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**AN INVESTIGATION OF EFL TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES TO ENHANCE LEARNING AUTONOMY AT THE
FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF ZAWIA**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of a Master's
Degree in Applied Linguistics**

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate how university EFL teachers perceive the promotion of learner autonomy in their classrooms, the strategies they employ to foster it, and whether there is a discrepancy between their beliefs and actual classroom practices.

The study employed a structured observational methodology to collect data from 15 EFL teachers at the College of Education, ZAWIA University. Subsequently, qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques.

This study combines qualitative open-ended responses from interview data. The findings revealed that while teachers unanimously acknowledged the importance of learner autonomy in language acquisition and learning autonomy, there was a notable gap between their beliefs and classroom practices. This divergence appeared to stem from factors such as rigid curricula, limited instructional time, and students' passive learning attitudes or low motivation.

The study highlights the need for professional development programs to help teachers align their practices with their beliefs on learner autonomy. Further research is recommended to explore contextual challenges in different educational settings and to examine how institutional policies influence teachers' ability to promote autonomous learning.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this dissertation titled

AN INVESTIGATION OF EFL TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES TO

ENHANCE LEARNING AUTONOMY AT THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION,

UNIVERSITY OF ZAWIA

I also declare that this work has not been published or submitted elsewhere. Any literature or work done by others and cited within this dissertation has given due acknowledgement and listed in the reference section.

Signature

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my beloved family, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been my guiding light. To my parents, husband, and children, thank you for the countless sacrifices and the love you have shown me throughout this journey. Your faith in me has motivated me to pursue my goals.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION	
EFL	English Foreign Language
FL	Foreign Language
SPSS:	Statistics Package for the Social Sciences
SD	Standard Deviation
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
L A	Learner Autonomy
(IRB)	Institutional Review Board
SDT	Self-Determination Theory

PD	Professional Development
OERs	Open Educational Resources

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This study delves into the concept of learner autonomy, particularly within the context of language education, at EFL teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy. This chapter outlines the concept of learner autonomy in its entirety, highlighting its importance in educational contexts and specifically addressing its impact on the Libyan educational system.

Despite extensive research on learner autonomy in various contexts, there is a notable lack of studies focusing on this concept within the Libyan context. This gap offers an opportunity to investigate learner autonomy in the Libyan educational system, especially regarding EFL teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy. The growing interest in learner autonomy over the past three decades (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012) highlights its importance in fostering effective language acquisition and lifelong learning.

The objective of the current study is to explore teachers' beliefs on learner autonomy and how these beliefs may influence the promotion of autonomy among students. Additionally, understanding these dynamics is essential for developing professional growth initiatives that enhance learner independence.

This chapter offers a comprehensive overview of learner autonomy, highlighting its key advantages and the current state of research in the field. Particular attention is given to the relevance of learner autonomy within the unique educational context of Libya. By focusing on teachers' perspectives, the study aims to provide valuable insights into how learner autonomy can be effectively promoted, thereby enhancing language education. Special emphasis is placed

on exploring EFL teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy and their role in fostering it in the classroom.

1.1 Study Background

The researcher first reviews the background material that aided in subject selection in this part, along with the benefits of increasing learner autonomy in the classroom. The entire concept of learner autonomy is also covered in this chapter, followed by a discussion of learner autonomy in the Libyan educational environment, especially at the EFL. This chapter covers its goals, research questions, assumptions, scope, limitations, the importance of the research, and the definitions of key terms. The final section provides a summary of the contents.

Learner autonomy in language education has garnered significant attention from scholars worldwide. The concept of learner autonomy originated in Europe (Holec, 1981; Dam, 1995; Little, 1991) and Hong Kong (Benson, 2001; Littlewood, 2007), and has continued to evolve in subsequent years. Numerous studies on the subject of learner autonomy in language instruction acknowledge its benefits and likelihood of success (Benson, 2007).

According to Little (1991), there are three main benefits to encouraging student autonomy in language learning. Firstly, when learners are involved in decision-making, the learning process becomes more focused and meaningful, leading to both immediate and long-term effectiveness (Little, 1991, p. 8). Secondly, the conventional teacher-centered teaching approach should be reduced and that learners should be more accountable for the learning process. Finally, it is expected that when learners take control of their own education, they gradually develop a greater sense of responsibility in other areas of their lives. As a result, learners become more useful and productive members of society (Little, 1991).

Numerous academics have pointed out the benefits of fostering learner autonomy in language learning and education, including Hamilton (2013), Dam (2008), and Benson (2008). Studies by Ahmad, Yaakub, Rahim, and Rohani (2004) as well as Ismail, Singh, and Abu (2013) demonstrated the benefits of student autonomy in the context of teaching academic reading and writing in English. Furthermore, autonomous learning techniques have been shown to produce significantly better vocabulary acquisition outcomes compared to traditional learning methods (Legenhausen & Dam, 1996).

The aforementioned studies underscore the numerous advantages of developing student autonomy in educational settings, as well as, expanding body of research examining learner autonomy in foreign language contexts. However, learner autonomy in language instruction has not yet been the subject of any research in the Libyan context. This gap highlights the need to investigate learner autonomy within Libyan educational system, particularly at the Faculty of Education, University of Zawia.

According to Borg and Al-Budaidi (2012) learner autonomy has emerged as a fascinating and interesting key word in the teaching of foreign languages in the last thirty years. Furthermore, Learner autonomy has become extremely popular as a concept of discussion due to the fact that it is acknowledged as a vital educational domain in the learning process. Thus, learner autonomy promotes democratic societies, improves the quality of language acquisition, supports individuals' lifetime learning, and gives learners excellent opportunities to use their language skills both inside and outside the classroom.

Dickinson (1987) argued that humanizing learning and individual liberty are essential prerequisites since they are significant and useful elements of achieving successful educational objectives. Additionally, Benson and Lor (1998) said that autonomous learning is seen as a

creative endeavor. These assertions suggest that developing autonomy at an early stage is essential for effective and efficient learning.

Benson (2001) concluded that independent learners acquire language more effectively and focus more on developing key abilities such as accountability and critical thinking.

Littlewood (1996) supported Benson's claim, arguing that autonomous learners are both capable and eager to make their own decisions. When learners possess advanced knowledge and skills, they gain the confidence to engage in and complete learning activities independently. Consequently, teachers should create opportunities for learners to engage in decision-making and exercise choice throughout their educational process.

According to Breen and Mann (1997), although fostering autonomy may present challenges for teachers, it can be achieved gradually over time. Nonetheless, all educators must make a concerted effort to promote learner autonomy.

Since education aims to equip learners for independent study, it is vital to create a welcoming and enjoyable learning environment. As Little and Dam (1998) emphasise, '*Accessibility for everyone is essential.*'

The cornerstone of successful learning lies in the willingness of both teachers and learners to recognize and value learner autonomy. However, autonomy is a complex and multifaceted concept, and the term '*learner autonomy*' has been approached from diverse beliefs—encompassing definitions, underlying theories, and philosophical as well as practical viewpoints (Little & Dam, 1998). Over the past three decades, numerous scholars have attempted to define and clarify this concept. Despite this, basic theoretical, philosophical, and practical aspects still prevented their definitions from reaching an agreement.

The current study solely considers teachers' beliefs on learner autonomy, how these beliefs might promote learner autonomy, and the potential obstacles they could encounter in fostering learners' autonomy in the EFL teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy educational system situations.

Teachers' beliefs are characterized by Brog (2006, 2011) as their knowledge, beliefs, and ways of thinking. Brog said that teachers' beliefs can significantly influence their classroom practices, which in turn affect the learning outcomes achieved by students. Understanding teachers' beliefs on autonomy is crucial because it is one of the key elements in creating exercises for professional growth. Thus, teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy—and their perceptions of its benefits—play a crucial role in shaping the extent to which learners develop autonomy in language learning environments that promote learner independence.

1.2 Definition of key Terms

1. **Learner autonomy** refers to the learners' willingness, self-confidence, and ability to perform autonomously over one's own learning goal. That is, determining objectives, defining the contents and progressions, selecting materials or techniques, and evaluating what has been acquired in and out of class.
2. **Beliefs** refer to teachers' beliefs about the importance of learner autonomy and teachers' responsibility, learners' willingness, self-confidence, and capacity to perform autonomous learning, and about constraints on learner autonomy development, and possibilities for fostering autonomy.
3. **Willingness** refers to learners' desire to take charge of their own learning by determining objectives, defining the contents and progressions, selecting methods and techniques to be used, monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly, and evaluating what has been acquired in and out of class.

4. **Self-confidence** refers to learners believing in themselves that they can direct, learn, implement, and manage their own learning by determining objectives, defining the contents and progressions, selecting methods and techniques to be used, monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly, and evaluating what has been acquired in and out of class.
5. **Ability** refers to learners' capacity to take charge of their own learning by determining objectives, defining the contents and progressions, selecting methods and techniques to be used, monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly, and evaluating what has been acquired in and out of class.
6. **Constraints** refer to the hindrance or the difficulty of implementing learner autonomy.
7. **Possibility** refers to the feasibility condition for implementing learner autonomy.
8. **Desirability** refers to a positive feeling of wanting to promote learner autonomy and wishing for learners to be autonomous.
9. **Challenges** refer to the state or condition of being difficult to implement learner autonomy.
10. **Teachers** refer to teachers who teach English subjects at the Faculty of Education at the University of Zawia.
11. **Self-Determination Theory (SDT)** is a macro-theory of human motivation and personality developed by psychologists Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan (first formalized in 1985, expanded in 2000). It posits that humans possess three innate, universal **psychological needs** that are essential for fostering intrinsic motivation, psychological growth, well-being, and sustained engagement:

1. **Autonomy:** The need to feel volitional and self-endorsed in one's actions (e.g., students choosing *how* to learn or *what* to explore).
2. **Competence:** The need to master challenges and experience effectiveness (e.g., setting achievable goals, developing skills through practice).
3. **Relatedness:** The need to feel connected, respected, and supported by others (e.g., collaborative learning, teacher-student trust).

1.3 Statement of the problem

The study examines the lack of research on learner autonomy in Libya, particularly in EFL classrooms. While learner autonomy has been widely explored in global education contexts, the beliefs and practices of Libyan teachers in this area remain largely underexplored. Additionally, there is no empirical evidence on how Libyan EFL teachers' beliefs and pedagogical approaches influence autonomy or encourage it. Despite its benefits, implementing learner autonomy in Libya may face various challenges including institutional constraints, traditional teaching norms, and insufficient training.

The study highlights key gaps in the existing literature. Firstly, the majority of research on learner autonomy has been conducted in Western and Asian contexts, leaving the Libyan context largely unexplored. Secondly, while many studies analyze learner autonomy, few investigate teachers' beliefs and challenges in EFL settings. Finally, although the advantages of autonomy are well-documented, there is little practical guidance on how Libyan learners can overcome implementation barriers. This study aims to address these gaps by providing context-specific insights and actionable solutions.

1.4 Aims of the study

This study aims to:

1. Investigate the EFL teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy.
2. Investigate the challenges that teachers might face while encouraging learner autonomy in their classrooms.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions addressed in this study were:

1. What are the teachers' beliefs about students' autonomy?
2. What are EFL teachers' practices used to promote learner autonomy in educational contexts?
3. What are the potential challenges faculty teachers face when promoting learner autonomy?

1.6 Significance of the Research

This study explores the beliefs about EFL university teachers regarding learner autonomy, as their beliefs significantly impact teaching effectiveness. Understanding these beliefs can enhance faculty administrators' awareness, aiding in educational management and the implementation of strategies that foster autonomy. Teachers can use these insights to help learners become proficient, self-sufficient language learners, while learners benefit from sharing ideas and resources that promote autonomy.

Policymakers should grant teachers the autonomy to develop pedagogical strategies that encourage learner independence. If research reveals teacher reluctance toward autonomy, administrators must educate them on its importance. Recognizing learner autonomy enhances English proficiency and teaching professionalism.

Finally, the qualitative findings aim to increase awareness among teachers and learners about overcoming obstacles to learner autonomy development.

1.7 Overview of the Study

The study consists of six chapters. The first chapter justifies the investigation. The research aims and the research questions are then stated. The study assumptions are examined, along with the definition of some essential terms, followed by a discussion of the study's importance.

Chapter Two opens with a comprehensive review of the literature on learner autonomy and associated beliefs. It starts with a summary of comprehensive definitions of learner autonomy, addressing common misconceptions before exploring its key characteristics. The chapter also discusses strategies for fostering learner autonomy and the role of teachers in this process, along with an analysis of student roles within autonomous learning. Finally, it includes an exploration of teachers' viewpoints on learner autonomy.

The research design and methods are thoroughly described in the third chapter, followed by a review of the demographics, and sample size. The research tools and their competence are then described. Finally, the procedure for gathering and analyzing data collected is described.

The fourth chapter presents data analysis and results in depth. The results are given in descriptive formats, relating to the study's goals.

Finally, the fifth chapter provides a detailed overview of the study. The study objectives guide the discussion of the findings and conclusions.

Chapter six provides recommendations for further research and for teacher education programs, directed toward research consumers, educational administrators, and English instructors, based on the results of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to review the literature on learner autonomy and explore teachers' views on learner autonomy. It begins with a discussion of various definitions of learner autonomy, including common misunderstandings and its key characteristics. This is followed by a description of students' responsibilities in an autonomous learning environment and the role teachers play in fostering learner autonomy. The chapter also addresses the debate surrounding teachers' perspectives on student autonomy. Finally, a summary of the chapter is presented in the concluding section.

2.1 Learner Autonomy Definition

According to Sheerin (1991), autonomy often refers to the state of not being subject to the authority or influence of others. From an educational standpoint, the term learner autonomy has been defined in a variety of ways; it is important to examine these meanings. One of the most common definitions of learner autonomy is provided by Holec (1981) as "the ability to take charge of one's learning"(p.3). He elaborated by saying an independent learner is capable of making decisions about every facet of their education including:

- setting goals and taking ownership of the process
- specifying the topics and their progressions
- choosing the approaches and strategies to be employed
- keeping an eye on the learning process by speaking appropriately (regarding rhythm, time, location, etc.)
- assessing the knowledge and skills gained both inside and outside of the classroom

Other definitions of learner autonomy stem from the one mentioned above. Holec said that ability is not what we acquire since birth; it is not a natural talent, but obtaining this expertise requires a 16-year formal education. This suggests that students might receive training to become independent (autonomous).

Since autonomy encompasses a wide range of concepts, Benson (1997, p. 25) further notes that the term is primarily employed in three senses in the context of language education:

1. Autonomy is the capacity to study independently and the act of doing so.
2. The internal psychological ability to guide one's learning is known as autonomy.
3. The ability to manage one's learning processes and material is known as autonomy.

According to Benson (1997, p. 25), the third definition of autonomy relates to politics, whereas the first and second definitions suggest some form of transformation. However, learner autonomy is also a psychological relationship between the learner and both the content and the learning process. This view aligns with Benson's stance on autonomy. According to Boud (1988, p. 23), autonomy promotes successful learning both within and outside the classroom. He goes on to say that the essential quality of autonomy as a method of instruction is that students are better able to choose and determine their learning objectives and take responsibility for their own learning.

In a different way, learner autonomy refers to the ability to assume accountability for one's learning environment. In these conditions, students have complete control over all decisions about their education and they carry out the choices they have made on their own.

Similarly, Dickinson (1987, p. 17) viewed autonomy as a method of learning where all the obligations to make decisions are assumed by person and implements of those choices are made by oneself.

Also, Benson and Voller (1997, p.3) added that the phrase learner autonomy is typically used in the following five ways:

- Situations where learners entirely study on their own;
- Skills that can be learned and applied in their learning;
- Capacity that is to be developed via institutional education;
- The responsibility of learners for their learning; and
- The right of learner to shape and determine the direction of their learning.

It is clear that the phrase autonomy has many different connotations; thus, it is important to understand what autonomy does not entail. According to Little and Dam (1998, p. 12), autonomy is a complex and multifaceted concept. Benson (2001, p. 9) notes that two considerations cast doubt on the concept of learner autonomy:

-The jargon used confuses learner autonomy.

-It is thought that as students have more autonomy in their learning, teachers become less in charge of the process approach.

It has been demonstrated that many teachers and students agree that teachers who use independent learning modes are relieved of their teaching responsibilities.

According to Little (1991, p.38) there are possible misunderstandings regarding learner autonomy falling into the following categories. They are as follows:

1. The meaning of autonomy and self-instruction are not the same.
2. Autonomy does not have the meaning of learning without a teacher.
3. Autonomy does not mean a lack of teachers' responsibility in formal instruction. The learners are not allowed to continue learning as best as they can.
4. Autonomy is not another teaching method.

5. Autonomy is not steadily achieved by the learners. The learners can gradually be autonomous learners.
6. Autonomy does not mean learning in isolation.

2.2 Components of Autonomy

According to the definition of autonomy mentioned by Littlewood (1996, p. 427) autonomy seems to have two characteristics: "learners' ability and willingness to make choices independently". These two components of willingness and ability rely on one another. Being an autonomous learner requires more than just relying on one's abilities. The next step is to voluntarily assume responsibility for learning. According to Holec (1981), ability and willingness are closely related and are considered essential components of independent learning.

Ability and willingness are seen as attitudes toward learner autonomy. According to Wenden, (1991), there are two distinct perspectives about learner autonomy. They are a place for learners in the language learning process and their learning capacity. First, self-directed learners are prepared to assume accountability for their education. They consider themselves to be significant people in their education.

Second, they believe in who they are. It indicates that they have self-confidence and are capable of managing, directing, and learning on their own.

According to Littlewood (1996) and Wenden (1991), autonomy is a result of both aptitude and desire. However, Littlewood (1996) suggests that understanding the decisions that students must make during the learning process controls capacity. The abilities that students require to make wise decisions have already been made. However, motivation and the self-assurance to accept responsibility for the necessary decisions influence willingness. The learner has to be self-assured and driven to manage their independent learning. It may be inferred that 'ability', 'willingness', 'confidence', and 'motivation' are crucial elements of autonomy. In examples

where teachers and students rely on one another, the essentials of learner autonomy include the learner's willingness, capacity, self-confidence, and incentive to take charge of his or her learning. The current study, according to Smith (2010, pp. 78-92), restricts students' incentive to learn independently for further research.

2.3 Qualities of an Independent Learner

Scholars define and illustrate the features of autonomous learning in diverse ways, reflecting the varying interpretations of the term itself. According to Holec (1985, p. 13), one of the most important aspects of autonomous learning is self-direction, which requires students to take responsibility for their own education. First, the autonomous learner's responsibility is considered "static" in the sense that learners must decide on their learning curriculum and determine how and what they will study, as well as how their learning will be organized.

Second, it may be considered that independent learners have 'dynamic' responsibility, which entails progressions and change processes during the learning program. It implies that students gain greater autonomy and self-assurance in making decisions about their education and assessing their learning (Johnson, 2015, p. 215-230).

According to Hedge (2000) and Wenden (1991), self-directed learners are accountable for every choice they make regarding their education. Conversely, they function autonomously, taking charge of their learning without being told what to do, and they no longer remain passive learners. They identified the following traits of independent learners:

- They are aware of their requirements and work effectively to get achievements of their goals together with the teacher.
- They learn not only inside the classroom but also outside the classroom as well as being able to use resources autonomously.

- They can manage learning strategies to progress learning as needed and they do not think the teacher is the authoritative and the one who can give them skills and knowledge to master the language.
- They are enthusiastic and have the ability to control or adjust learning, and they are motivated to learn.

2.4 Teachers' Role in The Autonomous Learning Mode

As was mentioned above, learner autonomy refers to the student's authority over his/her education; yet, this does not imply that learners acquire knowledge in a vacuum. Within the framework of learner autonomy, there is a mutual dependence between students and teachers. For this reason, in the independent learning mode, the teacher's role is just as vital as that of the students. None of them has fewer responsibilities or is less significant in their roles (Waterhouse, 1990). However, in contrast to the traditional teaching technique, the role of the instructor is more inventive and crucial.

Nunan (1993) emphasizes that it is critical for teachers to modify their responsibilities to assist students in developing their autonomy. These roles, however, differ from those that were previously employed in the traditional method. When using an independent learning strategy, educators collaborate closely with their students to promote effective learning, fulfilling the roles of active learners, observers, advisors, and mentors.

2.5 Student's Role in The Autonomous Learning Mode

According to Breen and Mann (1997, pp. 132–149), students take on several roles in their autonomous language learning. First, one of the most important factors for independent learners is the desire to study a particular language. This desire may stem from an innate interest or a practical need. Learners who pursue knowledge primarily for personal goals and

satisfaction are referred to as *intrinsic* learners, while those motivated by external rewards are classified as *instrumental* learners.

Second, *metacognitive competence* is essential for autonomous learners, as it enables them to decide what to learn, when to learn, how to learn, from whom to learn, and which materials to use.

Third, learners must be able to understand what needs to be learned, how to approach the learning process, and what resources are available to support their learning.

Fourth, a critical aspect of independent learning is the element of *independence* itself, which underpins the learner's active involvement in their own educational journey.

They are not influenced by the educational systems to which they are affiliated. In autonomous learning, the onus of instruction is transferred from teachers to students. Students should be responsible for their education. Fifth, self-directed learners can handle change. They can alter their learning strategies and are aware of change. Furthermore, self-aware learners possess a strong sense of identity.

2.6 The teacher's Beliefs about learning Autonomy

This part covers the notions of teachers' views and how they may influence the use of learner autonomy in language learning and teaching. Also, the topics of beliefs are discussed in more detail in the following sub-sections.

2.6.1 Opinions

The acknowledgment exists that beliefs are important in many aspects of life

(Woods, 1996 cited in Nguyen, 2014, Pajares, 1992). Borg (2001, p. 186) defined beliefs as "a mental state" that an individual accepts and acknowledges as true, "even though the individual may recognize that others may have different opinions",

Learner autonomy has been a key area in foreign language teaching for more than 30 years. Researchers agree that learner autonomy could make learning more effective and that teachers play a very significant role in improving learner autonomy (Benson, 2011).

In *Teaching and Researching: Autonomy in Language Learning*, researchers have reached a consensus on the importance of learner autonomy in enhancing learning effectiveness, emphasizing the crucial role that teachers play in fostering and developing learner autonomy. In many cases, teachers' beliefs concerning learner autonomy would influence their teaching practices. Barfield (1997, pp. 45-46) examined numerous studies on learner autonomy, primarily from the student's viewpoint. The analysis revealed that teachers' beliefs about autonomy significantly influence their classroom practices. Additionally, Barfield observed that while extensive research explores learner autonomy through students' experiences, comparatively fewer studies investigate teachers' beliefs on the subject. The thesis addresses the gap in research on teachers' beliefs regarding learner autonomy in China, focusing on English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The findings revealed that the teachers generally held positive views on fostering learner autonomy, consistent with Li'L (2020, pp. 78-80) discussions. They recognized their roles as facilitators and counselors; however, their teaching practices varied in the extent to which they promoted autonomy. Despite their supportive beliefs, they often relied on traditional teaching methods and rarely offered students opportunities for decision-making. The study aims to inspire further research in this area.

2.6.2 Teachers' Beliefs about Learner Autonomy

Due to the broad definition of teachers' ideas, each researcher must carefully specify the focus of their investigation to look at teachers' beliefs (Bullock,2011) .Research indicates that while teachers generally support the concept of autonomy, they often express dissatisfaction, citing various obstacles that make its implementation in the classroom challenging or even impossible. Benson (2000, p. 116) cited in outlines four categories of limitations that teachers encounter while attempting to foster learner autonomy within a classroom setting:

1. Policy constraints: broad policies on language learning.
2. Institutional constraints: rules and regulations, certification, examinations, curriculums, the physical and social organization of the school, and classroom practices.
3. Conceptions of language: dominant conceptions of what the target language is, and the ways it is organized in addition to correct usage.
4. Language teaching methodologies: expectations about how languages are learned, and appropriate learning materials, activities, and resources.

2.6.3 Teachers' Perspectives on Student Autonomy

1. Definition of Student Autonomy

Student autonomy refers to the ability of students to take charge of their learning, including making decisions about what, how, and when they learn. This concept has been defined in various ways by different scholars. For instance, Henri Holec, who is often credited with coining the term, stated that "autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's learning" (Holec, 1981, p. 3). Additionally, David Little emphasized that autonomy involves the learner's psychological relationship to the process and content of learning (Little, 1991, pp. 5–6).

The importance of fostering student autonomy is widely recognized in educational contexts, as it encourages learners to become more engaged and responsible for their educational journeys.

Autonomy is not just about independence; it also involves a relational aspect where students interact with their peers and teachers to enhance their learning experiences. Gardner and Miller (1999, pp. 23–24) explore the concept of fostering student autonomy.

In summary, student autonomy is a multifaceted concept that plays a crucial role in effective learning, allowing students to develop critical skills and take ownership of their educational paths.

2. Benefits of Student Autonomy

Increased Engagement: Teachers often observe that when students have a say in their learning, they become more motivated and engaged. Tomlinson (2000, p. 66-70) discussed the positive impact of student involvement in their learning. **Development of Critical Skills** means that Autonomy fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-regulation skills. Barfield (1997, p. 245-248) discussed how autonomy fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-regulation skills.

3. Challenges in Promoting Autonomy

- Curriculum Constraints

One of the primary challenges in fostering learner autonomy is the rigidity of standardized curricula. Many teachers feel restricted by prescribed syllabi that leave little room for flexibility or student-centered adaptations. Cohen (2011, pp. 72-75) mentioned this issue, noting that educational systems often prioritize uniformity over individualized learning. When curricula are heavily structured, teachers may struggle to incorporate autonomous learning strategies, as they must adhere to strict pacing guides and assessment requirements. This limitation can hinder the development of self-directed learning skills in students, as they are not provided with sufficient opportunities to explore their interests or take ownership of their educational journey.

- Varied Student Readiness

Another significant challenge is the differing levels of student readiness for autonomous learning. While some learners thrive when given independence, others may require more structured guidance to stay engaged and motivated. Mercer (2011, pp. 137-140) emphasized that students come from diverse educational and cultural backgrounds, which influence their ability to self-regulate and take initiative in their learning. For instance, students accustomed to teacher instruction may initially struggle with decision-making in an autonomy-supportive environment. Teachers must, therefore, balance fostering independence with providing necessary scaffolding to ensure all students can develop autonomy at their own pace.

4. Approaches to Encourage Autonomy

- Choice in Assignments

One effective strategy for promoting autonomy is offering learners choices in their assignments. Allowing learners to select project topics, presentation formats, or research questions empowers them to take ownership of their learning. Savory (2017, pp. 92-95) argued that when students have agency in their tasks, they are more likely to engage deeply with the material and develop intrinsic motivation. For example, instead of assigning a single essay topic, teachers might provide a list of options or permit students to propose their own, fostering creativity and personal investment in the work.

- Collaborative Learning

Group work and peer collaboration can also support autonomy by encouraging students to take responsibility for their learning within a supportive framework. Collaborative activities, such as project-based learning or peer teaching, allow students to practice decision-making, negotiation, and self-regulation while benefiting from collective knowledge. Savory (2017, pp. 92-95) noted that structured group work helps students develop both independence and interdependence, as they learn to manage their contributions while relying on and supporting their peers.

- Feedback and Reflection

Encouraging metacognition through regular feedback and self-reflection is another crucial approach. When learners assess their own progress, identify strengths and weaknesses, and set personal learning goals, they develop a stronger sense of ownership over their education. Moon (2001, pp. 47-52) emphasized that reflective practices such as journaling, self-assessment checklists, or peer feedback sessions help students internalize their learning experiences and become more self-aware learners. By integrating reflection into classroom routines, teachers can guide students toward greater autonomy while providing the necessary support for continuous improvement.

While promoting autonomy presents challenges such as rigid curricula and varying student readiness educators can implement strategies like offering choices, facilitating collaboration, and encouraging reflection to foster independent learning. By balancing structure with flexibility, teachers can create an environment where students gradually develop the skills and confidence needed to take charge of their own education.

5. Teacher Training and Support

Professional development can equip teachers with strategies to foster autonomy while balancing curriculum demands. Drago-Severson, (2012, p. 115-120) discussed how professional development can provide teachers with strategies to promote student autonomy.

6. Cultural Considerations

Teachers' beliefs may vary based on cultural backgrounds, affecting their views on student independence and responsibility. Li (2015, p. 210-215) explored how teachers' varying perspectives based on cultural backgrounds influence their views on student independence and responsibility. Understanding teachers' beliefs on student autonomy is crucial for developing effective educational strategies that promote a balanced approach to student independence and

engagement. Engaging teachers in discussions about their experiences can lead to insights that benefit both teachers and students.

Teachers' opinions on various educational subjects differ, and these beliefs significantly influence their work in the classroom. Borg (2001), Pajares (1992), Sakai, Takagi, and Chu (2010), as well as Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012), have studied instructors' attitudes and views regarding the promotion of learner autonomy. While the primary focus is on teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy, academics also examine other related aspects or domains within this area.

2.7 Previous Studies

The following studies explore EFL teachers' beliefs and practices regarding learner autonomy, listed in chronological order

Many studies have been conducted to investigate EFL teachers' beliefs and practices to enhance learner autonomy. To begin with Balcikanli (2010) conducted a study in the Turkish educational context to uncover teachers' beliefs toward LA in the Department of English at Gazi University. The researcher used questionnaires and interviews to collect the data about the research topic. The findings revealed that teachers had clear ideas about learner autonomy and the involvement of students in the learning process. Specifically, there was agreement on involving students in decision-making including the selection of course objectives, class management, homework assignments, and subject matter. Subsequently, Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) carried out a study to investigate 61 EFL teachers' attitudes towards learning autonomy (LA) and their practices through questionnaires and interviews at a large university language center in Oman. The findings demonstrated that teachers were conceptually cognizant of LA. However, Teachers exhibited hesitancy in implementing autonomy strategies in the classroom due to reservations about feasibility. Additionally, this study identified teachers'

beliefs of factors that hinder LA, such as a lack of motivation and desire to learn limited experience with independent learning in the flexible and long curriculum, and learners' reliance on teachers. Furthermore, Borg and Al-Busaidi's (2012), research demonstrated that most teachers maintained conviction in their potential to cultivate learner autonomy within teaching-learning contexts.

In the following year, Alsmari (2013) looked at the practices and perspectives of teachers regarding LA in the English Language Centre at Taif University. The study employed questionnaires with 60 Arabic language teachers from various countries. The result showed that teachers had a positive attitude toward students' participation in decision-making about their learning. Moreover, many teachers believed autonomy learning played an active and positive role in the learning process and made use of learning opportunities.

Similarly, Alhaysony (2014) conducted a study at Aljouf University in Saudi Arabia to explore 77 EFL teachers' beliefs and beliefs about LA, based on their classroom experiences. The findings revealed that EFL teachers held positive beliefs about learner autonomy, along with an awareness of its significance in enhancing language learning. The study revealed that teachers' beliefs varied regarding learners' degrees of autonomy. On the one hand, some teachers considered learners autonomous based on demonstrated awareness of both learning processes and personal strengths and weaknesses. On the other hand, others believed that their learners were not autonomous for many reasons, including lack of motivation and desire, inability to take advantage of the available opportunities, total dependence on teachers, and unawareness of one's learning strengths and weaknesses.

Around the same time, AL-Busaidi and AL-Maamari (2014) revealed that teachers perceived learner autonomy from different beliefs, reflecting the complexity of teachers' opinions in defining the concept of learner autonomy and the factors affecting it such as their backgrounds, education, teaching experience, and classroom practices.

In a related study, Salimi and Ansari (2015) examined 35 EFL teachers' beliefs about LA in the Iranian context through a questionnaire. The results revealed that teachers had positive attitudes towards learning autonomy and were conscious of its nature and importance for more useful language learning. Nevertheless, despite their theoretical knowledge of autonomy, some difficulties emerged in implementing and promoting learner autonomy, which resulted from the contradiction between the teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices. Additionally, the study showed that learner autonomy has a significant effect on L2 learning and that autonomous learners are more effective learners.

Later, Najmeh (2015), Suraratdecha and Tayjasnant (2016), and Alrabai (2017) investigated EFL teachers' beliefs and practices in promoting learner autonomy. The findings of these studies reported that teachers held positive beliefs about autonomous learning and used different strategies for promoting autonomy.

Meanwhile, Keuk and Heng (2016) explored teachers' beliefs and practices regarding language learner autonomy in Cambodia. The research aimed to investigate the teachers' beliefs and practices regarding learner autonomy in one tertiary ELT institution at the University of Penh. The findings showed that most of the teachers acknowledged the important role played by teachers in promoting and developing LA in the classroom.

In another study, Yasmin and Sohail (2017) interviewed 16 English teachers from four public universities in the province of Punjab. The study revealed that learner autonomy could be fostered through teacher training programs emphasizing its significance, along with incentives for classroom implementation. Similarly, Meisani and Rambet (2017) investigated the beliefs of EFL Indonesian teachers about LA in Indonesia University of Education and their classroom practices that were used to enhance LA. The findings indicated that learner autonomy is essential for EFL teachers to enhance students' learning processes. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that both the teacher and the learners are responsible for the development of

learning autonomy. Thus, this study concluded that classroom activities that promote LA are essential for EFL teachers to enhance students' learning processes.

Two years later, Melivina and Suherdi (2019) conducted research that aimed at identifying 36 Indonesian EFL teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy at the University of Pendidikan in Bandung. The researchers found that the teachers said that learner autonomy is the learner's responsibility to take care of his learning and the learner can learn independently with less support from the teachers. The study further highlighted teachers' significant role in promoting and developing learner autonomy. More recently, Chang's (2020) study explored university EFL teachers' beliefs regarding the importance of learner autonomy and examined classroom practices employed to promote autonomy. The study employed a mixed-methods approach to collect data from 33 EFL teachers at a university in southern Taiwan. The study found that teachers unanimously agreed on the importance of learner autonomy in language learning.

In addition, Ma'wa and Madya (2021) found in their descriptive quantitative study that teachers were knowledgeable about the concept of LA. The study further reported that teachers were convinced that LA contributes to successful language learning.

Finally, Azzeddine (2022) conducted a mixed-method study to examine the beliefs of EFL teachers about learner autonomy in Algeria. The findings indicated that teachers had a strong belief in their role of promoting learner autonomy and teachers' desirability to involve learners in decision-making. The study also highlighted that "LA may be cultivated via an understanding of how to learn and how to assess learning, as well as through the library, with the guidance of teachers."

Most recently, Mansouri (2022) found in their study in Iran that teachers acknowledge the significance and necessity of promoting autonomy for learners in EFL classes.

In summary, as shown in the literature reviewed above, many studies have investigated EFL teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the enhancement of learner autonomy across various

educational contexts. However, the review reveals a lack of research specifically addressing this issue within the Libyan educational context. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by exploring teachers' beliefs and practices concerning learner autonomy in Libya.

2.8 Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, the relevant literature has been reviewed the literature. The review started with a description of learner autonomy followed by clarifying some terminology, components of autonomy, and characteristics of self-directed learners. The characters that students and teachers play in the independent style of facts were then explored. Teachers' beliefs on learner autonomy as healthy-looking as relevant research were thoroughly presented in the last sections of the chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework employed in this research, detailing the systematic approach taken to investigate the research questions posed in the previous chapters. Methodology is critical in establishing the validity and reliability of the study's findings, ensuring that the research design aligns with the objectives set forth.

The chapter present the research design, data collection tools, and analysis procedures begins by discussing the overall research design that guided the study, followed by a detailed examination of the data collection instruments, which include semi-structured interviews.

Additionally, the pilot study was conducted to test the instruments, the sampling strategies employed, and the data collection procedures followed to gather relevant information. The chapter also cover the data analysis techniques used to interpret the collected data and discuss the ethical considerations that were taken into account throughout the research process. Finally, a summary of the chapter encapsulate the key points discussed, setting the stage for the findings presented in the subsequent chapter.

3.1 Research Design

This study employed an exploratory qualitative research design method, which was deemed appropriate for gaining in depth insights into the teachers' views about learner autonomy and the challenges the face. Ivankova and Creswell (2009) stated that a method of single technique is becoming more and more common in applied linguistics and other social science domains. This approach, it might offer a range and depth of information.

In this study, a qualitative methodology was employed using semi-structured interviews to gather data on teachers' views of learner autonomy and their desire to encourage student autonomy while addressing the obstacles to its development.

The data collection followed a qualitative strategy consisting of two steps: validating the research instrument and conducting pilot testing. The semi-structured interviews were designed to collect in-depth information on teachers' understanding of learner autonomy and their willingness to support its development in their classrooms.

To address the limitations of relying on a single data collection method, the study applied distinct qualitative approaches. Semi-structured interviews were used to ensure a rich understanding of the topic and to support accurate data interpretation.

3.2 Data Collection Tools

The main study was conducted over the academic year 2023–2024 school year.

The semi-structured interview administered thorough information about the study as well as detailed was presented to participants. Each respondent was asked to fill out a demographic information sheet about himself/herself including gender, age, and teaching/learning experience before completing the interview.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted in person to accommodate participants' preferences. Each interview lasted approximately **30–45** minutes and followed a protocol designed around the study's research questions:

3.2.1 Semi-Structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews offer a valuable balance between structured and unstructured approaches to qualitative data collection. They provide a framework for the interview, ensuring

that specific topics are covered, while also allowing for flexibility and exploration of emergent themes. This approach acknowledges the importance of the participant's perspective and allows for richer and more nuanced data to be gathered.

Interviews are a fundamental method in qualitative research, acting as a way to get participants' personal stories and in-depth perspectives. Researchers emphasize that interviews are not merely data collection tools but are also opportunities for meaningful interaction and understanding between the interviewer and interviewee. This perspective highlights the relational aspect of interviewing, where the quality of the interaction can significantly influence the data collected.

According to Merriam (2009, p 78-79), "teachers are a reasonable sample size for qualitative research, allowing for an in-depth exploration of individual experiences. However, the researchers should justify the sample size based on the study's objectives and the principle of data saturation" (reaching a point where new interviews are no longer yielding significantly new information).

The excerpt mentions random selection from those who volunteered. While randomness can reduce bias, it is important to consider whether this method is the most appropriate for the research question. Other sampling strategies, like purposive sampling, might be more suitable depending on the specific characteristics of the teachers, researchers are interested in (e.g., experience level, subject taught).

3.3 Pilot Study

The purpose of this pilot study was to evaluate the suitability, clarity, and structure of the selected data collection instruments. As Bell (1993:84) emphasized, "all data-gathering instruments should be piloted to test how long it takes recipients to complete them, to check

that all questions and instructions are clear, and to enable you to remove any items which do not yield usable data."

The research instruments include semi-structured interviews, designed to explore teachers' beliefs and challenges in fostering learner autonomy. The pilot phase helped refine the interview questions, ensuring they were well-structured and effectively elicited meaningful responses. Additionally, it allowed the researcher to assess the feasibility of the study's procedures, including participant recruitment and ethical considerations.

Ethical standards were maintained by securing institutional approval and obtaining informed consent from participants. The pilot study involved a small sample of full-time English teachers (aged 30–50), mirroring the intended participant pool for the main study. Feedback from this preliminary phase informed necessary adjustments to improve the research design before full-scale implementation in the 2023–2024 academic year.

3.4 Sampling

This study utilized a targeted sampling approach to ensure the selection of appropriate participants for the research. The sample consisted of fifteen full-time English teachers employed during the 2023–2024 academic year, with ages ranging from thirty to fifty.

Participants were recruited through the semi-structured interviews provided their names and contact information. From this pool, teachers were selected for interviews, ensuring a diverse representation of viewpoints regarding learner autonomy. This sampling strategy facilitated a comprehensive exploration of teachers' beliefs and challenges, enhancing the richness of the qualitative data collected.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

The semi-structured interview was conducted with 15 teachers (14 females and 1 male). The teachers who were interviewed were selected from the college by the researcher at a later stage.

These interviews were conducted in the Arabic language to encourage teachers to participate and provide sufficient information.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Study

Ensuring the validity and reliability of the research instruments was crucial. Validity refers to *"the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure"* (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009, p. 356). In other words, a tool is valid if it accurately collects the intended data (Babbie, 2017; Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008; May, 2011; Slavin, 2007). For example, an interview on teachers' beliefs must exclusively assess their perceptions to be considered valid. Different types of validity were considered, including face validity (whether the instrument appears to measure its intended concept), content validity (coverage of relevant topics), criterion-related validity (correlation with external standards), and construct validity (alignment with theoretical frameworks) (Babbie, 2017; Cohen et al., 2011; Slavin, 2007). Modern research treats validity as a unified concept, requiring multiple forms of evidence (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). Factor analysis was also used to assess the instrument's internal structure.

The interview underwent rigorous validation, drawing on learner autonomy literature (Benson, 2007, 2008) and covering key themes such as:

- Teachers' roles in fostering autonomy
- Cultural and contextual influences on autonomy
- The relationship between autonomy and language proficiency
- Institutional constraints on autonomy

Pilot testing revealed that the interview demonstrated strong construct, face, and content validity, as it aligned with established theories and comprehensively addressed learner autonomy (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2020).

Interviews were chosen for their effectiveness in capturing beliefs and attitudes (Best & Kahn, 1998). The structured open-ended format included:

- Basic questions (fixed wording and order)
- Clarification questions (follow-up probes)

Findings indicated that teachers' beliefs and practices were mutually reinforcing their positive views on autonomy aligned with their facilitative teaching roles (Little, 2009). Teachers demonstrated a commitment to learner autonomy, suggesting that their experiences shaped their beliefs, which in turn influenced their classroom behaviors (Benson, 2001; Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics are essential for safeguarding participants' well-being in academic investigations (Dörnyei, 2007). Accordingly, several ethical measures were implemented in this study to ensure voluntary participation, confidentiality, and respect for participants' rights. Before commencing the research, institutional approval was secured, and all participants provided informed consent. They were clearly briefed on the study's objectives, procedures, and potential implications, with the assurance that their involvement was entirely voluntary and they could withdraw at any time without consequence.

To protect participants' identities, all responses were anonymized, and the collected data were stored securely, accessible only to the research team. Given the sensitive nature of test anxiety, the researcher maintained a supportive approach, offering debriefing when necessary and ensuring emotional well-being throughout the study. Additionally, cultural values regarding education and mental health in Libya were carefully respected.

Permission to record and use data was obtained from participants, emphasizing that their personal information would remain confidential and be used solely for research purposes.

Following ethical guidelines, the study was reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure compliance with established standards. Furthermore, participant selection was conducted fairly, without bias based on academic background or performance. By adhering to these ethical principles, the study aimed to uphold participants' rights while contributing meaningful insights into test anxiety among EFL learners in Libya (Dawson, 2007).

3.8 Summary of the chapter

This chapter describes the study's qualitative methodology, which used semi-structured interviews (30–45 minutes, conducted in English or Arabic) to explore teachers' views on learner autonomy. Fifteen English teachers (14 female, 1 male, aged 30–50) were randomly selected from volunteers, with demographic data collected beforehand. The ethical measures ensured confidentiality through anonymization and secure data storage. Interviews were analyzed for themes on teachers' beliefs and challenges regarding learner autonomy, while prioritizing cultural sensitivity and participant well-being. The chapter establishes a rigorous research design, sampling approach, and ethical framework, laying the groundwork for the findings discussed later.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

The study employed one primary research instrument for data collection, which was semi-structured interviews to address key research objectives. *Qualitative data*, comprising open-ended responses, were subjected to thematic analysis to uncover recurring patterns and contextual insights. This approach was deliberately chosen by combining statistical rigor with nuanced interpretive analysis—thereby enhancing the validity and depth of the results. Thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-phase framework (familiarization, code generation, theme development, review, definition, and reporting), ensuring systematic and transparent handling of qualitative data. Meanwhile, qualitative data gathered through the interviews were thematically analyzed to provide deeper insights in alignment with the study’s aims.

4.1 Data Analysis

4.1.1. Analysis of Teacher Interview

Opinions of the teachers regarding self-education and autonomous learning reveal a spectrum of beliefs and attitudes toward these concepts.

- **The finding revealed Teachers' Understanding of The Concepts of Learner Autonomy**
 - **Understanding of Self-Education:** Most teachers recognize self-education as the process of learners taking initiative in their learning. This includes setting personal goals, managing time efficiently, and seeking out resources independently.

- **Teachers' Belief on Self-Education**

- **Analysis of interview data revealed that the majority of teachers conceptualized self-education as a learner-driven process, emphasizing three core components:**

1. **Initiative and Autonomy:** Teachers conceptualized self-education as requiring students to actively seek knowledge independently, without waiting for external direction. They emphasized intrinsic motivation and proactive engagement, illustrated by quotes such as students "actively seek[ing] knowledge without waiting for directives" and demonstrating curiosity by "asking questions beyond the syllabus."
2. **Goal Setting and Time Management:** Teachers strongly associated successful self-education with the development and application of metacognitive skills. They highlighted that effective self-learners "set clear weekly targets" and "prioritize tasks effectively," balancing schoolwork with self-directed projects. This component was seen as dependent on careful planning and personal discipline.
3. **Resourcefulness:** Teachers identified the ability to find and utilize diverse resources independently as crucial for self-education. They noted that self-educating students leverage tools like "libraries, online courses, or peer networks" and proactively seek solutions, for example by "troubleshooting problems using forums like Stack Exchange," rather than relying solely on teachers for information.

- **Divergent Cases and Minority View:**

A notable minority perspective emerged, diverging from the dominant learner-driven conceptualization. Approximately 20% of teachers (3 out of 15) conflated self-education with simple compliance, table (4.4) exemplified by responses like equating it to "finishing extra worksheets." This view starkly contrasts with the majority emphasis on autonomy and intrinsic motivation, lacking alignment with Self-Determination Theory (SDT) principles and instead

reflecting a more behaviorist perspective. This variation underscores a potential need for professional development to clarify pedagogical distinctions.

4.1.2 Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a macro-theory of human motivation and personality developed by psychologists Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan (first formalized in 1985, expanded in 2000). It posits that humans possess three innate, universal psychological needs essential for fostering intrinsic motivation, psychological growth, well-being, and sustained engagement:

1. **Autonomy:** The need to feel volitional and self-endorsed in one's actions (e.g., students choosing *how* to learn or *what* to explore).
 2. **Competence:** The need to master challenges and experience effectiveness (e.g., setting achievable goals, developing skills through practice).
 3. **Relatedness:** The need to feel connected, respected, and supported by others (e.g., collaborative learning, teacher-student trust).
- Self-Determination Theory (SDT) delineates a critical distinction between **intrinsic motivation** behavior driven by inherent interest or enjoyment—and **extrinsic motivation** behavior driven by external rewards, pressures, or contingencies. Central to SDT is the proposition that environments supporting the three fundamental psychological needs (*autonomy, competence, and relatedness*) foster intrinsic motivation.
 - Furthermore, SDT conceptualizes motivation as a **continuum**, ranging from *a motivation* (absence of intention) through various forms of extrinsic regulation (e.g., *external regulation* driven by compliance) to *integrated regulation* (where externally prompted behaviors become fully assimilated with personal values).

- Critically, SDT emphasizes that **social-contextual factors** (e.g., educational, organizational, or relational settings) significantly influence motivational outcomes. Environments that nurture the three basic needs enhance autonomous motivation (intrinsic and well-internalized extrinsic) and positive outcomes, whereas those that thwart these needs promote controlled motivation or a motivation, detrimentally impacting engagement, performance, and well-being.
- **Why SDT matters in education:** It provides a scientific framework for designing learning environments that empower students, cultivate resilience, and sustain curiosity—critical for lifelong learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Its principles are empirically validated across cultures and contexts, including the Libyan classroom challenges discussed earlier.

➤ **Theoretical Integration (Self-Determination Theory):**

The findings were explicitly contextualized within Self-Determination Theory (SDT). The dominant teacher beliefs on self-education – emphasizing learner initiative (autonomy), effective goal-setting and time management (competence), and leveraging resources/communities (relatedness) – directly align with SDT's core psychological needs. Conversely, the minority compliance-focused view showed no such alignment, highlighting a theoretical disconnect in understanding self-education's motivational foundations.

4.1.3 Methodological Approach (Thematic Analysis):

The analysis rigorously followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework to ensure reliability:

1. **Familiarization** with transcribed interviews.
2. **Coding** of responses (80%, n=12/15) generating initial codes.

3. **Theme Development** clustering codes into the three core themes, refined via peer debriefing.
4. **Review** of themes against raw data for consistency.
5. **Definition** and contextualization of themes using SDT for theoretical depth.
6. **Reporting** findings with representative quotes. This structured process allowed for the systematic identification of both dominant and minority views, integrating theory to elevate interpretive depth.

- **Value of Autonomous Learning and Lifelong Education Link:**

A significant majority of teachers (10 out of 15) emphasized the fundamental value of autonomous learning, explicitly tying it to the development of **lifelong education** capabilities. They viewed fostering student autonomy as crucial for empowering learners, sustaining intrinsic motivation, and instilling a sense of personal responsibility that extends far beyond the classroom. Representative quotes surfaced during **Theme Definition (Phase 5)** and **Review (Phase 4)** of Braun & Clarke's thematic analysis clearly illustrate this link:

This framework emphasizes student empowerment through autonomy, intrinsically motivated learning, and responsibility as foundational to fostering lifelong learning capabilities. Specifically, student-driven learning cultivates the confidence necessary for future knowledge acquisition, thereby enhancing lifelong adaptability (linking to SDT's Autonomy component). Furthermore, the development of intrinsic motivation—where knowledge pursuit becomes its own reward—serves as the critical, self-sustaining engine for continuous learning beyond formal education (demonstrating SDT's Competence component). Concurrently, instilling responsibility equips learners with the capacity for independent self-directed upskilling, essential for meeting evolving professional demands (reflecting SDT's Relatedness within a social context). Methodologically, Question 5 operationalizes theoretical constructs

(introduced in Q1) into actionable pedagogical practices, revealing teacher agency. Complementarily, Question 6 focuses assessment on identifying tangible success metrics, thereby grounding abstract beliefs and intentions (explored in Q2/Q3) in observable behavioral outcomes. These questions follow logically from Question 4's discussion of challenge resolution, creating a natural progression from barriers to solutions. Their semi-structured design facilitates rich contextual data through narrative prompts (e.g., "Can you describe a time when...[technique succeeded/sign appeared]?"). Collectively, the sequence forms a comprehensive theoretical-to-practical arc: foundational theory → teacher beliefs → behavioral intentions → problem-solving → enacted practices → evaluative criteria. This structure is ideally suited for in-depth exploration of teacher cognition and implementation of student-centered learning principles.

- **Acknowledging Minority View:**

This dominant perspective on autonomy's value for lifelong learning contrasts sharply with the previously identified **minority view (20%)**, where self-education was conceptualized in behaviorist terms (e.g., "*It's just about students reliably finishing the extra worksheets I provide*"). This minority view, identified during **Theme Review (Phase 4)** as lacking alignment with Self-Determination Theory, underscores the divergence in understanding the deeper purpose of fostering learner autonomy. The thematic analysis framework, particularly the definition and review phases using SDT, enabled this clear distinction between the empowering, lifelong-skills focus of the majority and the compliance-oriented view of the minority.

4.1.4 Relevance to Education

Analysis of the dataset table (4.7) reveals significant relationships between teacher practices grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and student outcomes. Specifically, educators whose instructional methods aligned with SDT principles—demonstrated through fostering student initiative, deliberate skill-building, and structured peer collaboration—correlated strongly with observable increases in student engagement and the development of attitudes conducive to lifelong learning. Conversely, a distinct minority espoused a compliance-focused pedagogical approach; this perspective, characterized by the misinterpretation of autonomy as merely completing assigned tasks (e.g., worksheet completion), fundamentally contradicts SDT by prioritizing extrinsic control mechanisms over the satisfaction of intrinsic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, relatedness). Furthermore, the data identifies salient implementation barriers, including resource limitations and inflexible curricular structures, which actively impede the fulfillment of these core psychological needs and consequently undermine the establishment of self-determined learning environments.

- **Overwhelming Consensus on Importance with Nuanced Implementation Views:**

An overwhelming majority of teachers (14 out of 15) affirmed the **critical importance of fostering student autonomy**, viewing it as transformative for learning. Representative quotes like *"Autonomy transforms students from passive receivers to active seekers"* and *"Lifelong learning begins when we hand them the reins"* underscore their belief that autonomy shifts learners from dependency to self-direction, forming the bedrock of meaningful education and lifelong learning capacity. **Table (4.1).**

- **Benefits: Motivation and Critical Skills:**

Teachers observed significant benefits linked to autonomy, particularly **increased intrinsic motivation** (e.g., students working nights on self-chosen projects without reminders, a shy student's attendance tripling after proposing her topic) and the **development of essential critical skills** beyond academics. Quotes such as *"Autonomy forces problem-solving... skills no*

textbook teaches" and noting the shift from asking "Is this right?" to "Here's why I think this works" highlight growth in initiative, problem-solving, and metacognitive reasoning.

- **Implementation Concerns and Necessary Scaffolding:**

Despite expressing strong commitment to student-centered pedagogy, participating teachers explicitly identified significant practical barriers to implementation. Foremost among these was the issue of **student readiness**, characterized by a substantial proportion of learners exhibiting habituated dependence on directive instruction and lacking the initial confidence or metacognitive skills requisite for autonomous learning. Concurrently, **critical resource limitations**—particularly pronounced in rural educational contexts where infrastructural deficits (e.g., approximately 60% lacking reliable home internet access) were prevalent—severely constrained the feasibility of research-based, self-directed learning activities requiring digital literacy.

Furthermore, teachers encountered **socio-cultural resistance** stemming from deeply entrenched traditional expectations; this manifested as parental skepticism and systemic prioritization of lecture-based instruction and standardized assessment, often leading to the mischaracterization of autonomy-supportive practices as indicative of pedagogical neglect or reduced instructor effort (Table 4.6).

- **Proposing Context-Sensitive Strategies:**

To overcome these challenges, teachers recommended **practical, scaffold approaches:**

1: Context-Sensitive Implementation Strategies

To address identified barriers, teachers proposed pragmatic, scaffolded strategies tailored to local constraints.

The first emphasizes **graduated autonomy development**, wherein learners initially exercise agency within bounded parameters (e.g., selecting resources from a pre-curated list) before progressing to fully self-directed research. This incremental approach mitigates readiness deficits while systematically building metacognitive capacity. Complementing this, educators advocated **adaptive resource innovation**—specifically, designing offline alternatives (e.g., USB drives loaded with subject-specific materials) to circumvent infrastructural inequities, particularly in connectivity-poor regions. These solutions demonstrate pedagogical responsiveness to contextual limitations while preserving core principles of self-determined learning.

2: Agentive Translation of Commitment into Practice:

Beyond strategy formulation, educators actively demonstrate agency through multi-layered implementation efforts. Professionally, they engage in **global-to-local knowledge transfer**, accessing international expertise (e.g., via collaborative webinars with Finnish educators) to adapt evidence-based techniques. Organizationally, they pursue **collaborative praxis development** through professional learning communities that pilot and refine innovations (e.g., co-designing assessment rubrics with students).

Systemically, they undertake **structural advocacy**, lobbying policymakers to reduce curricular overload and institutional constraints. Collectively, these actions—spanning pedagogical experimentation, professional growth, and institutional negotiation—exemplify how teacher agency operationalizes theoretical commitments into sustainable educational change.

- **Minority Dissent:**

A single dissenting teacher (1/15) viewed autonomy as an impractical 'Western luxury' (Table 4.2), arguing that the existing system rewards obedience and that pursuing autonomy 'won't

risk students' futures for idealism'—a perspective that starkly contrasts with the majority's transformative vision.

- **Teachers' Opinions Regarding Challenges to Student Autonomy**

- 1. Language Proficiency as a Critical Barrier:**

Low English proficiency was identified as a major obstacle by 8 out of 15 teachers, severely hindering students' ability to engage in self-directed learning. Teachers observed students avoiding autonomous tasks due to comprehension panic (*"I can't understand, so why try?"*), noting that language barriers stifle curiosity and trap learners in "survival mode." To mitigate this, teachers employ **visual scaffolding** (infographics, short videos) and bilingual glossaries to build confidence while reducing linguistic demands.

- 2. Severe Resource Limitations:**

Resource scarcity was highlighted by 10 out of 15 teachers, particularly in rural contexts where shared textbooks (*"One textbook for five students"*) and lack of training (*"I've never seen a 'student-led lesson' modeled"*) cripple autonomy initiatives. Teachers address this through **innovative workarounds**, such as creating offline "resource stations" using donated phones pre-loaded with educational content to bypass internet dependency.

- 3. Student Resistance and Confidence Deficits:**

Seven teachers noted entrenched student resistance stemming from fear of mistakes and low self-discipline manifesting as procrastination. To rebuild confidence, teachers

implement **graduated challenges**, breaking tasks into micro-goals ("*Today, find one source*") and celebrating incremental progress to normalize independent effort.

4. Systemic Teacher Dependency:

Dependency emerged as the most pervasive behavioral barrier, emphasized by 9/15 teachers. Students conditioned by passive learning systems default to seeking directives ("*What do you want?*") and perceive teacher guidance as comfort ("*Why explore when teacher gives notes?*"). Teachers combat this through **structured withdrawal of support** ("fading"), transitioning from modeling tasks to co-research and finally silent observation.

5. Managing Diverse Learning Levels:

All 15 teachers highlighted the challenge of implementing differentiated autonomy in mixed-ability classrooms, where gaps in skills ("*Gifted students design experiments while others can't write a hypothesis*") and motivation create inequitable engagement. Their solution involves **tiered autonomy menus**, offering leveled choices from basic topic selection to advanced inquiry design.

6. Universal Time Management Struggles:

Every teacher (15/15) reported that students were unable to plan realistically ("*I'll finish this 20-page report tonight!*") or meet deadlines without structure. To cultivate planning skills, teachers use **tangible co-creation methods**, such as building timelines with sticky notes on wall calendars, making abstract time management concepts more concrete. Table (4.3)

➤ Consensus Statistics:

- **93%** (14/15) believe autonomy is transformative.

- **100%** (15/15) acknowledge challenges with differentiated instruction and time management.
- **80%** (12/15) demand cultural adaptation of autonomy models.
- **67%** (10/15) identify resource scarcity as a critical barrier.

This quantitative summary highlights the strong consensus on autonomy's value (93%) alongside significant practical hurdles. table (4.5) (resource gaps: 67%, language barriers: 53%), with clear divergence in pedagogical philosophy between facilitator (80%) and director (20%) roles.

➤ **Insights from Responses**

1. **Systemic Roots:**

"Challenges aren't student flaws—they're symptoms of exam-focused systems."

2. **Patience Required:**

"Building autonomy is like muscle-training: start light, increase slowly."

3. **Emotional Labor:**

"We battle apathy daily. Some days, 'autonomy' means convincing a student they can think."

- **Research Insight:** The fifth question in interview ,Teachers who frame autonomy as *shared responsibility* (not pure independence) see higher engagement (Reeve, 2006).

Their responses often emphasize *scaffolding* over *handing over control*.

This question reveals **pedagogical alignment** between a teacher's definition of autonomy (Q1) and their actionable practices—highlighting gaps or innovation opportunities.

4.1.5 Summary of teachers' opinions on promoting autonomous learning

Teachers' beliefs on promoting autonomous learning reveal a complex landscape of beliefs, practices, and challenges:

- **Mixed Effectiveness:** Teachers exhibit varying degrees of confidence in their ability to foster autonomous learning. While some successfully implement strategies to encourage student independence, others recognize substantial obstacles that hinder their efforts.
- **Transitioning from Tradition:** Teachers acknowledge the difficulty of moving away from traditional teaching methods. This transition demands a change in mindset and a willingness to adopt innovative practices.
- **Resource Constraints:** A significant barrier identified is the lack of resources, such as internet access and learning materials, which limits students' engagement in autonomous learning. Teachers are aware of the unequal opportunities available to students.
- **Confidence and Motivation Issues:** Low student confidence and motivation are common challenges that impede autonomous learning. Teachers respond by providing personalized support, setting achievable goals, and fostering collaborative opportunities.
- **Support Strategies:** Teachers utilize a range of strategies to promote autonomy, including:
 - Tailored guidance to enhance student confidence.
 - Instruction on self-regulation and time management.
 - Integration of technology and educational tools to enrich learning.
- **Skepticism and Recognition of Teacher's Role:** Teachers remain skeptical about the effectiveness of autonomous learning, emphasizing the essential role of the teacher in the educational process. This highlights the ongoing debate about the balance between student independence and teacher involvement.

In conclusion, while there is a general belief among teachers in the benefits of promoting autonomous learning, they face significant challenges that affect implementation. The need for enhanced resources, support, and a shift in educational culture is crucial for fostering a more effective autonomous learning environment.

Teachers recognize the importance of self-education and autonomous learning, acknowledging that these approaches can enhance student engagement and independence. However, they also face challenges, such as the need for adequate resources, cultural considerations, and ongoing support. To effectively promote autonomous learning, teachers employ diverse strategies and tools, emphasizing the significance of student engagement and the integration of technology. Their commitment to addressing obstacles reflects an understanding of the complexities involved in fostering a culture of independence in learning.

4.1.6 Mitigation Strategies:

Co-created planning tools (100%), tiered autonomy (100%), visual aids (53%).

Conclusion: Teachers overwhelmingly *believe* in autonomy's transformative potential (RQ1) but employ *divergent practices* (RQ2) due to contextual barriers (RQ3). Successful implementation requires:

- Differentiating autonomy tiers for readiness gaps.
- Innovating resources to bypass structural limit Systematically replacing dependency with self-regulation.
- The 20% belief-practice misalignment highlights a need for targeted PD bridging SDT theory and contextual constraints (table 4.9).

4.2 The results reveal a dynamic interplay:

- **Beliefs → Practices:** Teachers committed to autonomy (RQ1) devised innovative workarounds to challenges (RQ3), such as offline resource kits for Wi-Fi-deficient students.
 - **Challenges → Constrained Practices:** Even teachers valuing autonomy (RQ1) simplified strategies (e.g., visual prompts for low-proficiency students) due to barriers (RQ3).
 - **Contextual Overlap:** Challenges like student dependency (RQ3) *directly shaped practices* (RQ2, e.g., "fading support" scaffolding).
 - **Systemic Tension:** While 14/15 teachers *believed* in autonomy (RQ1), structural barriers (RQ3) forced compromises in *practice* (RQ2), revealing a gap between ideology and reality.
- **The insight points of correlation:** Teachers operate within a **belief-practice-challenge triad**. Their autonomy-supportive practices (RQ2) are both driven by convictions (RQ1) and constrained by contextual realities (RQ3), necessitating systemic support to bridge theory and implementation.

4.3 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter provided data presentation, analysis, and interpretation. The results obtained from the interview were discussed. The majority of the participants have demonstrated different practices attempting to make learning successful and increase LA.

Whereas the interview revealed a consistency between teachers' beliefs and practices. the study design, research procedure, research instruments with their attributes of content validity and reliability, and data analysis in connection to each research aim were illustrated in the chapter summary with tables, and illustrations of each research question using tables.

Teacher interviews reveal diverse opinions on self-education and autonomous learning. Self-education involves learners taking initiative, while autonomous learning is vital for lifelong education. However, cultural context, teacher role, and effective implementation are issues. Some support a facilitative approach, while others believe teachers should remain central. Practical implementation concerns arise for students lacking readiness for independence.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.0. Introduction

This chapter discusses the study's main findings in relation to its research questions, aims, and previous literature. It also explains the implications of these findings and offers recommendations for overcoming the challenges that Libyan EFL teachers at Zawia University face in implementing their beliefs about learner autonomy. Furthermore, the chapter addresses the study's limitations and concludes with a summary.

5.1. Discussion

The current study was conducted to explore the beliefs of 15 EFL teachers about learner autonomy at Zawia University. The study was specifically designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the teachers' beliefs about students' autonomy?
2. What are EFL teachers' practices used to promote learner autonomy in educational contexts?
3. What are the potential challenges faculty teachers face when promoting learner autonomy?

The discussion of the results is presented through the themes emerged from the analysis process. These themes include the participant teachers' belief about learner autonomy. The researcher followed an iterative style in discussing the results through reflecting on the interviews answers. This style of analysis helped identify any inconsistencies between the research findings are discussed in regard to the research question and the existing literature.

5.1.1. *Teachers' believes*

The analysis of participants' responses to the interview questions—designed to identify their beliefs about learner autonomy—revealed a clear trend among EFL teachers. Specifically, their conceptions of learner autonomy closely align with those reported in virtually every cited study (Balcikanli, 2010; Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Alhaysony, 2014; Salimi & Ansari, 2015; Chang, 2020; Azzeddine, 2022, etc.). These studies consistently found that EFL teachers hold positive beliefs regarding the value, nature, and importance of learner autonomy. This trend is directly confirmed by the current study, where 93% of Libyan teachers (14 out of 15) described autonomy as 'transformative' and a 'lifeboat against dependency' (Table 4.1), perfectly aligning with the historical consensus in the literature."

The Gap Between Beliefs and Practices:

A major theme in the literature is the tension between teachers' positive beliefs and their actual classroom practices. Studies by Borg & Al-Busaidi (2012) and Salimi & Ansari (2015) explicitly noted "hesitancy in implementing" and "difficulties emerged" due to practical constraints.

This gap is a central finding of the new study. While 93% believe in autonomy, **100% acknowledge challenges (e.g., differentiated instruction, time management)** that constrain their practices. The "20% belief-practice misalignment" (Section 4.1.6) is a quantitative confirmation of this well-documented phenomenon.

5.1.2 Synthesis of Findings in Relation to Research Questions

1. Teacher Beliefs Regarding Student Autonomy (RQ1)

Teachers exhibited robust *theoretical endorsement* of learner autonomy, with 14 of 15 participants explicitly linking it to lifelong learning competencies, student empowerment, and critical skill development. However, significant epistemological divergence emerged within this consensus.

A majority (aligned with Self-Determination Theory) conceptualized autonomy as fostering *intrinsic motivation, student agency, and competence-building*, pitomized by metaphors of pedagogical transfer (e.g., "hand[ing] them the reins" as foundational to lifelong learning). Conversely, a minority perspective (n=1) reflected behaviorist influences, equating autonomy with task compliance-such as independent worksheet completion-thus revealing tensions between progressive pedagogical ideals and persistent traditional/systemic constraints.

2. Autonomy-Promoting Instructional Practices (RQ2)

Educators implemented *contextually adaptive strategies* to cultivate autonomy, though efficacy varied across settings. Predominant approaches included:

A. Graduated scaffolding frameworks (e.g., tiered choice menus, "fading support" techniques, and micro-goal setting to incrementally build self-efficacy);

B. Resource innovation to circumvent infrastructural barriers (e.g., offline USB kits with curretted multimedia for connectivity-poor learners);

C. Explicit met a cognitive training in time management (via co-created timelines) and information literacy (e.g., guided forum use); and

D. Cultural tailoring, such as initiating autonomy through collective tasks in collectivist environments.

3. Implementation Barriers (RQ3):

Four interrelated barriers impeded autonomy facilitation: table (4.8)

Perceived Challenges and Barriers:

Commonly cited barriers included lack of student motivation, student dependency on teachers, and rigid curricula (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Alhaysony, 2014).

The new study provides a detailed, ranked list of these barriers (Table 4.8), confirming their existence: **Student Readiness (100%)**, **Systemic Dependency (60%)**, **Resource Gaps (67%)**. It adds specificity, e.g., "crying when not guided" or "comprehension panic."

The Teacher's Crucial Role:

Multiple studies (Keuk & Heng, 2016; Melivina & Suherdi, 2019; Azzeddine, 2022) concluded that teachers see themselves as essential facilitators and promoters of autonomy, not as obsolete figures.

This is strongly supported. The dominant teacher metaphor is "scaffolding, not abandonment"(Table 4.1). **80%** see their role as a "**Facilitator**" or "**resource navigator**" (Table 4.7), emphasizing their active and guiding role in developing autonomy.

5.2 Theoretical and Practical Implications

- **Theoretical contributions**

This study makes significant theoretical contributions to understanding Learner Autonomy (LA) in Libyan English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts.

Firstly, it strongly validates Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as a framework for understanding LA promotion. The predominant teacher beliefs and their most effective classroom practices directly correlated with supporting students' core SDT psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness). Conversely, the minority view equating LA with mere compliance (e.g., worksheet completion) – a perspective notably devoid of SDT alignment and associated with less effective practices – further underscores the theory's explanatory power within EFL settings. Secondly, the findings emphasize that LA is not a universally applicable concept in the same way across all contexts; its successful implementation depends critically on cultural negotiation (such as fostering "group autonomy" within Libya's collectivist society) and practical adaptation to local resource constraints.

- **Practical contributes**

The study highlights several actionable steps for advancing learner autonomy in Libyan EFL classrooms. Teacher training should focus on autonomy-supportive strategies aligned with Self-Determination Theory (SDT), such as offering meaningful choices, fostering collaboration, and building student competence. Curriculum flexibility is also essential, allowing teachers to adapt LA practices to diverse learner needs and limited resources. At the policy level, reducing systemic constraints and empowering teachers as facilitators of autonomy will be key to sustainable implementation.

5.3 Concluding Statement

This study confirms that the vast majority of Libyan EFL teachers recognize and believe in the transformative potential of learner autonomy (LA) for their students. However, their ability to foster LA is significantly hindered by contextual hurdles, including resource limitations, student readiness, and cultural-systemic factors. Despite these challenges, the findings reveal considerable ingenuity among teachers in adapting LA strategies to local constraints, with the most effective practices demonstrably aligning with core Self-Determination Theory (SDT) principles. Moving forward, successfully promoting LA in the Libyan context necessitates collaborative and context-responsive approaches. This involves empowering teachers as skilled facilitators of autonomy, actively addressing systemic barriers at institutional and policy levels, and fundamentally reimagining education as a partnership dedicated to cultivating self-determined learners. As poignantly captured by one participant, "Handing students the reins isn't surrender, it's preparing them to steer their future." This statement encapsulates the essential shift in perspective required to realize the promise of learner autonomy.

This conclusion synthesizes empirical insights, theoretical significance, and actionable steps, offering a roadmap for advancing learner autonomy in resource-constrained, culturally distinct EFL settings.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the conclusion of the study, summarizing its main findings. It also outlines the limitations encountered, offers practical recommendations for different stakeholders, and suggests directions for future research.

6.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the practices and challenges of fostering Learner Autonomy (LA) among EFL teachers in Libya. The findings revealed that while the majority of teachers (93%) endorse the goal of creating self-determined learners, their implementation is hindered by significant obstacles. A key challenge is the variation in student readiness levels, reported by all teachers. Other major barriers include limited resources (reported by 67% of teachers), student language barriers (53%), and cultural resistance (47%). The study also identified a theory-practice gap, where teachers' understanding of LA does not always translate into classroom practice. Furthermore, a minority of teachers (20%) prefer highly directive methods. In conclusion, although Libyan EFL teachers value learner autonomy, its effective implementation is limited due to structural constraints, cultural factors, and a need for more targeted professional support.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

This study had several limitations.

Firstly, the small sample size of 15 teachers from specific regions of Libya means the findings cannot be generalized to the entire country.

Secondly, the reliance on self-reported data from interviews introduces the potential for bias, as teachers may have described what they believe is desirable rather than their actual classroom practices.

Finally, the study is highly specific to Libya's unique socio-educational context, including its cultural norms and resource limitations. Therefore, the direct transferability of these results to other EFL contexts may be limited.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. **For Teachers:** Teachers are encouraged to adopt practical, low-tech strategies to foster autonomy within existing constraints. This includes using visual aids, providing tiered choices suited to different student levels, and gradually reducing support to help students become more independent.
2. **For Educational Institutions:** School administrations should provide targeted professional development workshops and peer mentoring programs focused on practical LA strategies. They must also establish resource hubs with offline learning materials and revise assessment rubrics to include criteria that value student initiative and self-regulation.
3. **For Policymakers:** The Ministry of Education is recommended to reform the national curriculum to reduce content overload and explicitly include autonomy-building competencies. It is also crucial to develop a national plan to improve digital equity and internet access for students and to launch awareness campaigns for parents to build support for educational change.

6.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the limitations and findings of this study, further research is suggested:

- Future studies could use a larger and more diverse sample size from different regions of Libya to allow for greater generalization.
- Longitudinal research is needed to track the long-term impact of specific autonomy-fostering strategies on student outcomes.
- Further investigation is needed to explore students' own perceptions of autonomy and the barriers they face.
- Comparative studies could be conducted to analyze LA practices in other similar contexts to identify culturally resonant models.

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Appendixes

Appendix A: Teachers' interview

1. What do you understand by 'learner autonomy'?
2. Do you consider learner autonomy important? Why? Why not?
3. Do you want to improve learner autonomy in your students? Why? Why not?
4. What is the resolution of the possible challenge you face to promote learner autonomy for the college of educational contexts?
- 5. What specific techniques or activities do you use to foster learner autonomy in your classroom?**
- 6. What observable signs would tell you that a student has developed greater autonomy in their learning?**

Tables

Table (4.1) important of autonomy:

Theme	Teacher Consensus	Dominant Teacher Metaphor
Value of Autonomy	95% (14/15)	<i>"Lifeboat against dependency"</i>
Implementation	Context-dependent	<i>"Scaffolding, not abandonment"</i>
Cultural Fit	Requires adaptation	<i>"Group autonomy first"</i>

Table (4.2) Analysis of Practical Challenges

Commitment Level	Driver	Barrier	Adaptive Strategy
High (93%)	"Future-proofing students"	Resource scarcity	Offline learning kits
Moderate (7%)	Parental pressure	Student hesitancy	Gradual choice expansion

Table (4.3) Teacher Strategies

Challenge	Teacher Adaptation	Sample Quote
Language Proficiency	Visual scaffolding	<i>"Replace texts with info-graphics to spark curiosity."</i>
Resource Gaps	Offline/low-tech solutions	<i>"Pre-load content on shared USB drives."</i>
Student Resistance	Micro-goals + positive reinforcement	<i>"Celebrate finding one source before analysis."</i>

Challenge	Teacher Adaptation	Sample Quote
Teacher Dependency	Gradual "support fading"	<i>"Model → Co-do → Observe → Reflect."</i>
Diverse Levels	Tiered autonomy options	<i>"Basic choice menus for strugglers; open-ended for advanced."</i>
Time Management	Co-created planning tools	<i>"Sticky-note timelines on classroom walls."</i>

Table (4.4): Conceptualization of Self-Education

Theme	Response	Count	Percentage
Dominant View	Learner-driven process	12	80%
Initiative & Autonomy	Active knowledge-seeking	12	80%
Goal Setting & Time Management	Metacognitive skills required	12	80%
Resourcefulness	Independent resource utilization	12	80%
Minority View	Compliance-focused (e.g., worksheets)	3	20%

Table (4.5): Value of Autonomous Learning

Perspective	Count	Percentage
Lifelong Learning Link	2	13%
Essential for future readiness	10	67%
Overall Importance	3	20%

Perspective	Count	Percentage
Critical/transformative value	14	93%
Implementation Concerns	7	47%
Cultural Adaptation Needed	12	80%
Dissenting View	1	7%

Table (4.6): Implementation Challenges

Barrier	Count	Percentage
Resource limitations	10	67%
Language proficiency	8	53%
Student resistance/confidence	7	47%
Teacher dependency	9	60%
Diverse learning levels	15	100%
Time management issues	15	100%

Table (4.7): Teacher Roles & Strategies

Approach	Count	Percentage
Role Perception		
Facilitator ("resource navigator")	12	80%
Director ("roadmap provider")	3	20%

Approach	Count	Percentage
Strategies		
Gradual independence	7+*	>47%
Structured choice options	7+*	>47%
Offline/low-tech solutions	10	67%
Tiered autonomy menus	15	100%

Table (4.8) RQ3: Challenges in Promoting Autonomy

Challenge Type	Prevalence	Examples
Structural	67% (10/15)	Shared textbooks; no internet
Student Readiness	100% (15/15)	Low confidence ("crying when not guided"); procrastination
Systemic Dependency	60% (9/15)	"What do you want?" culture; comfort in passivity
Language Gaps	53% (8/15)	Comprehension panic; stifled curiosity
Cultural Resistance	47% (7/15)	Parental/school pressure for "traditional" teaching

Table (4.9) Synthesis of Interconnections

RQ	Core Insight
1	Beliefs drive practice: <i>SDT-aligned empowerment</i> (majority) vs. <i>compliance</i> (minority).
2	Practices reflect <i>contextual adaptation</i> (e.g., offline resources) to overcome RQ3 barriers.

RQ	Core Insight
3	Challenges (e.g., resource gaps) necessitate <i>graduated, scaffolded practices</i> (RQ2) to align with beliefs (RQ1).

Table 5.1: Core Findings at a Glance

Aspect	Dominant Trend (93%)	Minority View (7%)
Belief	"LA = Lifelong empowerment"	"LA = Compliance"
Practice	Scaffolded autonomy	Directive methods
Challenge	Resources, readiness	"LA is impractical"

Table 5.2: Future Research Priorities

Focus Area	Research Question
Strategy Efficacy	How do tiered autonomy menus impact student self-efficacy?
Cultural Negotiation	How can "group autonomy" models bridge tradition and SDT?
Systemic Barriers	What policy interventions best address resource gaps?