?

L: si

E: y de casualidad recuerdas cuando empezaste el nivel 1 como autónoma que esperabas de esta modalidad de autónoma que idea tenías o que....por ser una modalidad nueva no? Porque de alguna manera estamos acostumbradas a tomar clases presenciales y como esta es diferente que esperabas de esto?

L: pues si como que no sabía muy bien de que trataba pero si tenía así como que una idea de que un día a la semana tenías que venir a asesoría y los demás días tenía que venir y este..... pues si venía casi todos los días 2/3 hrs a

E: oye lidia y ahora que eres estudiante autónoma pues ya de alguna manera tienes.... pues experiencia no? Como alumna autónoma cual es tu vivencia de este tipo de curso en esta modalidad autónoma..que opinas que...como te sientes como lo has vivido?

L: pues esta bien el modelo no? Porque este....uno es el que...si tiene uno ganas de aprender si aprende no? Porque viene uno y se esfuerza en andar estudiando los temas...también en hacer las tareas venir a las asesorías este.....y.....pues si ahí

E: haz....además de aprender inglés has aprendido algo más? Algo aparte del inglés de este tipo de curso ósea de la modalidad autónoma?..... te ha dejado algo más aparte de conocimientos del idioma?

L:.....pues.....eso, ósea de que uno si uno se esfuerza....ósea de que en uno está el poder aprender y este....y es como....es que ósea no se en que uno mismo haciéndolo es un aprendiz, uno tiene ganas de aprender pues si...

E: te ha ayudado el algo el...el estar en esta modalidad de autónoma?....algo que puedas aplicar en otras áreas de tu vida? Otras materias?

L:.....si lo que es este....en mi carrera que estoy estudiando este.....pues así como que cuando vengo aquí a estudiar el inglés también este.... también tengo que estudiar pues otras materias y este..... y así el tiempo que le dedico aquí se lo tengo que dedicar a otras

E: ósea esta modalidad a creado algún hábito...o algún tipo de conciencia ósea que hayas tomado conciencia de algunas cosas que antes no te habías dado cuenta o...?

L:.....si

E: como que?

L:.....pues en.....de estudiar bueno deaja estudiar más este....ponerle más, dedicarle más tiempo

aaa...repasar los temas que veo en la escuela diario..este...si eso un hábito

E: ya...ok....oye lidia y que haces cuando estás aquí en el cadí?

L: pues este....vengo a este.. estoy en las computadoras o voy a las carpetas...este... estudio lo que es escritura vocabulario gramática, también hago exámenes para ver que tal estoy...en audio/ video casi no.....pero si....

E: oye y cuando estas en las asesorías que haces?

L: pues les expongo a la mtra no se si tengo alguna duda este.....pues no pregunta las tareas ehmm..hago la...lo que nos encarga de la unidad y trato de adelantar la siguiente unidad

E: algunas vez tu cuando llegas a tus asesorías tu tienes dudas o algo así?

L:...mmmm... a veces si pero la mayoría de las veces no

E: no?

L: no

E: ósea normalmente de lo que vas trabajando en la semana le vas entendiendo..

L: si le entiendo

E: a ya....que tan importantes o significativas, útiles te son las asesorías?

L: pues son muy útiles...porque hay veces que....se este lo que yo veo o lo entiendo de una forma y luego la mtra dice no es así o así y ya te despeja muchas dudas...ósea las aclara

E: ósea si te....

L: si me ayuda

E: si te sirve.....oye y...te agrada trabajar sola como estudiante autónoma o como te sientes estudiando sola?

L:este.....si si me gusta estudiar sola porque siento que avanzo mucho mas...

E: si?.....lidia alguna otra cosa que te sea importante que hayas vivido como estudiante autónoma, que te sea significativo que quisiera comentar?

L:.....pues.....nada mas eso que el modelo este..ósea el aprendizaje autónomo este.....esta muy bien porque se adecua al horario...este las horas libres que yo tenga en la escuela puedo venir a estudiar y pues nada mas es un día a la semana que tengo que venir a la asesoría y las asesorías son...me aclaran muy bien las dudas...y que si si he aprendido

E: si?

L: si

E: hay algo que te gustaría que... hubiera o que sucediera en esta modalidad y que no suceda o no se de?.....que a ti personalmente te gustaría que hubiera o que sucediera, que existiera dentro de esta modalidad de aprendizaje?.....que sientas que le haga falta a esta modalidad?

L:.....mmmm... no, no se, no, no creo que le haga falta.....

E: mmm ok Lidia pues muchísimas gracias, muchas, muchas gracias

APPENDIX 13

SAMPLE OF COUNSELLORS' INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Interview to counsellor (CRo)	24-04-05
INTERVIEW	MY COMMENTS
E.- thank you Ro, I'd like to start by asking, mmm... in your experience what do you know or what do you think about students expectations from cadi? Have you ever heard what students expect from cadi when they just arrive to cadi?	
R.- ahm no I never, I have never heard what they say, but I think theythink...I mean you're talking about autonomous learners or about	
E.- autonomous learners...specially about autonomous learners what they expect from cadi from their work at cadi?	
R.- well first of all they don't know what cadi is....they don't know exactly what they are going to do, they have a completely different idea of what they are expected to do.....they think they are coming just once a week, and can just listen to the teacher and that's it.....when the time passes is when they realize that most, if ..they are going to get a result and if they are going to succeed is because they have to work....but sometimes it takes about a year for some students to realize that's the way it is...but they..they think it is...they have no idea because.. they have a.... a very bad back-ground...they don't have a good experience in learning English....the idea they have in high school is completely different of what the idea of learning English is here in the university so they think it is going to be the same.teacher says something, they repeat, the do the exercise and that's it...but then I guess for some students the idea comes quickly and for others it takes longer to realize what the real situation is	
E.- have you noticed if they have an idea or an antecedent from students who studied in an autonomous way before and they tell them?	
R.- I've never had a student who has studied English or any other..... subjects in an autonomous way....I have never had a student like that	
E.- no I mean those students who have already studied English here as autonomous learners before the new ones	
R.-no	
E.- ...so that they communicate their experience or they tell them what it is like	
R.- ahhhhaaa, noo, yes, yes!!	
E.-is all about or.....	
R.- yes!! You know the first students we had 5 years ago, 5 or 6 years ago...they had no idea...but as the time passes, you know they talk to each other and they know already that they have to study by themselves	

E.-ok

R.- some of them...not many of them...that some of them have...ehhhh friends who have studied Englishin an autonomous way and they have the idea but is not the same, it's not the same perception if you do it by yourself and as if somebody tells you how to do it...ahh it's not possible, you can tell me you should study this and this way but I have to experience myself the...the...studying by myself to know really what it is....but not really, they don't know exactly what to do....they have the idea that they have to study by themselves and just for the little help of the teacher it's the counselling, but not exactly what it is, they have to experience it

E.- have you noticed if they have some misunderstandings or they have some bad information about previous students?

R.- yes

E.- and they bring like bad ideas about...

R.- yes, yes, yes.... just come once a week and that's it, .they don't have to worry about studying English for the rest of the school day...we have both kind of students

E.- all right; Rosy do you think there are differences in their perceptions or in the students view from those who decided to study the course in the autonomous way...and those who where forced to do it because they didn't get a place in a class?

R.- yes they are, they...is more difficult to adapt to this form of studying for students who were forced to take it they have no choice.....but those who prefer to organize their time they work better...and most of the time...most of the students are forced to take this...this form of studying English...it's not something they really like.....it's not what they really decide to do...they are very few students who really say I want to study in the self-access centre, by myself...and it's very difficult, we are not used to do so

E.- and do you notice any difference in their attitudes or in their behaviour

R.- yes

E.- their...the action they take when they...decided to do it and when they were forced to do it?

R.- yes, well it has to do also with...with the way they study the learning styles they have.....there are very good students that they don't need too much counselling they know how to do it...I mean what to study and they come to the counselling session very eh....sure of what they are going to ask and their doubts....but that has to do with the...personal learning style, and the personality...no the way to study it, it's, it's I think it depends on the person not on the method

E.- could you say that for example or, or have you identified what kind of students or with what characteristic those students who study in a better way it's easy for them or easier for them and those students whose personality does...doesn't help them, doesn't help them to go on or to work better or...

R.- very serious students do it better, they work better...they are more mature, not very talkative, very.... let's say, kind of shy students

e.- aha

R.- but we cannot say it's a rule, cause I often have very talkative, very outgoing students that are good students, but most of the time serious and shy students have the best results, they're the best

E.- ahhh

R.- because you know the personality

E.- yeah I see...

R.- has to do with this

E- right.....ok, and Rossi do you think there are differences in their perspectives or again in the students' view...between those students who study basic levels, I mean 1 or 2 and those students who are studying levels 4, 5, 6?

R.-if they studied the first...in a class, in a group?

E.- yeah

R.- yeah, ..there is a difference....students feel more secure...they have the basic knowledge the...they learnt it from a teacher...and then when they come they know exactly what to do....they can follow maybe the same order or the method the teacher used in class, they go to different areas ehmmm.... and they develop the skills, but they have the basis from the classroom, it's not the same when the student studies by himself from the very beginning it's nothing to be good...you have, ...you feel secure of what ..you're doing

E.- could you say that they find it easier or less difficult

R.- because they know how to...because it's like...if you have a student here; you say here you have all the material, ..go....for the material you think it's the best for you to begin with

E.-ahhh

R.- he may start with....I don't know....reading and he might not understand a word but if a student who knows that he can combine several areas...like grammar and reading and writing he knows how to do it because he saw that in class...I don't ..I don't mean that students cannot do it by themselves but it's more difficult they...they don't know how to because we are...they maybe didn't study before by themselves

E.- do you find.....differences between those students who have like....who approach English for the first time in the autonomous way and those who already know something and they can do more advanced levels?

R.- oh...there is lot of difference...they I tell you again...they know what to do if they have previous knowledge learning by themselves and it's very difficult they don't know what to begin with what should I do first?...writing or listening?, vocabulary or reading?.... they don't know...they need somebody to lead them at the beginning and then they can go by themselves...but completely by themselves I don't think they can do it, ..because they don't have the training

E.- yeah, yeah...sometimes even it's like difficult to find what they're interested in for the first time, no?

R.- yeah, they don't know

E.- they don't know what they are interested in

R.- and I suppose.....I've never learned by myself or by my own...and I suppose there must be a kind of steps to follow....I mean you should do this first...but it...it cannot be the same way for everybody, because everybody.....because everybody learns from different ways...or...I think it's difficult to learn on your own

E.- mmm. ...what is your opinion on what students do at CADI? What students really do at CADI?.....Is it different from what they should do and what they really do at CADI?

R.- they...just do exercises, write, write sentences and they saw if they have mistakes they, they correct it, they check with the answers, they corrected it, but they don't go further, they don't go and see why I made this mistake? I have to go deeper on this topic, they don't do that...they just do exercises, read ...saw if it's correct or incorrect they don't find out why, just don't, just doing activities, doing exercises, the autonomous learner does a little bit more but I don't think they really go deeper in their learning... just reads rules, do exercises and if it's...they don't check if they really learned it they just do...

E.- do you think they follow their pathways and they follow this ahhh....recommendations that they sometimes have at the end of the...

R.- I have...I haven't asked...I need to ask...it would be a good...a good idea to ask if they do

E.- do you find it useful ..

R.- once I heard a student.... was asking me...they recommend this, but I can't find the worksheet...what can I do?....and I suggested to do another one....it was the student who asked...just once

E.- and.....what do you think about students preferences?

R.- in the areas?

E.- yeah

R.- right...grammar and listening...they don't write, they don't read, they do grammar and listening, that's all

E.- do you have any idea or have you any guess about why

R.- because they think that's the only way of learning English, they don't...they don't experiment...they don't try to find other ways they think English, learning English is just grammar...and just trying to understand what other people can say...they don't try to...to see if other...they don't see like...ehmm the other areas are the complement... they think English is grammar and listening that's it, you can see the material on the reading and writing

E.- brand new jajaja

R.- brand new.....

E.- and what about their behaviour at CADI

R.- the autonomous?

E.- aha, the autonomous learners...

R.- well...many of them spend a long time on really studying ehmm or really doing activities....but I don't know if they really know.. that they really...that if they are sure that they are learning...I see spend...they spend a lot of time but...I don't think they organize their work...they do what they feel...I will do this

E.- yes....kind of difficult to know if they are really learning or if they areahm... what is your opinion of what students do in their counselling sessions?

PHONE RINGING.....

E.- sorry

R.- hehehe...ok what was the question?

E.- ahm... what is your opinion of what students do in their counselling sessions?

R.-in their counselling sessions...they come here just to....well...as you know we have been evaluating them for 2 semesters....their learning if they really know...all the topics in the unit...they just come here to....not to ask questions....not many students ask questions...they just come and ask to the teachers to ask questions to see if they really understood...they really learned the topic and that's it...not many students ask, they're supposed to be

E.- so there is no doubt?

R.- no...because they really don't...they don't study so hard to have doubts....they do activities... I saw it, I understood the grammar, I saw it, everything its correct, but no, they don't, they don't take the counselling session as it is...they should ask, and ehmm....try to find the answers for all doubts, and try to ask the teacher how to work certain search in a better way, what the teacher recommends, what he should do to ahm...improve their writing or their speaking, they never ask this kind of questions,we know...we tell them they can do that...that's why we are there for them but they don't ask

E.- what do you think of... the counselling sessions by themselves, I mean are they important or not important or the....

R.- of course they are important the.... the the counselling session it's just the the excuse to be together with other people who, who are working the same way I am and we should be exchanging opinions and ideas but they don't do so, the don't have the idea of the counselling as it is, they should be asking, they should be ehmm ehmm exchanging experiences and the way they feel...what was difficult for you,... I did it this way and didn't work for me but they don't do so...they don't....they don't speak to each other, except if they are classmates of the of the...faculty, but they don't speak to each other...the don't organize to come together and have conversations they...they cause they don't consider themselves as a group, they are supposed to be a group that help to each other and work together but they don't...I know it's autonomous but they are part of a group and they don't exchange experiences, ideas.....

E.- do you think they find it useful to come to the session?

R.- I think they...no

E.- no?

R.- I don't think so.... because they don't see.....only if one student asks: teacher...I didn't understand this they would try to explain even though it is.....but if you ask: does anybody else have a question or any doubt? Nobody speaks.they take what the teacher explains if somebody asks...but it doesn't come from them.....only the good students or the regular ones are the ones who ask but... the rest they are too... they depend too much on the teacher and the others.they don't see they have especial needs, individual needs they don't see it, they think...if they have a question and somebody asks it, they think it's good for me but they don't see what I need they don't see it's as individual...they don't...they never, most of the time there are no questions and there are many doubts, but they don't ask....I say do you know this? Do you have problems with this? Ehmmmm.....no, no....Are you sure?...yes. And if you...if you see the bitacoras (logs) and you say: you have a regular result in this activity, what happened? Tell me what was the mistake there? or what wasn't clear?...I don't remember, and I ask them to write. ...to keep the book and say, I didn't understand this exercise because this, this and this...they don't do so.....I don't know what's their idea

E.- have you noticed in the counselling sessions if they have some kind of preferences, likes or dislikes?...what they.....want to do in the counselling sessions, what they like to do? What they prefer to do?

R.- they don't like me to ask questions, to have them speak....there is a student who never comes because he doesn't want me to ask me questions...and I told him that's the point...to have a conversation...to use the language you studied in a book and exercises and that's the point, that you should...should be able to speak.....no, that's why I never come, if you are going to ask me I won't come.....so I think it's.....they are insecure...they have never had this experience of having to study English, I mean grammar, vocabulary, ...whatever and speaking, that's what they are afraid of.....speaking in front the others, because they didn't study that in high school.. just reading comprehension

E.- and finally...what do you think about the role of counselling sessions? The real role...not the one that it's supposed to be, the real role of counselling sessions in this moment really

R.- ajaam...well just to be the guide, be there for the students when they need it, just to ask...the way they do, the different choices they have to learn specific topics and.... guide them and explain what they don't understand by themselves, also trying to.... make them aware ...that they can do it by themselves, not just helping them just trying to, to...show them the way they could do it by themselves...you can go to this book, you can tell them: go to this book, try to find the explanation by yourselves, try to do self correction, peer correction, try to work with others, help yourself, don't try to depend on the teacher all the time, that's the point...the thing is that students depend on the teacher, they want everything from the teacher and that's the problem, they don't know how to work by themselves, and they want you to explain everything, and that's not the point, we clarify, we explain what they didn't understand of what they've studied before, but they don't do it, we should just help them to do it, make them aware of the importance of do it by themselves, everything learned... upps!!.....well I think what we should do is try to help them find the way to do it by themselves...I think that's the most important, to motivate them to do it by themselves not depending on others or on the teachers, but I think it's very difficult, you need to have a background on independent learning

INTERRUPTION OF A LADY

E.- Ro, and the last thing , in general...what is your opinion or what do you think ehbm....how do you perceive students....how students are experiencing this learning process, in this special mode?

R.- it's very difficult, they feel so confused and sometimes frustrated because they don't know they don't have the habit of doing or studying by themselves, I think that's the key, that's the point, the most important reason why they can't do it by themselves, it takes time but some of them can manage to do it, it's very difficult because they don't learn anything by themselves they don't...do research and they don't come to books if they have doubts, in high school or elementary school they don't look up the books, they, they...want all the explanation, all the learning from the teacher, they think that's the only way to learn, they don't know that they can do it by themselves and that's difficult, I think it's difficult,...for me it would be difficult to learn for example German by themselves...by myself, for me that would be difficult because I don't know anything about German, and most of our students don't know anything about the language, even though they have studied I mean supposedly they have studied English before, but they haven't, they have very, very bad background on learning languages

E.- what do you think is it moreI don't know, I don't know if more important or more powerful, the fact that they don't know English or that they don't know how to study by themselves?

R.- I think they don't know how to study by themselves, because it could be this time English or it could be any other subject, it could be mathematics or whatever, but if they don't, don't know how to organize themselves, how to decide I am going to study this or that, I think that is that is the problem they don't know how to study by themselves, they don't ha....they don't have the ehmm abilities to study on their own I think they don't, I think that is the most important problem here, they don't knowbecause English...you can learn any other language if you want to, but if you know how to use the materials, they don't establish their goals, they say I am going to study this but they don't say I'm going to study this first and then I am going to go to vocabulary and I am going to... practice, I'm going to have a test, I'm going to check myself, they don't do so I have...you have to follow, you have to do your exams, you have to check yourself, give me your opinion on how are you going on your English, they don't know how to answer, it's really difficult for them, it's bad habits, bad study habits, you know English or any language you have to study little by little it's not something you have to learn one day before the exam and they...that's what they do, they...I have students that have, that come the day they have the counselling session they come 2 hours in the morning, that's it...

E.- no doubts, for the counselling session

R.- no just to see, and the counsellor realizes that they have worked just 2 or 3 hours before the counselling session and no other in the week, that's the....the main problem

E.- Ro...is there anything that you would like to add, referring to this mode of learning?

R.- I think we are making some progress, we have changed they way or the things we ask the students to do in the counselling sessions, we don't ask them to work for hours in cadí, we ask them to really learn what they have to learn for the first, and I think they are taking more seriously a little bit more seriously and the way you approach them has also changed, we seem more comfortable...I thing we are progressing..

E.- ok, thank you very much, I appreciate it , thank you

R.- that's fine, see you. Bye.

APPENDIX 14

SAMPLE OF THE CADI-CI OBSERVATION SHEETS – FIELD NOTES

CADI-CI		
Date: 8.06.05	Time: 11:30 – 12:00	Group:
Level:	Area: Computers (CA)	No. of Ss: 6
Comments:		
11:30	In the CA there are 19 computers. A man and a girl are working on the computers but are	
11:48	talking and looking at the girl's screen, they seem interested and helping each other. She	
11:55	has the ear phones on. He keeps on telling her something while she is trying to do it on the	
12:00	computer. He points to her screen & looks at what she does. He keeps on talking to her until	
	she finishes, stands up and says "I'm freezing", then another girl there stands up & talks to	
	her, they together leave the room and check out. They go to the reception area and give	
	back their cards.	
	A boy is working on a program, he's got the earphones on, seems very attentive, looking at	
	the screen. Then he writes something on his log	
	A woman is also with the earphones on and working on a program, she's attentive and clicks	
	on the answer she's chosen.	
	The CADI is so silent and quiet.	
	Other 2 boys are working at their computers. One is writing something and the other is loo-	
	king for the right answer. Both are using the earphones. Attentive, quiet and working.	
	One of them finishes, closes his program and leaves. He checks out and writes down on his	
	log. The other one is still working and writing on a piece of paper. He is focused and using a	
	dictionary. He seems interested.	
	2 women get in the area and start looking for the computer's pathways. One of them is	
	looking at them like trying to find out the one she wants. She seats at a computer and starts	
	working.	
	<i>(The air conditioning is so cold that some people feel uncomfortable, especially me).</i>	
	The 4 Ss remaining in the CA seem concentrated, they're quiet and using different programs.	
	They look interested.	
	Another St comes in and seats in front of a computer, he looks around... to the other Ss in	
	the area, puts on the earphones, looks around again (as if he wanted to see what the others,	
	at least near him, are doing), he opens a program and looks attentive to the computer	
	screen, he starts typing and clicking. He's biting his nails.	
	A girl stands up and looks at the pathways, she's looking for something, maybe a program	
	or topic that she needs. She goes to the reception area and asks the assistant for a CD. She	
	comes back to her computer and starts working with the new program.	
	The man who was explaining to the girl is still attentively working, no earphones.	
	A boy, the one with the dictionary, finishes, closes, and leaves. He puts the dictionary on the	
	shelf, checks out, writes on his log and goes to the reception to pick up his belongings.	

APPENDIX 15

SAMPLE OF THE CADI-USBI OBSERVATION
SHEETS – FIELD NOTES

CADI-USBI		
Date: 14.06.05	Time: 12:00 – 13:10	Group:
Level: IN100 & IN200 English 1 & 2	Area: Video (VA)	No. of Ss: 2
Comments: In this area there are 13 TV sets with integrated VCRs and earphones. They are on tables separated by panels, so that people cannot see the neighbour's screen. This is a wide area next to the CA and it can be seen from the a'o.		
12:05	There are 12 Ss. 7 girls and 5 boys. 7 of them are watching the Video of New Interchange Intro &	
12:15	1 (the textbook used). They have the corresponding worksheet and they watch, answer, they	
12:25	rewind the video several times. There is only 1 girl that I notice that she watches the complete	
12:40	section, answers & rewinds; because the others are rewinding it very often.	
12:50	A boy is watching but not listening, as he doesn't have the earphones on. He only watches and	
12:55	pretends to answer, (I wonder what he's doing... maybe just wasting time "making time").	
13:00	Other Ss are watching movies. It's interesting to see that 2 of them rewind the videotape very	
13:10	often. That makes me think that they're really paying attention and want to understand as much	
	as possible. The others are just watching and listening.	
	A girl finishes her work, rewinds the videotape (as they must always do), takes her things and	
	leaves, she walks to the CHIOA.	
	A boy and a girl seem to be extremely bored they are with the earphones on but they are not	
	paying attention. Indeed, she's yawning and really falling asleep. He is looking at some other	
	point but the TV.	
	A girl and a boy who were seating next to each other, rewind the videos, take their things, turn	
	off the TV sets and leave, meanwhile they are commenting something.	
	A boy gets in, he puts the video, turns the TV set and seats. He immediately starts working on	
	the worksheet. He rewinds the tape very frequently.	
	Other 2 Ss seating next to each other are watching the video for the textbook and are frequently	
	talking, but it seems they are asking about the video they are watching and about the worksheet	
	because they look at it and one explains something to the other by pointing to the sheet.	
	2 girls come in and seat next to each other, they put the videos but start talking very quietly.	
	They put on the earphones but just on one ear. They keep on talking.	
	They pretend they are watching but they are chatting (whispering) all the time	
	A boy stands up walks to the a'o and changes his area card, he goes to MUA.	
	A boy finishes and leaves. Finally the girl who was "sleeping" leaves, she walks with such laziness.	
	Most of the Ss seem to be working, they watch attentively rewind the videotapes and write on	
	their worksheets.	
	The girls who were chatting finally start to work.	
	The boy who was just looking around , stands up, stretches and leaves.	
	The area is quiet.	

APPENDIX 16

SAMPLE OF THE COUNSELLING SESSIONS'
OBSERVATION SHEETS – FIELD NOTES

CADI-USBI		
Date: 16.06.05	Time: 18:00	Group: IN151
Level: IN100	Area: Counselling Session/Cls	No. of Ss: 4
Comments:		
18:05	2 boys enter the room. Then a girl comes in. Co enters the room and greets. She asks them for	
18:15	their logs. A girl seats next to her and Co checks her log, each activity and asks her what she	
18:25	practiced en each one of them.	
18:40	A girl comes in and Co says "what a miracle", she seats. The girl being checked asks some ques-	
	tions about dates and logs. A boy asks for his absences and Co says he's got several to what he	
	replies that once he came and the CADI was closed, to what Ad relied "it's not my fault". Another	
	boy comes in and says good afternoon, Co says good morning (because he was late), he makes	
	some jokes and they laugh.	
	A girl gives her log to Co and she explains why it is wrinkled and dirty. She laughs and is funny.	
	Co laughs too, but she tells her that she's kind of exaggerated. The same girl laughs a lot and she	
	keeps on explaining to Co what her notes on her log mean.	
	2 boys and a girl seating together are talking and making comments. Co is checking a log and	
	taking notes on her list.	
	Co asks another girl for her log, she gives it to her, meanwhile Co talks to the last boy who seems	
	to be joking and worriless.	
	A girl says that they should've brought a cake to celebrate the end of the course as it's their last	
	session. Co says that they can bring it next week, but the girl gives lots of excuses. She's quite	
	talkative.	
	Another boy enters and Co says "other", he replies "I over slept teacher".	
	Co keeps on checking a boy's log and asks him why he didn't attend CADI for 2 weeks, and he	
	tries to explain.	
	Co asks them if they have any questions. The talkative girl says that the topic of directions is	
	confusing. Co tells her to start and she asks "how?"	
	The 3 Ss at the other side of the table are talking lowly.	
	Co says "let's start" and looks at the 3 Ss and tells them that if they are going to keep on talking,	
	they can leave the room. They stop talking.	
	Co asks them where some places are. They try to answer, but none can do it. So some of them	
	participate in completing the sentence.	
	A boy says something about other topic and they laugh.	
	The girls, specially the talkative one, are participative. Co keeps on asking for the location of	
	some places and they've got trouble answering. They give very incomplete sentences, even	
	when all of them are participating on the completion of the same sentence.	
	Co looks at the textbook and reviews different prepositions, and she says that it's obvious that	
	they haven't studied. In fact, it really seems they haven't studied & that they don't care very much.	

18:50 Co dictates some questions and writes a model answer on the board. They copy and try to
19:00 answer the questions. They look at the book that is in the centre of the table. They share the
book; they get very close to each other.
Co brings another copy of the pages they are checking. They look at the book & write on
their sheets. They keep quiet.
While they are working, Co checks a boy's log & asks him why he hadn't come to CADL for so
long; she tells him that he's got 4 absences. He nods accepting and becomes very serious.
Ss keep on writing, they're working in 2 groups of 3 and a St is working by himself.
They start reading the answers aloud in order to check the exercise. Co corrects if necessary.
She calls another St and he reads his answer but Co says it's not correct and asks another girl
to say her sentence, but again she's not right. Still they don't get any answer complete. They
are just there looking at the map on the table (on the book).
Co gives the instructions for another exercise, they give the answers and Ad corrects if neces-
sary.
Co tells them about the final exams, she gives some instructions/recommendations. She tells
them to read the board and to pay attention. They make jokes and laugh. They pick up their
things, say bye and leave.
Co checks the last St's log & scolds him for not having come the last week. She questions
him a lot. He tries to explain while she's taking notes on her list (grades, exams). When she
finishes she gives his log back to him and they leave.

APPENDIX 17

2 SAMPLES OF THE OBSERVATION SHEETS –
FIELD NOTES / IN THE ANALYSIS PROCESS

CADI-USBI		
Date: 23.06.05	Time: 16:00 – 17:00	Group:
Level: IN100 & IN200 English 1 & 2	Area: Multiple Uses (MUA)	No. of Ss: 16
Comments:		
16:00	In this area, there are 9 rectangle tables with 4 chairs each. There is a big/long bookshelf with many binders, several books and dictionaries. It's divided from the VA and CA by 2 long tables with TV sets on them. There is a clock on the glass-wall.	
Ss talk quietly among themselves	It is quiet now; sometimes some Ss talk lowly, trying not to disturb the others. At a table there are 2 boys, it seems that when there are enough places to seat and some Ss seat together it's because they're friends or they came together. Each one is working with a worksheet, once in a while one looks at the other's sheet of paper, like checking what he's doing; or they talk to each other. One of them finishes and is waiting for his pal. When he finishes too, they look at their logs and compare them.	
Pals seat together	Several Ss have their logs on the table, ready to write on them. At other 5 tables there is only 1 St. All of them are quiet and focused, they're writing, sometimes they use a dictionary. The ones who are alone (at a table) seem to work harder, they read and write, when they finish a worksheet, they change it for another one or they take their things and leave (check out).	
Ss are working	It also happens that they just stop working and look like daydreaming, looking at some point on the space or to the table but without working.	
Ss look at what others are doing	At other table there are 2 boys. They've been talking lowly but constantly. They haven't worked at all, they are discrete.	
Ss write on logs	At other table there are 3 girls and a boy, thy might be classmates or friends because they work and comment among themselves, they laugh lowly and talk. When 2 of them finish, they take their things and leave.	
Ss write on logs	A girl gets in and greets the 2 boys who were working, she seats at their table, starts working but immediately starts talking to them, they sometimes laugh but also quietly.	
16:15	An assistant comes into the MUA to check Ss and all Ss look at her and keep quiet, they stop talking and smiling, they pretend that they are working. It's funny, because when one of them hadn't realized	
Ss seem focused		
Ss are working		
Lonely Ss seem to work harder		
Ss aren't working / daydreaming		
16:30		
Ss talk among themselves		
Ss aren't working		
Ss talk quietly among themselves		
Ss are playing around		
Ss are working		
Ss talk quietly among themselves		
Ss are playing around		
Assistant checks on Ss		
Ss pretend they're working		

Ss are working

Ss are playing around

Ss talk quietly among themselves

16:45

Ss aren't working

Ss pretend they're working

Ss are playing around

Ss seem not focused

17:00

Ss aren't working / daydreaming

Ss are playing around especially pals

that the assistant was there, his/her pal warned him/her.like children do.

At other table there is a couple, a boy and a girl, they are working (reading and writing), but sometimes they talk, joke and laugh. They both look at the clock. When any of them finishes a worksheet, they stand and go to the shelves take a binder and exchange the worksheet, seat again and make a few comments to the other.

New Ss have come in and they all do very similar things: go to the shelves, take a binder, take a worksheet out and seat, sometimes alone (because there is place now) and sometimes with their pals with whom they arrived or the ones they meet there.

The 2 boys keep on talking and doing no work. Sometimes one of them pretends to be writing on a sheet of paper and the other one has a worksheet opened.

At a table where the girl joined 2 boys they are talking and laughing quietly but the 2 boys finish and leave. The girl stays there constantly turning around, not focused..

It's incredible...a boy behind my seat has been with his worksheet opened and doing absolutely nothing for more than an hour, glimpsing at it and daydreaming ...wow.

Definitely when friends come together they tend to talk and comment and laugh, but there are some who still work and others don't do anything but waste time.

APPENDICES

CADI

OBSERVATION FORMAT

CADI-USBI		
Date: 14.06.05	Time: 11:00	Group: IN141
Level: IN100	Area: Counselling Session/ Isa	No. of Ss: 5
Comments:		
11:00	There are 4 girls seating, the Co gets to the room, greets and <u>asks</u> them <u>what</u> they <u>learnt</u> in the Conversation Club, she tells them that they just came because they are about to finish the course "hasta que les esta llegando el agua al cuello" (until water is coming to your throats), she asks their <u>logs</u> one by one: she calls them by their names and <u>checks</u> their logs. She also <u>asks</u> for the <u>grade</u> they got <u>on the exam</u> (self assessment exam for each unit). Another girl gets to the room. Three of them look as if they're friends and constantly <u>talk to each other but lowly</u>. The Co keeps on <u>checking logs</u>, she takes notes on her list (the activities & areas they've done). She tells them that they <u>haven't worked</u> in certain areas; in fact she claims that they or some of them <u>haven't worked</u> enough. She <u>asks</u> them if they have any doubts and <u>asks</u> them some <u>questions</u> (imperatives). They, very quietly and shy, <u>try</u> to answer but they are very doubtful. They <u>don't participate</u> very much. As they are reviewing what they <u>supposedly worked</u> on the previous week, the Co <u>asks</u> them to stand up and tells them to touch different parts of their bodies. They do it, smiling and looking at the others to check if they are touching the right part. They <u>don't do</u> it correctly and they say that they <u>didn't study</u> all of them, to what the Co replies that those are the parts included in the book, she points that she's not including any extra words and tells them that they have to study more vocabulary.	
11:10	The girls are <u>not pretty sure</u> of what they are saying, they ask for some vocabulary. One of them is <u>not participating</u> at all, she's so quiet and serious. The other 3 friends <u>talk among themselves</u>. The Co picks a marker and writes some sentences on the whiteboard (remedies for aches and recommendations). They <u>participate but doubtfully</u>, using a lot of Spanish. The Co is patient and speaks slowly, she waits for them to respond but it seems they <u>don't have enough elements</u> to say complete sentences. The Co <u>asks</u> them to go on to the next unit, and tells them "questions on this unit", it's about prepositions. She asks them "did you practice them?" and they say "yes", so give me some examples. The quiet girl starts and says a sentence, the Co <u>has to help</u> her <u>complete the sentence</u>. Then the Co asks them to give the location of a supermarket, they start saying words and <u>incomplete ideas</u>. They give silly excuses for not having said a right sentence. The Co gives them a choice and even then they <u>have problems completing</u> the sentence. They look at each other and to the Co like trying to get the answer from somewhere. Co asks them for some words and they all answer in chorus. It seems easy for them. They smile, sometimes like nervously and some others joking. Te Co is always patient but she points when she notices that they <u>haven't worked</u>. (It is obvious when Ss haven't worked during the week and who has). Co goes on <u>asking them</u> for <u>examples</u> of prepositions in use, but only one girl gives a sentence after a minute silence. They just look at their books or sheets (as if the answer would appear there magically). They waste a lot of time. Among 3 Ss <u>try to make a sentence</u>, one says one word, another one says the next two and so on. After many tries, there are 2 correct complete sentences, the Co didn't have to correct. She tells them that they won't be able to <u>work in teams during the final exam</u>, she asks them what they will <u>do</u>. Ss smile and <u>make jokes</u>, they say they will have their codes. Co tells them that they'd better study because they will be working by themselves. After some recommendations for the exam, they pick up their things and say <u>goodbye</u>. She's still <u>checking one's log</u> but she finishes quickly and leaves.	
11:25	The girls are <u>not pretty sure</u> of what they are saying, they ask for some vocabulary. One of them is <u>not participating</u> at all, she's so quiet and serious. The other 3 friends <u>talk among themselves</u>. The Co picks a marker and writes some sentences on the whiteboard (remedies for aches and recommendations). They <u>participate but doubtfully</u>, using a lot of Spanish. The Co is patient and speaks slowly, she waits for them to respond but it seems they <u>don't have enough elements</u> to say complete sentences. The Co <u>asks</u> them to go on to the next unit, and tells them "questions on this unit", it's about prepositions. She asks them "did you practice them?" and they say "yes", so give me some examples. The quiet girl starts and says a sentence, the Co <u>has to help</u> her <u>complete the sentence</u>. Then the Co asks them to give the location of a supermarket, they start saying words and <u>incomplete ideas</u>. They give silly excuses for not having said a right sentence. The Co gives them a choice and even then they <u>have problems completing</u> the sentence. They look at each other and to the Co like trying to get the answer from somewhere. Co asks them for some words and they all answer in chorus. It seems easy for them. They smile, sometimes like nervously and some others joking. Te Co is always patient but she points when she notices that they <u>haven't worked</u>. (It is obvious when Ss haven't worked during the week and who has). Co goes on <u>asking them</u> for <u>examples</u> of prepositions in use, but only one girl gives a sentence after a minute silence. They just look at their books or sheets (as if the answer would appear there magically). They waste a lot of time. Among 3 Ss <u>try to make a sentence</u>, one says one word, another one says the next two and so on. After many tries, there are 2 correct complete sentences, the Co didn't have to correct. She tells them that they won't be able to <u>work in teams during the final exam</u>, she asks them what they will <u>do</u>. Ss smile and <u>make jokes</u>, they say they will have their codes. Co tells them that they'd better study because they will be working by themselves. After some recommendations for the exam, they pick up their things and say <u>goodbye</u>. She's still <u>checking one's log</u> but she finishes quickly and leaves.	
11:30	The Co <u>asks</u> them to go on to the next unit, and tells them "questions on this unit", it's about prepositions. She asks them "did you practice them?" and they say "yes", so give me some examples. The quiet girl starts and says a sentence, the Co <u>has to help</u> her <u>complete the sentence</u>. Then the Co asks them to give the location of a supermarket, they start saying words and <u>incomplete ideas</u>. They give silly excuses for not having said a right sentence. The Co gives them a choice and even then they <u>have problems completing</u> the sentence. They look at each other and to the Co like trying to get the answer from somewhere. Co asks them for some words and they all answer in chorus. It seems easy for them. They smile, sometimes like nervously and some others joking. Te Co is always patient but she points when she notices that they <u>haven't worked</u>. (It is obvious when Ss haven't worked during the week and who has). Co goes on <u>asking them</u> for <u>examples</u> of prepositions in use, but only one girl gives a sentence after a minute silence. They just look at their books or sheets (as if the answer would appear there magically). They waste a lot of time. Among 3 Ss <u>try to make a sentence</u>, one says one word, another one says the next two and so on. After many tries, there are 2 correct complete sentences, the Co didn't have to correct. She tells them that they won't be able to <u>work in teams during the final exam</u>, she asks them what they will <u>do</u>. Ss smile and <u>make jokes</u>, they say they will have their codes. Co tells them that they'd better study because they will be working by themselves. After some recommendations for the exam, they pick up their things and say <u>goodbye</u>. She's still <u>checking one's log</u> but she finishes quickly and leaves.	
11:40	The Co <u>asks</u> them to go on to the next unit, and tells them "questions on this unit", it's about prepositions. She asks them "did you practice them?" and they say "yes", so give me some examples. The quiet girl starts and says a sentence, the Co <u>has to help</u> her <u>complete the sentence</u>. Then the Co asks them to give the location of a supermarket, they start saying words and <u>incomplete ideas</u>. They give silly excuses for not having said a right sentence. The Co gives them a choice and even then they <u>have problems completing</u> the sentence. They look at each other and to the Co like trying to get the answer from somewhere. Co asks them for some words and they all answer in chorus. It seems easy for them. They smile, sometimes like nervously and some others joking. Te Co is always patient but she points when she notices that they <u>haven't worked</u>. (It is obvious when Ss haven't worked during the week and who has). Co goes on <u>asking them</u> for <u>examples</u> of prepositions in use, but only one girl gives a sentence after a minute silence. They just look at their books or sheets (as if the answer would appear there magically). They waste a lot of time. Among 3 Ss <u>try to make a sentence</u>, one says one word, another one says the next two and so on. After many tries, there are 2 correct complete sentences, the Co didn't have to correct. She tells them that they won't be able to <u>work in teams during the final exam</u>, she asks them what they will <u>do</u>. Ss smile and <u>make jokes</u>, they say they will have their codes. Co tells them that they'd better study because they will be working by themselves. After some recommendations for the exam, they pick up their things and say <u>goodbye</u>. She's still <u>checking one's log</u> but she finishes quickly and leaves.	
11:50	The Co <u>asks</u> them to go on to the next unit, and tells them "questions on this unit", it's about prepositions. She asks them "did you practice them?" and they say "yes", so give me some examples. The quiet girl starts and says a sentence, the Co <u>has to help</u> her <u>complete the sentence</u>. Then the Co asks them to give the location of a supermarket, they start saying words and <u>incomplete ideas</u>. They give silly excuses for not having said a right sentence. The Co gives them a choice and even then they <u>have problems completing</u> the sentence. They look at each other and to the Co like trying to get the answer from somewhere. Co asks them for some words and they all answer in chorus. It seems easy for them. They smile, sometimes like nervously and some others joking. Te Co is always patient but she points when she notices that they <u>haven't worked</u>. (It is obvious when Ss haven't worked during the week and who has). Co goes on <u>asking them</u> for <u>examples</u> of prepositions in use, but only one girl gives a sentence after a minute silence. They just look at their books or sheets (as if the answer would appear there magically). They waste a lot of time. Among 3 Ss <u>try to make a sentence</u>, one says one word, another one says the next two and so on. After many tries, there are 2 correct complete sentences, the Co didn't have to correct. She tells them that they won't be able to <u>work in teams during the final exam</u>, she asks them what they will <u>do</u>. Ss smile and <u>make jokes</u>, they say they will have their codes. Co tells them that they'd better study because they will be working by themselves. After some recommendations for the exam, they pick up their things and say <u>goodbye</u>. She's still <u>checking one's log</u> but she finishes quickly and leaves.	

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PhD in Applied Linguistics

April - June '05

APPENDIX 18

SAMPLE OF STUDENTS' INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS/
IN THE ANALYSIS PROCESS

2 nd Interview to student Pablo (P)	24-06-05
INTERVIEW	MY COMMENTS
E.- Pablo...ehm in the first interview we had, we were talking about what you expected from this course and what you were getting, now that you have finished and you are about to take the final exam, what do you feel? What do you think you have got from this course ?	Expectations / Achievements
P.- what I got?... headaches hehehe	Autonomous mode (AM) = Bad experience
E.- yes? Hahaha	
P.- hehe, I feel that the progress was average...no....I am not going to question that it is a learning...because at the beginning I thought it was not going to work for me....certainly it worked, but it is not the same, I would have preferred to have a class with a teacher , because the counselling sessions ehmm, did not help me a lot...don't tell the teacher	Prefers "class" mode Cs don't help
E.- no, not at all, this is really private ehh, it is super private, of course no one will hear anything about it, it's absolutely private	
P.- I think it was... the truth ...this is because we don't know how to use, don't have the methodology to use everything that is here, it's too much information to follow the book, and then.....I discovered this at the very end, when I read in the book that.....we had to get support from the other...things	Don't know HOW Too much info
E.- yeah.....from the extra material that is there....from the same unit	
P.- yes	
E.- ahhh ok.....do you think it would have been important that someone had explained it to you or told you this at the beginning?	Importance of explaining HOW / training Ss
P.- in fact they explained it to me, right?...but...I insist there are some beliefs that for learning English it's not good.....you don't have to translate everything, but I have my theory that we all learn in different ways , not everyone can learn...if you learn easy just like that without translating, for me it doesn't work, I have to translate to understand and then a grammar explanation more than anything.....because....I can have lots of vocabulary but when I try to form sentences...the rules..... fail	Awareness of learning styles

E.- ok Pablo...if you had to make an evaluation of this coursewhat would you say about it?	Ss Evaluation of AM
P.- well....in fact the course is good, but the defective thing is...that it is not well organized according to our study programI mean for the major(career), that is to say, the time, it is.....they are too many subjectsand the location of my faculty is too far , and the time....more than anything it's the timeif one had a dedication or the time to come 2 hours a day during all the week... I feel that the progress would have been better, but it's that....I mean the course is ok ahmm....from my point of view, the programs, the materials are good ,...but at the same time one has to sit down and analyze how to use it , but then one comes in a hurry and trying to move forward as much as possible because the course goes and.....it's gone	Defects (Faults)= not organized, no agreement with Bachelor's program, location of schools, time/schedules Correct= SAC Materials & program HOW to use..... Pressure from course programs and schedules
E.-....do you think it is more demanding than the "presencial" (classroom class)?..I mean in the "presencial" in some way they have a schedule and they have to come to class every day....	Presencial Vs. Autonomous
P.- and.....you have that in mind, that you have to come and here.... practically....because you don't have that responsibility you come.... whenever you can ...but yes....mmm..... it's more demanding because you have to study....and try to find the way of....how... how to be able to.....	Autonomous don't feel the responsibility /more demanding Forced to find out HOW to
E.- you told me that the counselling sessions didn't help you too much?	
P.- gggggg no	
E.- they didn't play any role? What role did the counselling sessions play in your course?	Cs role
P.- mmm...the counselling sessions were.... only a review and....ehmm at the same time you don't know what they are talking about ...you cannot have doubts because you don't know what you are talking about, I mean if you yourself don't understand the things..	Cs = review Don't work for the Cs
E.- even though you had gone over all the contents before? The week before? Even though you had checked the unit?	
P.- the problem is that you go over the unit, but there are some things that you don't see because sometimes I only came 2 or 3 hours per week, I insist it's the time the one that doesn't.....that you don't have, thenI repeat, it's the bad planning that...ehmmm I had told you that I was "autonomous" not by my own choice , because I chose it, but because there was no place then.....	Time is a problem Bad Planning / Organization AM as imposition
E.- would you take a course.... again in this mode?	

P.- probably, I think that what you get a lot in a bachelor's degree is maturity then....	Get maturity
E.- in this kind of mode?	
P.- yes....it is maturity, because we are accustomed to the teachers pushing us , I feel that maybe it didn't work for me well because I am in this kind of transition period when I am withdrawing from the teachers , but I think it would work, I feel it would, because at work, we won't have a teacher to tell us what it is about , but the counsellor should have this function to tell us how to reach that, how to take advantage,.... to get this....progress.... not only to tell us to practice grammar, you have to do this you don't have to do that, but they should to tell us how to ...when we seat down.....how to	Used to be pushed Withdraw from teachers - good for work Cs function = show HOW to....
E.- do you feel that besides English you learned anything else in this course?	
P.- yes, you learn culture....other people's culture , to see the other...the other languages how other people who are not Latin learn English , then with their points of view...of understanding that language, how to learn it , you learn culture more than anything	Culture?? HOW to learn
E.- anything else you have learned in this mode of....?	
P.- self-learning.?....sssss that I am bad at English	Self image, self-learning?? jaja
E.- hahahaa no, not at all, the thing is....as you say...we are not prepared	
P.- yes	
E.- it is hard	
P.- And.....it's the bad organization, planning more than anything.... one's as well as the system's , but.....they say "it's not good to go back not even to take impulse" but... because sooner or later there is the change and that's what we are afraid of....the changein anything, so, maybe I would take another self-learning (autonomous) course it may not be English but other subject	Ss' & system's Bad planning and organization Aware of change /afraid of change
E.- you took English 1 course in the mode..?	
P.- presencial (classroom class)	
E.- ok I see....	
P.-yes	
E.- how did you live the experience of studying by yourself , of working alone?	How Ss experience the AM

P.-well.....I feel it was a test for myself to see what I am capable of , and to see how....to take in the information.... of..of not knowing	AM experience = test for himself, to find out his capabilities
E.- ehm....how did you live the experience of working alone?	
P.- well.....	
E.- when you came to CADL, did you come by yourself or with company?	
P.- mmmmm no...I came with my classmates, mm well sometimes I came alone and sometimes with someone, I think that you come to study , so this is the good think that you don't come to waste your time.... on the "autonomous" mode	Presencial Vs. Autonomous Autonomous Ss don't waste time
E.- a ok	
P.- I think that is the aim what it was created... for you to give yourself your own space.... but I feel they close too early	AM helps you to be with yourself ??
E.- poor counsellors you want them to sleep here....	
P.- but they close at 8 or 7	
E.- here? Nooo they close almost at 9? 8:40 or something like that	
P.- mmm I don't know, but they told me at 8, mmm but it's not for the hours I mean because of the schedules, of come to make hours (complete a determined number of hours)	
E.- yeah... what faculty do you come from?	
P.- sorry?	
E.- what faculty are you in?	
P.- in administration, there in the north	
E.- yes, yes..	
P.- and there is not a direct bus, you have to take 2 or walk	
E.- hey Pablo, have you seen that... some students come and.....they are like wasting time, lots of time, chatting, joking.....	Presencial Vs. Autonomous

P.- well that is because.....in the “presencial” mode I saw it, they ask a minimum of hours that are like...to help the regular students, right? Because if they don’t get a good grade in the exam, some hours would help, so it is like an imposition to...to come to make hours and being here 2 hours or make 15 practical hours,... so, that is a little boring...then, instead of studying or learning or reinforce their learning they.....they just waste time, so they don’t concentrate on practicing, that’s why... because they are being asked for hours...	Presencial Vs. Autonomous CADI as an imposition – Ss waste time
E.- the autonomous learners work differently, they work more you think?	
P.-yes....because actually what we learn by ourselves is what is going to decide if we pass or not, because we have to learn or learn, that’s it, the “autonomous” is like a dad with a belt	Obligation, No options, No alternatives AM = Dad – obliged, forced
E.- haha	
P.- that tells you to do the things, it’s as I see it, and...it has its pros and cons (its good things and its bad things)	AM has Pros & Cons
E.- is there anything else you would like to add Pablo?	
P.- ehmmm no, I feel that....I hope a can help you with your mission	
E.- yes. Thank you very much...I hope so too hahaa	

Green = Topics proposed by me

Orange highlights = topics related to green or arisen by their own.

AM = Autonomous Mode

Cs= Counselling Sessions or Counsellors

APPENDIX 19

SHEETS FROM MY DATA ANALYSIS NOTEBOOK
(MATRIX) → EMERGENCE OF THEMES

		Expectations										Learned/obtained										Difficult time issues									
		No idea	Like a class-representative	Learn about themselves, their capacity + abilities	Fulfill the requirement	Pass the subject	Come when I wanted/could	Do what I wanted/could	Learn English	Be easier	Learn more	Learn basic contents	Remembered/learned	Be more responsible	Organized myself better	Fulfill their expectations	Easy	Difficult time issues	Difficult + not understanding	Practical + content	Useful for learning	Advantages of open needs									
IN 242	Arissai SAt		✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓										
IN 249	Diego SDi										✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓										
IN 248	Elizabeth SEd			✓									✓	✓	✓	✓	✓														
IC 341	Enriqueta SEn												✓	✓	✓	✓	✓														
IN 148	Eany SFa										✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓										
IN 252	Jesus SJe						✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓										
IN 251	Lidia SLi						✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓														
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IN 143	Andres SAn																														
IN 250	Antemio SAr			✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓														
IN 156	Ayucena SAz	✓													✓	✓	✓														
IN 147	Eduardo SEd				✓										✓	✓	✓		✓												
IN 153	Guadalupe SGv		✓	✓						X				✓	✓	✓	✓														
IN 150	Jose J. SJa											✓			✓	✓	✓														
IN 142	Miguel SMi												✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓										
IN 255	Rafael SPa		✓	✓											✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓										
IN 145	Salme SSc									X			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓														
IN 243	Victor SVi		✓												✓	✓	✓														
IN 255	Janeth SVa		✓								✓				✓	✓	✓														
IC 541	Volanda SYo		✓	✓																											
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Ex-st	Brenda SBr																														
Ex-st	Agustin SAg		✓				✓							✓	✓	✓	✓														
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	CI3		✓								✓																				
	CAm		✓																												
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[illegible]

APPENDIX 20

SHEETS FROM MY DATA ANALYSIS NOTEBOOK
(MATRIX) → INCIDENCE OF THEMES

		Ss Ch	Ss Im	Co	T	
Expectations	✓ Have no idea of what it's about	1	2	3	1	4
	✓ Similar to a class-explanations	1	3	4	3	4
	✓ Fulfil the requirement-Pass	2	3	5	1	6
	✓ Come & do what I want-can	4	1	5	0	5
	✓ Be easier / Be more difficult	2/1	1/2	3/3	2	5/3
	Learn English / Not learn	3	1	4	1/2	4/2
Obtaining personal development	✓ Fulfilment of their Expectations	3	3	6	2	8
	* Learnt about themselves, their capacities	1	4	5	0	5
	Learnt a lot	2	2	4	0	4
	Learnt basic things - Vocab	5	2	7	0	7
	Reinforced what they already knew	5	3	8	0	8
	Became more Responsible-mature	4	7	11	1	12
	Became more Organized	3	7	10	0	10
Opinion on the implementation of the course	No-class mode					
	* Course is Easy	2	1	3	0	3
	* Course is difficult-Time issues	2	3	5	0	5
	* Course is Difficult-for new	3	3	6	3	9
	* Convenient, Practical for time-Schedules	6	9	15	0	15
	* Course is useful for learning	1	4	5	0	5
Attitudes	* Lack of Planning-Far from schools	2	3	5	0	5
	* Good for Busy people/Bus.	3/1	1	4/1	0	4/1
	English (+CAB) is Not a Priority subjects	4	4	8	0	8
	Learning Eng. is Important & Necessary	1	2	3	0	3
	* No-class Mode works / doesn't work	1/1	3/2	3/3	0	3/3
Awareness	Awareness of own needs & possibilities	3	3	6	1/2	7/2
	Awareness that Learning depends on themselves	4	6	10	2	12
	Aw. they can decide what to study & when	5	6	11	1	12
	Aw. of themselves & their capacities	2	3	5	1	6
	Against Imposition & Accumulation of hours	4	5	9	0	9
	Aw. that Previous Preparation is Needed (How to)	0	4	4	5	9
CADDL	Important to clock up hrs->credits	3	3	2		8
	Book & Workbook most important	3	6	2		11
	Grammar, Vocab, Reading, Vocab, Comp.			4/2	7	4/9
	No time to go to CADL	1	2	3	0	3
	CADL is good for Practice	3	0	3	0	3
	Materials are good/aren't good	1/1	3/2	3/3	0	3/3
	CADL is OK / is small	1	5/2	5/3	1	6/3

		Ss Cn	Ss Im	Co	T	
Task- work- ex- er- cise	✓ Prefer "Classes"	3	9	12	0	12
	Prefer to study-work alone	3	3	6	0	6
	Prefer to study-work w/group	1	6	7	2	9
	Like the no-class / don't like it	7/1	5	12/1	1	13
	Don't like mis-treatment, bossy staff	2	1	3	2	5
Con- soli- ding	Task + solve doubts	7	9	16	2	18
	To reflect on learning process + strategies	1	0	1	2	3
	Useful	6	6	12	1/1	13/1
	Important + Necessary / Not N	4	6/1	10/4	3	13/4
	Learn from Group-interaction	7	4	11	0	11
	Co is a guide, ^{suggests} model-Important	10	11	21	7	28

