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Fostering EFL Second-Year Learners' Autonomy in Vocabulary Learning

Case study of second- year Licence EFL students at Relizane

Thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

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Statement of Originality

We confirm that this thesis is entirely our own work. Reflecting original research and composed without assistance from others, except where explicitly acknowledge. We affirm that we have not presented this work for any other academic qualification nor have we engaged in any unethical practices such as plagiarism or academic misconduct.

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to:

My mother, Zahra, and my father, Mohamed, whose love, support, and sacrifices have enabled me to pursue my studies and achieve my academic goals.

My brothers, Abderrahmane and Abdelhadi, and my sisters, Amina and Somia, who have been a constant source of encouragement and motivation throughout my academic journey.

Thank you for being my pillars of strength and inspiration.

BELARBI Maroua

To my dear parents, Rokia and Habib,

Who gave me the gift of dreams and the strength to make them real.

Your endless love, sacrifices, and belief in me have shaped my path.

I will be forever grateful.

To my brother, Abdelhak,

You have such a kind heart. Thank you for always being there for me. You're the best brother anyone could ask for.

To myself,

For showing up, pushing through, and finishing what I started.

KAROUI AhlemChaimaa

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Abstract

There has been a growing interest in the role of learner autonomy (LA) in language teaching and learning. Over the past two decades, researchers have extensively explored LA across various educational contexts and developed multiple pedagogical strategies to foster its development. This study investigates EFL students' autonomy in vocabulary learning and explores the relationship between LA and language learning outcomes. Specifically, it examines the impact of autonomy on vocabulary learning, with particular emphasis on the roles of motivation, self-discipline, and technology. Conducted with second-year EFL students at Relizane University, the study collected data through questionnaires administered to both students and teachers, as well as interviews conducted with students to gain deeper insights into their autonomous vocabulary learning practices. The findings indicate that learners who exhibit higher levels of autonomy tend to achieve more favorable vocabulary learning outcomes. Furthermore, the study identifies key challenges to autonomous learning and proposes effective strategies for fostering autonomy in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: Learner autonomy, EFL, Vocabulary learning, Second-year students, Language learning outcomes

Résumé

Le rôle de l'autonomie de l'apprenant (LA) suscite un intérêt croissant dans le domaine de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage des langues. Au cours des deux dernières décennies, les chercheurs ont largement exploré ce concept dans divers contextes éducatifs et ont développé plusieurs stratégies pédagogiques pour favoriser son développement. Cette étude examine l'autonomie des étudiants en anglais langue étrangère (EFL) dans l'apprentissage du vocabulaire, et explore la relation entre l'autonomie de l'apprenant et les résultats en apprentissage linguistique. Plus précisément, elle analyse l'impact de l'autonomie sur l'apprentissage du vocabulaire, en mettant l'accent sur la motivation, l'autodiscipline et l'usage des technologies. Réalisée auprès des étudiants de deuxième année à l'Université de Relizane, les données ont été recueillies à l'aide de questionnaires administrés aux étudiants et aux enseignants, ainsi que des entretiens menés avec les étudiants pour mieux comprendre leurs pratiques autonomes. Les résultats montrent que les apprenants ayant un haut niveau d'autonomie obtiennent généralement de meilleurs résultats en apprentissage du vocabulaire. En outre, l'étude identifie les défis majeurs à l'autonomie et propose des stratégies efficaces pour la renforcer dans les classes d'EFL.

Mots-clés : autonomie de l'apprenant, EFL, apprentissage du vocabulaire, étudiants de deuxième année, résultats de l'apprentissage linguistique.

الملخص

شهد دور الاستقلالية الذاتية للمتعلمين (LA) اهتماماً متزايداً في مجال تعليم وتعلم اللغات. وخلال العقدين الماضيين، قام الباحثون بدراسة هذا المفهوم بشكل واسع في سياقات تعليمية مختلفة، وطوّروا عدة استراتيجيات بيداغوجية لتعزيز تنميته. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف استقلالية طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في تعلم المفردات، كما تسعى إلى توضيح العلاقة بين الاستقلالية الذاتية ونتائج تعلم اللغة. وتحديداً، تركز الدراسة على تأثير الاستقلالية على تعلم المفردات، مع تسليط الضوء على أدوار كل من التحفيز والانضباط الذاتي والتكنولوجيا. أُجريت الدراسة مع طلبة السنة الثانية لغة إنجليزية بجامعة غليزان، وتم جمع البيانات من خلال استبيانات وُرّعت على الطلبة والأساتذة، بالإضافة إلى مقابلات أُجريت مع الطلبة للحصول على رؤى أعمق حول ممارساتهم الذاتية في تعلم المفردات. أظهرت النتائج أن المتعلمين الذين يتمتعون بمستويات عالية من الاستقلالية يحققون نتائج أفضل في تعلم المفردات. كما حدّدت الدراسة التحديات الرئيسية التي تعيق التعلم الذاتي، واقترحت استراتيجيات فعّالة لتعزيز الاستقلالية في أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاستقلالية الذاتية، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، تعلم المفردات، طلبة السنة الثانية، نتائج تعلم اللغة.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AI:Artificial Intelligence

Apps:Applications

ChatGPT:Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer

EFL:English as a Foreign Language

LA:Learner Autonomy

SDT:Self-Determination Theory

SRL:Self-Regulated Learning

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Learning vocabulary is considered as one of the most essential parts in mastering a foreign language. In the case of English as a foreign language, vocabulary helps learners to understand and produce the language correctly. However, many EFL students still face difficulties in learning and remembering new words. One of the possible reasons is the lack of autonomy in the learning process. That is to say, most students rely heavily on their teachers and do not take responsibility for their own vocabulary development.

The concept of learner autonomy has been discussed by many researchers in the field of language education. It mainly refers to the learner's ability to take charge of his or her own learning, and to be responsible for choosing the strategies and methods that suit their needs and goals. Autonomy is not only about learning inside the classroom, but also outside of it. This means that students can learn anytime and anywhere, if they are motivated and know how to manage their learning.

In the Algerian context, specifically in Relizane University, learner autonomy is still a new and somehow neglected idea. Most of the classroom practices are still based on traditional methods, where the teacher is the only source of information. As a result, students become passive and wait for the teacher to explain everything, including vocabulary. In addition, students are not always encouraged to use modern tools like mobile applications, online dictionaries or vocabulary games that could help them learn independently and more enjoyable.

Hence, this study aims to explore the importance of learner autonomy in vocabulary learning among second-year EFL students at Relizane University. It tries to find out how students learn vocabulary on their own, what strategies they use, and how teachers can help them become more autonomous. Also, the study will focus on the role of digital tools, especially educational apps, in supporting autonomous learning of vocabulary.

To achieve this, the following research objectives are set:

- ❖ To investigate the impact of learner autonomy on EFL vocabulary learning.
- ❖ To highlight personalized vocabulary learning strategies for EFL students.
- ❖ To evaluate the role of teacher support in fostering autonomy in vocabulary learning among EFL students at Relizane University.

Based on these objectives, the study set out to answer the following questions:

- ❖ To what extent does learner autonomy contribute to vocabulary improvement among EFL students at Relizane University?
- ❖ What vocabulary learning strategies do EFL students employ?
- ❖ How do teachers foster learner autonomy to promote vocabulary enrichment in EFL students?

The hypotheses of this research are:

- ❖ Enhancing learner autonomy might lead to significant improvement in vocabulary learning among EFL students at Relizane University.
- ❖ The use of educational apps may positively influence learner autonomy and support vocabulary development.
- ❖ Teacher support in promoting learner autonomy might enhance effective vocabulary learning among EFL students.

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. This study aims to explore the perceptions of EFL students and teachers regarding autonomy in vocabulary learning. A questionnaire was administered to a sample of 50 EFL students and 15 teachers of the Department of English at Ahmed Zabana University, Relizane, while 15 students participated in semi-structured interviews. The sample was selected using random sampling techniques to ensure representativeness. The questionnaire and interview protocols served as the primary data

collection instruments, providing both quantitative and qualitative data that shed light on participants' experiences and perspectives on autonomous vocabulary learning.

The present dissertation comprises of three chapters ,the first chapter of the current research one is devoted for reviewing the literature in relation to the issue being studied. It provides the theoretical background of our research. The second chapter of the research is concerned with the data analysis in which it defines the research design, sample and Setting, data collection instruments, description and analysis of students 'and teachers' questionnaire and students' interview. The third chapter is related to the discussion of the findings and recommendations for both students and teachers.

Chapter One:

Fostering EFL Students' Autonomy in Vocabulary Learning

Chapter One: Fostering EFL Second Year Lerner's Autonomy in Vocabulary Learning

1.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing literature on fostering autonomy in EFL students' vocabulary acquisition. It highlights the importance of learner autonomy in mastering vocabulary, emphasizing Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) theory and constructivist approaches. Key aspects include defining learner autonomy, its essential attributes, and factors influencing its development, such as motivation, the educator's role, learning environments, and technology. The chapter also explores the link between autonomy and effective vocabulary learning, demonstrating how independent learning enhances language proficiency. Through a comprehensive literature review, it aims to clarify different perspectives on autonomy and its impact on vocabulary acquisition.

1.2 Theoretical Frameworks

To explore how learner autonomy can be fostered in L2 vocabulary learning, several theoretical perspectives will be examined, starting with Self-Determination Theory.

1.2.1 Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Ryan and Deci (1985, 2000), emphasizes autonomy as a key factor in motivating individuals. SDT identifies three core psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness essential for fostering intrinsic motivation. These needs promote more engaged and self-directed behavior. Autonomy, in particular, plays a crucial role in motivating individuals to pursue personal goals and perform effectively in various tasks (Deci, Ryan, 1985, p. 227).

Autonomy within SDT is defined as a sense of control over one's actions and decisions, enabling individuals to take ownership of their processes. Ryan and Deci (2006, p. 630) argue that autonomy goes beyond mere freedom of choice. It involves acting in ways that align with

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one's values and goals. This deeper understanding of autonomy connects directly to the concept of learner autonomy, where students take control over their learning process, such as setting goals, selecting content, and evaluating progress.

According to (Scot et al ,2014, p. 38) argue that autonomy is crucial for high-quality, self-determined behavior, where learners feel a sense of volition in their decisions, even when the available options are limited.

Although autonomy is often associated with personal freedom, SDT emphasizes that it also involves the internal endorsement of choices. For instance, a student may not have control over what they study or how they are assessed, even if these decisions align with their academic goals, they can still be considered autonomous within the SDT framework.

In the context of language learning, SDT provides a framework for understanding how learner autonomy fosters intrinsic motivation. (Holec ,1981, p.55) argues that language learners who feel autonomous are more likely to take responsibility for their learning and engage more deeply with the process. However, it is important to distinguish between general autonomy and language learner autonomy. While autonomy within SDT is a broader concept, language learner autonomy specifically involves learners managing their learning process, including setting goals, selecting materials, and evaluating their progress. (Chetouane, 2022, p.34) emphasizes that promoting learner autonomy within SDT frameworks can improve educational outcomes, particularly in environments where self-directed learning is key. By integrating SDT into the development of learner autonomy in language learning environments, both motivation and achievement can be enhanced.

Autonomy, as conceptualized by SDT, is central to fostering intrinsic motivation. Understanding how autonomy operates within SDT offers valuable insights into supporting students across different learning contexts, particularly in language learning. By ensuring

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that learners feel a sense of agency and control, educators can create more effective and engaging learning environments, facilitating both motivation and academic success.

1.2.2 Self-Regulated Learning Theory

Self-regulated learning (SRL) refers to the process where learners take control of their own learning. (Zimmerman ,2002, p. 17)defines SRL as “*a process where learners set their own learning goals, monitor their progress, and reflect on their outcomes to improve future learning strategies.*” SRL consists of three main components: setting goals, monitoring progress, and reflecting on results. These elements help learners take responsibility for their learning by planning, assessing, and adjusting their strategies. (Zimmerman, 2002,p17)further introduced a cyclical model of SRL, which includes three phases: forethought, performance, and reflection. In the forethought phase, learners set goals and develop plans, influenced by their motivation, beliefs about their abilities, and the perceived relevance of the task.

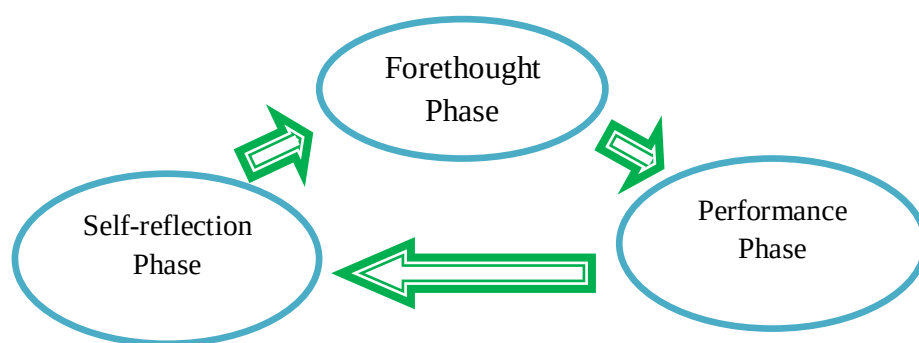


Figure1.1 Zimmerman's cyclical phases model of self-regulated learning (adapted, Zimmerman, 2002, p, 67).

During the performance phase, learners apply strategies such as focusing attention, using self-instruction, and visualizing, while also observing their own behaviors, such as time

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management and study habits. In the reflection phase, learners assess their performance by comparing the outcomes to their initial goals. Based on their performance, they may react defensively, such as avoiding future challenges, or adaptively, by modifying their strategies for improvement (Azevedo, Moos, 2008; Artino & Stephens, 2009).

Expanding on Zimmerman's work, (Winne, 2005) introduced the four Turning Points Model, which identifies key moments in the learning process.

The first turning point emphasizes understanding the learning environment, such as managing time and handling external pressures. The second turning point involves goal setting, where learners define their objectives. The third turning point occurs when learners apply strategies after acquiring the necessary skills, and the fourth turning point focuses on maintaining motivation to continue using these strategies effectively. (Zimmerman, 2002) also emphasized that SRL can be supported by guidance from teachers, peers, and others in the learner's environment. The effectiveness of SRL is influenced by learners' awareness of how the different phases interact, as well as by their personal characteristics and the learning context. Past experiences and prior knowledge (Schunk, 1985; Nicol, 2009) play a significant role in how learners plan, monitor, and adjust their strategies, which ultimately affect their academic success (Magno, 2010; Yang, 2006).

In conclusion, SRL is a continuous process that involves setting goals, developing strategies, monitoring progress, and reflecting on outcomes. As (Zimmerman, 2002) explains, these components allow learners to manage their learning more effectively, promoting greater autonomy, and leading to better results.

1.2.3 Constructivism

Constructivism, grounded in the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, asserts that individuals learn most effectively when they construct their knowledge (Santrock, 2004). Piaget's theory

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emphasizes the individual's role in transforming and organizing prior knowledge, while Vygotsky's theory highlights the significance of social interaction in the learning process (Vygotsky, 1978). In educational contexts, constructivism underscores how learners interpret events and ideas to create meaningful understanding (Candy, 1991). According to Candy (1991), learning is an active search for meaning rather than simple memorization.

Constructivist teaching practices involve embedding learning in realistic contexts, fostering social negotiation, and encouraging an understanding that knowledge is actively constructed (Woolfolk, 2004). This approach promotes self-awareness and ownership of learning, empowering students to engage in their own educational journey. Candy (1991) further suggests that individuals are "self-constructing" and they have the ability to reshape their circumstances based on their worldview (p. 277). Personal autonomy, as part of this process, is influenced by both individual characteristics and the surrounding environment.

Benson (2001) connects constructivism with learners' active participation in making decisions about both the content and learning methods. Similarly, Little (1991) emphasizes the importance of interdependence rather than dependence in the learning process. Constructivism thus encourages learners to take an active role in their learning, make decisions about how and what to learn, and foster interdependence in collaborative environments.

1.3 Learner Autonomy

1.3.1 Definition of Learner Autonomy

The concept of learner autonomy was first developed at the Centre de Recherche et Applications Pédagogiques en Langues, University of Nancy, France, in the early 1970s. Since its introduction, the concept has been discussed from various perspectives, making it challenging to reach a unified understanding of its definition (Holec, 1981; Little, 1991).

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Learner autonomy is primarily defined from three perspectives: learners' ability (Holec, 1981; Hua, 2009; Miu, 2017; Wan, 2013), learners' psychology (Fan, 2004; Li, 2016; Lin, 2013; Little, 1991), and the political-social context (Benson, 2005; Morrison, 2011; Nguyen, 2014). Holec (1981) is considered one of the key figures who addressed the concept of learner autonomy in education. He defined learner autonomy as *"the ability to take charge of one's own learning"* (Holec, 1981, p.3),

Although Holec's definition remains widely cited, many researchers disagree with his perspective, arguing that it does not account for the cognitive capabilities underlying effective self-management of learning (Benson, 2000, p. 499).

Little (1991) expanded on Holec's definition by adding a psychological dimension. According to Little (1991), learner autonomy is "essentially a matter of the learner's psychological relation to the process and content of learning—a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action" (p. 4).

Benson (2001) believed that autonomous learning requires a combination of processes, including the ability to negotiate for the right to make decisions about and take responsibility for one's learning. As a political concept, Benson and Voller (1997) defined learner autonomy as "the recognition of the rights of learners within educational systems" (p. 29).

Despite the varying definitions, there is a shared recognition of the importance of learner autonomy. Promoting learner autonomy in English as Foreign Language (EFL) contexts is challenging, as it requires reshaping teachers' roles, helping learners become more self-reliant, and considering both pedagogical and cultural elements.

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Models of LA	what LA is	What LA involves/ Main focus of LA	Authors
Technical		learning taking place outside classroom	
Psychological	Ability	taking charge of learning by determining objectives defining contents and progressions, selecting learning methods and techniques, monitoring, and evaluating Learning	Holec (1981)
Qualities		stance towards the world, desire to learn, sense of self, metacognitive capacity, management of change independence from educational processes, strategic engagement with learning, and capacity to negotiate	Breen and, Mann (1997)
Responsibility		cooperating with the teacher and others, monitoring making effort to use available opportunities	Scharle and Szabo (2000)
Knowledge		knowledge about learning strategies (cognitive, self-	Wenden (1991)

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Skills Motivation Confidence		management) knowledge about language learning(metacognitive), and knowledge about learner attitude	
Readiness Willingness		taking charge of learning, acting independently and in operation with others, actively participating in learning Process, critically reflecting on learning	co-Dam (1995)
Personal Dimension		explaining and justifying intellectual, moral and emotional Actions	Candy (1991)

Table 1.1 Summary of Major Definitions of Learner Autonomy (LA)

1.3.2 Characteristics of Autonomous Learners

According to Hedge (2000, p. 72), there are some characteristics that distinguish autonomous learners from those who are not. Below is a list of those features gleaned from the existing literature on learner autonomy. In fact, the majority of scholars (e.g., Candy, 1991, p. 102; Dam, 1995, p. 56; Little, 2004, p. 12; Lamb &Reinders, 2008, p. 78; Vieira, 2009, p. 34) describe autonomous learners as ones who:

- ❖ *“Assume and shoulder responsibility for their own learning”* (Candy, 1991, p. 103).
- ❖ *“Learn within and beyond the classroom walls homogeneously”* (Dam, 1995, p. 57).
- ❖ *“Are good at exploiting learning materials and resources”* (Little, 2004, p. 13).
- ❖ *“Are flexible and able to adjust their learning strategies and preferences to the task in hand”*(Lamb &Reinders, 2008, p. 79).

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- ❖ *“Are actively engaged in their learning “(Vieira, 2009, p. 35).*
- ❖ *“Are willing to take educational risks and persistent enough to finish difficult tasks” (Hedge, 2000, p. 73).*
- ❖ *“Are reflective and ready to assess themselves and the tasks assigned to them “(Candy, 1991, p. 104).*
- ❖ *“Think of teachers as counselors, guides, negotiators, and intellectual assistants” (Dam, 1995, p. 58).*
- ❖ *“Are critical thinkers who can manage their time effectively and learn in various settings” (Little, 2004, p. 14).*

1.3.3 The Importance of Autonomy

Autonomy in education is essential for academic success and personal development. Dewey (1916, p.5) states that education should equip individuals to actively participate in social and political life by developing independent thinking and decision-making skills. In higher education, autonomy is a key outcome, fostering independent thinkers (Stephenson & Laycock, 1993, p.5). In language learning, autonomy allows learners to control their own learning, making it more effective. Benson (2006, p.34) explains that autonomous learners develop strategies and attitudes that make them more confident and flexible in their learning. Gremmo and Riley (1995, p.154) note the shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered approaches, emphasizing individual responsibility for learning. This autonomy leads to better performance, especially in language acquisition.

Moreover, autonomy extends beyond the classroom, enhancing personal effectiveness. Little (1991, p.8) argues that self-regulated learners experience greater purpose and success,

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both academically and in life. Knowles (1975, p. 14) adds that those who take initiative in learning achieve more than those who wait for instruction.

In conclusion, autonomy is crucial for shaping responsible learners, empowering them to engage deeply in their learning and apply it in real-life situations. Promoting autonomy is essential for developing individuals who can navigate both academic and social challenges.

1.3.4 Models of Learner Autonomy

The concept of learner autonomy has been explored from various perspectives, resulting in a range of definitions. To categorize these definitions, researchers have identified four major versions of learner autonomy: technical, psychological, socio-cultural, and political-critical (Benson, 1997; Oxford, 2003). Benson's (1997) model encompasses three versions, while Oxford (2003) expands on this model by adding a socio-cultural dimension. The technical version views learner autonomy as a set of skills used outside the educational context, promoting independence and self-discovery (Benson, 1997, p. 22; Oxford, 2003, p. 80; Le, 2009, p. 45).

Besides, the psychological version focuses on internal features, such as attitudes, abilities, learning strategies, and styles, that motivate learners to take control of their learning (Oxford, 2003, p. 81; Le, 2009, p. 50). This version emphasizes the importance of interaction, creativity, and meaning negotiation in fostering psychological autonomy (Le, 2009, p. 55).

Further, the socio-cultural version, also known as socio-cognitive or socio-interactionist, posits that cognitive and language development results from social interaction (Oxford, 2003, p. 83). This perspective suggests that autonomy is gained through social interaction with more capable, mediating individuals in specific settings (Oxford, 2003, p. 85).

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The political-critical perspective highlights the role of power, access, and ideology in learner autonomy (Oxford, 2003, p. 87). This version emphasizes the need to recognize and challenge existing power structures to promote autonomy.

1.3.5 Levels and Domains of Autonomy

A/Levels

Some researchers claimed in the late 1990s that learning autonomy is a matter of levels or at least related to it, taking into comparison EFL learners (Benson, 2006, p. 12). Secondary school students are supposed to be more autonomous than pupils in middle school. It has been noticed that their autonomy's ability grows with their maturity and growth.

There are several models of autonomy levels. First, Nunan's (1997, as cited in Benson, 2006) attempt involves a model of five levels of autonomy in the learner's action. They are classified as follows:

1. Awareness: This stage refers to learner's ability to identify the strategy implications of pedagogical tasks and identify their own preferred styles and strategies (Benson, 2006, p. 13).

2. Involvement: Learners who are involved in their learning process; they are able to select their own goals and make choices among a range of options to improve their level (Benson, 2006, p. 14).

3. Intervention: At this step, learners are involved in modifying and adapting the goals and content of the learning program, plus the ability to select and decide the activities practiced inside the classroom (Benson, 2006, p. 15).

4. Creation: This stage refers to students' ability to create their own goals, objectives, and be responsible for their learning achievement (Benson, 2006, p. 16).

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5. Transcendence: In the last stage, learners go beyond the classroom and make links between the content of classroom learning and the world beyond the classroom, functioning as fully autonomous learners and improving their learning without guidance or help (Benson, 2006, p. 17).

Second, Littlewood (1999) states, *"If we define autonomy in educational terms as involving students' capacity to use their learning independently of teachers"* (Littlewood, 1999, p. 73). Littlewood speaks about autonomy as a degree/level, representing the idea that learner autonomy is not all-or-nothing, and it serves as a rough substitute for the much more complicated. He provides a list of behaviors that identify the level of autonomy of the learner. He arbitrarily decided to divide his list into seven levels, which are actually not fixed and could be more (or less) depending on the level

LEVEL	Learner's level of choice
1	Learners make their own choices in grammar and vocabulary-such as in role-plays
2	Learners choose the meanings and the communication strategies to use to convey them
3	Learners make decisions about goals, meanings and strategies.
4	Learners start shaping their own learning context-such as in project work
5	Learners make decisions that traditionally concern the teacher , on materials and learning tasks.
6	Learners are involved in making the syllabus controlling the progression of their learning
7	Learning can use the language to communicate independently outside the classroom

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Table1.2 Little wood's levels of autonomy (1996, p, 429-430)

The top levels are much free to choose and control learning activities, while lower levels are not allowed for much choice on the part of the learner (Littlewoods, 1999, p. 82). Third, Mascaro (1997) proposed a somewhat similar three-stage model involving:

1. Autonomy of language competence: This stage refers to learners' ability to use language effectively (Mascaro, 1997, p. 123).

2. Autonomy of language learning competence: At this stage, learnerscantake control of their own learning processes (Mascaro, 1997, p. 125).

3. Autonomy of choice and action: In this final stage, learners are able to make choices about their own learning and take action to achieve their goals (Mascaro, 1997, p. 127). Finally, Scharle and Szabó's (2000) three-phase model involves:

1. Raising awareness: This phase involves increasing learners' awareness of their own learning processes and needs (Scharle&Szabó, 2000, p. 156).

2. Changing attitudes: At this phase, learners begin to change their attitudes towards learning and take more responsibility for their own learning (Scharle&Szabó, 2000, p. 158).

3. Transferring roles: In this final phase, learners take on more responsibility for their own learning, and teachers transfer their roles from controllers to facilitators (Scharle&Szabó, 2000, p. 160).

Each of these models implies a possible progression from 'lower' to 'higher' levels of autonomy. They may also be related to the movement of the idea of autonomy into

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mainstream language education and a perceived need to identify spaces at the lower levels, where autonomy might be fostered without radical educational reforms (Benson, 2006, p. 20).

B/DOMAINS

Learner autonomy (LA) can be conceptualized through various frameworks. Littlewood (1996a) proposes a framework comprising three interrelated domains: autonomy as a learner, autonomy as a person, and autonomy as a communicator (p. 20). These domains are interconnected, with linguistic creativity, for instance, contributing to autonomy as a communicator and, in turn, facilitating the expression of personal meanings (Littlewood, 1996a, p. 22).

Dickinson (1996) offers an alternative perspective, categorizing LA into four domains from the viewpoints of researchers, teachers, and learners:

1. Researchers and teachers: Focus on learning techniques rather than teaching techniques (Dickinson, 1996, p. 12).

2. Teachers: Guide learners towards autonomy by providing opportunities for autonomous learning (Dickinson, 1996, p. 15).

3. Learners: Recognize LA as a learning mode leading to effective learning, encouraged by teachers (Dickinson, 1996, p. 18).

4. Collective perspective: Promote out-of-class learning as a crucial aim of educational activities (Dickinson, 1996, p. 21).

These domains emphasize the allocation of responsibilities among stakeholders to foster LA. Both Littlewood's and Dickinson's approaches highlight the importance of teacher

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guidance, learner engagement, and the employment of learning strategies for self-improvement.

1.3.6 Factors Influencing EFL Students' Autonomy

Learner autonomy (LA) has been the focus of extensive research over several decades; however, studies that systematically explore the factors influencing LA remain limited. Upon reviewing the literature, I find that there are two categories of influencing factors that are particularly important: internal factors and external factors. Internal factors relate to the learners themselves, with self-motivation being a significant contributor to autonomy. In contrast, external factors involve elements from the environment, such as the teacher's role, the learning environment, and the integration of technology, all of which play a vital role in shaping learner autonomy.

1.3.6.1 Self-Motivation

Autonomous learners are often driven by their motivation and capacity for reflection, which enables them to engage in more efficient and effective learning (Little, 1991, p. 58). Motivation plays a vital role in fostering autonomous learning (Hsu, 2005, p. 22) and is a key factor in encouraging autonomous learning behaviors (Benson, 2007b, p. 47; Liu, 2015, p. 34). Motivation is not only necessary for learner autonomy but also acts as a driving force for its development (Chan et al., 2002, p. 81; Dixon, 2011, p. 53; Hsu, 2005, p. 22; Littlewood, 1996a, p. 33; Macaskill& Taylor, 2010, p. 67; Nguyen, 2008, 2009, p. 102; Swatevacharkul, 2009, p. 91; Swatevacharkul&Boonma, 2021, p. 45; Tassinari, 2012, p. 19; Ushioda, 1996, p. 84; Zarei&Elakaei, 2012, p. 73).

Motivation is often regarded as one of the fundamental components of learner autonomy (Chan et al., 2002, p. 81; Dixon, 2011, p. 53; Hsu, 2005, p. 22; Littlewood, 1996a, p. 33). Some researchers even describe it as the "driving force" behind autonomous learning (Hsu,

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2005, p. 22). Learners who are motivated are more likely to take part in self-directed learning activities, which are crucial for enhancing autonomy (Littlewood, 1996a, p. 33).

Furthermore, I agree with Littlewood (1996a, p. 33), Hsu (2005, p. 22), and Swatevacharkul (2009, p. 91) that motivation is closely linked to a "willingness" to learn independently. This willingness not only fosters a sense of responsibility for one's own learning but also leads to more effective and long-lasting learning outcomes.

1.3.6.2 Teacher Roles

Many scholars emphasize that, to improve learner autonomy (LA), teachers should go beyond the traditional role of simply transmitting knowledge. Little (1996, p. 110) argues that while learners have the potential to be self-regulated, this does not mean they will achieve autonomy without the support of teachers. Teachers play an essential role in guiding students toward autonomy. According to (Kemala, 2016, p. 121) and (Leaver, et al., 2005, p. 98), teachers not only assist students in defining learning goals but also provide opportunities for them to make independent learning decisions. This aligns with the view expressed by (Alonazi, 2017, p. 65), who suggests that, to foster greater independence, teachers should assume multiple roles: guide, resource, and facilitator.

In addition to these roles, research has shown that students are more motivated to learn when they perceive their teacher as deeply committed to teaching. Tran and Le (2022, p. 123) found that teachers who demonstrate strong dedication inspire greater student engagement, which, in turn, fosters autonomy. When students feel that their teachers are invested in their learning, they are more likely to take responsibility for their academic progress.

Thus, the research consistently underscores the importance of teachers moving beyond the traditional role of knowledge transmission to actively support and guide students toward

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autonomy. Their involvement in setting learning objectives, offering resources, and showing commitment to teaching has a significant impact on students' ability to regulate their learning independently.

1.3.6.3 Learning environment

Environmental factors, including situational and social aspects, significantly impact language learning. According to (Benson ,2001, p. 49), the social aspect of learning involves interactions with parents, siblings, relatives, friends, and teachers, all of whom contribute to a student's overall learning experience. These social interactions can provide the emotional and intellectual support necessary for developing learner autonomy. Self-regulated learners, in particular, benefit from peer interactions, as these can facilitate collaboration and enhance learning in the classroom (Reinders&Balcikanli, 2011, p. 529).

The learning environment itself plays a crucial role in fostering learner autonomy by providing access to a variety of resources. Resources such as libraries, computers, and online materials empower learners to take charge of their own learning and engage with content independently (Benson, 2013, p. 123). In addition to resources, a supportive atmosphere is essential—one that encourages learners to take risks, explore new ideas, and engage in self-directed learning (Little, 2007, p. 18).

A flexible and autonomy-supportive environment is also vital for promoting learner autonomy. This includes offering self-paced learning, flexible scheduling, and integrating technology into the learning process. These elements provide learners with opportunities to make choices about their learning, set personal goals, and work independently, which helps them take greater responsibility for their educational progress (Reinders&Balcikanli, 2011, p. 531).

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Teacher support and guidance are crucial in fostering learner autonomy. Teachers can provide scaffolding, feedback, and encouragement, helping learners develop a sense of agency and responsibility for their learning (Kemala, 2016, p. 551). While the learning environment itself is important, teacher involvement strengthens learners' ability to manage and take control of their own learning.

The physical learning space also significantly impacts learner autonomy. Flexible seating arrangements, collaborative workspaces, and access to digital tools and resources encourage students to work both independently and with peers, share ideas, and take ownership of their learning. These elements of the physical environment help create a space that supports both individual and collaborative learning (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 147). By creating a supportive and flexible learning environment—one that incorporates social, resource-based, teacher-guided, and physical aspects—educators can help learners develop the skills, motivation, and confidence needed to become autonomous learners.

1.3.6.4 Technology

Technology has significantly impacted learner autonomy, providing learners with control over their learning and numerous opportunities for self-directed learning (Benson 2013, p.10; Chapelle, 2003, p.50). The availability of multiple online resources, such as online courses, videos, podcasts, and language learning apps, enables learners to participate in self-guided learning, promoting independence and autonomy (Benson, 2013, p. 12). Moreover, technology facilitates customized learning experiences, allowing learners to learn based on their needs and preferences (Chapelle, 2003, p. 56). For instance, online learning platforms can offer learners customized learning plans with recommended resources and activities according to their learning objectives and level (Mishan, 2005, p. 123).

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Technology also enables seamless communication and collaboration between learners, teachers, and peers, allowing learners to quickly seek guidance, support, and feedback (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008, p. 275). Furthermore, technology empowers learners to monitor their progress, set goals, and evaluate their learning, promoting autonomy and self-directed learning (Little, 2007, p. 18).

1.4 Vocabulary Learning

1.4.1 Definition of Vocabulary Learning

Vocabulary is a fundamental aspect of language learning, often varying across languages due to the distinct set of words each language possesses. The Oxford Dictionary (2018) defines vocabulary as "the body of words used in a particular language," which serves as the foundation for communication. Similarly, Hornby (1995) highlights that the entire set of words in a language constitutes its (vocabulary. As Ur, 1996: 23) points out, vocabulary is essential for language learners because effective communication is impossible without a wide range of words.

According to Nation (2008: 55), vocabulary plays a central role in language learning by enabling meaningful communication through the combination of words and expressions. In this context, vocabulary is not just a collection of words; it also encompasses specialized expressions specific to certain fields or subcultures, as noted by Roget (1980). Furthermore, (Neuman and Dwyer, 2009) categorize vocabulary into expressive and receptive types, where expressive vocabulary is used in speaking, while receptive vocabulary is crucial for listening comprehension.

Also, Richards et al. (2002: 98) argue that learning new vocabulary is essential for developing overall language proficiency. They explain that vocabulary is not only about

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knowing words but also about understanding their meanings in context. This idea is reinforced by (Hebert,1994), who stresses the importance of context in shaping the understanding of words. Laufer (1997: 143) adds that the process of learning and using vocabulary is inseparable, as effective language use is dependent on the vocabulary acquired.

Thus, vocabulary learning is crucial for both foreign languages teaching and learning, as it directly influences communication skills. The more words a learner knows, the more effectively they can communicate and understand the world around them.

1.4.2 Types of Vocabulary

Vocabulary can be categorized into various types, including receptive and productive vocabulary. According to (Milton,2014, p. 25), receptive and productive vocabulary refer to the ability to recognize words and use them in spoken or written form, respectively. (Manan2017, p. 252) supports this distinction, explaining that receptive vocabulary involves knowing and understanding words, which are stored in one's mind and can be acquired through reading and listening.

In contrast, productive vocabulary involves retrieving words from one's receptive vocabulary and using them appropriately in written and spoken form (Manan, 2017, p. 253). (Dakhi and Fitria ,2019, p. 539) further distinguish between active and passive vocabulary. Active vocabulary refers to words that learners have learned, understood, and can use in written and spoken form. In contrast, passive vocabulary refers to words that learners have not understood and cannot use.

Additionally, (Harkio and Pietilä ,2016, p. 912) identify two aspects of vocabulary size: vocabulary breadth and vocabulary depth. Vocabulary breadth refers to the number of words students know, while vocabulary depth refers to how well students understand the words.

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Nation (2001, p. 25) further divides word knowledge into three components: word form, word meaning, and word use.

M.Li and Kirby (2015, p. 851) also emphasize the importance of both vocabulary breadth and depth in reading comprehension. They argue that learners must possess both dimensions of vocabulary to be proficient in reading comprehension.

1.4.3 Vocabulary Learning vs. Vocabulary Acquisition

The terms "*vocabulary learning*" and "*vocabulary acquisition*" are often used interchangeably. However, in fact, they are two different concepts. Vocabulary acquisition, as (Krashen ,1981, p. 45) explains, is the subconscious process by which individuals acquire vocabulary through meaningful communication. This natural, intuitive process occurs when learners are exposed to authentic language use in context, without being explicitly aware of the rules governing vocabulary or grammar.

In contrast, vocabulary learning involves conscious, deliberate efforts to learn vocabulary, often through formal instruction (Nation, 2001, p. 101).(Krashen ,1981, p. 45) emphasizes that vocabulary acquisition occurs "subconsciously" and is driven by contextualized exposure to the language. This stands in contrast to vocabulary learning, which focuses on explicit instruction and often centers on the rules and structure of language rather than meaning (Nation, 2001, p. 101). Nation (2001, p. 101) further clarifies that vocabulary learning is a "conscious process" wherein learners focus on memorizing and understanding words in isolation, often outside of natural communicative settings.

One key distinction between vocabulary learning and vocabulary acquisition is that the former is tied to formal educational environments, where language form and grammar rules are taught explicitly, while the latter is tied to exposure to language in authentic, real-world

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contexts. As Nation (2001, p. 62) notes, "Learning vocabulary requires active engagement with language," whereas acquisition depends on passive interaction through exposure to authentic language use. Moreover, vocabulary acquisition is often linked with first language development, where children absorb vocabulary naturally through their environment, while vocabulary learning is more common in second language settings, where learners are often introduced to words in a structured, systematic way.

Additionally, the distinction between vocabulary acquisition and learning is also evident in their impact on language proficiency. Vocabulary acquisition is generally seen as crucial for achieving fluency and natural communication, as it arises from meaningful interaction with the language (Krashen, 1981, p. 45). On the other hand, vocabulary learning supports the development of a more formal understanding of language, which is essential for academic or specialized contexts (Nation, 2001, p. 101).

Therefore, while both processes contribute to vocabulary knowledge, the subconscious, experiential nature of vocabulary acquisition and the conscious, formalized process of vocabulary learning serve different roles in language development.

1.4.4 Approaches To Vocabulary Learning

1.4.4.1 Implicit vs. Explicit Vocabulary Learning

In vocabulary learning, two main approaches are often discussed: explicit and implicit learning. Both have distinct characteristics and provide unique benefits, making it essential for language learners to understand these methods in order to optimize their vocabulary development.

Vocabulary Learning requires learners to focus consciously on learning new vocabulary. This method is structured and typically involves tools such as word lists, flashcards, or

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dictionary exercises (Laufer& Yano, 2001, p. 28). A defining feature of explicit learning is the learner's awareness of the vocabulary they are trying to master. While explicit learning is effective for short-term memorization, it may fall short when it comes to long-term retention. This limitation arises because explicit learning generally lacks the rich contextual environment that would allow words to become deeply integrated into the learner's language knowledge (Laufer& Yano, 2001, p. 28).

In contrast, Implicit Vocabulary Learning occurs unconsciously through exposure to language in natural settings, such as through reading, listening, or engaging in conversations (Laufer,Hulstijn, 2001, p. 10). In this approach, learners do not focus on individual words but instead infer their meanings from context. Implicit learning is particularly beneficial for long-term vocabulary retention, as it encourages deeper engagement with the language (Hunt & Beglar, 1998, p. 220). Words learned implicitly tend to be better incorporated into the learner's linguistic system, ultimately boosting fluency in both speaking and writing.

Implicit learning fosters more natural language use. It allows learners to internalize words in such a way that they are easily available for immediate communication. Schmidt (1990, qtd. in Nyiazadeh, 2009, p. 35) highlights that implicit learning helps learners develop an intuitive understanding of vocabulary, making it easier to recall words in real-time conversations or written texts. This method encourages flexibility in using vocabulary across various contexts, which strengthens overall language proficiency.

While each approach offers distinct advantages, combining explicit and implicit learning may be the most effective strategy for vocabulary development. Explicit learning offers a solid foundation by giving learners focused exposure to new words, while implicit learning enriches this foundation by placing vocabulary in real-life, meaningful contexts. This

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combination enhances both retention and fluency (Schmidt, 1990, in Nyiazadeh, 2009, p. 35). By integrating both approaches, learners can achieve a deeper understanding of vocabulary and gain more confidence in using it in everyday communication.

1.4.4.2 Incidental vs. Intentional Vocabulary Learning

Both incidental and intentional vocabulary learning are important for language development. Incidental vocabulary learning, which often occurs through exposure to language in context, is recognized for its ability to lead to deeper cognitive processing and better retention of vocabulary. This learning typically happens when the learner is engaged in activities such as reading or listening, where the main focus is not on learning vocabulary but rather on understanding the broader context (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001, p. 10).

Hunt and Beglar (1998) point out that vocabulary learned incidentally is beneficial for learners at all levels of proficiency, particularly when they are exposed to a wide variety of language input. Through this process, words are internalized more naturally, contributing to more lasting retention due to the mental effort involved in understanding meanings from the surrounding context (Hunt and Beglar, p. 220).

On the other hand, intentional vocabulary learning refers to the active and focused effort to learn new words, often with a specific focus on their meanings. This approach is typically used in structured environments like classrooms, where learners engage in activities such as word lists, drills, and clear definitions to target vocabulary learning (Laufer & Yano, 2001, p. 28). While intentional learning can be effective in helping learners achieve specific vocabulary goals, some studies suggest that it may not always lead to long-term retention as effectively as incidental learning. Laufer and Yano (2001) argue that vocabulary learned

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intentionally tends to be less firmly established, as the process often lacks the contextual richness that incidental learning offers (p. 28).

In fact, incidental vocabulary learning fosters more meaningful engagement with the words being learned. Observes that this process encourages learners to figure out meanings based on context, which promotes deeper thinking and better retention (Cahoon,1995,p. 118). This is in contrast to the rote memorization often associated with intentional vocabulary learning, which focuses more on recall rather than understanding the word's meaning in context.

Despite the clear benefits of both methods, integrating intentional and incidental learning might provide a more complete approach to vocabulary learning. The intentional approach ensures learners are clearly introduced to new vocabulary, while incidental learning enhances this by reinforcing and expanding learners' understanding through repeated exposure in natural contexts (Schmidt, 1990, qtd. in Nyiazadeh, 2009, p. 35). By combining these methods, learners gain not only active knowledge of vocabulary but also the ability to use those words in real-life language situations.

1.4.5 Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Vocabulary learning strategies are essential for foreign language acquisition, enabling learners to become independent and take an active role in their learning. According to Cohen (1998), strategies can be categorized into three main groups: strategies for remembering words, semantic strategies, and vocabulary learning and practicing strategies. These strategies include techniques such as repetition, linking words to situations, using dictionaries, and employing flashcards. The acquisition of vocabulary is crucial for successful foreign language use, as it plays a key role in developing the four basic language skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Vocabulary learning strategies can be classified into four primary

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categories: cognitive, metacognitive, memory, and social strategies (Oxford, 1990). Research has also investigated the size of vocabulary required for foreign language learners to attain proficiency.

Studies suggest that learners need to acquire around 3000 word families to understand basic conversations, 5000 word families to read novels, and at least 9000 words to cope with advanced texts (Nation, 2001). Additionally, Gu and Johnson (1996) found that vocabulary learning strategies have a significant impact on language learning outcomes. Schmitt (2000) also emphasizes the importance of vocabulary in language teaching, while Cook (2001) highlights the role of vocabulary in second language learning and teaching.

1.5 Autonomy and Vocabulary Learning

Vocabulary learning is one of the most significant challenges faced by English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Traditionally, students have relied heavily on teachers for vocabulary learning. However, with the evolution of teaching methodologies, a growing emphasis on learner autonomy has emerged, encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning (Little, 1991, p. 45).

At the university level, where classroom exposure to the target language is often limited, students are increasingly expected to become independent in their vocabulary learning (Holec, 1981, p. 12). Consequently, learners must find effective ways to expand their vocabulary outside the classroom. Learner autonomy plays a vital role in facilitating vocabulary development, as it allows learners to manage their learning, improving both the retention and use of vocabulary (Benson, 2001, p. 87).

Research consistently supports the idea that learner autonomy positively influences vocabulary learning. For instance, (Schmitt ,2000, p. 45) argues that independent strategies,

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such as reading authentic texts and using dictionaries, enhance vocabulary retention and usage. Similarly, studies by (Gardner, Miller, 1999, p. 25) suggest that personalized learning strategies, like goal-setting, are crucial for improving vocabulary retention. (Oxford, 1990, p. 76) concurs, highlighting the role of self-regulated learning strategies in enhancing vocabulary learning. On the contrary, learners who lack autonomy may struggle with vocabulary retention and application, often relying passively on teachers (Cohen, 2007, p. 120).

The next section will explore the relationship between learner autonomy and vocabulary learning, focusing on how autonomy contributes to vocabulary retention and overall language development.

1.5.1 Relationship Between Learner Autonomy and Vocabulary Learning

The relationship between learner autonomy and vocabulary learning is vital for effective language development. As (Benson, 2001, p. 47) emphasizes, "autonomy is not just a matter of learners taking control of their own learning, but also of their ability to manage their own vocabulary learning." Autonomous learners show greater engagement in seeking opportunities to expand their vocabulary, as they take ownership of their learning process and engage in independent practice (Dickinson, 1987, p. 123). (Little, 1991, p. 4) also points out that "*the autonomous learner is one who can take charge of his or her own learning, and this includes vocabulary learning*," highlighting the critical role that autonomy plays in vocabulary learning.

Autonomy further empowers learners to develop personalized strategies for vocabulary learning. These strategies, such as self-directed learning, peer collaboration, and using technology, allow learners to explore vocabulary at their own pace and in ways that resonate

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with them (Holec, 1981, p. 13). (Cotterall, 1995, p. 217) states that "autonomy enables learners to develop a more reflective and thoughtful approach to vocabulary learning," enhancing their ability to use vocabulary effectively in different contexts.

Moreover, learner autonomy facilitates a deeper, more meaningful connection to vocabulary. When learners take control over their vocabulary learning, they are more likely to engage with words in authentic, real-life contexts, making the learning experience more relevant to their personal needs and interests (Benson, 2001, p. 50). (Little, 1991, p. 5) further elaborates, stating, "the autonomous learner is one who can learn vocabulary in a way that is relevant and meaningful to their own needs and interests," reinforcing the idea that autonomy fosters a contextualized approach to learning new words.

The relationship between learner autonomy and vocabulary learning is dynamic and connected. Autonomy not only enhances vocabulary learning by fostering active engagement and personal responsibility, but vocabulary development also supports the growth of autonomy as learners refine their skills in managing their own language learning process

1.5.2 The Role of Autonomy in Vocabulary Learning

Autonomy in language learning plays a critical role in vocabulary learning. When learners take control of their own learning, it promotes continuous vocabulary development, especially in environments where opportunities for language use outside the classroom are limited (Sawan, 2016, p. 45). This approach encourages learners to engage with language on their own terms, promoting ongoing vocabulary growth even in informal settings.

Autonomous vocabulary learning allows students to set individual learning goals and progress according to their needs, as (Kaur, 2013, p. 88) highlights. This flexibility is particularly important as it allows learners to focus on vocabulary areas that match their

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immediate needs or interests. With autonomy, students take responsibility for their vocabulary learning, which has been linked to greater retention and a deeper understanding of new words. This self-regulation ensures that vocabulary learning is suited to the learner's development.

Several studies emphasize the importance of autonomy in vocabulary learning. Khalifa and (Shabdin ,2016, p. 75) found that students who engage in independent vocabulary learning, in addition to classroom instruction, demonstrate higher levels of success in language learning. These findings stress the need for learners to develop self-regulation skills, which are essential for long-term vocabulary retention and overall language proficiency.

Motivation also plays a significant role in fostering autonomy in vocabulary learning. As (Sawan, 2018, p.112) notes, motivated learners are more likely to take charge of their vocabulary learning, actively seeking opportunities to expand their vocabulary. When learners are driven by internal motivation, they are better able to engage in independent vocabulary-building activities outside the classroom, further enhancing their language development.

Additionally, a study by Almahjoub (2014, p.123) on Libyan secondary school students found that teachers who encouraged autonomous learning practices helped boost students' confidence in managing their own vocabulary learning. By fostering an environment where students take responsibility for their learning, both teachers and learners contribute to the enhancement of vocabulary learning.

1.6 Conclusion

This literature review has effectively highlighted the significant relationship between autonomy and vocabulary learning, emphasizing the crucial role of learner autonomy in enhancing vocabulary learning and retention. By promoting self-regulation, motivation, and

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personalized learning strategies, autonomous learning encourages students to take responsibility for their vocabulary development.

The chapter has shown that increased autonomy not only fosters a deeper understanding of vocabulary but also enables learners to engage in independent vocabulary-building practices both inside and outside the classroom.

Chapter Two:

Research Design and Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This chapter represents the practical side of the current study; it intends to examine the perspectives of both EFL students and teachers regarding fostering EFL student's autonomy in vocabulary learning. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research combines questionnaire surveys with students and teachers, as well as semi-structured interviews with students. The aim of this chapter is to provide a thorough description of the research design, including the research setting, participants, data collection procedures, and analytical techniques.

2.2 Research Design

In order to collect data, this study uses a mixed-methods design that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. The purpose of this study is to investigate how EFL teachers and students view the growth of learner autonomy throughout vocabulary learning. In addition to interviewing a few chosen EFL students from Ahmed Zabana University Relizane's English Department, the researchers also administered a questionnaire to EFL instructors and students.

2.3 Sample and Setting:

The study included 50 EFL students from the Department of English at Ahmed Zabana University in Relizane who filled out the questionnaire along with 15 students who participated in the interview. Fifteen teachers from the same department completed the questionnaire as well. The research team implemented a random sampling method to make sure each sample member was equally likely to be selected.

2.4 Data Collection Instruments:

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments to meet its research objectives and answer its research questions. The research team developed a questionnaire to collect responses from 50 EFL students and 15 teachers about their

experiences and views on autonomous vocabulary learning. A semi structured interview was conducted with 15 students to obtain detailed qualitative information about their experiences and challenges. The chosen instruments served to gather pertinent data for the research subject.

2.4.1 Description of Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study is semi-structured, consisting of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. It was designed to collect data on fostering EFL students' autonomy in vocabulary learning. The questionnaire begins with a brief introduction and is organized into four sections containing 15 items.

Section One: Background Information

This section contains four multiple-choice questions which provide quantitative data about the teacher's gender, teaching experience, subject(s) taught, and qualifications to obtain demographic data to obtain teachers' profiles.

Section Two: Learner Autonomy and Vocabulary Learning

This section contains four multiple-choice questions which provide quantitative data about the teacher's gender, teaching experience, subject(s) taught, and qualifications to obtain demographic data to obtain teachers' profiles.

Section Three: Teaching Practices and Learner Autonomy

This section consists of four questions (open-ended and multiple-choice) to try to find out about teachers' practices in regards to teaching vocabulary and promoting learner autonomy in EFL classrooms. It asks how teachers currently teach vocabulary, what they can do to promote learner autonomy, the use of technology in teaching vocabulary learning, and the obstacles they face in promoting autonomy in their classrooms.

Section Four: Encouraging Autonomy and Strategies

This section consists of three questions in open-ended and multiple-choice formats designed to gain insights into teacher's practices to promote learner autonomy in vocabulary learning among EFL students. Specifically, it seeks to understand how teachers position and encourage students to take ownership of their vocabulary learning, the specific strategies they implement to stimulate autonomy in learner vocabulary learning, and any other comments or suggestions that the teachers may have on the topic.

2.4.2 Description of Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study is semi-structured, consisting of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. It was designed to gather data on fostering EFL students' autonomy in vocabulary learning. The questionnaire begins with a brief introduction and is organized into three sections containing 18 items.

Section One: Background Information

This section contains five questions: multiple choice and short-answer; and were designed to quantify the variables regarding students' gender, age, experience learning English, their reasons for learning English, and their self-evaluation of their level of proficiency in English.

Section Two: Learner Autonomy

This section aims to gather data on students' attitudes and perceptions about autonomy in learning English through six questions using a Likert scale, open-ended questions, and scaled-response questions. This section supports analysis of the items on students' sense of their own autonomy and confidence regarding the choices they make in learning, proactively sourcing learning resources, making learning goals, understanding what learner autonomy is, the teacher's role in fostering autonomy, and the learning context's general support of the autonomous learning process.

Section Three: Vocabulary Learning

This element consists of seven questions in a variety of forms including likert scale, ranking, open-ended, and scaled-response types; it will examine students' perceptions of subject matter knowledge related to vocabulary; the importance of vocabulary in learning English; students' level of independence in learning new vocabulary; students' preferred vocabulary learning strategies; students' perception of the effectiveness of various vocabulary learning strategies; challenges faced when learning vocabulary independently; and, any personal rationale or suggestions to improve vocabulary learning, as they relate to vocabulary development.

Description of Students' Interview

In this present study, the interview was conducted with fifteen second-year students from the Department of English at the University of Relizane. Each student was interviewed separately to avoid receiving similar answers. The duration of the interview was about 20 to 25 minutes for each student. It was a semi-structured interview that included a combination of six open-ended and closed-ended questions. This semi-structured interview aims to gather insights from students regarding their perspectives on fostering learner autonomy in the vocabulary learning process. At first, I introduced myself and explained the purpose of my research to the participants. After that, the students were asked to briefly introduce themselves, including their name, age, and background. Next, they were asked about their reasons for studying English and whether it was their choice or influenced by other factors. The interviewees were then asked about their perspectives on learner autonomy in vocabulary learning and whether they believe it is important. They were also asked how motivation affects their vocabulary learning and if it helps them learn independently. Following that, the students were asked whether they usually learn vocabulary from their teacher or on their own,

and which method they find more effective, along with an explanation. They were then asked if they use technology in their studies and how it helps them learn vocabulary autonomously.

2.5 Data Analysis of Questionnaire and Interview

2.5.1 Teachers' Questionnaire Analysis

Item 1 : Gender

Total	Male	Female
15	6	9
100%	40%	60%

Table 2.1 The number of participants.

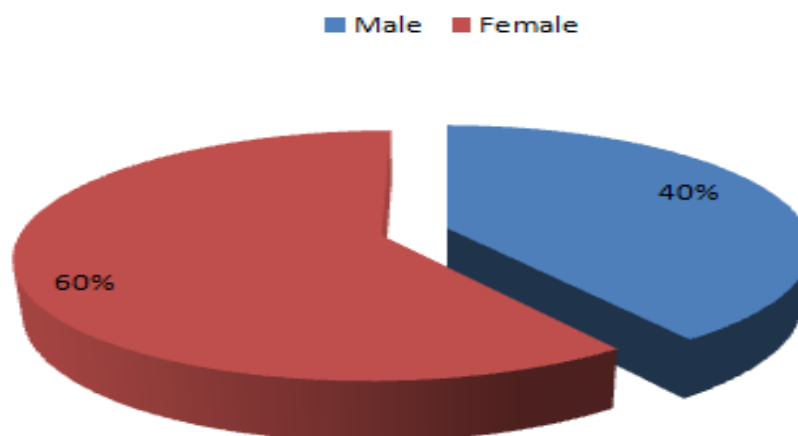


Figure 2.1 Participants' Gender

Analyzing the data, it is noted that, that the majority of the teachers are female represented 60% , and males represented 40%.

Item 2: teaching experience

- a) 0 to 5 years
- b) 6 to10 years
- c) More than 10 years

Total	0 to 5 years	6 to10 years	More than 10 years
15	8	2	5
100%	54%	13%	33%

Table 2.2 Teaching Experience

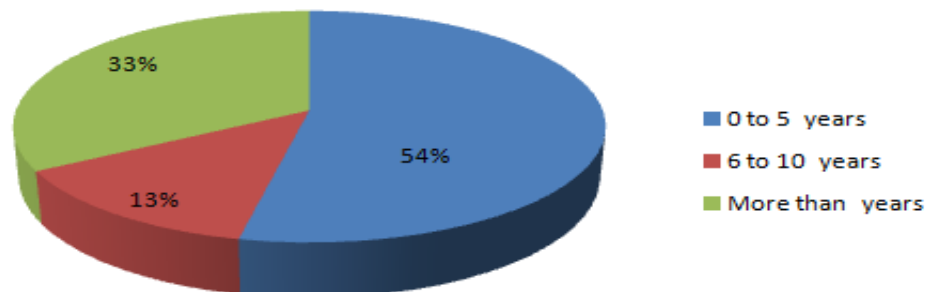


Figure 2.2 Teaching Experience

The table indicate that, of the 15 teachers, (54%), had little (0-5years) experience teaching, (13%) had moderate (6-10 years) experience and (33%) are seasoned educators (over 10 years) of experience.

Item 3: classes I teach

a) Licence	b) Master	c) Both	
Licence	Masters	Both	
Total	Licence	Masters	Both
15	6	0	9
100%	40%	0%	60%

Table 2.3 Teaching Classes

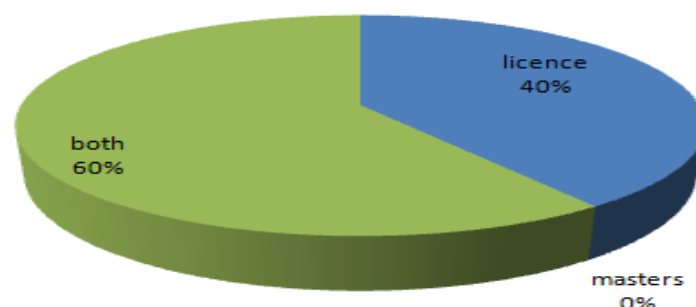


Figure 2.3 Teaching Classes

From the result we can see that (40%) teach license classes, and (60%) teach both licence and master's classes.

Item4: Educational Qualification

- a) Master's degree
- b) Magister degree
- c) Doctoral degree

Total	Master's degree	Magister degree	Doctoral degree
15	4	0	11
100	27%	0%	73%

Table 2.4Educational Qualification

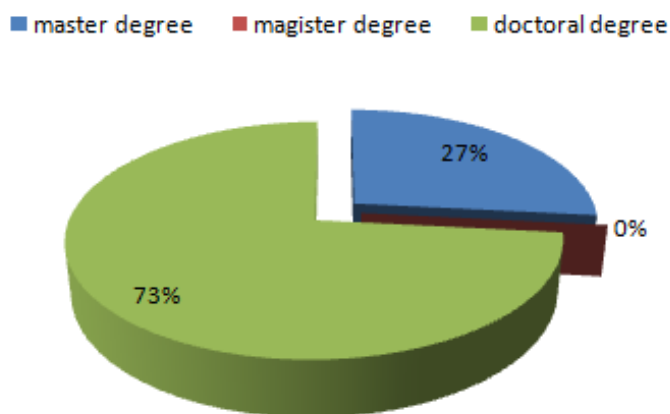


Figure 2.4Educational Qualification

The result show that (73%) of teachers hold a master's degree,(0%) hold a magister degree, and (27%) hold a doctoral degree.

Item 5: learner's autonomy plays an important role in developing and enhancing their vocabulary.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree

Total	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15	11	4	0	0
100%	73%	27%	0%	0%

Table 2.5 Role of Autonomy in Vocabulary Learning

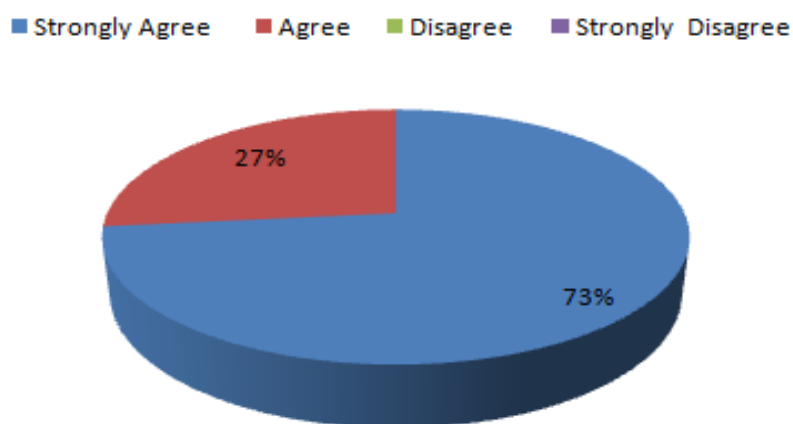


Figure 2.5 the Role of Learner Autonomy in Vocabulary Learning.

The above finding indicates that (73%) of teachers strongly agree that learner autonomy is important for vocabulary development, and (27%) agree. None of the teachers disagree or strongly disagree with this statement.

Item6: do you think that fostering learner autonomy helps students in vocabulary learning?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Total	Yes	No
15	15	0
100%	100%	0%

Table 2.6Learner Autonomy and Vocabulary Outcomes

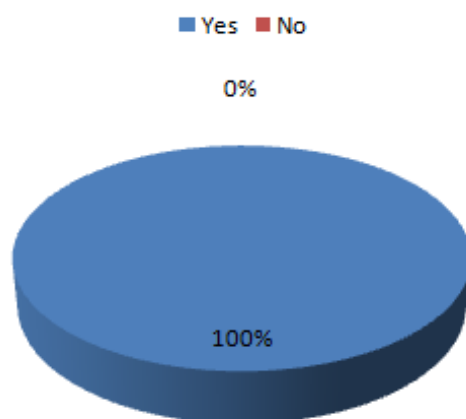


Figure2.6Learner Autonomy and Vocabulary Outcomes

All the teachers (100%) believe that fostering autonomy helps students in vocabulary learning, with no one disagreeing.

Item7: how would you rate the level of learner autonomy among your students in general?

- a) Low
- b) Moderate
- c) High

Total	Low	Moderate	High
15	3	12	0
100%	20%	80%	0%

Table 2.7The Level of Learner Autonomy.

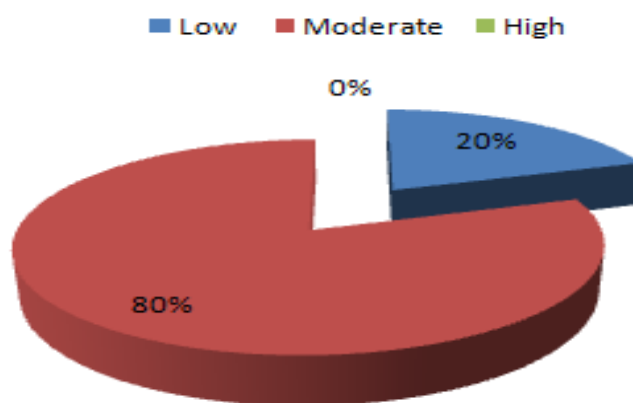


Figure 2.7The Level of Learner Autonomy.

The table show that (20%) of teachers think students' autonomy in vocabulary learning is low, while (80%) think its moderate. none of the teachers (0%) rated it as high.

Item 8: In your experience, what are the key benefits of fostering learner autonomy in vocabulary learning?

Most of the teachers gave comprehensive responses regarding the benefits of encouraging learner autonomy in vocabulary learning. Improved motivation and greater engagement, which lead to better retention and a deeper understanding of vocabulary, were cited as the most significant advantages. Some teachers strongly argued that autonomy helps learners become more confident in using the target language in real-life situations, while others emphasized the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and learning-to-learn skills. Additionally, some teachers pointed out that autonomy allows learners to choose words that are interesting and meaningful to them, thereby promoting personalized learning. The responses also highlighted increased metacognitive awareness, better retention, and enhanced motivation as further benefits of learner autonomy. Although a few teachers did not provide responses, the majority shared their views quite actively. Overall, the collected opinions suggest that fostering learner autonomy is essential for effective vocabulary learning outcomes.

Item 9: how do you currently teach vocabulary in your classes?

Almost all teachers use a range of techniques to teach vocabulary in class. A few teachers use interactive techniques to make learning vocabulary fun and exciting for the students, including games, flashcards, and puzzles. Some teachers focus on real-life situations by having students use their own vocabulary to complete drawings and other written expressions. Others teach vocabulary through contextually rich situations (situations, modules, and contextual experiences). Some teachers also use technology and multimedia vocabulary resources (e.g., vocabulary applications, audio recordings, listening activities), thereby providing students with multiple learning formats. In addition, several teachers integrate vocabulary with learning skills such as reading, writing, and speaking, having students combine learning words with homework, presentations, and essays.

Item 10: in what ways can you, as a teacher, facilitate learner autonomy in your EFL classroom?

Most teachers provided their views on how to enable learner autonomy in the EFL classroom. The respondents mentioned various ways for teachers to promote autonomy, such as providing students with tools and strategies like flashcards and word lists, motivating students to improve their skills and levels, and using learner-centered practices like setting up tasks and assignments and encouraging students to set goals and plan their learning path. Some teachers stressed that encouraging learners to use authentic English and practice English outside the classroom is very important. Several teachers emphasized group work, debates, and presentations to encourage learner autonomy.

Item 11: do you think technology (including educational apps) plays a crucial role in promoting learner autonomy in vocabulary learning? If yes explain

- a) Yes
- b) No

Total	Yes	No
15	15	0
100	100%	0%

Table2.8 The Role of Technology in Vocabulary Learning.

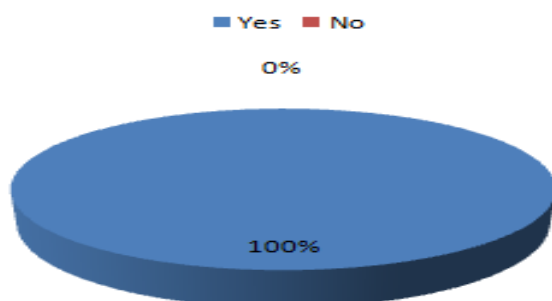


Figure 2.8 The Role of Technology in Vocabulary Learning.

The table shows that (100%) of teachers believe that technology plays a crucial role in promoting learner autonomy in vocabulary learning , while (0)% do not believe it does .their justifications are as follows:

- For example, chatgpt is a beneficial tool that provides learners with a huge linguistic baggage.
- We are in the world of technology, and it's beneficial to include it.
- Apps provide a lot of helps as they can be exposed to different jargon.
- They well become more independent learners.
- To gain time and efforts, also exposing to real-life situations.
- It's the digital era , students tend to use their phones to gain and acquire knowledge .

- Access to authentic materials , collaborations tools, platforms ,peer-to-peer learning.
- They can enhance student's autonomy by making them self-reliant.
- Ai apps are designed to reach language, and vocabulary is an important element.
- In order to cope with student's learning styles and the needs of modern time, students are encouraged to use educational applications to enrich their lexical background knowledge. Students find it more engaging and captivating when using technological devices both inside and outside the classroom. This method has proved efficient in facilitating learning vocabulary and helpful in retaining them.

Item 11: what challenges do you face in promoting learner autonomy in vocabulary learning?

- a) Lack of students motivation
- b) Limited resources
- c) Difficulty in self- regulation

Total	Lack of students motivation	Limited resources	Difficulty in self- regulation
15	9	3	3
100%	60%	20%	20%

Table 2.9Challenges in Promoting Learner Autonomy in Vocabulary Learning

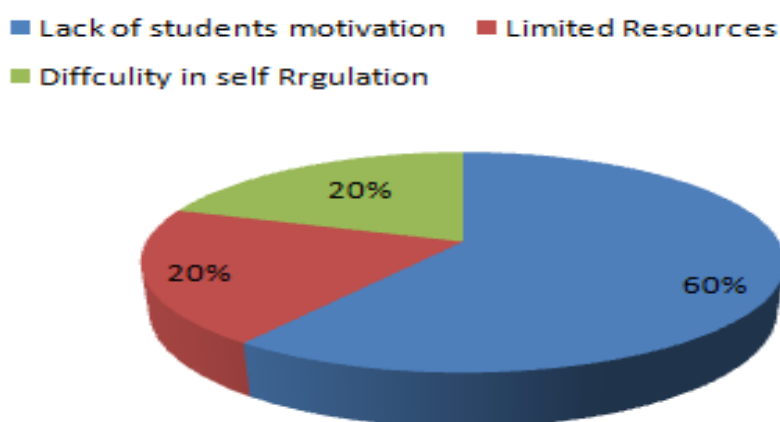


Figure 2.9Challenges in Promoting Learner Autonomy in Vocabulary Learning

The table indicates that the primary challenge teachers' face in promoting learner autonomy in vocabulary learning is lack of student's motivation, reported by 60 % of the respondents. Additionally, 20 % of the respondents cited limited resources and difficulty in self-regulation as challenges.

Item 12: how do you encourage students to take ownership of their vocabulary learning and develop autonomy?

Most teachers support students' sense of responsibility for their learning and their independence by allowing them to have a say in their learning and offering them learning activities and resources that they can do on their own. Slightly fewer teachers give students a choice in the topic of the class, the vocabulary words they would like to learn, or the language forms they would like to practice. Others systematically provide their students with the necessary tools, resources, and learning strategies to be able to drive their learning independently. In the same vein, many teachers also believe that motivation, incentivizing students, and appreciating their efforts can help promote greater learner autonomy. Additionally, some teachers use apps and online resources to support students' learning, while others encourage students to engage with authentic materials, such as novels, short stories, and interactions with native speakers.

Item 13: what specific strategies or approaches do you use to promote learner autonomy in vocabulary learning for second –year students?

- a) Self-directed learning
- b) Vocabulary learning journals
- c) Online resources and apps

Total	Self-directed learning	Vocabulary learning journals	Online resources and apps
15	6	2	7
100%	40%	13%	47%

Table 2.10 Strategies for Promoting Learner Autonomy in Vocabulary Learning.

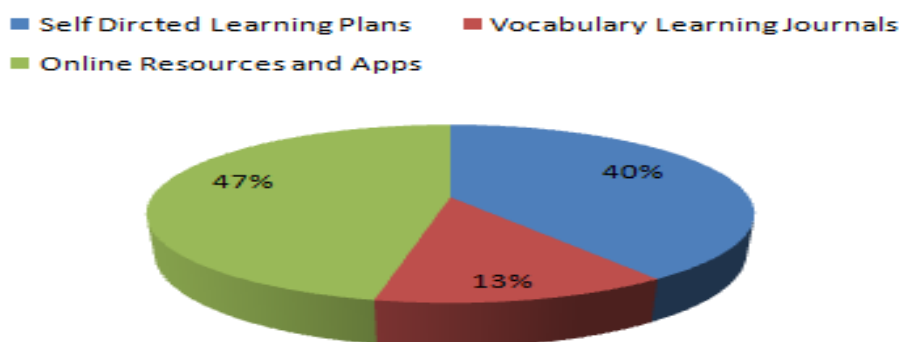


Figure 2.10 Strategies for Promoting Learner Autonomy in Vocabulary Learning.

Teachers use various methods to promote independent vocabulary learning. Six teachers, accounting for 40% employ self-directed learning plans. Meanwhile, two teachers, or 13%, use vocabulary learning journals. The most common approach, however, is utilizing online resources and apps, used by seven teachers (47%).

2.5.2 Students' Questionnaire Analysis

Item 1: Gender

- a) Male
- b) Female

Total	Male	Female
50	12	38
100%	24%	76%

Table 2.11 Participant' Gender

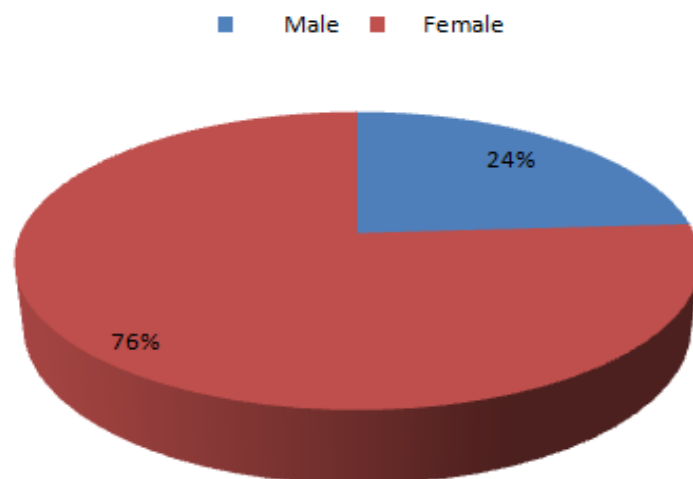


Figure 2.11Participants' Gender

The table shows that, (24%) are male, while (76%) are female participants.

Item 2:How long have you been studying English?

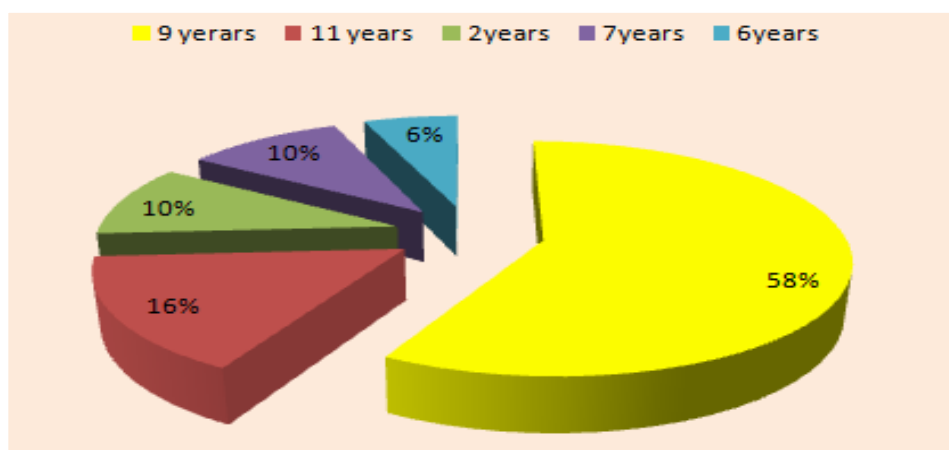


Figure 2.12 Years of English Study by Participants.

Most participants have 9 years of experience .some have 11years, and the remaining participants are distributed across 2 years (5 participants) , 7 years(5 participants), and 6 years(3 participants).

Item 3: why are you studying English

- a) personal choice
- b) future career
- c) Others.....

Total	Others	Personal choice	Future career
50	7	15	28
100%	14%	30%	56%

Table 2.12 Popular Reasons for Studying English

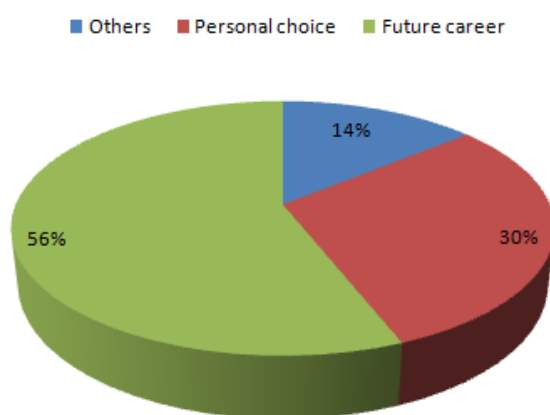


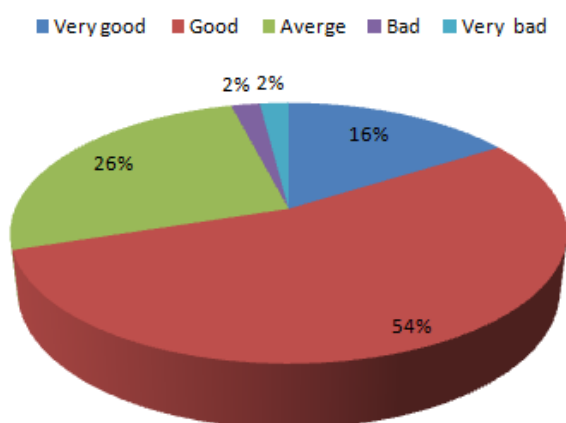
Figure 2.13 Popular Reasons for Studying English.

The table indicates that the majority of participants, specifically (56%) chose future career as their reason, while (30%) cited personal choice, a smaller proportion (14%) cited other reasons: to improve myself, it was my dad's choice, and considered it the wrong choice.

Item 4: How do you describe your level in English?

- a) Very good
- b) Good
- c) Average
- d) Bad
- e) Very bad

Total	Very good	Good	Average	Bad	Very bad
50	8	27	13	1	1
100%	16%	54%	26%	2%	2%

Table 2.13 Self-Assessment of English Proficiency**Figure 2.14** English Proficiency Levels as Perceived by Participants

As presented in the table, the majority of participants (54%) , as good and (16%) as very good, at the least the largest section rated their experience as average (26%) with a minority rating their experience poorly (bad 2% and very bad 2%)

Item 5: I feel confident in making my own learning choices in English language learning

- a) Strongly disagree
- b) Disagree
- c) Neutral
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly agree

Total	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
50	1	2	14	24	9
100%	2%	4%	28%	48%	18%

Table 2.14 Participants' Confidence in Self-Directed Learning

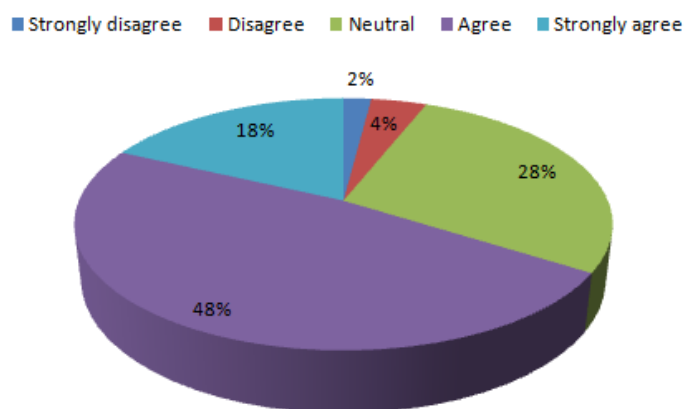


Figure2.15 Confidence Levels in Making Learning Decisions

The table indicates that the majority of the participants agree that they feel confident to make their own learning choices regarding English language learning. In fact, (48%) agree and (18%) strongly agree. Meanwhile, (28%) are neutral, (4%) disagree, and (2%) strongly disagree.

Item 6: I actively seek out resources to improve my English skills (e.g, books, apps, websites)

- a) Strongly disagree
- b) Disagree
- c) Neutral
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly agree

Total	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
50	4	5	8	22	10
100%	8%	10%	16%	45%	21%

Table 2.15 Resource Utilization for Enhancing English Skills

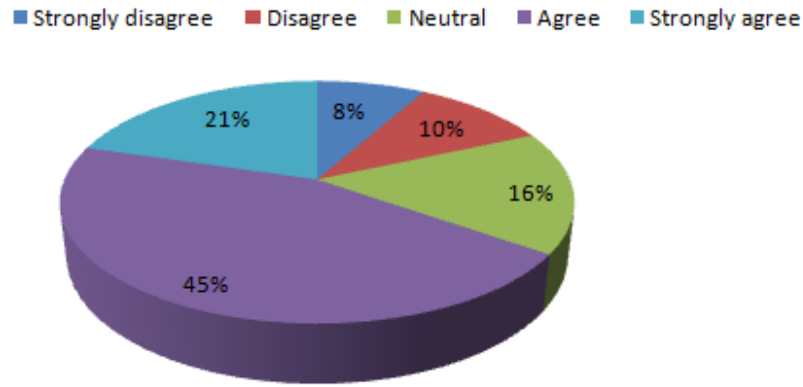


Figure 2.16 Resource Engagements for Skill Development in English

The table indicates that the majority of participants agree (45%), and (21%) strongly agree, that they proactively seek resources which help them increase their English skills. Additionally, interestingly, (16%) were neutral, while (10%) disagree, and (10%) strongly disagreed.

Item7: I set personal goals for my English language learning

- a) Strongly disagree
- b) Disagree
- c) Neutral
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly agree

Total	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
50	4	3	8	26	8
100%	8%	6%	17%	53%	16%

Table 2.16 Goal Setting in English Language Learning

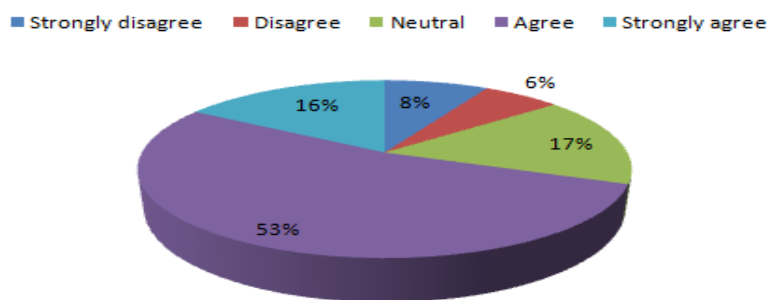


Figure 2.17 Personal Goal Setting in English Learning Contexts

The table shows that the majority of participants, (53%) agree that they have set personal goals for their English language learning, and (16%) strongly agree. Meanwhile, participants (17%) are neutral, (6%) disagree, and (8%) strongly disagree.

Item8: Do you have an idea about learner autonomy? If yes what does it mean for you?

The majority of respondents who answered positively view learner autonomy as taking charge of one's own learning by being responsible, independent, and self-directed. Many respondents indicated that learner autonomy includes goal-setting, resourcing, and developing strategies that best support their ability to learn independently and effectively. Some respondents referred to learner autonomy in terms of self-motivation, independence, and lifelong learning, while others discussed learning beyond the classroom and applying learning to non-academic aspects of their lives. A few respondents appeared uncertain or unclear about the concepts, although many also provided detailed examples of how learner autonomy was a key component of their learning process.

Item9: what role does your teacher play in promoting your autonomy?

The majority of participants view their teachers as playing a significant role in their development as autonomous learners by providing guidance, support, and resources. Many of them provided examples indicating that their teachers motivate them in their learning and foster their independence. Some participants stated that teachers help foster autonomy by

suggesting tools and resources for independent learning, and some mentioned that feedback from teachers is helpful along their independent path to improvement. Others suggested that teachers offer opportunities to engage in projects, research, or tasks that promote independent thinking, all of which support their growth as autonomous learners. A few participants indicated that the teacher has a limited role in promoting autonomy and emphasized that it ultimately depends on the learner. When teachers are supportive and provide proper guidance, students are more likely to develop the skills and confidence needed to become autonomous learners.

Item 10: How conducive do you find your learning environment to fostering autonomy?

- a) Conducive
- b) Not Conducive at all

Total	Conducive	Not conducive at all
47	25	22
100%	53%	47%

Table 2.17 Assessment of Learning Environment for Promoting Autonomy

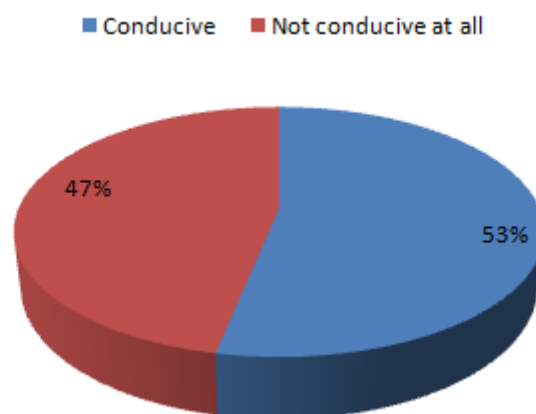


Figure 2.18 Assessment of the Learning Environment for Fostering Autonomy

The table shows that (53%) of the participants find the learning environment conducive to developing autonomy whereas (47%) of participants find it not conducive at all.

Item 11: How would you rate your vocabulary knowledge in English?

- a) Very low
- b) low
- c) Average
- d) High
- e) Very high

Total	Very low	low	Average	High	Very high
47	1	6	28	9	3
100%	2%	13%	60%	19 %	6%

Table 2.18 vocabulary knowledge in English

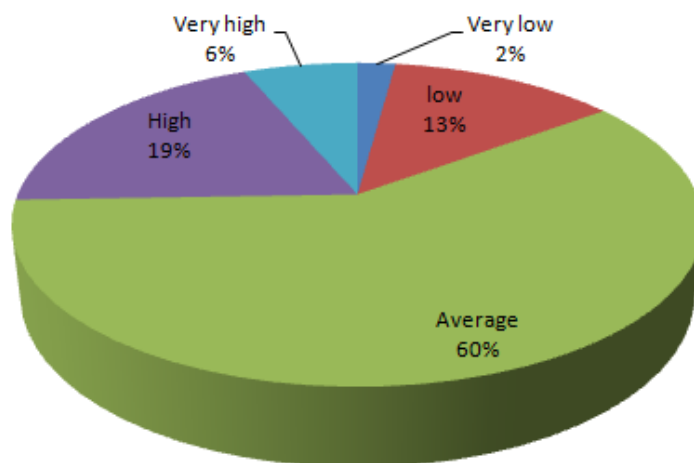


Figure 2.19 Vocabulary Knowledge Assessments by Participants

Most of the respondents, (60%) express their vocabulary knowledge as average. A smaller percentage considered their vocabulary knowledge as high (19%) or very high (6%), while (13%) assume it to be low and (2%) as very low.

Item12: I believe learning vocabulary is essential for improving my English skills

- a) Strongly disagree
- b) Disagree
- c) Neutral
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly agree

Total	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
50	4	1	2	9	34
100%	8%	2%	4%	18%	68%

Table2.19 Beliefs about Vocabulary Learning and Skill Improvement

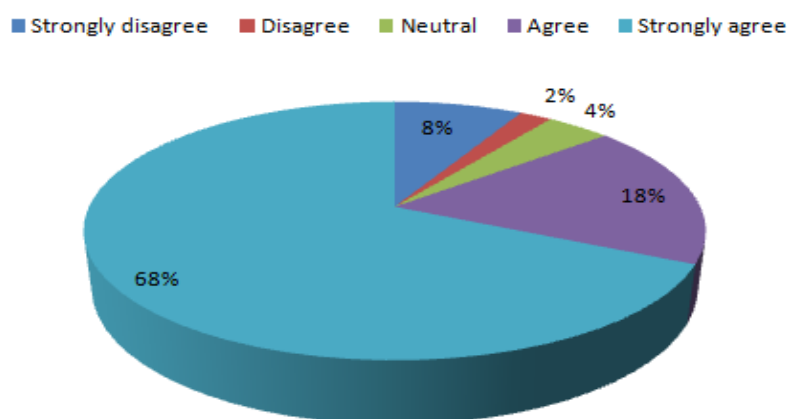


Figure 2.20 Beliefs about Vocabulary's Role in Skill Enhancement

The table shows that 18 % of participants agree or 68% strongly agree that learning vocabulary is necessary for improving their English skills, while 2% disagree or 8% strongly disagree, and 4% remain neutral.

Item 13: Rank the following strategies for learning new vocabulary in order of importance to you.

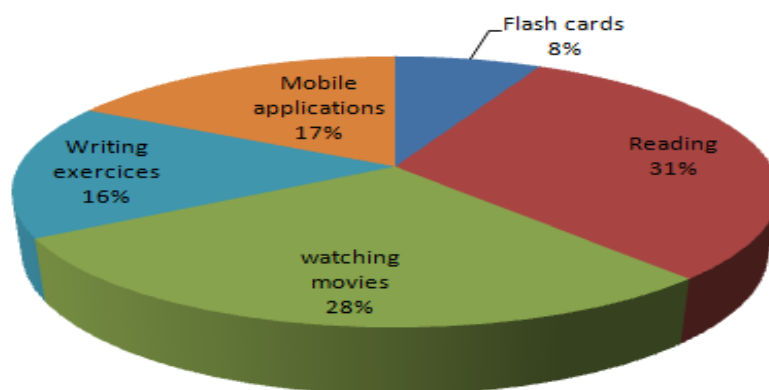


Figure 2.21 Ranking of Preferred Vocabulary Learning Strategies

The chart reveals that reading (31%) and watching movies (28%) are the most popular activities among respondents, indicating a strong preference for passive entertainment and self-education. These activities collectively account for nearly 60% of the total, highlighting their significance in daily routines. Writing exercises, at 16%, and mobile applications, at 17%, hold moderate popularity, reflecting an interest in developing skills and engaging with digital content. In contrast, flash cards are the least favoured activity, comprising only 8%, which suggests that this method is less preferred for learning or practicing compared to other options.

Item 14: To what extent do you feel autonomous in your vocabulary learning?

- a) Not autonomous at all
- b) Slightly autonomous
- c) Moderately autonomous
- d) Very autonomous
- e) Completely autonomous

Total	Not autonomous at all	Slightly autonomous	Moderately autonomous	Very autonomous	Completely autonomous
50	2	11	16	15	2
100%	4%	24%	35%	33%	4%

Table 2.20 Self-Assessment of Autonomy in Vocabulary

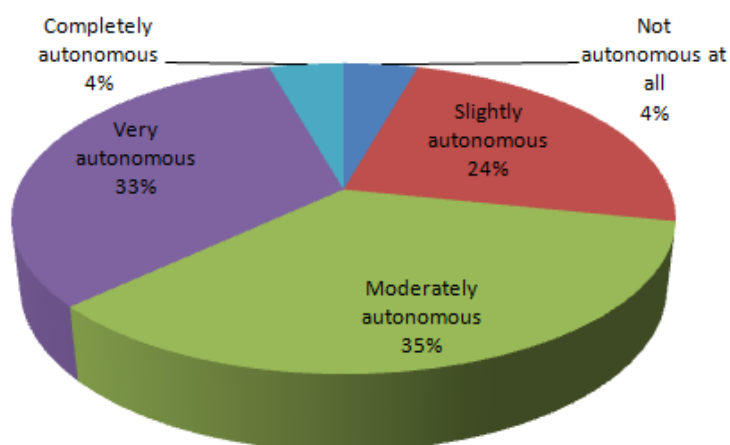


Figure 2.22Autonomy Perceptions in Vocabulary Learning Among Participants

The table shows the distribution of autonomy levels among respondents. Most feel moderately (35%) or very autonomous(33%), while fewer consider themselves slightly autonomous (24%) or not autonomous at all (4%). Only 4% see themselves as completely autonomous.

Item 15: I take the initiative to learn new vocabulary without being promoted by a teacher

- a) Strongly disagree
- b) Disagree
- c) Neutral
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly agree

Total	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
50	5	2	12	16	9
100%	11%	5%	27%	36%	21%

Table2. 21Initiative in Learning Vocabulary Independent of Teacher Guidance

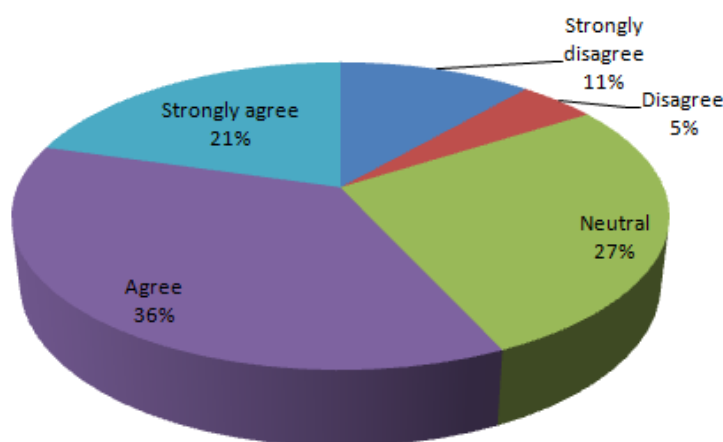


Figure 2.23 Initiative in Learning New Vocabulary Without Teacher Prompts

The majority of students 56, 9% (36% agree and 21%strongly agree) take the initiative to learn vocabulary without being promoted by a teacher. A significant proportion, 27%, is natural about this, while 5% disagree and 11%strongly disagree.

Item 16: Rate the effectiveness of the following methods for learning vocabulary autonomously

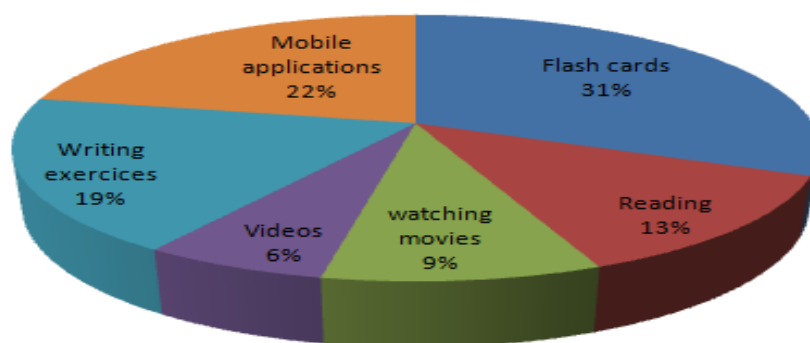


Figure 2.24 Effectiveness of Various Methods for Autonomous Vocabulary Learning

The chart illustrates the distribution of various learning and entertainment activities. The most prominent activity is using flash cards, which accounts for 31% of the total, indicating a strong preference for quick, memorization-based learning tools. Mobile applications follow closely at 22%, reflecting their significant role in learning processes. Reading constitutes

13%, suggesting a moderate engagement with text-based content. Watching movies makes up 9%, highlighting its role as both a leisure activity and a potential learning tool. Writing exercises account for 19%, emphasizing active learning through practice. Lastly, watching videos represents 6%, indicating it is a less favoured or less frequently used method in this context

Item 17: What challenges do you face when trying to learn new vocabulary autonomously? (Check all that apply)

- a) Luck of motivation
- b) Limited access to resources
- c) Difficulty understanding in context
- d) Insufficient practice opportunities

Total	Luck of motivation	Limited access to resources	Difficulty understanding in context	Insufficient practice opportunities
50	22	12	8	8
100%	44%	24%	16%	16%

Table 2.22 Challenges Faced in Autonomous Vocabulary Learning.

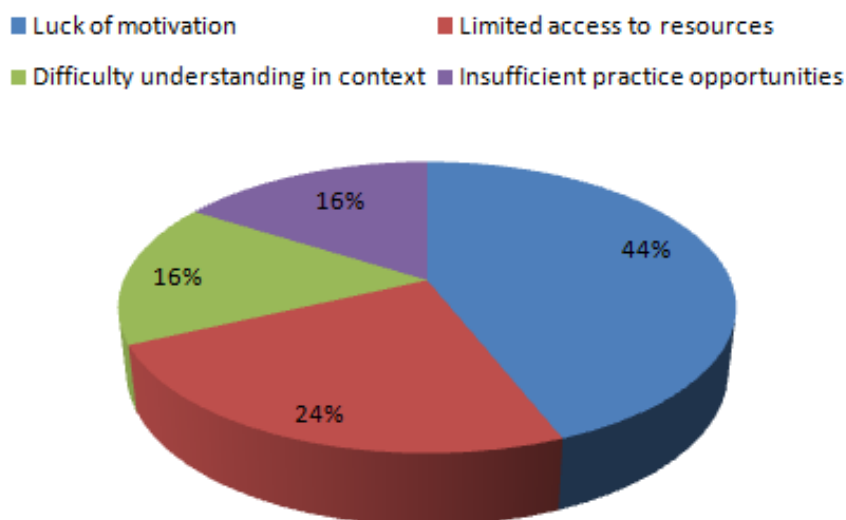


Figure 2.25 Challenges to Autonomous Vocabulary Learning Reported by Participants.

The table shows the main challenges faced by students. The biggest issue is lack of motivation (44%), followed by limited access to resources (24%). Difficulty understanding in context and insufficient practice opportunities are equal at (16%).

2.5.3 Students' Interview Analysis

Question 01: Can you briefly introduce yourself, including your name, age, and background?

Most participants are second-year English students, aged between 19 and 22. Many of them had a strong interest in languages and communication, which helped to guide their choices to study English.

One participant, Basma, highlighted a unique background, mentioning she holds a biology degree before transitioning to English studies. Additionally, some participants mentioned their previous experiences, such as one who had studied French for a year, and another who worked part-time while studying English. These responses show that while participants share a similar academic focus in English, their individual backgrounds—such as prior degrees, personal interests, and work experience—reflect a diversity of personal and educational paths.

Question 02 : . Why did you decide to study English? Was it your choice, or were there other reasons?

All participants expressed reasons for studying English mainly linked to personal interest, passion, or perceived usefulness. Some participants indicated that studying English was their choice, often describing it as their favourite language or a long-time dream. They emphasized enjoyment in learning the language and a desire to improve their skills for personal or professional goals, such as becoming an English teacher. Others highlighted the global status of English as a motivating factor, viewing it as an international language that provides access to opportunities, communication, and creativity.

Meanwhile, a few participants noted that English was not their first choice, but a result of limited options or academic constraints. Some reported switching from other fields, such as German, or choosing English due to the absence of better alternatives. These responses suggest that not all participants approached the decision from the same standpoint, with some influenced more by external factors than personal preference.

Additionally, several participants emphasized the instrumental value of English, citing its role as a global medium of communication and its significance within academic and professional domains. Their perception of English as essential for future success seemed to further consolidate their motivation to engage with the language.

Moreover, these variations indicate that while most participants made an enthusiastic choice to study English, situational factors such as limited educational choices also shaped the academic paths of some students.

Question 03: What does learner autonomy mean to you, and do you think it is important for vocabulary learning? Why or why not?

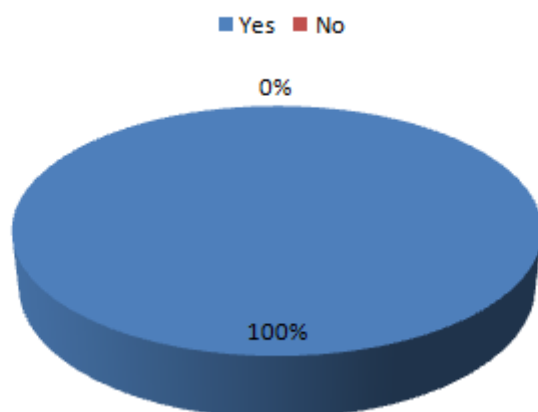


Figure 2.26 Participants' Perceptions of the Importance of Learner Autonomy in Vocabulary Learning.

All the participants agreed that learner autonomy is very important when it comes to learning vocabulary. Some participants define it as the ability to learn independently without relying heavily on the teacher. Others describe it as taking responsibility for their own learning, making decisions about what and how to learn. One participant considered learner autonomy as the use of personal tools and strategies, such as reading books or listening to podcasts, to expand vocabulary outside the classroom context. Another one mentioned that when students motivate themselves and keep working alone, they remember words better.

Other participants pointed out that autonomy makes learning more interesting because everyone can pick the method that suits him best and work at his own rhythm. They also believe that when they study independently, they become more serious and responsible, which reflects in their progress. Consequently, Participants engage more actively in their learning, which facilitates more effective vocabulary development and contributes to their overall language learning.

Question 04: How does motivation affect your vocabulary learning? Do you think it helps you learn independently?

The majority of participants indicated that motivation has a strong positive effect on vocabulary learning. Many of them stated that when they feel motivated, they study more regularly, as they try different techniques, and engage more actively in learning new vocabulary. Motivation enhances both interest and enjoyment in the learning process, contributing to better retention.

Some participants highlighted that motivation facilitates independent learning. Noting that when they feel motivated, they tend to study autonomously without relying on the teacher. This reflects the strong connection between motivation and learner autonomy. Others consider that motivation pushes them to use personal strategies and tools, such as reading, using language apps, or practicing outside of class.

However, two participants shared a different viewpoint, highlighting that discipline is more effective than motivation. They assert that while motivation supports learning, it is often inconsistent; in contrast, discipline helps maintain steady learning habits. This indicates that both motivation and discipline are important in fostering vocabulary learning and autonomy.

Furthermore, one participant pointed out a scientific dimension, explaining that motivation enhances memory performance when learners are in a positive mood.

Consequently, motivation helps Students stay focused and makes learning more enjoyable, leading to more effective vocabulary learning.

Question 05: Do you usually learn vocabulary from your teacher or on your own? Which do you think is more effective, and why?

The majority of participants indicated that learning vocabulary independently is more effective than relying solely on the teacher. Many emphasized that taking charge of their own learning allows them to choose strategies and resources that suit their individual preferences,

focus on vocabulary that feels meaningful to them, and advance at a rhythm that fits their comfort. .Whereas, some respondents believe that learning vocabulary on their own gives them the freedom to explore personal interests such as politics and commerce, and to use supplementary tools like podcasts that are not typically available in the classroom . Others note that self-learning enhances motivation, as it stems from personal initiative rather than external obligation.

However, some participants emphasize that vocabulary learning is more effective when guided by the teacher, reflecting a preference for structured instruction. They argue that classroom instruction provides clear guidance and enhances retention, especially for learners who face difficulties with self-discipline or motivation.

Several participants also stressed the value of combining both approaches, suggesting that a balance between guided instruction and independent study leads to more effective results. Only one participant showed a distinct preference for teacher-led learning, explaining this by a lack of motivation for independent study.

Overall, participants showed a clear preference for independent vocabulary learning, mainly due to its autonomy, flexibility, and personal relevance. Consequently, they are more likely to take ownership of their learning, fostering a deeper connection to the language and its practical application

Question 06: Do you use technology in your studies? If so, does it help you learn vocabulary independently?

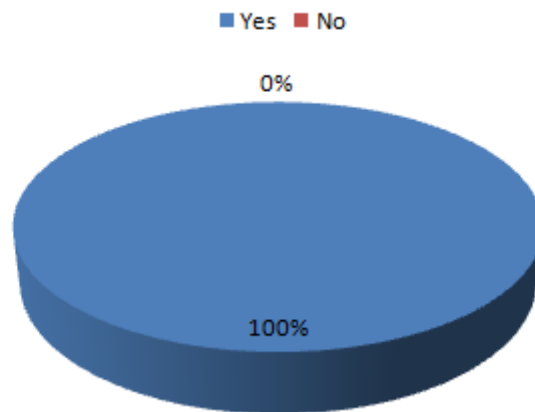


Figure 2.27 Participants' Use of Technology for Independent Vocabulary Learning

The majority of responses suggested that technology is extensively used in the learning process. Some participants attribute this to the accessibility and flexibility of tools such as language learning apps, online dictionaries, and YouTube videos. Others highlight that technology offers access to a wide range of resources and enables them to learn and practice vocabulary independently, anytime and anywhere. All participants reported using technology in their studies, emphasizing its effectiveness in supporting autonomous vocabulary learning.

Question 07: What methods do you use to learn vocabulary by yourself? Choose one of the following methods and explain why you use it:

- 1- Flashcards 2-Spaced repetition 3- Word maps

The majority of responses suggested that participants use various methods to learn vocabulary independently. Flashcards are the most popular method, chosen by some participants due to their simplicity and effectiveness in memorization. Spaced repetition is also favoured by others, who attribute its effectiveness to reinforcing memory and retaining new words. However, others highlight that word maps are more effective for them, citing their visual appeal and ease of use. The variety of methods chosen suggests that participants prioritize flexibility and effectiveness in independent vocabulary learning, with different approaches suiting different individual.

2.6 Conclusion

In conclusion this chapter concludes by highlighting the importance of encouraging learner autonomy in vocabulary learning among second-year EFL students at Ahmed Zabana University Department of English. The information gathered from teacher and student interviews and questionnaires provided both quantitative and qualitative insights into the difficulties and methods that students face when learning vocabulary.

Furthermore despite their awareness of the value of vocabulary in effective communication many students still rely on teacher direction and lack self-directed learning techniques. Teachers also recognized the advantages of autonomy but they pointed to course limitations and a lack of funding as obstacles to its successful application.

According to the findings, vocabulary learning and independent study habits are also encouraged in the classroom when learner-centered approaches and using technology are used. Teachers emphasized that in order to help EFL students become more autonomous and proficient vocabulary learners who are better equipped to use English in everyday situations it is crucial to establish a classroom environment that encourages accountability self-direction and frequent vocabulary learning.

Chapter Three:
Interpretations, Discussions and
Recommendations

3.1 Introduction

In the final chapter of this study, the interpreted results and conclusions drawn from the analyzed data collected through the teachers' and students' questionnaires, as well as the students' interviews, are presented and discussed. The main findings of the research are highlighted and examined about to the research objectives. Additionally, the chapter explores the significance and implications of these findings, offering practical recommendations to foster EFL students' autonomy in vocabulary learning. It also addresses the limitations of the study and provides suggestions that may inform future educational practices and research in the field of language learning.

3.2 Interpretations

3.2.1 Interpretation of the Teachers' Questionnaire

Section One: Background Information

The findings from the first section of the questionnaire reveal that most of the teachers involved in this study hold advanced academic degrees, with the majority holding either a Master's or a Doctorate. This reflects their strong academic background, suggesting (that they possess) omit it a solid educational foundation. Another important aspect is their teaching experience, as many have spent several years in the classroom. This combination of theoretical knowledge and practical experience is crucial, particularly when it comes to fostering learner autonomy in vocabulary learning. It allows teachers to approach the issue with both understanding and practical experience, which are effectively omit support students.

Section Two: Learner Autonomy and Vocabulary Learning

In the second section of the questionnaire, most teachers have a positive view of learner autonomy, recognizing its importance in language learning. The majority rated their students' autonomy as moderate, while only a few considered it low. Although not all students are fully autonomous, there's a strong consensus among teachers about the importance of

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autonomy. Teachers agree that it helps students organize their learning, choose the strategies that work best for them, and solve problems on their own. This suggests that autonomy is seen as an important factor in encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning process.

However, many teachers noted that learner autonomy isn't something that students develop automatically. It has to be nurtured and supported. Without the right guidance, many students struggle to become independent learners. Teachers emphasized the importance of providing support, particularly in helping students develop effective learning strategies. Autonomy, therefore, is something students can gradually achieve, but only with ongoing support and encouragement from their teachers.

Section Three: Teaching Practices and Learner Autonomy

When it comes to vocabulary teaching, teachers mentioned using various techniques to encourage students to become more independent. For example, several teachers highlighted using digital tools to engage students outside the classroom. Others emphasized the importance of encouraging students to read widely and exposing them to authentic materials, such as real-life texts and videos. These practices aim to move away from the traditional focus on memorizing isolated vocabulary and instead promote the practical use of vocabulary in real communicative situations. This shows that teachers are aware of the need to make vocabulary learning more meaningful and learner-centered.

Despite these efforts to encourage learner autonomy, a few challenges continue to persist. Many teachers pointed out that students still tend to rely heavily on the teacher, often avoiding independent work or trying new learning strategies. Motivation also emerged as a significant issue. Some students fear making mistakes, while others lack sufficient resources or opportunities to practice outside the classroom. These challenges make it difficult to foster autonomy, despite the teachers' efforts to support it.

Section Four: Encouraging Autonomy and Strategies

In the final section of the questionnaire, teachers shared their suggestions and described the strategies they use to promote learner autonomy in vocabulary learning. Many of them encourage students to engage with English outside the classroom by reading books, watching videos, or using mobile applications. Others guide students in setting personal learning goals and tracking their progress to help them take charge of their own learning. While these methods may seem simple, teachers believe they are effective when used consistently and followed up with regular feedback.

Additionally, several teachers emphasized the importance of creating a positive and supportive classroom environment. They stressed that students should feel comfortable expressing themselves, taking initiative, and making mistakes without fear. Many teachers also pointed out the need to provide students with access to relevant resources that they can explore independently, both inside and outside of class.

Consequently, teachers' responses suggest a strong recognition of the value of learner autonomy, especially in vocabulary learning.. Although teachers are adopting a variety of strategies to promote autonomy, obstacles like lack of motivation, fear of making mistakes, and limited access to resources still present significant challenges. However, addressing these issues could help students become more confident and responsible learners in the future.

3.2.2 Interpretation of Students' Questionnaire

Section One: Background Information and English Learning Experience

The results obtained from the students' questionnaire show that the classes involved in this study are quite mixed in terms of background, but with a clear dominance of female students. This gender gap gives the impression of a more feminine learning environment, which might have some influence on classroom participation and the way students interact with one another. What also stands out is the number of years students have been learning

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English—most of them reported studying it for about nine years. This long exposure indicates that students are not beginners and probably have enough experience to take more charge of their own learning.

When asked about their reasons for learning English, the majority chose “career” as the main reason, which clearly shows a goal-oriented mindset among learners.

Followed by “personal choice,” while others mentioned “teacher’s advice” or “parental pressure,” but these were less frequent. These answers show that most students are driven either by personal interest or future plans, and both types of motivation play an important role in how students approach the language. When asked to evaluate their English learning experience, most students said their experience was “good” or even “very good,” while only a small number said it was negative. This positive feedback reflects a general satisfaction that could help them feel more confident and independent in their learning process.

Section Two: Learners’ Autonomy in English Language Learning

The analysis of this part of the questionnaire reveals that students show a clear awareness of the meaning of learner autonomy. The majority of the students defined learner autonomy as the capacity to take charge of their own learning without relying heavily on the teacher.

They explained that they organize their study time, assess their own learning progress and take initiative to address any challenges they encounter on their own omit . This indicates that many of them genuinely understand the concept of being an independent learner.

However, when asked whether their classroom environment fosters learner autonomy, students provided mixed responses. While some acknowledged that their teachers encourage independence and support autonomous learning, others reported that their learning remains largely dependent on the teacher. This variation in perception may be attributed to differences in teaching approaches and the extent of autonomy each teacher allows within the classroom.

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The findings show that students generally agree that teachers should not only explain lessons but also serve as guides, offer valuable advice, and provide assistance when necessary. However, few students argued that autonomy should originate with the student, not the teacher. This perspective suggests that some learners view autonomy as a personal responsibility rather than a concept that can be taught in the classroom.

Section Three: Vocabulary Learning and Learner Autonomy

The third section examined vocabulary learning and its relationship to autonomy. Most students considered their vocabulary level to be "average," with a few describing it as either "good" or "poor." However, all students agreed that vocabulary is a fundamental aspect of learning English and essential for enhancing communication skills.

When students discussed how they learn new words, many mentioned using methods like watching movies, reading books or articles, and using mobile apps. These tools were described as enjoyable and motivating, suggesting that students prefer modern and interactive ways of learning. Only a few students said they use more traditional tools like dictionaries or flashcards, indicating a shift towards more digital and practical learning methods.

However, what's encouraging is that most students expressed a willingness to study vocabulary independently, without needing the teacher to encourage them. This reflects a positive sign of autonomy. Students also shared that watching videos or reading in English helped them learn new words in an enjoyable and meaningful way. Despite this, students still face some challenges. They mentioned issues such as lack of motivation, limited time for practice, and fear of making mistakes. Additionally, not all students have access to the necessary resources.

One key aspect highlighted by the students is their understanding of the importance of autonomy in vocabulary learning. This awareness suggests that taking responsibility for their own learning allows them apply more personalized and effective strategies. Furthermore, their

positive attitude toward independent vocabulary study reflects a growing sense of ownership over their language development. However, the challenges they reported—such as lack of motivation, time limitations, and restricted access to resources—emphasize the need for continued guidance and encouragement from teachers and educational institutions in order to help them strengthen their autonomy and become more confident in managing their vocabulary learning.

3.2.3 Interpretation of Students' Interview

The findings from the students' interviews highlight several key insights into the role of learner autonomy in fostering vocabulary learning among EFL students. Firstly, the participants' diverse backgrounds and experiences played a significant role in shaping their approaches to learning English. Whereas some students expressed a genuine passion for language learning, others were primarily motivated by the practical advantages of English, particularly its ability to create access to professional and personal opportunities.

Furthermore, all participants agreed on the importance of learner autonomy in vocabulary learning. They described it as the ability to take charge of one's own learning, which includes choosing materials, setting goals, and practicing vocabulary outside the classroom. Additionally, some participants emphasized the role of personal strategies, such as reading or using podcasts. They also highlighted that autonomy not only fosters motivation but also helps develop discipline and confidence. In particular, this independence was seen as crucial for long-term language development.

In terms of motivation As far as motivation is concerned , most students acknowledged its positive impact on vocabulary learning. They explained that motivation not only boosts engagement but also encourages consistent practice and supports the use of diverse learning techniques. However, few students also omitted stressed the importance of discipline alongside motivation. They pointed out that while motivation can vary, discipline

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helps maintain consistency. This suggests that both factors are crucial for ensuring steady progress in vocabulary learning.

When asked about their preferred method of learning vocabulary, most students reported that they favour self-learning. They mentioned its flexibility, the ability to tailor it to their own needs, and how it aligns with their personal interests. Nevertheless, Some students still appreciated teacher input, especially when they had trouble staying focused or understanding certain concepts. Additionally, several participants felt that a blended approach—mixing classroom instruction with independent learning—was the ideal way to learn.

Moreover, Technology was also seen as playing a key role in supporting vocabulary learning. All participants mentioned using digital tools like apps, online dictionaries, and videos, emphasizing how convenient and effective these resources are for independent learning, no matter the time or place.

Finally, Students shared their preferred strategies for learning vocabulary, with flashcards being the most commonly mentioned, followed by spaced repetition and word maps. Each method was chosen for its distinct benefits, whether it was for memorization, reinforcement, or visual organization. This variety shows how students try to adapt their learning strategies to what works best for them.

The interviews highlight the importance of learner autonomy, motivation, and technology in improving vocabulary learning among EFL students. Consequently, these factors contribute to more effective, independent, and engaging learning experiences, preparing students for real-world language use.

3.3 Discussion of the Main Findings

Through the use of students' and teachers' questionnaires, along with interviews with students, various and varied data have been gathered on how learner autonomy influence vocabulary learning among second-year EFL students. The collected data highlights key factors, such as the role of motivation, the importance of digital tools, and the challenges both students and teachers face in fostering autonomy. These findings provide valuable insights and contribute to answering the research questions raised throughout the study.

3.3.1 Learner Autonomy in Vocabulary Learning

In the context of vocabulary learning, EFL students recognize the importance of autonomy for enhancing their language skills. Autonomy, in this case, refers to the ability to manage one's learning process independently, enabling students to select resources, set their own goals, and work at their own pace outside the classroom. This autonomy does not only fosters independence but also strengthens students' sense of responsibility and motivation toward their learning. However, the way students implement these strategies varies significantly. While some students show comfort in using self-directed tools, such as language apps and podcasts, others still rely heavily on teacher support. This variability highlights that the shift toward full autonomy in learning is ongoing and that many students are still in the process of developing the necessary skills for independent vocabulary learning.

3.3.2 Teacher Support in Fostering Autonomy

Although many students express a desire for autonomy, they also acknowledge the essential role of teacher support. Even omit Students who are motivated to take charge of their own learning often turn to their teachers when they encounter difficulties, suggesting that autonomy does not entirely replace the need for teacher guidance. Teachers continue to provide valuable feedback and structure, even in environments where autonomy is encouraged. This points to the importance of a balanced approach where teachers not only

help students develop strategies for independent learning but also ensure that students have access to the resources necessary for success outside the classroom. Thus, while students aspire to autonomy, their dependence on teachers remains crucial for sustaining their learning progress.

3.3.3 Motivation and Discipline in Vocabulary Learning

Motivation is clearly a fundamental element in vocabulary learning, with many students indicating that it is key to staying engaged with language tasks. However, the findings reveal that motivation alone is insufficient for consistent progress. Several students pointed out that self-discipline, particularly the ability to maintain a regular study routine, is equally important. Those who exhibited stronger discipline were able to make consistent progress, even when their motivation was low. This suggests that motivation and discipline complement each other, working together to support effective vocabulary learning. Therefore, a balanced approach, where motivation is closely linked with self-discipline, to be most effective and conducive to long-term success in vocabulary learning

3.3.3.1 Challenges in Maintaining Motivation

Despite the importance of motivation, students face several challenges in staying motivated. Time constraints for independent study and the fear of making mistakes were commonly cited as barriers. These challenges underscore the need for a more supportive learning environment that encourages risk-taking and consistent practice.

Teachers also highlighted these difficulties, noting that maintaining student motivation requires more than just positive reinforcement. It involves offering a variety of resources and strategies tailored to students' individual needs and interests. Such an approach can help to keep students engaged and motivated, ensuring that they stay aligned with their learning.

3.3.4 The Role of Technology in Autonomous Vocabulary Learning

One of the most significant findings from this study is the crucial role that technology plays in supporting independent vocabulary learning. Both students and teachers agreed that digital tools, such as mobile apps, online dictionaries, and educational videos, are invaluable in the learning process.

For students, these tools provide flexibility, allowing them to study at their own pace and making the learning experience more enjoyable. For teachers, these resources are particularly helpful in promoting autonomous learning outside of the classroom. The findings strongly suggest that technology is an essential component of fostering learner autonomy.

3.3.4.1 Blended Learning Approach

The study also revealed a preference for a blended learning approach, which combines classroom instruction with independent study using digital tools. Many students stated that this combination is the most effective method for enhancing vocabulary learning. By integrating teacher-led lessons with self-directed learning, students are able to benefit from both structured guidance and the freedom to explore the material independently. Teachers also supported this approach, emphasizing that using digital tools in class not only increases student engagement but also helps them develop the skills they need to continue learning autonomously. This indicates that a blended approach, combining both teacher support and self-directed learning, offers a comprehensive strategy for vocabulary learning.

3.3.5 Barriers to Autonomy

Although learner autonomy is widely recognized as beneficial, several barriers hinder its complete integration into vocabulary learning. Students cited limitations such as insufficient time for independent study, lack of access to resources, and a fear of making mistakes as significant obstacles. These challenges highlight the gap between students' understanding of the importance of autonomy and the practical difficulties they face in engaging in independent learning. Teachers also expressed concerns, noting that despite

encouraging autonomy, many students still rely on teacher-centered methods and require continuous support to develop their independent learning skills.

3.3.5.1 Teacher Challenges in Supporting Autonomy

Teachers, too, omit face challenges when it comes to promoting learner autonomy in vocabulary learning. While they recognize the importance of encouraging independence, many teachers reported feeling inadequately prepared due to a lack of resources, training, or confidence in supporting autonomous learning. Some teachers mentioned that their limited knowledge of digital tools or specific teaching methods made it difficult to fully embrace autonomy supportive practices in the classroom. This underscores the need for more professional development opportunities and access to resources that can help teachers effectively support autonomous learning. Without these supports, teachers may struggle to create the necessary conditions for students to develop as independent learners, highlighting the importance of continued investment in teacher training.

3.4 Limitations of the Study

The present master's thesis dissertation on "Fostering EFL Students' Autonomy in Vocabulary Learning" omit has faced several limitations that should be mentioned when interpreting the findings. Firstly, the number of participants was limited. Since the study was only carried out with a small group of second-year EFL students and a few teachers, it becomes hard to generalize the results. Every student has their own learning way, and with more participants, the study would have offered more variety in the responses and maybe different results.

Time was also another problem. The study had to be completed within a short time, and because of that, some parts were done quickly. This includes data collection and analysis, which might have affected the depth and quality of the results. With more time, more detailed work could have been done.

Another thing limitation is the lack of resources. There was difficulty in accessing enough updated books and materials, especially related to vocabulary learning and autonomy. This made it hard sometimes to support the findings with strong references. Also, students themselves reported having limited access to digital tools, which affected their independent learning experience.

Moreover, not all the students answered all the questions clearly. Some of the responses were short, unclear, or even left blank. This made the interpretation harder and maybe less accurate in some cases.

Finally, although the study was about promoting autonomy, many learners still depend a lot on their teachers. This shows that real autonomy is still not fully achieved, and that affected the general aim of the study.

In summary, even if the study tried to provide valuable insights, these limitations reduced its full potential. Addressing these limitations in future studies will be essential to obtaining more reliable and comprehensive results.

3.5 Suggestions and Recommendations

At the end of this study, it becomes evident that several key factors affect the way students approach vocabulary learning independently. As a result, a number of practical recommendations can be proposed. These recommendations are designed to benefit not only the learners but also the educators and those involved in curriculum development. The focus is on fostering learner autonomy , making good use of technology, and creating a classroom environment that encourages active participation.

1. For EFL Learners

Firstly, learners are encouraged to take more control over how they approach vocabulary learning. For example, beginning with achievable goals and selecting vocabulary that reflects learners' personal interests can provide a meaningful starting point. This not only enhances

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their sense of connection to the material but also makes the learning process more purposeful than simply memorizing unrelated word lists.

In addition, Learners should aim for consistency and discipline. It is common to experience periods of demonization however, maintaining a consistent routine, even if only for a few minutes each day, can lead to meaningful progress over time.

Moreover, nowadays, learners are fortunate to have access to a variety of digital tools. Applications, flashcards, educational videos, and even language games can significantly enhance the vocabulary learning process. Therefore, it is recommended for students to explore different options and gradually identify the methods that align best with their learning preferences.

Autonomy, however, should not be misunderstood as working entirely on one's own. At times, learners are likely to encounter challenges in their studies. In such moments, turning to their teachers for support and asking questions can be especially helpful. Often, even a short explanation or a few words of guidance are enough to help them regain focus and continue with greater confidence.

Moreover, learners can significantly benefit from gradually expanding their learning outside of the classroom. Engaging with short articles, watching English videos, or producing short written texts independently can foster a sense of responsibility and gradually enhance both their confidence and autonomy in vocabulary learning.

2. for Teachers

It is important to highlight the significant role that teachers play in promoting learner autonomy. One of their key responsibilities is to create a classroom atmosphere where students feel comfortable sharing their ideas without the fear of making mistakes, as this kind of environment is crucial for both their personal development and language growth.

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Moreover, it demonstrates its usefulness when teachers assist learners in identifying practical vocabulary learning goals and expose them to a range of strategies. Since not all students learn in the same way, offering various approaches allows each learner to explore and adopt the techniques that best match their individual preferences.

A further consideration is the role of feedback. Even though learners are encouraged to be more independent, they still need support. It is important to note that feedback does not always need to be formal; sometimes, even a brief comment or suggestion can help guide learners toward the right approach.

Additionally, it is recommended that teachers incorporate technology into their teaching practices. For example; they might introduce learners to vocabulary apps or incorporate videos and interactive online exercises into their lessons to enhance engagement and promote active learning.

Furthermore, shifting from a traditional teacher-centered approach to a more learner-centered one can be highly beneficial. Activities that require students to take responsibility such as presentations or projects not only improve vocabulary use but also help learners become more confident.

Finally, teachers themselves can benefit from continuous development. Attending workshops or online courses about autonomy and digital tools can offer new insights that enrich their teaching.

3. For Educational Stakeholders

In a broader context, educational institutions have an essential role in promoting learner autonomy. One practical step would be to encourage blended learning models, combining face-to-face teaching with digital tasks gives students more flexibility and space to grow.

Moreover, it is equally important that schools ensure both students and teachers have reliable access to appropriate resources. Whether it involves a reliable internet connection, multimedia resources, or simply a quiet study environment, such support can play a crucial role in fostering independent learning habits.

Finally, institutions should try to create a culture where mistakes are seen as part of the learning process, not something to be punished. If learners feel they can try, fail, and try again without judgment, they're more likely to take risks and push themselves which is exactly what autonomy requires.

3.6 Conclusion

After the analysis and interpretation of the data, valuable insights were gained regarding how autonomy, motivation, discipline, and technology play a crucial role in enhancing EFL learners' vocabulary learning. We have identified key relationships and significant findings that highlight the necessity of fostering these elements to improve vocabulary learning.

Based on our findings, we offered several recommendations to improve EFL teaching practices by emphasizing the development of learner autonomy, motivation, and discipline. These recommendations also highlight the integration of technology, the importance of addressing potential challenges that may hinder autonomy, and the need to create supportive learning environments. All aiming to foster EFL students' autonomy in vocabulary learning. And to support the growth of more autonomous, motivated, and actively engaged learners in the EFL vocabulary learning context.

General conclusion

General Conclusion

The current study has contributed valuable reflections on how fostering learner autonomy can positively influence vocabulary learning among EFL students. Through an in-depth analysis of feedback gathered from both teachers and students at Relizane University, the research sought to understand the extent to which elements such as motivation, self-discipline, supportive instruction, and the integration of technological tools can empower learners to take ownership of their vocabulary learning. The findings lend strong support to the initial assumptions of the study most notably, that learners are more likely to make noticeable progress when they are trusted, guided, and encouraged to take initiative in their own learning process.

As the findings showed, students who are motivated and organized, and who also benefit from teacher assistance and technological tools, are generally more responsible and active in their learning. It became clear that students who take their learning beyond the classroom by making use of online resources, mobile applications, or self-study techniques tend to report greater confidence and noticeable improvements. This shows that autonomy doesn't mean complete independence; rather, it involves guiding students in a way that enables them to make decisions on their own and take more initiative in their learning process.

From the teachers' side, the results pointed to the importance of changing traditional classroom dynamics .It appears that shifting from traditional, teacher-centered methods to more flexible, student-focused approaches can genuinely make a difference in how students engage with their learning.

General conclusion

Nevertheless, teachers remain essential in this process, they not only offer guidance and feedback but also foster a safe environment where students are encouraged to take risks, explore new strategies, and gradually take more ownership of their learning.

In addition, when technology is used effectively whether through apps, online dictionaries, or digital exercises, it can help personalize the learning experience and make vocabulary learning more efficient and engaging.

To sum up, this thesis highlights the crucial role of learner autonomy in vocabulary learning, focusing on how motivation, self-discipline, teacher guidance, and the integration of technology can work together to promote greater independence and responsibility among EFL students. The findings from both students' and teachers' responses strongly validate our initial hypotheses, emphasizing the importance of fostering learner autonomy in vocabulary learning, encouraging students to take control of their vocabulary development, and more active and confident progress in their learning.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear Teachers,

You are kindly invited to participate in this questionnaire, which investigates "Fostering EFL Students' Autonomy in Vocabulary Learning." The aim of this study is to explore how fostering learner autonomy can enhance vocabulary learning among EFL students. We would be grateful if you could answer the following questions to assist us in this research. The data collected will be used for academic purposes to develop the practical part of the study.

We greatly appreciate your time and effort in completing this questionnaire. Your cooperation is highly valued.

Please tick the corresponding answers or provide your response where necessary.

I. Section One: The background information

1. Gender:

- a) Male
- b) Female

2. Teaching Experience:

- a) 0 to 5 years
- b) 6 to 10 years
- c) More than 10 years

3. Classes I teach:

- a) License
- b) Masters
- c) Both

4. Educational Qualification:

- a) Master's degree
- b) Magister degree
- c) Doctoral degree

II. Section Two: Learner Autonomy and Vocabulary Learning

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1. Learners' autonomy plays an important role in developing and enhancing their vocabulary.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly disagree

2. Do you think that fostering learner autonomy helps students in vocabulary learning?

a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

c) Why:.....

.....

3. How would you rate the level of learner autonomy among your students in general?

a) Low ☐

b) Moderate ☐

c) High ☐

4. In your experience, what are the key benefits of fostering learner autonomy in vocabulary learning?

.....
.....

III. Section Three: Teaching Practices and Learner Autonomy

1. How do you currently teach vocabulary in your classes?

.....
.....

2. In what ways can you, as a teacher, facilitate learner autonomy in your EFL classroom?

.....
.....

3. Do you think technology (including educational apps) plays a crucial role in promoting learner autonomy in vocabulary learning?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If Yes, please explain:

.....

Appendices

.....

4. What challenges do you face in promoting learner autonomy in vocabulary learning?

- a) Lack of Students' Motivation
- b) Limited Resources
- c) Difficulty in Self-Regulation

IV. Section Four: Encouraging Autonomy and Strategies

1. How do you encourage students to take ownership of their vocabulary learning and develop autonomy?

.....
.....

2. What specific strategies or approaches do you use to promote learner autonomy in vocabulary learning for second-year students?

- a) Self-Directed Learning Plans
- b) Vocabulary Learning Journals
- c) Online Resources and Apps

3. Would you like to add anything to what has already been discussed?

.....
.....

Thank you for your participation and invaluable contribution to this research endeavor

Appendix B

Students' Questionnaire

Dear Students,

This questionnaire investigates the notion of "learner autonomy" in fostering vocabulary learning in the Algerian Higher Education context. Answering this questionnaire would be of great help in developing the practical part of the current research.

Thank you in advance.

I. Section one: Background Information

1. Gender:

- a) Male
- b) Female

2. Age :

18/25

25/30

+30

3. How long have you been studying English?

.....Years

4. Why are you studying English?

- a) Personal choice
- b) future career
- c) Other(s):.....

.....

5. How do you describe your level in English?

- a) Very good
- b) Good
- c) Average
- d) Bad
- e) Very bad

II. Section Two: Autonomy

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2. I feel confident in making my own learning choices in English language learning.

- a) Strongly Disagree
- b) Disagree
- c) Neutral
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly Agree

3. I actively seek out resources to improve my English skills (e.g., books, websites, apps).

- a) Strongly Disagree
- b) Disagree
- c) Neutral
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly Agree

4. I set personal goals for my English language learning.

- a) Strongly Disagree
- b) Disagree
- c) Neutral
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly Agree

5. Do you have an idea about learner autonomy? If yes, what does it mean for you?

.....
.....

6. What role does your teacher play in promoting your autonomy?

.....
.....

7. How conducive do you find your learning environment to fostering autonomy? (Scale: 1-5, where 1 is "not conducive at all" and 5 is "very conducive")

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

6)

III. Section Three: Vocabulary Learning

1. How would you rate your vocabulary knowledge in English?

- a) Very Low
- b) Low
- c) Average
- d) High
- e) Very High

2. I believe learning vocabulary is essential for improving my English skills.

- a) Strongly Disagree
- b) Disagree
- c) Neutral
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly Agree

3. Rank the following strategies for learning new vocabulary in order of importance to you:

(1 = most important, 5 = least important)

- 1. Flashcards
- 2. Reading
- 3. Watching movies or videos
- 4. Writing exercises
- 5. Mobile applications

4. To what extent do you feel autonomous in your vocabulary learning?

- 1. Not Autonomous at All
- 2. Slightly Autonomous
- 3. Moderately Autonomous
- 4. Very Autonomous
- 5. Completely Autonomous

5. I take the initiative to learn new vocabulary without being prompted by a teacher.

Appendices

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

6. Rate the effectiveness of the following methods for learning new vocabulary

Method	Not Effective	Somewhat Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Extremely Effective
Flashcards					
Reading					
Watching movies or videos					
Writing exercises					
Mobile applications					

autonomously

Other (please specify):

.....

7. What challenges do you face when trying to learn new vocabulary autonomously?
 (Check all that apply)

1. Lack of motivation
2. Limited access to resources

Appendices

3. Difficulty understanding vocabulary in context

4. Insufficient practice opportunities

Other (please specify):

.....

.....

.....

8. Please provide any additional comments or suggestions regarding your experience with autonomy in vocabulary learning:

.....

.....

THANK YOU for your cooperation.

Appendix C

Students' Interview

Dear students,

We are conducting a research study on fostering EFL students' autonomy in vocabulary learning. We are collecting data through this interview, and we would greatly appreciate your participation. The interview will be recorded for accuracy. Rest assured that your responses will be treated confidentially and used solely for academic purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

- **Interview Questions:**

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself, including your name, age, and background?

.....
.....

2. Why did you decide to study English? Was it your choice, or were there other reasons?

.....
.....

3. What does learner autonomy mean to you, and do you think it is important for vocabulary learning? Why or why not?

.....
.....

4. How does motivation affect your vocabulary learning? Do you think it helps you learn independently?

.....
.....

5. Do you usually learn vocabulary from your teacher or on your own? Which do you think is more effective, and why?

.....
.....

6. Do you use technology in your studies? If so, does it help you learn vocabulary independently?

.....
.....

Appendices

7. What methods do you use to learn vocabulary by yourself? Choose one of the following methods and explain why you use it:

Flashcards Spaced repetition Word maps