Learner Autonomy in a Libyan EFL Context

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

By

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Author’s declaration

I declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research. It has been written by me and has not been submitted previously for any examination that has led to the award of a degree. The copyright of this thesis belongs to me under the terms of the United Kingdom Copyright Acts, as qualified by the University of Strathclyde Regulation 3.50. Proper acknowledgement must always be given for any material contained in, or derived from, this thesis.

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Abstract

Benson (2021) defines learning autonomy as the ability of individuals to take charge of their own learning process, exercising responsibility and making decisions for their own learning. The concept has been a focus in foreign language education for many years. However, learner autonomy in the Libyan educational context remains under-researched. This study explores the concept within the Libyan English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university context, identifying barriers and strategies that support it.

Traditionally, higher education in Libya has followed a teacher-centred approach where students take a passive role (Algwil, 2024), making the promotion of autonomy challenging. In addition, the Libyan education system has been shaped by socio-political instability, resulting in disrupted learning conditions that have significantly affected the learning environment. In this context, fostering learner autonomy is especially important to help students remain engaged and resilient despite these challenges.

This study adopted a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design in two phases: semi-structured interviews with 20 students and teachers in four public universities, followed by a questionnaire with 309 EFL teachers and 486 students. Findings showed that both groups demonstrated basic understandings of learner autonomy across four perspectives (Benson, 1997; Oxford, 2003): technical, psychological, sociocultural, and political. Teachers viewed it mainly from a technical perspective, while students leaned towards a more psychological perspective.

The study identifies three key categories of constraints: institutional, sociocultural, and those related to individual learners. Teachers and students largely – but not entirely – raise issues that are outside their control: resource shortages, political instability, with cultural factors such as reliance on teacher authority, parenting practices, reliance on memorisation, and perceptions of autonomy as a Western concept also playing a role. In Libya, strong collective cultural values influence learning, but classroom practices remain dominated by teacher authority, limiting autonomy. The findings of this study suggest that disrupted conditions and collectivist values shape learner autonomy as gradual, context-dependent process, where learners show partial independence rather than complete independence from teacher guidance.

Teachers and students emphasised self-management as crucial. Students reported strategies such as note-taking, summarising, seeking feedback, and breaking tasks into smaller steps. Overall, the findings of this study further highlight that autonomy in the Libyan EFL context

is best understood as a balance between independence (through self-management) and interdependence (through collaboration), rather than one or the other

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Study

Learner autonomy refers to the ability of an individual to take charge of their own learning process, taking responsibility and making decisions (Benson, 2021). In Libya, there has been limited research on learner autonomy, particularly in the context of language education. The purpose of this research is to explore the current state of learner autonomy in Libyan language classrooms, to identify the factors and constraints that affect the development of learner autonomy, and to make recommendations for promoting learner autonomy in Libyan language education. Beyond the Libyan context, this research also contributes to understanding how learner autonomy can be developed within the context of educational disruption, highlighting its importance in conflict-affected settings where instability often requires learners to take greater responsibility for directing their own learning.

To understand these issues more fully, it is first necessary to examine the broader context in which teaching and learning take place: the environment in which learning happens plays a crucial role in shaping how both teaching and learning are carried out (Nunan, 2003). For this reason, this section provides a detailed overview of the study's context. It includes a brief overview of the country's geography and political background, followed by an overview of the education system. This includes the historical development of education, its current structure, and a general description of classroom settings and teaching practices, with a particular focus on how the ongoing socio-political challenges have influenced English language teaching and learning conditions.

1.2 Education in Libya

Libya is a North African country bordered by the Mediterranean Sea from the North, Tunisia and Algeria from the West, Niger and Sudan from the South, Egypt and Chad from the East. Libya has witnessed different eras of occupation and colonisation, including periods under the Phoenicians, Romans, Ottomans, and later Italian rule. Each of these powers not only left cultural and political imprints but also introduced external languages (Latin, Turkish, and Italian) that interacted with, and often competed against, Arabic as the primary language of Libyan life (Banun, 2019).

When Italy took control of Libya in 1911, the education system was largely ignored, and Italian became a tool of colonial policy; most Libyans were denied access to formal schooling. This meant that the colonial administration prioritised Italian-language schooling for settlers while

leaving most Libyans with no access to formal schooling (Alhmali, 2007). Only a small number, mainly the children of wealthy or urban families, were able to attend formal schools, while the majority, especially in rural and poorer communities, only had access to traditional Quranic schools due to limited resources and colonial neglect of broader education. These schools, also called Zawaya, focused on teaching Arabic, Islamic studies, and the Quran (Boufarrag, 2021). The lack of fuller education was mainly due to widespread poverty and limited government resources (Gherwash, 2024).

Following Libya's independence in 1951, the new constitution declared education a basic right for all citizens. At that time, 81.1% of the population was illiterate, and only 14 people had university degrees (Vandewalle, 2012). Libya made primary education both free and compulsory for boys and girls. Since then, the education system has developed significantly, with more schools, more students, and an extended period of compulsory education now lasting nine years (Banun, 2019). Following the 1969 revolution, the focus of education shifted towards the promotion of Arab nationalism (Boufarrag, 2021).

After the 2011 uprising, many Libyans hoped the education system would improve (Elabbar, 2022). However, instead of reform, the country was drawn into civil conflict, which severely impacted education (Carter, 2018). Insecurity and political instability led to frequent school closures, especially in conflict zones. In some years, (See Figure 2) students had to study at home and still take final exams without proper instruction (Libya Observer, 2025). Many schools and universities continue to suffer from weak infrastructure and staff shortages Elabbar,2022).

1.3 Structure of Education in Libya

The Libyan government provides free education to all citizens from early childhood up to the university level, and this policy applies not only to Libyan citizens but also to foreign nationals residing in the country (Ali & Albattat, 2021). Basic education is compulsory, reflecting the state's commitment to ensuring that every child receives the opportunity to learn and grow in a structured environment. Over the decades, Libya has invested in expanding access to schools and improving literacy rates, although challenges remain due to political instability and resource limitations, literacy in Libya has risen dramatically, from under 20% at independence in 1951 to nearly universal youth literacy (99.9% by 2014), while adult literacy reached approximately 90% by the same year (UNESCO, 2019). The stages of the Libyan education system, along with the typical age range for each, are shown in Figure 1.

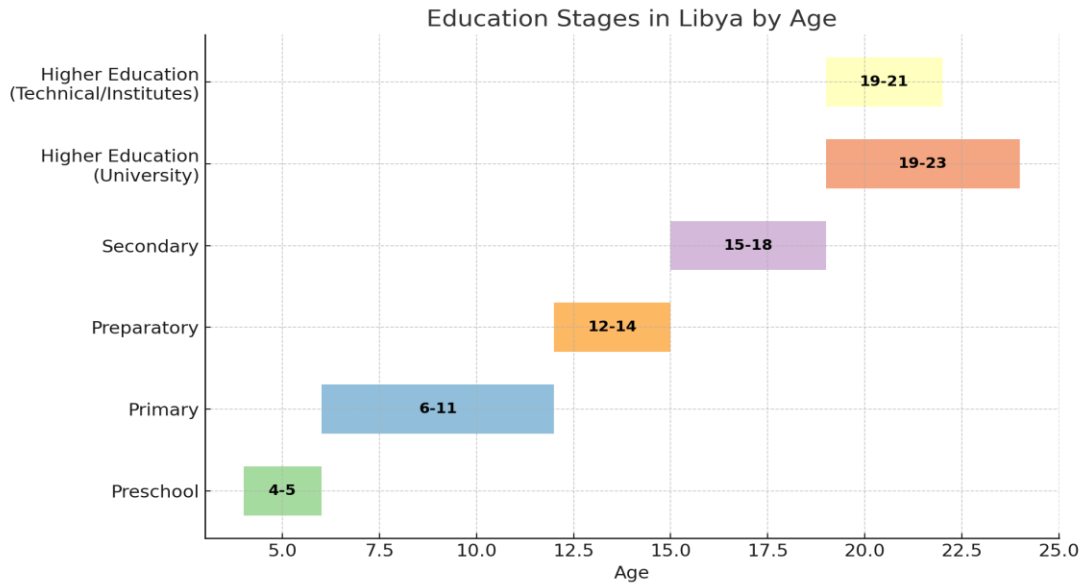

Figure 1: Stages of the Libyan Education System by Age

Preschool education focuses on early childhood development, preparing children socially and emotionally for formal schooling. Primary education (age 6-11) introduces basic literacy and numeracy. The preparatory stage (age 12- 14) builds on these foundations and serves as a bridge to secondary education (age 15-18), where students begin to specialise in either scientific or literary tracks. Students are tracked into academic or vocational pathways after the preparatory stage, typically based on exam performance and teacher recommendations. Those who excel often continue into the academic track leading to universities, while others may enter vocational or technical institutes (Elmahjoub, 2019).

After completing secondary school, students can pursue higher education at universities (age 19-23), technical colleges, or vocational training centres. University degrees typically require four to seven years, depending on the field of study, while diplomas from technical institutes and higher education centres usually take about three years. According to the Libyan Ministry of Education (2023), the current framework guarantees nine years of compulsory education and provides structured pathways to both higher education and vocational training.

1.4 The English Language in Libya

Arabic is the official language of Libya, with different dialects spoken in different regions. English was taught as a foreign language in Libya from the middle of the 1950s to the mid-1980s. It was an obligatory component within the Libyan national curriculum and was taught from the age of 10 until the completion of secondary school at age 17 (Boufarrag, 2021). At

the university level, it was introduced for 4 academic years for English majors and was an obligatory module across the different sciences and humanities disciplines (Alhmali, 2007). During this period, and particularly in the 1980s, the grammar-translation method was the most widely implemented methodology in both schools and universities (Shihiba, 2011). The core elements of English language teaching at that time were grammar and reading comprehension. Lessons were characterised by the memorisation of long lists of items translated into Arabic, reading aloud focused on correct grammar and the use of Arabic as the primary means of instruction and communication amongst students and teachers (Orafi & Borg, 2009).

However, in 1986, teaching English was entirely banned from universities and schools across Libya. This was part of an Arabization campaign that followed increasing political tensions between Libya and Western countries, especially the United States and Britain, after the American airstrikes on Tripoli and Benghazi in April 1986 (Aldabbus, 2008). The government framed English as a symbol of Western imperialism and sought to reduce its cultural influence. The elimination of English language teaching and learning, which took almost a decade, had a considerable impact on the Libyan educational system (Gherwash, 2024). Not only did it affect a whole generation of learners who graduated with barely any knowledge of English, but it also affected the English language teachers and inspectors who were either left unemployed or obliged to take up alternative teaching careers (Emhamed & Krishnan, 2011). This period of exclusion created a deep gap in foreign language capacity. By the early 1990s, Libya faced both international and internal pressures to modernise its education system, particularly from global organisations such as UNESCO and from the Libyan Ministry of Education itself. These reforms laid the groundwork for the reintroduction of English language teaching (Orafi & Borg, 2009).

As foreign relations between Libya, the United States, and Britain began to improve, English language teaching, which had deteriorated for many years, started to regain its status in the mid-1990s. Specifically, after UN sanctions on Libya were suspended in 1999, the government encouraged educational reform, which created the political space for English to return. It was then that the policymakers and educationalists realised the need to reincorporate English into the Libyan national curriculum (Banun, 2019). In the academic year 1999/2000, a new curriculum based on communicative theories, which integrated cultural aspects of the English language, was introduced across Libyan universities and schools for the first time. The curriculum included topics such as typical daily routines, social customs, transportation

systems, and education practices in countries like the UK and the US. Students also engaged with workplace communication scenarios, including writing emails and participating in interviews (Borg, 2006).

Additionally, the curriculum explores cultural aspects like traditional clothing, popular dishes, and cooking customs. For instance, students learned how to describe meals like roast dinners or packed lunches, how food differs by region, and how certain clothing items, such as jeans, hoodies, or formal wear are worn in different contexts (Elmahjoub & Lamb 2019). These topics helped learners practice vocabulary while also gaining insight into everyday life in English-speaking societies (Athawadi, 2021). This represented a meaningful change in teaching methodology and materials as it marked a departure from the rote memorisation that had characterised earlier English instruction in Libya, shifting towards a more communicative approach (Borg, 2006).

After an era of English language neglect combined with teacher-directed pedagogical approaches, teachers found it difficult to accept change and were struggling to cope with the demands of the new syllabus (Kuo, 2006). To address this challenge, the Libyan educationalists and policymakers ran teacher training programs which aimed to help teachers grasp the principles of communicative language teaching and adapt to their recent roles (Orafi & Borg, 2009). However, these programs primarily brought little success due to ingrained teaching techniques and habits which needed time to be replaced and due to the influence of contextual factors such as class size, resources, and learner expectations (Sawan, 2018). The students' cultural backgrounds and previous learning experiences had led them to expect quite different classroom practices. They found it challenging to embrace the techniques and procedures teachers had been trained to employ (Elmahjoub,2019). As implementation of the new curriculum progressed, it became clear that both experienced English teachers and recent graduates required longer training periods, and students also needed additional time to adapt to the innovation before the curriculum could take full effect (Orafi & Borg, 2009).

At the same time, this period also witnessed a rapid spread of private language centres and summer schools encouraging the learning of English as a foreign language (Abukhattala, 2016). Economic factors have led to a rise in motivation and to a change in the attitude of Libyan students towards learning English, with many learners targeting posts in emerging foreign companies, tourist agencies, and in the oil sector in Libya, all of which require highly trained staff with a strong command of English (Alkorbow & Eldeeb, 2021). The American Embassy and British Council in Libya have supported Libyan initiatives in English Language

Teaching provision by launching high-quality English teaching courses and university preparation with student exchange programs (British Council, 2015). Together, these developments highlight how political change and international partnerships shaped Libya's renewed engagement with English education. While progress was evident in both public schools and private initiatives, the uneven quality of instruction revealed ongoing challenges (Gherwash, 2024). This sets the stage for examining the specific difficulties that have continued to affect the teaching and learning of English in Libya.

1.5 Challenges in Teaching English in Libya

In Libya, English language instruction was officially reintroduced into the national curriculum in 2001. English is given four periods a week, with forty-five minutes for each class in the preparatory and secondary stages. However, three hours a week is not deemed sufficient for teaching English and covering all the different skills and activities (Elmahjoub, 2014). The Libyan Ministry of Education usually removes material instead of offering extra support or alternative solutions, such as online teaching or additional resources. This policy remained in place for several years until post-revolution educational reforms were implemented (Pathan et al., 2016). In 2013–2014, the Ministry of Education revised the curriculum, and English began to be taught from the first year of primary school in all schools. This change reflected a national effort to improve students' English level from an early age and to better align with global educational standards (Pathan et al., 2016).

Pathan et al. (2016) also highlighted several structural and pedagogical challenges that prevent Libyan teachers from delivering speaking and listening instruction effectively. These issues have been further exacerbated since 2011 by increased time pressure and declining educational resources. In higher education, English is taught in the first year of university as a general subject for all departments, typically taught for two hours per week. The English language materials taught in the first year as a general subject are noticeably simpler than those used in secondary and primary education, and the focus is often limited to very basic grammar topics (Elabbar, 2022). Moreover, there are no speaking, writing, or listening tests, nor any practical activities designed to develop these essential language skills. Evaluations of university English programs reveal significant shortcomings in teaching resources and skills balance, with oral competencies, particularly speaking and listening, being notably overlooked (Ebtesam, 2019). Most schools lack functioning audio equipment, and although some teachers attempt to use their own speakers, this is often unreliable, especially when CDs or audio materials are unavailable (Elmahjoub, 2014). Othman & Baharum (2024) found that learners have "limited

opportunities to practice oral communication skills both in and outside the classroom" (p. 2169) due to large class sizes, short lesson times, and a lack of resources. Almishraqi & Mokatf (2021) similarly reported that listening lessons are often skipped due to the absence of audio tools and reliance on traditional grammar-translation methods. Before the introduction of the current textbooks, English teaching materials in Libya were widely criticised. Elhensheri (2004) explained that the earlier syllabuses lacked clear skill objectives and neglected important areas such as vocabulary load, cultural and situational context, and methods of assessment. He also noted that the materials failed to account for learners' different abilities, which caused many students to fall behind and develop negative attitudes toward learning English.

More recently, textbook evaluations have continued to reveal flaws in the current English teaching materials used in Libya. For instance, Elbasher Tomi (2023) argues that the English for Libya series still relies heavily on rote memorisation, mechanical grammar exercises, and limited integration of communicative teaching principles. Similarly, Abugharsa (2024) highlights that while the textbooks include some cultural references, they are predominantly surface-level and fail to provide a balanced view of global cultural contexts, which are essential for developing communicative competencies. These findings suggest that despite curriculum reforms, the issues identified decades ago remain relevant today, hindering the effectiveness of English language education at all levels in Libya, including universities.

The lack of individualised instruction, where all students are taught the same material regardless of their needs, and the compulsory nature of English language education have contributed to Libyan school graduates leaving school with insufficient English proficiency (Orafi & Borg, 2009). Several researchers have noted that the rigid, one-size-fits-all approach to English teaching in Libya has prevented students from developing the skills needed for effective language learning (Emhamed & Krishnan, 2011). Recent research by Ali (2024) on ninth-grade students in Libya found a strong negative washback effect from high-stakes English language exams. The heavy focus on exam preparation reduced opportunities for personalised learning, resulting in limited development of communication skills (Ali, 2024).

The difficulties that cause low levels in teaching the English language, in general, are the underqualified teachers. Teachers who have been educated and trained through expository modes will find it difficult to follow the roles of counsellors and facilitators with their learners (Little, 1991). Hence, such teachers usually follow the way they were taught (Elbakay et al., 2024). Moreover, the General Committee of Education (2008) indicated that Libyan teachers lack modern teaching methods, and that the use of traditional approaches, characterised by

memorisation and recitation, continues to dominate the Libyan educational system. Therefore, teachers are sometimes given teacher training programs; however, these training programs are usually short and very few, and only a small number of teachers are invited to attend them, so their effects are minimal (Al-Dhawi,2021). This means that Libyan English education remains teacher-driven and textbook-oriented, rather than learner-centred and communicative (Aldabbus, 2008). Together, these challenges reinforce Libya's teacher-centred system and highlight the difficulties of developing students' communicative skills.

Communicative skills emphasise learners' ability to interact effectively, use language authentically, and apply it in real-life contexts (Savignon, 2005). However, studies from Libya suggest that while teachers recognise the importance of communicative competence, its development is hindered by large class sizes and limited professional training (Karash & O'Neill, 2024). Research by Algwil (2023) revealed that many classrooms remain teacher-centred, with limited student interaction and heavy use of Arabic during instruction. Similarly, Abusrewel (2023) found that cultural and institutional barriers prevent teachers from adopting more interactive, learner-centred approaches, despite awareness of the importance of communicative skills.

1.6 English Language Pedagogy and Classroom Setting in Libya

English in Libya is not the language of everyday communication but is restricted to sectors such as trade, business, travel, medicine, industry, and technology, and as a medium of instruction in higher education. Therefore, exposure to the English language in everyday life is extremely limited, and opportunities to interact using English outside the classroom are rare (Gherwash, 2024). But even if students do not use English every day, it is still important to improve how it is taught. English is needed for university, future jobs, and to connect with the world (Al Jawad,2023). When students do not hear or speak English outside school, the classroom becomes their only chance to really learn it. Therefore, if the teaching is unengaging or only about memorisation, students will not learn well (Khamees, 2016). That is why the learning experience improves with more practice and greater student involvement. This helps them get the most out of their lessons and prepares them for real opportunities in life, such as securing scholarships to study abroad where English proficiency is a prerequisite and accessing well-paying career paths in sectors like the oil industry, where English communication is critical (Hussein, 2018).

This limited daily life exposure makes the classroom environment even more critical. This draws attention to the way English is currently taught in Libyan schools, according to Aldabbus (2008), the teacher dominates the classroom by asking questions, selecting students to answer, and demonstrating examples on the board for students to follow. The teacher is regarded as an authority who transfers knowledge to students, and it is considered impolite or unacceptable to interrupt or disagree with them. Moreover, teachers are expected to know everything, so allowing learners to ask questions might result in embarrassment for teachers. Therefore, teachers may not let learners ask questions. Students are seated in rows listening dutifully to the teacher; if the teacher asks a question, students raise their hands to answer, and the teacher chooses one student to answer (Elmahjoub, 2014). Therefore, the most prominent reasons for the problems in teaching the English language in Libya might be attributed to the use of teacher-centred approaches, such as translation-based instruction, which focuses on grammar rules, translation, and memorisation rather than meaningful communication. This leads students to gain knowledge about the language but not the ability to use the language effectively in real situations. In addition, the lack of qualified teachers, who, even if provided, will be affected by other factors such as large class sizes and limited resources, further contributes to the problem (Othman & Baharum, 2024).

From the above illustration of the educational system, including the teaching of English in Libya, the Ministry of Higher Education has given greater prominence to the learning and teaching of English. However, the challenges facing teachers and learners include the traditional teaching methods applied in most schools and universities, the exam-oriented context, and overcrowded classrooms. In such a context where the demand for English is rapidly increasing, but most students are struggling to improve their English language skills due to the teaching quality they experience in Libyan universities and schools, this implies that there is a need for initiatives to be implemented to improve the process of language learning and create opportunities to enhance students' learning experience (Karash & O'Neill, 2024).

1.7 Culture and Autonomy

This section focuses on the concept of culture, including its definition and the relevant concepts connected to it, as well as how learning is viewed within cultures. It will also look for the relationship between culture and autonomy and discuss how autonomy might be manifested across different cultures, drawing on definitions and perspectives from different decades to show how the concept has been understood across contexts. It will highlight the main issues and the intersection of these two complex concepts, and why it is important to

address culture in the case of this study. Firstly, if learner autonomy is considered as a human ability as defined by Benson (2021), learner autonomy refers to the ability of an individual to take charge of their own learning process, taking responsibility and making decisions. This ability undoubtedly takes place within a cultural framework that shapes how autonomy is practised. This is one justification behind this study, which calls for culture-specific understandings of learner autonomy. Secondly, in the domain of language learning (which is the main aspect of this study), culture and language are inseparable aspects (Kuo & Lai, 2006). Language is viewed as an extension of culture and is affiliated with learners' personal experiences and lives generally (Palfreyman, 2003). To further clarify this point, it is important to emphasise how cultural perspectives directly shape learners' beliefs and practices.

Therefore, this study aims to understand how learner autonomy is viewed within a particular cultural context, highlighting why cultural understanding is necessary when interpreting these perceptions. Aoki and Smith (1999) assert that "when the validity of learner autonomy in a particular cultural context is questioned, we should highlight that definitions of both 'culture' and 'autonomy' need to be carefully considered" (p. 19). This section will, therefore, explore different interpretations of culture and autonomy.

Palfreyman (2003) emphasises that culture is central to language learning and education, since all teaching and learning inevitably take place within cultural contexts. Besides, culture and language are intimately related, as Brown (2007) notes, culture is:

> incredibly important in learning a second language. A language is a part of a culture, and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture (p. 189).

Palfreyman (2003) further reports that studies of culture in linguistics and education are marked by a focus on issues of power and principles where autonomy, culture and learning are shaped by the interactions of learners, teachers, and other stakeholders, as well as by the power relationships between them in the classroom and in wider society. Recent research conducted by Linh and Nguyen (2024) shows that culture strongly influences how learners understand and experience autonomy. Linh and Nguyen (2024) found that Vietnamese EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners' autonomy is limited by high power distance and collectivist values. In high power distance cultures, social hierarchies are strongly accepted,

and teachers are viewed as authority figures whose decisions are rarely questioned. As a result, students tend to rely on teachers for direction and are less likely to take independent learning initiatives, seeing autonomy as fulfilling social or teacher expectations. Similar patterns appear in Turkey (Ceylan, 2025), where hierarchical classroom norms further limit students' capacity for autonomous learning. Taken together, these findings show that cultural factors, whether rooted in collectivist values or hierarchical classroom traditions, consistently shape the way autonomy is perceived and practised across different contexts. Building on this, it becomes important to consider how scholars interpret autonomy when situated between different cultures (Palfreyman, 2003).

In the study of autonomy in specific cultural settings, Palfreyman (2003) comments that "authors frequently use their position between cultures to interpret how autonomy fits into cultural settings where they are both insiders and outsiders" (p. 16). He asserts that such authors possess a position of comparing one culture to another. This leads to judging the validity/ invalidity of autonomy in specific contexts on the grounds of its appropriateness or inappropriateness in another context. Therefore, considering the suitability of independence for students or cultures should be through understanding learners and their cultures rather than evaluating them according to pre-defined assumptions. Pennycook (1997) further argues that promoting 'learner autonomy' everywhere without considering the social, cultural, and political context can lead to ineffective teaching or the imposition of foreign values.

The discussion of autonomy and culture is particularly important because it concerns how people live their lives and how nations understand one another. Palfreyman (2003) warns against linking autonomy solely to Western individualism and liberal values. Alardhi (2025) notes that although autonomy is recognised as a basic psychological need in self-determination theory, its expression and significance differ across cultures. Nalipay and Cai (2020) further show that autonomy is valued in both Eastern and Western societies but expressed differently, for instance, through independence in individualist cultures and through relational responsibilities in collectivist ones. Chirkov (2009) adds that some scholars from collectivist traditions argue that the concept of "autonomy" can have negative implications in Eastern contexts, where collective values are prioritised, and autonomy may not always be fully accepted.

Building on these debates, Chirkov (2009) warns that when learners feel they are not acting independently, it often leads to negative effects on their performance. This reinforces the need to support autonomy in all contexts, even where collectivist traditions dominate. At the same

time, arguing that some social groups (non-Western) are unfit for autonomy not only implies that they are undeserving of social justice and the right to live under democratic and egalitarian governance (Chirkov, 2009). However, Yasmin and Sohail (2018) stress that learner autonomy does not require a completely relativistic approach. It is about enabling students to take responsibility for their learning, which can be fostered in any system if teaching methods are culturally adapted. Kharroubi and El Mediouni (2024) argue that learner autonomy can develop even within highly structured and authority-driven educational systems, provided that teachers introduce gradual opportunities for learners to make decisions and engage in reflection. Their findings suggest that autonomy is not an inherently Western construct but can be meaningfully fostered in collectivist, non-Western contexts when practices are aligned with local cultural values. This perspective underscores the context-dependent nature of learner autonomy and sheds light on the challenges teachers face when attempting to implement learner-centred approaches in environments that prioritise control, standardisation, and hierarchical relationships over individual agency. In Libya, where education is mostly teacher-centred and shaped by collectivist values, promoting autonomy means adapting teaching to local beliefs and classroom realities. Even in highly structured systems, autonomy can grow through small steps, such as allowing students to make decisions or reflect on their learning (Elmahjoub & Lamb, 2019). This shows that autonomy can thrive in non-Western, collectivist contexts like Libya when aligned with local values.

1.7.1 The Concept of Western Values and Assumptions in Learner Autonomy Research

Learner autonomy, as it is commonly theorised in applied linguistics and language education, has largely been shaped by Western cultural values and assumptions (Benson, 2021; Holliday, 1994). The global spread of learner autonomy thus reflects not only a pedagogical approach but also a process by which Western educational paradigms, developed primarily in North America and Europe during the second half of the twentieth century, have been exported worldwide. Pokhrel (2016) critiques learner autonomy as a form of Western hegemony, suggesting that its uncritical application to non-Western contexts risks overlooking cultural differences in how learning is understood. In addition, Chang (2021) demonstrates how tensions between Eastern and Western learning perspectives emerge when Western models of autonomy are introduced into different educational settings.

This influence has meant that many non-Western countries are expected to adopt Western concepts of autonomy without sufficient consideration of their own contextual realities (Elmahjoub, 2014). In fact, several scholars (Pennycook, 1997; Smith, 2003) argue that

autonomy may not be valid in particular cultural settings, framing it as a Western construct imposed on non-Western learners. Koirala (2019), for example, shows how Bhutanese refugees in Australia resisted autonomy-supportive practices because their premigration experiences and cultural understandings of teaching conflicted with Western models of autonomy. This highlights the need for contextual sensitivity, where autonomy may need to be introduced gradually and scaffolded. Koirala (2019) recommends that teachers scaffold autonomy gradually, particularly with learners from non-Western educational backgrounds who may not be accustomed to taking responsibility for their own learning.

Sinclair (2000) emphasises that autonomy should be regarded as a flexible concept open to multiple interpretations and universally applicable, rather than tied exclusively to Western liberal ideals. Similarly, Little (1990) stresses that the freedoms associated with autonomy are always shaped by contextual factors, while Nunan (2003) argues that autonomy is a matter of degree rather than an absolute state. These perspectives highlight that autonomy is not a fixed or universal concept, but one that adapts to different cultural and educational contexts. In many non-Western societies, emphasising community interdependence and collective responsibility shape how autonomy is understood and enacted. These cultural orientations stand in contrast to Western concepts that prioritise individual choice and self-direction (Linh & Nguyen, 2024). This reinforces the importance of studying learner autonomy within its cultural context.

Despite repeated calls by scholars such as Palfreyman (2003), Smith (2008), and Linh and Nguyen (2024) to develop theories rooted in non-Western contexts, Western frameworks continue to dominate the discourse on autonomy. Fleischer (2009) observes that cultural pedagogy knowledges and values shaped outside formal schooling are often overlooked when Western concepts are imposed in different educational settings. Without acknowledging such pedagogies, the cultural role in shaping learners' identities and learning experiences risks being eroded. Consequently, although learner autonomy is widely recognised as a valuable concept in education, its practice in non-Western contexts remains contested (Linh & Nguyen, 2024). Thus, perceptions of autonomy are socially constructed and tied to context. In this thesis, therefore, the term 'Western' is not used uncritically, but rather as a label participant themselves adopted to frame their perceptions, highlighting both the assumptions and limitations associated with the concept.

1.8 Autonomy in the Libyan Context

Research shows that learner-centred approaches, which emphasise individualism, may not always succeed in teacher-centred education systems (Linh & Nguyen, 2024). Similar concerns are evident in Libya, where teacher-centred traditions and cultural expectations continue to shape classroom practices (Orafi & Borg, 2009). Learners are often expected to follow fixed social values and parental expectations. Communal values such as respect for elders, conformity, and group harmony are prioritised over individual choice, shaping how autonomy is defined and practised (Ceylan, 2025).

There are differences in parental orientations, particularly in how children are restricted from crossing or even contemplating boundaries set by parents (Ceylan, 2025). These restrictions reflect broader parental and cultural expectations, where social norms and values strongly influence the learner's freedom of choice. This, of course, is the reality; lifestyles are also different. These differences raise important challenges for understanding how autonomy is expressed in different cultural contexts. Learner autonomy can be conceptualised in culturally appropriate ways (Oxford, 2003). This does not mean that learner-centred values are unimportant. On the contrary, they are essential for preparing autonomous learners from an early stage in life. The key issue lies in determining how such values can be implemented in ways that align with local cultural norms.

The process of learner autonomy in the Libyan context has not been explored comprehensively. Nevertheless, its importance should not be underestimated because there is a consensus in the language-learning literature within the Libyan context that the Libyan education system has not effectively prepared students for critical thinking, as it is still embedded in teacher-centric principles (Elmahjoub, 2018; Ibrahim & Alhodairy, 2023). Although a small number of empirical studies have examined aspects of autonomy, they are limited in scope and do not provide a full picture of how autonomy is enacted in Libyan classrooms. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate learner autonomy more systematically to understand its current status and the factors shaping it.

One of the earliest studies to explore learner autonomy in Libyan English classrooms was conducted across four regions by Suwaed (2019), who examined its extent and connection to students' academic achievement. The study of 72 Libyan male and female students investigated learners' autonomy and its association with the academic achievement of English foreign language learners. According to Suwaed (2019), the study showed that English

learners in Libya have little awareness of learner autonomy. Teachers and students must be aware of the importance of independence and its advantages. This highlights the need to raise awareness among teachers and students about the benefits of independent learning, such as improved motivation and self-regulation. There is evidence that teacher-centred methods in the Libyan education system create barriers to some approaches, such as pair work and collaborative learning (Al-Araibi, 2020; Salama, 2016). Classroom practices often limit student participation, leaving learners with few opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. As Al-Araibi (2020) notes, when students are actively engaged in meaningful tasks, they learn more effectively than by simply listening to the teacher. These limitations in classroom engagement directly reinforce Suwaed's (2019) findings, which show that Libyan learners display low autonomy and rely heavily on teacher instructions.

In promoting learner autonomy in Libya, it is also important to consider the socio-political context, particularly the ongoing conflicts since 2011. As shown in the literature, there are some researchers studying conflict areas (Farrah et al., 2024). In countries such as Syria, Iraq, Vietnam, and Kurdistan, limited educational resources and disrupted schooling have hindered the development of independent learning, especially in language education (Burns & Lawrie, 2015; Bozkurt & Arslan, 2018). Some contexts referred to specific barriers to learner autonomy, which may be similar to Libya, for example, Iraqi teachers reported that rigid curricula, exam-focused teaching, and insufficient institutional support made it difficult to promote learner autonomy (Alzeebaree & Yavuz, 2016). Syrian refugee learners struggled with motivation and self-directed learning due to their disrupted educational experiences and cultural expectations (Bozkurt & Arslan, 2018). In Palestine, students demonstrated high dependence on teachers, though the introduction of blended learning environments offered some improvement in fostering autonomy (Farrah et al., 2024). Similarly, Sudanese learners faced challenges due to teacher-centred methods and prevailing cultural norms. While translation activities provided limited opportunities for learner involvement, Othman (2021) argues that these did not fully foster autonomy but offered a partial pathway towards more independent learning.

In all these countries, ongoing conflict, lack of resources, and rigid education systems make it hard for students to learn independently (Burns & Lawrie, 2015; Badrasawi et al., 2018). As such, the development of learner autonomy remains constrained by centralised control and a sociopolitical legacy that continues to influence educational practices (Garib, 2023; Rajab, 2018). Taken together, this would suggest that learner autonomy is not only a pedagogical

concern but also deeply shaped by sociocultural and political contexts, making Libya's case part of a broader global trend observed in other conflict-affected educational contexts. Investigating these factors provides educators with opportunities to develop effective strategies that facilitate the successful integration of learner autonomy. Therefore, examining the factors that limit and promote learner autonomy in Libya not only benefits Libyan education but also contributes to developing educational practices globally in areas with similar obstacles, such as resource limitation and socio-political instability.

1.9 Problem Statement

The education system in Libya has faced, and continues to face, a series of socio-political and structural challenges. Contemporary challenges commenced with the 2011 outbreak of civil war, and the situation continues to be unstable. Political unrest was followed by the COVID-19 pandemic (UNICEF, 2020). More recently, the country experienced a series of natural disasters, including floods in the eastern region, which resulted in the closure of a number of educational institutions (UNICEF, 2023). In total, over the last 14 years, there have been at least 11 periods of educational disruption (see Figure 2). These disruptions have severely hindered the continuity of education, with prolonged school closures, interruptions in academic schedules, and limited access to learning resources and facilities (Gherwash, 2024). Students and educators alike have struggled to adapt, with many facing significant barriers to engaging in remote or alternative forms of education due to inadequate infrastructure and resources. As a result, learning gaps have widened, and educational outcomes have been adversely affected (Suwaed, 2023). In response to these adversities, there is a need to formulate an alternative plan aimed at mitigating educational losses.

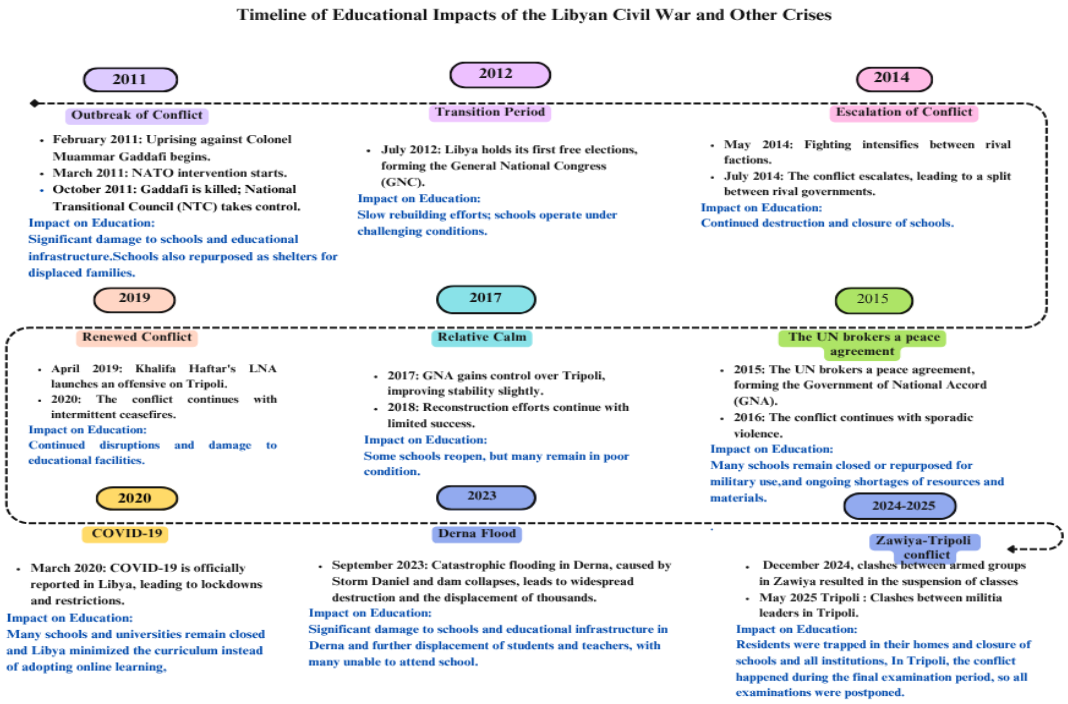

Figure 2: Timeline of Educational Impacts of the Libyan Civil War and Other Crises

Given these repeated disruptions and the need for more resilient learning practices, it becomes essential to explore approaches that support learners' ability to manage their own learning. The concept of learner autonomy has been a significant focus in foreign language learning and teaching for over thirty years (Benson, 2021; Little, 2022). However, few researchers are focusing on learner autonomy in the context of Arab countries, such as Libya. This gap is significant as cultural, social, and political factors in Arab countries may influence how autonomy is perceived and practised by learners. For example, Libyan students often rely heavily on their teachers for guidance and feedback, as cultural norms view the teacher as the primary source of knowledge and authority (Gherwash, 2024). This reliance can hinder the development of skills like self-directed learning and decision-making, which are essential for learner autonomy (Irshad & Janjua, 2022). At the start of this study, it became clear that qualitative interviews needed to come first because learner autonomy in Libyan universities is under-researched. The interviews helped build an initial understanding of the cultural and institutional context before designing a questionnaire. The questionnaire's main value lies in its development as a context-specific tool that adds breadth to the interview findings.

Investigating these cultural factors provides educators with opportunities to develop effective strategies that facilitate the successful integration of learner autonomy. Therefore, examining

the factors that limit and promote learner autonomy in Libya does not only benefits Libyan education but also contributes to developing educational practices globally in areas with similar obstacles, such as socio-political instability and educational disruption.

1.10 Research Aim, Objectives, and Questions

This research explores how learner autonomy is understood and practised in Libyan university English language classrooms. It focuses on how both teachers and students view autonomy in learning, the barriers they face in promoting it, and what classroom methods and learner qualities are believed to support it.

The main aim of the study is to understand the concept of learner autonomy in Libyan EFL (English as a Foreign Language) settings and to investigate the factors that influence its development. To meet this aim, the research is guided by the following objectives:

- To explore how Libyan EFL teachers and students perceive the concept of learner autonomy.
- To identify the main challenges and constraints that hinder the promotion of learner autonomy in Libyan university EFL classrooms.
- To investigate the classroom strategies and learner characteristics that are perceived as most effective in supporting the development of learner autonomy.

The research is built around the following three questions:

> Q1-What is the concept of learner autonomy as perceived by EFL teachers and students in the Libyan university context?
>
> Q2- What are the major challenges and constraints teachers and students perceive relative to promoting learner autonomy in Libyan university EFL classrooms?
>
> Q3-Which classroom strategies and learner characteristics are perceived as most effective in fostering learner autonomy in Libyan university EFL classrooms by teachers and students?

1.11 Significance of The Study

The study presents a contribution to the broader area of learner autonomy research in a time marked by ongoing challenges and instability, but also to the academic context of Libyan universities, particularly in its essence, the study mainly corresponds to calls for more contextualised research about learner autonomy (O'Leary, 2014; Wang, 2016), and it adds to

the body of literature on learner autonomy in underexplored contexts like Libya. This study makes a methodological contribution by developing a context-specific questionnaire for learner autonomy, grounded in interview data. Unlike previous studies that relied on generic instruments (Elmahjoub & Lamb, 2019), this approach ensured the items reflected local cultural and educational realities (See chapter 3). Its main value is in the development of a new tool for the Libyan context, which adds breadth to the interview findings, especially as no existing learner autonomy scales adequately reflect the cultural and institutional realities of Libyan universities. By integrating qualitative insights with a large-scale quantitative survey, the study offers contextual depth alongside a broad overview of patterns across a large Libyan population, providing a framework that can be adapted to similar contexts and further validated in future research.

The findings of this research aim to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of learner autonomy in Libya, offering academics insights into how autonomy is shaped by contextual, cultural, institutional, and educational disruptions. They can also guide policymakers in designing measures that align with students' educational goals within the realities of the Libyan context. Finally, understanding the factors that hinder or support learner autonomy in Libya not only helps improve the local education system but also provides valuable lessons for other regions facing similar challenges, such as political instability, limited resources, and repeated disruptions to schooling

1.12 Overview of the Chapters

This thesis is organised into several chapters. The first chapter has provided an overview of the Libyan context where the research was carried out. It began with general information about Libya, followed by a summary of the country's education system, its goals, and how it is structured. The chapter then discussed the history of English language teaching in Libya, its status in the education sector, and how English is currently taught and learned in universities. It also explored the role of English in Libyan society and discussed the challenges and conditions affecting the learning and teaching process in higher education. This includes cultural, social, and institutional factors that shape the teaching and learning of English in Libya. Together, these details provide important context for the rest of the thesis and explain why the topic of learner autonomy is important and relevant in Libyan higher education.

The second chapter will review the literature related to learner autonomy, covering various definitions and how it has been applied in different educational settings. It will also explore

teacher and student beliefs in language learning, focusing on how these beliefs influence teaching and learning practices. The third chapter will describe the research design and methodology used in the study. It will explain the overall research approach and rationale, describe the Libyan university setting, and outline the participants involved. This chapter will also detail the tools used to collect data, how these tools were developed, tested, and translated, and the ethical steps taken to ensure the study was conducted responsibly. It will conclude with an explanation of the data analysis methods used.

The fourth chapter will present the results of interviews with Libyan university EFL students, focusing on their views of learner autonomy in the classroom. The fifth chapter will report the findings from interviews with EFL teachers on the same topic. The sixth chapter will present the results of the students' and teachers' questionnaire, including statistical analyses comparing and exploring beliefs about learner autonomy. The seventh chapter will analyse the major findings of this study in relation to the research questions and previous literature, highlighting their significance for the Libyan context. Finally, the eighth chapter will conclude by summarising the main findings, outlining the study's academic and practical contributions, acknowledging its limitations, and suggesting directions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores literature relevant to language learning autonomy and learner characteristics. Cultural differences in how learners approach and experience learning may also create barriers to developing autonomy. These challenges are also examined in this chapter. The chapter further reviews the approaches for developing learner autonomy and presents arguments for autonomy in the language learning classroom, as well as discussing teachers' and students' roles in promoting learner autonomy. It then evaluates ways in which these approaches are being implemented and identifies classroom activities and tasks that have been found to promote learner autonomy. The summary of the chapter discusses areas in which there are gaps in the literature and, therefore, potential for further investigation.

2.2. Understanding Learner Autonomy

The Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project first articulated the concept of learner autonomy in 1971. In the following years, the idea was further developed by Henri Holec, who is considered the father of autonomous learning. The notion of learner autonomy has been essential to reformist educational principles and became a focal point in foreign language teaching after the publication of Holec's (1979) book *Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning.* He defined autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's learning" (Holec, 1981). Since then, Holec's work provided both the theoretical basis and practical justification for including autonomy in language education.

While learner autonomy has a general core meaning, how it is understood in practice may differ depending on the cultural context. For example, in some cultural contexts, autonomy is closely associated with individual responsibility and decision-making, while in others it is understood as shared responsibility within a group (Yasmin & Sohail,2018). Individual factors such as motivation, prior learning experiences, and self-regulation strategies also shape how autonomy is expressed in practice (Benson, 2017). Learner autonomy, therefore, encompasses various dimensions, including cognitive, affective, psychological, and behavioural aspects of learning (Sinclair et al., 2000).In the past few decades, the emphasis on learner autonomy has shifted from mere self-regulation to a greater focus on self-directed learning and critical thinking, skills essential for contemporary work, such as a shift to more remote learning and remote working (Law, 2023), Law (2023) asserts learner autonomy is a form of self-direction

through which learners take charge of their own learning process. Although these definitions have been developed through research, the fundamental concept of learner autonomy has consistently emphasised the importance of learning how to learn (Benson, 2021). Thanasoulas suggests that learner autonomy is a developmental process for learners. Little (2022) stated that learners must be prepared to be autonomous because autonomy cannot simply be assumed. Learner autonomy must be cultivated through structured guidance and support, highlighting that proper preparation is essential, guiding the learners to implement strategies that address the contextual constraints and factors that promote learning. Overall, the literature suggests that learner autonomy is not a single, fixed concept but a multidimensional process. It develops gradually, requires preparation, and depends on both individual initiative and contextual support (Cotterall, 2017).

2.2.1 The Teacher-Centred to Student-Centred Shift

As the focus in education has shifted from teacher-centred instruction to student-centred learning, scholars have emphasised that not all learners develop autonomy in the same way (Nunan, 2003; Scharle & Szabo, 2000). Many learners require additional support to gain control over their own learning process, which may come from teachers or peers (Aljabri, 2024; Chang, 2007; Oxford, 2003) suggested that such interdependence is a natural way of fostering autonomy, since learners often need social interaction and shared responsibility to gradually build the confidence and skills required for independent learning. The successful development of learner autonomy depends largely on the balance between teacher control and learner independence, since this relationship shapes how far learners are able to take responsibility for their own learning (Blidi, 2017). Blidi (2017) reflects that students need help in applying their potential to develop autonomy. This indicates that the ability to achieve learner autonomy is inherent, but it may take extrinsic motivation before a learner can fully take control of their own learning. Blidi's (2017) suggestion also questions the assumption that autonomy arises naturally, proposing instead that all learners are indeed capable, but they may need structured support. For example, teachers can model learning strategies and gradually reduce control over classroom decisions by providing reflective activities that encourage students to evaluate their progress. Over time, such structured support enables learners to internalise these practices and manage their own learning more effectively.

This consensus of research on fostering learner autonomy shows that teachers must provide opportunities for students to take on these responsibilities (Reinders, 2010). The pedagogical principles underpinning learner autonomy are learner engagement and reflective practice

(Little, 2007). Learner engagement refers to the extent to which students actively participate in their learning through meaningful task involvement and self-monitoring rather than remaining passive recipients of information (Reinders, 2010). Reflection requires learners to think critically about their learning and evaluate what they have learned. It is a learning cycle whereby they assess, plan, and act according to how they can improve (Little, 2007). Yancey (2016) further reinforces this by emphasising that reflection is not only an individual process but also a socially situated practice, where learners construct meaning through interaction and feedback.

It has been argued that learner progress should be observed from within the classroom, as learners need direction and advice (Nunan, 2003). Thus, learner autonomy does not mean that learners should work entirely independently. As Liu (2015) indicates, developing learner autonomy is a slow and long-term process. Although there may be different definitions of learner autonomy, it means students take charge of their learning, showing progress in skills such as decision making, self-regulation, motivation, and the ability to manage their own learning over time, and they actively participate in the process. Teachers still guide and support them, giving them space to make choices and reflect on their progress. This approach takes time and practice, but it helps students grow. There is a consensus that it involves students taking responsibility for their learning (Haapaniemi et al., 2021).

Basri (2023) argues that learner progress should be observed and supported within the classroom, and student-centred learning environments have been proposed as ways of facilitating such opportunities. Student-centred learning would give teachers the chance to monitor the activities being carried out by learners in the classroom and make decisions about the level of support needed by individual learners. Ejiwale (2012) indicates that student-centred learning is one of the building blocks for learner autonomy, and teachers have been encouraged to become enablers of student activity by placing learners at the centre of any educational experience (Ejiwale, 2012). This direction has been purported to empower learners and motivate them to become responsible for their own learning process (McManus, 2001). Furthermore, it is claimed that learners will develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills by engaging in the learning process (Anwar, 2022). This argument has marked a change from focusing on the teacher as a distributor of knowledge to concentrating on the student as an active searcher for expertise.

Carlile and Jordan (2005) highlighted discovery and independent learning as additional features of student-centred approaches. In discovery learning, students are encouraged to

explore problems, test ideas, and draw conclusions for themselves rather than being given ready-made answers (Fumin & Li, 2012). This process not only deepens understanding but also nurtures independence, as learners learn how to seek and apply knowledge on their own. Morris (2023) extended this view, explaining that student-centred learning is grounded in constructivist theory, where learners actively build knowledge rather than passively receive it. Within this framework, hands-on and activity-based tasks are considered essential, as they engage learners directly in the process of constructing meaning. Hadiyanto (2024) further shows that in EFL contexts, activity-based learning not only deepens learners' understanding but also helps them develop wider 21st-century skills. Collaborative learning also plays a key role, as it enables learners to share perspectives and co-construct knowledge, which both strengthens comprehension and promotes reflection on their own learning processes (Abusrewel, 2022; Alzubi & Ahamad, 2024). Together, these elements demonstrate how student-centred approaches contribute directly to the development of learner autonomy.

2.2.2 Autonomy as Being Relational

Independent learning is often used interchangeably with autonomy, as it shares similar principles with self-directed and self-regulated learning (Healey, 2014; Najeeb, 2013). However, the primary difference between autonomy and independent learning lies in their context of use within the field of language learning or education in general. Recent research highlights that learner autonomy is not synonymous with independence but is shaped by social and contextual factors. Gomez-Virseda, de Maeseneer, and Gastmans (2020) argue for a relational view of autonomy in which intentional reliance on others can support rather than reduce autonomy. In contrast, Kinsella (2024) situates this perspective directly in language education, framing autonomy as "becoming oneself amongst others" and emphasising collaboration and dialogic engagement with peers and teachers. This means that autonomy is less about physical separation from others and more about how learners mentally and emotionally engage with their learning. Together, these studies suggest broad agreement that autonomy emerges through relationships as much as through individual effort, while differing in scope; Gómez-Virseda et al. (2020) provide a general ethical framework, and Kinsella (2024) applies it directly to language learning.

To further clarify the nature of autonomy, Bensons (2013) differentiated between self-directed learning and learner autonomy, describing self-directed learning as learning that is conducted under the learner's own direction, while autonomy is a capacity possessed by the learner. Autonomy comes in degrees, such as "reactive autonomy", which emerges when teachers

guide students towards autonomy; the term self-directed learning is not used in the same way. Therefore, Benson (2013) mentioned that "self-directed learning can be considered as something that learners can do more or less effectively, according to the degree that they possess this capacity (learner autonomy)" (p. 37). What this means is, autonomy is a prerequisite for self-directed learning; the more autonomous the learner, the more capable they are of directing their own learning.

A further distinction is needed between autonomy and self-instruction, as the latter is often wrongly equated with the former. Little (1991) noted that a common misconception is viewing autonomy as simply learning without a teacher, while Dafei (2007) emphasised that terms like self-instruction or self-study merely describe forms of learning alone, not autonomy. Although autonomous learners may be better at learning independently (Dafei, 2007), the two concepts differ in important ways. Autonomy is grounded in learner freedom, such as choosing content, strategies, methods, and whether to work alone or with others, thus incorporating a social dimension. In contrast, self-instruction focuses on teaching oneself (Little, 1991), making it an individualistic process and only one limited aspect of autonomy. Drawing on these stands together, this reinforces the relational view by underscoring that autonomy does not require isolation but may actively involve others.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is based on Benson's theory (1997), which recognises three diverse kinds of learner autonomy: technical autonomy, psychological autonomy, and political autonomy. The choice of Benson's theory (1997) aligns with the research aim to explore the factors promoting and constraining learner autonomy in Libya, as it allows for a comprehensive examination of individual learner behaviour and attitudes, alongside broader political influence. Oxford (2003) added the sociocultural perspective to Benson's technical, psychological, and political autonomy to emphasise the crucial influence of social and cultural contexts on learners' ability to develop and exercise autonomy. The sociocultural dimension of autonomy is evident in the capacity to interact and collaborate with others, as highlighted by Ushioda (2011).

Constructivism, particularly social constructivism, provides a theoretical bridge between Benson's (1997) psychological perspective and Oxford's (2003) sociocultural perspective. Constructivism posits that learners actively construct knowledge by linking new information to prior experience, which reflects Benson's emphasis on learner initiative and responsibility.

At the same time, social constructivism highlights the role of interaction, collaboration, and cultural context, aligning closely with Oxford's sociocultural view of autonomy. Thus, constructivism underpins both models and offers a coherent lens through which to examine learner autonomy in this study.

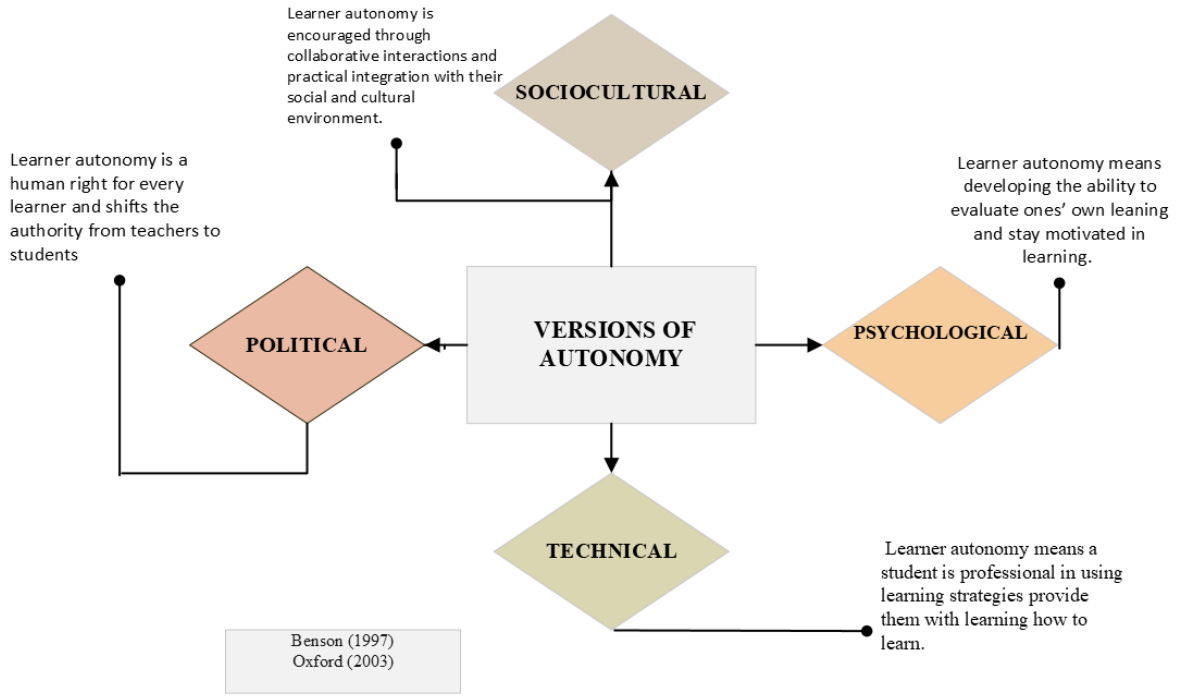

Figure 3: Versions of Autonomy

Together, these dimensions of autonomy offer a clear window into how learner autonomy can be impeded or forwarded in a given cultural context, as the balance of internal and external factors. Figure 3 presents the four versions of learner autonomy—technical, psychological, political, and sociocultural—based on the frameworks proposed by Benson (1997) and further developed by Oxford (2003), highlighting the conceptual distinctions and pedagogical implications of each perspective. As this research was conducted in the Libyan context, adopting a sociocultural perspective is essential. Oxford's (2003) framework enhances the theoretical foundation by emphasising the role of context in shaping learner autonomy. Although Benson's (1997) and Oxford's (2003) theories are not recent, they remain highly influential and widely cited in autonomy research, providing a comprehensive lens for analysing both individual and societal dimensions of autonomy. More recent studies (Alrabai, 2022; Linh & Nguyen, 2024) continue to build on these earlier theories, confirming their enduring relevance. In the Libyan context, these frameworks are particularly valuable because autonomy is influenced not only by strong family and communal expectations but also by

political instability and systemic disruptions that impair educational quality and teacher-centred practices (Elabbar, 2022). Revisiting these theories in this study highlights the need to adapt them to collective cultural values where autonomy is often constrained by external forces as much as by individual learner readiness.

2.4 Versions of Autonomy

According to Benson (1997), there are three diverse kinds of learner autonomy, which he refers to as technical autonomy, psychological autonomy, and political autonomy. Active learning falls within the psychological version of autonomy, which relates to the behaviour of learners, their attitudes, and motivations (Benson, 1997). Oxford (2003) later added the sociocultural perspective as the fourth version of autonomy, highlighting the importance of context and social interaction. Benson (2021) builds on this earlier work by discussing limited autonomy and more recent, context-based developments.

Viewing learner autonomy from different perspectives and associating it with philosophical stances can help in maximising our understanding of such a complex concept, because it highlights not only its educational relevance but also its wider implications for how responsibility and agency are conceived. Discussion of the concept of learner autonomy and its validity and applicability in various aspects of life has led educationalists to classify this concept according to different uses (Oxford, 2017). These perspectives show that autonomy is not just about individual learning skills but also about how learners take responsibility within social and cultural contexts.

Benson's versions and Oxford's versions are almost the same except that Oxford discussed an extra element related to the sociocultural perspective (See Table 1).

Aspect	Benson's (1997)	Oxford's (2003)
1. Technical Autonomy	Focus on the development of learning skills and strategies	Physical situation (learning environment
2. Psychological Autonomy	Capacity (abilities – attitudes) emphasises cognitive and metacognitive aspects of learning	Characteristics of learners and acknowledge inner change, but within a socio-cultural context
3. Political Autonomy	Concerned with power, control, and learner agency in decision-making	Criticised as unsuitable for academic settings, too politically charged
4. Socio-cultural	----------	Central to Oxford's theory, autonomy is shaped by social and cultural context

Table 1: Benson's (1997) and Oxford's (2003) Perspectives Defining Learner Autonomy

The following section considers the different perspectives of learner autonomy established in the literature, moving from the technical, the political perspective, the psychological perspective, and finally the sociocultural perspective.

2.4.1 The Technical Version of Autonomy

The technical element of learner autonomy is closely related to learning management, which refers to the practical strategies and tools learners use to organise and control their own study. According to Benson (2021), it primarily concerns the techniques and strategies that learners use to study independently. In other words, autonomy is seen as a set of skills or tools that can be provided to learners to enable them to direct their own learning, which echoes a positivist philosophy of education. From this perspective, the teacher acts as a "technical expert" who can transfer learning strategies to students in order to prepare them for independent study (Vieira, 2012).

For Benson (1997), technically autonomous learners are those who can take charge of their learning without the intervention of the teacher and work effectively outside the classroom. In this sense, knowledge is viewed as existing objectively, and learning is acquired through the transfer of information from one person to another (Benson, 2021). In practice, this means that learners can acquire the target language by being equipped with strategies through systematic teacher-directed training (Chou, 2024). Such training can prepare learners to take responsibility for their learning beyond the classroom.

The ultimate goal of the technical element of learner autonomy is for learners to study on their own and make decisions without the teacher's direct involvement, for example, when working in self-learning centres. Here, learning strategies are treated as transferable tools that can be taught through learner training and then applied in self-directed learning (Kuluşakli& Yumru, 2020). According to Kuluşakli and Yumru (2020), the technical aspect of learner autonomy in language learning is achieved when learners develop the skills and strategies to manage their own learning, such as setting goals, monitoring progress, and choosing suitable materials. Language learning strategies are viewed as transferable tools that can be taught through training and later applied in self-directed contexts. In this process, teachers act as facilitators who help learners build strategic awareness, enabling them to continue learning autonomously beyond the classroom. However, some researchers have criticised this approach. McDonough (2002), for example, argues that training learners implies directing them to behave in a certain way,

which can contradict the principle of autonomy. If training is too prescriptive, learners may lose the freedom to exercise responsibility, make choices, and manage their own learning according to what works best for them.

Oxford (2003) offers a more balanced view, emphasising the teacher's role in empowering learners with strategies while also preparing them to cope with different learning environments. She stresses the importance of training learners to monitor their progress and use available resources effectively. Thus, while decision-making about strategies is an important part of autonomy, it is not sufficient on its own, since true learner autonomy also involves psychological and cognitive dimensions that go beyond technical skills (Law, 2023).

2.4.2 The Psychological Version of Autonomy

The second element of learner autonomy is control over cognitive processes. This is based on the psychological perspective of learner autonomy. This emphasises the mental and emotional characteristics of learners as individuals and members of social or cultural groups (Wu & Dong 2024). It refers to autonomous learners as having positive attitudes and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to situations where learners learn for enjoyment in the activity or for gaining competence, whereas extrinsic motivation means learning for the sake of rewards rather than for learning itself. Motivation depends on the learning environment, the context in which learners' study, and the people involved in that process (Zhang et al., 2024). This was first noted by Little (1991), who mentioned that learner autonomy involves having a psychological disposition that helps learners develop a particular relationship to the process and the content of their learning. Oxford (2003) also notes that learners' motivation, confidence, and performance can be enhanced by strategy instruction and learner training for strategy use. This psychological relationship stresses the motivational and cognitive processes of learners (Benson, 1997).

Research on learner autonomy highlights the importance of psychological factors in promoting independent language learning. Studies have shown that autonomy is grounded in learners' motivation, confidence, and sense of control over their learning (Kuluşaklı & Yumru, 2020; Cheon & Vansteenkiste, 2021). There is general agreement that the development of psychological readiness enables learners to take responsibility for their learning and to sustain self-directed engagement beyond the classroom. However, differences emerge in how researchers conceptualise the sources of this psychological autonomy. Some view it as a product of learners' internal growth and self-regulation (Kuluşaklı & Yumru, 2020), whereas

others emphasise the importance of autonomy-supportive environments that nurture intrinsic motivation and psychological need satisfaction (Cheon & Vansteenkiste, 2021). Andri and Azis (2025) highlight responsibility as central to learner autonomy, developing through interaction between teacher support and learner agency. They argue that autonomy grows when teachers gradually transfer responsibility to students, helping them make decisions and reflect on learning. However, in teacher-centred contexts, responsibility often remains imposed rather than chosen, limiting genuine autonomy. Together, these perspectives enrich the understanding of autonomy as both an internal capacity and a socially influenced process in language learning.

2.4.3 The Political Version of Autonomy

The third element of learner autonomy concerns "control over content" in the language classroom, and it reflects the political dimension of learner autonomy. Besides associating autonomy with freedom from external control and the internal capacity to develop learning, Benson (1997) links autonomy to the learners' ability to take control over their learning without constraints from external authorities such as educational institutions. Learner autonomy is considered a human right because it gives learners the freedom to make decisions about their own education. According to Oxford (2003), this shift of authority from teachers to students positions learners as active participants rather than passive recipients, while teachers act as facilitators who guide rather than control the learning process.

The main problem from this point of view is the ability of learners to control not only their learning process and content, but also the institutional context in which learning takes place (Ramnarain& Hobden,2014; Carter, 2022). In this sense, learners are responding to the institutional context rather than controlling it, as their choices are shaped by broader structural constraints. For example, in educational institutions, learners can make their own choices in what and how to learn and deal with the teaching-learning issues that intervene in the learning process. The roots of the political version are linked to critical theory, which places emphasis on the social, cultural, and political context in which the development of autonomy takes place (Pennycook, 1997). However, the extent to which learners can realistically shape institutional factors is debated by scholars.

Benson (1997) further elaborates on the notion of 'control' to include three levels: control of the management of language learning, control of language learning resources, and control of the language aspects. The first level refers to a learner's ability to apply metacognitive

strategies in terms of planning, organising, setting goals, and evaluating progress (Costa & Lopes, 2015). Another factor affecting the degree of autonomy is the learner's awareness of the content of their study, for example, what they learn and how they use it, as this will affect their ability to make appropriate choices among the learning resources at their disposal (Efklides, 2011). Efklides (2011) argues that being a competent language user with the necessary academic abilities and skills enhances learners' confidence in acquiring new language patterns. This perspective, therefore, demonstrates that learners have the power to shape their own learning experiences and act as active participants in the process.

Raya and Lamb (2020) discuss the political dimension of learner autonomy, noting that it is often constrained by educational traditions and sociopolitical structures that prioritise control and authority. They argue that in some contexts where hierarchical systems dominate classroom practice, these political aspects of autonomy remain underdeveloped, limiting learners' capacity to act independently. Recent work by ElFalih and Lamrani-Hassani (2024) has also highlighted the importance of considering the political dimension of learner autonomy, which extends beyond the technical and psychological perspectives most commonly discussed. ElFalih and Lamrani-Hassani (2024) in Morocco found that even when teachers supported student-centred learning, they tended to avoid discussions around decision-making and power. Betancor-Falcon (2023) argues for a coherent critical theory of learner autonomy in higher education, emphasising that autonomy is not only about individual strategies or internal responsibility but also about how institutional power structures and wider social contexts enable or restrict learners' agency. This perspective challenges the tendency in the literature to treat autonomy narrowly as an individual trait and instead stresses its political implications, particularly in educational systems where students may face constraints outside their control. Such an approach is especially relevant for disrupted or constrained educational contexts, as it reminds us that autonomy must be understood not only as a personal capacity but also as a product of structural and social conditions that shape learners' opportunities for independent action.

2.4.4 The Sociocultural Version of Autonomy

The fourth element of learner autonomy emphasises that learner autonomy is encouraged through collaborative interactions and practical integration with their social and cultural environment. Oxford (2003) proposed a "socio-cultural" version of the concept, where emphasis is placed on the context in which autonomy is practised. Oxford (2003) criticised Benson's (1997) versions of learner autonomy, describing them as "fragmentary," and argued

that they neglect the socio-cultural aspect of the concept, which takes place within socio-cultural contexts from which it should be understood. She bases this perspective on Vygotsky's (1978) work on mediation, which enables the learner to interact with the others around them, or move through the zone of proximal development, which refers to the learner's performance with and without help and assistance from the 'more capable others' around them.

Within the sociocultural version of autonomy, researchers stress that autonomy is shaped by cultural and institutional contexts rather than being only an individual trait. Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) showed that in Oman, teachers expressed support for autonomy, but classroom practices remained dominated by exams and teacher authority, leaving little room for shared responsibility. Nguyen and Habok (2020) likewise found that Vietnamese students valued autonomy, but their practices were limited by hierarchical traditions and reliance on teachers. Adding a further dimension, Sadaghian and Marandi (2021) showed that autonomy can also be expressed interdependently, as students engaged in collaborative wiki writing that combined individual responsibility with collective contribution.

In Oxford's (2003) model, the primary focus is on social-mediated learning, in which she considers the significance of interaction in developing human capacity and language development. According to this view, learner autonomy can be promoted via dynamic interaction between learners and others, or the context itself (Toohey & Norton, 2003; Varisoglu, 2016). In addition, through appropriate scaffolding, learners can receive various forms of support, such as practice, cultural knowledge, and language strategies, which can help them develop their self-regulated abilities and enable them to act independently in socio-cultural contexts (Yasmin & Sohail, 2018; Alzubi & Ahamad,2024). Recent studies confirm Oxford's claim that interaction and context matter, but they also vary in how strongly they emphasise external versus internal factors. For example, Yasmin and Sohail (2018) stress the importance of community-based support, whereas Alzubi and Alhamad (2024) foreground learner self-regulation within structured contexts, showing that different studies emphasise different aspects of how social and individual factors shape learner autonomy. This indicates that although there is broad agreement on the significance of sociocultural factors, researchers differ in how they conceptualise the balance between external scaffolding and individual learner agency.

2.5 Autonomy in Language Learning

Little (2004) suggests that the development of learner autonomy helps learners to both ‘know’ and ‘use’ the target language. Autonomy facilitates target language performance with a greater level of confidence. Murray et. al (2011) point out that learner autonomy is one of the key elements in the process of learning a second language. They explain that autonomy is not something fixed or automatic, but rather something that grows and changes depending on the learner’s environment and motivation. In their view, when learners take more responsibility for their own learning, choosing how to study or setting their own goals, it can lead to better results. Autonomy also helps learners stay motivated and more involved in their learning over time, which is especially important in a process as complex as learning a new language (Alkorbow & Eldeeb, 2021). Benson (2021) shows that autonomous learning greatly contributes to the success and progression of language acquisition by enabling learners to develop self-regulation skills, such as planning and monitoring their progress. These skills help learners sustain motivation and adapt strategies when challenges arise, leading to more effective long-term learning outcomes. Empirical studies support this claim: for example, Alkorbow and Eldeeb (2021) found that students who exercised greater control over their learning strategies demonstrated higher persistence and improved proficiency, while Ushioda (2011) highlights that autonomy fosters intrinsic motivation, which is strongly associated with language achievement. When learners feel more in control of their learning, they are more likely to stay motivated and engage more deeply both behaviourally and emotionally in their education (Ahmed & Hossain, 2024).

Research shows that when learners are given autonomy, they tend to engage more deeply and develop stronger communication skills (Namaziandost, 2024). Since languages are communicative and require constant practice to improve and progress, learner autonomy is especially effective in this context (Murray et al, 2011). However, autonomy may not always be the right approach in other subjects, such as mathematics or science, where structured instruction and external evaluation tend to play a more central role in learning success (Nakata, 2014). In short, autonomy works very well in language learning because it builds confidence and communication skills. But in subjects like maths or science, where rules and structure are more important, it may not always be the best method (Patzak & Zhang, 2025).

As language education has become more focused on language learning processes, Najeeb (2013) believes that language learning autonomy reflects learners' ability to develop their language skills without the intervention of a teacher. She calls autonomy a positive way to

encourage students to become autonomous learners, because it allows them to take charge of their own progress and choose resources that match their interests while practising language in real-life contexts. For example, listening to native speakers in movies, videos, or on YouTube may help to materialise this responsibility. These resources expose learners to authentic language use and cultural context (Richards, 2015), allowing learners, in some cases, to communicate directly with native speakers outside the classroom, for example, through social media platforms, language exchange applications, or travel experiences (Botes et al, 2025).

It is important to note, however, that autonomy does not mean complete isolation. Chik et al. (2018) claim that learning a language requires interaction. It is a social process that requires a person to act independently and work with others. This interdependence suggests that autonomous learners should not work independently, and support should always be available if necessary. Even when a language learner communicates with a native speaker, support often appears in non-verbal forms such as gestures, facial expressions, or intonation, which can significantly enhance understanding (Hussein, 2018).

The opportunities for collaboration can often assist understanding, as this allows different perspectives to collaborate in processing new knowledge (Blidi, 2017). Collaborative learning also allows learners to negotiate meaning and construct knowledge through interaction (Swain, 2000). Learning strategies need to be adopted, and the most effective advice comes from a teacher who may have experimented with several techniques to find the most effective (Haapaniemi & Palojoki, 2021). Together, these perspectives show that learner autonomy does not mean learning alone. Instead, it means taking responsibility for one's progress while also making use of collaboration and guidance when needed. True learner autonomy is achieved when learners can balance independence with interaction, using both personal initiative and social engagement to develop their language skills.

2.6 Exploring the Interplay of Teacher and Learner Roles in Autonomous Learning

Many researchers (for example, Weimer, 2002; Fumin & 2012; Griffiths & Dikilitaş, 2022) have studied teachers' and students' roles in developing learner autonomy in the EFL context, exploring how teachers and students perceive their roles and responsibilities towards learner autonomy. Benson and Voller (1997) argue that achieving learner autonomy involves more than just shifting responsibility to students; it requires a deeper reconsideration of "the roles of both learner and teacher, the relationship between them, and the relationship of both to

institutions of learning" (p. 93). This section, therefore, aims to review how the roles of both the teacher and the student are conceptualised with learner autonomy.

2.6.1 The Role of Students in Fostering Learner Autonomy

Scholars widely agree that students' active participation plays a key role in fostering learner autonomy (Benson, 2021; Fumin & Li, 2012). The way students take part in their learning can significantly impact how autonomy works in education. Therefore, it is essential to understand the roles students assume. Doyle (2008) observes that the traditional roles of students and teachers in higher education have often been seen as stable, meaning that teachers are expected to lead and students are expected to follow, although some changes have occurred in recent decades. But since autonomy means learners need to take on new roles and responsibilities (Little, 2022), it can be seen as an approach that challenged traditional ideas about teaching and learning and continues to influence current thinking (Betancor-Falcon, 2023). These studies suggest that learner autonomy requires a reconceptualisation of the student role: rather than being positioned as passive recipients of knowledge, students are increasingly viewed as active agents who share responsibility for shaping the learning process.

Research on learner roles in autonomy spans studies conducted over the past two decades and across diverse educational contexts (see Table *2*). Students' own perceptions of their roles strongly shape how autonomy is enacted. Yang (2022) showed that students' views of responsibility influence how they act in learning environments. For example, Chan's (2001a, 2001b) research at Hong Kong Polytechnic University shows that students had mixed feelings about their roles and their teachers' roles, but they showed a strong desire to be involved in learning-related decisions such as choosing content and tasks. This indicates that while learners continued to value teachers as experts, they also expected opportunities to share responsibility, reflecting a shift towards more collaborative classroom dynamics. Building on these insights, Nunan (2003) argued that autonomy involves giving students choices, stressing the importance of a partnership between teachers and learners. According to Nunan (2003) students are not passive but active partners in learning. The extent of students' roles depends heavily on the extent of freedom and guidance teachers give them (Scharle & Szabo, 2000).

Researcher(s) & Year	Context / Participants	Focus	Findings
Chan (2001a)	Hong Kong Polytechnic students	Student perspectives on roles and autonomy	Mixed views on teacher vs learner roles; openness to change

Chan (2001b)	Hong Kong Polytechnic students	Desire for active contribution	95% wanted input on content and tasks
Brackenbury (2012)	24 American university students	Learner-centred pedagogies	Students are empowered by choosing assessments and tasks
Rungwaraphong (2012)	91 Thai university students	Student perceptions of roles in learning	Students were unsure of roles; viewed teachers as authority; passivity limited autonomy; over 90% claimed responsibility, but motivation was mostly extrinsic (grades).
Rushidi & Rushidi-Rexhepi (2015)	50 grad students & 10 teachers, Macedonia	Attitudes toward learner autonomy	Responsibility is seen mostly in out-of-class learning activities
Ellili & Chaffin (2007)	Emirati university students	Teacher vs. student responsibility in learning	Teachers are seen as responsible inside class; autonomy is limited to outside learning
Elmahjoub (2019).	Libyan secondary school students and teachers	Influence of culture and classroom practice on learner autonomy	Teachers held dominant roles; students took more passive roles
Al-Araibi (2020)	Libyan high school & university EFL learners	Impact of traditional teaching methods on student engagement and autonomy	Students rarely made independent decisions
Algwil (2024)	Libyan university EFL context	Teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy and students' roles	Students remain passive and teacher-dependent; limited decision-making, but potential for greater autonomy with support and training.

Table 2: Comparative Summary of Research on Learner Roles in Autonomy

Brackenbury's (2012) study supports this. She looked at the 24 American students' opinions on student-centred teaching. She found that when teachers moved to these approaches, significant changes happened. Students felt they were allowed to play an active and powerful role in their learning, like designing assignments, deciding on assessments or choosing research topics. These experiences were described as empowering, meaning they felt more in control and capable. This shows that teachers sharing power and responsibility with students really boosts the students' self-responsibility and directly supports the development of learner autonomy (Ahmed & Hossain, 2024).

Research in various cultural contexts shows that many students still struggle to take full responsibility for their learning, often remaining dependent on teachers for guidance. Rungruangphong (2012) found that while learners valued autonomy in principle, they frequently relied on external guidance. Rungwaraphong concluded that while learners were not fully autonomous, they demonstrated potential to become more autonomous if supported

through appropriate pedagogical shifts and demonstrated willingness to take this responsibility. Lin's (2024) study in Taiwan showed that learners often display reactive autonomy, taking responsibility mainly within teacher-set frameworks. In such cases, students manage tasks and follow directions but rarely take the initiative to set their own goals or strategies. This illustrates how students' role in autonomy can shift from reactive to proactive, depending on the extent to which they are willing and able to move beyond reliance on teacher guidance.

Similar concerns about the balance between teacher and student roles appear in other contexts. Rushidi and Rushidi-Rexhepi (2015) studied the attitudes of 50 graduate students and 10 teachers in Macedonia regarding autonomy. Most students agreed that their role was key to learning and emphasised the importance of self-study and self-assessment. The study showed that these activities included reviewing lecture materials, preparing for exams, and practising independent language use, and they generally happened outside of the classroom. Ellili and Chaffin's (2007) study with Emirati university students also found that learners perceived teachers as mainly responsible for guiding classroom learning, while their own responsibility was limited to self-study outside class. This pattern suggests that teachers are not only perceived as taking the lead in classroom learning but may also act in ways that reinforce this perception, such as directing most learning activities and limiting opportunities for independent decision-making (Chetouane, 2022). More recent research confirms this trend. Rinekso and Kurniawan (2020) found that students expect to share responsibility for learning decisions at the classroom level, whereas Alzubi and Alhamad (2024) emphasise the need to balance teacher guidance with independent regulation in Arab higher education contexts. These studies show that in many contexts, learners continue to depend on teachers inside the classroom, while autonomy is mostly practised in out-of-class tasks. This highlights the need for teaching approaches that provide students with more responsibility and decision-making opportunities during lessons as well.

In the Libyan context, Algwil (2024) highlights that students are largely passive and teacher-dependent, with limited involvement in learning decisions, and teachers view potential for greater autonomy if supported through learner training and institutional reform. Elmahjoub (2019), through an ethnographic study in a Libyan secondary school, found that although both EFL teachers and students recognised the value of learner autonomy, actual classroom practice remained largely teacher-directed. Teachers were positioned as the central figures in instruction, while students took more passive roles. The study suggested that learner responsibility could increase through gradual teacher-led scaffolding, offering structured

support that aligns with local expectations while gently shifting more control to learners over time.

Similarly, Al-Araibi (2020), in a case study in Ajdabiya, Libya, argued that dominant teaching approaches, particularly the teacher-centred approach, limited students' involvement in meaningful decision-making. Students in this study were found to rely heavily on their teachers and seldom participated in tasks that required independent thought or initiative. Similarly, Elhadi's (2024) study called for significant pedagogical and structural reforms to reposition teachers as facilitators and allow students to play more active and autonomous roles, both inside and outside the classroom. Overall, these studies show that although the active role of students in language learning is increasingly acknowledged across diverse contexts, its practical implementation remains constrained by cultural norms and institutional structures.

2.6.2 The Role of the Teacher in Fostering Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy does not just affect learners; it also shapes the role of teachers. As students take more responsibility for their learning, teachers are expected to adjust their roles from knowledge transmitters to facilitators and guides. However, this does not mean that teachers are no longer important. As Chene (1983) said, "The teacher cannot disappear without reappearing in another form." (p. 43). In other words, the teacher still plays a key role, just in a different way. by creating conditions that encourage learner choice, offering guidance when needed, and supporting students in developing the confidence to act independently (Little, 2022). Teachers who share responsibility and foster trust help shift learners from passive roles toward greater autonomy (Griffiths & Dikilitaş, 2022).

Several studies have shown that teachers play a big role in helping students become more autonomous. For example, Bagcı and Aydın (2021) believe that autonomy is essential in higher education. That means teachers need to create the right conditions to help students develop autonomy in their learning. Similarly, Masouleh and Jooneghani (2012) describe the teacher's role as critical in creating and maintaining learning environments that allow students to grow independently. Elmahjoub (2019) adds that supportive learning environments are ones where teachers give students encouragement and access to resources. Building on this, researchers emphasise that teachers must balance freedom with guidance. Kirovska Simjanoska (2015) points out that autonomy-supportive teachers are those who listen to students, respect their preferences, encourage them to take initiative, and respond to their needs and questions. Bonneville-Roussy et al (2013) also say that such teachers allow students to make their own

choices and decisions. But that does not mean students are left completely alone; there is still a “safety net” to make sure they do not feel lost or overwhelmed (Han, 2020).

Similarly, studies show that autonomy support requires preparation and caution. Bonneville-Roussy et al. (2013) studied 144 international students at a Canadian university. They found that students who felt their teachers supported their independence were more likely to engage in autonomous learning. Sheerin (1997) reminds us that while autonomous learning is the goal, “almost all learners need to be prepared and supported” (p. 55) along the way. Still, Sheerin warns teachers not to overdo it; too much control or support could actually limit students’ autonomy and critical thinking.

Even with good intentions, many teachers still struggle to share power with their students. This often stems from teacher-centred traditions or doubts about learners’ readiness. For instance, Ramnarain and Hobden (2014) in South Africa support this idea. Their research showed that even when teachers intended to support students, they still held onto control, sometimes without realising it. This study also found that many teachers were hesitant to share power with students or let them make independent decisions during class activities. More recent research confirms that institutional and cultural pressures can limit teachers’ ability to hand over control to learners and foster autonomy. For instance, Khotimah & Eliyanah (2023) highlight this further, focusing on Indonesian EFL teachers, showing that while teachers generally support the idea of learner autonomy, their classroom practices often remain teacher-centred due to curriculum demands and institutional constraints. Khotimah and Eliyanah (2023) argue for professional development and reflective training to help bridge the gap between supportive beliefs and actual implementation.

Bonneville-Roussy et al. (2013) and Khotimah and Eliyanah (2023) both emphasise the motivational dimension of the teacher’s role in fostering learner autonomy. Drawing on self-determination theory, which argues that learners develop greater motivation and autonomy when their needs for autonomy and relatedness are supported (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Bonneville-Roussy et al. (2013) show that autonomy-supportive teachers who provide encouragement and constructive feedback enhance learners’ intrinsic motivation and persistence. Similarly, Khotimah and Eliyanah (2023) argue that teachers who create autonomy-supportive classroom environments help students sustain motivation and confidence to take responsibility for their learning. Both studies highlight that teacher encouragement and feedback are central to developing learners’ psychological readiness for autonomy.

Supporting learner autonomy often means sharing control with students and treating them more like partners in learning, not because they have the same experience, but because they may have equal potential to learn. Weimer (2002) mentioned that because teachers have long held power in classrooms, giving up some of that control can feel uncomfortable and even threatening. Some teachers may fear that giving students more autonomy means losing authority (Clifford, 1999). Besides these fears, there are other reasons why teachers may be unwilling to give up control. Haapaniemi and Palojoki (2021) say this way of thinking makes teachers feel it is their sole duty to make sure learning happens, as also supported by Ustunluoglu (2009), who found that teachers saw themselves as mainly responsible for learning because they did not believe their students were ready to take that responsibility. However, Fumin and Li (2012) argue that teachers who try to control everything in the classroom are actually being "professionally irresponsible," because doing so takes away from the students' learning experience. Instead, he says, responsible teachers are those who try to share responsibility with their students. This might explain why some teachers resist the idea of student autonomy, and why many classrooms are still teacher-centred.

Recent studies underline the central role of teachers in shaping the conditions for learner autonomy. For example, Wu and Dong (2024) conducted research in China with university students learning and found positive correlations between students' perceptions of teacher autonomy support, stronger peer relationships, and improved psychological well-being, highlighting the critical role of teacher behaviour in cultivating supportive environments. To better understand what roles university teachers should take in supporting autonomy, Fumin and Li (2012) conducted a large survey with 2,685 students in eight Chinese universities. Their study focused only on students' views. The results showed that autonomy pushed teachers to take on new and more complex roles, especially as study guides and learning organisers. A similar study by Xhaferri et al (2015), conducted in Switzerland and Macedonia, also found that teachers saw their roles as helpers, guides, motivators, and role models for students. Some of these roles overlap, but they all suggest that teachers should move beyond their traditional positions if they want to encourage learner autonomy. (Weimer, 2002) illustrates this shift with the metaphor of teachers as gardeners, preparing the soil and planting seeds, but leaving the real growth and success to the plants. In the same way, teachers support and nurture students, while learners themselves must take responsibility of their learning.

In the Libyan context, the educational system presents significant challenges to language teachers' efforts to foster autonomous learning in their classrooms (Elmahjoub, 2014).

Traditionally, language teachers dominate the language classroom by choosing teaching methods and evaluating student learning progress. Such an approach leaves little room for learners to develop autonomy. However, in autonomous classrooms, the teacher's role must evolve from one of control and decision-making to one of support and facilitation (Elhadi, 2024).

Recent research in Libya supports this transition. For example, Algwil (2024) found that many Libyan university teachers are beginning to adopt the ideas of new roles like facilitator and resource provider, though they face some challenges, such as exam-driven curricula and limited resources. This shows that while attitudes are shifting, practical barriers can slow down the move toward autonomy. Additionally, Alburki and Almashrgy (2024) report that while teachers recognise the value of learner autonomy, traditional practices and cultural expectations often prevent them from fully applying it. These findings suggest that teacher beliefs alone are not enough; institutional and cultural factors must also change. This aligns with Benson (2021): achieving autonomy requires changes not only in classroom practice but also in institutional attitudes and teacher beliefs.

2.6.2.1 Frameworks for Teacher Roles in Fostering Autonomy

Building on the discussion of teacher roles in promoting learner autonomy, several pedagogical frameworks provide practical guidance for how teachers can support the development of learner autonomy. Among the most influential of these is Nunan's (2003) nine-step model, which outlines a gradual process through which teachers can transfer control to learners while maintaining a supportive role. Nunan emphasises that teachers should be actively involved in the learning process while offering diverse educational resources and allowing students to participate in decisions about methods and materials. He stressed the crucial role of teacher support in facilitating learning and encouraging critical reflection (Figure 4). His first and fourth steps highlight the importance of setting clear learning goals and giving learners a voice in their education. Learners should also be encouraged to modify course content and create their own goals (Step 2), and to seek knowledge and use the target language outside the classroom as presented in step three, Nunan's in fifth step emphasises that the concept of choice, despite its Western origins, is effectively applicable in non-Western cultures like Hong Kong, Thailand, and Japan, where learners have successfully adopted autonomy, because it adapts to local cultural practices, values collaborative learning, and shows that learners everywhere are capable of taking responsibility when given appropriate support (Li, 2019). The subsequent steps, sixth, seventh and eighth, involve teachers gradually transferring control to learners,

enabling them to participate in decision-making and even take on teaching roles. Nunan's ninth step encourages students to become researchers beyond the classroom walls.

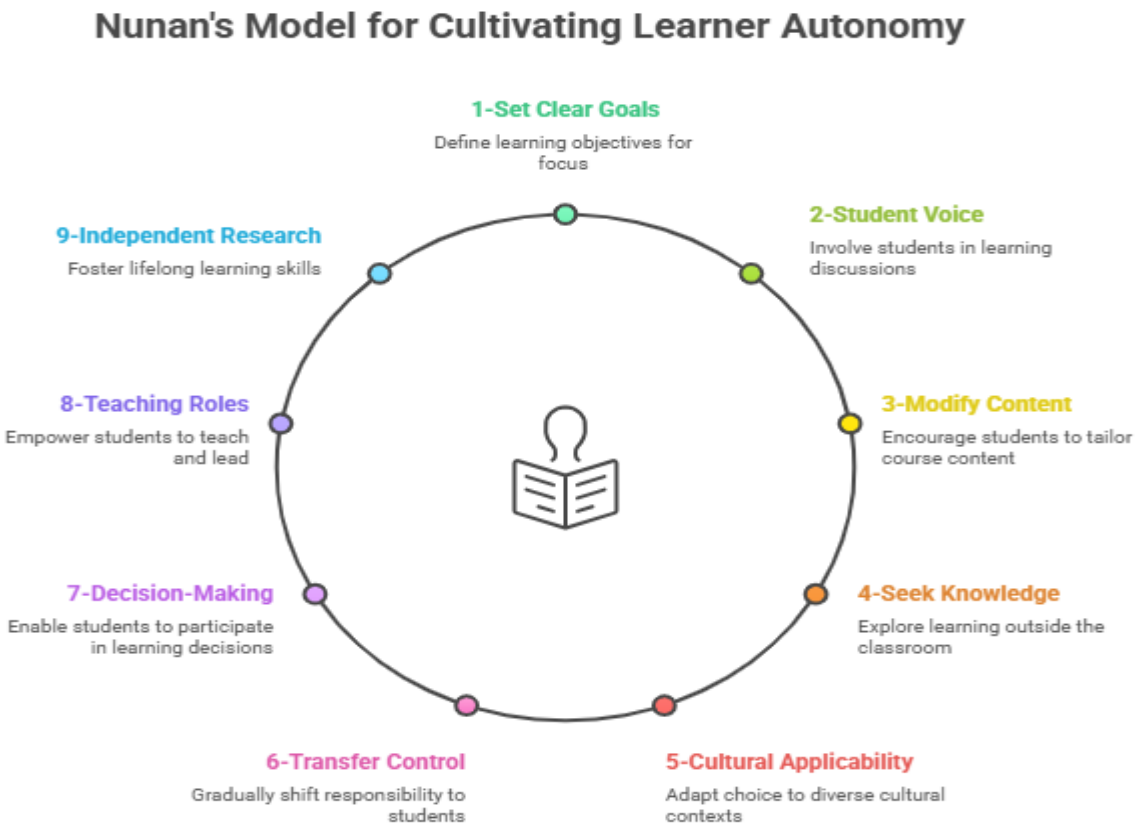

Figure 4: Nunan's (2003) Nine Steps to Learner Autonomy (adapted from Nunan, 2003)

Research has since applied aspects of Nunan's framework in diverse settings. For example, Chan (2001) found that Hong Kong university students responded positively to opportunities for goal-setting and independent learning, while Rungwaraphong (2012) showed that similar strategies could help Thai learners move gradually toward greater autonomy. More recently, Nguyen and Gu (2022) demonstrated that involving Vietnamese tertiary students in goal setting and course design not only improved their engagement but also strengthened their motivation and speaking proficiency. These studies suggest that while the full nine-step model may not always be adopted, its principles remain highly relevant in supporting learner autonomy across different contexts. Teachers often modify specific steps to suit their learners' needs and contextual realities.

Alternatively, what should happen in the autonomous language classrooms is that the teachers have to be aware of the shift in their roles from providing and decision-making to facilitating. Littlewood (1996) offers a useful framework for this shift, showing that language learners

develop autonomy in three interconnected ways: as communicators, as autonomous learners, and as individuals. As communicators, learners gain independence through active participation in real communication. As autonomous learners, they take responsibility for managing their own learning processes. As individuals, they experience personal growth and self-development through the learning process.

2.7 Constraints in Learner Autonomy

Factors that impede learner autonomy development can be categorised as situational, dispositional, and institutional factors (Benson, 2021). One significant barrier identified is the traditional teacher-centred approach to teaching, which tends to make students overly reliant on teachers and limit their autonomy in learning (Law, 2023). This instructional method reduces opportunities for students to engage in self-regulated learning and critical thinking, which are essential components of learner autonomy (Anwar & Muti'ah, 2022). Consequently, students may struggle to take ownership of their learning process, relying on direct instruction rather than developing independent learning strategies. Additionally, institutional factors such as a rigid curriculum and strict educational timelines can also hinder learner autonomy by restricting opportunities for students to practice skills that promote Learner autonomy (Basri, 2023).

The influence of culture on learner autonomy significantly shapes the learning process; cultural backgrounds can either hinder or facilitate autonomy (Palfreyman & Smith, 2003). This influence is illustrated by the concept of "reactive autonomy" in Middle Eastern learners, where students can make choices, but only within rules set by teachers (Littlemore, 2001). Recent studies show that in East Asia, strong respect for teachers and authority limits the choices learners are willing to make, but autonomy is still possible when teaching practices promote group responsibility and shared decision-making (Nguyen & Gu, 2022).

Another important factor is cultural differences, which highlight the shift from traditional hierarchical learning to more autonomous approaches, as seen in countries like China and Japan, where the teacher-centred model has long been dominant (Chan, 2001). In these contexts, students are expected to passively absorb knowledge, which can hinder the development of learner autonomy. However, recent reforms in education policy in both countries are gradually promoting more student-centred approaches that encourage independent learning and critical thinking, aiming to foster greater autonomy among learners. The impact of cultural factors on learner autonomy underlines their primary role in shaping the

learning environment, possibly aligning certain educational practices better with specific cultural contexts (O'Sullivan, 2004). Despite perceptions of unsuitability for collectivist societies, Students from culturally conservative backgrounds, for example, in Saudi Arabia, which has a similar culture and shares the same religion as Libya, often face constraints on learner autonomy due to traditional values and hierarchical teacher–student relationships. Al-Saraj (2014) and Aljaser (2015) both found that Saudi learners are open to new learning approaches, but they differ in their emphasis: while Al-Saraj stresses learners' receptiveness to technology-enhanced methods, Aljaser highlights the continuing influence of cultural familiarity in shaping attitudes toward autonomy. More recently, Bin-Hady and Ali (2025) also observed growing openness, but they caution that cultural and institutional constraints still limit how far autonomy can be fully realised. Together, these studies suggest broad agreement that learners are not resistant to change, yet they also reveal persistent tensions between traditional expectations and more autonomous practices. Related research, for example, by Bozkurt and Arslan (2018) on Syrian refugees and Farrah et al. (2024) on Palestinian learners, supports the claim that autonomy can flourish even under systemic adversity when learners are motivated.

In addition to the cultural and institutional constraints discussed above, it is important to consider the role of disrupted education, especially in conflict- affected areas like Libya. These interruptions resulted in ongoing school closures, limited or weak continuity in learning, and learning gaps. Many students struggled because the education system relies heavily on teacher-centred instruction, which is difficult to maintain during crises (Gherwash, 2024). Research in education in emergencies shows that such contexts are often marked by instability and weakened institutional support, making it difficult to maintain traditional teacher-centred approaches (Akkari,2023; Rohwerder,2015; Hanon,2022). In these situations, education systems are frequently underfunded and affected by both physical barriers, such as damaged infrastructure, and non-physical challenges like insecurity. These conditions highlighted the need for more flexible and adaptive approaches to learning (Hanon, 2022; GPE KIX, 2024). In this regard, Stringer (2024) offers a useful perspective by describing learner autonomy as something that develops over time and in response to specific conditions, rather than as a fixed ability. Stringer (2024) describes learner autonomy as a dynamic process rather than a fixed trait, developing through learner's interactions with their environment, particularly in unstable contexts. This perspective is particularly relevant in disrupted educational contexts, where learners are often required to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances.

At the same time, it is important recognise the role of culture. In collectivist societies such as Libya, learning is often shaped by value such as respect for authority and social interdependence (Yasmin & Sohail, 2018). However, disrupted education is not rooted in culture but in external crisis conditions. Despite this difference, e, collectivist cultural influences and disrupted educational conditions can overlap in practice, as both may increase learner's reliance on teachers and limit opportunities for independent learning. It is therefore important to distinguish between cultural influences and disruption-related constraints, while also acknowledging how they interact. Within this context, learner autonomy can be understood not simply as individual independence, but as the flexible ability to manage learning under challenging conditions (Benson,2011). This aligns with Sringer's (2024) view that autonomy develops through adaptive processes.

Research in disrupted educational context (see, for example, Little, 1991; Akkari, 2023) suggests that learner autonomy is linked to strategies such as goal setting, and the use of alternative resources, particularly when formal instruction is in consistent In addition, literature addressing education in emergencies highlights that emergency curricula emphasise flexibility and learner centred approaches to sustain learning in fragile contexts (Akkari, 2023; Dryden-Peterson, 2016). Overall, this means that learner autonomy is increasingly viewed as both an educational goal and a response to disrupted learning environment (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020).

Other studies, such as Khonamri, Salimi, and Rezaei (2020), suggest that learner autonomy constraints often arise from within the learners themselves, particularly in relation to motivation and training. Motivation is crucial for learner autonomy development, but low motivation acts as a significant barrier, as noted in studies conducted in Oman (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012) and Iran (Farahani, 2014). Also, Alhejaily (2020) discusses how low learner confidence is a major obstacle to promoting autonomy in EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia. She explains that many students feel insecure about their English proficiency, which makes them hesitant to take responsibility for learning tasks or make decisions in class. As a result, students often depend heavily on teachers for direction and support, reinforcing teacher-centred practices and limiting opportunities for autonomy.

Moreover, across multiple collectivist cultural contexts, a lack of training in autonomous learning skills has also been identified as a constraint, since without explicit preparation, learners often struggle to manage their own learning, learners often struggle to manage their own learning. Yunus and Arshad (2015) argue that without explicit training in self-directed

strategies such as goal-setting and self-monitoring, learners remain dependent on teachers. In the Libyan context, Algwil (2023) found that many students lacked preparation in time management and reflective learning, limiting their ability to plan and evaluate their progress. Similarly, Elhadi (2024) reported that weak strategy training left learners unable to take responsibility for autonomous tasks, while Mustapha and Mahmoud (2019) highlighted that the absence of skills such as independent decision-making and critical reflection, when combined with sociocultural expectations of relying on teachers, made the challenges of autonomy even harder to overcome.

Similarly, Siepmann (2023) and Stewart (2019) note that in many contexts where structured collaborative activities are missing, opportunities to develop autonomy are reduced, leaving learners dependent on teacher-led practices. However, motivation also plays a big role even in collectivist cultures, where learners may still experience restrictions when low motivation combines with traditional educational constraints, limiting their engagement with autonomous learning tasks (Yunus & Arshad, 2015). In addition, Mohebbi (2025) notes that despite the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to foster learner autonomy, internal constraints within students, such as low lack of motivation and dependence on teacher guidance, continue to hinder their ability to fully engage in independent and self-regulated learning. These findings show that internal constraints, such as low motivation, together with external sociocultural influences, represent significant barriers to learner autonomy, particularly in regions where traditional teacher-centred educational practices still dominate (Elhadi, 2024).

2.8 Factors That Promote Learner Autonomy

This section explores the factors that foster learner autonomy. The first sub-section focuses on the characteristics and behaviours that encourage and foster autonomous learning, while the second section examines the classroom activities that promote learner autonomy. Benson (2021) indicates that autonomous learners can link what they need to learn, how to understand it, and what resources are available for them. This suggests that they are individuals who are aware of their learning objectives and what they want to accomplish. It may also be indicated that these are students who are not only able to take charge of their learning, but they are also able to manage other aspects of their lives (Patzak & Zhang, 2025). Another way to understand learner autonomy is by describing what makes learners autonomous, their behaviours and characteristics, which is what this section discusses.

2.8.1 Characteristics of Autonomous Learners

There is debate on whether specific characteristics determine students who are more likely to succeed in autonomous learning. Benson (2021) argues that while traits such as motivation and self-regulation are often emphasised, autonomy is also strongly influenced by contextual factors, showing that learner success cannot be explained by individual characteristics alone. Dickinson (1995) and Littlewood (1999) suggested that some learners are naturally more autonomous because of personality traits or motivational factors that make them more willing to take initiative in learning. From this perspective, autonomy is seen partly as acquired rather than a purely learned skill. However, more recent research argues that while personality and motivation may shape learners' readiness for autonomy, these qualities can also be developed through pedagogical support and reflective learning opportunities (Halabi, 2018). Such characteristics have been identified in language learners, such as being self-motivated and proactive in learning (Cheon & Vansteenkiste, 2021). Therefore, one of the most widely noted characteristics in literature is intrinsic motivation. Those learners who are interested in what they are studying are more likely to take initiative and persist through challenges. Zimmermann (2002) and Al-Khasawneh (2024) suggest that this internal drive plays a bigger role than external rewards in sustaining autonomous learning. Recent studies further highlight the strong relationship between intrinsic motivation and autonomy, showing that motivation is key to academic achievement and sustained engagement (Ahmed & Hossain, 2024). However, motivation often depends on the learning environment. Support from parents, meaningful feedback, and engaging tasks can all enhance a student's willingness to take control of their learning (Sincer & Yakut Özek, 2024). Taken together, this shows that while motivation is a driving force, autonomy also requires practical skills and behaviours that enable learners to plan and evaluate their own learning process.

Scholars such as Meyer (2010) and Benson (2021) have indicated that there are certain characteristics associated with autonomous learners: cognitive and metacognitive skills. Cognitive skills include the use of memory, attention, and problem-solving. Learners need to be able to process information before they can learn independently (Suharto, 2025). More crucially, to assess their learning, students need to have metacognitive skills, which are associated with what learners do to discover new information, how they learn, and who helps them with their learning, such as planning, monitoring, evaluating, and reflecting on their learning processes (Wu, 2025). These skills are needed to accept responsibility and discover ways of finding and evaluating information (Ebtesam, 2019). Learners must have the capacity

to take control of their learning process (Benson, 2021). However, this capacity does not have to be innate, as it can be enhanced (Holmes, 2018). One of the most crucial skills is the ability to engage in reflective practice, as this provides the opportunity to sift out the important knowledge and set aside what is not useful (Saif Ghaleb, 2024). This reflective process enables learners to make decisions about their learning and take appropriate action.

Responsibility is widely recognised as one of the characteristics of autonomous learners. Scharle and Szabo (2000) emphasise that learners' awareness and changing classroom roles encourage them to assume greater responsibility for their learning, arguing that a high sense of responsibility is what characterises autonomy. Similarly, Ustunluoglu (2009) also links autonomy to responsibility but stresses the importance of teachers gradually transferring this responsibility to students. Wood and Ross-Kerr (2011) characterise autonomous learners as those who take the initiative in setting goals and accomplishing objectives. After goals are set, learners select and implement strategies that guide them towards achieving these objectives and reflect on their progress, which enables assessment and adjustment (El-Badri & Abubaker, 2021). Together, these studies broadly agree that learner autonomy encompasses motivation, self-regulation, and responsibility. However, they differ in focus; some emphasise learners' awareness (Scharle & Szabo, 2000), others highlight the teacher's role in facilitating transfer (Ustunluoglu, 2009), while some stress the learner's own initiative (Wood & Ross-Kerr, 2011). Overall, autonomy is best understood as an integration of motivation and responsibility, forming a holistic framework rather than a collection of separate traits (Haapaniemi & Palojoki, 2021).

Namaziandost et al. (2024) examined how learner autonomy and academic engagement influence motivation and confidence among Iranian EFL university students. Using data from 387 participants, they found that higher levels of autonomy and engagement were linked to greater willingness to communicate and more persistence in language learning. The study suggests that supporting learner autonomy through flexible teaching and opportunities for independent decision-making can help students become more confident and resilient in their learning. In this regard, Rinekso and Kurniawan (2020) mentioned a list of characteristics of autonomous learners, such as taking responsibility for learning, setting goals, managing time effectively, showing initiative, and reflecting on progress, by emphasising that "it is not mandatory to obtain all of those characteristics" (p. 104). Likewise, Al Ghazali (2020) described learner autonomy as "not an all-or-nothing concept" (p. 118), referring to learners not having to have all learner autonomy-related traits to be considered autonomous. In my research, I share similar views to Bendebiche (2022), who supports "a broader and holistic approach to autonomy that does not limit our view to pre-defined sets of characteristics" (p. 54). Thus, instead of assigning specific characteristics to autonomous learners, it would be

more realistic to refer to the initial argument in this research about the importance of learning context and culture in defining what learner autonomy is. This would eventually help identify what characteristics should be attributed to autonomous learners in the relevant contexts. In this regard, Benson (2021) noted that relatively little is known about how autonomous learning behaviours work to foster autonomy and how they interact with contextual factors. Overall, the literature suggests that learner autonomy is best understood as the interaction of motivation, cognitive and metacognitive skills, and responsibility. Rather than fixed traits, these characteristics develop in relation to cultural and contextual conditions. This integrated perspective provides the foundation for this study, which investigates how these characteristics of autonomy manifest in the Libyan EFL context.

2.8.2 Approaches Promoting Learner Autonomy

Research on learner autonomy, particularly studies by Benson (2021) and Al-Khasawneh (2024), indicates that learner autonomy is most effectively developed when students are entrusted with greater responsibility for their own learning and are provided with opportunities to make decisions about the learning process (Al-Khasawneh, 2024). Benson (2021) categorises these opportunities into six areas of practice: resource-based, technology-based, learner-based, classroom-based, curriculum-based, and teacher-based approaches, each representing a different way in which responsibility can be shared between teachers and learners.

Resource-based approaches rely on authentic materials, which expose learners to meaningful language beyond textbooks and encourage self-study (Cirocki, 2016). These often overlap with technology-based approaches, since online tools now provide wide access to resources and opportunities for authentic communication with speakers of the language, which may include more collaborative tasks, such as interacting with native speakers, which may encourage learners to engage with more collaborative tasks (Blidi, 2017). Learner-based approaches focus more directly on developing the skills and strategies learners need to take advantage of such opportunities, building confidence and independence (Oxford, 1990).

Classroom-based and curriculum-based approaches shift responsibility further by involving learners in cooperative work and in decisions about learning content and tasks. Activities such as group projects or negotiated syllabi promote interaction and ownership of learning (Chou, 2024). Teacher-based approaches, on the other hand, stress that teachers themselves need training and support to adapt their practices in ways that encourage autonomy (Benson, 2021).

Oxford (2003) adds that all of these practices are shaped by social and cultural contexts, since autonomy develops through interaction with others as much as through individual effort.

Strategy-based instruction and reflective practices, such as portfolios or journals, further support autonomy by equipping learners with tools to set goals and evaluate their performance, helping them to monitor progress and become more independent in managing their learning (El-Badri & Abubaker, 2021). Overall, the literature makes clear that there is no single route to autonomy. Instead, autonomy develops through a combination of approaches, where different methods, ranging from classroom interaction and project work to strategy training and reflective practice, work together to build learners' capacity to take charge of their learning.

2.8.3 Activities Promoting Learner Autonomy

Classroom activities that foster learner autonomy largely depend on learner-centred approaches, and they focus on collaborative work and learner involvement. This section will focus on various suggestions for autonomy-supporting activities within language classrooms and give examples of activities and practices to foster learner autonomy in the language classroom, acknowledged by research studies.

2.8.3.1 Using Assignments and Projects in Promoting Learner Autonomy

Assignments and projects are seen as effective in promoting learner autonomy because they encourage students to make decisions and solve problems (Benson, 2021). Independent projects, for example, allow learners to take charge of their own themes and learning paths, making them highly student-centred (Zainuddin & Saad, 2021). Collaborative projects, on the other hand, stimulate motivation and engagement by requiring learners to work together toward common goals (Beckett & Slater, 2020). More recently, project-based learning has been strongly linked to autonomy and motivation, as it connects classroom tasks with real-world contexts (Hasani et al., 2020).

Projects are usually initiated by the teacher to give students the opportunity to expand their English language skills (Gautam & Sarwar, 2018). Alian and Mohamed (2025) describe independent projects as being focused on themes rather than tasks, which means they can be viewed as extensions of classroom work. Independent projects are highly student-centred, as they require learners to take initiative and make choices without constant teacher direction, which is a key practice that builds autonomy. At the same time, as Beckett and Slater (2020) note, teacher support remains essential to ensure learners are guided but not dependent.

Collaborative projects also play a critical role in fostering autonomy, since learners must negotiate roles and sustain motivation while working together toward shared goals (Chou, 2024). Research shows that project-based learning provides authentic tasks that not only develop language skills but also encourage students to regulate their own learning and reflect on outcomes (Nha, 2009).

Recent studies across different EFL contexts, such as Saudi Arabia (Alian & Mohamed, 2025), Malaysia (Saad, 2024), and Macao (Chou, 2024), confirm that certain types of projects, particularly those that require collaboration and independent decision-making, can support learner autonomy. They improve communication and problem-solving skills, and additionally, they help students gain confidence and self-regulation. These findings are echoed in the Libyan context, where Suwaed (2022) demonstrated that project-based learning helped undergraduate students enhance their English skills and increase awareness of social issues and autonomy. In a related vein, Alburki and Almashrgy (2024) found that Libyan EFL teachers recognise the value of autonomy-supportive teaching and see technology as a useful tool for overcoming contextual challenges that limit learner autonomy, because projects require learners to take responsibility and engage in authentic tasks that mirror real-life communication and problem-solving (Beckett & Slater, 2020).

In a study conducted in India by Imtiaz and Asif (2012), project-based learning was found to improve language skills and develop students into more independent and autonomous learners. The 52 participants in the study were aged from 15 to 18 years old, and they had never completed a project previously. The main results from their study were that learners increased their confidence. Also, the learners felt they had gained skills to become independent learners, such as time management, self-motivation, teamwork, and self-regulation. However, Garib (2023) indicates there were some issues emphasised, especially related to the lack of time and group dynamics. Overall, the literature demonstrates that assignments and projects can foster learner autonomy by combining independence with collaboration, connecting classroom learning to real-world contexts, and equipping learners with both the linguistic and personal skills needed to take responsibility for their learning.

2.8.3.2 Peer Learning and Group Discussions

Social interaction and the social construction of knowledge through collaborative learning also promote active learning and learners' initiative, thereby enhancing autonomous learning (Oxford, 2003). Learners are encouraged to initiate and perform a new function with the

support of the teacher or another group member; this function is then internalised and performed independently (Sinclair, 2009). Chowdhury (2021) found that learning collaboratively helps language students construct knowledge as a joint activity, and this collaborative construction is regarded as an important source of language learning. Little (1996) argues that the development of learner autonomy in language learning depends on internalising the ability to participate fully and critically in social interactions. Therefore, collaborative learning is closely linked to social constructivist epistemology (Khonamri, et al, 2020). Murray (2011) emphasised that, while social interaction is vital, true autonomy also depends on learners' capacity for internal self-regulation and reflection.

In group learning activities, students work in groups to explore ideas and seek understanding or meaning. It marks a shift from individual efforts and traditional learning to group work and interactive learning (Alian & Mohamed, 2025). Alzubi & Ahamad (2024) found that group activities enable undergraduate students to maintain proper work and continuously assess their learning outcomes. Their study showed that students became better at managing their learning and expressing satisfaction with their achievements. But some learners struggled to adapt to a collaborative learning method and required additional teaching. Even though some needed more guidance for certain activities, most students were very pleased with their accomplishments. Mitchell (2023) emphasises that learner autonomy can be effectively fostered through collaborative and project-based approaches, which encourage students to take ownership of their learning and apply language skills in meaningful contexts. Such interactive learning environments not only promote self-regulation and responsibility but also help learners develop confidence and independence through shared problem-solving and reflection. In many ways, this situation can be related to Libyan students, as it is often assumed that Japanese learners, like Arab learners, are passive and wait for knowledge to be transferred from teachers (Alhejaily, 2020).

Research on learner autonomy increasingly recognises the interconnected roles of collaboration, strategy use, and self-regulation in fostering independent learning. Al Jawad (2021), working within the Libyan context, found that collaboration significantly enhanced students' speaking skills and confidence, showing that cooperative learning can create supportive spaces for language use. Similarly, Alzubi et al. (2024) demonstrated that explicit strategy training, such as helping students to plan and evaluate their learning, promotes autonomy when combined with collaborative methods. Their findings suggest that autonomy

develops most effectively when learners engage both cognitively and socially in shared learning environments.

Learning in collaboration becomes effective when there is a focus on the mutual exploration of a subject using social interaction with peers (Wu & Dong, 2024). Learners study in groups to achieve a learning goal, such as an essential problem or a project, and students construct their knowledge by sharing experiences (Zhang, 2012). Students can also participate in activities such as role-playing and task-based activities (Yildiz & Hur, 2020). However, cultural expectations surrounding gender roles in Libyan society may affect students' willingness to participate in mixed-gender group activities (Feng et al., 2023). In more conservative contexts, students, particularly females, may feel uncomfortable collaborating closely with the opposite gender, potentially limiting their engagement and negatively impacting learning outcomes (Carter, 2018).

Collaborative tasks require interaction with others; teachers must ensure there are opportunities for learners to work together, whether through projects or other group activities (Blidi, 2017). Such tasks have been used only in a limited way in Libyan English language teaching classrooms, despite suggestions in the literature that they can promote greater autonomy. According to Gautam and Sarwar (2018), teachers should guide and support learners to reduce any anxiety, which can be achieved by initially involving them in small group tasks that eventually lead to individual projects. These tasks help learners progress towards autonomy.

2.8.3.3 Reflective Learning

Reflective activities are important tools in language learning, as they help students think about their progress and make better decisions about how to improve their learning (Almazrawi, 2014). Dabia (2012) suggested that it is important that learners understand how they can improve their learning experience and reflect on their knowledge. The reflective activity in language learning can be conducted by using such methods as journals or diaries (Haapaniemi & Palojoki, 2021). Writing thoughts and opinions can become a habit that learners are taught, and it is an activity that can lead to learner autonomy. This may take time to develop but this activity can be based on it.

Zimmerman (2000) defined reflective activity as the procedures that the learners take after the learning process, including the ability to conduct their self-evaluation and acknowledgement of their abilities to be adaptive to the learning environment around them.

This allows students to look at areas where they need to improve their learning. There have been studies which advocate learning diaries, as these diaries can help practice reflection (Simard, 2004). Learners are encouraged to write down their thoughts on aspects of language learning and comment on their own learning experiences. (Cleary, 2011). It is more useful if learners write their diaries in English, as this gives them more practice in writing skills (Benson, 2021).

In a study carried out with English language students in a Portuguese context, Costa et al. (2015) introduced a learning diary so that students could be aware of their activities. These also sought to capture changes in students' reflections on their learning. Costa et al. (2015) found in their study that training learners on using a diary as a reflective activity was beneficial, as learners were not used to planning and evaluating their work regularly; these students are more likely to become autonomous learners. These results were in line with other studies that found training in how to reflect on learning experiences helps to increase levels of autonomy (Haapaniemi & Palojoki, 2021). Learning diaries or journals have also been advocated as tasks that help learners become more aware of areas where they need to improve their knowledge (Chetouane, 2022). Teachers should be able to train and encourage students to use those diaries, especially to ensure that they are maintained regularly, as this can also increase motivation (Simard, 2004).

In addition, Hourani (2013) found that student teachers in Abu Dhabi lacked critical and practical reflective skills. Student teachers in traditional contexts may face challenges such as being hesitant to question authority or discuss teaching practices openly. This highlights the need to include clear and culturally appropriate reflective activities in teacher training, such as guided peer collaboration, structured mentoring, and the use of reflective journals or portfolios, which can help student teachers critically evaluate their own practices and, in turn, enable them to foster learner autonomy in their future students (Hourani, 2013). Similarly, Almazrawi (2014) agrees with her study, Almazrawi found that Saudi teachers were highly satisfied with their performance in the classroom, and that reflective practice was not being used to reflect on ways to improve and develop. However, recent studies conducted in Libya have highlighted the growing recognition of reflective practice as a valuable tool in teacher education and language learning. For instance, Abubaker and ElBadri (2022) found that digital storytelling encouraged deeper levels of reflection and critical thinking among Libyan EFL learners. Abubaker and ElBadri (2022) reported that self-reflective worksheets improved

reading comprehension and fostered learner autonomy among EFL students (Abubaker & ElBadri, 2022).

As mentioned above, reflective practice plays an important part in learners' understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and shows them where they can improve. By engaging in reflective activities, learners not only become more aware of their own learning processes but also take greater responsibility for directing them, which is a defining characteristic of learner autonomy (Wu, 2025; Haapaniemi & Palojoki, 2021). It is also essential for teachers to evaluate their teaching in selected areas for their development, and teachers will not be able to help their learners by giving them the time to reflect on their learning if these teachers cannot understand the value of reflective practice (Yancey, 2016).

2.8.3.4 Learning Strategies

Learning strategies are a cornerstone of learner autonomy, as they equip students with the tools to take control of their own learning and gradually reduce dependence on teachers (Chetouane, 2022). Oxford (1990) defined language learning strategies as "specific actions taken by language learners to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations" (p.8), and Oxford considers learning strategies to be signs of autonomy (Oxford, 2003). Liu (2015) indicates that students need to use these strategies if they want to remember information better. Liu's study found that students become more autonomous when they take charge of their own learning. If students use appropriate learning strategies, they also tend to take part in more learning activities, which can help them improve their language skills. These strategies might also lead students to spend more time practising the language, but they might need some guidance to choose the right activities. This perception is supported by a Libyan study by Fadhil and Hamed (2020), which found that learners who used strategies like planning and memory aids had higher readiness for autonomy and better English performance.

Schmitt (1997) considers different types of strategies for approaching the language learning processes, and some of these strategies in turn lead to learner autonomy. These are to be grouped into categories: learning strategies, communication strategies, and social strategies. With cognitive, meta-cognitive, memory, social, and affective strategies, Schmitt's work focuses particularly on vocabulary learning, highlighting that the use of learning strategies is essential for helping learners internalise new words by connecting them to real contexts and retaining them for long-term use. A case study by Al-Araibi (2020) found that students initially

lacked awareness of these strategy categories but demonstrated noticeable improvement once they received explicit instruction, particularly in the use of memory and cognitive strategies, which proved most effective in supporting vocabulary development. Importantly, this suggests that raising learners' awareness of strategies through explicit instruction is a key step toward fostering learner autonomy, as it equips them with the tools to manage and regulate their own vocabulary learning beyond the classroom.

Communication strategies are verbal or non-verbal techniques that help learners to get their message across, even if their linguistic skills are not yet proficient (Hussein, 2018). A study conducted by Rababah and Seedhouse (2004) with Arabic learners explained how different levels of learners transmitted their knowledge effectively. This study found that even learners with low-level skills could transmit comprehensible messages by using communication strategies such as sign, role play, and picture storytelling. These results highlight the importance of communication strategies themselves as tools that enable learners to become less dependent on external support and more capable of expressing meaning independently, thereby promoting learner autonomy. This aligns with findings by Ibrahim and Alhodairy (2023), who reported that Libyan EFL learners benefited from vocabulary learning strategies such as storytelling and peer dialogue, demonstrating how strategy use can simultaneously enhance language learning and foster learner autonomy.

Another important category of learning strategies is social strategies, which involve actively using the language through interaction with others (Sinclair, 2009). This can include seeking opportunities to practise with teachers, peers, or speakers outside the classroom. A student's willingness to use social strategies often depends on having a communicative learning environment that builds confidence in using the language (Hammad, 2018). For instance, research conducted by Elhadi (2024) found that while teachers recognise the value of social strategy use in English language learning, structural barriers such as exam-oriented curricula and limited classroom interaction restrict learners from fully benefiting from these strategies. Social strategies are closely tied to learner autonomy, since they require learners to take initiative in creating or seeking communicative opportunities, which helps them assume responsibility for their own learning development (Alzubi & Ahamad, 2024).

Additionally, metacognitive strategies play a central role in learner autonomy. The metacognitive strategy is a strategy in which learners have the awareness to monitor and manage their learning (Raoofi et al., 2013). However, awareness alone may not ensure effective autonomy unless it is supported by opportunities for reflection and strategic decision-making.

Students being able to select and evaluate the most effective strategy for learning leads to success, and it is also a way of developing learner autonomy (Halabi, 2018). This highlights the dynamic relationship between strategic awareness and the learner's capacity for self-direction.

Cognitive strategies have been found to have a significant association with language proficiency (Chetouane, 2022). Yet, this link is not always straightforward, as learners' use of strategies is shaped by a range of contextual and individual variables. There are many variables that can affect the use of learning strategies. Kulusaklı and Yumru (2020) have found such variables as aptitude, motivation, age and teacher expectations. As Richardson (2004) indicates, it has been identified that learners from different cultural backgrounds tend to select different kinds of strategies. This suggests that strategy choice is not universal but culturally mediated. This was reflected in Ibrahim and Alhodairy (2023) findings, which emphasised that students' previous exposure to rote-based learning, such as memorisation and repetition, made it necessary for teachers to actively guide them toward strategy selection and reflection. This indicates that in contexts shaped by rote-based learning traditions, the move from teacher dependence to autonomy cannot happen naturally; it requires explicit strategy training and structured guidance to help learners develop independent learning habits.

The relationship between the learning strategy used and autonomy is complex and not direct; they both aim to help learners become better learners (Tomasouw & Marantika, 2020). Rather than viewing them as separate constructs, scholars increasingly argue that effective strategy training functions as a catalyst for autonomy. For example, Benson (2021) explains that teaching students how to use learning strategies helps them become more independent. Using these strategies allows learners to work toward their goals more effectively and supports their development of autonomy and self-direction (Alhejaily, 2020). Therefore, it can be considered that the students who use a wide range of strategies for appropriate tasks have a high tendency to autonomous learning (Tomasouw & Marantika, 2020). However, autonomy should not be measured merely by the number of strategies used, but by how critically and flexibly learners apply them across contexts. The more strategies students use, the more they learn to take responsibility for their own learning and become autonomous (Ceylan, 2015).

Learning strategies are the foundation of learner autonomy. When students learn how to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning, they are more able to take control of their progress (Halabi, 2018). In Libya, developing autonomy means not only teaching these strategies but also addressing cultural and institutional barriers that limit learner autonomy. Since traditional

teacher-centred methods are common, explicit strategy instruction can help students move from dependence to autonomy.

2.9 Conclusion

The main purpose of this chapter was to explore the concept of learner autonomy, which involves reviewing its origins, its versions, and its connectedness to culture and to the research setting under which this study is carried out. The literature indicates that learner autonomy is a multidimensional concept shaped by cultural and contextual factors. The literature also involved examining recent studies about learner autonomy in similar contexts to this research. Such works highlighted that there is an emphasis on finding a culturally congruent definition of learner autonomy, limiting research to the field of language learning, focusing on the classroom context, and making assumptions that Libyan culture poses barriers to learner autonomy.

Although this study focuses specifically on Libya, the literature reviewed indicates that similar conditions are found in other post-conflict and socially conservative contexts where education is shaped by both political instability and teacher-directed pedagogies. In such settings, educational disruption and resource shortages often push schools toward rigid, exam-focused practices that undermine learner autonomy, as shown in studies of disrupted education systems (Burns & Lawrie, 2015). Learners who experience interrupted schooling frequently struggle with self-direction and motivation, particularly when their opportunities to participate in decision-making are limited (Bozkurt & Arslan, 2018). At the same time, cultural traditions of teacher authority and rigid curricula reinforce dependency (Farrah et al., 2024), even when teachers express some willingness to involve students (Badrasawi et al., 2018). Libya's situation, shaped by civil war and ongoing instability, aligns closely with these regional patterns where centralised control, teacher dominance, and sociopolitical legacies continue to influence educational practices (Garib, 2023; Rajab, 2018).

Much of the existing research, however, has been conducted in regions outside Libya, with limited attention to the country's distinctive cultural influences. Although studies in comparable contexts such as Vietnam (Nguyen, 2022), Turkey (Kocaman & Cifci, 2018), and Iran (Chen & Liu, 2024) provide useful insights, they cannot fully capture Libya's unique sociocultural dynamics. Even the limited studies available in the Libyan context (Elhadi, 2024; Mustapha & Mahmoud, 2019) do not offer a comprehensive understanding of how autonomy is perceived and enacted. This gap highlights the need for further investigation into how learner

autonomy is understood and promoted in the Libyan context. The need to view learner autonomy from a comprehensive point of view, in other words, within and outside the classroom, learner autonomy should be jointly considered. This research seeks to fill the gaps in existing scholarship by investigating teachers' and students' understandings and practices of learner autonomy in the Libyan context.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses how the research has been conducted and presents the methodology. The target population of this study were those who were involved in teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Libyan public universities. The chapter will explain how data were collected and why particular approaches were selected. This study adopted a mixed-methods data collection approach in two phases. The first phase involved semi-structured interviews with both teachers and students, and data from these interviews were analysed using thematic analysis in NVivo. In the second phase, a questionnaire was distributed to a larger sample, and the data collected from this questionnaire were analysed using statistical methods. Moreover, this chapter will describe and justify the sample selection, present the methods of data analysis employed for the study, discuss issues of trustworthiness (reliability and validity), and address ethical considerations. It also explains how the site of the study was approached and elaborates on the data collection process.

3.2 Research Paradigm and Philosophy

This study adopts a pragmatic paradigm because pragmatism provides the flexibility needed to investigate learner autonomy in the Libyan EFL context. Pragmatism allows the researcher to focus on the research problem itself rather than being restricted to a single philosophical stance (Johnson et al., 2007; Punch, 2014). In the social sciences, complex phenomena such as learner autonomy are difficult to adequately capture through reliance on one method alone, because they involve both teachers' and students' perceptions and their reported practices. Pragmatism, therefore, offers methodological flexibility, enabling the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches as complementary means of inquiry (Creswell, 2022).

From an ontological perspective, this study draws on both relativist and realist assumptions, brought together within a pragmatic framework. A relativist position, associated with interpretivism, underpins the interview phase, where learner autonomy is understood as a socially constructed and context-specific reality shaped by the lived experiences of Libyan EFL teachers and students. At the same time, a realist position, associated with post-positivism, informs the questionnaire phase, where autonomy is treated as a phenomenon that can reveal broader, comparable patterns across participants. To expand on these assumptions, relativism recognises that individuals conduct multiple realities shaped by culture and context

(Creswell, 2022), whereas realism assumes that some shared patterns can still be observed across individuals despite contextual variation (Maxwell, 2012). However, the questionnaire was not used solely for generalisation: it also serves a complementary role, as many of its items were developed directly from the interview findings, thereby extending and illustrating the qualitative themes. This aligns with a pragmatic stance, which prioritises the use of multiple perspectives and methods when they best address the research problem (Morgan,2014). This dual stance was needed because a purely relativist view would miss the common patterns among Libyan EFL teachers and students, while a purely realist view would ignore the unique, context-specific meanings of autonomy in Libyan classrooms.

Epistemologically, this study is mainly based on an interpretivist view, which sees knowledge as being created through the meanings and experiences of participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). This is why the first phase uses interviews, as they provide rich and detailed insights into how teachers and students understand learner autonomy in the Libyan context. At the same time, the study also makes use of quantitative tools in the second phase. The questionnaire was designed mainly from the interview findings and partly from the literature review, which allowed it to both extend and illustrate participants' views and link them to existing research. Integrating both approaches make the findings deeper and more reliable than relying on only one (Cohen et. al, 2018). The mixed-methods approach is further explained below.

This study uses an abductive logic of inquiry, which involves moving between data and theory. Abduction enables the study to reconcile general frameworks with contextual particularities (Ketokivi & Choi, 2014). The study began inductively, using interviews to explore how teachers and students understand learner autonomy in their own context. The interview findings were then used to shape most of the questionnaire items, while additional items were drawn from the literature review to connect the study with wider theoretical perspectives (Appendix K). In this way, the study began to gather participants' views and existing theory, making it possible to explain both the local meanings of autonomy in Libyan EFL classrooms and their relationship to the broader field of learner autonomy research. Taken together, the pragmatic paradigm, interpretivist epistemology, and abductive reasoning provide a coherent foundation for addressing the study's aim: to understand the concept of learner autonomy in Libyan EFL settings and to investigate the factors that influence its development. The combination of qualitative and quantitative strands ensures that the research captures both depth and breadth, linking localised meanings with broader theoretical insights.

3.3 Mixed-Methods Research Approach

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach to capture a variety of perspectives on learner autonomy in the Libyan higher education context, offering both rich individual views and broader, generalisable insights. This is because autonomy is both a subjective concept, shaped by how teachers and students interpret and practise it in their daily classroom experiences, and a broader phenomenon that shows recurring patterns across different groups and institutions (Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2018). One method alone would miss part of this picture, while combining qualitative and quantitative approaches allows both dimensions to be captured (Johnson et al., 2007).

Mixed methods involve elements from a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods. In this study, this meant combining interviews and questionnaires to balance depth and breadth. The interviews offered rich and detailed accounts of participants' perceptions, and the questionnaire was then designed sequentially from these qualitative findings to examine how widespread these themes were among a larger group. This direct application of mixed methods ensured that the chosen approach was tailored specifically to the study's aims (Mackey and Gass's, 2015). For this reason, semi-structured interviews were conducted with EFL teachers and students to capture their interpretations of learner autonomy in their specific context, while the questionnaire helped extend these themes by showing how widely they were shared across a broader sample. Combining both methods in this study, therefore, produced a comprehensive picture of how learner autonomy is conceptualised and practised in Libyan public universities.

This approach also offers the possibility of methodological triangulation, which enhances the credibility of research by looking for validation and correspondence in the research results from the different data collection methods (Creswell& Clark, 20018). In this research, triangulation was achieved by leveraging findings from both semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. The depth explored by the interviews and the breadth provided by the questionnaire helped to strengthen the validity of the findings. As Dörnyei (2007, p. 45) notes, 'words can be used to add meaning to numbers and numbers can be used to add precision to words' (2007, p. 45). The study additionally used triangulation at the level of viewpoints in two ways. First, both the researcher and the participants were involved in the interpretation of findings using member checking (Creswell & Clark, 2018). Additionally, the study considered the perspectives of both teachers and students to gain a thorough understanding of learner autonomy in the Libyan public universities. This made the triangulation in this research both

methodological and perspective, increasing the credibility of the findings (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

3.4 Research Strategy: Sequential Design

This research utilises a sequential mixed-methods design, in which quantitative and qualitative studies are conducted in two separate phases. During each phase, one type of data is collected (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). According to Creswell et al. (2018), two major strategies for a mixed-methods design are acknowledged: sequential and concurrent. A concurrent design was not used in this study because it involves collecting both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time, which works best when both types of data are given equal importance from the start. The study began with qualitative interviews because learner autonomy in Libyan public universities is under-researched, and starting with interviews made it possible to develop an initial understanding of the cultural and institutional realities before designing the questionnaire. In this study, the questionnaire was not intended to generate new themes but to extend the interview findings by showing how widely the identified themes appeared across a larger sample. Therefore, this study used a sequential exploratory design, in which qualitative data collection and analysis were done first to inform the design of the second research instrument.

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), sequential exploratory designs are very useful when little is known (as in this instance around the learner autonomy in the Libyan context) about the phenomenon being studied or when existing measurement tools may not fully capture the perspectives of the target population (Libyan public universities). In phase one, semi-structured interviews were conducted with EFL teachers and students. In phase two, the questionnaire was designed based on both the results from qualitative data and a literature review on learner autonomy. Drawing on the literature review was important because it provided established frameworks and measurement items from EFL contexts (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). This ensured that the questionnaire was both contextually relevant to Libyan universities and connected to the broader field. A critical review of the literature review is as important as the contextual dimension that comes from the interviews because such a design is “effective in improving the content representation of the survey and thus the internal validity of the study” (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010, p. 110). All the results from both phases were integrated to answer the research questions.

3.5 Research Setting

This study included participants from different Libyan public universities. In total, participants came from 17 universities, representing approximately 65% of the 26 public universities in Libya. Teacher participants had experience at the university level. Student participants were enrolled in their first year of university and were taking the English language as a core subject. These inclusion criteria ensured that participants had relevant experience and knowledge related to the study's focus on learner autonomy in the Libyan educational EFL context.

The participants were drawn from across Libya; however, the majority were affiliated with seven universities: Tripoli, Benghazi, Sabha, Bani Walid, Misrata, Az Zawiya, and Gharian. Table 3 provides profiles of these institutions, including their location type, approximate student population and program offerings. The data in Table 3 were compiled from official Libyan university websites

University	Location	Student Population	Key Faculties/Programs
(Tripoli University)	Urban – capital city	Over 47,450 students	Large range including Engineering, Medicine, Sciences, Humanities…
(Benghazi University)	Urban – eastern Libya	Approx. 82,000 undergraduates + 3,000 postgraduates	Wide range across Sciences, Arts, Law, Medicine …
(Sebha University)	Urban - southern Libya	Approx. 19,224students	Large range including Engineering, Medicine, Sciences, Humanities…
(Bani Walid University)	Rural- central Libya	Approx. 4,956 students	Wide range of programs across Sciences, Humanities, Arts, and Law, but no Medicine, Pharmacy, or Dentistry…
(Misrata University)	Urban- coastal Libya	Approx. 22,340 students	Likely offers Engineering, Medicine, Economics …
(Az Zawiya University)	Urban – Western region	Approx. 29,267 students	Wide range across Sciences, Arts, Law, Medicine…
(Gharian University)	Rural- mountainous region	Approx. 9,138 students	Wide range of programs across Sciences, Humanities, Arts, and Law, but no Medicine, Pharmacy, or Dentistry.…

Table 3: Profiles of Participating Universities

Students enrol in a range of subjects, including Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry, Applied Medical Sciences, Social Sciences, Languages, Computer Science, and Engineering. In their first year, all students take English language courses. English is the main medium of instruction in the English language department and the field of medicine, while Arabic is more widely used in non-medical disciplines. Students who are not majoring in English typically receive only two hours of English instruction per week. (Gherwash, 2024).

3.6 Participants

All participants were over 18 years old and directly involved in learning or teaching English at Libyan universities. Students were included if they were in their first year and studying English as a core subject, which is a compulsory course across disciplines. Teachers were included if they had experience teaching English at the university level. In this thesis, the term 'teacher' is used to refer to university lecturers who teach undergraduate students. These criteria ensured that all participants had relevant experience for exploring learner autonomy in the Libyan EFL context.

The study involved two groups: teachers and students. 92.9% teachers were Libyan and native Arabic speakers, with the majority holding Master's or Doctoral degrees and having different levels of teaching experience. The student participants were all first-year undergraduates from universities across Libya, with the largest groups from Tripoli and Benghazi. The gender distribution was 59.3% females and 41.7% males, and students came from a variety of departments, with the largest share in English, followed by Engineering, Social Sciences, Medicine, and other fields. A more detailed breakdown of teachers' and students' demographic characteristics is provided in Chapter 6, where figures and infographics are used to illustrate patterns in relation to the research findings.

Students who were beyond their first year or not taking English as a core subject were excluded, as well as teachers who had no experience teaching at the university level. These exclusion criteria helped ensure that all participants were directly involved in the learning and teaching of English at the university level.

3.7 Sampling

This study employed a purposive sampling strategy with elements of volunteer (self-selection) sampling, implemented across two phases of a sequential mixed-methods design. This combination was chosen because purposive sampling ensured that participants had direct and relevant experience of teaching or learning English at university level, while the volunteer element made it possible to access a wide pool of teachers and students who were willing to participate. This approach was chosen because the research aimed to access participants with direct, relevant experience in university-level English language teaching and learning in Libyan public universities. The volunteer (self-selection) element was introduced because recruitment was done through open advertisements, and participants actively chose to take part. Together,

this combination ensured that the study included those most relevant to the research focus, while also reaching a wide pool of teachers and students who were willing to participate.

Probability or random sampling was not possible because a complete or accessible sampling frame of all Libyan EFL teachers and students does not exist. In Libya, as in many higher education contexts, institutional or national lists of EFL students and teachers are incomplete or inaccessible, making it impractical to draw a truly random sample (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Teachers and students were invited to participate through advertisements posted on university websites and higher education platforms. In the qualitative phase, volunteers who responded were purposively selected according to inclusion criteria; the inclusion criteria ensured that all participants had experience with teaching or learning English in Libyan higher education, making this phase purposive sampling with volunteer participation. In the quantitative phase, a volunteer/self-selection approach was used: all eligible participants who saw the online advertisement could choose to complete the survey. This phase, therefore, combined purposive targeting of EFL teachers and students with volunteer participation, resulting in responses from 17 public universities. All participants received detailed information sheets outlining the study's purpose, ethical considerations, and their right to withdraw. Confidentiality protections are explained in the Ethics section. (see Chapter 3, Ethics Considerations 3.10)

In total, 20 participants took part in the qualitative phase: 10 university teachers and 10 first-year students from four public universities (Tripoli, Gharyan, Sabha, and Bani Walid). The interviewees were selected on a non-probability basis, relying on availability and willingness to participate. In the quantitative phase, 795 participants (309 teachers and 486 students) completed the questionnaire, with the survey link distributed via higher education platforms and university websites.

Teachers were included as they play a central role in fostering learner autonomy. As Stefanou et al. (2004) note, teachers must encourage active language use and provide opportunities for learners to take on various discourse roles, both initiating and responding. Therefore, including both teachers and students allowed the study to explore how autonomy is supported and experienced from both perspectives. This choice of purposive and volunteer/self-selection sampling is consistent with the pragmatic paradigm of the study, which emphasises methodological flexibility and the use of approaches that are most workable in a given context to answer the research questions (Johnson et al., 2007).

3.8 Data Collection Tools

One of the main concerns facing the design of this study was the mechanism for identifying autonomous language learning and whether the researcher would be able to collect valid and reliable data about learners' autonomous learning. Learner autonomy is not often directly observable, as it includes attitudes, self-management, and self-regulation, which may not be clear in classroom behaviours only (Benson, 2021). Thus, the study design focuses on capturing participants' experiences and perceptions through a mixed method, both qualitative and quantitative methods.

3.8.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

This research used semi-structured interviews in phase one. They were chosen because they balance structure with flexibility, making them well-suited to exploring teachers' and students' perspectives in depth while still allowing comparison across participants (Dörnyei, 2007; Creswell & Creswell, 2022). There were three main reasons for their use in this study: first, to address the research questions by eliciting rich accounts of learner autonomy in the Libyan context; second, to gain insight into the challenges and practices shaping autonomy in classrooms; and third, to generate themes that informed the design of the questionnaire.

Semi-structured interviews contain predetermined guiding questions but also allow follow-up questions for clarification and depth (Petty, 2014). This flexibility helps cover key areas while letting participants express their views in their own terms (Dörnyei, 2007). Although interviews are time-consuming and may feel intrusive for some participants, their ability to provide contextualised, detailed insights made them the most appropriate choice for this study (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The following sections provide further details on the semi-structured interviews, including the structure of interviews, design, piloting and analysis.

3.8.1.1 Interview Design

In this study, interview questions were created for both students and teachers to explore the main topics of the research (see Appendix C & D). These included how well participants understood the concept of learner autonomy, what practices and activities were used, and how effective they were. It also explored the characteristics of autonomous learners. In addition, cultural and contextual aspects, such as challenges and limitations, were included as part of the core questions.

At the start of each interview, participants were given a clear overview of the research aims and the general structure of the semi-structured interview (Bernard, 2003). The first questions

are general to encourage interviewees and develop rapport between them and the researcher (Cohen and Morrison, 2018). It began with broad topics to help participants feel comfortable and to build trust between them and me, and during the interviews, the researcher stressed that there were no right or wrong answers or opinions, as Creswell (2018) suggests.

A flexible approach was applied to the interviews. According to Dornyei (2007), the interviewer can ask the same questions to all participants, but not necessarily in the same order or wording. They may also add follow-up questions to explore important topics. The semi-structured interviews were conducted exclusively online via Zoom video calls, each lasting 20–30 minutes. Participants selected either Arabic or English for the interviews, based on their language preference, to ensure cultural and linguistic sensitivity. Participants spoke mainly in Arabic, while a few chose English. Even those who started in English often switched between the two languages. This choice was important to allow participants to express themselves comfortably and accurately, ensuring richer and more reliable data (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

3.8.1.2 Piloting the Interview

Piloting the interviews was used to test the structure and clarity of the questions, as well as to estimate interview duration. The main aim of piloting interviews was to identify potential interview design weaknesses in terms of structure, flow, the best timing, and clarity of language used in formulating questions. According to Richards (2003), piloting the interview allows the researcher to revisit interview questions, as the questions are seen by other parties. I changed some questions that would need adjustments in the main study, particularly when receiving repetitive responses or responses that did not meet research objectives. For example, when many participants gave the same brief answer, I rephrased the question to prompt a more detailed response, and I also clarified items that students found confusing by adding simple examples.

The participants in the pilot study had the same characteristics as the intended sample in the main interview; they were two teachers and two students from Libyan public universities. The pilot interviews were conducted in May 2023 online via Zoom video calls, each lasting 20–30 minutes and were audio/video recorded so that they could be transcribed for analysis.

Minor adjustments were introduced to improve accessibility without changing the research focus. Some questions were reordered to begin with broader prompts that helped ease participants into the discussion. Additionally, neutral follow-up prompts such as “Can you give

an example?" were incorporated more systematically to encourage depth without leading responses as recommended by (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The option to switch between Arabic and English was clarified to support participant comfort. These adaptations, while minor, helped ensure that interviews remained aligned with the approved ethical protocol while improving data richness and participant experience. According to participants, all questions were clear.

3.8.1.3 Conducting the main interview

The full study included 10 university students and 10 English language teachers from four cities in Libya at four public universities: Tripoli University, Gharyan University, Sabha University and Bani Walid University. Teacher participants had experience in teaching English at the university level. Student participants were enrolled in their first year of university and taking the English language as a core subject. These inclusion criteria ensured that participants had relevant experience and knowledge related to the study's focus on learner autonomy in the Libyan educational EFL context. None of the participants was a native English speaker. All participants were over 18 years old. This sample size was considered sufficient for a qualitative study, as methodological literature suggests that between six and twenty interviews are typically adequate to achieve data saturation and capture a diversity of perspectives (Malterud, 2016; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). In this study, conducting 20 interviews provided a wide range of views from both teachers and students, which in turn enhanced the depth and trustworthiness of the qualitative findings. Consistent with qualitative research guidance, thematic saturation was achieved by around 14 interviews (Guest et al, 2006), yet 20 interviews were included to enhance the richness and variation of the findings. Pre-interview Zoom calls helped put the participants at ease with both myself and the research process. I addressed participants' questions and emphasised voluntary participation. Written and verbal consent were obtained. As I am Libyan myself, I was aware of the sociopolitical and educational context in which the study was conducted. However, the teacher and student participants were not previously known to me, ensuring a balance of analytical distance.

The study adopted Richards' (2003) guideline for successful interviewing, emphasising the importance of attentive listening and maintaining focus. To minimise distraction, interviews were audio recorded rather than relying on note-taking. Since the interviews were conducted online via Zoom, the platform's recording feature was used, and in line with Malterud's (2016) recommendation, an external backup device was also employed to avoid data loss. The use of

video enabled the researcher to attend to participants' non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions and eye contact, thereby supporting richer interpretation of responses.

Data collection took place over three months, from June to August 2023, allowing participants enough time to respond and schedule interviews. This online method ensured broad accessibility and allowed for flexible participation across the four cities involved in the study. To ensure accuracy, interview transcripts were shared with participants for verification through member checking.

3.8.1.4 Processing and Analysis of Qualitative Data

A thematic approach was employed in this study to analyse the qualitative data collected through interviews. Thematic analysis was conducted using NVivo software to manage and code the interview transcripts. This method involved identifying patterns to select categories for organising the data. Thematic analysis included multiple readings of the data, breaking up the text into codes. These codes were first identified as initial and focused (Bailey & Bailey, 2017). Codes were continuously refined and grouped into broader categories, which were then organised into overarching themes aligned with the research questions. This research used the six steps identified by Clarke and Braun (2021) for doing thematic analysis: becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, identifying themes, reviewing them, defining and naming them, and finally producing the report. The analysis was not a fixed, step-by-step journey. Instead, it was flexible and recursive, allowing me to move back and forth between the phases as needed, as Clarke and Braun (2021) suggest. The coding process was concluded when thematic saturation was reached, that is, when no new themes, categories, or insights were emerging from the data (Guest et al., 2020). (See Appendix 6)

3.8.2 Questionnaire

In phase two, questionnaire surveys were used to collect data. According to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010), using a questionnaire is flexible and efficient because researchers can get insights from a large population, in different situations, and on various topics. As explained in section 3.6, this research was built on the first phase with EFL teachers and students to ensure sensitivity to the Libyan context and to capture the complexity of their interpretations of learner autonomy. The interview findings were used to design the questionnaire, and the questionnaire then broadened the scope of the data by showing how widely the interview themes were shared across a larger sample.

According to Mackey and Gass (2016), questionnaires also enhance the reliability of research

results; however, in this study, they did not simply "remove bias" from the interviews but rather complemented them. The two data types were treated as interrelated, with the questionnaire providing breadth, while the interviews provided depth and meaning. Questionnaires are also recognised as effective tools for investigating attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). In this study, this refers to beliefs about learner autonomy, which were analysed not as objective facts but as perceptions that gained strength when interpreted alongside the qualitative findings.

This study used an online questionnaire hosted on Qualtrics. Qualtrics was selected over other platforms because it offers stronger data security, advanced design options, and more reliable tools for managing large datasets (Bryman, 2016). Qualtrics was chosen for data collection because online surveys are better suited to Libya's geographic and political context, where vast distances and low population density make paper-based methods impractical, whilst also meeting the University of Strathclyde's ethical standards around data protection. Libya is a vast country, covering approximately 1.76 million square kilometres, making it the fourth largest country in Africa, yet it has a relatively small population of around 7 million people. Its political instability makes paper-based data collection difficult, which strengthens the justification for using an online questionnaire. However, all research instruments have limitations; one of the disadvantages is noted by Mackey and Gass (2016), the questionnaire is the tiredness effect, which affects the validity of the data it provides. This means that participants may give inaccurate answers because they feel bored, which generally happens toward the end of a questionnaire. The study tried to overcome this issue by designing the last section of the questionnaire to the easy demographic data of the participants, as recommended by Hughes et al. (2022).

3.8.2.1 Questionnaire Design

The format of the questionnaire consists of the title, study purpose, consent, instructions, and sections (4 sections). The full version of the teachers' and students' questionnaire can be found in Appendices E and F.

Questionnaire design			
		N of Items	scale
Section 1	Learner autonomy prospects.	5	Five-point Likert scale
	Teachers' & Students' Roles in LA.	8	
	Internal and External Constraints.	11	

Section 2	Learner autonomy enhancement	16	Nominal Yes-Unsure-No
	Language learning enhancement	16	
Section 3	General questions about learner autonomy.	6	Nominal, categorical, and ordinal scales
Section 4	Demographic information	5	Open-ended nominal, categorical, and ordinal scales

Table 4: Questionnaire design

This questionnaire was divided into four sections, covering beliefs about learner autonomy, autonomy-supportive practices, general opinions about autonomy, and demographic information. The design combined Likert-scale items and categorical responses, enabling the collection of both nuanced and generalisable data. This structure ensured that different dimensions of learner autonomy were explored, while also allowing for statistical analysis across a large sample. A summary of the questionnaire structure is presented in Table 4, and the full instrument is provided in Appendix K., which also includes a detailed table outlining the source of each questionnaire item, indicating whether it was derived from Phase One or the literature review, along with the specific reference. The draft questionnaire was reviewed by my supervisors (academic expertise) and two Libyan university teachers (contextual expertise) to ensure clarity and relevance before piloting. After this review, the questionnaire was ready to be piloted with a small sample to further check its clarity and usability.

3.8.2.2 Piloting the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was piloted in September 2023 with 30 teachers and 30 first-year students of English, recruited through university websites and departmental announcements. This group reflected the same characteristics as the main study sample, in line with Creswell's (2022) recommendations. The sample size (n=60) was considered sufficient, as Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) suggest 50–70 participants for statistical significance in social science pilot studies.

The pilot led to several refinements: item 35 was reworded to avoid confusion. The original version, "Language games make learning better," was considered vague by some participants. Therefore, it was revised to: "Language games and informal activities make learning less stressful and more enjoyable,"; Likert scales were rearranged to start with "strongly agree" for easier response. additionally, in section one, the Items about teachers and students' roles were paired together to help the participants decide whether a role belongs to a teacher or a student. In section three, the option "both" was added to question 46 and the option "Unsure" in question 41.

3.8.2.3 Responses to the Main Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered in October 2023. Teachers and students were invited to participate through announcements posted on the university websites and departmental calls, and these participants received clear information about the research study in both Arabic and English. A total of 918 surveys were received from both teachers and students; however, only 795 were included in the analysis, as incomplete responses were excluded in line with Creswell's (2018) recommendation to remove unusable or missing data to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. The study included 309 teacher participants with teaching experience at the university level, and 486 student participants who were enrolled in their first year of university and taking English as a core subject.

3.8.2.4 Processing and Analysis of Quantitative Data

To maintain anonymity, each questionnaire was automatically transferred from Qualtrics into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 28.0, where responses were coded numerically. The data were then cleaned and prepared as an essential step before conducting the analysis.

Following this, the reliability test was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha as part of the preliminary analysis. Reliability contributes to the dependability or consistency of measurement. Cronbach's alpha is the most widely used index for internal consistency (Van Zyl, Neudecker, & Nel, 2000). According to Dörnyei (2007), the minimum acceptable reliability, indicated by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, should not be less than 0.6 in second-language studies. As shown in Table 5 Cronbach's alpha scores ranged from 0.653 to 0.775, indicating strong internal consistency and reliable scales.

Cronbach's alpha for constructs		
Scale	The Cronbach's alpha	N of Items
Learner autonomy prospectives.	0.775	5
Teachers' & Students' Roles in LA.	0.653	8
Internal and External Constraints.	0.749	11
Learner autonomy enhancement	0.759	16
Language learning enhancement	0.723	16

Table 5: Cronbach's alpha for constructs

As shown in Table 6, a range of statistical tests was applied, including Cronbach's alpha to assess reliability, descriptive statistics to report trends and percentages, and inferential methods

such as the Wilcoxon test, one-sample t-test and regression analysis to explore deeper relationships in the data.

Section two of the questionnaire consists of 16 items about autonomy-supportive practices and characteristics. Two questions were asked for each item were ‘Does (the development of) this item enhance learner autonomy?’, and ‘Does (the development of) this item enhance language learning?’. The Two-Tailed t-test was applied because I assumed a difference between the two groups (students and teachers) without specifying the kind of difference in the hypothesis; thus, a non-directional two-tailed hypothesis was used (Mackey & Gass, 2016). Additionally, one of the aims of this research is to investigate what impact attitudes toward learner autonomy may have on language learning as perceived by participants. The study looked to determine if a positive attitude towards learner autonomy was accompanied (affected) by a positive attitude towards language learning. Regression analysis is a tool to examine the effects of the independent variable (learner autonomy) on the dependent variable (language learning) (William, 2016). To collect this information, the correlation and regression tests were used to analyse the data.

Test Name	Purpose	Rationale
Cronbach’s Alpha	To ensure the internal consistency of questionnaire responses.	Measures the reliability of multi-item Likert-type scales, confirming that items measure the same underlying construct.
Descriptive Statistics (Percentages)	To summarise participants' responses and present overall trends in beliefs, practices, and demographics.	Useful for interpreting ordinal and categorical survey data; provides clear summaries of distribution.
One-Sample T-Test	To determine whether participants’ attitudes toward learner autonomy are significantly positive.	Assesses if the sample mean differs from a known or hypothesised value.
Two-Tailed T-Test	To compare attitudes toward learner autonomy between teachers and students.	Suitable for comparing the means of two independent groups.
Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test	To compare matched responses (e.g., beliefs vs. practices) within the same group.	It is used in the second section, a test used for ordinal data.
Correlation Analysis	To measure the relationship between learner autonomy and language learning.	Assesses the strength and direction of association between two variables.
Regression Analysis	To evaluate the impact of learner autonomy on language learning	Explores predictive or causal relationships, identifying the influence of independent variables

outcomes.	on a dependent outcome.

Table 6: Statistical Tests Used in Data Analysis

3.9 Issues of Reliability and Dependability, Validity and Trustworthiness

In this study, reliability and validity were defined in relation to the mixed-methods design. Reliability/dependability refers to ensuring that the findings are consistent and stable across both phases (Greene & Hall, 2010). while validity/trustworthiness refers to ensuring that the data accurately reflect participants' perspectives and the Libyan EFL context. According to Phakiti and Paltridge (2015), reliability in quantitative research refers to the consistency in measuring something of interest and is usually linked with research instruments. In qualitative research, an equivalent concept is dependability, which refers to the stability of findings over time and conditions. Similarly, while the term validity in quantitative research refers to whether findings measure what they intend to measure, in qualitative research, this is often expressed as trustworthiness, the extent to which we can trust that the researcher's interpretations genuinely represent participants' perspectives (Phakiti & Paltridge, 2015). Reliability, dependability, validity, and trustworthiness were operationalised through the specific procedures used in both phases of data collection, ensuring that each method strengthened the other and enhanced the credibility of the overall mixed-methods design.

To ensure dependability and trustworthiness in the qualitative phase, several strategies were applied. The semi-structured interview was first piloted with a group of students and teachers, and their feedback was used to refine ambiguous or unclear items. Triangulation was achieved by using the questionnaire to extend and illustrate the qualitative findings, showing how widely the interview themes appeared across the larger sample. Member checking was carried out by sharing summaries of interview data with participants to confirm the accuracy of interpretations. Peer debriefing took place through regular discussions of emerging codes and themes with my supervisors, which reduced potential researcher bias. In addition, a detailed audit trail was maintained to ensure transparency in how data moved from raw transcripts to final themes. Using NVivo, transcripts were systematically imported and coded, and decisions were recorded through memos and annotations.

For the quantitative phase, reliability and validity were addressed through piloting and statistical checks. The questionnaire was first piloted with a group of students and teachers, and their feedback was used to refine ambiguous or unclear items. Internal consistency was then tested using Cronbach's alpha, which produced acceptable reliability coefficients, ensuring that the instrument consistently measured the intended constructs. Content and construct validity

were supported by using the qualitative findings and the literature review to inform item development, ensuring that the instrument was grounded both in participants' perspectives and in established theoretical frameworks. In this way, the quantitative phase was directly built on and validated, and the qualitative insights reinforced the robustness of the findings. Taken together, these strategies ensured that the findings of the mixed-methods research were both reliable/dependable and valid/trustworthy.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

This study received full ethical approval from the University of Strathclyde's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee. As Wellington (2015) stresses, "ethical concerns should be at the forefront of any research project and should continue through to the write-up and dissemination stages" (p. 4). Following Creswell and Creswell (2022), careful attention to ethical procedures was essential for ensuring the credibility and reliability of the research. All research activities complied with the institution's ethical guidelines and were GDPR-compliant. Teachers and students were provided with information sheets detailing the study's purpose, confidentiality protections (e.g., anonymised codes like TE1, Student Omer, and pseudonyms), and their right to withdraw at any stage. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants. The participation was voluntary, and efforts were made to build trust by answering questions and reassuring participants about the secure handling of their information. Both phases of the study followed the same principles of voluntary informed consent and secure data storage. These ethical procedures ensured that participants' rights were respected throughout and that the study followed the principles of responsible and ethical research.

3.11 Chapter Summary

Chapter Three outlined the methodology of the study, starting with the selection of pragmatism as the research paradigm for this. It then explained the sequential explanatory mixed methods design and provided the rationale for this methodological choice. Building on this, the chapter elaborated on the two phases of the research, detailing the sample, instruments, data collection procedures, and analysis. Both phases complemented each other, about teachers' and students' beliefs about and practices of autonomous learning within the Libyan university context. The remainder of the chapter addressed issues of reliability and dependability, validity and trustworthiness, along with ethical considerations related to the research. Chapters Four and Five will present the findings derived from phase one, and Chapter Six will present the findings derived from phase two.

Chapter Four: Qualitative Data Analysis-Students' Results

4.1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 3, the first element of this study consisted of semi-structured interviews, which aimed to qualitatively investigate how teachers and students in Libyan universities comprehend and interpret learner autonomy. The study included 20 interviews with ten EFL teachers and ten EFL students to give rich data about learner autonomy in the current context. This phase informed the development of the subsequent quantitative questionnaire. The qualitative results of the interviews are presented in this chapter according to emerging themes. The following themes are covered in this chapter: technical, psychological, sociocultural and political perspectives on learner autonomy; the significance of learner autonomy; the factors that promote and hinder its growth; students' participation in learning choices; and the roles that teachers and students play in learner autonomy development. The chapter will then highlight how teachers' and students' perceptions of learner autonomy differ from one another.

The results from the student interviews indicate that students' beliefs about learner autonomy represented Benson's (1997) and Oxford's (2003) four main perspectives of learner autonomy, namely, the technical, psychological, sociocultural and political perspectives, in addition to Oxford's sociocultural beliefs. Libyan students believed that these perspectives were not separate, but rather complex and interconnected. While the themes were derived from the participants' responses, their interpretation was guided by Benson's (1997) and Oxford's (2003) four main perspectives on learner autonomy. The results are presented under these themes for clarity, but this does not imply that the themes were separate in the beliefs of Libyan students. This section also explores the factors that students identified as promoting or hindering learner autonomy in the Libyan context, both in terms of learning practices and personal characteristics.

4.2 Student's Demographic Information

The interview participants were first-year Libyan public university students who were enrolled in English as a core subject, as shown in Table 7. These demographic characteristics are important in interpreting the findings. The diversity of academic backgrounds provides insight into how learner autonomy is perceived not only by English language majors but also by students in other disciplines, which helps highlight differences in motivation, exposure to English, and opportunities for autonomous learning. In addition, as first-year students, the participants have recently transitioned from secondary school to university. This means their

perceptions of learner autonomy are informed by experiences in both contexts, allowing for a richer understanding of how previous schooling influences their expectations and practices in the university setting

Table 7 shows the demographics of student interview participants			
Participant Pseudonym	ID	University	Field of Study
Student Lina	Student	Sabha University	English Language
Student Omer	Student	Bani Walid University	Engineering
Student Amal	Student	Tripoli University	English Language
Student Maha	Student	Tripoli University	Engineering
Student Daniel	Student	Tripoli University	Political science
Student Amir	Student	Gharyan University	English Language
Student Linda	Student	Bani Walid University	English Language
Student Ahmed	Student	Gharyan University	English Language
Student Maya	Student	Tripoli University	Medicine
Student Ruby	Student	Sabha University	Psychology

Table 7: Shows the demographics of student interview participants.

4.3 The Meaning of Learner Autonomy

This section addresses the first research question, focusing on students' perspectives on learner autonomy. Participants were initially asked to define learner autonomy and explain whether they considered it important in language learning. The goal was to link their definitions to their views on how well autonomous learning is fostered in their current environment. The results indicated that the students were aware of the concept of learner autonomy, but there were conflicting beliefs regarding how they understood it. Table 8 below shows that the participants were familiar with the term learner autonomy. They often associated it with related concepts such as independent learning, freedom, self-study, self-reliance, and some participants also linked it to students' rights within the learning process. Their views on learner autonomy reflected a mixture of Benson's (1997) and Oxford's (2003) main perspectives: technical, psychological, political and socio-cultural. Students' beliefs reflected that these perspectives were not separate, but rather interconnected. In this chapter, the analysis will start with the political perspective, move to the psychological viewpoint, and end with the technical and sociocultural perspectives. Table 8 presents various perspectives on learner autonomy based on students' quotations, which will be further explored below.

Perspective	Participant Pseudonym	Definition	Quotation
Political	Student Amal	Autonomy as a right	"Autonomy is all about having the right to make our own decisions... We want to be independent, but that doesn't mean total freedom..."
	Student Daniel	Learner autonomy as political freedom and democracy	"Before, under the dictatorship, education was all about control... Now that Libya is moving towards democracy, we should have the right to shape our

			own education."
	Student Ruby	Learning freely without constraints	"Learner autonomy is about learning freely without constraints."
	Student Linda	Autonomy and Community Engagement	"By being dedicated, working hard, engaging in discussions, and interacting with my community, I improve myself and grow my passion."
	Student Omer	Autonomy for Social and National Development	"If students have the freedom to think critically, we can help rebuild Libya. Educational reform is key to our future."
Psychological	Student Maha	Autonomy as self-motivation in learning	"An autonomous learner takes charge of their own learning... No one can force you to learn if you don't want to..."
	Student Lina	Self-assessment and reflection for learning improvement	"Confidence is key to learning... Errors are a normal part of the process... Recognising strengths and weaknesses helps me improve."
	Student Daniel	Resilience and overcoming challenges in learning	"Autonomous learners don't let anything stop them... they are driven."
	Student Ahmed	Self-reflection as a strategy for learning	"I jot down things I didn't get... figure out why I was distracted... then try to fix those problems."
Technical	Student Linda	Using technology to take responsibility for learning	"Learner autonomy means using technology... language apps, websites, and online videos... instead of depending only on the teacher."
	Student Ruby	Organising and summarising knowledge to support learning	" Learner autonomy is something like being able to work alone, it is when a student organises ideas, writes down key points... and summarises lessons clearly."
Sociocultural	Student Omer	Learning through social interactions outside the classroom	"Learner autonomy is the ability to use the language outside the classroom... I practice with Nigerian workers near my home..."
	Student Lina	Cultural norms limiting autonomy due to teacher control	"Being an autonomous learner in our culture is not very acceptable... teachers are usually strict and formal."
	Student Amir	Cultural norms and teacher authority restricting autonomy	"Our culture gives teachers full authority... I cannot be autonomous in a system where teachers have total control."
	Student Maya	Comparison with Western education systems	"Learner autonomy exists in Western societies... but here, the teacher talks, and we listen."

Table 8: Student Statements on Autonomy in Learning

4.3.1 Political Perspectives on Learner Autonomy

The student participants demonstrated a strong belief in the political perspective of learner autonomy, viewing it as both a human right and a fundamental aspect of education. Benson (1997) highlights the political dimension of learner autonomy by emphasising learners' rights within society and their ability to participate in decision-making processes about their education. Students perceived themselves as playing a crucial role in making educational decisions. This belief was expressed in various ways. Amal describes autonomy as the right to express thoughts and opinions, making it a personal matter. 50% of interviewees echoed this

view, considering autonomy an integral part of their learning experience. Amal explained that learner autonomy:

> …is all about having the right to make our own decisions and not be controlled by teachers. A lot of students my age are really independent and care about having freedom. It's our right. We want to be independent, but that doesn't mean we want total freedom to do whatever we want. We're responsible, and we know our limits.

This student identified that the boundaries around autonomy are shaped by cultural and institutional norms, where teachers hold authority and students are expected to follow their lead. The quotes highlight that while such norms are deeply embedded, students like Amal express a desire for more shared responsibility, signalling a tension between traditional expectations and emerging views of learner independence.

Beyond personal responsibility, five out of ten students connected learner autonomy to Libya's ongoing political transformation. Their understanding of autonomy is shaped by their lived experience of regime change from an authoritarian system that restricted freedom to a democracy. This shift has influenced their expectations for education. For example, Daniel believes that the right to choose how and what to learn reflects the broader fight for political rights. He emphasised this connection, stating that just as people fight for political freedom, students should also fight for academic freedom.

> For me, learner autonomy is all about political freedom. Before, under the dictatorship, education was all about control, with no room for questioning anything. Now that Libya is moving towards democracy, we as students should have the right to shape our own education. Just like people fight for their political rights, students should fight for academic freedom, too. We should be able to choose what we study and learn in a way that makes us independent thinkers.

Students were reminded that Libya's transition to political freedom also brought conflict, as seen in the civil war. This raised the question of whether similar risks apply to education. Could greater autonomy, if not well managed, lead to instability? In the same way, if educational autonomy lacks a clear structure, too much freedom might result in disorder. I asked Daniel whether:

> Libya's transition from dictatorship to democracy has come at a heavy price. The consequence of this regime change is the ongoing civil war. Could a shift towards more autonomy in education also have unintended consequences? If students are given full

> control over their learning without clear structures, would the system risk becoming chaotic?

In response, Daniel acknowledged both the benefits and risks of autonomy:

> …of course, I know that freedom comes with consequences. We can see that in Libya right now, the civil war is a consequence of the struggle for freedom. And I do believe that too much autonomy in learning could bring its own challenges. If there are no clear guidelines, some students might not take responsibility, and the system could become chaotic. But at the same time, autonomy has great advantages; it gives us a chance to have a say in what we learn and how we learn it. Just like in a democracy where we vote and make our voices heard, we should also have a voice in our education. When we're part of the process, we feel more connected, more responsible, we stop being just passive followers and start becoming active, engaged learners.

This perspective on learner autonomy reflects a broader understanding of education as a way of empowerment rather than control. By linking academic freedom to democratic principles, Daniel suggests that autonomy is not just about individual responsibility but also about active involvement in shaping one's learning environment. The comparison to voting highlights the belief that students should have a voice in their education, as people do in a democracy. However, he also acknowledges the potential risks of unrestricted freedom and recognises the need for balance between autonomy and structure.

While Daniel and Amal see autonomy as a mix of freedom and responsibility, others see it as complete freedom. For example, Ruby said, "Learner autonomy is about learning freely without constraints." Ruby thinks autonomy means being fully independent from teachers or school rules; however, this idea raises questions about how realistic significantly more freedom is in Libyan education. Overall, student participants demonstrated a strong belief in the political perspective of learner autonomy, viewing it as both a human right and a fundamental aspect of education.

4.3.2 Psychological Perspectives on Learner Autonomy

Unlike the political perspective, which focuses on external systems and structures, the psychological view emphasises individual traits and internal motivation (Benson, 2021). As highlighted earlier in this section, student participants also expressed a strong belief in the psychological perspective alongside the political one. For example, Maha described an autonomous learner as someone self-motivated, particularly in language learning. This means

that the desire to learn comes from within, rather than from external factors. Maha further explained that motivation plays a key role in language learning, making the learning process more enjoyable and effective:

> …an autonomous learner is someone who takes control of their own learning because they truly want to. You cannot be forced to learn a language if you are not interested, but when you are motivated, it feels easier and even fun. These days, English is not just for school; it is everywhere on TV, on social media and at global events. I use all kinds of resources to learn English, and I see myself as an autonomous learner because my motivation comes from inside, just like it does in other things I enjoy learning.

Maha's statement highlights the belief that learner autonomy is closely tied to intrinsic motivation, as students take responsibility for their own learning based on personal interest and the perceived usefulness of the language in different aspects of life.

Another example of the psychological perspective relates to self-assessment. For instance, Lina emphasised that self-assessment not only allows students to evaluate their own progress, but it also helps reduce stress and enhances confidence.

> I believe that confidence is key to independent learning. The more confidence I have, the better I understand my abilities. Errors are a normal part of the learning process, and recognising both strengths and weaknesses allows me to build on what I do well and improve where I struggle. This approach helps me manage stress while learning.

Lina's statement illustrates how self-confidence plays a crucial role in learner autonomy. By acknowledging both strengths and weaknesses, students develop resilience and take ownership of their learning through self-assessment, which aligns with the psychological aspects of autonomous learning.

Daniel linked learning to resilience, stating that, "autonomous learners don't let anything stop them; I mean no barriers will stop them, they are driven." Daniel's comment reflects a psychological view of autonomy as resilience: he sees autonomous learners as driven and able to persist despite barriers. This suggests that for him, autonomy is not only about studying independently but also about having the resilience to continue learning when challenges arise – a potential connection between his comments on the political perspective and this psychological one.

Another example of a psychological perspective in students' beliefs was articulated in students' practices of self-reflection in their learning. For instance, Ahmed defined learner autonomy

simply as “independent study.” However, when asked to elaborate, he provided a more detailed explanation connected to reflective practices.

> The ability to learn by oneself, I'll explain with an example. I jot down things I didn't get from the lesson and figure out why I was distracted or just not paying attention. Then I try to fix those problems. I don't do it every week, but when I do, it helps.

This shows how Ahmed connected the idea of learner autonomy to the process of reflecting on their own learning. To gauge students’ thoughts on the psychological view, they were asked whether they are encouraged to engage in self-reflection as part of their learning process in classrooms. Understanding their exposure to reflective practices helps assess how well current educational approaches support the development of learner autonomy and critical thinking skills. Nine out of ten students stated they did not remember participating in reflective activities in classrooms. However, one student, Lina, provided an example of a reflective activity they used in the classroom and emphasised its helpfulness. She referred to the K-W-L strategy (– Know – Want to Know – Want to Learn) as a reflective tool in learning. The K-W-L strategy is a metacognitive framework that helps learners activate prior knowledge, set goals, and reflect on new learning (Sari et al., 2023). As Lina explained, "We use the K-W-L strategy, called the 'learning schedule,' in class. We fill in the 'what have you learned?' section as a team." Then I asked whether she thought it was helpful, she replied:

> Yeah, it really helps. I figure out what I didn't know before, what I got from the lesson, and where I'm weak. That third column? That's where I see what I'm good at and what I need to work on more.

Lina's use of K-W-L shows that reflective tools can promote metacognition and shared learning. Her detailed response highlights the activity's role in fostering self-awareness and identifying learning gaps. However, the rarity of such examples in the data set indicates a lack of consistent psychological support for reflective practices in Libyan classrooms. In summary, the psychological perspective shows that Libyan students view autonomy as an internal process driven by motivation, confidence, resilience, and self-reflection. These traits help learners take control of their own learning (Hu & Zhang, 2017). While reflective practices are valued, they were not reported as widely used in classrooms. This sets the stage for the technical perspective, where I examine the tools and strategies that support or hinder these internal capacities.

4.3.3 Technical Perspectives of Learner Autonomy

The technical perspective emphasises that learner autonomy is focused mainly on using resources and learning techniques effectively to support students to be autonomous (Borg and Al Busaidi 2012). The results showed that the technical view was less evident than the political and psychological views in students' beliefs. Evidence of this view was shown in students' responses to a question on how they define learner autonomy. Linda defined learner autonomy from a technical perspective as follows:

> Learner autonomy means taking charge of your own learning by using different technological tools like language apps, websites, language games and online videos. Instead of depending only on the teacher, an autonomous learner searches for useful resources and finds new ways to improve their skills. Technology makes learning easier because you can study anytime and anywhere.

Based on Linda's quotation, learner autonomy is about students taking responsibility for their own learning process instead of relying completely on their teachers, specifically through seeking out and using resources. The quotation shows that technology played a key role in helping this learner become more independent through digital resources like apps and websites.

Another student explained the autonomous learner from a technical perspective through summarising techniques. Ruby highlighted that an important aspect of learner autonomy is the ability to organise and simplify information effectively.

> Learner autonomy is something like being able to work alone; it is when a student can organise ideas from a lecture, write down the important points, translate new words and summarise the lesson in a way that is clear and easy for all students to understand.
>
> Researcher: That sounds interesting. Can you give me an example?
>
> Ruby: Yes! During the war, when students had to stay home and could not attend classes, there was one student who took the initiative to summarise the lessons in a clear and organised way. His notes were even easier to understand than the teacher's explanations. He shared them with all the students, helping everyone continue their learning despite the difficult situation. For me, that student is a great example of an autonomous learner because he did not wait for the teacher, he took responsibility for his own learning and supported others as well.

Ruby demonstrated learner autonomy by organising information and summarising lessons clearly, making learning easier for others. Furthermore, this example underscores the critical role of learner autonomy during times of hardship, such as war, when conventional learning environments are disrupted. The ability of students to direct their own learning and support their peers becomes essential in ensuring continued education. This highlights that autonomy is not just a skill for academic success but also an essential factor for maintaining resilience in challenging circumstances.

4.3.4 Sociocultural Perspectives on Learner Autonomy

The discussion now moves to explore the sociocultural perspective of learner autonomy in students' beliefs. The sociocultural perspective emphasises the role of social interaction and cultural context in learning, which is crucial for developing learner autonomy (Yasmin & Sohail, 2018). This perspective suggests that language learning is not solely an individual cognitive process but also a socially mediated activity (Oxford, 2003).

Building on this, students frequently referred to the sociocultural perspective when discussing the challenges to learner autonomy. However, when defining what learner autonomy means, this perspective was not as strongly emphasised, except by the following four students, who will be quoted below. Despite the limited use of English outside the classroom in Libya, some students still highlighted the importance of social interaction in fostering learner autonomy. They recognised that engaging in conversations beyond the classroom setting contributes significantly to their language development. They believe that an autonomous learner is someone who can use the language in real-life interactions outside the classroom, often through friendships with people from different cultural backgrounds. Omer explained: "I think learner autonomy is the ability to use the language outside of the classroom and interact with people from other nationalities." When I asked him to explain, he shared a personal experience that illustrates this perspective in practice:

> I feel I am an autonomous learner. My English is much better than the rest of my class. I live near a car repair shop where the workers are from Nigeria, and their first language is English. Every afternoon, I go there to chat with them. We have become friends, and through our conversations, I have learned a lot about Nigerian culture, food, and traditions. This experience has greatly improved my English skills.

Omer highlighted that real-life social interactions play a key role in language learning, emphasising that learner autonomy is strongly connected to social and cultural engagement.

Moreover, when students describe what learner autonomy means to them, their sociocultural beliefs shape their understanding of autonomy. For example, Lina stated, "I think being an autonomous learner in our culture is not very acceptable because teachers are usually strict and formal with students." Lina's view indicates that in a rigid classroom environment, where teachers have strict authority, students may feel discouraged from enacting autonomy in their own learning. In addition, another student agreed that autonomy and independent learning are not encouraged in Libya. Instead, they felt completely dependent on their teachers. Amir explained how culture reinforces this, saying, "Our culture gives teachers full authority over teaching and learning, so I cannot be autonomous in a system where teachers have total control and are seen as always knowing best." His quote shows how cultural beliefs create a strict teacher-student hierarchy and making it difficult for students to develop autonomy in their learning. He indicated that the strong authority of teachers restricts students' ability to explore new learning methods or make independent decisions about their learning.

This cultural limitation becomes even more evident when students compare their own learning experiences with their perception of how learning takes place in other countries, even though these perceptions are not based on direct experience. Maya compared Libya with Western countries, stating that while people in the West are perceived to have complete freedom, in Libya, people in power have strict control over others. According to Maya, the education system does not support learner autonomy because it is not part of Libyan culture, stating that, "Learner autonomy is to learn independently, this kind of learning may you find it in Western societies but unfortunately, in middle east society, we only know one way of learning: the teacher talks, and we listen." This quote highlights the idea that Libyan classrooms emphasise passive learning, where students are expected to listen rather than think independently or take control of their learning. The use of "unfortunately" in Maya's statement suggests that she sees learner autonomy as beneficial and recognise its positive impact on learning. This implies that despite the limitations imposed by the education system and cultural norms, students are aware of the importance of autonomous learning and may want more opportunities to develop autonomy.

In addition to cultural limitations, three out of ten students also expressed how learner autonomy connects to broader social development. Linda was asked about the motivation to become more autonomous. Linda highlighted the importance of participation in both the classroom and society, saying that: "By being dedicated, working hard, engaging in discussions, and interacting with my community, I improve myself and grow my passion."

Linda's response illustrates how autonomy, in this study, was understood not only as individual learning but also as active participation in a community. This perspective among participants provides a bridge to the next section, which examines whether they view autonomy as a learnable skill or an innate characteristic.

4.4 Nature of Learner Autonomy: Learnable Skill or Innate Characteristics?

This section explains students' opinions regarding the nature of learner autonomy. Participants were asked whether they view learner autonomy as a skill that can be developed or as an innate characteristic. If students consider learner autonomy as innate, they may not actively work on developing autonomous learning strategies, and this may hypothetically lead to a passive learning approach (Halabi,2018). However, if it is considered a skill, students may be seeking ways to engage actively in activities that foster autonomy (Benson, 2011).

This question brought varied responses from university students. Their beliefs reflected a mix of experiences about how they learn. Three out of ten students believed that learner autonomy is an innate characteristic. They believed that certain students naturally show qualities like self-motivation, confidence, leadership and the ability to take responsibility. As Omer said, "I think some students are just born with the ability to take charge of their own learning. They don't need external motivation; they just know what to do and how to do it." This student's perspective suggests that, for some people, self-directed learning comes effortlessly. They may feel naturally inclined to set goals and manage their own studies without external support.

Similarly, Daniel shared: "Well, yeah, I think it comes naturally to some people. They just have a mindset that helps them stay motivated and take responsibility without needing guidance." This response highlights the idea that believing in independence in learning is tied to personality traits. Daniel considers motivation and responsibility in autonomy as qualities a person either has or does not possess, rather than something that can be developed.

Ahmed also stated that: "Some students just seem to have a natural drive to learn independently. Even in group work, they take charge and don't rely on others for guidance." This student's experience points to a pattern in group settings, where certain students naturally assume leadership roles and take responsibility for their own learning.

However, the other seven students believed that learner autonomy is a skill that can be developed through practice and experience. They believe that with time and effort, anyone can become an autonomous learner. Linda explained, "I believe autonomy is something that develops with experience. When I was in high school, I depended a lot on teachers, but now, I

see that I can take charge of my learning." When I asked her to elaborate, she provided a more detailed explanation connected to how personal growth and exposure to new learning environments can foster autonomy, saying that: "When I started university, I struggled with managing my learning. But as I gained more experience and worked on organising my studies, I became better at it. So, I believe it's a skill that anyone can learn." Her experience highlights the idea that learner autonomy strengthens over time with effort and practice.

Adding to this idea, Ruby reflected on a challenging period that contributed to the growth of learner autonomy among some students:

> I remember during the civil war, my school closed for more than a month, and it was during my final exams. I had no choice but to study on my own, and that experience made me realise that autonomy is something you can develop when needed. To be honest, at the beginning, I found it really difficult to study alone, but over time, I became more confident in learning on my own.

Ruby's experience illustrates how difficult circumstances can push individuals to develop self-directed learning skills, proving that autonomy can emerge when necessary. Likewise, Maha recalled a similar situation:

> During the COVID-19 pandemic, schools were closed, and private courses were also banned, leaving me with no choice but to study on my own or risk falling behind. Initially, I sought help from my brother, but after an argument with him, I came to believe that I needed to take responsibility for my own learning. I figured out how to plan my studies and keep myself motivated. That experience taught me that learner autonomy is something that can be developed.

Maha's statement further supports the idea that external challenges can lead to the development of autonomous learning skills, emphasising the role of adaptation in fostering autonomy. Overall, while three out of ten student participants believe learner autonomy is something people are born with, seven out of ten students think it can be learned. These mixed views suggest that learner autonomy is not simply considered something you are born with or entirely learn over time; it seems to grow through a combination of personal traits and life experiences. This highlights the importance of giving students the right support and opportunities to build autonomy gradually, rather than expecting it to be already present.

4.5 Importance of Learner Autonomy

Students generally agreed that learner autonomy is important in language learning. Eight out of ten students emphasised both academic and psychological benefits of learner autonomy. Additionally, they mentioned that learner autonomy becomes even more essential in the absence of direct teaching, such as during school closures or when resources are hard to access. For example, Amal described how taking responsibility helped her develop useful skills such as finding resources and practising with others. Similarly, Ahmed felt that autonomy encouraged him to "learn more effectively" because it pushed him to take ownership of his progress.

Another key theme was motivation and persistence. Maha believed that when learners take charge of their own study, "we become more committed to learning." Daniel echoed this, stressing that "learning a language shouldn't stop when class ends," highlighting how autonomy supports continuous effort beyond formal instruction. At the same time, students also acknowledged the continued role of teacher support. For instance, Omer admitted that while independent learning is important, he struggled with "access to appropriate resources" and still relied on teachers for guidance. Likewise, Ruby reflected that autonomy was particularly necessary during "challenging times when school closures" disrupted normal teaching, but implied that teacher input remained important.

Taken together, these responses show that students in this study valued learner autonomy for fostering motivation, confidence, and responsibility, while also recognising that teacher guidance remains essential to provide structure and resources. They emphasised that taking responsibility for their own learning keeps them engaged and motivated. A full list of student responses is provided in Appendix L. While students highlighted autonomy's importance, they also pointed to teachers' support as crucial, a theme discussed further below.

4.6 Teachers' and Students' Roles in Developing Learner Autonomy in Classrooms

Students were further asked whether learner autonomy was related to them or to their teachers, and whose role is more important in developing learners' autonomy to identify how they perceived their roles and responsibilities towards learner autonomy. Eight out of ten students viewed learner autonomy as a shared responsibility between students and teachers. However, they emphasised that the teacher plays a more significant role, particularly in the psychological aspects of motivation and assessment. Beyond serving as a source of support, teachers help scaffold learning activities and provide constructive feedback to guide students' progress.

While students acknowledged the teacher's role as central, they also highlighted their own active participation in the learning process. These students recognised their own responsibility in fostering learner autonomy by actively seeking out resources to improve their English skills. For instance, Amir highlighted the complementary roles of both the teacher and the student:

> Both the teacher and the student have important roles when it comes to developing learner autonomy in the classroom. The teacher plays a big part by guiding students and giving feedback. They support and motivate students to become more independent. But it's not all up to the teacher; students also need to take responsibility.

This response indicates that while the teacher is seen as a key figure in guiding and motivating students by this participant, there is also recognition that students must take responsibility for their own learning process. Similarly, Linda expressed a more balanced view, acknowledging the supportive role of the teacher while emphasising the student's willingness to learn:

> Both have an important part to play. Teachers help a lot by creating a good learning environment and showing us how to use different tools and resources. They also keep us motivated. But it's not just up to the teacher. Students have to take part too, like being ready to learn, asking questions, and trying things on their own. It's really a team effort.

Linda sees the teacher as a facilitator who provides a conducive environment, while students need to demonstrate a willingness to learn. This balanced view reflects the complexity of developing learner autonomy, where it is recognised that both teacher support and student initiative are necessary. It also highlights that while students may expect guidance, they are aware that successful autonomous learning ultimately depends on their willingness to take responsibility. A similar view was shared by Daniel, who saw both the student and teacher playing roles in developing learner autonomy, but he leaned more toward the student's responsibility.

> I think both the teacher and the student have a role, but for me, it's more about pushing myself to become an autonomous learner. Still, my teacher's support really helps. For example, if a student is shy and doesn't like to speak, the teacher can encourage them to join in and share their ideas. Being an autonomous learner means being independent, but that doesn't mean we can do everything on our own. Teachers need to understand that students are different; some of us need more support or a confidence boost to take charge of our learning. Without that support, it can be hard for some students to become fully independent.

Daniel's response shows that while they believe learner autonomy is mainly about students taking responsibility for their own learning, they still see the teacher's support as valuable. By saying, "My teacher's support really helps," he acknowledged that the teacher's role is important, but it is more about helping and guiding rather than taking control. The phrase "without that support, it can be hard for some students to become fully independent" highlights a realistic view: not all students are equally ready to take full responsibility for their learning. Some may need more guidance or encouragement from teachers to feel capable of learning independently.

Two students expressed the opinion that the student's role in developing learner autonomy was more significant than the teacher's role. Maha emphasised that learners should take responsibility for their own progress rather than blaming others.

> I think the student's role is more important. It's mostly up to you as a student because you're the one learning, and you have the chance to do it on your own. I believe students should take responsibility for their own learning. In Libya, you can blame teachers if you're not successful, but when students graduate and fail to benefit from their university experience, no one blames the teachers; people blame the students because, in the end, they are responsible for their own learning.

Maha's viewpoint draws attention to the personal accountability of students, especially after they leave formal education and face real-world expectations. Her perspective suggests that learner autonomy is mainly in the hands of the students. She recognised that true success in learning comes from a student's effort, not just the teacher's guidance. By mentioning that society blames students, not teachers, when graduates struggle, Maha shows an awareness that in the post-education workplace, responsibility for learning and growth ultimately falls on the learner. This idea also challenges a cultural tendency in Libya, where failure is often seen as the teacher's fault (Elabbar, 2011). Maha believed teachers can facilitate guidance and support for students, but they cannot force students to learn. Maha believed that once students graduate, people expect students to independently apply their acquired knowledge and skills, that is, to be autonomous workers and learners. Her view underscores the importance of learner autonomy in both academic achievement and professional development later in life.

Lina supported the idea that the student's role is more important in developing learner autonomy. However, she pointed out that the cultural and educational context in Libya often prevents students from fully embracing this responsibility. She said:

> I believe that the student's role in learner autonomy is more important if they are given a chance to take responsibility. However, in Libyan culture and the education system, the teacher usually does most of the work (talk-talk-talk), just giving information while students mostly listen. We only know one way of learning: the teacher talks, and we listen. Sometimes, we are given a chance to ask questions, but often we just listen and go home. This approach starts in primary school and becomes more intense and passive as we move up to university.

When I asked her what she meant by "being given a chance," Lina explained:

> In Libyan culture, a strict teacher is seen as a good teacher. When we were younger, students were scared to ask questions because if they interrupted the teacher, they might be hit with a stick. Now, at university, the teacher might shout at you or blame you, asking why you didn't already know the answer. This makes students hesitate to participate. Many students, particularly students who feel shy or intimidated, often lack classroom experience in interaction and participation. The student's role in Libyan classrooms remains invisible because most of the time, students just listen to their teacher, with no participation.

Lina's quote reveals how deeply rooted cultural and educational norms can suppress learners' comfort in speaking or participating, which then impacts learner autonomy down the line, despite students' recognition of its importance. She believes that the student's role in developing learner autonomy was more significant than the teacher's; however, there is a significant cultural barrier that limits the development of learner autonomy. Although she believes that students should take more responsibility for their own learning, the traditional teaching method in Libya, marked by authoritative methods, discourages active student participation. Lina believed the fear of being criticised or even punished creates a classroom environment where students are hesitant to engage or ask questions. This insight explains why students may struggle to take ownership of their learning despite recognising its importance. The next section explores these concerns in more detail, starting with students' current roles in classroom decision-making.

4.7 Students' Views on Student Involvement in Decision-Making

This section presents an analysis of student perspectives regarding their involvement in classroom decision-making. Students were asked to what extent they are currently involved in making decisions, and to what extent they would like to be involved in making decisions about

setting lesson objectives, selecting the teaching method, choosing their homework and evaluation techniques. The findings showed that all students want more involvement in all aspects of their learning, particularly in selecting the teaching method and choosing their homework. The students believed in their own abilities, and their responses suggest that they feel capable of deciding what helps them learn best.

In terms of their current involvement in classroom decisions, only a few students reported having limited choice over homework tasks, such as selecting one question from a small set provided by the teacher. However, this practice was not widespread among the sample. Four out of ten students mentioned that their teachers allow them to select their homework tasks. Maha shared the experience of choosing the homework:

> Yes, some teachers give us the chance to choose our homework. For example, they might provide three questions and ask us to pick the one we find most interesting or easier to answer. This way, it does homework more personally and interestingly.

Another participant, Ruby provided a similar perspective:

> Sometimes, teachers offer a list of tasks for us to choose from for homework. For example, we could either write an essay, create a mind map, or summarise a chapter. It gives us the freedom to select a task that suits our strengths and interests.

These responses show that when students have a say in their homework, they find it more meaningful and engaging. Several students in this study articulated that choosing tasks that align with their interests helps them feel more motivated and involved in their learning.

Moving on to the involvement of students in selecting teaching methods, eight out of ten students reported that teaching methods were primarily determined by their teachers. However, two out of ten students mentioned that they occasionally had a choice in their learning activities. Omer, for example, shared a perspective on the rarity of the opportunity to choose the teaching method: “Yes, sometimes we choose the teaching method when the teacher is in a good mood.” When I asked him to give more details, he explained that his teacher occasionally allows students to choose group activities or organise friendly competitions, usually once or twice a month. Omer further added, “The teacher gives us a set of options, and we choose which activity to do. I believe these lessons improve my language skills ten times more than traditional teaching lessons.”

Another participant, Daniel, described the experience in selecting teaching methods.

> Sometimes our teacher lets us choose how we want to learn. We can pick if we want to focus on speaking or writing, and choose topics we're interested in. For example, we might have a debate about what's going on in Libya or join a group discussion. I really enjoy debates about things like politics or the economy because they help me practise speaking and make me feel more connected to what's happening around me.

These insights, Omer and Daniel highlighted that while such opportunities are limited, they are considered highly beneficial by the students. They believe that choosing their learning methods, such as working in groups or engaging in class debates, enhances their learning experience. The evidence indicates that students in this study found that even limited autonomy, such as choosing homework tasks, made their lessons more engaging.

In terms of assessment, only one student reported having the option to choose how she was assessed. This highlights how rare this practice is in Libyan education. By contrast, research shows that in UK and European universities there is a growing move toward offering students more flexible assessment options, including choice of assessment method (Elkington, 2025). However, Lina, who had this opportunity, shared a positive experience:

> Yes, besides the end-term exam, students are given the option to choose an alternative assessment method. We can choose between performing a play, designing a poster, or creating a PowerPoint presentation. So, this allows me to pick the method that best suits my strengths and interests.

Lina explained that providing flexible assessment methods allows students to tailor their learning experience based on their individual preferences. Looking at student involvement in setting lesson objectives, none of the students reported having the chance to choose lesson objectives in public universities. However, only Amir described his experience with this in private courses, expressing a wish for similar practices in university settings, where the learning objectives were set together by the students and teachers: "In my private course, the teacher asked us to assess our strengths and weaknesses before setting lesson objectives. It helped me focus on what I needed most." When I asked him to give more details about this experience, Amir explained how lesson objectives were set in private courses:

> We used to reflect at the end of each lesson on what we learned and what we still needed to work on. This way, our next lesson objectives were based on our needs. If universities followed this, students would progress much faster.

These responses highlight the benefits of involving students in setting lesson objectives. Amir indicates that this approach helped students focus on areas where they need improvement and made learning more relevant to their needs. Additionally, Amir expressed a desire to see this strategy implemented in Libyan public universities.

Five students expressed a more critical perspective, highlighting the challenges of implementing such practices. While some were hesitant to fully criticise the current situation, they raised concerns about the power structure in Libyan language classrooms. For instance, Amal explained:

> As a student, I didn't feel comfortable telling my teacher what I really thought, even if I was sure I was right. Sometimes, I was not confident enough to speak up, and other times, I just didn't want to embarrass the teacher in front of the class.

Amal's comment draws attention to the power imbalance that still exists between students and teachers, making it hard for students to speak freely or challenge ideas. It highlights the teacher's authority and how it limits students' participation. Ahmed also shared a similar experience:

> Our teacher comes to class with everything planned: lesson objectives, teaching method and just delivers the lesson from start to finish. There's no room for us to ask questions or take part in deciding what we learn. Or how we learn, to be honest, I never felt like I had any control in my English class.

This view adds to the idea that some classrooms follow a top-down structure where students are expected to just listen, not contribute. Even at this stage in their education, some Libyan university students still feel they are not treated as mature individuals. For example, Ruby pointed out: "Some teachers don't act like we are old enough to share our opinions. One time, I corrected my teacher about something, and instead of discussing it, he made fun of me in front of the whole class." Ruby believes that the issue is not just about having a voice in the classroom but also about being respected and treated like adults, an issue that will be explored in the next section.

4.8 Students' Beliefs about Constraints to Fostering Learner Autonomy

The analysis of student interview data identified three main challenges that hinder the development of learner autonomy: factors related to individual learners, institutional barriers, and cultural influences. These three aspects offer valuable insights and recommendations for fostering a more supportive environment for autonomous learning in Libyan universities.

4.8.1 Learner-Related Constraints

The analysis of the interview data from the students revealed several key constraints to learner autonomy, with inadequate student responsibility for their own learning being a significant one. This issue is closely connected to aspects associated with autonomous learning, like being motivated and independent (Ivanovska et al., 2015). It suggests that students may not have been adequately encouraged to develop the qualities of responsibility essential for managing their own learning processes. Ahmed briefly outlined several obstacles that he believes significantly impact the development of learner autonomy, stating:

> Students are not willing, that's the obstacle. A bunch in my class, they're kind of shy about being independent and would rather lean on someone, be it teachers, buddies, friends, or even parents. It's like they're not too confident in their English skills and are scared of messing up.

This quote underscores a significant obstacle to developing autonomous learners among students. The phrase "a bunch in my class" implies that this perspective may be widespread among many students. The hesitancy to be independent could be linked to a lack of confidence in their English proficiency and a fear of making mistakes. However, it is important to consider that this hesitation may not necessarily be due to a lack of willingness, but rather due to a lack of knowledge or experience in being autonomous learners. It could be that students are not aware of how to be independent in their learning, particularly if they have never been expected to do so before. This lack of experience or understanding of autonomy could be a reasonable explanation for their reluctance. Therefore, dependency on others is not merely a matter of willingness but may be due to a gap in learning experiences that hinders students' ability to embrace autonomous learning.

Students may not know how to manage their own learning, especially if they have never been expected to do so before. This lack of experience could explain their reluctance and persistent reliance on the teacher (Hamad,2018). The following examples shed light on the challenges raised by a lack of experience with learner autonomy. Amal said:

> I try my best to memorise the limited content provided and repeat it literally during exams to achieve high grades. Most of the time, I am unwilling to attempt learning anything outside this content. Similarly, most students do not wish to go beyond the content they have; they do not desire anything extra from their teachers. Most students

> prefer opting for easy matters, wanting to study straightforward subjects, and have no interest in anything beyond their content.

These opinions indicate that the desire for high grades and exam success is considered a barrier to autonomous learning, enabling learners to pursue teacher-dependent, memorisation-focused learning. This shows that focusing mainly on exams can limit students' chances to learn independently and engage more deeply with the subject, as memorisation on its own is limited if not combined with meaningful practice (Wang, 2023). The cultural context can also influence how students prefer to learn. In this study, some students expressed a preference for rote learning rather than real comprehension, reflecting broader educational traditions in the Arab region that emphasise memorisation over critical engagement (Elabbar, 2011).

Participants also identified the role of motivation in developing learner autonomy, though they tended to speak to how the teacher motivated students rather than motivation being intrinsic or related to whether sufficient resources were provided. For example, Omer said:

> You know, when teachers push us to join class discussions, it's like a real morale boost for us students. It makes us feel more motivated to throw our ideas out there, and there is no fear of speaking up.

This quote highlights the positive influence of teacher encouragement on student participation in class discussions. At the same time, this inclination for external motivation and reliance on teachers to boost confidence can be considered as another constraint to the development of learner autonomy. This highlights that when students depend excessively on teacher feedback, they risk developing a passive approach to learning. Instead of fostering self-regulated learning, the dependence on external support, rather than fostering self-driven exploration, also constrains the development of intrinsic motivation and self-direction, which are both essential for autonomous learning.

4.8.2 Institution-Related Constraints

This section specifically addresses additional constraints related to institutions. A view expressed by 90% of participants is illustrated by Maha, who perceived institutional constraints as the responsibility of educational institutions, which have failed to provide basic learning methods that encourage students to develop learner autonomy. Maha explained that: "No internet, no library, no courses, and teachers are not trained to motivate students."

Another student echoed this view, with Maya identifying that: "Since the civil war in 2011, there has been no library at all." These quotations exemplify some of the constraints faced by

participants in Libya and the mark that has been left by the civil war on the educational system. The absence of libraries and limited access to technology present a clear picture of the educational system struggling to provide some of the necessary foundations for fostering learner autonomy. Maya believes that when educational systems lack stability, developing learner autonomy becomes difficult.

Time and strict schedules are also identified as constraints, with students expressing frustration about them. For example, Ahmed said: "The schedule is really full, and you don't have time to develop personal skills." Another student pointed to a lack of time for personal development skills, Ruby saying:

> At the university, the schedule is packed, and you won't have sufficient time to pursue what you desire, develop your skills, and be creative in understanding your preferences and abilities. It makes it challenging to assess whether you can truly be autonomous in your learning or not.

The results reveal that time constraints and strict schedules are significant barriers to learner autonomy, as expressed by Ahmed and Ruby. Ahmed complained that the schedule is overwhelming and said there's no time for themselves. Similarly, Ruby pointed out that packed university schedules leave no time to focus on personal goals or explore individual interests, which are important for developing learner autonomy. Students in this study believe that a rigid framework can prevent them from developing critical self-management and problem-solving skills, which are essential for learner autonomy. Without the freedom to explore and practice these skills, it is difficult for students to develop the confidence needed to manage their own learning, which is essential for becoming autonomous learners in educational settings.

Despite university students being at an advanced stage in their studies, many still feel they have little say in their own learning. As Amir stated, “We are not allowed to take responsibility for our own learning.” This reflects a perceived lack of autonomy in their education. When asked about their future roles as teachers and whether they would give students more control over their learning, Amir responded, “I wouldn’t allow students to take control, at least not in the first year. I first need to adapt to being a teacher and understand how things work before deciding whether to give students more freedom.” This indicates that students in this study are hesitant to support the introduction of an approach they have never experienced themselves, which may continue the cycle of limited learner autonomy.

4.8. 3 Sociocultural-Related Constraints

In addition to the previously mentioned factors related to learners and institutions, this research identified additional obstacles that are linked to sociocultural constraints. For instance, some participants expressed the view that learner autonomy is a Western construct, which may not align with the values and practices of Eastern societies because these societies often emphasise collective learning and teacher-centred approaches over individual exploration and self-directed education. Furthermore, the cultural focus on respecting authority figures may discourage questioning or independent decision-making in the classroom. This belief was supported by Maha, who stated that, "In Western society, they begin to develop learner autonomy earlier than us.” There is a belief that there is a difference in educational approaches in other countries. Daniel also expressed this belief, stating that: "The education system in Libya does not support autonomy as it does in the West.” This is possibly linked to the idea that learner autonomy is seen as a Western approach, as these students believe that learner autonomy rooted in Western educational systems may not align with non-Western cultural contexts due to cultural norms, such as deference to authority, a preference for teacher-centred instruction, and limited emphasis on independent critical thinking.

From the perspective of one participant, Lina, studying in Western societies is not about textbooks. She believed that in Western contexts, there is no right or wrong about ideas, as everything is accepted:

> Living in a society with a traditional educational system can limit learner autonomy, because everything is so structured, and we’re always expected to follow what the teacher says without question. In Western societies, it seems like students are encouraged to think for themselves and take control of their learning, which is very different from here.

This perception suggests that students view learner autonomy as a product of a more flexible and open-minded educational system. Students in this study view “Western” education as relativistic, contrasting with their structured and rigid learning environment, highlighting a potential gap in fostering autonomy within their own context. Lina highlighted how deeply ingrained cultural and traditional values can inhibit students from taking responsibility for their learning. In such environments, Lina believed that students may rely heavily on teacher guidance, viewing the teacher as the sole source of knowledge. This dependency creates a cycle

where both teachers and students remain in a system that discourages independence and autonomous learning.

In addition, four out of ten students pointed out that Libyan parents often take a strict traditional approach that values obedience over independence. This cultural mindset can make it harder for students to develop their own opinions and make decisions. For example, Ahmed shared that their parents often disagree with their preferred study habits. They like studying at night, but their parents force them to sleep early so they can wake up early for morning studies. Ahmed noted: "My parents sometimes object to my study schedule; I prefer studying at night, but they force me to sleep early to wake up early for early morning studies." The strict approach of Libyan parents, as described by participants, tends to emphasise obedience and adherence to traditional routines over self-directed decision-making, which can directly impede the development of learner autonomy. This shows that students are discouraged from making even minor decisions about their study habits or expressing preferences; they miss opportunities to practice self-regulation and decision-making skills, which are fundamental to autonomy in learning.

Six out of ten students highlighted the importance of group work in fostering learner autonomy, yet this potential was constrained by gender dynamics. Maya explained: "I find group discussions and project workshops really enjoyable, and they promote my autonomy. This is especially true when I'm with people of the same gender. Otherwise, I tend to feel a bit shy." Her preference for single-gender groups reflects broader cultural and religious norms in Libya that restrict interaction with the opposite gender, echoing findings in research on gendered participation in educational contexts (Suwaed, 2023). Such constraints can limit opportunities for collaborative learning and reduce the extent to which group work supports the development of autonomy, as learners are not always able to fully engage in mixed-gender settings.

4.9 Characteristics and Practices Enhancing Learner Autonomy

This section explores the strategies and behaviours that students believe help develop learner autonomy. Understanding these perspectives is important because it sheds light on how students perceive autonomy and what practices they find most useful in becoming independent learners. During the interviews, students mentioned several activities and characteristics that support learner autonomy. They highlighted the importance of self-management practices, such as setting goals and organising their learning. They also pointed out the value of using specific learning strategies to improve their skills. Additionally, students emphasised that motivation

plays a key role in fostering autonomy, as it helps them stay engaged and take initiative in their learning. Another important aspect they discussed was collaborative learning, where working with others enhances their ability to learn independently while benefiting from peer support. The following sections will explain these aspects in more detail:

4.9.1 Learner Autonomy Enhancement through Self-Management Practices and Personal Characteristics

Self-management practices that Libyan university students believe are key to developing learner autonomy include planning study time, addressing weaknesses, and using self-explanation. A common theme among the students was the importance of time management. They emphasised that skills like planning and setting deadlines help them take control of their learning. For example, Lina mentioned:

> I need to plan my time carefully and stick to deadlines. When I do that, I'm more likely to stay focused and organised. Without a plan, I end up falling behind, so I think planning my study time is very important to take control of my learning and be an autonomous learner.

This quote demonstrates an understanding that effective time management and adherence to deadlines are essential for academic success and an awareness of the importance of self-management in the context of learner autonomy. By acknowledging that planning helps them stay focused and organised, Lina emphasises the potential consequences of not planning, such as "falling behind," and highlights the struggle many students face in maintaining control over their learning process. Lina indicates that awareness is key to the development of learner autonomy, as it reflects the student's ability to self-reflect on their learning habits and recognise the impact of their actions on their academic outcomes.

However, Daniel acknowledged the importance of planning but struggled to implement it effectively in their own learning. stating, "I think planning is important because it helps learners learn independently." However, when I asked him whether he used planning as a strategy, he mentioned some difficulties in applying it:

> Yes, during wartime, we stayed home for about one month, so I tried it, but I struggled with it. I know planning is useful, but I find it hard to stick to a plan. Unexpected things always happen, and my plans don't always work.

This illustrates a challenge to this student, as Daniel understands the benefits of planning but often finds it difficult to follow through due to unforeseen difficulties.

To further explore the strategies that students use to enhance their autonomy, Amal shared additional insights about independent practice and addressing weaknesses. She highlighted the importance of self-directed learning in learner autonomy, "I know that just relying on class time isn't enough. I try to practice on my own outside of class, and the more I do, the faster I improve." This highlights the critical role of self-directed learning. This statement reflects an awareness of how personal effort outside the classroom is essential for developing autonomy. When I asked for further clarification, she further explained: "I always try to figure out where I'm struggling in my studies. Once I know my weaknesses, I can focus on fixing them, either on my own or with help from my peers or teachers." This statement reveals the importance of self-awareness and addressing weaknesses in the learning process. Amal reflected on the difficulties and took steps to resolve them, either independently or with external support. This behaviour reflects a key aspect of learner autonomy. Her experience illustrates the value of autonomy, shown in the way she takes responsibility for her progress through ongoing self-assessment and seeking support when necessary.

Maha illustrated the value of self-explanation when she stated, "When I explain things in my own words, I understand them much better. I often try to explain new concepts to myself or to my classmates. It really helps me grasp the material more deeply." Ruby also shared her thoughts on the importance of self-explanation:

> I believe that when I explain things to myself, it helps me understand and remember what I'm learning. I make better progress when I work on my own. It takes time, but I believe the data stays in my memory for a long time.

This illustrates the value of metacognitive strategies in learning. By articulating concepts in their own words, participants in this study believe it enhances their understanding and internalises knowledge more effectively, which strengthens their ability to work independently and develop autonomy. These findings underscore the importance of self-management practices and self-awareness as key factors in promoting learner autonomy among Libyan university students.

4.9.2 Learner Autonomy and Developing Learning Strategies

Developing effective learning strategies plays a crucial role in fostering learner autonomy. This section analyses students' perspectives on how autonomy can be strengthened using various learning techniques. During the interviews, students highlighted a range of activities that they believe effectively promote autonomous learning; they indicated that a combination of digital

tools, reading and writing strategies, auditory practices, visualisation techniques, and structured task management contributes to enhancing learner autonomy (See Table 9).

Participant Pseudonym	Response
Student Lina	taking notes, using language-learning apps (e.g., Duolingo, Anki), choose topic of writing, presentation, listening to English podcasts
Student Omer	reading English books, articles, or newspapers, practising pronunciation with language tools, and summarising.
Student Amal	recording and listening to my own speech, watching YouTube tutorials on grammar and pronunciation, summarising and presenting reading assignments
Student Maha	joining English conversation clubs, subscribing to English learning channels on social media, shadowing (repeating after native speakers) to improve fluency. use additional resources beyond those provided by the teacher.
Student Daniel	listening to audiobooks in English, taking notes, prepare all my lessons before I go, breaking large tasks into smaller tasks
Student Amir	writing summaries of books or movies in English, watching ted talks in English, using visual aids like YouTube and cards,
Student Linda	recording classroom presentations and listening for improvement, translating and summarising key concepts from lessons, practising guided note-taking strategies
Student Ahmed	translating short paragraphs from Arabic to English and vice versa, practising structured paraphrasing, breaking large tasks into smaller,
Student Maya	using dictionaries, using mind maps to organise new vocabulary, use additional resources beyond those provided by the teacher.
Student Ruby	writing summaries of classroom discussions, singing along to English songs to improve pronunciation,

Table 9: Students' views about the Importance of learner autonomy in foreign language learning

80% of students emphasised the role of technology in supporting their autonomous learning efforts. Table 9 highlights the varied ways students use technology, self-study, and/or social interaction to exercise learner autonomy, with common strategies such as using digital resources, practising self-monitoring, and breaking tasks into smaller parts, alongside unique approaches like mind maps, singing, or joining conversation clubs. Despite the challenges posed by limited internet access at universities after the civil war in Libya, as detailed in previous sections, students still found online resources to be highly effective. Many participants (teachers and students) reported using their private internet connections or accessing the university's internet whenever available.

Reading and creating summaries were mentioned as essential learning techniques, as explained by both Omer and Ruby. Omer stated, "I prefer reading English articles or newspapers and then

summarising the key points.” He believes these texts help him retain information and develop analytical skills. Similarly, Ruby shared, "I write summaries of classroom discussions to review and reinforce the lessons." She felt that writing summaries not only aids comprehension but also enhances the synthesis of information.

Six out of ten students also adopted auditory learning strategies to improve pronunciation and listening skills. For example, Daniel highlighted, "I listen to audiobooks in English and take notes to understand new vocabulary and prepare all my lessons before I go." Likewise, Amal recorded and listened to her speech, stating, "It helps me identify mistakes in pronunciation and improve clarity." Ruby also reported practising pronunciation by "singing along to English songs." These students found that these activities strengthened phonetic awareness through repetition. Additionally, four out of ten students employed visualisation techniques to enhance their learning. Amir stated, "I use YouTube and visualisation cards to remember key concepts from books or movies." Likewise, Maya reported, "I use mind maps to organise new vocabulary and make connections between words." The responses indicate that students believed these techniques reinforced memory and comprehension.

Strategy use and structured approaches to learning were also common themes among the responses. Daniel explained, "Breaking large tasks into smaller sections helps me manage my workload effectively." Similarly, Ahmed mentioned, "I translate short paragraphs from Arabic to English and vice versa, which makes it easier to grasp language patterns without feeling overwhelmed." Ahmed said this approach gave him a sense of accomplishment and made learning easier. Some students highlighted the importance of social interaction in developing autonomy. Maha mentioned, "Joining English conversation clubs and shadowing native speakers has helped me become more fluent.” In general, Maha believed that engaging with native-like speech through shadowing and social interactions improves both speaking and listening abilities. In summary, the findings suggest that learners view autonomy as a multifaceted process shaped by digital tools, cognitive strategies, auditory and visual practices, and social interaction. Students mentioned that they use these strategies when a supportive environment is available, particularly when they have sufficient time, lighter schedules, and access to supportive technologies at home. Collectively, these strategies demonstrate that fostering learner autonomy requires not only individual effort but also the effective use of resources and supportive environments that encourage learning autonomy, and that participants were able to do many of these strategies relatively independently.

4.9.3 Learner Autonomy Enhancement by Motivation Characteristics and Practices

Motivation emerged as a key factor in enhancing learner autonomy, with students identifying both internal and external influences that provide or hinder their ability to learn independently. Students recognised that autonomy in learning involves not only observable actions but also internal psychological traits that shape how they learn. When reflecting on what would help them become autonomous learners, they openly highlighted these internal traits as the driving force behind their efforts. This included elements such as intrinsic motivation, the student-teacher relationship, and interest in learning English, which enabled them to actively engage in their learning process.

For example, Omer referred to these psychological traits as key to staying focused and becoming an autonomous learner: “Motivation is what makes autonomy the best. It's both about motivating myself and even when my teachers encourage me to work harder and rely on myself.” This shows that motivation is not one-sided; it comes from within but is also nurtured by supportive environments. The students’ words highlight the importance of both self-discipline and encouragement from teachers in shaping autonomous learners. Omer further explained: "Even if you have the confidence and the willingness to be independent, a lack of encouragement from teachers holds you back." This perspective illustrates how even capable learners may hesitate to act independently without external encouragement.

In addition to Omer’s view, seven out of ten student participants believed that a teacher’s influence could either foster or reduce this motivation. Lina reflected: "When teachers are supportive, we feel more confident expressing ourselves and engaging in discussions. But when they are too strict, we hesitate to participate." When I asked her to explain this further, she added: “Building a positive relationship with my teacher makes the subject more enjoyable and helps enhance my skills.” This highlights how a strong teacher-student relationship can make learning more enjoyable and empower students to take a more active role in their learning.

Beyond teacher influence, Ruby highlighted curiosity and personal interest as powerful sources of internal motivation. For instance, she described curiosity as a strong driver of autonomy:

> When you're really interested in something, you end up doing more research on your own, wanting to learn more. That pushes you to rely on yourself to find the info, and over time, it helps you become more independent in your learning.

Ruby’s comment shows that when students are deeply interested in a topic, they go beyond what is required. They explore more, not because they have to, but because they want to.

Furthermore, engaging and enjoyable learning experiences were also seen as important motivators for autonomy. Five students emphasised that incorporating online language games and informal activities helps reduce stress and increase participation. Amir explained: “For me, in private language courses, using online language games in groups and informal activities makes learning less stressful and more enjoyable. When the lesson feels like a game, I don’t feel pressured, and I learn faster." He highlights the importance of interactive learning in reducing anxiety and making education more accessible. However, despite recognising the benefits of such tools, students also acknowledged practical limitations. Based on the findings from the previous section on constraints, many Libyan universities struggle with limited internet access and restricted technological resources, which makes the use of these tools difficult.

Alongside external and contextual influences, seven students emphasised the critical role of self-motivation. They believed that internal drive and willingness to learn were central to becoming autonomous. Maha explained: “It depends, some students are naturally curious and eager to learn. They don’t wait for the teacher; they take responsibility for their learning. I think being willing to learn is the first step toward autonomy.” She also added, “No one can force you to learn if you don’t want to,” showing that self-motivation is essential for independent learning.

Building on this idea, students also highlighted the emotional side of learning autonomy. The results indicate that autonomous learners are proactive in seeking knowledge rather than relying solely on teachers. However, even highly motivated students can feel discouraged, which may slow their progress. Daniel shared a personal strategy for dealing with such challenges:

> I motivate myself when I feel down about my learning. There are days when I feel like I’m not improving or that English is too difficult. In those moments, I remind myself why I started learning in the first place, because it will help me in the future, and so on.

Daniel’s experience shows that emotional strength, such as self-discipline and resilience, is a key part of becoming autonomous. According to Daniel, in Libya’s post-conflict context, where many face economic, social, and emotional challenges, this inner strength and motivation become even more important for academic success.

In addition to emotional resilience, another strong pillar of learner autonomy highlighted by the students was family support. The interviews revealed how important family support is for

Libyan students, especially when it comes to learning English and continuing their education in general. In Libya, many students stay with their families well into adulthood, not just until they get a job, but often until they get married and start a household of their own. Even with financial independence, family remains a central part of their lives, offering both emotional and practical support (Khalifa, 2022). Daniel explained: “My parents always believed that education is an investment. They told me not to rush to work just for money but to build myself first. They even helped me pay for extra English courses when I needed them.” Ahmed also shared how his sibling became an inspiration: “My sister was the first in our family to study abroad, and she would always push me to practice English with her. She made learning feel exciting, like something that could open up the world.” These stories demonstrate how family members, whether parents or siblings, can shape students' attitudes towards learning and give them the encouragement to keep improving. Many students talked about being motivated by their families to study harder. However, when it came to society’s role, students had more mixed feelings. They said that using English in public spaces still feels awkward or uncomfortable. For example, Amal said:

> When I speak English outside with my friends, people sometimes stare. It makes us feel weird, like we’re doing something wrong or trying to act like we’re better than others. in Libya, people often think English is just for talking to foreigners. You only need it if you're speaking to someone who doesn’t speak Arabic. So, if you use it too much, they assume you’re showing off.

These reactions are understandable in public settings, but they also reflect wider societal attitudes in Libya, where English is often viewed as a language for formal rather than everyday communication. This perception means that using English casually in public can be interpreted as socially inappropriate or as signalling a higher social status, which contributes to students’ discomfort (Elmahjoub, 2018). These views suggest that societal attitudes can make it difficult for students to freely use English in everyday life. This can limit their chances to practice, and by extension, it impacts their confidence and autonomy as learners. However, not all students felt restricted by society. Some found safe and encouraging spaces in online private groups. These platforms provided them with a way to connect and practice English in ways they did not always find in their offline environment.

4.9.4 Learner Autonomy Enhancement through Learning Cooperatively

This section explores how students see cooperative learning as a valuable way to develop learner autonomy. Seven out of ten Students emphasised the importance of collaborative learning. Working in groups was more than just a classroom activity. It was a key part of becoming more independent in their learning. They felt that collaborating with others helped them grow into more confident learners who could express their ideas openly and take responsibility.

Although the COVID-19 restrictions ended a few years ago, their impact on group learning is still clearly felt by Maha. She shared how this change impacted learning:

> During COVID, everything changed. In class, we used to sit in groups and help each other, but after the restrictions, we had to sit separately. Everyone was on their own. I felt like I lost motivation because there was no group energy or exchange of ideas. I shared this experience with you to tell you how important group work is.

This quote highlights how important peer interaction was to students, not only as a way to learn but also as a source of motivation. The sudden move to individual learning environments resulted in a sense of connection and shared purpose.

Maya who was living in a university dorm shared a different learning experience shaped by their living environment "I study with peers in the dorm, and we help each other with difficult topics. We learn how to organise ideas and research, which helps me develop learner autonomy and use these skills when studying alone." The above quote illustrates how purposeful peer collaboration can enhance understanding and build habits that support learner autonomy. Importantly, the learning did not end with the group; it carried over into the student's independent study as Maya mentioned above.

In even more challenging times, like during periods of conflict, students found creative ways to continue learning. Ruby recalled how he and her friends made a plan to divide topics among themselves, each becoming responsible for one part and then teaching it to the others:

> During the war, it was hard to go to classes regularly. So, my friends and I made a deal, each of us would learn one topic really well and then explain it to the group. It was actually very helpful and made me more responsible on my part. I think it really supported learner autonomy.

Ruby's comment shows how, even in difficult circumstances, students took the initiative and supported one another. Students created their own structure, which not only helped them learn but also encouraged them to direct facets of their learning.

Technology also opened new doors for collaborative learning. Amir joined online communities to practice English and connect with people from other countries. Amir shared:

> I joined a Facebook group for English learners from different countries. Talking to them helped me see new expressions and ways of speaking. It pushed me to practice more and think differently, which helps me to be an independent learner.

This kind of global interaction gave students the chance to explore new ways of learning outside the classroom. The result of this study reveals that structured group work also helped students to learn independently. Omer said that working on projects with others was a great way to learn: "When we work on a project together, I feel like I'm learning from different minds. Everyone has a different way of thinking. It helps me reflect on my own ideas and improve them." His quote highlights how collaborating in this way gave students access to a range of perspectives. It helped students think more critically and become more self-aware.

Teacher feedback also played a key role, especially when it was shared with the group. Daniel mentioned the importance of teachers' oral feedback as it allowed students to learn from one another and take greater control over their progress. "Sometimes the teacher gives group feedback, and I learn not only from my own mistakes but also from my classmates' corrections. It makes me more aware of how to improve and control my learning skills."

Maya shared an experience of how cultural norms, particularly gender dynamics, influence both group work and student-teacher relationships. These factors affected how comfortable the student felt participating in collaborative learning. Maya explained how the dynamics of mixed-gender groups could impact her participation and the development of learner autonomy. The relationship between students and teachers also played a role in this. Cultural expectations around gender sometimes made it more difficult for female students to feel comfortable speaking up in mixed-gender settings (see 4.8.3 sociocultural-related constraints). As Maya shared: "I find group discussions and project workshops really enjoyable, and they promote my autonomy. This is especially true when I'm with people of the same gender. Otherwise, I tend to feel a bit shy." Maya went on to express a wish for a different educational system, saying:

> I wish I could live in Saudi Arabia, where universities are separated, one for males and another for females. I think in that system, students would be more open to talk and speak. At the same time, teachers would suggest topics that encourage us as women to speak, like makeup, cooking.

Maya's quotations show how cultural norms affect classroom dynamics. In mixed-gender groups, two out of six female student participants felt shy or held back. However, in same-gender groups, these students felt more comfortable and confident. These settings helped them engage more and become more independent learners. Overall, the analysis shows that cooperative learning is not only shaped by students' strategies and environments but also by their attitudes and the influence of cultural and gender norms. A positive and open attitude towards collaboration was consistently linked with greater learner autonomy, as students who embraced group work tended to transfer those skills into independent learning.

4.10 Summary of Chapter

This chapter presented the findings from interviews with Libyan university EFL students about learner autonomy. Students agreed that autonomy is important for improving language learning and showed interest in taking more responsibility for their learning. However, they pointed to challenges such as relying too much on teachers and exam-focused learning. Despite these obstacles, students welcomed ideas like collaborative learning and having more involvement in classroom choices. Overall, the findings show that students value autonomy but face barriers that make it difficult to practice. The next chapter presents the analysis of teachers' results, offering further insight into how autonomy is understood and supported in the Libyan EFL context.

Chapter 5: Qualitative Data Analysis -Teachers' Results

5.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter Three, the first phase of this research involved semi-structured interviews designed to explore how EFL teachers and students in Libyan universities perceive and interpret learner autonomy. Twenty interviews were conducted with teachers and students, and the themes that emerged from this phase later informed the development of the questionnaire used in Phase Two. The purpose of the questionnaire was to extend these qualitative insights by providing a broader overview of how widely the identified themes were reflected across a larger sample, rather than to confirm the qualitative findings.

This chapter presents the findings from the teacher semi-structured interviews. This chapter is organised around key themes that emerged from their responses. The analysis addresses teachers' views on the technical, psychological, sociocultural, and political dimensions of learner autonomy, as well as their perceptions of its importance, the factors that support or hinder its development, students' role in making decisions about their learning, and the role of teachers in fostering autonomy.

5.2 Teacher's Demographic Information

All the teacher interview participants have extensive experience teaching English at the university level (See Table 10). None of the participants is a native English speaker. The group includes teachers from four universities: Tripoli, Sabha, Gharyan, and Bani Walid. Seven hold Master's degrees (MA or M.Phil.), and three have PhDs. Their teaching experience ranges from 7 to 17 years (see Table 10)

Table 10: Demographics of Interview Participants

Participant Pseudonym	University	Highest Degree	Field	Teaching Experience (years)
Teacher Adam	Tripoli University	PhD	English Language	12
Teacher Salma	Sabha University	PhD	English Language	13
Teacher Hana	Gharyan University	MA	English Language	10
Teacher Ali	Sabha University	MA	English Language	9
Teacher Nadia	Gharyan University	M. Phil	English Language	11
Teacher Mohamed	Tripoli University	PhD	English Language	7

Teacher Fatima	Bani Walid University	MA	English Language	17
Teacher Sara	Gharyan University	MA	English Language	11
Teacher Yusuf	Tripoli University	M. Phil	English Language	10
Teacher Mira	Gharyan University	MA	English Language	14

Table 10: Shows the demographics of interview participants

5.3 The Meaning of Learner Autonomy

This section addresses the first research question about teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy. Participants were initially invited to share their views on learner autonomy and the significance they attribute to it. This step aimed to link their interpretations of the concept with their perceptions of how learner autonomy is currently manifested in their particular context. All teachers were aware of learner autonomy, and they perceived learner autonomy as a positive development. The concepts of "independence," "ability to use skills," "responsibility," "student-centred teaching," and "freedom" were central to their understanding of learner autonomy. These concepts were common throughout the teachers' views.

Perspective	Participant Pseudonym	Definition	Quotation
Technical	Teacher Hana	Autonomy begins with basic study skills.	"Students should develop language skills like taking notes, summarising, and identifying learning objectives early on..."
	Teacher Mira	Digital tools support independent learning.	"I encourage my students to follow creators like Dr. Ahmed on TikTok... it offers quick, engaging content..."
	Teacher Ali	Autonomy requires critical use of resources.	"Learner autonomy means equipping students to use resources effectively... comparing information...."
	Teacher Adam	Autonomy develops through goal-setting habits.	"From the start of the semester, I show students how to set their own learning goals and track their progress."
	Teacher Sara	Role models encourage independent learning.	"I had a student who became independent by making her own study routine..."
Psychological	Teacher Nadia	Autonomy means personal responsibility.	"Learner autonomy is about stepping up and taking control of your learning..."
	Teacher Salma	Responsibility is the core of autonomy.	"Learners are responsible for their own learning... it is students' mission."
	Teacher Salma	Motivation supports self-regulated learning.	"Learning how to learn is the first step to becoming autonomous... motivation is what drives your learning forward."
	Teacher Salma	Visual tools can aid reflection.	"I've used mind maps as a reflective strategy... but many students struggled..."

Sociocultural	Teacher Hana	Collaboration fosters autonomy.	"Students learn best and become autonomous when they interact with others..."
	Teacher Fatima	Group work builds responsibility.	"When students work together, they learn from each other. Group projects are a great way..."
	Teacher Ali	Linking learning to culture promotes autonomy.	"I ask students to write about topics from their daily lives, like describing a traditional event in English."
Political	Teacher Yusuf	Autonomy involves leadership and voice.	"It's about helping students develop critical thinking skills... Encouraging students to start their own clubs..."
	Teacher Mohamed	Autonomy requires some freedom.	"Learner autonomy means that students have some freedom or choice to do the kind of work they like..."

Table 11: Teachers' Statements on Autonomy in Learning

Table 11shows that teachers understood learner autonomy in different ways, reflecting Benson's (1997) and Oxford's (2003) four perspectives. From the technical perspective, teachers linked autonomy to skills such as note-taking, using resources effectively, digital tools, and goal setting. The psychological perspective was also common, with responsibility and motivation seen as central to becoming autonomous. In the sociocultural perspective, teachers highlighted collaboration, group work, and connections to students' cultural backgrounds. From a political standpoint, autonomy was associated with giving students freedom, voice, and leadership opportunities. The following subsections present these four perspectives in detail, beginning with the technical perspective, which was the most frequently mentioned by teachers.

5.3.1 Technical Perspectives of Learner Autonomy

Teachers view their role as essential in guiding students to acquire these techniques early and enabling them to manage their learning effectively. Overall, teachers appeared to have a stronger belief in the technical viewpoint. As explored in the quotations below, this was demonstrated by participants' emphasis on the idea of learning, including students' ability to use resources and techniques. This overview is further illustrated by the interview quotations presented in this section. As the literature analysis demonstrates, the technical perspective of learner autonomy was primarily concerned with using resources and learning techniques effectively to support students to be autonomous (Vieira, 2012, as cited in Hamad, 2018). Teachers' responses to questions on what they believed was necessary to raise their students' level of learner autonomy reflected the technical perspective. For example, Hana

commented: “Students should develop language skills like taking notes, summarising, and identifying learning objectives early on. As teachers, it’s our job to guide them in building these skills from the start.” Hana emphasises that foundational skills such as note-taking and summarising are fundamental for fostering autonomy. Moreover, some teachers (Adam, Fatima, and Mira) believed social media greatly supports language learners' autonomy. For instance, Mira said:

> For me, learner autonomy is about helping students learn independently. I encourage my students to follow creators like Dr. Ahmed on TikTok since they love using the app. TikTok is a great platform because it offers quick, engaging content that makes learning English enjoyable and easy to fit into their daily routines. I am always guiding my students how to use social media to help them learn English independently.

Mira mentioned recommending that students follow TikTokers who teach English, as they enjoy platforms like TikTok, which show an integration of technical and sociocultural perspectives, and also emphasised that mobile tools are highly beneficial, as students can download apps to assist them in learning English independently. Ali’s response combined the encouragement of using learning resources. Ali commented:

> Learner autonomy, for me, means equipping students to effectively use learning resources. This involves guiding them not just on how to search, but also on which resources are trustworthy, like specific dictionaries and websites. It also means fostering critical thinking skills: comparing information and adopting a research-oriented approach. These skills empower students to become independent learners.

This highlights the importance of guiding students in using learning tools effectively and identifying credible resources to build critical thinking and research skills. The teachers in this study articulated that the goal is to encourage learning autonomy by giving students the right guidance and tools they need to learn on their own – in other words, a more teacher-driven than student-driven view. This response reflects a belief in focusing on practical skills to support learner autonomy, especially by teaching students how to use resources effectively and improve their research abilities.

For example, Adam emphasised the importance of fostering autonomy early in the semester by encouraging students to set personal learning goals and track their progress:

> Learner autonomy means helping students become independent learners from the very beginning, from the start of the semester. I show them how to set their own learning

> goals and track their progress. I also guide them on using tools like language apps and online forums to practice. Starting early gives them the habits they need to keep learning on their own.

Sara described an autonomous learner as follows

> I had a student who became independent by making her own study routine and practising in fun ways, like teaching her family what she learned. She asked great questions in class and did extra projects just out of curiosity. I tell her story to other students to show how they can take charge of their learning, too.

This highlights the positive outcomes of fostering learner autonomy. She shares this story to inspire other students and show them what they can achieve when they take charge of their learning. It is a great example of how students can become more independent and engaged when they are given the tools and encouragement to learn on their own.

5.3.2 Psychological Perspectives of Learner Autonomy

Four teachers defined learner autonomy from a psychological perspective, viewing it as an internal ability students possess. This contrasts with the technical perspective, which sees learner autonomy as something external that is given to students. Teachers indicated that "responsibility" for one's own learning is a fundamental theme associated with learner autonomy. For example, Nadia explained that learner autonomy is: "about stepping up and taking control of your learning, not just leaving it all to your teachers and making their own decisions about their learning." This viewpoint highlights that teachers feel that learner autonomy requires a shift in focus from teacher-centred learning to a student-centred approach, where learners actively manage their progress and outcomes. Salma has a similar opinion, noting that learner autonomy means, "Learners are responsible for their own learning. They might be taught, but it's up to them to make sure they actually learn; it is the students' mission." Salma's definition emphasises learner responsibility as the core of learner autonomy. While acknowledging the role of teaching, she highlights that true learning is ultimately the student's own mission. This suggests that autonomous learners can be distinguished by their proactive approach and ownership of the learning process, going beyond simply attending class to actively ensuring their own progress. Salma's quotation is not just saying that it is good for students to be responsible for their learning; she is saying that being responsible is what makes someone an autonomous learner. Responsibility is not just a helpful quality; it is the key quality. Someone might be a good student in other ways, but if they do not take responsibility for their

own learning, according to this perspective, they are not truly demonstrating learner autonomy. Responsibility is the defining characteristic, the thing that sets autonomous learners apart. Salma further added

> Learning how to learn is the first step to becoming autonomous in your studies, it's about figuring out what works best for you, being able to track your own is what makes real autonomy possible, besides to motivation which gives learner the push to take charge of their learning and keep going, even when it's tough, as a teacher, I can guide you, but your motivation is what drives your learning forward.

Based on Salma's comment, motivation appears to serve as a supporting factor rather than a core component of autonomy. However, the key lies in the intrinsic motivation to adapt one's approach to learning. This focus underscores the psychological nature of autonomy as a process of developing autonomous control over one's learning process.

To gauge teachers' thoughts on the psychological view, they were asked whether they have ever asked their students to reflect on what they have learned. This question was designed to find out whether teachers are employing strategies that promote learner autonomy through self-assessment and reflection. Eight out of ten teachers reported that they never did so, while two teachers mentioned different examples that did not grasp the purpose of reflection in learning. For example, Mira referred to advising students to keep a list, similar to designing dictionaries, to help them practise English. Mira said,

> I repeatedly advise my students to maintain a list when they return home. Writing the word, its Arabic and English equivalents, and whether they learn it in class or on their own are all included. They will improve their speaking abilities by writing expressions. Because English requires practice, I thus ask students to memorise and edit their lists in order to develop a much wider vocabulary and expressions they will use outside of the classroom.

Salma mentioned that she asked students to use the mind maps strategy, where students can visually organise what they know and connect prior knowledge with new information. Salma said, "I've used mind maps as a reflective strategy in my lectures, hoping they'd help students visualise and deepen their understanding, but many students struggled to engage meaningfully." Mira's and Salma's explanations show that the teachers' strategies did not fully support true reflection. According to Mira, she encourages students to keep vocabulary lists that focus on memorisation and practice, which she believes help students consolidate

knowledge. However, her description indicates that this approach does not explicitly guide students to reflect on how they are learning or to assess their own progress, suggesting that the reflective dimension of learner autonomy may not be strongly emphasised in this practice. Similarly, Salma's use of mind maps was more about organising ideas than reflecting deeply on them. Both methods aimed to help students manage their learning, but the ways teachers described them suggest that these strategies may place less emphasis on fostering self-reflection, which is an important aspect of learner autonomy.

In this study, teachers' descriptions of reflection tended to highlight practical or task-oriented elements rather than encouraging students to engage with their learning processes critically. The quotes above suggest that while teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy often reflect a psychological perspective, emphasising factors such as motivation and self-assessment, this dimension was less prominent than the technical aspects of autonomy in their responses. Teachers also overlooked the use of reflective activities in the classroom and did not fully understand how reflection supports the development of autonomy.

5.3.3 Sociocultural Perspectives of Learner Autonomy

The discussion now moves to explore the sociocultural perspective of learner autonomy in teachers' beliefs. The sociocultural perspective emphasises that learner autonomy is encouraged through collaborative interactions and practical integration with their social and cultural environment (Oxford, 2003; Smith, 2008). The data analysis revealed varying beliefs about learner autonomy from a sociocultural perspective. Culture and community play an important role in shaping how learners take responsibility for their learning. Interestingly, despite the limited use of English outside the classroom in Libya, Hana highlighted the importance of social interaction in fostering learner autonomy. She provided examples of how they encourage interaction, demonstrating that their understanding of learner autonomy aligns with the sociocultural perspective. Hana explained:

> I believe students learn best and become autonomous when they interact with others, whether it's in class discussions or through group activities. I always push them to use English outside the classroom, like talking with peers or joining online groups.

This statement connects learner autonomy with interaction. Hana believes that students become more independent and autonomous through interaction, both within classroom discussions in group work and outside via online groups. This response emphasises that autonomy is

perceived to be not only about individual effort but also about engaging in meaningful social interactions to practice language skills.

Another participant, Fatima, defines learner autonomy as independent work for students and emphasised how group projects help students become more autonomous learners, saying that "When students work together, they learn from each other. Group projects are a great way for them to share ideas and take responsibility for their tasks. It is a type of learning autonomy." Her quote emphasises students learning from one another and sharing responsibility, suggesting that she sees autonomy as emerging through social interaction, where learners gradually take ownership within a supportive group environment. This perspective aligns with sociocultural interpretations of learner autonomy, which stress the role of peer learning and shared decision-making.

Ali described learner autonomy through an activity used with students, focusing on cultural context and authentic learning as examples of autonomy:

> I will give you an example of autonomous work which describes learner autonomy. I ask students to write about topics from their daily lives, like describing a traditional event in English. This helps them connect language learning to their own culture and see its value in real life.

By incorporating cultural elements into learning activities, taking Ali as an example, he encouraged his students to engage with English in ways that he believes are meaningful and authentic. This method aligns with the sociocultural view that learning is most effective when it connects to the learners' context and experiences (Oxford, 2003). Despite recognising the importance of sociocultural elements, some teachers admitted challenges such as student shyness and limited opportunities when using group work in classrooms, which will be discussed in section 4.2.7. With this understanding, the focus now shifts to examining the political perspective of learner autonomy in teachers' beliefs.

5.3.4 The Political Perspective of Learner Autonomy

The political perspective of learner autonomy emphasises the importance of individuals in their society and advocates shifting authority from teachers to students (Benson, 2021). However, the interviews revealed that only two teachers supported this perspective, which was fewer than the other perspectives. For example, Yusuf believed this approach builds students' leadership by creating a supportive environment where their roles are valued:

> It's about helping students develop critical thinking skills and learn how to express their opinions. My goal is to make them understand that they have a valuable role in the learning environment, that their voice matters, and their opinion is important because I want them to become leaders.

Yusuf also mentioned a similar idea when talking about ways to support the development of learner autonomy. It is an example of both political perspective and the psychological perspective in terms of self-assessment. Yusuf suggested encouraging the creation of student clubs in universities to help students take ownership of their learning. He pointed out that one way to achieve this would be for the university administration to support these clubs:

> Encouraging students to start their own clubs at school could help them take ownership of their learning. The school administration could create spaces where students can share their opinions. But the hardships in Libya, especially during civil war, the private sector could offer a solution, allowing students to attend private clubs and workshops. This would provide them with more opportunities to develop skills outside of public universities.

This teacher stresses the importance of student-led clubs to promote learner autonomy, giving students more control over their learning. However, due to the challenges in Libya, her reference to the private sector highlights how institutional limitations in Libya shape the opportunities available to students.

However, another notion which is ingrained in the political perspective is the concept of "freedom." Mohamed described learner autonomy as: “Learning freely without constraints." Then the researcher asked for an explanation, saying, "Can you explain it more for me?" Mohamed answered:

> Sure! Learner autonomy means that students have some freedom or choice to do the kind of work they like. This does not mean that students have full freedom to do everything they like, but they have some role and power to make decisions regarding their learning.

In other words, freedom is not absolute but partial, in a way that the teacher shapes the learning experience while still giving students a sense of ownership and responsibility. Mohamed’s explanation reflects a view of autonomy as shared control, where learners make choices but within boundaries that support rather than overwhelm them.

The political perspective of learner autonomy in these two teachers' beliefs revealed that this perspective connects to leadership, critical thinking, and participation in community service programs to enhance academic skills. Teachers associated the political perspective with classroom and educational contexts, rather than a broader view of citizenship, policy, or global identity. This may be because, in the Libyan context, education has traditionally focused on structured, teacher-led approaches, with limited emphasis on student involvement in policy-related issues (Al-Araibi, 2020). This may also reflect Libya's history of dictatorship, where political expression was tightly controlled and civic engagement discouraged, making political discussion in education particularly sensitive. As a result, teachers may see autonomy in terms of individual growth within the classroom, rather than as a tool for broader social or political engagement. Political discussions in schools are often sensitive, which could also limit how far teachers feel comfortable extending the idea of autonomy beyond academic development (Hamad, 2018). Overall, teachers' views show that learner autonomy is shaped by both individual skills and social interaction. The technical and psychological perspectives stress developing strategies and responsibility, while the sociocultural and political perspectives highlight collaboration and student voice. Together, these perspectives present autonomy as a supported and shared process rather than complete independence. The next section will focus on answering the question of whether learner autonomy is a learnable skill or an innate characteristic.

5.4 Nature of Learner Autonomy: Learnable Skill or Innate Characteristics?

The question of whether learner autonomy is something students are born with or a skill they can learn is important because it reflects the way teachers approach education (Benson, 2021). Understanding potential development can help to create better strategies to help students become autonomous learners. If learner autonomy is considered to be innate, teachers might focus on identifying and nurturing those natural tendencies in students or deciding not to develop these at all. However, if it is considered a skill, teachers can design learning experiences that actively promote autonomy for all students. The two beliefs can lead to different practices: seeing autonomy as innate may limit support to certain students, while viewing it as a skill encourages teachers to develop it more broadly (Little, 1991).

This question brought varied responses from university teachers. Their beliefs reflected a mix of personal experiences and beliefs about how students learn. Three out of ten teachers believed that learner autonomy is an inherent characteristic. They believed that certain students naturally show qualities like self-motivation and the ability to take responsibility. As Nadia highlighted,

"In my experience, some students are naturally independent and self-driven. They do not wait for instructions; they take the initiative to explore and learn on their own." Another teacher, Mohamed, said, "Not everyone can be autonomous. Some students just seem to have a natural ability to manage their learning, while others struggle even with support." These two teachers viewed autonomy as something that some students are simply born with. Teachers who think some students are just born more independent learners might not try as hard to teach those skills to other students; they might focus on the "naturally independent" students and ignore the ones who need help learning to be more autonomous (Halabi, 2018).

On the other hand, seven out of ten teachers believed that learner autonomy can be developed. They emphasised the importance of giving all students opportunities to make choices and guiding them to reflect on their learning. For instance, Fatima said, "I believe autonomy can be developed: When students are given opportunities to make choices and are guided on how to reflect on their learning, they gradually become more autonomous." Sara highlights the need for support and training for students. "Students may not start as autonomous learners, but with the right strategies and support, they can develop these skills over time. It's about giving them the confidence to take control over their learning process." The theme among all the teachers in this study was the difficulty of fostering autonomy in the Libyan educational system, which often revolves around teacher-centred approaches. Four out of ten noted that even students with natural autonomy might struggle to fully develop their potential without an environment that engages that autonomy. Therefore, whether they thought autonomy was inherent or learnable, teachers viewed autonomy as a shared responsibility between students and the learning environment, showing that even naturally independent learners need support.

5.5 Importance of Learner Autonomy

The interviews revealed that all teachers considered learner autonomy to be essential for English language learning, although their reasons for this varied. Their views emphasised both academic and psychological benefits of learner autonomy and even helped students overcome issues with the curriculum. Ali says, "Autonomous learning is important to any language learner; it can help learners take control of their learning activities and study English much better." Yusuf shared a similar view, explaining that: "Learner autonomy is crucial for English language students. It empowers them to learn strategically and improve their skills over time." This perspective is echoed by Mohamed, who emphasised the importance of knowing how to learn autonomously, stating: "I think that autonomous learners may have a greater chance of success in learning than those who are not autonomous." These comments show that teachers

see learner autonomy as a way for students to take charge of their own learning, become more effective and achieve better results.

Teachers also identified that they considered learner autonomy to improve learning. Adam explained that when students find information on their own, they remember it better, as they know the resources and research strategies.

> As a teacher and lifelong learner myself, I find that relying on my own initiative and actively seeking information helps it stick with me much better than passively receiving it. Information I discover through my own efforts is far more memorable than something simply handed to me, which I'm more likely to forget. So, learner autonomy is definitely very important.

What is particularly interesting about Adam's quote is that he, as the teacher, positions himself not only as an educator but also as a learner. This dual perspective suggests a reflective approach to teaching, where personal learning practices inform pedagogical decisions. In Adam's case, this suggests that valuing his own autonomy influences how he encourages autonomy in his classroom.

Fatima believes that learner autonomy plays a vital role in bridging the gap between curriculum requirements and students' interests. As she explained:

> Learner autonomy is necessary because the curriculum doesn't always match what students are interested in. For example, it includes topics like gardening, which some students might find boring or irrelevant. With autonomy, students can choose to focus on things they actually enjoy, like travel or their personal hobbies.

Fatima emphasised that learner autonomy addresses this issue by allowing students to focus on areas that interest them, rather than being restricted to topics they find irrelevant. In her view, giving students the ability to explore subjects they enjoy helps sustain their motivation, even when parts of the curriculum feel unconnected to their needs.

Beyond academics, one teacher emphasised that learner autonomy is especially important because it prepares students to face challenges, even in hard times like civil wars or pandemics. Hana said:

> Learner autonomy is important because it teaches students to manage their own learning, even in difficult situations like the civil war in Libya. Autonomous students

> can cope with such challenges and continue their learning independently, without the need for constant help or support.

Another dimension of learner autonomy significance is explained by Mira, who discussed the emotional and personal benefits of learning autonomy. Mira pointed out that autonomous learners tend to feel less anxious and more confident: “Autonomous learners tend to experience less anxiety, even when faced with unexpected tests or questions. Their increased confidence, fostered by learner autonomy, strengthens their belief in their own abilities, leading to more effective and accurate responses. “Mira’s quotation highlights how learner autonomy can contribute to a more positive and productive learning experience. The same teacher added how learner autonomy motivates students and helps them understand themselves better. Mira explained:

> Learner autonomy helps students figure out what they are good at and where they need to improve. It also lets them explore things they are actually interested in. This makes the subject more fun and helps them feel more positive about it.

Mira’s quotation emphasises that when students direct more of their learning, they can focus on what matters most to them. She believed it boosts their confidence as they work on what they enjoy and feel more motivated.

In general, the teachers believe that learner autonomy helps students in many ways. They believe it can make learning more effective because students become more engaged and proactive. It can also make learning more enjoyable, as students have more decision-making power and can focus on what interests them. Teachers also pointed out that learner autonomy can help students go beyond the curriculum and explore topics in more depth. Perhaps most importantly, they see it as a confidence booster. Teachers felt that, when students take ownership of their learning, they naturally become more confident in their abilities, which in turn fuels their motivation to keep learning and growing. This is important because it shows teachers link learner autonomy with both academic progress and personal growth, making it central to sustaining long-term learning.

5.6 Teachers’ and Students’ Roles in Learner Autonomy

Teachers were also asked whether learner autonomy was related to them or their students, and whose role is more important in developing learners’ autonomy in the classroom, to identify how they perceived their roles and responsibilities towards learner autonomy. Seven out of ten teachers believed that students' level of learner autonomy was closely tied to the role of

teachers. The teacher's belief in their crucial role in learning autonomy development suggests that they see themselves as central to initiating and guiding this process. This support can take different forms, from carefully scaffolding learning activities to providing constructive feedback that guides students. It also involves equipping students with the strategies and tools they need to become successful independent learners. Those seven teachers provided several reasons to support this view. For example, Ali guided students by sharing personal learning experiences with them. This approach aimed to serve as a role model for the class, with a focus on offering psychological support to help students become more autonomous learners. Ali said:

> I usually tell my students, "I *know it's not always easy because I was a student, but trust me, you can do this.*" In the hopes that it may encourage them to keep going, I share with them my experiences overcoming obstacles and maintaining my motivation. Teaching is more than just delivering knowledge; it is also about empowering students to take charge of their own learning.

Ali's quote highlights his belief in the importance of his role in fostering learner autonomy. Another participant, Sara, specifically highlights the importance of using "kind and intelligent words." She explains that students are more likely to feel comfortable, confident, and willing to participate when teachers communicate with respect and encouragement. This shows her belief that learner autonomy grows in a classroom climate that is both supportive and intellectually stimulating. In other words, her emphasis on positive and thoughtful language reflects the view that students are more empowered to take ownership of their learning when they feel valued and respected. According to Adam, it is the teacher's task to inspire students to value learning. One way of motivation suggested by participants was awarding extra marks, given the strong emphasis Libyan students place on grades. While extrinsic rewards are not always seen as effective in the literature (Brima & Abdelaty, 2023), teachers in this study focused on extra marks because grades hold strong value in the Libyan context. Adam explained, "Sometimes, just a little reward like extra marks can make a big difference because grades mean so much to students. It encourages them to put in more effort and see the value of learning." Salma suggested that a reward could encourage students to work independently. She said:

> The teacher's role is like a coach, to guide and ensure students stay on track. By following up and providing encouragement, students begin to take ownership of their learning and feel proud of their progress. No student is a lost cause if you give them the

> right push. Some are naturally motivated, but others simply need that extra encouragement. This is where the teacher's role is crucial.

Salma believed that with the right support, any student can take ownership of their learning, and that teachers are essential in providing that push, especially for students who are not naturally motivated. This suggests that personalised support is key, even more so than simple rewards, for fostering learner autonomy in higher education (Alkorbow & Eldeeb, 2021).

Some teachers felt that although they were key to building learner autonomy, students' unfamiliarity with this type of learning made it difficult. Yusuf believed that a student's age significantly influenced their ability to become autonomous. Introducing autonomy early would better prepare students, making the concept more familiar by the time they reach university. Yusuf indicated that students needed training in autonomous learning methods, emphasising the teacher's role as a guide:

> I believe the teacher's role is very important because students need strategies that books alone cannot provide. First-year students often find it difficult to adapt to autonomy since they are not used to it. As a teacher, my role is to guide them and teach management skills that will help them gradually take control of their own learning.

Teachers in this study believed their role was crucial because first-year university students often did not know how to study independently. This supports the view that autonomy is not something students naturally possess, especially at the beginning of their studies. Instead, the teacher plays a crucial role in equipping students with strategies and management skills that enable them to gradually take responsibility for their own learning.

To better support this development, Hana proposed training teachers to help them prepare students for autonomy. Hana believed teachers' role is to provide useful strategies to support students to take control of their own learning, but she also believed that teachers need to put in as much effort as their students to foster learner autonomy, saying: "Teachers need training. We expect them to be ready to guide students toward autonomy. It should be part of the system, ensuring teachers work as hard as students to achieve this goal."

Mira viewed her role in fostering learner autonomy as central, emphasising that autonomy must be initiated and directed by the teacher. She believed that teacher-assigned tasks were necessary to guide students toward becoming more independent. As she explained, autonomy begins with how much responsibility the teacher allows students to take. Mira said, "I give them tasks because autonomy depends on whether I do everything for them or let them learn on their own."

When asked for clarification, Mira suggested that autonomy was largely teacher-driven, explaining:

> I'm the guide and evaluator. When a lesson is new, students cannot become independent learners immediately. For example, I might ask them to research something, which is a form of LA, but it still starts with me. The teacher's role is to instruct and advise students how to learn on their own.

When asked if students could learn independently without teacher input, Mira responded: "No, I need to guide them. I organise group projects, give them a key task to start with, let them continue learning on their own, and assess them at the end." This response reflects a teacher-centred view of learner autonomy, where guidance is essential for beginning the learning process. Mira explained that she uses group projects and research tasks to introduce autonomy gradually, but always within a structure she controls. She described her role as guiding and organising autonomy as something that must be carefully cultivated by the teacher, rather than achieved by simply giving students complete freedom.

In contrast to the teachers discussed above, Nadia, Fatima and Mohamed believed the role of students is more important than that of teachers in fostering learner autonomy. Nadia emphasised that autonomy depends heavily on the students' abilities and English level: "Autonomy depends a lot on the students. If they have strong English skills and the ability to learn independently, they can take control of their learning. Without those, progress is much harder." This highlights that a student's readiness for autonomy is considered to be closely linked to their skills and confidence. Without foundational abilities, students may struggle to take charge of their learning, even with support from teachers.

Another teacher explained that the students' role is important because they need to take responsibility for their learning. However, cultural upbringing can make this challenging: Fatima said, "In our society, children are often raised to rely on others, so it's a challenge for them to take responsibility for their learning. But autonomy starts with their willingness to change that mindset." This suggests that while students are considered by the teachers to be ultimately responsible for their learning, they may need support in overcoming ingrained cultural habits that hinder learner autonomy.

Building on this point, Mohamed placed particular emphasis on the role of student motivation: "I think students' role is more important. Students' interest and effort are the key to autonomy. Even with the best support from a teacher, nothing will change if the students aren't motivated

to take responsibility for their learning." This shows that autonomy primarily depends on students' willingness to participate and take initiative. Even with excellent guidance, progress remains limited if students lack motivation and effort. It is ultimately up to the students to actively engage and take charge of their own learning. Overall, this finding in this section shows how teachers understand responsibility in developing learner autonomy, which shapes how they support it in their classrooms.

5.7 Teachers' Beliefs About Students' Involvement in Learning Decisions in Class

In the interviews, teachers were asked to what extent they are currently involved in making decisions with their students, and to what extent they would like to involve their students in making decisions about setting lesson objectives, selecting teaching methods, choosing homework, and evaluation techniques. The findings showed that while 70% of teachers gave students freedom to choose some of their homework and assignments, they do not currently involve students much. However, they would like to increase student participation in some areas, such as teaching methods. In contrast, teachers see assessments and lesson objectives as their own responsibility and within their control. Teachers mentioned several reasons that prevent them from giving students a choice. These barriers will be explained in detail in section 5.8.

Some other teachers said they rarely involve students in decision-making because they believe students are not ready for this responsibility. Mira explained: "While I would like to involve students more in decision-making, they often lack the responsibility to take part in choosing teaching methods. Many students prefer to be guided rather than take initiative." Teachers worry that students may not be ready to take on this responsibility. Moreover, teachers' choices are also limited by higher-level institutional or government requirements, which means they are not always free to choose or modify teaching methods themselves. This highlights a key tension: promoting learner autonomy requires not only willingness from teachers but also readiness from students. Giving students this chance would also require that they know what they need to learn, which may not always be the case.

Cultural and institutional expectations can significantly influence how teachers perceive and implement learner autonomy, including limiting student involvement in decision-making. For example, Nadia explained that: "In Libya, teachers are expected to make every decision, from what to teach to how to assess students. Involving students in such decisions is interpreted as a show of weakness." This suggests that established cultural norms can create barriers to shared

decision-making and the development of student autonomy, even when teachers may want to give more power to their students. Despite this risk of 'weakness,' many teachers said they want to involve students more, especially in choosing homework and tasks. Fatima commented:

> I believe involving students in choosing their tasks can improve their motivation and engagement. It gives them a sense of ownership. Personally, I think I should give the students more room to make decisions, like choosing their assignments and homework.

This emphasises the potential benefits of involving students in decision-making, especially in contexts where full autonomy might not be culturally accepted. For example, Fatima highlighted that allowing students to choose their tasks can enhance their motivation and engagement. This approach helps students develop a sense of ownership over their learning and promotes active participation. The teacher's idea of providing students with more choices demonstrates a move towards student-centred learning, recognising that flexibility is important. However, they also mention barriers such as the lack of flexibility in the curriculum and time constraints. For instance, Sara said: "The curriculum is very structured, and there's little room for flexibility. Even if I wanted to involve students more, the system does not support it." This reflects the fact that curriculum decisions are largely determined at higher institutional levels, leaving teachers with limited ability to adapt or modify content to support autonomy. With limited flexibility and time, it becomes a real challenge to create interactive, autonomy-driven learning experiences.

Some teachers, such as Adam, see learner autonomy as important for helping students become independent learners, but are hesitant to let students make major decisions: "I encourage students to be active participants in class discussions, but big decisions like choosing evaluation methods are beyond their scope." Adam's comment shows a limited view of learner autonomy. This suggests a willingness to share some control, but not when it comes to important areas like assessment, as students are perceived not to have that expertise. Teachers do not seem to recognise that this expertise could be developed in students, even though they generally view learner autonomy as teachable. The above evidence showed that teachers tended to be resistant to generally engaging their students in lesson objectives, selecting the teaching method, and evaluation techniques. This means that students' choices were limited, mainly to homework tasks or selecting the teaching method.

Overall, the interviews show that teachers want to involve students more but face challenges like rigid systems, time management, cultural norms, and concerns about students' readiness. After exploring how desirable learner autonomy is in various classroom decisions, the next section explores the barriers teachers feel might prevent its promotion further.

5.8 Teachers' Beliefs about Constraints to Fostering Learner Autonomy

The data from the interviews revealed three sets of constraints hindering the development of learner autonomy: individual learner-related constraints, institution-related constraints, and culture-related constraints; these three dimensions provide a comprehensive recommendation to create a more conducive environment for autonomous learning in Libyan universities.

5.8.1 Learner-Related Constraints

Inadequate student responsibility for their own learning was identified as a key constraint to learner autonomy. This issue is closely connected to broader dispositions necessary for autonomous learning, including motivation and independence. It suggests that students may not inherently possess or may not have been adequately encouraged to develop the qualities of responsibility essential for managing their own learning processes. Ali emphasises the issue of inadequate student responsibility for their learning, stating:

> Students need to be taking more responsibility because they are studying to gain expertise in their chosen fields, no obstacles! Everything is there, private if not available by universities. What will stop or hinder learning except the student themselves. It depends on students' readiness; they must be ready to learn.

Ali believes that more responsibility should be placed on the student, with no suggestion about whether they are provided with the right resources. The teacher emphasises the expectation that university students should exert greater effort and assume more responsibility than the teacher in the learning process. Ali also mentions that students need the right mindset, such as being ready to learn, to develop learner autonomy. It emphasises that all necessary resources for learning, whether facilities, teachers, books, or internet access, are available privately if not provided by universities. According to Ali, the only possible hindrance to learning is the student themselves. This highlights the importance of student readiness, as Ali stated that "everything depends on the student." Here, he is referring to the ability of Libyan families to provide their children with internet access, books, and all the necessary resources for learning – or for students to sort out access on their own.

Salma concurs with Ali and identifies a further student disposition linked to learner autonomy (motivation):

> Well, some students aren't taking much responsibility, which really brings me down as a teacher. They're not too motivated to study. I believe that this factor significantly impacts the development of learner autonomy. When students want to work independently, I'm happy to give them the chance and encourage them. But many aren't motivated and avoid taking responsibility, so I end up leading the class in a more traditional, teacher-centred way.

Salma's comment shows that when students avoid responsibility, she feels forced into a more traditional, teacher-centred role. Her frustration indicates that low student motivation limits learner autonomy and also shapes teachers' practices, creating a cycle where reduced engagement narrows opportunities for autonomy and discourages teachers from fostering it further (Benson, 2021).

Another view expressed by participants is exemplified by Nadia, who briefly outlined several obstacles that she believes significantly impact the development of learner autonomy. "A lot of my students hesitate to embrace autonomy because they lack confidence in their skills. They're afraid to make mistakes, so they avoid situations where they might have to take charge." This quote underscores a significant obstacle to developing autonomous learners among students. The phrase "a lot of" implies the perception that it is widespread among many students. The tendency to rely on others may arise from a reluctance to step out of their comfort zone. However, it is important for teachers to consider that this hesitation may not necessarily be due to a lack of willingness, but rather due to a lack of knowledge or experience in being autonomous learners. It could be that students are not aware of how to be independent in their learning, particularly if they have never been expected to do so before. Students may not know how to manage their own learning, especially if they have never been expected to do so before. This lack of experience could explain their reluctance and persistent reliance on the teacher.

The following examples shed light on the challenges raised by a lack of experience with learner autonomy. Fatima said:

> Some teachers just hand out full marks if you regurgitate the textbook word for word, turning us into memorisation machines. Me? I'm all about giving props to students who throw in their own words and mix it up with a bunch of different vocab; that's how you really learn.

These findings demonstrate how assessment methods can contribute to shaping students' learning behaviour. Such forms of learning were noticed to have become a deeply ingrained tradition within the Libyan educational system. Teachers perceive these factors as revealing culturally specific aspects of Libyan students' reliance on external motivation. While the perspective of Fatima highlights some of these challenges, it is important to note that other participants shared similar views.

5.8.2 Institution-Related Constraints

This section specifically addresses additional constraints related to institutional education. A view commonly expressed by ninety per cent of participants is illustrated by Nadia, who clearly refers to this challenge, placing the blame on educational institutions for failing to provide basic learning methods that encourage students to develop learner autonomy. Nadia explains that:

> Since the civil war in 2011, no learning resources, no library. I sometimes use my personal Wi-Fi to help my students access the internet when we need it, as we rarely get reliable internet access from the university.

This quote exemplifies some of the constraints faced by participants in Libya and the mark that has been left by the civil war on the educational system. The absence of libraries and limited access to technology present a clear picture of the educational system struggling to provide some of the necessary foundations for fostering learner autonomy (Elmahjoub, 2014). These struggles across conflict-affected contexts show that when educational systems lack stability, developing learner autonomy becomes difficult. A lack of libraries, for instance, leaves students without essential space and resources that they can use for learning, meaning that they are more reliant on the source the teacher provides; there are fewer opportunities for extending their learning. Extension in this context refers to activities that allow students to go beyond the classroom, such as independent research and practice, which are critical for developing autonomy, as Benson (2011) and Little (1991) argue. Learner autonomy requires opportunities for independent research and practice beyond the classroom.

Time and strict schedules are also identified as constraints, with teachers expressing frustration about mandatory time limits, which impede learner autonomy. For example, Yusuf says: "Because the timetable is so tight, students struggle to find opportunities for personal growth or even reflect on what they're learning." The theme of navigating time and curriculum constraints emerges as one of the primary challenges in fostering learner autonomy. Mohamed

explained that limited time prevents group discussions, which are essential for promoting learner autonomy:

> In my teaching experience, I've found that group discussions work really well to develop learner autonomy and get students working on their own. But, you know, the issue is time, we're always racing to cover the syllabus, and that's holding back the development of learner autonomy. It's like, we know what works, but the pressure to stick to the curriculum is making it tough to fully embrace these effective teaching strategies.

He further explains that while group discussions effectively encourage students to work independently, the constant pressure to complete the syllabus limits their use. This reflects a tension between implementing effective teaching strategies and adhering to strict curriculum requirements. Overall, the teacher participants thought that group discussions provide students with opportunities to share ideas and take responsibility for their learning. Without enough time for these activities, students miss out on developing the skills that may be needed for learner autonomy.

Another frequently cited constraint among teacher participants was a lack of teacher autonomy. Teachers expressed a sense of limited autonomy, as explained by Hana and Mohamed.

> We follow a specific plan outlined by the educational institution, and sometimes we are under pressure as teachers. Due to time constraints and the adherence to the university syllabus, Teachers are required to focus on covering a predefined curriculum and teaching the four language learning skills, further limiting their autonomy in shaping instructional strategies (Hana)

> Teachers have to follow strict rules set by administrators and the education department. They do not get to choose the curriculum, materials, or objectives. They are expected to stick to the official textbooks and finish them on time. Even the tests and how they're done are decided for them. (Mohamed)

In the Libyan context, the lack of teacher autonomy may have consequences on the development of learner autonomy. Teachers in this study are pressured to follow institution-prescribed plans that focus on delivering a structured set of language skills, which restricts their ability to introduce student-centred learning activities. This lack of autonomy means that teachers in this study have limited control over adapting lessons to promote learner autonomy,

as their primary responsibility is often completing a curriculum rather than fostering learning skills.

5.8.3 Sociocultural-Related Constraints

In addition to the previously mentioned factors related to learners and institutions, this element of the research has identified additional obstacles that may be linked to sociocultural constraints. For instance, teachers expressed the perception that learner autonomy is a Western construct, which they felt may not align with the values and practices of Middle Eastern societies because, in their view, these societies often emphasise collective learning and teacher-centred approaches over individual exploration and self-directed education. Furthermore, participants suggested that the cultural focus on respecting authority figures may discourage questioning or independent decision-making in the classroom. Some teachers perceived that the "Western" lifestyle and education system encourages autonomous learners. As Mira explained, "In our society (Middle East), students rely heavily on the teacher for direction. Western education seems to focus on making students responsible for their own learning, which is so different." The quote highlights participants' perception of the contrast between teacher-centred learning in the Middle East and student-centred approaches in Western education. In the Middle East, teachers in this study believed that students often rely heavily on teachers for guidance, reflecting a hierarchical system where teachers are the primary source of knowledge (Hammad, 2018), hindering the development of independent learning skills. In contrast, they viewed Western education as encouraging students to take responsibility for their learning and autonomy. The difference stems from what participants identified as cultural and systemic expectations, with Middle Eastern systems emphasising structure and direction over exploration and self-reliance.

In addition, participants pointed out that Libyan parents often take a strict traditional approach that values obedience over independence. This cultural mindset can make it harder for students to develop their own opinions and make decisions. For example, Yusuf mentioned that:

> Students do not see learning as a field for exploration, so critical thinking is not encouraged. Students are not taught to ask questions but rather to accept what the teacher tells them. At home, they follow their parents in a similar way.

This quotation reflects a cultural mindset where students come to university expecting to simply follow what teachers instruct them to do, rather than actively engaging with the material or questioning it. In this context, the teacher is the respected figure and source of knowledge,

making the learners passive recipients. However, despite classes being teacher-centred, Yusuf believed there is still room for students to become autonomous learners.

> Teachers should give instructions to students, who are then left to follow those instructions; this method could be used as a route toward teachers guiding or directing their students while introducing some autonomous activities into the classroom.

This approach represents a technical strategy, gradually shifting responsibility to students through structured tasks, as discussed earlier, but it is also shaped by the sociocultural context, where teacher authority and hierarchy are valued. In this case, the technical and cultural dimensions interact clearly. Teacher guidance respects cultural expectations while simultaneously creating a space for students to begin practising autonomy. This suggests that even within the traditional Libyan educational culture, there may be pathways to foster learner autonomy by aligning technical methods (like guided tasks) with culturally acceptable practices. Rather than challenging cultural norms outright, autonomy can be introduced gradually and be used to develop independent learning habits over time. Adam presented a broader perspective, highlighting the role of cultural homogeneity in shaping learner autonomy.

> Students learn from each other, so the situation would be different if we had a mix of cultures and backgrounds, but since 2011, most students are from one cultural background, the Middle East. The resources provided by the university were also considered a hindrance to autonomy.

Adam further suggested that diverse cultural backgrounds among students could enhance learning through peer interaction because, before the civil war in 2011, Libyan universities had a more diverse student population, including international students, particularly in fields like engineering and medicine. This diversity provided more opportunities for students to exchange ideas and learn from peers with different educational and cultural experiences. However, since 2011, students in Libyan universities are mostly Libyan and Middle Eastern students, who are experiencing nearly the same instruction as where the teacher-centric approach is predominant.

Another key issue is responsibility for outcomes, as explained by Sara

> In Libya, if students aren't doing well, fingers often point at teachers. When we ask them to step up and do activities for improvement, they're like, "Can you do it? It's your job." There's this mindset that it's all on the teachers to make things work.

This quote shows that in Libya, when students struggle academically, they usually blame the teachers. They resist teachers' prompts for active engagement, as expressed in "Can you, do it?

It's your job," which indicates a cultural inclination towards a more teacher-centric approach to education. This presents additional barriers for students to become autonomous learners. The reported resistance from students when asked to be an active participant in their learning suggests not only a reliance on teachers but also a potential lack of confidence or preparedness to engage in autonomous learning. This lack of responsibility appears to be deeply rooted in cultural expectations, where educational success is viewed primarily as the teacher's responsibility rather than a shared effort (Saleh, 2020).

5.9 Characteristics and Practices Enhancing Learner Autonomy

This section explores the characteristics and practices that teachers believe enhance learner autonomy, examining their views on the importance of fostering learner autonomy and the specific strategies they employ to support its development. Investigating the practices and behaviours that teachers associate with autonomous learners revealed important insights into how they understand autonomy. During interviews, the teachers highlighted several strategies they believed encouraged students to become more independent. These included promoting self-management by encouraging learners to take responsibility for their learning, teaching effective learning strategies, fostering motivation through engagement in language learning, and using collaborative activities to enhance teamwork and interaction. Teachers emphasised that these practices played a crucial role in helping students take charge of their own learning. While teachers could easily identify individuals who are autonomous learners, they were dissatisfied with how few students showed these qualities. Mohamed noted, for example, "Yes, but there aren’t many. Maybe they’re doing it unconsciously, but they are autonomous." This suggests that some students do show autonomy, but often without being fully aware of it: autonomy exists among some students, but it remains underdeveloped. This issue leads into the next section on how teachers support autonomy through self-management practices.

5.9.1 Learner Autonomy Enhancement by Self-Management Practices and Characteristics

This section examines how teachers view and support the development of self-management practices, a key component of learner autonomy. Teachers highlighted several important strategies, including planning study time, practising independently, addressing weaknesses, and using self-explanation. A common theme was the importance of time management, with teachers emphasising that skills like planning and setting deadlines help students take control of their learning. For example, Salma stated:

> Students need to plan their time and stick to deadlines. When they do that, they are more likely to achieve their learning goals. Without a plan, students tend to move aimlessly through the semester, so I do believe planning study time is very important to promote learner autonomy.

This highlights that, without these practices, students may lack direction and fail to meet their goals. She sees that self-management fosters independence and discipline, which are essential traits of autonomous learners and academic success.

Nadia emphasised the need for independent practice, explaining: “I always tell my students they can’t rely only on the classroom. The ones who practice outside class and try new methods learn English much faster.” This quote underscores the significance of self-directed learning. Students who actively seek resources and practice beyond the classroom environment gain exposure to diverse learning methods. This independent effort is a critical component of developing autonomy in language learning (Al-Abyadh & Abdel Azeem, 2022).

Four teachers out of ten noted the value of addressing weaknesses directly, for example, Yusuf explained: "I often ask my students to figure out where they’re struggling. Once they know their weak points, we can work together to fix them.” Yusuf believes that this practice promotes active problem-solving and self-awareness. By identifying their challenges, Yusuf believes students can take initiative in resolving them and reinforcing their role as active participants in the learning process. This not only supports language development but also cultivates a sense of ownership and autonomy.

Additionally, Fatima highlighted the importance of self-explanation. She said: “When students explain things in their own words, it helps them understand better. I always ask them to explain new concepts to their classmates or me. I believe it really makes a difference." This quote from Fatima illustrates the role of metacognitive strategies in learning. By articulating concepts in their own words, students deepen their understanding and internalise knowledge more effectively. Fatima stated that this process not only strengthens their learning but also enhances their ability to work independently and develop autonomy.

Overall, teachers described how they help students develop self-management skills, an important part of learner autonomy. They mentioned strategies like planning study time, working independently, addressing weaknesses, and using self-explanation to help students take charge of their learning.

5.9.2 Learner Autonomy Enhancement Through Developing Learning Strategies.

This section explores teachers' views on how learners' autonomy can be enhanced through the development of various learning strategies. The teachers discussed several activities they believed could promote learner autonomy. They suggested using media, such as listening to English songs and watching movies. They also highlighted useful learning strategies, like breaking large tasks into smaller steps. In addition, writing down words and phrases from these sources was recommended as an effective way for students to independently learn English from their surroundings. For instance, Fatima noted that many students in the university, despite limited resources, demonstrate autonomous learning behaviours by employing various strategies like note-taking and summarising tasks. Fatima explained: “I characterise autonomous learners as those who actively use strategies like taking notes and summarising during class. These students form a good number, which shows that our students can develop autonomy even with limited resources.” Furthermore, Fatima added, "I help students adopt these strategies because they’re effective when studying independently. Skills like summarising and making diagrams help them focus on the essential points and make learning more manageable." Based on these insights, strategies like note-taking and summarising are thought to help students actively engage with their learning. She sees these methods as essential for improving understanding and retaining knowledge. Also, she considers that visualising information, such as through diagrams or mind maps, further helps students organise and connect ideas, making it easier for them to learn independently and be autonomous.

Additionally, teachers emphasised the role of technology in fostering learner autonomy, even in contexts with limited resources, such as Libyan universities, where Wi-Fi is not widely available (as noted earlier by Nadia in Section 5.8.2). Mira also shared the same point. She explained: "Since there is no Wi-Fi at the university, I often share my personal connection with students. I believe technology is essential for their learning." Based on her quote, allowing students to use devices like phones for research teaches them how to access and evaluate information effectively. This practice equips students with digital literacy skills that they can apply independently at home or in other environments.

Teachers in this study believe that an autonomous learner should actively use materials beyond what is provided in class, such as exploring extra resources and engaging in activities that enhance learning. However, in public universities, only a few students demonstrate this kind of autonomy, especially compared to those in private institutions, as explained by Hana, who has taught English in both private and public institutions. She identified that in private language

schools; students take more responsibility for their learning and seek extra materials. This may also be because private schools require students to pay fees, meaning they attend voluntarily and are often more motivated. On the other hand, students in public universities tend to focus only on exam preparation and are less interested in using additional resources or strategies to improve their learning. She explained that when she taught in a private university, “students were very responsible, they searched for answers using other resources online, they did extra activities and even talked to each other in English.” This behaviour can be understood in light of how both institutional structures shape students’ priorities. If universities place a heavy emphasis on exam results as markers of success, students may see little value in engaging with learning beyond what is required for the test. Hana also raises an important question: why should students invest time and effort in using extra resources or developing broader skills if the system primarily rewards exam performance? She explains that in the context of English language learning, this also depends on whether students see English as a tool for professional development or simply as a subject they must pass to earn their degree. If students do not perceive English as having real-world value beyond university, their motivation to explore learning strategies independently is likely to remain limited.

In contrast, university students showed less interest in activities beyond their exam preparation. The same teacher (Hana) explained: "At the university, students only care about studying for exams. When I tried to give extra materials, they would ask if they would be in the exam. If not, they wouldn’t bother with it." This suggests that the pressure of high-stakes exams can discourage autonomous learning, as students prioritise studying for the test above all else. It also shows how the culture of an institution can influence students’ approach to their education. The difference in autonomy between private and public university students may result from varying levels of teacher encouragement and institutional support, and also from the voluntary, fee-paying nature of private language schools, where students choose to attend, and classes are often targeted toward specific language goals, teachers in this study said that, in private institutions, students often take a more active role in their learning, using strategies like exploring online resources and participating in discussions. However, in public universities, the exam-focused culture limits students’ willingness to engage in extra activities that foster autonomy.

5.9.3 Motivation as a Key Factor in Developing Learner Autonomy

Seven out of ten participating teachers strongly emphasised the importance of motivation for students to learn independently. They described autonomous learners as highly motivated individuals who demonstrate a clear willingness and interest in their learning. Adam said

> An autonomous learner is someone who's naturally motivated. You can see it when they talk and discuss what they've clearly done their research. They're interested in what they're studying, and they can express themselves well in English too.

This quote highlights teachers' perceptions that autonomous learners are driven by interest. Their motivation leads them to research topics on their own and engage actively in discussions. In this way, students' interests can contribute to intrinsic motivation, which not only sparks learning but also enables students to take greater control of their learning process. A common idea was that showing a willingness to learn is key; teachers saw it as the first step toward becoming autonomous, as Ali noted: "When students show curiosity and ask questions, they are not just depending on us but trying to discover things on their own. This kind of behaviour is very motivating for both the teacher and the student." He highlights that when students take an active role and show interest, they move from just listening to actually participating in their learning. This helps them become autonomous learner. However, motivation alone is not sufficient; students also need opportunities to develop the skills required for independent learning. His comment that this behaviour is "very motivating for both the teacher and the student" suggests a reciprocal relationship. He explained that student curiosity not only fuels teacher enthusiasm and supports positive teaching practices but also empowers students, strengthening their intrinsic motivation to learn. He added that teachers can promote this by creating a positive environment where asking questions and showing curiosity are valued.

Building on the idea of creating a positive and supportive learning environment, and further acknowledging the psychological domain of learning, Language games and informal activities were identified as valuable tools for reducing stress and making learning more enjoyable and promoting learner autonomy. Sara explained that "Sometimes students feel nervous when speaking English, but when we play a game, they forget their fear. They enjoy the process and learn without even realising it." Sara believed that informal, interactive activities can reduce stress, which is often a barrier to autonomous learning and learning in general, particularly in language acquisition.

In addition to using engaging activities, Sara emphasised that relational aspects of teaching are equally important in supporting learner autonomy. A supportive teacher-student relationship fosters a sense of trust and belonging, which motivates students to engage actively in their learning: “When students trust their teacher, they feel more comfortable and confident in learning. It’s like they know we are a team working towards the same goal.” This sense of trust and confidence, fostered by positive teacher-student relationships, seems to be a key ingredient for developing self-motivation, another crucial aspect of learner autonomy.

Teachers also talked about self-motivation as an important characteristic, often linking it to being persistent and able to bounce back from challenges. Mohamed commented:

> Students with natural motivation know exactly what they want to achieve in their learning. They don’t give up when faced with problems; they push through to solve them. They’re always prepared for assignments, tests, and extra work. These learners are ready to face challenges and succeed.

This highlights how motivated students are perceived to ‘naturally’ be determined and persistent. They don’t wait for others to solve their problems but take action themselves. Their preparation and resilience show that they are not only overcoming obstacles but also building the skills to work independently. The emphasis on persistence, "don't give up," "push through" highlights the resilience characteristics attributed to autonomous learners. Furthermore, their consistent preparation "always prepared" indicates a proactive approach to learning, where students take ownership of their academic success. From the interviews, it is clear that teachers see perseverance and intrinsic motivation as key traits of autonomous learners.

5.9.4 Learner Autonomy Enhancement by Learning Cooperatively.

This section looks at how teachers view cooperative learning as a way to boost learner autonomy. It considers their ideas on authentic communication with English speakers, the power of constructive feedback, and the benefits of collaborative projects, all of which teachers viewed as interconnected ways of promoting cooperative learning and supporting learner autonomy. These teachers offer valuable insights into how these approaches can encourage practical language use and active participation, ultimately helping students become more independent learners.

Ali emphasised the importance of encouraging students to communicate with English speakers from various countries, either online or in person. He noted: “When students communicate with people from other countries, they get real-world practice with the language. It’s not just about

grammar or vocabulary anymore, it's about using English naturally and confidently." This highlights the value of authentic communication in fostering learner autonomy in the view of the participants. However, this remains difficult in the Libyan context, where, following the civil war, many international students returned to their home countries. This situation likely limited opportunities for face-to-face interaction with native English speakers, making online communication even more crucial.

In addition to encouraging real-world communication, teachers also highlighted the importance of classroom-based strategies that promote interaction, such as the role of feedback from both teachers and peers. Teachers in this study believe that students who seek feedback from teachers or peers are the kind of learners who can develop autonomy more effectively. These learners do not depend on feedback but use it to improve their skills. Nadia explained:

> Students who actively look for feedback from us or their classmates are the ones who can improve their skills better. They don't depend on it but use it to figure out their strengths and weaknesses and take action to grow. I believe those students develop autonomy quickly.

This feedback is considered a key practice of learner autonomy. It demonstrates that students who actively look for feedback were willing to take charge of their own learning. They did not wait to be told how they are doing; they wanted to know so they can get better. Nadia made a great point that these students do not see feedback as a judgment, but as helpful information that can guide them. Nadia highlights that peer feedback also helps by encouraging teamwork and teaching students to evaluate their own work, which reveals that feedback's value depends on how students use it. Those who engage with feedback from teachers or classmates show a proactive attitude and a willingness to learn, she believes it is a key trait of autonomous learners.

Teachers also stressed the benefits of small group collaboration to enhance autonomy, as expressed here by Hana: "When students work together on projects, they learn from each other and share ideas. It teaches them how to communicate and take responsibility for their part of the work. These activities promote LA." Hana's view emphasises the development of individual responsibility within a collaborative context. While working in a group, students still have individual roles and responsibilities, which foster a sense of ownership. Hana believes that through teamwork, learners develop essential skills like communication and decision-making. Overall, teacher participants believe collaborative work fosters essential skills for

learning autonomy. By integrating these strategies into their teaching practices, teachers can support the development of autonomy and equip students with essential skills for autonomous learning.

5.10 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented the findings from semi-structured interviews with Libyan university EFL teachers about learner autonomy. Teachers saw autonomy as important for language learning and believed it could be developed by teaching strategies and encouraging the use of resources. They also mentioned challenges such as students' dependency, lack of institutional support, focus on exams, and cultural norms that give more authority to teachers. Still, many supported methods like group work and giving students more say in classroom decisions. On the whole, teachers recognised both possibilities and limits in promoting autonomy in the Libyan context. While these findings are grounded in English language teaching, several themes, such as motivation and self-management, reflect wider learning principles that may apply beyond EFL. In contrast, aspects related to language exposure and authentic English materials are specific to the language learning context. The next chapter presents the quantitative analysis of students' results, which adds another perspective on learner autonomy.

Chapter 6: Quantitative Analysis

6.1 Introduction of Students' Survey

To complement the findings from the semi-structured interviews and to provide a broader overview of students' perceptions of learner autonomy, a questionnaire was administered to 486 EFL students at Libyan public universities. As noted in Chapter Three, the questionnaire was developed to see how broadly the themes identified in Phase One were shared across a larger student sample. To help the reader understand the results, a brief explanation of the questionnaire structure is provided. The questionnaire had four sections. The first section included 24 items about beliefs on learner autonomy, answered using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree), where a lower mean shows stronger agreement. The second section had 16 items about specific practices and characteristics that support autonomy, with answers marked as Yes, Unsure, or No (coded as 1, 2, and 3). The third section asked general questions about the importance of learner autonomy, using the same response scale. The fourth section collected demographic information. Full details are explained in the Methodology chapter.

6.1.1 Students' Demographic Information

The demographic data of the 486 student participants show that females made up 59.3% of the sample compared to 41.7% males. (63.6%) of students were enrolled in the second semester, while 36.4% were in the first semester, all in their first year of study, where English is taught as a core subject. The largest shares of participants came from the University of Tripoli (15.2%) and the University of Benghazi (13.6%), while 26.5% were drawn from smaller or less-represented institutions. In terms of departments, most students were from the English Language department (42.8%), followed by Engineering (22.6%) and Social Sciences (18.4%), with smaller proportions in fields such as Computer Science (9.9%), Medicine (9.1%), and Religious Studies (8.6%). (See Appendix M for a detailed breakdown of these distributions).

6.1.2 Students' Beliefs About Learner Autonomy

Table 12 presents the results of a one-sample statistics analysis of university students' responses to items about the meaning of learner autonomy. Overall, most of the students viewed the concept of learner autonomy from a psychological perspective view of learner autonomy, where learner autonomy develops the ability to evaluate one's own learning and stay motivated in learning. Their beliefs were less in line with the political and sociocultural perspectives of

learner autonomy. This may indicate that students perceive autonomy as a personal responsibility related to their academic success, while being less aware of or less concerned with the other perspective of autonomy.

Mean levels of support perspective of learner autonomy

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean
Interviewee's perspective (Independent)	486	1	5	1.53
Psychological perspective	486	1	4	1.19
Political perspective	486	1	4	1.51
Sociocultural perspective	486	1	5	1.52
Technical perspective	486	1	4	1.35

i. 1_Strongly Agreed,5- strongly Disagreed

Table 12: Mean levels of support perspective of learner autonomy

Additionally, most of the students believe that learner autonomy is important in a language learning (LL) context. This result indicates the awareness among students about the importance of autonomy in foreign language learning (Figure 5-bar chart). These students will likely engage more actively and take greater responsibility for their learning, although this awareness may vary in how strongly students value or act upon it.

This awareness of autonomy's importance raises the question of how students understand its nature, whether they see it as a learnable skill or an innate trait. Students were asked whether they view learner autonomy as a skill that can be developed or as an innate characteristic to understand their beliefs and perceptions. The response to the nature of learner autonomy in this study's context was defined as, innate characteristics =1, learnable skill = 2 and both = 3. Figure 5- The pie chart shows that more than half of students believe that learner autonomy is a learnable skill; these students might be more likely to use strategies to foster autonomy. Conversely, the students who think it is innate might not prioritise autonomy-enhancing activities.

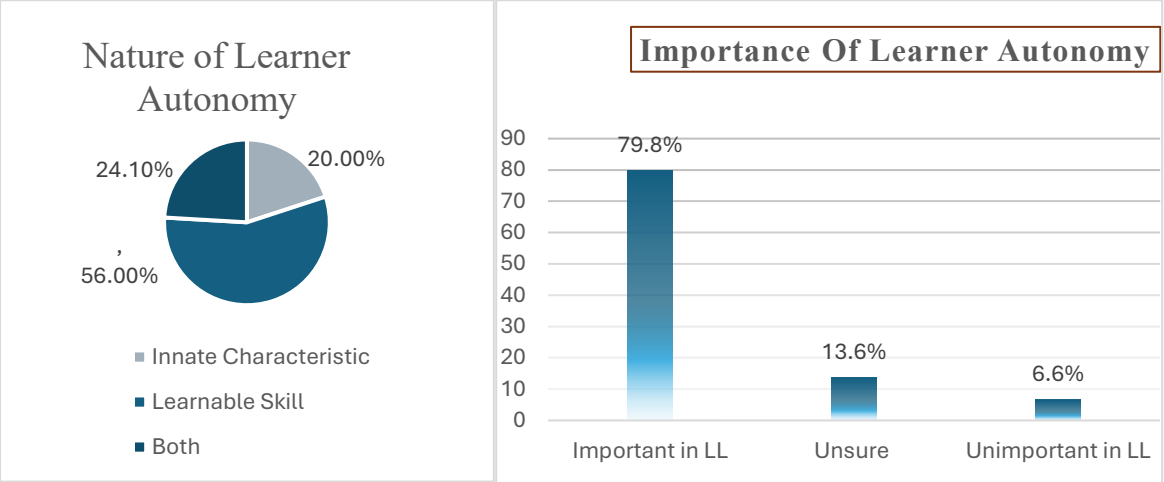

Figure 5: Students' views about the nature and importance of learner autonomy

6.1.3 Teachers' and Students' Roles in Developing Learner Autonomy in Classrooms

In the questionnaire, the students were asked whether learner autonomy was related to them or their teachers and whose role is more important in developing learners' autonomy in the classroom, to identify how they perceived their roles and responsibilities towards learner autonomy. Table 13 shows that most students considered that learner autonomy was related mainly to their teachers. This indicates that students believe the teachers' role is crucial in fostering learning autonomy, although a significant proportion also recognises the importance of their role to take charge of their own learning. This result demonstrates the need for a collaborative approach, where both teachers and students share responsibility in the development of learner autonomy. This balance is needed for developing a learning environment that encourages both guidance from teachers and self-directed efforts from students.

Additionally, students were asked whether learner autonomy was related to them more or related to their teachers to identify how they perceived their roles towards some specific areas. The areas evaluated included: the role of both teachers and students in assessing the learner's progress, stimulating interest in learning English, finding effective learning strategies, and supporting collaborative learning.

Students' Perceptions of Their Own Roles and Teachers' Roles				
Statement	Teacher's Role:72%		Student's Role:28%	
	Mean	P-value	Mean	P-value

Evaluation	1.68	< .001	1.79		<.001
Motivation	1.77	<.001	1.66		<.001
Collaborative Learning	2.05	<.001	2.29		<.001
Learning Strategies	1.94	<.001	1.58	.	<.001

* 1_Strongly Agreed ,5- strongly Disagreed

Table 13: Students' Perceptions of Their Own Roles and Teachers' Roles

Table 13 shows the results of a one-sample t-test for all eight items. The results suggest that students place greater importance on their own roles in developing learner autonomy. They especially emphasised responsibility for finding their own ways of practising English and selecting learning strategies. At the same time, the close mean values between teacher and student roles in motivation and assessment indicate that students view these responsibilities as shared. This suggests that while learners are willing to take initiative, they also expect teachers to provide guidance and encouragement. Teacher roles were rated slightly, particularly in facilitating collaborative learning, suggesting that students see teachers as especially important in creating peer-learning opportunities.

Overall, the results highlight that students perceive learner autonomy as a shared responsibility. While they prioritise self-direction in strategy use and independent practice, they also value teachers' involvement in sustaining motivation and supporting assessment. This balance underscores the importance of a collaborative approach to fostering learner autonomy.

6.1.4 Students' Views on Student Involvement in Decision-Making

The students' questionnaire asked about their current and preferred involvement in decision-making. These covered areas such as lesson objectives, teaching methods, homework, and evaluation techniques. Students were guided by a list of responsibilities adapted from Little's (2022) definition of learner autonomy.

Table 14 illustrates students' perceptions of their current and desired involvement in classroom decision-making. The data reveal a contrast between the extent to which students are currently engaged in decisions and the extent to which they wish to be engaged, reflecting a strong desire for greater participation in shaping their learning experiences.

Students' Views on Their Involvement in Decision-Making		
	Current Involvement:	Desired Involvement:
	To what extent are you currently involved in the following decisions?	To what extent would you like to be involved in the following decisions?

	Yes	No	Yes	No
Lesson Objectives	11.7%	88.3%	61.5%	38.5%
Teaching Methods	25.7%	74.3%	67.7%	32.3%
Homework & Tasks	32.3%	67.7%	68.7%	31.3%
Assessment	13.4%	86.6%	65.2%	34.8%

Table 14: Students' Views on Their Involvement in Decision-Making

Table 14 above suggests that while learners are often excluded from such fundamental decisions at present, they prefer to take more ownership of their learning goals and evaluation. A similar picture appears with teaching methods and homework. Table 14 shows that many students feel ready to have more responsibility in areas that directly affect their learning experience. The patterns in the questionnaire reflect similar issues raised in the qualitative data. Overall, the results point to a mismatch between current practice and what students want. students currently experience limited involvement in most areas of classroom decision-making; however, the majority express a strong desire for greater responsibility in the future. This reflects a clear interest in taking more control of their own learning, which is a key idea in learner autonomy.

6.1.5 Students' Beliefs about Constraints to Fostering Learner Autonomy

This section of the questionnaire investigated students' viewpoints on the main barrier hindering learner autonomy development in Libyan universities. The detailed statistical table with the percentages has been merged and is presented in Appendix O, while Figure 6 below provides a visual summary of the main findings with the mean scores.

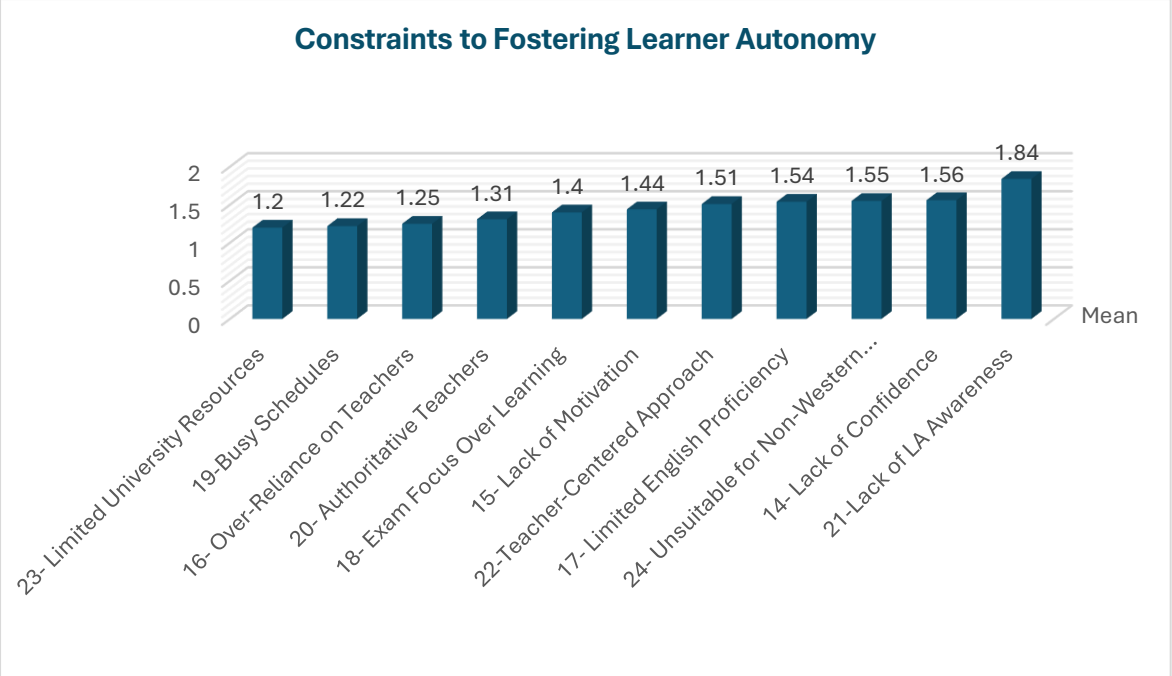

Figure 6: Students' Beliefs about Constraints to Fostering Learner Autonomy

Figure 6 provides an overview of the barriers that students believe hinder learner autonomy in Libyan universities. The lowest mean scores show strong agreement that factors restrict autonomous learning. What these results mean is that the barriers are not simply isolated problems but interconnected challenges that shape how learning occurs. For example, 97.3% of students either strongly agreed or agreed that the lack of university resources is a major barrier, and 96.9% felt the same about having a full study schedule. Similarly, more than 94% admitted that exam orientation and low motivation limited their autonomy, while 96.5% reported strong dependence on teachers. Even psychological barriers such as lack of confidence (84.8%) and limited proficiency (88.1%) were widely acknowledged. The consistently high levels of agreement across these items show that students recognise multiple overlapping challenges rather than a single cause. This suggests that learner autonomy in the Libyan university context cannot be developed unless institutional issues (such as resources and pedagogical approach) and learner-related factors (such as motivation and confidence) are addressed together. Full statistical details are provided in Appendix O.

6.1.6 Difficulty Ranking of Language Skills to Enhance Learner Autonomy

Table 15 presents an analysis of how students perceive the difficulty of language skills in terms of developing learner autonomy in English language classrooms at Libyan universities. The data categorises the skills into four levels of difficulty, ranging from most difficult to least

difficult. The purpose of asking students about these perceptions is to identify specific areas where they may struggle with autonomy and to adapt support accordingly.

Difficulty Ranking of Language Skills			
Skills	Difficulty Level	Frequency	Percent
Reading	Most Difficult	41	8.4%
	Second Most Difficult	23	4.7%
	Less Difficult	19	3.9%
	Least Difficult	403	82.9%
Writing	Most Difficult	85	17.5%
	Second Most Difficult	81	16.7%
	Less Difficult	307	63.2%
	Least Difficult	13	2.7%
Listening	Most Difficult	60	12.3%
	Second Most Difficult	312	64.2%
	Less Difficult	93	19.1%
	Least Difficult	21	4.3%
Speaking	Most Difficult	318	65.4%
	Second Most Difficult	63	13.0%
	Less Difficult	68	14.0%
	Least Difficult	37	7.6%
	Total	486	100%

Table 15: Difficulty Ranking of Language Skills

Table 15 shows that the majority of students responded to this item, ranking reading skills as the least difficult skill, with 82.9%, whereas only 8.4% of students consider reading to be the most difficult. This result is somewhat consensus that reading is generally considered less challenging for students at the university level than the other skills. Additionally, 63.2% of students rated writing skills as less difficult to develop learner autonomy. Despite this, 17.5% of students consider writing to be the most difficult skill, indicating that it presents challenges for them.

In contrast, almost two-thirds of the participants 65.4% ranked speaking skills as the most difficult skill to be an autonomous learner, and 64.2% selected listening skills are the second most difficult. This ranking highlights the difficulties students face with speaking and listening skills, aligning with their responses in the qualitative data analysis. Overall, the data analysis shows a distinct hierarchy in the perceived difficulty of language skills. Reading is seen as the easiest skill, while listening and speaking are regarded as the most difficult. Writing is considered less difficult than listening and speaking, but more difficult than reading.

6.1.7 The Implementation of Reflective Learning in University Classrooms

The questionnaire also includes a yes / no question asking students whether they have ever been asked to reflect on what they have learned. This question was designed to find out whether students are encouraged to engage in self-reflection as part of their learning process. Understanding their exposure to reflective practice helps assess how well current educational approaches support the development of learner autonomy and critical thinking skills. Descriptive data were generated for this variable. It is apparent from Table 16 that very few students engaged with such reflective activities, whereas about 87% of students have never practised reflective activities before. The patterns in the questionnaire reflect similar issues raised in the qualitative data. This result highlights a gap in the use of reflective activities as a pedagogical tool in the Libyan context.

Have you ever been asked by your teacher to reflect on what you have learned?		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	63	13.0%
No	423	87.0%
Total	486	100%

Table 16: Implementation of Reflective Learning in University Classrooms (Students)

6.1.8 Results for Section Two: Characteristics and Practices Enhancing Learner Autonomy

This section of the questionnaire aimed to investigate participants' points of view on the importance of developing autonomous characteristics and examining some kinds of practices, whether this development played a role in learner autonomy and enhancing language learning (or both). The 16 items were divided into four sets:

- Self-management (5 items): focuses on taking charge of learning and personal responsibility in learning.
- Developing learning strategies (4 items): emphasises the methods and tools used to enhance learning.
- Motivation (4 items): includes elements of self-motivation and engagement in language learning.
- Collaborative learning (3 items): highlights working with others to support learning.

The two questions asked about each item were, 'Does (the development of) this item enhance learner autonomy?', and 'Does (the development of) this item enhance language learning?'. The result was found to be very highly significant ($p < .001$). The result shows that students

strongly agree that developing such practices and characteristics significantly enhances learner autonomy.

Students believe that developing practices of self-management enhances learner autonomy, as shown in Table 17. Among the self-management practices, explaining material to themselves received the lowest mean score, which indicates the strongest level of agreement from students. The results suggest that students view learner autonomy primarily in terms of strategies that directly support understanding and independent progress, such as explaining material to themselves and working on their own to enhance their language learning. Planning and organising their study is also valued, but students show less confidence in reflective practices such as identifying weaknesses or evaluating their own learning. This indicates that while proactive self-management strategies are well established, more support may be needed to strengthen students' metacognitive and reflective skills.

Items of Self-Management (Practices /Characteristics)	**Students' response %**			**Mean**	**Rank**
	Yes	Unsure	No		
37-Explaining things to myself helps me understand and remember what I am learning.	83.1	15.6	1.2	1.18	1
33-I make better progress in learning when I work on my own.	81.1	17.7	1.2	1.20	2
29- I plan my study time and set specific deadlines to achieve my learning goals.	79.0	18.3	2.7	1.24	3
32- I actively identify my weaknesses and take steps to improve them.	63.2	33.3	3.5	1.40	4
25- Evaluating and reflecting on my own learning is helpful.	56.8	37.7	5.6	1.49	5
P value of items < .001***					

Table 17: Learner Autonomy enhancement by Self-Management Practices items

To build on this, the findings also highlight the role of motivation in shaping how students understand autonomy. Students also agreed that learner autonomy is enhanced by developing motivational practices and maintaining a positive attitude towards learning (Table 18). The item most strongly agreed upon was motivating oneself when feeling discouraged about learning, with 90.5% of students agreeing with this practice. It received the lowest mean score, indicating the strongest agreement. Building a positive relationship with teachers was also valued, suggesting that students link motivation not only to internal drive but also to supportive interpersonal connections. Generally, the items suggest that students associate learner autonomy with both intrinsic and extrinsic forms of motivation. However, the stronger support for self-encouragement and willingness to learn indicates that intrinsic motivation plays a more central role in how they perceive the development of autonomy, while extrinsic factors, such as teacher support or online games, are also recognised as important but appear slightly less central.

Items of motivation (characteristics and practices)	Students' response %			Mean	Rank
	Yes	Unsure	No		
28-I motivate myself when I feel down about my learning.	90.5	7.2	2.3	1.12	1
40- Building a positive relationship with my teacher makes the subject more enjoyable and helps enhance my skills.	82.5	14.2	3.3	1.21	2
35- Using online language games and fun activities to make learning less stressful and more enjoyable.	76.1	21.2	2.1	1.25	3
34-Demonstrate a willingness to learn.	76.1	20.8	3.1	1.27	4
P-value of items < .001***					

Table 18: Learner Autonomy enhancement by motivation characteristics and practices

Following this, the results show that students also view learning strategies as central to developing autonomy. Table 19 shows that students regard learning strategies as a keyway of enhancing autonomy. The most widely agreed-upon practice was the independent use of additional resources beyond teacher-provided materials, with 79% of students reporting this as important. Nearly the same proportion valued strategies such as note-taking, summarising, and translation, which highlights their recognition of the need to actively process and manage information rather than rely solely on instruction. Breaking large tasks into smaller steps was also considered useful, indicating that students link effective organisation and planning with autonomous learning. These results suggest that students see learner autonomy as based on taking initiative, applying effective learning strategies, and managing their studies well, while the use of authentic materials, though valued, is considered less central.

Items of developing learning strategies (Practices /Characteristics)	Students' response %				
	Yes	Unsure	No	Mean	Rank
27-Besides the material I have been given by the teacher, I independently use other resources to learn some topics.	79.0	20.4	0.6	1.22	1
31- I independently use various strategies like taking notes, summarising, and translation to aid my learning.	78.2	20.4	1.4	1.23	2
30- I break large tasks into smaller, manageable steps to facilitate learning.	72.8	25.3	1.9	1.29	3
38-Engaging with authentic materials like English news articles, podcasts, and watching videos.	73.3	23.7	3.1	1.30	4
P-value of items < .001***.					

Table 19: Learner Autonomy enhancement by developing learning strategy items

In addition to self-management, motivation, and learning strategies, students also emphasised the value of collaboration. the findings indicate that students consider collaborative learning an important contributor to learner autonomy (Table 20). The most widely supported item was collaborating with classmates on small group projects. Students agree that this enhances autonomy. By comparison, communicating with English learners from other countries, either online or in person, received lower agreement, suggesting that students prioritise local

classroom-based collaboration and feedback over external or cross-cultural communication. These results suggest that students understand learner autonomy in interdependent terms, where collaboration with classmates and feedback from teachers or peers are seen as essential supports. They recognise that collaboration with peers and feedback from teachers can support their autonomy, particularly in familiar classroom contexts. Overall, these results provide a broad overview of how students perceive cooperative activities as part of autonomy, complementing the qualitative findings that emphasised collaboration and feedback as recurring themes. They offer an indication of how widespread these views are across the larger sample.

Items of learning cooperatively	**Students' response %**			**Mean**	**Rank**
	Yes	Unsure	No		
36. Collaborating with my classmates on small-group projects.	78.0	15.8	6.2	1.28	1
26 Getting feedback from my teachers or peers is very helpful.	70.2	23.7	6.2	1.36	2
39-Communicating with English learners from different countries, either online or in person.	65.8	24.1	10.1	1.44	3
P-value of items < .001***.					

Table 20: Learner Autonomy Enhancement by Cooperative Learning Practices

6.1.8.2 Results for Question 2: Do Certain Characteristics and Practices Enhance Language Learning?

The second question in section two of the questionnaire asked whether these practices also enhance language learning. This was designed as a follow-up to examine whether the same practices that support learner autonomy are also seen to promote language learning. In the semi-structured interviews, students confirmed this link, explaining that the development of these practices helps them become more autonomous learners, which in turn supports their language learning. Table 21 presents the students' responses, showing that they believe all four sets of practices play a crucial role in enhancing language learning. Students expressed positive opinions about the role of the statements provided in the questionnaire in enhancing language learning (Mean = 1.15).

Descriptive statistics for overall Language Learning enhancement

Practices /Characteristics	Students' Response %			Mean	Rank
	Yes	Unsure	No		
Self-Management	95.9	4.1	-	1.04	1
Motivation and Engagement	95.3	4.7	-	1.05	2
Collaborative Learning	89.5	7.6	2.9	1.13	3
Learning Strategies	86.4	11.7	1.9	1.15	4
P-value of items < .001***.					
Overall Mean Score: 1.21					

Table 21: Overall Language Learning Enhancement by Developing Four Sets of Practices (Students)

As shown in Table 21, students expressed strong agreement across all four sets of practices. self-management, motivation and engagement, collaborative learning and developing learning strategies. These findings show that students believe language learning is mainly supported by independence, motivation, and collaboration, while learning strategies are also helpful but seen as less central.

Students agreed most strongly that self-management supports language learning, as shown by its lowest mean score. At the same time, all four sets of practices were statistically significant ($p < .001$), confirming that students consistently see each of them as important for language learning, mirroring their importance in supporting learner autonomy. This finding could suggest a link between the development of learner autonomy and language learning. The full table with percentages for each item is provided in Appendix O. The next section explores the relationship between these practices in promoting both learner autonomy and language learning, highlighting the extent to which students perceive the two as interconnected.

6.1.9 Relationship between Learner Autonomy Enhancement and Language Learning Enhancement

To explore how the development of learner autonomy relates to language learning, both correlation and regression analyses were conducted. These tests were conducted on the students' sample to explore both the strength (small, medium, large) and the nature (positive, negative, or no relation) of this relationship. To determine the strength, Cohen's (2018) guidelines for correlation values were used. Correlation analysis measured the association between each set of autonomy practices and language learning, while regression analysis tested whether these practices predict language learning outcomes and assessed the relative contribution of each set of practices.

As shown in Table 22, all four dimensions of autonomy showed large and significant positive correlations with language learning, confirming that practices which strengthen autonomy also strongly support language learning. Learning strategies recorded the strongest correlation ($r = .650$, $p < .001$), with regression showing the largest contribution ($\beta = .804$). This finding suggests that students who apply strategies such as note-taking, summarising, breaking tasks into smaller steps, and using authentic materials are also the ones who report the greatest improvement in language learning. Self-management also showed a strong relationship with English language learning, indicating that practices like planning study schedules, setting deadlines, and monitoring progress not only enhance autonomy but also substantially improve

language learning outcomes. Motivation and engagement recorded a similarly strong effect, highlighting the importance of intrinsic motivation, such as persistence when discouraged or willingness to learn, in driving both autonomy and language learning success. Collaborative learning also showed a strong positive relationship, suggesting that practices like working on group projects and seeking feedback from teachers and peers contribute meaningfully to language learning, though to a slightly lesser extent than strategies or motivation.

Simple Correlation and Linear Regression Between Learner Autonomy and Language Learning (Students)			
Practices/characteristics	Correlation	P-value	Regression estimate
Self-Management	.505***	0.001	.517
Learning Strategies	.650***	0.001	.804
Motivation and Engagement	.552***	0.001	.539
Learning Collaboratively	.542***	0.001	.443
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *** Cohen's (2018) guidelines interpret correlation strength as small (r = .10–.29), medium (r = .30–.49), and large (r = .50–1.0).			

Table 22: Results of simple correlation and linear regression between learner autonomy and language learning (Students)

Overall, the analysis confirms that all four sets of practices that enhance autonomy also significantly enhance language learning, with effect sizes in the large range according to Cohen's criteria. These results highlight the importance of autonomy in language learning, showing that developing autonomy directly helps to improve students' language learning.

6.2 Introduction of Teachers' Survey

To complement the findings from the semi-structured interviews and to provide a broader overview of teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy in the Libyan context, a questionnaire was administered, and data were collected from 309 EFL university teachers in Libya. The primary value of the questionnaire lies in its systematic development as an initial tool for capturing key dimensions of learner autonomy identified in the qualitative phase within this context. The following section presents an overview of the statistical findings, offering a sense of how widely certain perceptions and practices are reflected across the larger sample. These quantitative patterns sit alongside the qualitative findings, adding breadth to the themes explored in greater depth through the interviews and contributing to a clearer understanding of learner autonomy in Libyan higher education.

6.2.1Teachers' Demographic Information

The demographic background of the teacher participants, including their qualifications, native language and nationality, years of experience, and the English level(s) taught (see Appendix M). The demographic information of the teachers reveals a staff mostly qualified at the postgraduate level, with 68.9% holding a master's degree and 15.9% holding a Doctorate, indicating a strong emphasis on advanced education. Only a small portion of the teachers have a Certificate (5.5%) or Diploma (1.9%). In terms of teaching experience, the majority have 5-9 years of experience (38.8%), followed by those with 0-4 years (16.2%) and 10-14 years (17.2%), suggesting a relatively balanced distribution across different stages of their careers.

The distribution of mainly taught English levels shows that Year 2 (31.1%) and Year 4 (30.7%) are the most taught, while Year 3 has the lowest representation (11.3%). Most teachers are native Arabic speakers (92.9%), with a small percentage of native English speakers (3.2%) and speakers of other languages (3.9%), reflecting the linguistic diversity within the teaching staff. Additionally, 90.6% of the teachers are Libyan nationals, with 9.4% from other countries.

6.2.2 Teachers' Beliefs About Learner Autonomy

The survey revealed that almost all teachers considered learner autonomy is important for English language learning. As shown in (Figure 7- bar chart), teachers believe that learner autonomy is important in language learning. This result indicates that most teachers are aware of the importance of autonomy in English language learning. While this awareness highlights positive attitudes toward learner autonomy, it does not necessarily provide evidence of how teachers implement it in practice.

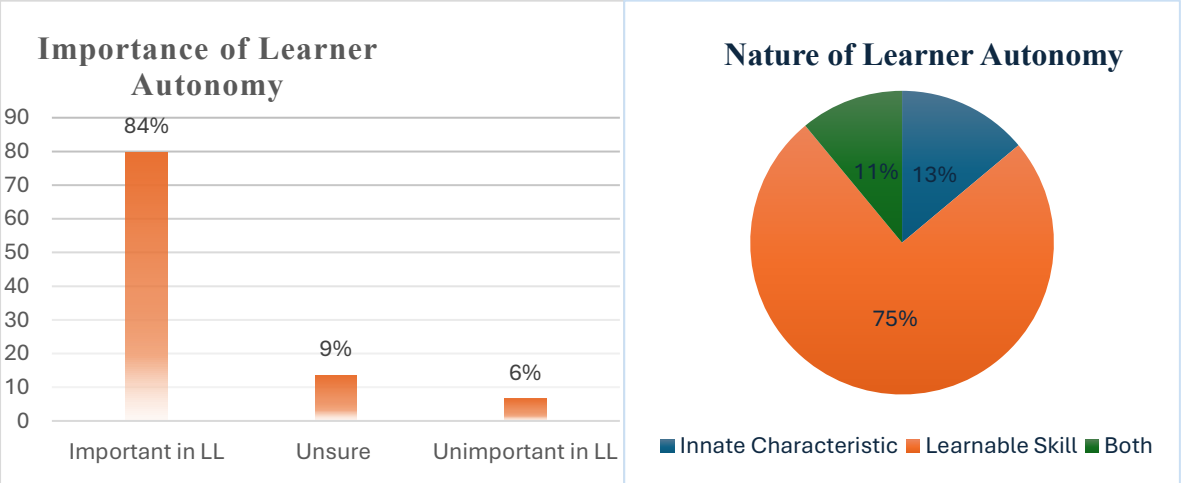

Figure 7: Teachers' views on the Importance and nature of learner autonomy

Moreover, teachers were asked whether they view learner autonomy as a skill that can be developed or as an innate characteristic to understand their beliefs and perceptions. Overall, they indicated that the majority of teachers viewed learner autonomy as a skill that can be developed, rather than an innate trait (Figure 7- pie chart). These teachers who believe learner autonomy is a learnable skill might be more likely to implement strategies to foster autonomy in their students. Conversely, with teachers who think learner autonomy is innate, they might not prioritise autonomy-enhancing activities (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012).

To provide an overall picture, the quantitative findings revealed that teachers held the strongest beliefs about learner autonomy in terms of its technical and psychological aspects. whereas sociocultural and political dimensions received comparatively less support. Table 23 presents the results of a one-sample statistics analysis of university teachers' responses to items about the meaning of learner autonomy.

Perspective of Learner Autonomy

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean
Interviewee's perspective (Independent)	309	1	5	2.17
Psychological perspective	309	1	4	1.88
Political perspective	309	1	4	2.03
Sociocultural perspective	309	1	5	2.18
Technical perspective	309	1	5	1.79

i. 1_Strongly Agreed,5- strongly Disagreed

Table 23: Mean levels of support perspective of learner autonomy

Overall, most of the teachers viewed the concept of learner autonomy from a technical view, where learner autonomy is developed by focus on the notion of how to learn, such as by using learning strategies, skills or resources, and the psychological view of learner autonomy as considered learner autonomy means developing the ability to evaluate ones' own leaning and stay motivated in learning. Their beliefs were less in line with the sociocultural and political perspectives of learner autonomy.

6.2.3 Teachers' and Students' Roles in Learner Autonomy

Teachers were further asked whether learner autonomy was related to them or their students, and whose role is more important in developing learners' autonomy in the classroom, to identify how they perceived their roles and responsibilities towards learner autonomy. Table 24

shows that (60.2%) of teachers considered their role in developing learner autonomy in the classroom was related mainly to them as teachers, while (39.8%) of teachers believed that the students' role is more important in developing learner autonomy in the classroom. This indicates that teachers' role is crucial in fostering learning autonomy, although a significant proportion also recognises the importance of empowering students to take charge of their own learning. This result demonstrates the need for a balanced approach, where both teachers and students actively contribute to learner autonomy development.

Additionally, teachers were asked whether learner autonomy was related to them or their students to identify how they perceived their roles towards some specific areas. The areas evaluated included: the role of both teachers and students in assessing the learner progress, stimulating interest in learning English, finding effective learning strategies, and supporting collaborative learning.

Teachers' Perceptions of Their Own Roles and Students' Roles				
Statement	Teacher's Role:60.2%		Students' Role:39.8%	
	Mean	P-value	Mean	P-value
Evaluation	1.27	.001	1.49	.001
Motivation	1.45	.001	1.17	.001
Collaborative Learning	1.29	.001	1.38	.001
Learning Strategies	1.57	.001	1.14	.001
* 1_Strongly Agreed,5- strongly Disagreed				

Table 24: Teachers' Perceptions of Teacher and Student Roles

Table 24 shows that teachers believe strongly in their role in helping learners assess their own learning progress and support students in learning from their peers and work collaboratively to develop learner autonomy. Conversely, teachers also emphasise the importance of student roles, particularly in self-motivation and selecting their own learning strategies. The result indicates a belief that intrinsic motivation and personal responsibility are both key to developing learner autonomy. Overall, the results highlight the necessity of an integrated approach that actively involves both teachers and students in the learning process to effectively promote learner autonomy.

6.2.4 Teachers' Views on Student Involvement in Decision-Making

The teachers' questionnaire also involved a section in which teachers were asked to what extent they are currently involved their students in making decisions, and to what extent they would like to involve their students in making decisions about setting lesson objectives, selecting the teaching method, and choosing their homework and evaluation techniques. Teachers were

simply given a list of responsibilities based on Little's (2022) definition of learner autonomy. These responsibilities, as well as the teachers' responses, are illustrated in Table 25.

Teachers' Views on Student Involvement in Decision-Making

	Current Student Involvement: To what extent do you currently involve your students in the following decisions?		Desired Student Involvement: To what extent would you like to involve your students in the following decisions?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Lesson Objectives	7.1%	92.9%	23.6%	76.4%
Teaching methods	6.8%	93.2%	14.9%	85.1%
Homework& Tasks	39.5%	60.5%	64.7%	35.3%
Assessment	4.5%	95.5%	8.7%	91.3%

Table 25: Teachers' Views on Student Involvement in Decision-Making

Table 25 presents the percentage of teachers who currently involve students in specific classroom decisions and those who would like to involve students more in the future. The same group of teachers was asked about both their current practices and their desired level of student involvement, revealing a clear contrast between the two. Similar to the teachers who participated in the interviews, the respondents to this questionnaire revealed that while they express a desire to involve students in the teaching process, they often find that students lack the responsibility and willingness to engage actively.

Homework and tasks show the highest level of current student involvement, while 64.7% of teachers reported that they would like to see greater student involvement in this area in the future. In contrast, assessment decisions, only 4.5% of teachers currently involve students, with 8.7% hoping to see more involvement in the future.

However, overall, the result shows that few participant teachers involved students in decisions. The statistical results in this section reflect a similar pattern to the interview findings, which showed teachers' resistance to engaging their students in class learning decisions. This suggests that teachers tended not to consider this type of learner autonomy support in their teaching practices. The interviewed teachers linked this resistance to their perceptions of their own role in class as being responsible for all these decisions. Although some teachers view autonomous learners as active participants, as presented in phase one qualitative results, this active participation is nowhere near making major classroom decisions like deciding what to study, how to study, the materials to use, or the evaluation techniques involved in students'

assessment. In the end, from the teachers' perspective, students' active participation inside the classroom does not involve making major decisions about the core subject of study.

6.2.5 The Implementation of Reflective Learning in University Classrooms

The questionnaire also included a Yes/No question asking teachers whether they had ever asked their students to reflect on what they had learned. This was intended to establish whether reflective practices, which are linked to learner autonomy through self-assessment and critical awareness, were being used in Libyan university classrooms. As shown in Table 26, only a small minority of teachers reported encouraging students to reflect on their learning, while the majority had not. This suggests that reflective learning is not a common pedagogical strategy in this context, and that many teachers may not view reflection as central to their teaching practices. This pattern adds breadth to the qualitative findings by indicating that reflection is not widely used as a classroom activity.

Have you ever asked your students to reflect on what they have learned?		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	50	16.2%
No	259	83.8%
Total	309	100%

Table 26: Implementation of Reflective Learning in University Classrooms (Teachers)

6.2.6 Teachers' Beliefs about Constraints to Fostering Learner Autonomy

This section of the questionnaire aimed to investigate teachers' viewpoints on the main barrier hindering learner autonomy development in Libyan universities. Based on the interview results, the participants mentioned some of the barriers, which are listed in the section one questionnaire. Figure 8 represents the teachers' responses to these items. the barrier of limited university resources and libraries recorded the lowest mean score (M = 1.11). This very low mean indicates that almost all teachers agreed that insufficient facilities are a major barrier to fostering learner autonomy, with 98% identifying the lack of basic resources as the most critical external constraint (see Appendix N for percentages and full statistical details).

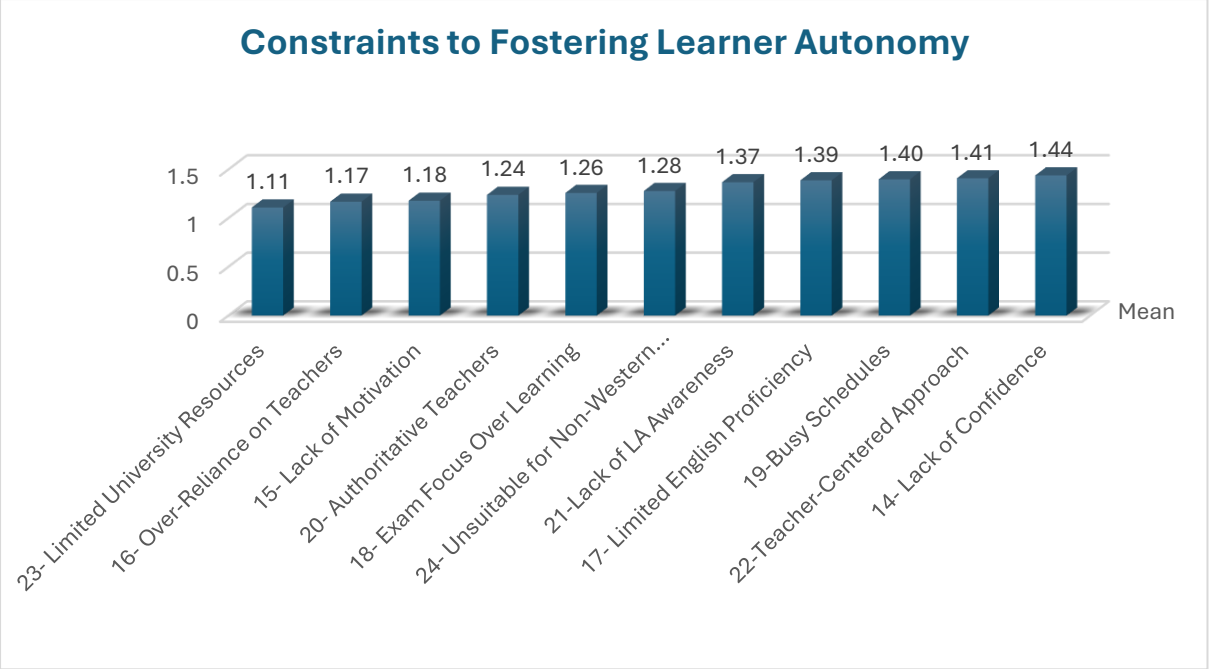

Figure 8: Teachers' Beliefs about Constraints to Fostering Learner Autonomy

The findings reveal that both internal and external constraints significantly hinder the development of learner autonomy among Libyan EFL learners. Overall, teachers expressed a very high level of agreement regarding the barriers listed. Internally, learners' over-reliance on teachers and lack of motivation were reported as the most serious obstacles. Externally, other widely reported barriers included authoritative teaching methods and the belief that learner autonomy is unsuitable for non-Western learners. Additional factors, such as overloaded student timetables and teacher-centred educational traditions, were also highlighted as constraints, though they recorded slightly higher mean scores. Taken together, these results show a strong consensus among teachers that both learner-related and institutional-cultural barriers significantly obstruct the promotion of learner autonomy. The interpretation of these findings is that the Libyan EFL context is shaped by deeply rooted educational traditions and systemic limitations which reinforce teacher dependence and restrict students' opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. This suggests that the barriers identified are not isolated problems but part of a wider educational culture that prioritises teacher authority and examination performance over independent learning practices.

6.2.7 Difficulty Ranking of Language Skills to Enhance Learner Autonomy

Table 27 presents an analysis of how teachers perceive the difficulty of language skills for their students in terms of developing learner autonomy in English language classrooms at Libyan universities. The data categorises the skills into four levels of difficulty, starting from the most

difficult to the least difficult. The purpose of asking teachers to rate the difficulty of language skills in relation to developing learner autonomy is to gather useful information that represents the practical challenges and needs of the classroom.

Difficulty Ranking of Language Skills

Skills	Difficulty Level	Frequency	Percent
Reading	Most Difficult	25	8.1%
	Second Most Difficult	11	3.6%
	Less Difficult	10	3.2%
	Least Difficult	263	85.1%
Writing	Most Difficult	37	12%
	Second Most Difficult	19	6.1%
	Less Difficult	243	78.6%
	Least Difficult	10	3.2%
Listening	Most Difficult	43	13.9%
	Second Most Difficult	238	77%
	Less Difficult	20	6.5%
	Least Difficult	8	2.6%
Speaking	Most Difficult	205	66.3%
	Second Most Difficult	41	13.3%
	Less Difficult	38	12.3%
	Least Difficult	25	6.1%
	Total	309	100%

Table 27: Difficulty Ranking of Language Skills

What stands out in Table 27 is that the majority of those who responded to this item rank reading skills as the least difficult skill for their students. Additionally, teachers rated writing skills as less difficult for their students to develop autonomous learning. In contrast, 66.3% of teachers ranked speaking skills as the most difficult for their students to develop as autonomous learners, while 77% selected listening skills as the second most difficult. This reflects the particular challenges associated with oral communication skills, which were also highlighted in the qualitative data. Interviewed teachers explained that this difficulty is common in many Arab contexts, including Libya, where traditional teaching methods often prioritise written forms of language over spoken interaction (Alrabai, 2017). Such methods may provide limited opportunities for practising speaking and listening, with greater emphasis placed on reading and writing. As a result, students have fewer chances to develop oral proficiency either inside or outside the classroom, which can hinder their ability to learn autonomously in these areas (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012).

Overall, the data analysis results revealed a clear ranking in the perceived difficulty of language skills. Reading is considered the easiest skill, while listening and speaking are regarded as the most difficult. Writing is considered less difficult than listening and speaking, but more difficult than reading. These findings offer useful insights for teachers who want to help students develop autonomy because they highlight where additional support and targeted strategies may be most needed, particularly in speaking and listening activities.

6.2.8 Results for Section Two: Characteristics and practices enhancing learner autonomy

Similar to the students' questionnaire, teachers were asked whether these characteristics and practices helped in enhancing learner autonomy and language learning. The same 16 items presented in the students' questionnaire were also introduced to the teachers. These items were divided into four sets: five items on self-management, four items on developing learning strategies, four items on motivation, and three items on collaborative learning. The two questions asked about each item were, 'Does (the development of) this item enhance learner autonomy?', and 'Does (the development of) this item enhance language learning?'. Moreover, the opinions of participants towards the items and their corresponding items were 'yes', 'unsure', and 'no'. The extension of responses was defined as Yes =1, Unsure =2, and No = 3. The statistical test confirms that the attitudes of teachers are positive for learner autonomy enhancement through developing these practices, which is found to be very highly significant (p-value < .001). This indicates that teachers consistently view these practices as important and central to supporting students' autonomy.

6.2.8.1 Results for Question 1: Do Certain Characteristics and Practices Enhance Learner Autonomy?

The first question, 'Does this (statement) enhance learner autonomy?' explored teachers' opinions on the importance of developing practices and characteristics enhancing learner autonomy. Teachers believe that developing practices connected to students' self-management could enhance learner autonomy, as shown in Table 28. Teachers generally viewed self-management practices as important for enhancing learner autonomy, with planning study time and setting deadlines emerging as the most strongly supported practices. They also valued independent learning and self-explanation, indicating broad support for self-management as a key component of learner autonomy in the Libyan university context. Together, these findings suggest that teachers view autonomy as an active, self-regulated process where students plan,

take initiative, monitor progress, address weaknesses, and engage actively with their learning, rather than as a passive trait.

Items of Self-Management (Practices /Characteristics)	Teachers' response %			Mean	Rank
	Yes	Unsure	No		
29-Planning study time and setting deadlines contributes to achieving learning goals.	93.2	5.5	1.3	1.10	1
33- Learn English better independently.	96.8	2.6	0.6	1.12	2
25-Students' evaluation and reflection on their own learning.	98.0	7.8	3.2	1.14	3
32- Actively identifying and addressing weaknesses.	88.0	8.1	3.9	1.16	4
37-Self-explanation improves learning.	83.8	15.5	0.6	1.17	5
P-value of items < .001***					

Table 28: Learner Autonomy Enhancement by Self-Management Practices Items

Expanding on these findings, the results also show how teachers view the development of learning-strategy practices as a way to enhance learner autonomy. The data in Table 29 shows that teachers using structured strategies, such as taking notes, summarising, visualising, and breaking large tasks into smaller steps, as the most important approaches for supporting autonomy. Strategies involving independent use of additional resources, including authentic materials like news articles, podcasts, or videos, were also valued but appeared less strongly emphasised than the structured strategies. These findings indicate that teachers strongly value structured strategies, such as note-taking and breaking down tasks, as central to fostering autonomy, while still recognising the importance of independent resource use and authentic materials.

Items for developing learning strategies (Practices /Characteristics)	Teachers' response %			Mean	Rank
	Yes	Unsure	No		
31-Using different strategies, such as taking notes, summarising, and visualising.	90.9	7.8	1.3	1.10	1
30- Breaking large tasks into smaller steps.	90.0	5.5	4.5	1.15	2
27_Independently using additional resources beyond the provided material.	81.9	17.8	0.3	1.18	3
38-Engaging with authentic materials like English news articles, podcasts, and watching videos.	84.8	9.7	5.5	1.21	4
P-value of items < .001***					

Table 29: Learner Autonomy Enhancement by Developing Learning Strategy Items

In addition, the findings show how teachers perceive motivation as an important element in enhancing learner autonomy. Teachers agree that learner autonomy may be enhanced by developing the practices and characteristics that motivate learners and reflect a positive attitude towards learning. The summary results in Table 30 show that demonstrating willingness to learn was rated as the most influential factor in supporting autonomy, followed by the belief that games and enjoyable activities reduce stress and that self-motivation helps learners face challenges. Building a positive relationship with the teacher was also valued, though slightly

less strongly. These findings show that teachers view motivation as shaped by both internal and external factors. They place the greatest emphasis on students' personal willingness and enjoyment, indicating that learner autonomy begins with the learner's mindset. At the same time, teachers acknowledge the supportive role of classroom enjoyment and teacher–student relationships, even though these were rated slightly lower. This suggests that teachers see autonomy as rooted in learners' intrinsic motivation but strengthened by positive classroom conditions, meaning that both individual attitudes and supportive environments are necessary for its development.

Items of motivation (characteristics and practices)	**Teachers' response %**			**Mean**	**Rank**
	Yes	Unsure	No		
34-Demonstrate a willingness to learn.	92.0	6.5	1.3	1.09	1
35-Language games and fun activities make learning less stressful and more enjoyable.	88.0	10.4	1.6	1.14	2
28- Self-motivation is important when facing challenges in learning.	86.4	10.0	3.6	1.17	3
40- Building a positive relationship with the teacher makes the subject more enjoyable and helps improve skills.	82.5	10.7	6.8	1.24	4
P-value of items < .001***					

Table 30: Learner Autonomy Enhancement by Motivation Characteristics and Practices

The findings also point to the importance teachers place on collaboration in supporting autonomy. Teachers believe that the development of the overall learning cooperatively sub-items could improve learner autonomy. As seen in Table 31, teachers believed that developing the practice of communicating with English learners from different countries, either online or in person, can enhance learner autonomy. Getting feedback from teachers or peers was also viewed as supportive of autonomy, followed by collaborating with classmates on small group projects, which teachers likewise considered beneficial for developing learners' skills. These findings show that teachers value opportunities for communication beyond the classroom, as well as structured collaboration and feedback within the learning environment. Together, these practices are seen as complementary ways of developing learner autonomy. Unlike students, who placed greater emphasis on local collaboration and classroom feedback, teachers highlighted the importance of broader communication with learners beyond the classroom setting.

Items of learning cooperatively	**Teachers' response %**			**Mean**	**Rank**
	Yes	Unsure	No		
39-Communicating with English learners from different countries, either online or in person.	78.3	18.4	3.2	1.25	1
26- Getting feedback from teachers or peers.	73.8	22.7	3.6	1.30	2
36- Collaborating with classmates on small group projects enhances skills.	76.1	11.7	12.3	1.36	3

P-value of items < .001***

Table 31: Learner Autonomy Enhancement by Learning Cooperatively

6.2.8.2 Results for Question 2: Do Certain Characteristics and Practices Enhance Language Learning?

The second question, "Does this (characteristic/practice) enhance language learning?", examined teachers' views on whether the development of these practices supports language learning. This question was designed as a follow-up to determine whether the same practices that foster learner autonomy are also seen as contributing to language learning. Table 32 presents teachers' responses, showing that they believe all four sets of practices play an important role in enhancing language learning. Teachers expressed positive opinions towards the role of the statements provided in the questionnaire in enhancing language learning (Mean 1.15). Overall, the results indicate that teachers strongly agree that developing these practices directly enhances language learning, with the very low *p*-value ($p < .001$) confirming a highly consistent view across the sample.

Practices /Characteristics	Teachers' response %			Mean	Rank	P-value
	Yes	Unsure	No			
Collaborative Learning	96.8	3.2	-	1.03	1	<.001***
Learning Strategies	94.8	4.9	0.3	1.06	2	<.001***
Motivation and Engagement	92.9	7.1	-	1.07	3	<.001***
Self-Management	91.3	8.4	0.3	1.09	4	<.001***
P-value:<.001***						
Overall Mean Score: 1.15						

Table 32: Overall Language Learning Enhancement by Developing Four Sets of Practices (Teachers)

As shown in Table 32, teachers placed the greatest emphasis on collaborative learning, particularly through communication with English learners from different countries, as a way to enhance language learning. This was followed by learning strategies, with teachers especially valuing the independent use of additional resources and authentic materials to improve language learning. Motivation (92.9%) was also rated highly, with willingness to learn and self-motivation considered central to sustaining language learning. Self-management practices, while still strongly endorsed, received slightly lower agreement overall, with reflection on learning and addressing weaknesses rated most positively for supporting language learning. Interestingly, this set was ranked lowest in relation to language learning, even though teachers had considered it the most important for enhancing autonomy. This contrast suggests that teachers view self-management as central to autonomy, but see cooperation, strategies, and motivation as playing a more direct role in improving language learning. Full details for each item are presented in Appendix O.

6.2.9 Relationship between Learner Autonomy Enhancement and Language Learning Enhancement

To explore how the development of learner autonomy relates to language learning from teachers' perspectives, both correlation and regression analyses were conducted.as shown in Table 33. These tests were applied to the teachers' sample to examine both the strength and the nature of the relationship. Following Cohen's (2018) guidelines, all correlations were large ($r \geq .50$), indicating strong positive associations between autonomy practices and language learning. correlation analysis of all four sets of practices, self-management, learning strategies, motivation, and collaboration, was significantly linked to language learning, while regression analysis confirmed that each set also made a meaningful contribution. Among them, learning strategies showed the largest contribution, suggesting that teachers view strategic behaviours, such as resource use and breaking tasks into steps, as particularly effective for improving language learning through autonomy.

Results of the Correlation and Regression Analyses Between Learner Autonomy and Language Learning (Teachers)			
Practices/characteristics	Correlation	P-value	Regression estimate
Self-Management	.614***	< .001	.602
Learning Strategies	.681***	< .001	.716
Motivation and Engagement	.725***	< .001	.599
Learning Collaboratively	.699***	< .001	.623
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *** Cohen's (2018) guidelines interpret correlation strength as small (r = .10–.29), medium (r = .30–.49), and large (r = .50–1.0).			

Table 33: Results of the Correlation and Regression Analyses between Learner Autonomy and Language Learning (Teachers)

The results (see Table 33) show that teachers see a clear link between students' motivation and their progress in language learning. For example, when learners demonstrate a willingness to learn or remain motivated in the face of challenges, teachers believe this not only reflects autonomy but also directly improves their ability to learn the language. Although the regression estimate for motivation (.599) was slightly lower than some other practices, it still indicates a strong predictive effect, showing that motivation consistently contributes to language learning even when other factors are considered.

Learning strategies ($r = .681$, $p < .001$) also showed a strong positive correlation, with the regression estimate (.716) indicating the largest predictive contribution to language learning

among all four sets. This means that when all practices are considered together, learning strategies emerge as the most powerful driver of language learning from the teachers' perspective. Teachers, therefore, see practices such as breaking tasks into smaller steps, summarising, or using authentic resources as especially effective because they simultaneously foster autonomy and predict stronger language learning outcomes.

Collaborative learning ($r = .699$, $p < .001$) was also strongly related to language learning, with regression confirming its significant contribution (.623). This demonstrates that collaboration not only correlates with language learning but also serves as an independent predictor. In practice, this reflects teachers' belief that when students work on projects, seek feedback, or engage with peers internationally, these activities both build autonomy and directly forecast better language learning results. Finally, self-management ($r = .614$, $p < .001$), while still strongly related to language learning, showed a slightly lower regression contribution (.602) compared to the collaborative learning set and learning strategies. This indicates that although planning, reflection, and addressing weaknesses are valuable, teachers see them as less directly predictive of language learning than the more immediate effects of collaboration and strategy use.

Overall, these findings indicate strong and highly significant positive associations between learner autonomy and language learning across all four dimensions. The regression results suggest that autonomy-related practices are meaningful predictors of language learning outcomes within this sample. In other words, participants perceive that when students engage in these practices, they tend to make greater progress in their language learning.

6.3 Comparison between Students' and Teachers' Quantitative Results

This section explores the similarities and differences between students' and teachers' perspectives on learner autonomy, highlighting how their roles, beliefs, and practices align or diverge across key dimensions of language learning. To get a deeper and detailed analysis, the t-test was used to compare the data of two independent groups.

Table 34 shows that, while both teachers and students recognised all four perspectives of learner autonomy, students expressed significantly stronger agreement overall ($M = 1.42$) than teachers ($M = 2.01$). Teachers tended to view autonomy technically, as something developed through training in strategies and resources, whereas students saw it more as a psychological capacity rooted in motivation and self-regulation. This gap suggests that fostering autonomy in language

learning requires integrating both perspectives: providing structured guidance and strategies from teachers while also nurturing students' internal motivation and responsibility.

	Scale	Group	Mean	Sig.(2-tailed)
Section 1	Learner Autonomy Perspective	Student	1.42	.001
		Teacher	2.01	.001
	Teachers' Role	Student	1.88	.001
		Teacher	1.67	.001
	Students' Role	Student	1.80	.866
		Teacher	1.80	.867
	External Constraints to Fostering Learner Autonomy	Student	1.44	.001
		Teacher	1.30	.001
	Internal Constraints to Fostering Learner Autonomy	Student	1.44	.001
		Teacher	1.29	.001
Section 2	Self-Management Practices to Enhance Learner Autonomy	Student	1.30	.001
		Teacher	1.12	.001
	Learning Strategies to Enhance Learner Autonomy	Student	1.26	.001
		Teacher	1.16	.001
	Motivational Practices to Enhance Learner Autonomy	Student	1.15	.230
		Teacher	1.17	.331
	Collaborative Practices to Enhance Learner Autonomy	Student	1.36	.075
		Teacher	1.30	.062
	Self-Management Practices to Enhance Language Learning	Student	1.24	.001
		Teacher	1.15	.001
	Learning Strategies to Enhance Language Learning	Student	1.26	.001
		Teacher	1.12	.001
	Motivational Practices to Enhance Language Learning	Student	1.15	.320
		Teacher	1.17	.331
	Collaborative Practices to Enhance Language Learning	Student	1.20	.047
		Teacher	1.15	.033
Note. Significance levels are interpreted as follows: $p < .001$ = very highly significant, $p < .05$ = significant, $p > .05$ = not significant.				

Table 34: Independent T-Test Results for Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy

Almost all of the results in this section indicated that teachers were more likely to have lower scores compared with students. This means teachers generally showed greater agreement than students. Teachers showed stronger agreement than students on self-management and learning strategies for enhancing learner autonomy, suggesting that teachers place slightly greater importance on structured behaviours such as planning, reflection, and strategy use. By contrast, students tended to show stronger agreement on external and internal constraints items. This

suggests that students experience these barriers more directly in practice and therefore place greater emphasis on the need for institutional support to overcome them.

For motivation and collaboration, differences were smaller and often not statistically significant ($p > .05$), indicating a broad consensus between teachers and students that both intrinsic factors (e.g., willingness to learn, self-motivation) and social interactions (e.g., peer feedback, cooperation) are important. The lack of a significant difference in perceptions of the student's role also highlights agreement that learners themselves are central to autonomy, even if the groups diverge slightly in how they see the teacher's role ($p < .001$).

Overall, teachers emphasise structured, strategy-based aspects of autonomy, while students are more attuned to the constraints that limit their autonomy in practice. This comparison highlights the need to balance both perspectives: providing explicit strategy training and guidance, while also recognising and addressing the barriers students experience. In short, fostering learner autonomy requires both strategy training and support to reduce the barriers students face.

6.4 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented the quantitative findings from a survey of 309 EFL teachers and 486 students in Libyan universities, exploring their beliefs, roles, practices, and challenges related to learner autonomy. The results were analysed using descriptive statistics. Both teachers and students viewed learner autonomy as essential and learnable. Teachers leaned toward a technical perspective, focusing on strategy training and structured support, while students favoured a psychological view, emphasising motivation and self-evaluation.

While teachers saw themselves as key to fostering learner autonomy, especially through assessment and collaborative learning, both groups agreed that developing autonomy should be a shared responsibility. Key barriers included limited resources, time constraints, and students' over-reliance on teachers. Both groups stressed the importance of developing self-management and motivation to support autonomous language learning. The next chapter discusses these findings in more detail.

Chapter 7: Discussion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesises and interprets the qualitative and quantitative findings from Chapters 4, 5 and 6, interpreting them through the lens of established theoretical frameworks on learner autonomy. It integrates both teachers' and students' beliefs, based on semi-structured interviews and questionnaire data, and compares them with existing literature. This chapter addresses key themes surrounding perceptions of autonomy, the factors influencing its development, and the role of teachers and institutions in either facilitating or constraining it. Special attention is given to comparing students' and teachers' perspectives and situating the findings within existing theoretical frameworks and relevant empirical studies. Highlighting how autonomy is shaped not only by individual learner strategies but also by socio-political instability and cultural expectations, this contribution will be developed further throughout the discussion. The discussion presented in this chapter is guided by the following research questions, with the sections that address each question:

> Q1 – What is the concept of learner autonomy as perceived by EFL teachers and students in the Libyan university context? This question is answered in Sections (7.2, 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5).
>
> Q2 – What are the major challenges and constraints teachers and students perceive relative to promoting learner autonomy in Libyan university EFL classrooms? This is addressed in Section 7.6.
>
> Q3 – Which classroom strategies and learner characteristics are perceived as most effective in fostering learner autonomy in Libyan university EFL classrooms by teachers and students? This is discussed in Section 7.7.

7.2 Conceptualising Learner Autonomy in the Libyan Context

To begin with, the findings revealed different conceptions associated with learner autonomy. The emergence of these varying understandings likely resulted from the multi-layered meanings learner autonomy requires (Benson, 2016), and also that people often come up with different interpretations, especially for a complex concept like ‘learner autonomy.’ Moreover, given that this study included different types of participants with varying roles (students and teachers), the emergence of distinct views on learner autonomy was to be expected.

A key insight from the data is that the participants were aware of learner autonomy as a concept, but there were conflicting understandings. While they perceived learner autonomy positively, their views on learner autonomy reflected a mixture of Benson's (1997) and Oxford's (2003) main perspectives: technical, psychological, political and socio-cultural. Their beliefs reflected that these perspectives were not separate but rather interconnected. For instance, participants often described technical skills such as planning and note-taking as meaningful only when combined with psychological states like motivation and self-responsibility. They also connected sociocultural expectations about teacher–student roles with political issues of authority and decision-making in classrooms. In this sense, learner autonomy emerged as a dynamic interplay of skills, attitudes, cultural norms, and institutional power, rather than as isolated categories. This study, therefore, extends the literature by moving beyond the general claim that autonomy is complex. It shows how teachers and students perceive the different facets of autonomy operating together in teaching and learning.

It is important to note that both students and teachers in this research primarily associated learner autonomy with the values of independence, with approximately 85% of semi-structured interview participants as central to their understanding of the concept. As was highlighted in Chapter 2, the idea of independence is often closely tied to learner autonomy (Healey, 2014). In this study, students provided examples where they considered themselves autonomous learners. However, in more challenging times, like during the war, Ruby described how attending classes regularly became impossible, so she and her peers created a peer-teaching arrangement. Each student became responsible for mastering a specific topic and then teaching it to the group. This strategy not only encouraged them to continue learning but also encouraged a sense of independence and ownership. As several students noted, experiences of suffering and hardship pushed them to take greater responsibility for their own learning and for supporting their peers. Such examples show that autonomy can emerge in collaborative and adaptive ways, even in the absence of formal instruction (Gomez-Virseda et al., 2020).

In difficult times, students often need to learn on their own and rely on others with more experience, even though they know it is important to act independently. These insights suggest the need to reconsider how independence relates to learner autonomy. Specifically, autonomy may still be present even when students depend on others, provided that this dependence stems from informed decision-making and a conscious sense of responsibility. Thus, learner autonomy does not necessarily require complete independence at all times. Instead, what matters is that the learner's reliance on others is intentional and rooted in a clear understanding

of what supports their learning best. This echoes Kinsella's (2024) view of learner autonomy in language education as a process of 'becoming oneself amongst others,' reminding us that autonomy involves choice and responsibility rather than isolation. This study contributes to language learning research by showing that in disrupted educational contexts, autonomy emerges as flexible interdependence: learners strategically balance self-reliance and reliance on others to sustain language learning when resources, support, or formal instruction are limited.

7.2.1 Technical and Psychological perspectives

Teachers appeared to hold a more technical perspective of learner autonomy, while students seemed to express more of a psychological and political view. In other words, teachers tended to perceive learner autonomy as something provided to students that can be maintained or achieved by training students on the use of learning strategies and resources, whereas students seemed to perceive learner autonomy as an internal capacity within each student, albeit one that can and should be developed.

In examining these nuances, both quantitative and qualitative data highlighted teachers' emphasis on training students in strategies and guiding them to resources. Teachers tended to emphasise the importance of learning strategies, resource use, and student independence through tools like apps and digital content. Five out of ten teachers in this study tend to prioritise academic outcomes and learning strategies, conceptualising learner autonomy as a product of achievement, such as improved academic performance and effective strategy use, rather than as a developmental process concerned with how autonomy develops. A likely explanation for the prevalence of this technical perspective, as reported by teacher participants in the qualitative analysis, is the assumption that learning strategies, resources, and learner training create autonomous learners; without such tools, students find it difficult to develop autonomy. This stance aligns with the technical perspective by Kulusakli and Yumru (2020), which treats autonomy as built through guided engagement with learning resources such as self-access materials, apps, teacher-led training, and modelling.

Four out of ten students in this study tended to emphasise a psychological perspective of learner autonomy, seeing it as an internal capacity grounded in self-determination, responsibility, and proactive effort. Three student participants expressed that nothing could positively or negatively influence the level of learner autonomy except if students themselves allowed it. This aligns with Benson's (2021) concept of learner autonomy as a process of learners taking charge of their learning, and with Cheon and Vansteenkiste's (2021) view that both intrinsic

and extrinsic motivation play key roles in sustaining autonomous behaviour. These findings suggest that motivation and autonomy are closely linked, as students with stronger internal motivation are more likely to take responsibility for their own learning.

Building on this link between motivation and responsibility, the findings show that responsibility was consistently identified by participants as central to learner autonomy. Two teachers and four students all highlighted responsibility, using terms such as ownership and questioning whether learners were genuinely willing to take charge of their own learning. This emphasis on responsibility aligns with Teng's (2019) argument that it is a universal component of autonomy and supports Andri and Azis's (2025) view that responsibility can take a generalised form across diverse contexts. The findings in this study reveal that although teachers and students recognise the importance of responsibility in theory, actually practising it is difficult when teachers retain strong control over decisions. Autonomy is therefore understood but not easily enacted, exposing a tension between what people believe about learning responsibility and what classroom structures allow them to do. This issue will be discussed in more detail in Section 8.5, which focuses on learner involvement.

However, while both teachers and students acknowledge the psychological importance of reflective activities, their actual use in classrooms remains limited. The questionnaire results revealed that only 13% of students had ever been asked to reflect on their learning, and just 16.2% of teachers reported incorporating reflective activities into their teaching practices. This shows a significant gap in the practical implementation of reflective activities as a pedagogical tool. Teacher Salma, for example, reported asking students to use mind maps during lectures "to help them visualise and deepen their understanding," but acknowledged that many students struggled to engage meaningfully, suggesting the activity was more structural than reflective. Teacher Mira similarly encouraged students to keep bilingual vocabulary lists at home, describing this as a way to "develop a much wider vocabulary and expressions they will use outside of the classroom." However, there was no indication that students were guided to evaluate their learning process, progress, or difficulties. Although teachers presented these as reflective activities, they were largely technical strategies (e.g., mind maps, vocabulary lists) that focused on content reinforcement rather than prompting students to evaluate or regulate their learning. In other words, they helped students practise and organise knowledge but did not engage them in the deeper processes that make an activity truly reflective. This limited their effectiveness as reflective activities for fostering autonomy.

This limitation reflects wider challenges noted in the literature and aligns with the findings of Dabia (2012) and Abubaker & El-Badri (2022), who highlight that reflective activities in language classrooms are often reduced to surface-level tasks, such as keeping vocabulary logs, rather than fostering critical awareness of learning processes. These findings reveal more than just a pedagogical gap; they point to a broader issue of limited awareness or misinterpretation of what constitutes meaningful reflective activity. Embedding reflective activities more deliberately into classroom practice is therefore not only beneficial but also necessary for fostering autonomous learners. The absence of reflective activities could partly explain why students are less accustomed to taking responsibility for monitoring their own learning progress.

7.2.2 Political Perspectives

This section explores how the findings from this study echo widely discussed views about the political dimensions of learner autonomy. particularly whether autonomy should be seen narrowly as a classroom skill or more broadly as a right tied to freedom and social change. In this study, students demonstrated a much stronger engagement with the political perspective of learner autonomy than their teachers. While only two out of ten teachers touched on this point, students frequently framed autonomy as a right closely tied to freedom, voice, and broader social change. This suggests that students positioned autonomy within a wider political context, linking it to ideas about rights and democratic participation, rather than restricting it to classroom practices. Students offered more developed and personally rooted understandings of autonomy from a sociopolitical angle. Student Daniel, for example, made a clear connection between Libya's political transformation and the right to academic freedom, arguing that students, like citizens, should have a say in shaping their future. Student Amal also described autonomy as "the right to make our own decisions," reflecting a sense of ownership and self-direction. These findings echo Betancor-Falcon's (2023) argument that autonomy must also be understood as a political construct, shaped by institutional and societal structures, not just as an individual psychological trait or technical skill.

In contrast to the rest of the teacher participant set, Yusuf emphasised student leadership and participation, describing their classroom goal as helping learners understand that their opinions matter. Teacher Mohamed also acknowledged students' right to make choices, but within limits, suggesting that autonomy meant some degree of freedom, not total independence. These views point to a limited but growing awareness of how autonomy connects to empowerment, though mostly confined to the classroom context. These perspectives reflect Benson's (2021) argument

that learner autonomy should involve a shift in power toward the learner, allowing them to take an active role in their education and broader society. While Benson frames this mainly as a transfer of power, the findings of this study suggest a more reciprocal relationship, where autonomy develops through shared responsibility between teachers and students. Still, these ideas are rarely addressed in teacher training or institutional policies. The findings of this study reflect similar patterns observed in other contexts. ElFalih and Lamrani-Hassani (2024) found that in Morocco, even teachers who supported student-centred learning often avoided discussions about decision-making and power. Likewise, Bagcı and Aydın (2021) reported that Turkish instructors lacked the confidence or training to address autonomy from a political perspective, preferring traditional classroom roles. In the Libyan context, this study shows a comparable trend that teachers recognised the value of learner autonomy but did not engage with it in political terms. This suggests that across these contexts, autonomy is often viewed as a pedagogical practice rather than a political stance, indicating a potential broader regional pattern where structural and cultural norms may limit how far teachers can promote shared decision-making. This was further evidenced in teacher interviews, where several participants, such as Teacher Adam, Teacher Hana, and Teacher Nadia, expressed the belief that key decisions about assessment and lesson objectives should remain with the teacher. Although some autonomy-supportive practices were employed, such as offering minor choices in homework or implementing the "little teacher" strategy, these were limited in scope and did not address deeper issues of authority or sharing power. This reinforces the idea that, despite some openness to change, many teachers in the Libyan context have yet to fully embrace the political dimension of learner autonomy, where power is meaningfully transferred to students. As Raya and Lamb (2020) argue, such political dimensions of autonomy are often difficult to realise in contexts where educational traditions and sociopolitical structures prioritise control and authority, which may help explain why these practices remain underdeveloped in Libya.

7.2.3 Sociocultural Perspectives

Although both teachers and students acknowledged the sociocultural dimension of learner autonomy, they primarily interpreted it through an individualistic lens, focusing on managing one’s own learning rather than one’s role within a community. For example, Teacher Hana encouraged learners to interact in English both inside and outside the classroom, while Student Omer described how informal conversations with Nigerian workers helped develop both language skills and cultural awareness. Teacher Hana and Student Omer highlight social interaction as a tool for individual language improvement, rather than a way to contribute

meaningfully to a shared learning environment or society. This aligns with critiques by scholars such as Murray (2011) and Oxford (2017), who argue that autonomy is often reduced to personal responsibility, overlooking its social and cultural dimensions. In other words, autonomy is not just "my responsibility," but also "our responsibility and how we learn together within our culture.

This narrow interpretation is not unique to Libya. As Pennycook (1997) argued, Western notions of autonomy, rooted in independence and self-direction, often fail to account for how learning operates in collectivist or teacher-centred cultures. Sinclair et al. (2009) also point out that the meaning of autonomy is always shaped by its social and cultural context. Al Asmari, (2013) and Smith (2008) add that autonomy is frequently misunderstood as a personal trait, rather than something that also depends on collaboration, cultural practices and shared responsibility. Libya is a collectivist culture that values collaboration and shared responsibility. But these strengths do not fully shape how learner autonomy is seen, showing a tension between community values and teacher authority. For example, while students may work together in their families and communities, in classrooms, teachers still hold most of the power, and students are rarely asked to share in decision-making. This is surprising in a collectivist context (Yasmin& Sohail, 2018), as both teachers and students leaned toward a more individualistic view of autonomy, focused on personal responsibility rather than shared decision-making.

Participants recognised the value of interaction and peer support; they also described how classroom dynamics and cultural expectations restrict opportunities for collaboration. These challenges suggest that autonomy in Libyan contexts should not be framed solely as independence from others. Instead, it should also be understood as interdependence, where learners develop autonomy alongside others within a community. As Murray (2011) argues, autonomy includes both independence and interdependence, and Sadaghian and Marandi (2020) show how learners can practise autonomy interdependently through collaborative activities in English language learning. This shows that Libya needs a more nuanced view of learner autonomy, one that sees independence and interdependence as working together, not as opposites. In practice, this would mean encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning while also supporting learning through collaboration and community.

7.3 Nature of Learner Autonomy

This section explores how the findings from this study echo some longstanding debates about the nature of learner autonomy, such as whether it is an innate trait or a skill that can be taught and developed. The findings revealed a mix of beliefs. A few participants, like Teacher Nadia and Student Omer, saw autonomy as an innate trait, but most, such as Teacher Sara and Student Linda, believed it can be developed through experience and support. The survey results confirmed this: 75% of teachers, compared with 56% of students, thought autonomy can be taught, showing that teachers are more likely to see it as shaped by instruction. Some early scholars suggested that autonomy might be innate. Such as Dickinson (1995) and Littlewood (1999) implied that certain learners are naturally more autonomous because of personality or motivation. However, later research challenges this fixed view. Little (1991) and Benson (2021) argue that all learners can develop autonomy if given appropriate support. Similarly, Missoum (2015) and Ceylan (2025) stress that autonomy often emerges in response to life events and environmental challenges. In contrast, others like Holmes (2018) note that autonomy can be limited by factors such as culture, curriculum design, and lack of teacher training. Together, this body of work suggests that while some learners may appear naturally inclined toward autonomy, the dominant position is that autonomy is a capacity that can be nurtured, but it remains vulnerable to contextual limitations. Overall, these findings suggest that participants in this study conceptualise autonomy as a mix of skills and mindset that can grow when supported, a position that echoes the dominant view in literature (Oxford, 2017; Halabi, 2018).

7.4 The Roles Different Parties Play in Supporting Learner Autonomy

The results of both the quantitative and qualitative showed that students generally recognised their responsibility in learning and often took initiative to engage with additional resources. To an extent, they demonstrated an internalised understanding of autonomy, especially through selecting learning strategies and motivation. Participants believed that the role of teachers in promoting learner autonomy was mainly that of facilitators and motivators, supporting students through guidance and emotional encouragement. Before discussing the findings in depth, it is important to understand why examining the roles of both teachers and students is central to this study. In any educational setting, especially in language learning, the way teachers and students see their responsibilities can significantly impact learning success (Little, 1991; Ushioda, 2015). When students take more responsibility for their learning and teachers act as guides rather than controllers, it creates a supportive environment for developing learner autonomy (Benson, 2021). Therefore, understanding how each group views their role helps us better

understand the overall classroom dynamic and how it can be improved to support more independent learning (Alrabai, 2017; Al-Husban & Tawalbeh, 2023).

7.4.1 Student's Role

This study highlights that learner autonomy depends significantly on students becoming both responsibility-takers and initiators. It aligns with the literature emphasising the role of personal ownership of learning as a core component of autonomy (Szabo & Scharle, 2000). Students defined their role as related to selection and motivation. For instance, Student Omer said, "students should take responsibility for their learning," and Student Amir stated, "students should be independent learners and search for more ways to improve their language." Quantitative results supported this view. Students strongly agreed on the importance of selecting learning strategies (mean = 1.58) and staying motivated (mean = 1.66). These results point to a strong belief in personal responsibility for learning, reflected in students' learning behaviours. Teachers also supported this outlook. Teacher Adam noted, "students must take responsibility and develop their ability to study on their own," while Teacher Nadia noted, "we try to encourage students to depend on themselves and search for what helps them learn better." These examples suggest initiative, but often within teacher guidance, which reflects reactive autonomy rather than fully proactive autonomy in the Libyan context. This form of dependent often appeared to be guided by teachers rather than completely self-directed. This aligns with Littlewood's (1999) distinction between reactive and proactive autonomy and is further supported by Lin's (2024) doctoral study in the Taiwanese context, which found that students often manage tasks within teacher-led frameworks rather than initiating their own goals and strategies. At the same time, participants in this study mainly demonstrated the positioned student's role in autonomy mainly around motivation. This echoes Rungwaraphong's (2012) finding that students' willingness to take responsibility for their own learning is closely tied to their motivational beliefs, suggesting that self-motivation is a key way in which learners promote autonomy. The results of this study, therefore, highlight that learners' autonomy development depends not only on the responsibility of strategy use but also on sustained self-motivation, which students themselves identified as central to their role.

7.4.2 Teacher's Role

Like students, teachers were seen to play a crucial role in fostering autonomy. In the Libyan university context, they are expected to go beyond traditional teaching and adopt roles as facilitators and motivators (Elhadi, 2024). In my study, most participants in both phases

recognised the critical influence teachers have on learner autonomy. Around 72% of students associated their autonomy mainly with their teachers, and about 60.2% of teachers also believed that learners' autonomy levels were directly linked to the teacher's role.

This result demonstrates the need for a collaborative approach in which both teachers and students share responsibility for developing learner autonomy. Such a balance is essential for creating a learning environment that combines teacher guidance with students' self-directed efforts. This finding aligns with Sheerin's (1997) concept of the "autonomy paradox," which refers to the apparent contradiction in promoting autonomy: while learners are expected to take control of their own learning, they still require teacher support and structure to build the confidence and skills necessary for independence. In this sense, autonomy is not the absence of teaching but a gradual process in which teachers play a crucial role in helping learners move from dependence to independence.

Research indicates that teachers play a central role in fostering autonomy, particularly by motivating learners and sustaining their engagement (Xhaferri et al., 2015). The findings of this study align with this view, as students tended to define the teacher's role in psychological terms, valuing encouragement and feedback that boosted their confidence and helped them monitor progress. Several learners explained that without regular encouragement, it was difficult to stay motivated or feel capable of becoming independent, which echoes findings by Bonneville-Roussy et al. (2013) and Khotimah and Eliyanah (2023), who both highlight the motivational impact of autonomy-supportive teaching on learners' confidence and engagement.

Teachers in both phases of this study, however, described their role more in terms of practical responsibilities, such as facilitating peer collaboration and supporting learners in evaluating their progress. Teacher Adam, for example, emphasised the importance of peer support, while Teacher Nadia stressed guiding students in assessing their progress. This contrast shows that while students positioned motivation at the centre of autonomy, teachers highlighted structural and evaluative aspects. Such a pattern reflects Masouleh and Jooneghani's (2012) view of teachers as facilitators but also supports Weimer's (2002) argument that tensions often arise between the teacher's role in encouraging learner motivation and their responsibility to provide assessment and structure.

At the same time, there was also clear alignment in the psychological domain of autonomy. Both students and teachers agreed that encouragement, guidance, and sharing personal learning experiences were essential to sustaining learner motivation. Teacher Adam emphasised that

small incentives, such as awarding extra marks, can strongly motivate students because grades hold significant value for them and encourage greater effort. Teacher Salma mentioned that the teacher's role functions much like a coach, providing guidance and encouragement so that students stay on track. Through this support, students begin to take ownership of their learning and feel proud of their progress. Every student has the potential to succeed if given suitable support. Some are naturally motivated, but others simply need that extra encouragement. This is where the teacher's role is crucial. The data did not suggest that students relied completely on teachers for motivation. Instead, there was an understanding that motivation can fluctuate, and teachers play an important role in helping students stay on track (Khotimah & Eliyanah, 2023).

However, teachers were not expected to extend their role beyond these educational and psychological functions into political or activist ones. Although some scholars, such as Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) have argued that teachers can act as agents of wider social change, none of the participants in this study described them in this way. This may be linked to the challenging Libyan context, where political instability makes such roles risky. Thus, in this study, teachers' contributions were largely confined to technical and psychological support. These forms of support still play an important role in helping learners become more independent, as highlighted in previous research (Elmahjoub, 2018).

Teachers in this study felt responsible for creating environments that promote autonomy. This aligns with Benson's (2021) view that students are capable learners who should be supported in discovering their potential. These teachers aim to share responsibility rather than control learning. In a context where students are used to being passive, such teachers work to build trust to encourage participation and support autonomy (Griffiths & Dikilitaş, 2022). However, it remains unclear how many teachers in Libya are ready or able to fully adopt this approach, especially given the challenges they face, such as limited training and years of instability. This will be explored further in section (8.6).

7.5 Beliefs about students' involvement in learning decisions in class

Among student and teacher participants, there was broad agreement that involving students in classroom decisions is valuable. However, there is a clear disconnect between what students want and what teachers are currently doing. Learner involvement in decision-making within classrooms appears to be characterised by what Benson (2021) describes as limited autonomy. Although 61.5% of students surveyed expressed a desire to contribute to lesson objectives, only

about 11.7 % reported actually doing so, and participation in assessment decisions was almost absent. On the teacher side, fewer than 7.1% currently involve students in setting objectives, and only 4.5% in assessment; even when asked about future practices, the majority remained reluctant. These findings align with Hamad's (2018) observation that although many EFL teachers endorse autonomy in principle, they hesitate to grant it in practice, often due to concerns about learners' readiness or classroom control. Similarly, Rahmasari (2025) found that language teachers may encourage responsibility in specific tasks, such as reading, but still maintain authority over key curricular choices. The findings of this study reflect what Benson (2021) describes as "limited autonomy," where learners may contribute to smaller aspects of learning but remain excluded from decisions about content and evaluation.

This study shows that institutional structures, rather than teacher willingness alone, often restrict student involvement. Teachers acknowledged the importance of involving students in decision-making, but highlighted barriers such as rigid curricula, lack of institutional support, and ingrained teacher-centred norms. For instance, Teacher Nadia stated that in Libya, "teachers are expected to make every decision... involving students is interpreted as a sign of weakness." Similarly, Teacher Sara noted that "the curriculum is very structured, and there's little room for flexibility." These comments reflect how institutional and cultural expectations make fully autonomous learning challenging in practice. However, many teachers still expressed a desire to increase student participation in choices around tasks and homework (e.g., Teacher Sara), suggesting that while full implementation may not be practical, gradual steps toward autonomy are possible within existing constraints.

The one area where students and teachers overwhelmingly agree is homework. Nearly 70% of students want more say in the tasks they are given, and around 40% already report having some choice. Teachers likewise show openness to this; about 40% already offer options, and nearly 65% said they would like to do this more. This reflects what Halabi (2018) noted that autonomy can often be fostered in small, manageable ways within structured classroom routines. Both sides see how giving students' choices in homework can make learning more engaging and meaningful. As one student (Maha) put it, "This way does homework more personal and interesting." Another (Ruby) emphasised that it helps align tasks with their strengths: "We could either write an essay, create a mind map, or summarise a chapter." Such examples illustrate what Scharle and Szabó (2000) describe as the gradual development of autonomy through guided practice. Teacher Sara echoed this view, saying, "Involving students in choosing their tasks can improve motivation and engagement… it gives them a sense of

ownership." This aligns with Cirocki's (2016) argument that homework provides a practical entry point for autonomy because it creates opportunities for learners to take responsibility and regulate their learning outside teacher-controlled classroom settings.

When it comes to the more "serious" decisions, such as planning lessons or setting assessments, teachers were noticeably more hesitant. Hana and Nadia noted that they are expected to make these decisions themselves, reflecting traditional views of teacher authority and cultural norms. This aligns with Nguyen and Habók (2020) and Ghaleb (2024), who argue that exam-focused, teacher-centred systems leave little space for learner choice. Sara added that, although teachers may want to involve students more, strict curricula, workload, and time pressures make this difficult.

Students described positive experiences with decision-making. For example, Student Amir explained how, in a private course, they helped identify learning objectives based on their strengths and weaknesses, noting that reflection helped make progress. Student Omer and Student Daniel said that when teachers occasionally allowed them to pick learning activities, such as debates or group work, the lessons felt more useful and engaging. These examples illustrate that students in this study value even small opportunities for choice and that such experiences could serve as building blocks for broader involvement.

Both students (68.7%) and teachers (64.7%) expressed a desire for change, particularly in homework and classroom activities, suggesting there is potential for developing greater learner autonomy. Research also highlights that preparing students to take on more responsibility is just as important as encouraging teachers to share it (Marzuki et al., 2023). If given the right support and training, teachers might feel more confident in letting students assume greater responsibility, echoing Benson's (2021) point that autonomy must be shared rather than imposed. At the same time, students also need to be prepared for this role too. Some teachers worried that students are not yet responsible enough to handle autonomy, as mentioned by Teacher Mira, "They often lack the responsibility to take part in choosing teaching methods." These findings suggest that while teachers' willingness matters, student readiness is equally crucial for autonomy to develop effectively (Yasmin, 2018).

Overall, this section echoes Benson's (2021) concept of limited autonomy, showing that while students want to be more involved, teachers continue to control decisions about objectives, methods, and assessment. It also reinforces Nguyen and Habók's (2020) observation that exam-driven, teacher-centred systems restrict autonomy, while extending the literature by

demonstrating how cultural expectations and institutional structures intensify these constraints in the Libyan context (Hamad, 2018; Ghaleb, 2024). At the same time, the findings contribute new evidence that both teachers and students view homework as a practical entry point for autonomy, supporting earlier claims that responsibility can be built gradually through structured practices (Cirocki, 2016; Scharle & Szabó, 2000).

7.6 Constraints hindering learner autonomy

This study also explored the constraints limiting learner autonomy among Libyan university students. Using Benson's (1997) and Oxford's (2003) frameworks, the study shows how learner autonomy is shaped by overlapping personal, institutional, and sociocultural influences. Theoretically, this study extends Benson's and Oxford's frameworks by applying them to a post-conflict context, demonstrating how learner autonomy is negotiated within sociocultural rooted educational traditions.

7.6.1 Psychological Constraints

The findings reveal that psychological factors, particularly low motivation and lack of responsibility, act as major constraints on learner autonomy. The results suggest that many students may not take sufficient responsibility for their learning and that low motivation often hinders their independence. Teachers also noted that over-reliance on the teacher is a barrier to autonomy, and the survey data confirmed this with a strong majority reporting similar concern. In such situations, teachers may feel their efforts to foster autonomy are ineffective and may even revert to more traditional, teacher-centred methods to regain a sense of control in the classroom (Benson, 2021). However, when students take responsibility, they create a supportive environment that helps teachers encourage autonomy - a sort of virtuous cycle (Han, 2021). Motivated students are more likely to take initiative and welcome the responsibilities of self-directed learning. This enthusiasm, in turn, can energise teachers and strengthen their commitment to autonomy-supportive practices (Yang et al, 2021).

A key finding from this research highlights the reciprocal relationship between student motivation and teacher support in fostering learner autonomy. Fifteen out of twenty interview participants said that student motivation is key. It not only helps students improve their learning but also encourages teachers to support autonomy more effectively (Houssami & Benattabou, 2024). This attitude inspires teachers to autonomy-supportive practices (Cheon et al., 2021). Conversely, when students demonstrate low motivation, teachers may feel discouraged and potentially revert to more traditional, teacher-centred methods. Empirically, this reinforces.

Oxford's (2003) argument that autonomy is not simply about learner traits but is shaped through dynamic interactions between teachers and students. In this study, participants also recognised the role of motivation in developing learner autonomy, but they mainly referred to how teachers motivate students rather than to intrinsic motivation. This does not mean that external factors are unimportant, but rather that they are not sufficient on their own to foster autonomy (Ahmed & Hossain, 2024).

As Student Omer explains, teacher encouragement has a positive impact on student participation in class discussions, which resonates with previous literature (Achouak, 2023). However, this strong reliance on external motivation also presents a potential drawback: teacher encouragement to participate is not sufficient to develop learner autonomy. External motivation and reliance on teachers to boost confidence can be seen as another constraint to the development of learner autonomy, as noted in the literature (Khonamri et al., 2020). When students depend excessively on teacher feedback, they risk developing a passive approach to learning, even if they are more vocal in class (Tassinari, 2012). Instead of fostering self-regulated learning, this tendency often weakens their ability to take responsibility for their own educational progress (Lamb, 2017). Additionally, such dependency can limit their capacity to cultivate intrinsic motivation, which is essential for learner autonomy (Nunez & Leon, 2015). In the case of Libyan students, their reliance on family and institutional support may significantly influence their learner autonomy. While these resources promote short-term academic success, they may inadvertently reduce students' motivation for autonomous learning.

The findings of this study indicate that while teacher and family support can encourage learners, excessive direction may limit opportunities for students to practise independence. Participants described situations where strong external guidance, especially from teachers, reduced students' ability to make decisions or take responsibility for their learning. This result aligns with Wei et al. (2022), who found that university students experiencing higher levels of parental autonomy support reported greater satisfaction of psychological needs and stronger autonomous motivation, whereas controlling behaviours undermined these outcomes. Similarly, when teachers dominate classroom decision-making, students lose valuable chances to develop autonomous learning skills, resulting in a one-directional rather than reciprocal relationship. These findings support Oxford's (2003) argument that overdependence on external regulation weakens self-regulation, a key element of autonomy and extend her

framework by showing that such dependence can also disrupt the balance between teacher support and learner responsibility, ultimately limiting the development of learner autonomy.

Additionally, the findings of this study expand Benson's (2011) concept of "access to learning" by showing that cognitive access (knowing how to learn independently) is as important as physical or technological access. My study adds nuance to his framework by emphasising that without cognitive access, other forms of access may be underutilised; thus, my study deepens our understanding of the layered nature of learner autonomy. The empirical evidence demonstrates this clearly: 96.5% of students reported that over-reliance on teachers is a barrier to autonomy. Similarly, a very high percentage of teachers (85% strongly agree and 12% agree) also identified these traits as key obstacles. As an example of cognitive barriers to learner autonomy, Student Ahmed viewed that low confidence in English and fear of making mistakes prevent students from becoming more independent and lead them to rely on others. This echoes Alhejaily's (2020) findings in the Saudi EFL context, where low learner confidence similarly emerged as a barrier to autonomy, reinforcing dependence on teachers. The tendency to rely on others may arise from students' reluctance to step out of their comfort zones (Gardner & Davis, 2013). However, it is important to consider that this hesitation may not necessarily be due to a lack of willingness, but rather due to a lack of knowledge or experience in being autonomous learners. It could be that students are not aware of how to be independent in their learning, particularly if they have never been expected to do so before.

7.6.2 Institutional and Structural Constraints

The findings of this study highlight significant institutional constraints on learner autonomy, a concern echoed by nearly all participants. 90.9% of teachers and 83.5% of students strongly agreed that a lack of basic resources, such as libraries, internet access, and digital tools, is a major barrier to developing autonomy. Yet, participants also pointed to deeper, systemic challenges, including rigid curricula, exam-driven teaching, and limited teacher flexibility, all of which restrict opportunities for student choice. These constraints are reinforced by sociocultural norms of authority and the continuing disruption of civil conflict, showing that autonomy is limited not only by resources but also by cultural practices.

These findings also highlighted the impact of structural disruption on learner autonomy in conflict-affected contexts such as Libya. Although classroom practices remain largely teacher-centred, the results indicate that learners demonstrate a willingness and capacity to engage in more autonomous behaviour when appropriate support is provided. This is particularly relevant

in conflict- affected contexts such as Libya, where instability disrupts learning and reliance on rigid structures become less sustainable.

The findings further suggest that learner autonomy in this context is not fully developed as independent learning but instead emerges gradually as a context-dependent process shaped by both sociocultural and institutional constraints, this finding is consistent with Stringers (2024) conceptualisation of learner autonomy as adaptive phenomenon, as well as with education in emergencies which emphasises the important of flexible and responsive approaches (Akkari, 2023; Dryden-Peterson, 2016). In this sense, autonomy can also be understood as not only a pedagogical goal, but also as a practical response to sustaining learning in disrupted environments.

In addition, time constraints and rigid timetables were consistently identified as major barriers to learner autonomy (Figure 6 & Figure 8). Students and teachers both noted that busy academic schedules leave little time for students to develop autonomy skills such as managing their work, solving problems, building confidence, and thinking critically. Without the flexibility to practice these skills, students struggle to gain the confidence necessary for managing their own learning (Nguyen, 2014). This result aligns with Nguyen's research (2022), which shows that a lack of time and traditional teaching practices with packed schedules further hinder the promotion of learner autonomy.

Similarly, limited time also reduces opportunities for group discussions, which are essential for promoting learner autonomy (Al Jawad, 2021). In the Libyan educational context, this challenge appears particularly pronounced. The system's heavy focus on fixed curricula and syllabus completion leaves little room for interactive and student-centred learning strategies that promote learner autonomy (El Mezughi, 2021). Moreover, this finding aligns with comparable outcomes reported by Nguyen (2014), who observed that teachers were too occupied to allocate time for class activities. Additionally, Killen & O'Toole (2023) and Qutoshi & Poudel (2014) documented that teachers and students find it hard to handle flexible teaching methods and group discussions in short timeframes. Group discussions provide students with opportunities to share ideas and take responsibility for their own learning. Without enough time for these activities, students miss out on developing the skills and independence needed for learner autonomy (Hussein,2018).

Another frequently cited constraint among teacher-participants was the lack of professional autonomy. As discussed earlier, teachers described feeling restricted in making instructional

decisions, highlighting the limited freedom teachers experience in their roles. Aligned with these findings, the literature emphasises the fundamental role of teachers in fostering learner autonomy (Haapaniemi et al., 2021). This finding aligns with Skerritt's (2023) work, which highlights that teacher flexibility is essential for creating learning environments that empower students to take control of their own learning. This study aligns with Oxford's (2017) political dimension of autonomy by showing that systemic constraints on teachers' freedom directly limit the development of learner autonomy.

7.6.3 Sociocultural Constraints

This study contributes to the theoretical debate about the "cultural neutrality" of learner autonomy, challenging the notion that learner autonomy is exclusively a Western construct (Palfreyman & Smith, 2003). Learner autonomy is often seen as a Western approach, as noted in previous research (Pokhrel, 2016), yet learner autonomy matters in all cultural contexts (Nalipay & Cai, 2020). To address these challenges, researchers emphasise the need for culturally adapted teaching methods and activities that foster autonomy while respecting local contexts (Yasmin & Abas, 2020). In this study, participants like Student Maya and Student Daniel suggested that autonomy may conflict with Eastern values that favour collectivism. While Western contexts are often associated with individualism, where autonomy is linked to independence and personal choice, and Eastern contexts with collectivism, where autonomy may be expressed through interdependence and shared responsibility, these are broad tendencies rather than fixed categories (Hofstede, 2001; Littlewood, 1999).

Student Lina perceives that studying in Western societies emphasises open-mindedness and idea exploration over textbook-based learning, where there is no absolute right or wrong, and all perspectives are accepted. This opinion is further supported by the quantitative findings, as 81.6% of teacher participants strongly agreed that one of the barriers to developing learner autonomy is the belief that the concept is not suited to non-Western learners. However, it is important to recognise that learner autonomy does not require a completely relativistic approach. It is about students taking responsibility for their learning, which can be encouraged in any system if teaching methods are adapted to the culture (Yasmin & Sohail, 2018), for example, by inserting choice into group projects, framing decision-making as a collective task, or allowing students to negotiate roles within teams. In practice, this might mean giving students limited choices that teachers approve in advance, presenting choice as a sign of maturity, or letting groups take responsibility while teachers keep overall guidance.

Another key issue is responsibility for outcomes. Teacher Sara explained that in Libya, students often blame teachers when they struggle academically and resist efforts to engage them actively. This mindset creates further barriers to developing learner autonomy. Furthermore, these findings align with prior research that recognises the dependence on teachers as a socio-cultural constraint in developing learner autonomy (Elmahjoub & Lamb, 2019). While those prior studies have acknowledged the dependence on teachers as a barrier to fostering learner autonomy, this study provides further insight into the dynamics of this teacher-student relationship. Teacher participants reported resistance from students when they were asked to be active participants in their learning. This suggests not only a reliance on teachers but also a potential lack of confidence or preparedness to engage in autonomous learning. This lack of responsibility appears to be deeply rooted in cultural expectations, where educational success is viewed primarily as the teacher's responsibility rather than a shared effort (Othman, 2021).

Additionally, participants noted that Libyan parents often adopt a strict, traditional approach that prioritises obedience over independence. This cultural mindset can hinder students from forming their own opinions and making decisions because it discourages questioning authority and limits opportunities for self-directed choices within the home environment. For example, Student Ahmed shared that his parents often disagreed with his preferred study habits. Teacher Yusuf pointed to similar cultural constraints, describing a mindset in which students arrive at university expecting to follow teachers' instructions passively, rather than engaging actively with content or questioning it. This mindset reflects both technical (instructional strategy) and sociocultural (parental and cultural norms) factors. This finding aligns with prior research (Pokhrel, 2016; Wei et al. , 2022) which highlights the impact of parental control on limiting students' ability to develop autonomy.

Student Amal sheds light on further challenges students faces due to their lack of experience with learner autonomy. Underlying reasons can be traced to cultural and educational practices. In some cultures, including Libya, students grow up memorising the Quran, and this fosters a strong cultural emphasis on memorisation as a respected and cultivated skill (Hamad, 2018). Similarly, as European scholars once memorised Latin vocabulary without necessarily being able to communicate in Latin, learners who rely mainly on memorisation may acquire linguistic knowledge without developing the ability to use the language meaningfully or autonomously.it can restrict the development of communicative competence and self-directed language use (Littlewood, 1999). This practice contributes to a heightened capacity for memorisation among students, as they are accustomed to committing large amounts of text to memory from an early

age(Hamad, 2018). Consequently, many Libyan students find traditional memorisation-based learning strategies more familiar than other methods. This is reflected in the perspective of Teacher Fatima, whose cultural preference for memorisation over critical thinking or independent learning aligns with previous research. This deepens Benson's (2021) sociocultural view by showing that cultural norms like valuing memorisation not only shape learner habits but also define what counts as acceptable learning. This redefines the space in which autonomy can realistically develop.

Overall, As Oxford (2003) notes, learner autonomy is shaped by sociocultural factors. This study confirms that norms around authority, and family in Libya strongly influence how autonomy is understood and enacted. Specifically, respect for authority discourages questioning and independent decision-making, the expectation of teacher-led pedagogical approaches restricts opportunities for collaborative learning, and family expectations of obedience limit self-directed learning choices. Together, these norms mean that any attempt to foster learner autonomy must be framed within the cultural context rather than imposed externally.

7.7 Characteristics and practices enhancing Learner autonomy

This study looked at the main factors that help Libyan university students become more independent in learning English. By combining interviews with students and teachers and analysing survey data, four key themes emerged: self-management, learning strategies, motivation, and collaboration. The following sub-sections provide a clearer understanding of these factors in the specific context of Libyan education, where resources are often limited.

7.7.1 Promoting Learner Autonomy Through Self-Management

One of the takeaways was how important self-management is for learner autonomy. Students like Student Lina and Student Amal talked about planning their time and practising outside of class. Teachers, such as Teacher Salma and Teacher Yusuf, said that students who set goals and reflect on their progress tend to do better overall. Survey data supported this; Both teachers (93%) and students (90%) agreed that self-management practices are key to developing learner autonomy. Students emphasised self-reflection and self-monitoring, teachers prioritised structured planning, yet both saw independent learning as central to autonomy. This finding supports what Benson (2013) has long emphasised: when learners take responsibility for their own progress, setting goals, planning, and evaluating their work, they become autonomous. Recent studies also support this idea, showing that self-management and self-regulation are

key to developing learner autonomy. For example, Admiraal et al. (2024) found that when teachers give students more control over their learning, they improve their ability to plan and manage their own progress. In the same way, the students in this study showed that when they organised and reviewed their learning, they felt more independent and responsible.

The findings of this study reveal a strong agreement between teachers and students that the ability to take responsibility is the most essential aspect of learner autonomy. Teachers particularly emphasised it as a core component of autonomy and a key characteristic of successful language learners, reinforcing Benson's argument and showing that it is central to effective learning. In places like Libya, where education systems can be unstable, this skill is even more essential (Algwil, 2024). Similar findings were reported by Ibrahim and Alhodairy (2023) showing that Libyan top-performing students use metacognitive strategies for self-management effectively. Other studies in similar regions found the same, performed better academically. Al-Abyadh (2022) showed that being able to regulate one's learning is closely linked to motivation and achievement. This aligns with international research showing that self-management learners perform better across contexts. However, in Libya, where educational disruption is common, such self-management practices are particularly vital for sustaining learning continuity and achievement.

Clearly, when individuals can make decisions about their own learning, it plays a key role in fostering autonomy. This trait is highly valuable in learners because it helps them stay focused on their goals (Little, 2003). Beyond the classroom, autonomous behaviour also carries over into everyday life, influencing how individuals approach personal and professional challenges (Lamb, 2003; Little, 1991). As Namaziandost et al. (2024) point out, developing habits of autonomy is not only crucial for academic progress but also for nurturing creative thinkers who are well-prepared for the future. This was also reflected in the participants' experiences, as some students mentioned that during times of conflict in certain areas and the COVID-19 lockdown, they formed study groups, divided tasks, and explained lessons to one another. According to them, this collaborative and self-directed approach made learning easier and more effective than traditional teacher-led instruction. These insights support the need to prioritise self-management explicitly in both curriculum design and teacher training programs, especially in contexts with limited resources such as Libya, where students often lack access to sufficient learning materials and institutional support, making self-directed skills essential for progress.

7.7.2 Developing Learner Autonomy Through Learning Strategies

Both teachers and students in this study emphasised the importance of learning strategies for fostering learner autonomy and improving language development. Teachers such as Nadia and Sara highlighted that students who use diverse strategies tend to be more confident and independent learners, particularly when they make use of additional resources beyond classroom materials, 96.8% of teachers identified as especially effective. Similarly, 79% of students, including Lina, Maya, and Amir, valued independent use of online tools and materials to support their learning. Students also highlighted notetaking, summarising, breaking tasks into smaller steps, and using authentic materials such as news articles and podcasts as key strategies that enhance autonomy. These strategies were consistently rated as important in the quantitative results (Table 19 & Table 29). These data confirm that the majority of students are applying structured, technical learning strategies, and they are also beginning to develop reflective habits, such as breaking complex tasks down and using multiple resources.

This aligns with the technical and psychological perspectives of autonomy, which view strategy use as a key mechanism by which learners can take control over their own learning (Oxford, 2003; Benson, 2013). Emphasising that learning strategies are essential for successful language learning. Strategies such as using additional resources, for example, Carter (2022) found that students who frequently used online tools and external materials developed greater independence in language learning. Similarly, Guapacha and Paz (2017) demonstrated that integrating diverse resources and strategy instruction through models significantly enhanced students' autonomy and language proficiency. Together, these findings reinforce the idea that access to varied learning tools and strategies supports learner autonomy. In disrupted educational contexts, students are often required to use the resources available to them to continue learning. When learners engage actively in selecting and applying effective strategies, they demonstrate the ability to take charge of their own learning.

7.7.3 The Role of Motivation and Engagement in Fostering Autonomy

Motivation emerged as a key driver of learner autonomy in this study. Both teachers and students described how curiosity, personal goals, and encouragement from others sustained autonomous learning. Students such as Omer and Ruby highlighted that self-motivation and interest in learning topics pushed them to study independently and explore beyond the classroom. Teachers like Adam and Mohamed similarly noted that motivated learners were more persistent and willing to take responsibility for their progress. Quantitative results

supported these views: 93.2% of teachers and 87.4% of students identified motivation as a major factor in autonomy, while 90 % of students said they continued motivating themselves even when learning became difficult. Teachers further emphasised that willingness to learn (92.0%), enjoyable classroom activities (88.0%), and self-motivation (86.4%) are central to fostering autonomy. These findings show that motivation both intrinsic and extrinsic acts as the foundation of autonomous learning. This aligns with Oxford's (2003) view of motivation as the emotional engine of autonomy. In Libya, Brima and Abdelaty (2023) found that both motivations, such as personal interest and external factors, like grades or recognition, significantly impact how actively students engage in learning. Another research supports this as well, Mustapha and Mahmoud (2019) reported a strong link between motivation and learner readiness for autonomy among Libyan students in Malaysia. Similarly, Ceylan (2021) reported a positive correlation between students' motivational beliefs and their autonomy in a Turkish university setting.

Students also pointed to teacher-student relationships as a critical external motivator. Student Lina shared, "When teachers are supportive, we feel more confident to express ourselves... but when they are too strict, we hesitate to participate." This was further supported by 82.5% of teachers who agreed that building a positive relationship with students makes the subject more enjoyable and improves learning (Table 30). These findings are consistent with earlier studies showing that supportive teacher–student relationships, built on care and encouragement, promote greater learner autonomy and self-regulation (Danielsen et al., 2016). Zhang et al. (2024) also found that when teachers support autonomy by showing respect and responding to students' needs, learners report higher motivation and energy in their studies, both of which are critical for fostering autonomous learning behaviours.

Motivation does not just help learners get started; it also sustains them when challenges arise. In the Libyan context, where many students face limited resources, a motivated mindset often becomes the key to resilience. This study highlights a cyclical relationship in which motivation fosters autonomy, and autonomy, in turn, sustains motivation. Such a cycle explains why learners who begin with interest or encouragement are more likely to take responsibility for their learning, which then strengthens their motivation further. These findings align with Oxford's (2003) claim that motivation is the emotional engine of autonomy, and with Ahmed and Hossain (2024), who describe it as a mutually reinforcing process. Moreover, the evidence here adds nuance by showing how both intrinsic drives (personal interest, curiosity) and extrinsic factors (grades, teacher support) interact in shaping learner behaviour. For Libya, this

means that supportive feedback and engaging materials are not optional extras but essential triggers of the motivation–autonomy cycle, helping learners move toward greater independence even in resource-constrained settings.

7.7.4 Enhancing Autonomy Through Collaborative Learning

Student participants reported that working with others made it easier to learn and stay engaged. Maya and Omer described how group study sessions helped them better understand lessons. Teacher Hana and Teacher Nadia echoed this, noting that collaborative tasks not only built students' confidence but also encouraged them to take greater responsibility for their own learning. These findings align with the work of Oxford (2003), who argues that autonomy can develop through meaningful social interaction. The strong agreement in the survey data, 88.7% of teachers and 84.7% of students, are believing that group learning enhances learner autonomy. Similarly, 94.8% of teachers highlighted that interacting with English speakers, even though online platforms, promoted language use, reinforcing Oxford's (2017) view that authentic interaction is central to sustaining motivation and building autonomy. This aligns with research conducted by Al Jawad (2021) found that collaboration notably improved students' speaking skills, suggesting that cooperative environments can create safer and more supportive spaces for language use. Similar findings were reported in nearby regions. Aljabri, (2024) found that using pair work and group strategies in Saudi classrooms helped students retain information more effectively and fostered greater classroom engagement. Likewise, Alzubi et al (2024) showed that strategy training, such as the explicit teaching techniques that help students plan and evaluate their own learning, especially when implemented through collaborative methods, not only improved language skills but also boosted students' confidence and autonomy, their study emphasised that motivated learners were more likely to participate in group work, which further strengthened their independence as language learners.

This study highlights the important role of collaboration in promoting learner autonomy. The findings support previous research suggesting that autonomy is not solely an individual pursuit but can be developed through social interaction. In the Libyan context, group work and communication with others, both in person and online, proved especially valuable in building learners' confidence and engagement. These insights reinforce the need for language teachers to create more collaborative opportunities that support students in becoming independent and self-directed. In section (8.7.1), students' emphasis on independent study and teachers' stress on structured self-management might appear to contrast with the strong support for collaborative learning reported here. However, these findings are not contradictory. Rather,

they represent two complementary dimensions of learner autonomy. Self-management practices equip learners with the ability to plan and reflect on their own progress, skills that are vital when external support is limited, as is often the case in Libya. Collaboration, on the other hand, provides the motivation and supportive environment needed to sustain this independence, particularly in contexts where learners may lack resources. In practice, many students described how self-study helped them progress, but also how working with peers reinforced their confidence and kept them engaged. This shows that autonomy in the Libyan context emerges not only through working alone but also through interdependent learning with and from others. Such a dual emphasis reflects Oxford's (2003) and Murray's (2011) arguments that autonomy develops most effectively when both independence and social interaction are present, working together rather than in opposition. This suggests that learner autonomy in the Libyan EFL context is best understood as a balance between independence and interdependence, rather than one at the expense of the other.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter brought together the different perspectives and experiences of teachers and students to better understand how learner autonomy is viewed and practised in Libyan higher education. Drawing on the voices of participants and supported by theories from Benson's (1997) and Oxford's (2003), it is clear that autonomy is not a simple or fixed concept; it means different things to different people and is shaped by a range of factors, including personal motivation, classroom practices, institutional policies and cultural values.

A key takeaway from this discussion is that both teachers and students value the idea of autonomy, but they often approach it in different ways. Teachers tend to see it more as a set of skills that can be taught, like using strategies or managing time, while many students view it as something deeper, tied to independence, responsibility, and even their rights as learners. This mismatch creates a kind of tension: students are often ready to take on more responsibility, but the system they are in does not always support that shift. Further complicating the picture, many teachers feel that students are either not ready or unwilling to take on greater responsibility, which further complicates the move toward autonomy.

There were also noticeable gaps between what both groups wanted to see happen and what was actually happening in classrooms. While students expressed a strong desire to be more involved in decisions about their learning, especially in areas like setting goals or choosing activities, teachers were still cautious, often because of institutional pressures or cultural expectations.

These findings reflect a wider pattern seen in other countries facing similar challenges, where traditional systems and top-down approaches make it difficult to create more learner-centred environments. At the same time, this study shows that change is possible. Both students and teachers shared small but meaningful examples of progress, like allowing more choice in homework or encouraging group work, that help create space for autonomy to grow. These steps might seem minor, but they are important in shifting the classroom dynamic from control to collaboration.

In the end, learner autonomy is not something that happens overnight, and it cannot be reduced to just using strategies or working independently. It is about building a learning culture where students feel capable and trusted, and where teachers feel supported in giving up some control. The findings of this study further highlight that autonomy in the Libyan EFL context is best understood as a balance between independence (through self-management) and interdependence (through collaboration), rather than one or the other. In the Libyan context, this is particularly important. With limited resources and ongoing instability, empowering students to become more autonomous is not merely a helpful approach; it emerges as a critical response to contextual challenges. This independence allows learning to continue even when external support is reduced or disrupted. This chapter has highlighted both the obstacles and the opportunities when it comes to developing learner autonomy. The findings draw attention to the complexity of balancing external support with internal motivation and learner autonomy. Understanding these dynamics contributes to a more informed understanding of how autonomy might realistically evolve within Libyan higher education.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the key findings and looks at what they might mean for how autonomy works in Libyan higher education. It also lays out the contributions and limits of the research. I offer practical ideas and implications for what teachers, institutions and policymakers could consider doing. In addition, the limitations of the study are presented before concluding the chapter with some suggestions for future research. Toward the end, I reflect on the process of carrying out this work and connect what happened in Libya to other places that face similar challenges in education.

8.2 Revisiting the Research Aims and Questions

This research explored the perceptions of both EFL teachers and students regarding learner autonomy within Libyan public universities. The primary objectives were to examine how each group defines learner autonomy, to understand their perceived roles in fostering it, and to assess both the desirability and practicality of involving learners in classroom decision-making. Additionally, the study aimed to compare the beliefs of teachers and students operating within the same educational environment. By examining the issue from both viewpoints, the research seeks to offer a clear understanding of learner autonomy in public university settings. The research questions guiding this study were:

- Q1-What is the concept of learner autonomy as perceived by EFL teachers and students in the Libyan university context?
- Q2- What are the major challenges and constraints teachers and students perceive relative to promoting learner autonomy in Libyan university EFL classrooms?
- Q3-Which classroom strategies and learner characteristics are perceived as most effective in fostering learner autonomy in Libyan university EFL classrooms by teachers and students?

8.3 Summary of Findings

The study investigated how learner autonomy is understood and practised in Libyan universities. It found that both students and teachers saw autonomy as important, but they interpreted it in different ways. Teachers tended to adopt a technical view, seeing autonomy as something that can be developed through strategies, tools and classroom guidance. Students

leaned more towards a psychological view, linking autonomy to independence, motivation and personal responsibility. Additionally, there was a mismatch between teachers' and students' definitions: teachers described autonomy in academic and pedagogical terms, whereas students associated it with broader life skills and independence beyond the classroom. This mismatch suggests that autonomy in Libya should be framed not only as a classroom strategy, but also as part of a wider personal growth and decision-making process.

Participants generally conceptualise autonomy as a combination of skills and mindset that can develop when supported, a position that aligns with the dominant view in the literature (Stringer, 2024; Halabi, 2018). This study contributes to the broader literature by reinforcing the idea that autonomy is not simply an innate quality but a context-sensitive ability. It demonstrates that with the right support and sometimes even out of necessity, learners in challenging environments can build the ability to direct their own learning.

This study found that both teachers and students highlighted the importance of involving learners in classroom decision-making; however, what emerges in practice reflects a limited form of autonomy. Teachers continue to maintain authority over lesson objectives, assessment, and teaching methods, whereas students expressed a strong desire for greater participation in these areas. At the same time, the findings provide new evidence that both groups view homework and classroom tasks as practical entry points for promoting autonomy, supporting earlier claims that learner responsibility can be developed gradually through structured and guided practices.

Participants agreed that teachers guide, assess, and support learning, while students play a key role in motivating themselves and sustaining their own progress. Although both groups viewed autonomy as a shared responsibility, it remained largely reactive in practice, as students showed some independence but continued to depend on teacher direction. This suggests that autonomy in the Libyan context is developing within a teacher-supported framework rather than through full learner independence. Teachers tended to view autonomy as students responding to teacher input, whereas students expressed a more proactive orientation, recognising their own role in motivating themselves and contributing to their learning while still valuing teacher support.

The findings also revealed a widespread misunderstanding of reflection. Both teachers and students had limited experience with reflective practices, which weakened opportunities for developing self-evaluation and self-direction. This suggests that barriers to learner autonomy go beyond practice and stem from how reflection is perceived.

Several challenges were identified, including restricted curriculum flexibility, time pressures, limited training, political instability, and cultural expectations surrounding authority, memorisation and family influence. These individual, institutional and cultural constraints shape how autonomy develops in the Libyan context. In other words, the learner autonomy development process in Libya is characterised by these intersecting roadblocks. Teachers and students largely, but not entirely, raise issues that are beyond their control, such as resource shortages due to political instability.

The findings show that both teachers and students view self-management, motivation and collaboration as essential to developing autonomy. Practices such as notetaking, breaking tasks into smaller steps, using varied resources, constructive feedback and group work were seen as helpful for building confidence and encouraging greater learner responsibility. Overall, the findings of this study further highlight that autonomy in the Libyan EFL context is best understood as a balance between independence (through self-management) and interdependence (through collaboration), rather than one or the other. These findings underscore that learner autonomy in Libya is not absent but under development, constrained by structural forces but supported by growing awareness and small but meaningful pedagogical shifts.

8.4 Limitations

While this study offers important insights, it is not without limitations. the study focused primarily on public universities. As a result, the findings may not fully capture the range of learner autonomy experiences, for example, those in private educational settings. Notably, several participants mentioned having experienced greater autonomy in private language courses, suggesting that pedagogical approaches and learner roles may differ between public and private institutions. Therefore, one limitation of this study is the potential influence of the type of institution on learner autonomy practices. It remains unclear to what extent differences in expectations, particularly in private institutions that need to attract paying students, may shape the way autonomy is promoted, possibly shielding them from some of the challenges faced by public universities. Accordingly, future research could explore these differences more deeply by comparing learner autonomy practices across the public and private sectors, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how context influences autonomy in the Libyan EFL environment.

Another limitation relates to the research methodology; this study was based on data collected through interviews and questionnaires. As highlighted in the literature, participants may respond in ways they believe are expected or socially desirable, which reflects participants' self-reported perceptions (Cohen et al., 2018). However, because classroom observations were not conducted, the research did not capture how learner autonomy is conceptualised in day-to-day teaching and learning practices. A further methodological limitation is that the newly developed questionnaire has undergone only initial validation within the Libyan context and has not yet been compared with existing autonomy measures, which is an important step for establishing convergent validity. Future research could incorporate observational methods to provide a more comprehensive and contextually grounded understanding of autonomy in practice. Although alternative methods such as classroom observations, focus groups and standardised questionnaires were considered, they were not feasible in this context. (Cohen et al., 2018). Observations were limited by safety and access concerns, while focus groups were also unsuitable due to the political sensitivity of the Libyan context, where group discussion may become uncomfortable of influenced by differing regional perspectives. To address these challenges, one to one online interview was selected as a safe and more ethical approach, allowing participants to express their views with reduced pressure.

Additionally, the study focused mainly on students and teachers. It did not include voices from university administrators, families, or people shaping national education policies. Those groups have a big impact on what happens in classrooms. The study also focused exclusively on English language learning, which may limit generalisability to other disciplines. While the findings offer insights that are particularly relevant to EFL settings, such as the role of language exposure, communicative practice and authentic English materials, other aspects like motivation and self-management reflect broader learning principles that may transfer beyond English to other subjects. The findings may not entirely apply to other subjects or educational levels where teaching and learning practices differ. Finally, political instability may have influenced participant responses and access to data.

8.5 Theoretical and Practical Implications of the Study

8.5.1 Theoretical Contribution

This study contributes to the literature by presenting an understanding of the perceptions towards learner autonomy in the Libyan context. Limited literature is available on this context where traditions of teacher-centred learning are dominant, yet learner autonomy is an important

issue given the current educational and political changes in Libya because students need to take greater responsibility for their own learning and rely less on teachers and institutions, particularly in times of conflict when universities may be closed or even destroyed. In such circumstances, the ability to study independently becomes essential for sustaining learning. This research is therefore a significant step towards providing research focusing on learner autonomy within Libyan Higher Education language classrooms, as there is a lack of research in this field.

This study also contributes theoretically by highlighting how autonomy is conceptualised differently by teachers and students in a conflict-affected context. While previous research in Libya, such as Elabbar (2011) and Ibrahim& Alhodairy (2023), has explored aspects of learner autonomy, none have compared teachers' and students' beliefs directly. This difference has, however, been noted in other contexts. Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) in Oman and Nguyen and Habok (2020) in Vietnam found that teachers tend to view autonomy as something to be taught or facilitated, while students associate it with independence and freedom of learning. The present study extends this body of work by showing that, in Libya, this divergence is intensified by disrupted education and limited institutional stability.

The findings showed that teachers believed learner autonomy development is mainly their responsibility. Their beliefs reflected a reactive view of autonomy, where students are expected to respond to what teachers provide. In contrast, students held a more proactive view of autonomy, seeing it as something they take part in developing with their teachers. They valued their own active role but also recognised the support they needed from teachers. This difference highlights how teachers' beliefs are shaped by a more traditional, top-down approach (positivist), while students lean towards a more learner-centred, collaborative perspective (constructivist). These conflicting conceptualisations imply that autonomy cannot develop fully unless the gap between reactive teacher-led views and proactive student-centred views is bridged. More specifically, in the Libyan context, this means designing teacher training that helps teachers gradually shift from directive methods to practices that include student input, such as negotiated tasks, reflective activities, and shared decision-making. At the curriculum level, autonomy can be fostered through structured opportunities for students to set goals, work collaboratively, and link classroom learning to real-life contexts, ensuring that cultural traditions of authority are respected while students' readiness for active participation is supported in practice.

Additionally, in Libya, where ongoing political and economic instability has strained the education system, promoting learner autonomy can empower students to take responsibility for their learning in situations where teacher support may be very limited in some parts of the country. At the same time, the data showed that these very conditions can also prompt students to develop autonomy out of necessity, for example, by organising peer study groups, relying on self-discipline, and seeking learning resources independently when formal support is absent. This makes the study especially relevant for conflict-affected or fragile education systems, offering insights that may apply to other contexts where instability disrupts formal education, and students must rely on self-directed learning, such as parts of the Middle East.

8.5.2 Methodological contribution

A key methodological strength of this study lies in the development of a new learner autonomy questionnaire. Although some initial items were adapted from existing questionnaires in the literature, the final version was primarily constructed from themes that emerged in the phase one semi-structured interviews, ensuring strong contextual relevance. The questionnaire was subsequently reviewed by experts, piloted, and statistically validated to confirm its reliability and construct validity. However, as a newly developed, context-specific instrument, it requires further validation in future studies to strengthen its applicability and robustness within the Libyan context and in other similar EFL environments. Consequently, this study provides a context-specific, empirically grounded instrument that can support future research on learner autonomy in similar EFL and higher education settings.

This study also makes a significant contribution by successfully collecting data from a large, geographically dispersed population within Libya, a country where logistical, political, and infrastructural challenges often hinder large-scale research. Given Libya's vast land area and small, unevenly distributed population, gathering a sizeable and representative sample is extremely difficult. The contribution lies not simply in obtaining a large sample, but in demonstrating that large-scale data collection is possible in such constrained conditions. The large sample in this study, therefore, adds value by offering a broad overview of perceptions across regions and institutions, strengthening the credibility and generalisability of the findings, and providing insights that would not be accessible through small-scale qualitative work alone.

8.5.3 Pedagogical Contribution

The study provides insights into classroom activities and practices based on the views of EFL teachers and first-year students in a Libyan public university. As well as offering new insights into actual classroom practices, references to practices and characteristics of an autonomous learner in the Libyan context are presented in this study. In practice, this might mean giving students limited choices that teachers approve in advance, presenting choices or letting groups take responsibility while teachers keep overall guidance. This study also identifies specific challenges faced by Libyan students and teachers, such as a lack of reflective practices and limited institutional support, which impede the development of autonomy. The findings may help to explain some of the constraints that Libyan language learners face when confronted with autonomous practices, as they highlight the institutional and socio-cultural barriers that both teachers and students need to overcome.

Learner autonomy in a Libyan language-learning context is characterised by a balance between teacher guidance and learner responsibility, where autonomy develops gradually within a culturally shared understanding of collaboration, respect for authority, and collective learning. The study offers a clearer understanding of what learner autonomy looks like in this context, showing how it is shaped by cultural expectations, institutional norms, and beliefs about responsibility in learning. While the study does not include data from other contexts, comparing its findings with previous literature in other context settings helps situate the Libyan experience within the wider discourse on learner autonomy and highlight both shared and context-dependent dimensions. The insights generated here also offer practical recommendations for improving teacher training, curriculum design, and student engagement strategies that can be adapted to similar educational disruption settings, where instability and institutional constraints affect the development of learner autonomy.

8.5.4 Contribution to Disrupted Educational Contexts

This study makes an important contribution to the understanding of learner autonomy in disrupted education contexts, particularly within conflict-affected contexts such as Libya. While previous research ((Benson, 2011; Nguyen & Gu, 2022; Little, 2020) has often examined autonomy within stable educational environments, this study highlights how autonomy can function under conditions of instability and inconsistent instructional support.

The findings of this study suggest that learner autonomy in conflict-affected educational contexts should not be conceptualised only as individual independence, but rather as interdependence and a context-sensitive process. Learners operate within a system shaped by

both collectivist cultural expectations and structural disruptions, which together influences their capacity to make control of their own learning. This dual influence creates a form of constrained or emerging autonomy, where learner rely on teachers but also show potential for independent learning when conditions allow.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates that autonomy can act as a mechanism for maintaining learner continuity in disrupted contexts. When formal teaching is inconsistent, learners who are able to be self-regulate, set goals, self-evaluate and use alternative resources are better positioned to sustain their learning. This supports existing literature on education in emergencies for example (Akkari, 2023; Dryden-Peterson, 2016), which emphasises flexibility and learner- cantered approaches as a key to resilience and extends it by providing evidence from the Libyan EFL context.

Lastly, the study contributes to theory on learning autonomy by supporting recent conceptualisations of autonomy as a dynamic and emergent rather than being fixed. This study shows that autonomy develops through interaction with contextual challenges, such as limited resources and restricted instructional support, rather than being predetermined in advance.

8.6 Recommendations

The findings of this study informed several recommendations for promoting learner autonomy among teachers, students, and stakeholders in the Libyan context. The suggested recommendation echoes students' and teachers' opinions about what improves learners' autonomy. Those recommendations first supported the research with data about how learner autonomy is understood and interpreted. Simultaneously, they explained how autonomy is to be promoted in the Libyan context.

To ensure that these recommendations are relevant and realistic, it is important to first acknowledge how cultural factors shape learner autonomy in Libya. All cultural factors work together to shape students' and teachers' views of autonomy and hinder their ability to engage in autonomous learning as defined in the literature. Theoretically, cultural norms could be resisted or modified in the service of learner autonomy, or learner autonomy could be modified to the cultural context. For instance, teacher dependence in Libyan culture fosters passivity, with students relying on teachers for academic success instead of taking responsibility for their own learning. This could be modified by more explicit discussions or negotiations about responsibility throughout secondary and higher education, which might make learners move toward autonomy. However, such a change is unlikely without significant resource allocation

and perhaps engaging more general cultural shifts, to the extent they are occurring in the wider culture. Other factors raised by students and teachers are more realistic to change, as they encourage students to take on leadership roles in classroom activities, such as moderating discussions or presenting projects. This builds confidence and instils a sense of ownership over their learning process.

While sweeping educational reform may not be immediately feasible due to institutional constraints such as rigid syllabi and exam-focused policies, small and strategic adjustments can still foster autonomy. For instance, teachers might begin by offering students limited but meaningful choices in how they complete certain tasks or assignments or letting groups take responsibility while teachers keep overall guidance. These small opportunities for decision-making can build learners' confidence and motivation over time, without requiring major structural changes, as well as teachers' confidence that they can promote learner autonomy.

Since most interaction between students and teachers happens within the classroom, participants highlighted the important role teachers play in motivating their students. Building positive relationships and creating a supportive and respectful space where students feel comfortable sharing their ideas is crucial. Such an environment helps foster critical thinking and self-reflection, these two key elements that teachers are encouraged to practice, promoting learner autonomy. Additionally, it is important for teachers to clearly explain students' responsibilities and provide essential materials, such as an outline of the topics to be covered during the semester. This helps students engage more actively with the subject matter and come to class better prepared. To achieve this, teacher education becomes essential. Teachers often find it difficult to shift from traditional authority roles unless they receive targeted support and professional development (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012). Workshops and mentoring programmes can provide teachers with practical strategies to foster autonomy without feeling that they are losing control of the classroom. Reflective training that focuses on learner-centred approaches and collaborative practices would better equip teachers to manage this transition.

Another area that needs improvement is the assessment criteria. Students noted that exams do not seem to encourage critical thinking or reflection on the discussed information. This becomes particularly clear when students mention that they are expected to write on exam sheets what they have studied during the lessons, word for word. For such reasons, assessment criteria should not be based on memorising what has been studied, but on the analysis that students give, and their own reflection about the issues tackled.

To foster learner autonomy in Libya without conflicting with cultural values, three culturally sensitive strategies are proposed. First, a guided autonomy model could help teachers shift from authority figures to facilitators by integrating small, structured student-led tasks like topic discussions. This supports Littlewood's (1999) model of transitional autonomy and reflects findings from this study where students favoured a more proactive role, while teachers-maintained control. Second, community learning hubs, possibly hosted in mosques or local centres, could provide offline resources and involve parents through workshops that promote gradual learner autonomy. This aligns with Libya's collectivist values, as found in this study, where family influence played a key motivational role. Such hubs echo Oxford's (2003) emphasis on culturally grounded support systems. Third, offering gender-sensitive activities like peer reviews in either same-gender or mixed-gender groups allow students to choose what suits them best, while still encouraging teamwork and responsibility. This respects local social norms while promoting collaboration, as recommended by Benson (2021) and supported by students' preferences for safe, inclusive learning environments. Together, these strategies create space for autonomy while respecting cultural expectations.

This study contributes to the existing literature by examining how individual, institutional, and sociocultural factors interact to shape learner autonomy within the Libyan context. It also highlights the specific challenges learner's encounter. The findings show that no single group (teachers or students) can overcome these barriers alone, nor can sole interventions such as curricular change or more interactive class activities. One key shift is recognising that autonomy does not diminish teachers' authority but instead enhances the learning environment by fostering shared responsibility and mutual respect. In the Libyan context, this will require adaptive strategies that take cultural and systemic constraints into account, promoting a gradual and culturally sensitive approach to learner autonomy.

The recommendations of this study are directed toward policymakers, university administrators, and stakeholders in Libya's higher education sector. A key issue raised by both teachers and students was the urgent need to improve university infrastructure. Despite the appearance of modern facilities in some institutions, participants reported frequent electricity cuts, poor lighting in early morning classes, and a lack of university transportation. While these challenges may not directly impact students' ability to become autonomous learners, they do influence motivation and engagement, particularly in environments already strained by wider social and political disruptions.

Improving infrastructure is essential to support learner autonomy. Educational technology, like campus-wide internet access and classroom tools, must also be made available. Strengthening university libraries is equally important to promote self-directed learning. Although these improvements require planning and commitment, they are entirely achievable, especially considering that Libya is a resource-rich country. However, the ongoing political instability and disruptions caused by administrative breakdowns and security issues remain a serious barrier to implementation. Addressing these structural problems in parallel with educational reforms is critical. If such disruptions can be minimised, these recommendations have real potential to create a more autonomous and engaging learning environment. That said, in some cases, long-term investment in institutional infrastructure may not be realistic. Frequent disruptions, lack of central authority, and repeated theft or destruction of university property make it difficult to sustain improvements. In this context, providing students with individual resources, such as laptops or mobile internet access, may be a more sustainable and impactful strategy. This approach helps mitigate system-level weaknesses while still supporting learners' ability to study independently and access resources outside of class.

8.7 Concluding Reflections

I began this research project with a strong belief that learner autonomy holds great potential, not only in education but also in its impact on personal growth and professional development. As a Libyan student educated within a system often described as relying on traditional, teacher-centred pedagogies, I have always considered myself an independent learner. Academically, I depended on teachers who provided structured learning paths within the classroom, but I would always take it further on my own to deepen my understanding of the topics I studied. I consistently took responsibility for improving my language skills through various resources and authentic language materials made available to me via technological tools. For me, this was a form of autonomy.

Highly prescriptive, teacher-centred approaches, which remain common in Libyan English classrooms, have long limited students' independence and communicative ability. This study's findings show that both teachers and students now favour more interactive and collaborative methods that foster engagement and promote deeper learning – even though there are significant barriers to such interactive teaching. Therefore, more communicative and learner-centred approaches could help support autonomy and motivation, although their implementation would also depend on broader institutional and curricular conditions. In other words, promoting and adopting more autonomous learning practices may contribute to

enhancing the quality of English education in Libya, and it can play a role in equipping the new generation with lifelong skills that extend beyond the classroom.

Moreover, conducting this research in the context of English language teaching in Libyan higher education taught me that developing learner autonomy depends heavily on building habits, with an understanding of how the surrounding culture shapes previous habits. Both teachers and students need to cultivate autonomous habits that help them take greater responsibility for their learning practices. We must support and guide students in developing self-directed learning habits and life skills that will help them adapt to the evolving demands of education and employment, both locally and globally.

Interviews with students revealed a frequent use of the word “freedom”, highlighting the importance of empowering the new generation of learners and providing them with greater opportunities to develop autonomy and take control of their learning. Some university students clearly expressed this, saying: “We demand autonomy!” Now is the time for their voices to be heard. As educators, it is our responsibility to respond to our students’ needs and demands and grant them their right to independent, self-directed learning. Our role as educators is not just to provide knowledge but to empower students to discover their learning capacity via the development of learner autonomy.

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Appendix A: Consent Form for participants in English and Arabic

Consent Form for adult participants

- ☐ I confirm that I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and I have received satisfactory answers to any questions I may have had regarding the research. I am also aware of how my personal information will be used, stored, and for how long.
- ☐ I understand that participation in this study is voluntary, and I have the right to withdraw at any time before the completion of the study without providing a reason or facing any consequences.
- ☐ I understand that I can request the removal of any personal information that identifies me, including video, audio recordings of interviews, and my personal information from transcripts. However, anonymized data that cannot identify me personally cannot be withdrawn once included in the study.
- ☐ I understand that any information collected during the research will be kept confidential, and my identity will not be revealed in any publicly available information.
- ☐ I give my consent to participate in the study and agree to be audio and/or video recorded as part of the project.

Name:	Date:	Signature:

نموذج موافقة المشاركين البالغين

عنوان البحث: الاستقلالية التعلمية في سياق تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في ليبيا

1- أؤكد أنني قد قرأت ورقة معلومات المشاركين وتلقيت إجابات مرضية على أي أسئلة قد كانت لدي حول البحث ()

2- أؤكد بالدراية بكيفية استخدام معلوماتي الشخصية وتخزينها وفترة استخدامها ()

3- أنا أدرك أن المشاركة في هذه الدراسة تطوعية، ولدي الحق في الانسحاب في أي وقت قبل انتهاء الدراسة دون إعطاء سبب أو مواجهة أي عواقب ()

4- أفهم أنه يمكنني طلب إزالة أي معلومات شخصية تحدد هويتي، بما في ذلك الفيديو والتسجيلات الصوتية للمقابلات، ومعلوماتي الشخصية من النصوص المكتوبة. ومع ذلك، لا يمكن سحب البيانات المجهولة التي لا يمكن التعرف علي شخصيتي فيما إذا تم تضمينها في الدراسة ()

5- أفهم أن أي معلومات يتم جمعها خلال البحث سيتم الحفاظ عليها بسرية، ولن يتم الكشف عن هويتي في أي معلومات متاحة للجمهور ()
6-أعطي موافقتي للمشاركة في الدراسة وأوافق على تسجيل صوتي و / أو مرئي كجزء من المشروع ()

الاسم	التاريخ	التوقيع

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet for Participants in English and Arabic

Participant Information Sheet for Adult Participants

Name of department: School of Education

Title of the study: Learner Autonomy in a Libyan EFL Context.

The Researcher

Noura Ali is a postgraduate student undertaking PhD degree in Education at the University of Strathclyde. She is currently undertaking a research study Learner Autonomy in a Libyan EFL Context. The focus of this study is on the views of EFL teachers and students toward learner autonomy. The study also attempts to compare these beliefs in order to identify any potential differences between them within the same context. She can be contacted at School of Education | University of Strathclyde | Lord Hope Building | 141 St James Road | Glasgow | G4 0LT Email: noura.ali@strath.ac.uk.

What is the purpose of this research?

The main purpose of this study is to explore the learner autonomy in the Libyan EFL context and Libyan culture, as well as to explore the possibility of implementing learner autonomy in English language classroom (teachers, students).

Do you have to take part?

Taking part in this study is entirely optional, and if you choose not to participate it will in no way affect your studying, and I can assure you that the study will not disrupt the working environment in any way and any data collected will remain confidential Similarly, you are entitled to withdraw from the process at any point.

What will you do in the project?

If you choose to take part in the study, you will be invited to take part in an interview with Mrs Noura Ali. The interviews will online using zoom and will last around 20-30 minutes as first phase. the second phase you will be asked to fill up a questionnaire which take around 15 minutes. The full project is planned to take place from 01/05/2023 to -30/10/2025.

Why have you been invited to take part?

I have chosen your class - English language department at Libyan public university- for the research because you are at level where you can express your opinions and can decide what you like or not and what you think is suitable or not for you in learning and teaching.

What happens to the information in the project?

Interview data will be pseudo-anonymised before analysis. Each participant will be given a code name; keys for code names will be stored separately from the raw data. Survey data will be fully anonymised except for those participants who choose to leave a contact email for an interview. Those participants' surveys will have the contact information extracted and stored separately before analysis. Both the identification codes and data will be uploaded on to Strathclyde OneDrive. These files will be kept in separate area to the audio-recordings and transcripts. The result of this study will be made available to you. They will also be used in my PhD thesis and might be presented in academic journals or at academic conferences.

What happens next?

If you are happy to be part of the study, please sign the consent form enclosed to show this, and return to Mrs Noura Ali, if you do not want to be involved in the project then we thank you for taking the time to read this information. After the study is complete and the data has been analysed the full report in dissertation format will be available to you, as well as a shortened version of the results. The researcher can be contacted at any time via email/telephone should you wish to ask questions about the results.

Researcher Contact Details:

Mrs Noura Ali _School of Education | University of Strathclyde | Lord Hope Building | 141 St James Road | Glasgow | G4 0LT

Email: noura.ali@strath.ac.uk.

Telephone: +44 777 603 1046

Chief Investigator details:

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University of Strathclyde Glasgow

ورقة معلومات المشارك للمشاركين البالغين

اسم القسم: كلية التربية

عنوان الدراسة: الاستقلالية في التعلم في سياق اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في ليبيا.

الباحثة:

نورة علي طالبة دراسات عليا تسعى للحصول على درجة الدكتوراه في التعليم من جامعة ستراثكلايد. تقوم حاليًا بدراسة الاستقلالية التعلمية في سياق تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في ليبيا. يركز هذا البحث على آراء معلمي وطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية حول الاستقلالية التعلمية. كما يحاول البحث مقارنة هذه المعتقدات لتحديد أي اختلافات محتملة بينهما في نفس السياق. يمكن التواصل معها عبر 141 St James Road | Lord Hope Building | University of Strathclyde | School of Education | Glasgow | G4 0LT البريد الإلكتروني: noura.ali@strath.ac.uk.

ما هو هدف هذا البحث؟

الغرض الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة هو استكشاف الاستقلالية التعليمية للمتعلم في سياق تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في ليبيا وفي الثقافة الليبية، بالإضافة إلى استكشاف إمكانية تطبيق الاستقلالية التعليمية في فصول تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية (المعلمون والطلاب).

هل يتوجب عليك المشاركة؟

المشاركة في هذه الدراسة هي اختيارية تمامًا، وإذا اخترت عدم المشاركة فلن يؤثر ذلك بأي شكل من الأشكال على دراستك، ويمكنني أن أؤكد لك أن الدراسة لن تؤثر على بيئة العمل بأي شكل من الأشكال، وسيتم الحفاظ على سرية أي بيانات يتم جمعها، بالإضافة إلى أنك لديك الحق في سحب مشاركتك في أي وقت.

ماذا ستفعل في المشروع؟

إذا قررت المشاركة في الدراسة، ستُدعى للمشاركة في مقابلة مع السيدة نورة علي، وستجري المقابلات في إحدى غرف الاجتماعات في جامعتك، وستستغرق حوالي 15 دقيقة كمرحلة أولى، ثم سيُطلب منك في المرحلة الثانية ملء استبيان يستغرق حوالي 15 دقيقة. المشروع بأكمله مخطط له من 2023/05/01 حتى 2025/10/30

لماذا تمت دعوتك للمشاركة؟

لقد اخترت صفك - قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في الجامعة العامة الليبية - للبحث لأنك تمتلك المستوى الذي يمكنك فيه التعبير عن آرائك واتخاذ قراراتك بما يليق بك في التعلم والتدريس.

ماذا يحدث بالمعلومات في المشروع؟

سيتم تشويه بيانات المقابلات بشكل شبه مجهول قبل التحليل. سيتم إعطاء كل مشارك اسم رمزي ؛ سيتم تخزين مفاتيح الأسماء الرمزية بشكل منفصل عن البيانات الأساسية. سيتم تشويه بيانات الاستبيان بالكامل باستثناء المشاركين الذين يختارون ترك بريد إلكتروني للاتصال بهم لإجراء المقابلة. سيتم استخراج معلومات الاتصال لهؤلاء المشاركين من الاستبيانات وتخزينها بشكل منفصل قبل التحليل. سيتم تحميل كل من رموز التعريف والبيانات على وحدة تخزين السحابة "ستراثكلايد وان درايف". سيتم الاحتفاظ بهذه الملفات في منطقة منفصلة عن تسجيلات الصوت والنصوص المكتوبة بعد التحليل. سيتم جعل نتائج هذه الدراسة متاحة لك. كما سيتم استخدامها في رسالة الدكتوراه الخاصة بي وقد يتم عرضها في المجلات الأكاديمية أو في المؤتمرات الأكاديمية.

ما الذي يحدث بعد ذلك؟

إذا كنت سعيدًا بالمشاركة في الدراسة ، يرجى التوقيع على نموذج الموافقة المرفق لإظهار هذا ، وإرجاعه إلى السيدة نورة علي ، إذا كنت لا ترغب في المشاركة في المشروع ، فنحن نشكرك على الوقت الذي قضيته في قراءة هذه المعلومات. بعد الانتهاء من الدراسة وتحليل البيانات ، سيتم توفير التقرير الكامل بتنسيق الأطروحة لك ، بالإضافة إلى نسخة مختصرة من النتائج. يمكن الاتصال بالباحث في أي وقت عبر البريد الإلكتروني / الهاتف إذا كنت ترغب في طرح أسئلة حول النتائج.

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Appendix C: Protocols for Semi-Structured Interviews in English and Arabic (teachers)

Protocols for Semi-Structured Interviews (teachers)

General Questions:

1. How long have you been teaching English in Libyan institutions?
2. What motivated you to pursue a career in teaching English?

Questions about Learning Autonomy:

1. How would you define an autonomous learner?
2. Do you believe that learner autonomy is important? Why or why not?
3. If you feel the need to enhance the level of autonomy in your students, what sort of things do you think they need?
4. Do you think that the concept of Learner Autonomy is more relevant to you as a teacher or to your students? Why?

Questions about the practice of Learner Autonomy:

1. To what extent would you like your students to be involved in the following decisions: Lesson objectives; teaching methods; homework and tasks; assessment.
2. Is there any language skill (reading, writing, listening, speaking) that you find challenging to improve the level of autonomy in your students? If yes, which skill is it, how do you recognize the difficulty, and what suggestions do you have to improve it?
3. Have you ever asked your students to reflect on what you have learned?
4. Constraints promoting Learner Autonomy:

1. Can you mention any classroom activities, practices, or characteristics that you found helpful in promoting your students' autonomy?
2. In your teaching environment, are there any restrictions or challenges that limit the growth of learner autonomy?
3. What tactics can be used to get around the problems you've identified?
4. Apart from academic contexts, what other elements can foster or hinder the development of learner autonomy (e.g., family, parents, home environment)?

بـروتوكولات لمقابلات شبه المنظمة (المعلمين)

الأسئلة العامة

1-منذ متى وأنت تدرس اللغة الإنجليزية في المؤسسات الليبية؟

2-ما الذي دفعك لاختيار مهنة تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية؟

أسئلة حول استقلالية التعلم

1-كيف تعرف المتعلم المستقل؟

2-هل تعتقد أن استقلالية المتعلم مهمة؟ ولماذا؟

3-إذا شعرت بالحاجة لتعزيز مستوى استقلالية طلابك، ما هي الأشياء التي تعتقد أنها تحتاجها؟

4-هل تعتقد أن مفهوم استقلالية المتعلم أكثر صلة بك كمعلم أم بطلابك؟ ولماذا؟

أسئلة حول ممارسة استقلالية التعلم

1-بأي مدى ترغب في أن يشارك الطلاب في صنع القرارات التالية: أهداف الدرس، كتاب الدورة، وقت التعلم، أساليب التدريس، إدارة الصف، الواجبات المنزلية والمهام، التقييم

2-هل هناك مهارة لغوية (القراءة، الكتابة، الاستماع، الكلام) تجد صعوبة في تحسين مستوى استقلالية طلابك؟ إذا كان الأمر كذلك، فما هي هذه المهارة، وكيف تتعرف على الصعوبة، وما هي الاقتراحات التي لديك لتحسينها؟

3-هل سبق لك أن طلبت من طلابك التعليق على ما تعلموه؟ ما هي مشاعرهم تجاه تعلمهم؟

القيود التي تعزز استقلالية التعلم

1- هل يمكنك ذكر أي نشاطات، ممارسات، صفات أو عوامل في الصف تجد أنها مفيدة في تعزيز استقلالية طلابك؟

2-هل هناك أي عقبات تمنع تطوير استقلالية المتعلم في سياق التدريس الخاص؟

3-ما هي التكتيكات التي يمكن استخدامها لتجاوز المشكلات التي حددتها؟

4-بخلاف السياقات الأكاديمية، ما هي العناصر الأخرى التي يمكن أن تعززاو تعيق تطوير استقلالية المتعلم (على سبيل المثال، الأسرة، الآباء، البيئة).

Appendix D: Protocols for Semi-Structured Interviews in English and Arabic (Students)

Semi-Structured Interview Protocols (students)

General questions:

1-Do you believe learning English is important? Why?

2-How do you see learning English in Libya?

Questions about Learning Autonomy:

1. How would you characterise an autonomous learner?

2. How important do you think learner autonomy is? If not, why not?

3. What kind of tools do you believe you would need in order to increase your level of learning autonomy?

4-Do you believe that Learning Autonomy has more to do with your teacher than it does with you as a student? How?

Questions about the practice of Learner autonomy:

1. To what extent would you like to be involved in the following decisions: Lesson objectives; time of learning; teaching methods; homework and tasks; assessment.

2. Is there any language skill (reading, writing, listening, speaking) that you find challenging to improve your level of autonomy? If yes, which skill is it, how do you recognize the difficulty, and what suggestions do you have to improve it?

3. Have you ever been asked to write about what you have learned? What are your feelings about your learning?

Constraints promoting Learner Autonomy:

1. Can you mention any classroom activities, practices, or factors that you found helpful in promoting your autonomy?

2. In your learning environment, are there any restrictions or challenges that limit the growth of learner autonomy?

3. What tactics can be used to get around the problems you've identified?

4. Apart from academic contexts, what other elements can foster the development of learner autonomy (e.g., family, parents, home environment)?

بروتوكولات المقابلة غير المنظمة للطلاب

الأسئلة العامة- :

1-هل تعتقد أن تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية مهم؟ ولماذا؟

2-كيف ترى تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في ليبيا؟

أسئلة حول الاستقلالية في التعلم-

1 كيف تعرف مصطلح المتعلم المستقل ؟

2-كيف ترى أهمية استقلالية المتعلم ؟إن لم ترها هامة، فلماذا؟

3ما هي الأشياءالتي تعتقد أنك تحتاجها لزيادة مستوى استقلاليتك في التعلم ؟

4هل تعتقد أن الاستقلالية في التعلم لها علاقة أكثر بالمعلم منها بك كطالب؟ وكيف؟

أسئلة حول ممارسة الاستقلالية في التعلم-

1 إلى أي مدى ترغب في المشاركة في القرارات التالية: أهداف الدرس؛ طرق التدريس؛ الواجبات والمهام؛ والتقييم؟

2 هل هناك مهارة لغوية (القراءة، الكتابة، الاستماع، الكلام) تجدها صعبة في تحسين استقلاليتك فيها؟ إن كان الجواب بنعم، فما هي هذه المهارة؟ وكيف تتعرف على الصعوبة؟ وما هي الاقتراحات التي لديك لتحسينها؟

3هل طلب منك يوما ما كتابة رايك حول ما تعلمته؟ ما هي مشاعرك حيال تعلمك؟

القيود التي تعزز استقلالية المتعلم-

1-هل يمكنك ذكر أي نشاطات، ممارسات، أو عوامل في الصف الدراسي وجدتها مفيدة في تعزيز استقلاليتك؟

2-هل هناك أي عقبات تمنع تطوير استقلالية المتعلم ؟

3-ما هي التكتيكات التي يمكن استخدامها لتجاوز المشكلات التي حددتها؟

4-في بيئتك التعليمية، هل هناك قيود أو تحديات تقيد او تطور استقلاليتك في التعلم. علي سبيل المثال والديك عائلتك او المجتمع من حولك بصفة عامة.

Appendix E: Students' Questionnaire in English and Arabic

Students' Questionnaire: Exploring Learner Autonomy in a Libyan EFL Context

Instructions

This questionnaire is divided into four sections. In Section one, please choose the option that best reflects your beliefs and practices about learner autonomy. In Section two, indicate whether you believe specific autonomy-supportive practices and learner characteristics are effective by selecting "Yes," "No," or "Unsure.". In section three, answer general questions about learner autonomy. In section four, provide personal information about yourself.

Section One: Please state your agreement or disagreement with the following statements by clicking on the appropriate option for each statement.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Learner autonomy means to learn without a teacher.					
2	Learner autonomy means developing the ability to evaluate ones' own leaning and stay motivated in learning.					
3	Learner autonomy is a human right for every learner and shifts the authority from teachers to students.					
4	Learner autonomy is encouraged through collaborative interactions and practical integration with their social and cultural environment.					
5	Learner autonomy means a student is professional in using learning strategies and provide them with learning how to learn.					
6	Teachers should help me assess my own learning and progress.					
7	Teachers should help me stimulate my interest in learning English,					
8	Teachers should help me find the best ways to practice and learn the language autonomously.					
9	Teachers should support me in learning from my peers and work collaboratively to develop my learner autonomy.					
10	I should evaluate my own learning and progress to develop LA.					
11	I should stimulate my interest in learning English for developing learner autonomy.					
12	I belief I should find my own ways to practice and learn English to develop LA.					
13	It is a student's role in developing LEARNER AUTONOMY to learn from peers and work collaboratively					
14	One of the barriers to developing learner autonomy is that students are not confident in working independently.					
15	One of the barriers to developing LEARNER AUTONOMY is that learners are not motivated to learn.					
16	A limited sense of duty and learners' over-reliance on the teacher are barriers to developing learner autonomy.					
17	One of the barriers to developing learner autonomy is the limited English proficiency among Libyan learners.					
18	Learners' focus on passing exams rather than on actual learning is one of the barriers to developing learner autonomy.					
19	A full schedule for university students can also be a barrier to the development of learner autonomy, as it may leave them with limited time and opportunities to take charge of their own learning.					
20	Controlling or authoritative teachers make it harder for students to be autonomous at Libyan university.					
21	One of the barriers to developing LEARNER AUTONOMY is the lack of awareness about what learner autonomy means and how it can be fostered. (Teacher - students…etc).					

22	One of the barriers to promoting LEARNER AUTONOMY is the predominantly teacher-cantered teaching approach in schools before students come to university.					
23	One barrier to developing learner autonomy is universities that lack libraries, internet access, and other resources.					
24	One of the barriers to developing learner autonomy is the belief that the concept is not suited to non-Western learners.					

Section Two, Learners' characteristics, and activities promoting learner autonomy: click on the appropriate option for each statement in both questions.

Learners' characteristics and practices	Q2. Does this enhance learner Autonomy?			Q2. Does this enhance Language learning?		
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No
25- Evaluate and reflect on my own learning is helpful.						
26 Getting feedback from my teachers or peers is very helpful.						
27-Besides to the material I have given by teacher I independently use other recourses to learn some topics.						
28-I motivate myself when I feel down about my learning.						
29- I plan my study time and set specific deadlines to achieve my learning goals.						
30- I break large tasks into smaller, manageable steps to facilitate learning.						
31- I independently use various strategies like taking notes, summarizing, and translation to aid my learning.						
32- I actively identify my weaknesses and take steps to improve them.						
33-I make better progress in learning when I work on my own.						
34-Demonstrate a willingness to learn.						
35- Using online language games and fun activities to make learning less stressful and more enjoyable.						
36- Collaborating with my classmates on small group projects.						
37-Explaining things to myself helps me understand and remember what I'm learning.						
38- Engaging with authentic materials like English news articles, podcasts, and videos.						
39- Communicating with English learners from different countries, either online or in person.						
40- Building a positive relationship with my teacher makes the subject more enjoyable and helps enhance my skills.						

Section Three: General Views Please select (Ö) only one answer for each question, except for question 43(A&B) where you can select more than one answer.

41-Do you think learner autonomy is important in foreign language?

- Yes
- Unsure
- No

42-Whose role is more important in developing learners' autonomy in the classroom.

- Students Role
- Teacher Role

43-A: To what extent are you currently involved in the following decisions? (You can select more than one answer)

- □ Lesson objectives
- □ Teaching methods
- □ Homework and tasks

□ Assessment

43-B: To what extent would you like to be involved in the following decisions? (You can select more than one answer)

□ Lesson objectives
□ Teaching methods
□ Homework and tasks
□ Assessment

44-Please rank the following language skills from most difficult to least difficult to enhance learner autonomy in English language classrooms:

- Reading
- Writing
- Listening
- Speaking

45- Have you ever been asked by your teacher to reflect on what you have learned?

- Yes
- No

46- Do you think that learner autonomy is a skill that anyone can learn? Or do you think? it is an innate characteristic? In other words, can we say that some learners are autonomous by nature and others are not, and there is nothing we can do about it!

- Learnable Skill
- Innate Characteristic
- Both

Section Four: Personal Information

Please tick ONE answer.

1. What is the name of your university? _____
2. In which year of study are you currently enrolled? _____
3. What is your nationality? _____
4. What department are you studying in? _____
5. Would you be interested in participating further in this study (i.e., via an interview)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered YES to Question 6, please provide your contact information:

Email: _____

Other means of contact (e.g., landline or mobile number): _____

Thank You for Taking the Time to Complete This Questionnaire!

استبيان الطلاب: استكشاف الاستقلالية التعليمية في سياق تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في ليبيا

التعليمات

هذا الاستبيان مقسم إلى أربعة أقسام:في القسم الأول، يرجى اختيار الخيار الذي يعكس بشكل أفضل معتقداتك وممارساتك حول الاستقلالية التعليمية.في القسم الثاني، حدد ما إذا كنت تعتقد أن الأنشطة الداعمة للاستقلالية وخصائص المتعلم المحددة فعالة عن طريق اختيار "نعم"، "لا"، أو "لست متأكدًا."في القسم الثالث، أجب عن أسئلة عامة حول الاستقلالية التعليمية .في القسم الرابع، قدم معلومات شخصية عن نفسك.

القسم الأول: يرجى تحديد مدى موافقتك أو عدم موافقتك على العبارات التالية عن طريق اختيار الخيار المناسب لكل عبارة.

		موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة
1	الاستقلالية التعليمية تعني التعلم بدون معلم.					
2	الاستقلالية التعليمية تعني تطوير القدرة على تقييم تعلم الفرد والبقاء متحفزًا أثناء التعلم.					
3	الاستقلالية التعليمية هي حق إنساني لكل متعلم، وتنقل السلطة من المعلم إلى الطالب.					
4	يتم تعزيز الاستقلالية التعليمية من خلال التفاعلات التعاونية والتكامل العملي مع البيئة الاجتماعية والثقافية للمتعلم.					
5	الاستقلالية التعليمية تعني أن يكون الطالب ماهرًا في استخدام استراتيجيات التعلم وتعلم كيفية التعلم.					
6	الأساتذة لديهم دور فعال علي تشجيع الطالب بحيث يكون مستقلا في تعلمه او يعتمد اعتماد تام علي الاستاذ					
7	الأساتذةلهم دور فعال في تحفيز الطالب بتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، مما يساهم في استقلالية المتعلم.					
8	الأساتذة يمكنهم مساعدتي في تحديد نقاط قوتي وضعفي لتطوير استقلاليتي كمتعلم..					
9	الأساتذة يمكنهم تشجيعي في التعلم من زملائي لتطوير استقلاليتي كمتعلم.					
10	يجب أن أجد طرقي الخاصة بي لممارسة الإنجليزية لتطوير استقلاليتي كمتعلم.					
11	يجب أن أحفز واشجع نفسي بنفسي في تعلم الإنجليزية لتطوير استقلاليتي.					
12	يمكنني تعلم الاستقلالية في التعلم من خلال الدراسة مع اصدقائي .					
13	الطلاب الذين يرغبون في تعلم اللغة يمكن ان يكونوا اكثر من غيرهم مستقلين في تعلمهم .					
14	أحد العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو عدم ثقة الطلاب في العمل بشكل مستقل.					
15	أحد العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو عدم تحفيز المتعلمين على التعلم.					
16	ضعف الشعور بالمسؤولية واعتماد المتعلمين المفرط على المعلم يعدان من العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية.					
17	أحد العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو ضعف الكفاءة اللغوية في اللغة الإنجليزية بين المتعلمين الليبيين.					
18	تركيز المتعلمين على اجتياز الاختبارات بدلاً من التعلم الفعلي هو أحد العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية.					
19	الجدول الدراسي المزدحم لطلاب الجامعة يمكن أن يكون عائقًا أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية، لأنه يحد من الوقت والفرص التي تمكنهم من تحمل مسؤولية تعلمهم.					
20	وجود معلمين ذوي أسلوب تحكمي أو سلطوي يجعل من الصعب على الطلاب أن يكونوا مستقلين في الجامعات الليبية.					
21	أحد العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو نقص الوعي بمفهومها وكيفية تعزيزها.					
22	أحد العوائق أمام تعزيز الاستقلالية التعليمية هو النهج التدريسي الذي يركز بشكل					

	أساسي على دور المعلم في المدارس قبل التحاق الطلاب بالجامعة.					
23	من العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو افتقار الجامعات إلى المكتبات، وخدمة الإنترنت، وغيرها من الموارد.					
24	أحد العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو الاعتقاد بأن هذا المفهوم غير مناسب للمتعلمين غير الغربيين.					

القسم الثاني: خصائص المتعلمين والأنشطة التي تعزز الاستقلالية التعليمية – يرجى النقر على الخيار المناسب لكل عبارة في كلا السؤالين

	هل يعزز هذا الاستقلالية التعليمية؟			هل يعزز هذا تعلم اللغة؟		
	نعم	لست متأكدًا	لا	نعم	لست متأكدًا	لا
25 - تقييم مستواك الدراسي في التعلم يعزز.						
26 - الحصول على ملاحظات تعليمية من أساتذتي أو زملائي يفيد كثيرًا في.						
27 - تجربة اساليب تعليم مختلفة من حين الي اخر تعزز مهاراتي في ..						
28 - عندما تكون متحفزًا في الصف فهذا يساعد علي .						
29 - تخطيط وقت الدراسة وتحديد المواعيد النهائية يساهم في تحقيق أهداف التعلم						
30 - تجزئة مهامي الكبيرة إلى مهام صغيرة						
31 - استخدام استراتيجيات مختلفة، مثل تدوين الملاحظات، والتلخيص، والتصور الذهني.						
32- تحديد وتحسين نقاط ضعفي.						
33 - تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بشكل افضل عند التعلم المستقل بمفردي.						
34 – عند إظهار رغبتي في التعلم يساعدني في.						
35 -الألعاب اللغوية والأنشطة الترفيهية تجعل التعلم أقل توترًا وأكثر متعة.						
36 - التعاون مع زملائي في المشاريع الجماعية الصغيرة يعزز المهارات.						
37 - التفسيروالشرح الذاتي يحسن التعلم.						
38 - استخدام مواد و مقالات الأخبار الإنجليزية، والبودكاست، ومشاهدة الفيديوهات.						
39 - التواصل مع متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية من دول مختلفة، سواء عبر الإنترنت أو شخصيًا.						
40 - بناء علاقة إيجابية مع المعلم يجعل المادة أكثر متعة ويساعد في تحسين المهارات.						

القسم الثالث: الآراء العامة

يرجى اختيار (✓) إجابة واحدة فقط لكل سؤال، باستثناء السؤال 43(A&B) حيث يمكنك اختيار أكثر من إجابة.

41 - هل تعتقد أن الاستقلالية التعليمية مهمة في تعلم اللغات الأجنبية؟
□ نعم
□ لست متأكدًا
□ لا

42 - من هو الأكثر أهمية في تنمية استقلالية المتعلمين داخل الفصل الدراسي؟
□ دور الطلاب
□ دور المعلم

43 /ا أي من هذه القرارات تشارك في الوقت الحالي في اتخاذها. (يمكنك اختيار أكثر من إجابة واحدة)
□ أهداف الدرس
□ أساليب التدريس
□ الواجبات والمهام
□ التقييم

43 - ب: أي من هذه القرارات ترغب في اتخاذها. (يمكنك اختيار أكثر من إجابة واحدة)
□ أهداف الدرس
□ أساليب التدريس
□ الواجبات والمهام
□ التقييم

44-رتب المهارات اللغوية من الاكثر صعوبة الي الاقل من حيث استقلاليتك كمتعلم في تعلم اللغة الانجليزية:
□ القراءة
□ الكتابة
□ الاستماع
□ التحدث

45-هل طلب منك فيما سبق أن تعطي رأيك عن ما تعلمته في المحاضرة وما هو مستوى رضاك عنها واذا مايوجد اي شي تحب تطويره في الدرس او مستواك بوجه عام
□ نعم
□ لا

46-هل تعتقد أن الاستقلالية التعليمية هي مهارة مكتسبة يمكن لأي شخص أن يطورها ؟ أم تعتقد أنها سلوك فطري يولد به الانسان ؟ بمعنى آخر، هل يمكننا القول أن بعض المتعلمين مستقلون بطبيعتهم والبعض الآخر لا

□. سلوك فطري يولد به الانسان
□ مهارة يمكن تعلمها
□ الخيارين معا

القسم الرابع: المعلومات الشخصية
.يرجى وضع علامة (✓) على إجابة واحدة فقط

1-ما اسم جامعتك؟----------
2- في أي سنة دراسية تدرس حاليًا؟----------
3- ما هي جنسيتك؟----------
4--ما هو القسم المسجل به في الجامعة ؟----------
5- هل أنت مهتم بالمشاركة بشكل أكبر في هذه الدراسة (على سبيل المثال، عبر مقابلة)؟
☐ نعم لا ☐
إذا أجبت بـ "نعم" على السؤال 5، يُرجى تزويدنا بمعلومات الاتصال الخاصة بك:

البريد الإلكتروني .....
وسيلة أخرى للتواصل (مثل الهاتف الأرضي أو رقم الجوال).....

!شكرًا لك على وقتك في إكمال هذا الاستبيان

Appendix F: Teachers' Questionnaire in English and Arabic

Teachers' Questionnaire: Exploring Learner Autonomy in a Libyan EFL Context

Instructions

This questionnaire is divided into four sections. In Section one, please choose the option that best reflects your beliefs and practices about learner autonomy. In Section two, indicate whether you believe specific autonomy-supportive activities and learner characteristics are effective by selecting "Yes," "No," or "Unsure.". In section three, answer general questions about learner autonomy. In section four, provide personal information about yourself. Note: LA=Learner Autonomy

Section One: Please state your agreement or disagreement with the following statements by clicking on the appropriate option for each statement.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Learner autonomy means to learn without a teacher.					
2	Learner autonomy means developing the ability to evaluate ones' own learning and stay motivated in learning.					
3	Learner autonomy is a human right for every learner and shifts the authority from teachers to students.					
4	Learner autonomy is encouraged through collaborative interactions and practical integration with their social and cultural environment.					
5	Learner autonomy means a student is professional in using learning strategies and provide them with learning how to learn.					
6	It is a teacher's role in developing LEARNER AUTONOMY to help learners assess their own learning progress.					
7	It is a teacher's role in developing LEARNER AUTONOMY to help learners stimulate their interest in learning English,					
8	It is a teacher's role to develop LEARNER AUTONOMY to help learners find the best ways to practice and learn English.					
9	It is a teacher's role in developing LEARNER AUTONOMY to help learners learn from their peers.					
10	It is a student's role in developing LEARNER AUTONOMY to evaluate their own learning and progress.					
11	It is a student's role in developing LEARNER AUTONOMY to stimulate their own interest in learning English.					
12	It is a student's role in developing LEARNER AUTONOMY to find their own ways of practising English.					
13	It is a student's role in developing LEARNER AUTONOMY to learn from peers and work collaboratively.					
14	One of the barriers to developing learner autonomy is that students are not confident in working independently.					
15	One of the barriers to developing LEARNER AUTONOMY is that learners are not motivated to learn.					
16	A limited sense of duty and learners' over-reliance on the teacher are barriers to developing learner autonomy.)					
17	One of the barriers to developing learner autonomy is the limited English proficiency among Libyan learners.					
18	Learners' focus on passing exams rather than on actual learning is one of the barriers to developing learner autonomy.					
19	A full schedule for university students can also be a barrier to the development of learner autonomy, as it may leave them with limited time and opportunities to take charge of their own learning.					

20	Controlling or authoritative teachers make it harder for students to be autonomous at Libyan university.					
21	One of the barriers to developing LEARNER AUTONOMY is the lack of awareness about what learner autonomy means and how it can be fostered.					
22	One of the barriers to promoting LEARNER AUTONOMY is the predominantly teacher-cantered teaching approach in schools before students come to university.					
23	One barrier to developing learner autonomy is universities that lack libraries, internet access, and other resources.					
24	One of the barriers to developing learner autonomy is the belief that the concept is not suited to non-Western learners.					

Section Two, Learners' characteristics, and activities promoting learner autonomy: click on the appropriate option for each statement in both questions.

Learners' characteristics and practices	Q1. Does this enhance learner autonomy?			Q2. Does this enhance Language learning?		
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No
25-Students' evaluation and reflection on their own learning.						
26- Getting feedback from teachers or peers.						
27_Independently using additional resources beyond the provided material.						
28- Self-motivation is important when facing challenges in learning.						
29-Planning study time and setting deadlines contributes to achieving learning goals.						
30- Breaking large tasks into smaller steps facilitates learning						
31-Using different strategies, such as taking notes, summarising, and visualising.						
32- Actively identifying and addressing weaknesses.						
33- Learn English better independently.						
34-Demonstrate a willingness to learn.						
35-Language games and fun activities make learning less stressful and more enjoyable.						
36- Collaborating with classmates on small group projects enhances skills.						
37- Self-explanation improves learning.						
38-Engaging with authentic materials like English news articles, podcasts, and watching videos.						
39-Communicating with English learners from different countries, either online or in person.						
40- Building a positive relationship with the teacher makes the subject more enjoyable and helps improve skills.						

Section Three: General Views Please select (Ö) only one answer for each question, except for question 43(A&B) where you can select more than one answer.

41-Do you think learner autonomy is important in foreign language?

- Yes
- Unsure
- No

42-Whose role is more important in developing learners' autonomy in the classroom?

- Students Role
- Teacher Role

43-A- To what extent do you currently involve your students in the following decisions? (You can select more than one answer)

- Lesson objectives
- Teaching methods
- Homework and tasks
- Assessment.

43- B-To what extent would you like to involve your students in the following decisions? (You can select more than one answer)

- Lesson objectives
- Teaching methods
- Homework and tasks
- Assessment.

44-Please rank the following language skills from most difficult to least difficult to enhance learner autonomy in English language classrooms:

- Reading
- Writing
- Listening
- Speaking

45- Have you ever asked your students to write about what they have learned?

- Yes
- No

46- Do you think that learner autonomy is a skill that anyone can learn? Or do you think? it is an innate characteristic? In other words, can we say that some learners are autonomous by nature and others are not, and there is nothing we can do about it!

- Learnable Skill
- Innate Characteristic
- Both

Section Four: Personal Information

Please tick ONE answer.

1. Number of years of experience as an English language teacher at the university:
☐ 0 – 4 ☐ 5 – 9 ☐ 10 – 14 ☐ 15 – 19 ☐ 20 –24 ☐ 25 or more

2. Highest qualification:
☐ Certificate ☐ Diploma ☐ Bachelor's ☐ Master's ☐ Doctorate ☐ Other (please specify) _____

3. English Levels you teach most:
Level: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 1 & 2 ☐ 3 & 4 ☐ All levels

4- Your first/ native Language:
☐ Arabic ☐ English ☐ Other (please specify) _____

5- Nationality: _____

6. Would you be interested in participating further in this study (i.e., via an interview)?
☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered YES to Question 6, please provide your contact information:

Email: _____

Other means of contact (e.g., landline or mobile number): _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!

استبيان المعلمين: استكشاف الاستقلالية التعليمية في سياق تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في ليبيا

التعليمات

هذا الاستبيان مقسم إلى أربعة أقسام:في القسم الأول، يرجى اختيار الخيار الذي يعكس بشكل أفضل معتقداتك وممارساتك حول الاستقلالية التعليمية.في القسم الثاني، حدد ما إذا كنت تعتقد أن الأنشطة الداعمة للاستقلالية وخصائص المتعلم المحددة فعالة عن طريق اختيار "نعم"، "لا"، أو "لست متأكدًا."في القسم الثالث، أجب عن أسئلة عامة حول الاستقلالية التعليمية .في القسم الرابع، قدم معلومات شخصية عن نفسك.

القسم الأول: يرجى تحديد مدى موافقتك أو عدم موافقتك على العبارات التالية عن طريق اختيار الخيار المناسب لكل عبارة.

		موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة
1	الاستقلالية التعليمية تعني التعلم بدون معلم.					
2	الاستقلالية التعليمية تعني تطوير القدرة على تقييم تعلم الفرد والبقاء متحفزًا أثناء التعلم.					
3	الاستقلالية التعليمية هي حق إنساني لكل متعلم، وتنقل السلطة من المعلم إلى الطالب.					
4	يتم تعزيز الاستقلالية التعليمية من خلال التفاعلات التعاونية والتكامل العملي مع البيئة الاجتماعية والثقافية للمتعلم.					
5	الاستقلالية التعليمية تعني أن يكون الطالب ماهرًا في استخدام استراتيجيات التعلم وتعلم كيفية التعلم.					
6	دور المعلم في تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو مساعدة المتعلمين على تقييم تقدمهم في التعلم.					
7	دور المعلم في تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو مساعدة المتعلمين على تحفيز اهتمامهم بتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية.					
8	دور المعلم في تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو مساعدة المتعلمين على إيجاد أفضل الطرق لممارسة وتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية.					
9	دور المعلم في تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو مساعدة المتعلمين على التعلم من زملائهم.					
10	دور الطالب في تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو تقييم تعلمه وتقدمه بنفسه.					
11	دور الطالب في تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو تحفيز اهتمامه بتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية.					
12	دور الطالب في تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو إيجاد طرقه الخاصة لممارسة اللغة الإنجليزية.					
13	دور الطالب في تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو التعلم من زملائه والعمل بشكل تعاوني.					
14	أحد العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو عدم ثقة الطلاب في العمل بشكل مستقل.					
15	أحد العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو عدم تحفيز المتعلمين على التعلم.					
16	ضعف الشعور بالمسؤولية واعتماد المتعلمين المفرط على المعلم يعدان من العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية.					
17	أحد العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو ضعف الكفاءة اللغوية في اللغة الإنجليزية بين المتعلمين الليبيين.					
18	تركيز المتعلمين على اجتياز الاختبارات بدلاً من التعلم الفعلي هو أحد العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية.					
19	الجدول الدراسي المزدحم لطلاب الجامعة يمكن أن يكون عائقًا أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية، لأنه يحد من الوقت والفرص التي تمكنهم من تحمل مسؤولية تعلمهم.					
20	وجود معلمين ذوي أسلوب تحكمي أو سلطوي يجعل من الصعب على الطلاب أن يكونوا مستقلين في الجامعات الليبية.					
21	أحد العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو نقص الوعي بمفهومها وكيفية تعزيزها.					
22	أحد العوائق أمام تعزيز الاستقلالية التعليمية هو النهج التدريسي الذي يركز بشكل أساسي على دور المعلم في المدارس قبل التحاق الطلاب بالجامعة.					
23	من العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو افتقار الجامعات إلى المكتبات، وخدمة الإنترنت، وغيرها من الموارد.					
24	أحد العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو الاعتقاد بأن هذا المفهوم غير مناسب للمتعلمين					

	غير الغربيين.					

القسم الثاني: خصائص المتعلمين والأنشطة التي تعزز الاستقلالية التعليمية – يرجى النقر على الخيار المناسب لكل عبارة في كلا السؤالين

	هل يعزز هذا الاستقلالية التعليمية؟			هل يعزز هذا تعلم اللغة؟		
	نعم	لست متأكدًا	لا	نعم	لست متأكدًا	لا
25 - تقييم الطلاب وتعليقهم على طريقة تعلمهم الخاص.						
26 - الحصول على وجهة نظر سواءا من المعلمين أو الزملاء.						
27 - استخدام الموارد الإضافية بشكل مستقل خارج المواد المقدمة من معلمهم.						
28 - التحفيز الذاتي مهم عند مواجهة الصعوبات في التعلم.						
29 - تخطيط وقت الدراسة وتحديد المواعيد النهائية يساهم في تحقيق أهداف التعلم						
30 - تقسيم المهام الكبيرة إلى خطوات أصغر يسهل عملية التعلم.						
31 - استخدام استراتيجيات مختلفة، مثل تدوين الملاحظات، والتلخيص، والتصور الذهني.						
32 - التعرف على نقاط الضعف ومعالجتها.						
33 - تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بشكل افضل عند التعلم المستقل.						
34 - إظهار الرغبة في التعلم.						
35 -الألعاب اللغوية والأنشطة الترفيهية تجعل التعلم أقل توترًا وأكثر متعة.						
36 - التعاون مع الزملاء في المشاريع الجماعية الصغيرة يعزز المهارات.						
37 - التفسيروالشرح الذاتي يحسن التعلم.						
38 - استخدام مواد و مقالات الأخبار الإنجليزية، والبودكاست، ومشاهدة الفيديوهات.						
39 - التواصل مع متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية من دول مختلفة، سواء عبر الإنترنت أو شخصيًا.						
40 - بناء علاقة إيجابية مع المعلم يجعل المادة أكثر متعة ويساعد في تحسين المهارات.						

القسم الثالث: الآراء العامة

يرجى اختيار (✓) إجابة واحدة فقط لكل سؤال، باستثناء السؤال 43(A&B) حيث يمكنك اختيار أكثر من إجابة.

41 - هل تعتقد أن الاستقلالية التعليمية مهمة في تعلم اللغات الأجنبية؟

□ نعم

□ لست متأكدًا

□ لا

42 - من هو الأكثر أهمية في تنمية استقلالية المتعلمين داخل الفصل الدراسي؟

□ دور الطلاب

□ دور المعلم

43 - أ: إلى أي مدى تشرك طلابك حاليًا في القرارات التالية؟ *(يمكنك اختيار أكثر من إجابة)*

□ أهداف الدرس

□ أساليب التدريس

□ الواجبات والمهام

□ التقييم

43 - ب: إلى أي مدى ترغب في إشراك طلابك في القرارات التالية؟ *(يمكنك اختيار أكثر من إجابة)*

□ أهداف الدرس

□ أساليب التدريس

□ الواجبات والمهام

□ التقييم

44 - يرجى ترتيب المهارات اللغوية التالية من الأكثر صعوبة إلى الأقل صعوبة فيما يتعلق بتعزيز الاستقلالية التعليمية في فصول تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية:
□ القراءة
□ الكتابة
□ الاستماع
□ التحدث

45 - هل سبق لك أن طلبت من طلابك الكتابة عن ما تعلموه؟
□ نعم
□ لا

46 - هل تعتقد أن الاستقلالية التعليمية مهارة يمكن لأي شخص تعلمها، أم أنها سمة فطرية؟
بمعنى آخر، هل يمكننا القول إن بعض المتعلمين لديهم استقلالية طبيعية بينما آخرون لا، وليس هناك ما يمكننا فعله حيال ذلك؟

□ سمة فطرية
□ مهارة قابلة للتعلم
□ الاثنين معا

القسم الرابع: المعلومات الشخصية
.يرجى وضع علامة (✓) على إجابة واحدة فقط

1- عدد سنوات الخبرة كمعلم لغة إنجليزية في الجامعة:

☐ 0 – 4 ☐ 5 – 9 ☐ 10 – 14 ☐ 15 – 19 ☐ 20 – 24 ☐ 25 أو أكثر

2- أعلى مؤهل حصلت عليه:

☐شهادة ☐دبلوم ☐ بكالوريوس ☐ماجستير ☐دكتوراه ☐ أخرى (يرجى التحديد) .....

3- المستويات التي تقوم بتدريسها غالبًا:
المستوى:
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

4- لغتك الأم/ الأولى:

☐العربية ☐ الإنجليزية ☐ أخرى (يرجى التحديد) .....

5- الجنسية .....

6- - هل أنت مهتم بالمشاركة بشكل أكبر في هذه الدراسة (على سبيل المثال، عبر مقابلة)؟
☐ نعم ☐ لا

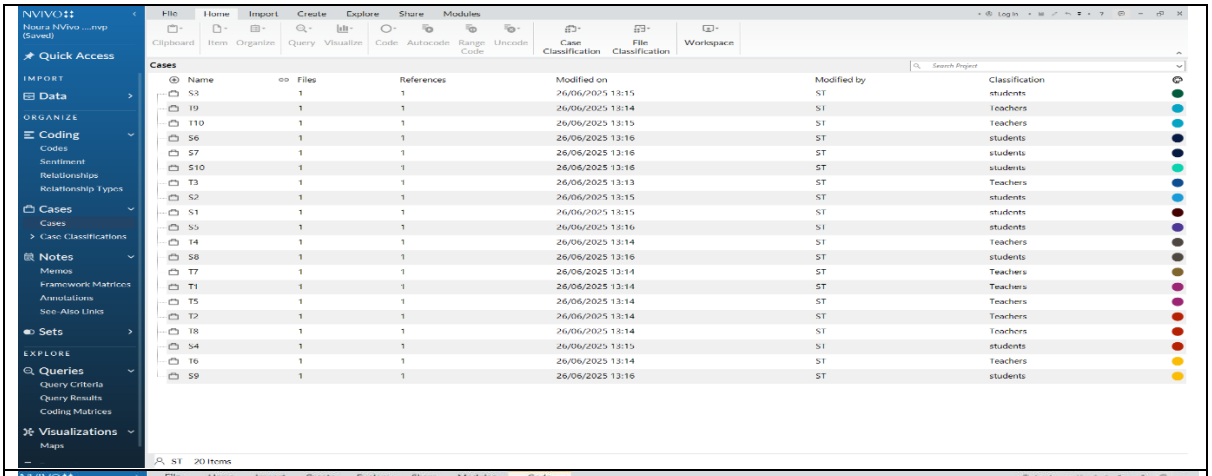
إذا أجبت بـ "نعم" على السؤال 6، يُرجى تزويدنا بمعلومات الاتصال الخاصة بك:

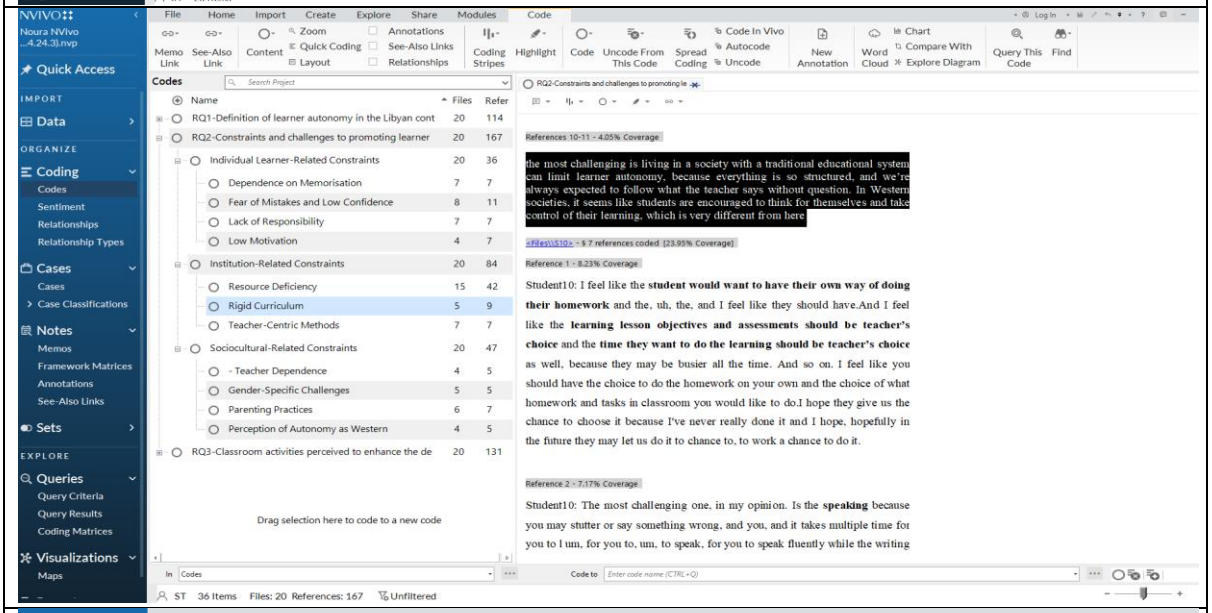
البريد الإلكتروني .....

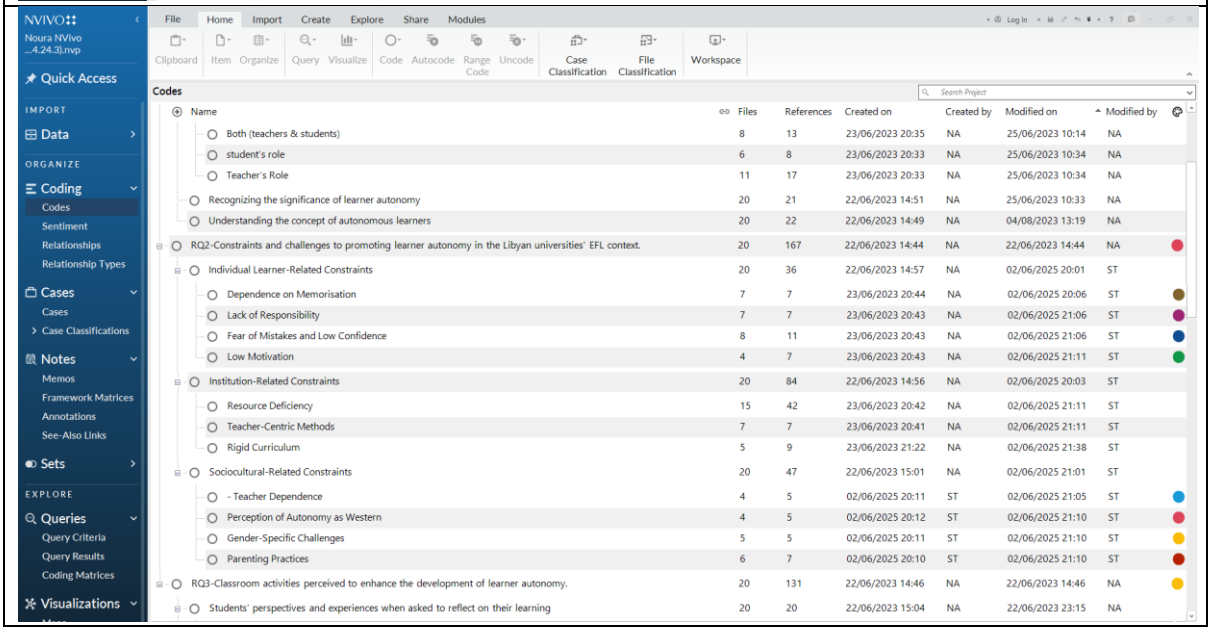
وسيلة أخرى للتواصل (مثل الهاتف الأرضي أو رقم الجوال).....

شكرًا لك على وقتك في إكمال هذا الاستبيان

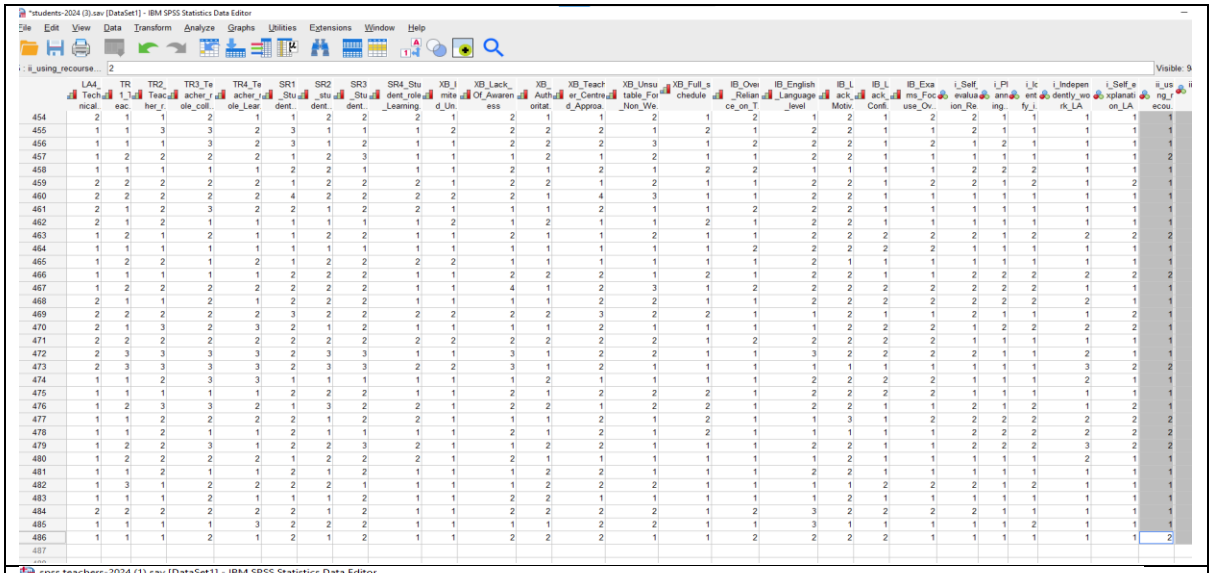
Appendix G: Thematic Data Analysis Using NVivo

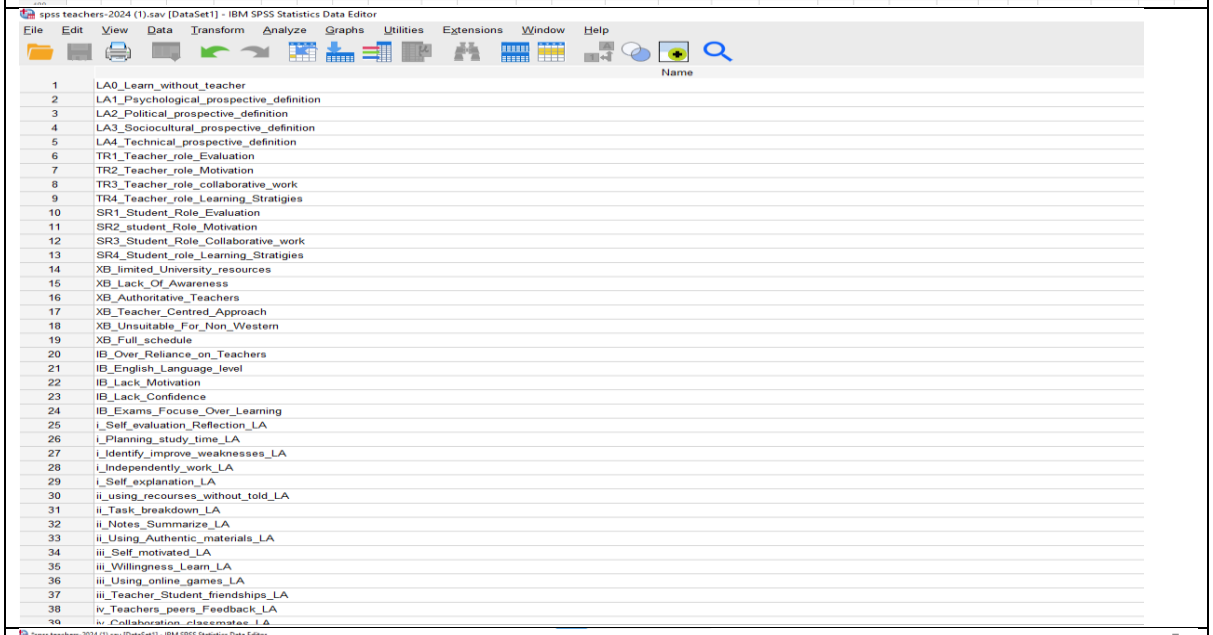


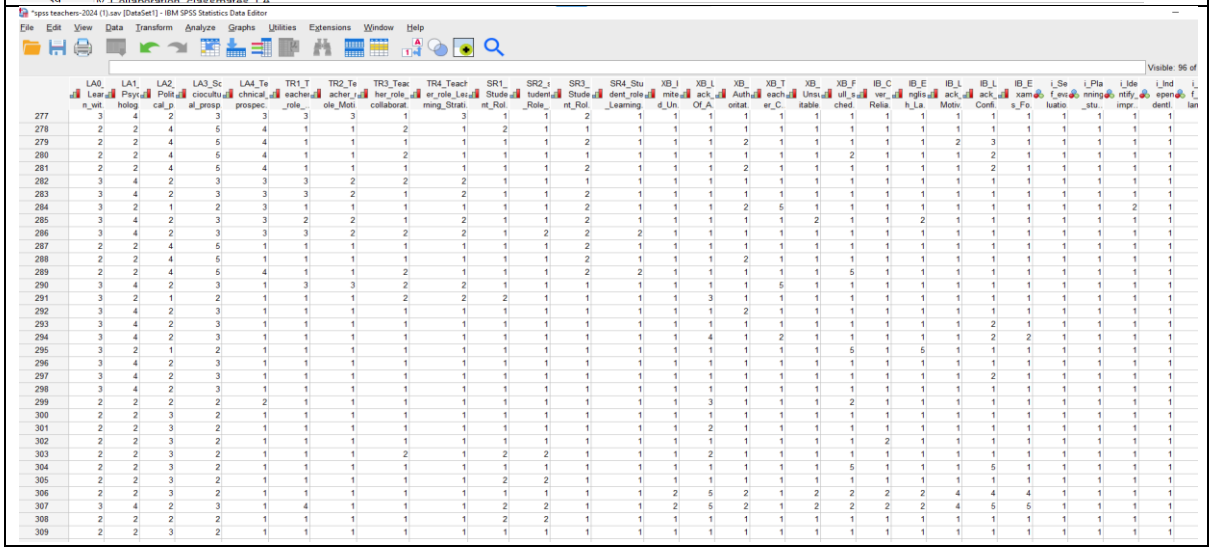




Appendix H: Statistical Data Analysis Using SPSS







Appendix I: Sample of Teachers' Survey Responses

1. □ I confirm that I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and I have received satisfactory answers to any questions I may have had regarding the research. I am also aware of how my personal information will be used, stored, and for how long.
□ I understand that participation in this study is voluntary, and I have the right to withdraw at any time before the completion of the study without providing a reason or facing any consequences.
□ I understand that I can request the removal of any personal information that identifies me, including video, audio recordings of interviews, and my personal information from transcripts. However, anonymized data that cannot identify me personally cannot be withdrawn once included in the study.
□ I understand that any information collected during the research will be kept confidential, and my identity will not be revealed in any publicly available information. □ I give my consent to participate in the study and agree to be audio and/or video recorded as part of the project.
By clicking "Agree," you confirm that you accept all the points mentioned above.

- (●) Agree
- ( ) Disagree

1. Name:

Mohamed fadeel

1. Date:

8/10/23

*. This questionnaire is divided into four sections. In Section one, please choose the option that best reflects your beliefs and practices about learner autonomy. In Section two, share your opinions on the effectiveness of specific autonomy-supportive activities and learner characteristics. In section three, answer general questions about learner autonomy. In section four, provide personal information about yourself.

Q1. Section One: Please state your agreement or disagreement with the following statements by clicking on the appropriate option for each statement.

	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Learner autonomy means to learn without a teacher.	○	●	○	○	○
	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
2. Learner autonomy means developing the ability to evaluate ones' own leaning and stay motivated in learning.	○	●	○	○	○
	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree

3. Learner autonomy is a human right for every learner and shifts the authority from teachers to students.	○	◉	○	○	○
	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
4.Learner autonomy is encouraged through collaborative interactions and practical integration with their social and cultural environment.	◉	○	○	○	○
	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
5.Learner autonomy means a student is professional in using learning strategies and provide them with learning how to learn.	◉	○	○	○	○
	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
6. It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners assess their own learning progress.	○	◉	○	○	○
	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
7. It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners stimulate their interest in learning English.	○	◉	○	○	○
	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
8. It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners find the best ways to practice and learn English.	◉	○	○	○	○
	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
9. It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners learn from their peers.	○	◉	○	○	○
	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
10. It is a student's role in developing LA to evaluate their own learning and progress.	○	◉	○	○	○
	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
11. It is a student's role in developing LA to stimulate their own interest in learning English.	○	◉	○	○	○
	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
12.It is a student's role in developing LA to find their own ways of practicing English.	○	○	◉	○	○
	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
13.It is a student's role in developing LA to learn from peers and work collaboratively.	○	◉	○	○	○
	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
14. One of the barriers to developing learner autonomy is that students are not confident in working independently.	○	○	○	◉	○
	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
15. One of the barriers to developing LA is that learners are not motivated to learn.	○	○	◉	○	○
	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
16. A limited sense of duty and learners' over-reliance on the teacher are barriers to developing learner autonomy.	○	◉	○	○	○

	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
17. One of the barriers to developing learner autonomy is the limited English proficiency among Libyan learners.	◉	○	○	○	○
18. Learners' focus on passing exams rather than on actual learning is one of the barriers to developing learner autonomy.	○	◉	○	○	○
19. A full schedule for university students can also be a barrier to the development of learner autonomy, as it may leave them with limited time and opportunities to take charge of their own learning.	○	○	◉	○	○
20. Controlling or authoritative teachers make it harder for students to be autonomous at Libyan university.	○	◉	○	○	○
21. One of the barriers to developing LA is the lack of awareness about what learner autonomy means and how it can be fostered.	○	◉	○	○	○
22. One of the barriers to promoting LA is the predominantly teacher-cantered teaching approach in schools before students come to university.	○	◉	○	○	○
23-One barrier to developing learner autonomy is universities that lack libraries, internet access, and other resources.	○	○	◉	○	○
24-One of the barriers to developing learner autonomy is the belief that the concept is not suited to non-Western learners.	○	◉	○	○	○

Q2. Section Two, Learners' characteristics, and activities promoting learner autonomy: click on the appropriate option for each statement in both questions.

	Q1-Does this enhance learner autonomy?			Q2. Does this enhance Language learning?		
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No
25-Students' evaluation and reflection on their own learning.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No
26- Getting feedback from teachers or peers.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No

27_Independently using additional resources beyond the provided material.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No
28- Self-motivation is important when facing challenges in learning.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No
29-Planning study time and setting deadlines contributes to achieving learning goals.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No
30- Breaking large tasks into smaller steps facilitates learning	◉	○	○	○	◉	○
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No
31-Using different strategies, such as taking notes, summarizing, and visualizing.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No
32- Actively identifying and addressing weaknesses.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No
33- Learn English better independently.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No
34-Demonstrate a willingness to learn.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No
35-Language games and fun activities make learning less stressful and more enjoyable.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No
36- Collaborating with classmates on small group projects enhances skills.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No
37- Self-explanation improves learning.	◉	○	○	○	◉	○
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No

38-Engaging with authentic materials like English news articles, podcasts, watching videos.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No
39- Communicating with English learners from different countries, either online or in person.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No
40- Building a positive relationship with the teacher makes the subject more enjoyable and helps improve skills.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes	Unsure	No

3. 41-Do you think learner autonomy is important in foreign language?

- ◉ Yes
- ○ Unsure
- ○ No

3. 42-Whose role is more important in developing learners' autonomy in the classroom.

Teacher's Role	Student's Role
◉	○

3. 43-A- To what extent do you currently involve your students in the following decisions? (You can select more than one answer)

Lesson objectives	Teaching methods	Homework and tasks	Assessment.
○	○	◉	○

3. 43-B-To what extent would you like your students to be involved in the following decisions (You can select more than one answer).

Lesson objectives	Teaching methods	Homework and tasks	Assessment.
☐	☑	☐	☐

3. 44-Please rank the following language skills from most difficult to least difficult to enhance learner autonomy in English language classrooms:

Speaking	1
Listening	2
Reading	3
Writing	4

3. 45- Have you ever asked your students to write about what they have learned? learned?

Yes No
○ ◉

3. 46- Do you think that learner autonomy is a skill that anyone can learn? Or do you think? it is an innate characteristic? In other words, can we say that some learners are autonomous by nature and others are not, and there is nothing we can do about it!

Learnable Skill Innate Characteristic Both
○ ◉ ○

Please ONE answ. 1-Number of years of experience as an English language teacher at the university:

0-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20-24 25 or more
○ ◉ ○ ○ ○ ○

. 2-Highest qualification:

Certificate Diploma Bachelor's Master's Doctorate Other
○ ○ ○ ◉ ○ ○

. 3-English Level you teach most:

Year1 Year2 Year3 Year4 1&2 3&4
◉ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

. 4-Your first/ native Language:

Arabic English Other
◉ ○ ○

. 5-Nationality

Libyan Other

(●) ( )

. 6-Would you be interested in participating further in this study (i.e., via an interview)?If you answered YES, please provide your contact information:

No

Appendix J: Sample of Students' Survey Responses

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استقلالية المتعلم تعني بوجه عام كيفية قدرة الطالب علي التحكم في زمام امور تعلمه(للغة الانجليزية) وكذلك قدرته علي تحمل المسؤولية واستعداده لاخذ القرارات بما يخص دراسته ومدي رغبته في التصرف بشكل استقلالي ورغبته في المشاركة مع الاخرين .كما انوه الى انه هناك مستويات في الاستقلالية في تعلم اللغة الانجليزية من حيث مستوى الاعتماد علي استاذ المادة واختياره لطرق المناسبة له في تعلم اللغة الانجليزية بشكل مستقل . يتم تقسيم هذا الاستبيان إلى أربعة أقسام. في القسم الأول، يُرجى اختيار الخيار الذي يعبر بشكل أفضل عن معتقداتك وممارستك فيما يتعلق بالاستقلالية التعليمية. في القسم الثاني، قم بمشاركة آرائك حول فعالية الأنشطة التي تدعم الاستقلالية وخصائص المتعلم. في القسم الثالث، أجب على أسئلة عامة حول الاستقلالية التعليمية. في القسم الرابع، قدم معلومات شخصية عن نفسك.

*. 1-أؤكد أنني قد قرأت ورقة معلومات المشاركين وتلقيت إجابات مرضية على أي أسئلة قد كانت لدي حول البحث
2- أؤكد بالدراية بكيفية استخدام معلوماتي الشخصية وتخزينها وفترة استخدامها أنا أدرك أن المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.
3- تطوعية، ولدي الحق في الانسحاب في أي وقت قبل انتهاء الدراسة دون إعطاء .
4- سبب أو مواجهة أي عواقب أفهم أنه يمكنني طلب إزالة أي معلومات شخصية تحدد هويتي، بما في ذلك الفيديو والتسجيلات الصوتية للمقابلات، ومعلوماتي الشخصية من النصوص المكتوبة. ومع ذلك، لا يمكن سحب البيانات المجهولة التي لا يمكن التعرف علي شخصيتي فيما إذا تم.تضمينها في الدراسة أفهم أن أي معلومات يتم جمعها خلال البحث سيتم الحفاظ عليها بسرية، ولن يتم الكشف عن هويتي في أي معلومات متاحة للجمهور.
() بالنقر علي موافق أعطي موافقتي للمشاركة في الدراسة كجزء من المشروع والموافقة على ماهو موجود في النقاط السابقة.

- (●) موافق
- ( ) غير موافق

1. الاسم:

سامي

1. التاريخ

16/12/2023

Q1. يُرجى اختيار مستوى موافقتك أو عدم موافقتك على العبارات التالية من خلال الضغط مرة واحدة فقط أمام كل عبارة.

	موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	غير موافق	غير موافق بشدة
1.الاستقلالية التعلمية تعني التعلم بدون معلم.	( )	(●)	( )	( )	( )
2. الاستقلالية التعليمية تعني تطوير الطالب لقدراته حتى يستطيع تقييم نفسه بنفسه .	(●)	( )	( )	( )	( )
3. الاستقلالية التعليمية هي حق لكل متعلم.	( )	(●)	( )	( )	( )
4. الاستقلالية التعليمية تتم من خلال تشجيع المجتمع والبيئة المحيطة بالطالب .	(●)	( )	( )	( )	( )
5. الاستقلالية التعليمية تعني أن الطالب يكون محترف في استخدام اساليب التعلم.	(●)	( )	( )	( )	( )

6. الأساتذة لديهم دور فعال على تشجيع الطالب بحيث يكون مستقلا في تعلمه او يعتمد اعتماد تام على الاستاذ .	○	◉	○	○	○
7. الأساتذلهم دور فعال في تحفيز الطالب بتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، مما يساهم في استقلالية المتعلم.	○	○	◉	○	○
8. الأساتذة يمكنهم مساعدتي في تحديد نقاط قوتي وضعفي لتطوير استقلاليتي كمتعلم.	○	◉	○	○	○
9. الأساتذة يمكنهم تشجيعي في التعلم من زملائي لتطوير استقلاليتي كمتعلم.	◉	○	○	○	○
10. يجب أن أجد طرقي الخاصة بي لممارسة الإنجليزية لتطوير استقلاليتي كمتعلم.	○	◉	○	○	○
11. يجب أن أحفز واشجع نفسي بنفسي في تعلم الإنجليزية لتطوير استقلاليتي.	◉	○	○	○	○
12. يمكنني تعلم الاستقلالية في التعلم من خلال الدراسة مع اصدقائي .	○	○	◉	○	○
13. الطلاب الذين يرغبون في تعلم اللغة يمكن ان يكونوا اكثر من غيرهم مستقلين في تعلمهم .	◉	○	○	○	○
14-أحد العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو عدم ثقة الطلاب في العمل بشكل مستقل.	○	◉	○	○	○
15-أحد العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو عدم تحفيز المتعلمين على التعلم	◉	○	○	○	○
16ضعف الشعور بالمسؤولية واعتماد المتعلمين المفرط على المعلم يعدان من العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية الذاتية.	○	◉	○	○	○
17.أحد العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو ضعف الكفاءة اللغوية في اللغة الإنجليزية بين المتعلمين الليبيين.	◉	○	○	○	○
18-تركيز المتعلمين على اجتياز الاختبارات بدلاً من التعلم الفعلي هو أحد العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية.	○	○	◉	○	○
19الجدول الدراسي المزدحم لطلاب الجامعة يمكن أن يكون عائقًا أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية، لأنه يحد من الوقت والفرص التي تمكنهم من تحمل مسؤولية تعلمهم.	◉	○	○	○	○
20-وجود معلمين ذوي أسلوب تحكمي أو سلطوي يجعل من الصعب على الطلاب أن يكونوا مستقلين في الجامعات الليبية.	◉	○	○	○	○
21.أحد العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو نقص الوعي بمفهومها وكيفية تعزيزها.	○	◉	○	○	○
22. أحد العوائق أمام تعزيز الاستقلالية التعليمية هو النهج التدريسي الذي يركز بشكل أساسي على دور المعلم في المدارس قبل التحاق الطلاب بالجامعة.	○	○	◉	○	○
23-من العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو افتقار الجامعات إلى المكتبات، وخدمة الإنترنت، وغيرها من الموارد.	◉	○	○	○	○
24-حد العوائق أمام تنمية الاستقلالية التعليمية هو الاعتقاد بأن هذا المفهوم غير مناسب للمتعلمين غير الغربيين	◉	○	○	○	○

2. يرجى اختيار اجابة واحدة لكل سؤال ،ويرجى الاجابة علي سؤالين لكل فقرة بحيث تكون اجابتان في كل فقرة.

	هل هذا يعزز الاستقلالية التعليمية؟			هل هذا يعزز تعلم اللغة؟		
	نعم	غير متأكد	لا	نعم	غير متأكد	لا
25- تقييم مستواك الدراسي في التعلم يعزز.	◉	○	○	○	◉	○
	نعم	غير متأكد	لا	نعم	غير متأكد	لا

26 - الحصول على ملاحظات تعليمية من أساتذتي أو زملائي يفيد كثيرًا في.	○	○	●	○	○	●
	لا	غير متأكد	نعم	لا	غير متأكد	نعم
27 - تجربة اساليب تعليم مختلفة من حين الي اخر تعزز مهاراتي في ..	○	○	●	○	●	○
	لا	غير متأكد	نعم	لا	غير متأكد	نعم
28 - عندما تكون متحفزًا في الصف فهذا يساعد على .	○	○	●	○	○	●
	لا	غير متأكد	نعم	لا	غير متأكد	نعم
29 - تخطيط وقت الدراسة وتحديد المواعيد النهائية يساهم في تحقيق أهداف التعلم.	○	○	●	○	○	●
	لا	غير متأكد	نعم	لا	غير متأكد	نعم
30 - تجزئة مهامي الكبيرة إلى مهام صغيرة	○	○	●	○	○	●
	لا	غير متأكد	نعم	لا	غير متأكد	نعم
31- استخدام استراتيجيات متنوعة مثل أخذ الملاحظات، وإعداد ملخصات، وتصوير المعلومات.	○	○	●	○	○	●
	لا	غير متأكد	نعم	لا	غير متأكد	نعم
32- تحديد وتحسين نقاط ضعفي.	○	○	●	○	○	●
	لا	غير متأكد	نعم	لا	غير متأكد	نعم
33 - تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية بشكل افضل عند التعلم المستقل بمفردي.	○	○	●	○	○	●
	لا	غير متأكد	نعم	لا	غير متأكد	نعم
34- عند إظهار رغبتي في التعلم يساعدني في	○	○	●	○	○	●
	لا	غير متأكد	نعم	لا	غير متأكد	نعم
35- الألعاب اللغوية والأنشطة الترفيهية تجعل التعلم أقل توترًا وأكثر متعة.	○	○	●	○	○	●

	نعم	غير متأكد	لا	نعم	غير متأكد	لا
36 - التعاون مع زملائي في المشاريع الجماعية الصغيرة يعزز المهارات.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
	نعم	غير متأكد	لا	نعم	غير متأكد	لا
37 - التفسير والشرح الذاتي يحسن التعلم.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
	نعم	غير متأكد	لا	نعم	غير متأكد	لا
38 - استخدام مواد و مقالات الأخبار الإنجليزية، والبودكاست، ومشاهدة الفيديوهات.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
	نعم	غير متأكد	لا	نعم	غير متأكد	لا
39 - التواصل مع متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية من دول مختلفة، سواء عبر الإنترنت أو شخصيًا.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
	نعم	غير متأكد	لا	نعم	غير متأكد	لا
40 - بناء علاقة ايجابية مع المعلم يجعل المادة أكثر متعة ويساعد في تحسين المهارات.	◉	○	○	◉	○	○
	نعم	غير متأكد	لا	نعم	غير متأكد	لا

3. 41 - هل تعتقد أن الاستقلالية التعليمية مهمة في تعلم اللغات الأجنبية؟

- ◉ نعم
- ○ لست متأكدا
- ○ لا

3. 42- دور من هو أكثر أهمية في تطوير استقلالية المتعلمين في الصف

دور المعلم دور الطلاب
○ ◉

3. 43-/ ا أي من هذه القرارات تشارك في الوقت الحالي في اتخاذها. (يمكنك اختيار أكثر من إجابة واحدة)

أهداف الدرس ☐ طرق التدريس ☐ الواجبات والمهام ☑ التقييم ☐

3. 43-/ب أي من هذه القرارات ترغب في اتخاذها. (يمكنك اختيار أكثر من إجابة واحدة)

أهداف الدرس	طرق التدريس	الواجبات والمهام	التقييم
○	◉	○	○

44-. رتب المهارات اللغوية من الاكثر صعوبة الي الاقل من حيث استقلاليتك كمتعلم في تعلم اللغة الانجليزية

المحادثة	1
الكتابة	2
لاستماع	3
القراءة	4

45-. هل طلب منك فيما سبق أن تعطي رأيك عن ما تعلمته في المحاضرة وما هو مستوى رضاك عنها واذا مايوجد اي شي تحب تطويره في الدرس او مستواك بوجه عام

نعم	لا
○	◉

46-. هل تعتقد أن الاستقلالية التعليمية هي مهارة مكتسبة يمكن لأي شخص أن يطورها ؟ أم تعتقد أنها سلوك فطري يولد به الانسان ؟ بمعنى آخر ، يمكننا القول أن بعض المتعلمين مستقلون بطبيعتهم والبعض الأخر لا .

- ○ سلوك فطري يولد به الانسان
- ◉ مهارة يمكن تعلمها
- ○ الخيارين معا

4. 1-ما اسم جامعتك ؟

جامعة المرقب

4. 2-في أي سنة دراسية تدرس حاليًا؟

الاولى السيمستر الثاني

Q19. 3-ما هي جنسيتك؟

ليبى

4. ما هو القسم المسجل به في الجامعة-4

هندسة

4. هل توافق علي المشاركة في الجزئية الثالثة من هذه الدراسة (مقابلة عبر الوسيلة المفضلة والميسرة اليك)? إذا أجبت "نعم" على السؤال 4، يُرجى-5
تقديم معلومات الاتصال الخاصة بك: البريد الإلكتروني, وسائل أخرى للاتصال (مثل الهاتف الأرضي أو الجوال):

لا نعم

Appendix K: Items Pool and Their Resources for The Questionnaire Format

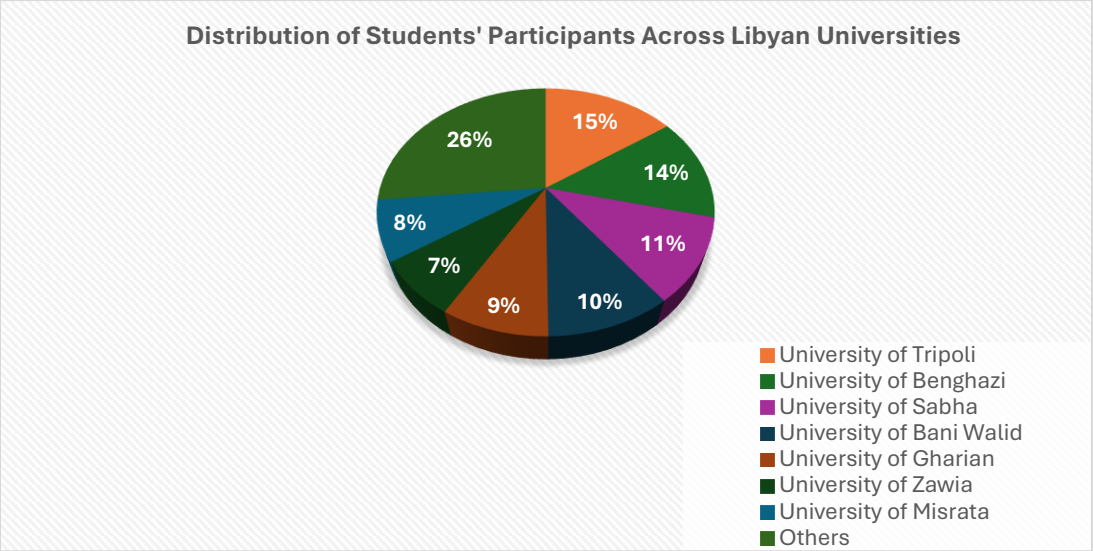
Beliefs about LEARNER AUTONOMY		
	Questionnaire's items	Resource
1	Learner autonomy means to learn without a teacher.	Interview data
2	Learner autonomy means developing the ability to evaluate one's own learning and stay motivated in learning.	Interview data _Borg and Al Busaidi (2012)
3	Learner autonomy is a human right for every learner and shifts the authority from teachers to students.	Interview data _Oxford (2003)
4	Learner autonomy is encouraged through collaborative interactions and practical integration with their social and cultural environment.	Interview data_ Little (1991)
5	Learner autonomy means a student is professional in using learning strategies and provides them with learning how to learn.	Interview data_ Borg and Al Busaidi (2012)
Teachers' and Students' Roles		
6	Teachers should help me assess my own learning and progress.	Interview data + Chang (2007)
7	Teachers should help me stimulate my interest in learning English,	
8	Teachers should help me find the best ways to practice and learn the language autonomously.	
9	Teachers should support me in learning from my peers and work collaboratively to develop my learner autonomy.	
10	I should evaluate my own learning and progress to develop LA.	
11	I should stimulate my interest in learning English to develop learner autonomy.	
12	I believe I should find my own ways to practice and learn English to develop LA.	
13	It is a student's role in developing LEARNER AUTONOMY to learn from peers and work collaboratively	
Factors that influence LEARNER AUTONOMY (barriers)		
14	One of the barriers to developing learner autonomy is that students are not confident in working independently.	Interview data_ Borg and Alshumaimeri (2017) Spratt, Humphreys and Chan (2002)
15	One of the barriers to developing LEARNER AUTONOMY is that learners are not motivated to learn.	
16	A limited sense of duty and learners' over-reliance on the teacher are barriers to developing learner autonomy.	
17	One of the barriers to developing learner autonomy is the limited English proficiency among Libyan learners.	
18	Learners' focus on passing exams rather than on actual learning is one of the barriers to developing learner autonomy.	
19	A full schedule for university students can also be a barrier to the development of learner autonomy, as it may leave them with limited time and opportunities to take charge of their own learning.	
20	Controlling or authoritative teachers make it harder for students to be autonomous at the Libyan university.	
21	One of the barriers to developing LEARNER AUTONOMY is the lack of awareness about what learner autonomy means and how it can be fostered. (Teacher -students…etc).	
22	One of the barriers to promoting LEARNER AUTONOMY is the predominantly teacher-centred teaching approach in schools before students come to university.	
23	One barrier to developing learner autonomy is universities that lack libraries, internet access, and other resources.	
24	One of the barriers to developing learner autonomy is the belief that the concept is not suited to non-Western learners.	
Learners' characteristics and practices		
	Questionnaire's items	Resources
25	Evaluating and reflecting on my own learning is helpful.	Interview data. Chang (2007) Chetouane, A. (2022).
26	Getting feedback from my teachers or peers is very helpful.	
27	Besides to the material I have given by teacher I independently use other resources to learn some topics.	
28	I motivate myself when I feel down about my learning.	
29	I plan my study time and set specific deadlines to achieve my learning goals.	
30	I break large tasks into smaller, manageable steps to facilitate learning.	
31	I independently use various strategies like taking notes, summarising, and translation to aid my learning.	
32	I actively identify my weaknesses and take steps to improve them.	
33	I make better progress in learning when I work on my own.	
34	Demonstrate a willingness to learn.	
35	Using online language games and fun activities to make learning less stressful and more enjoyable.	
36	Collaborating with my classmates on small group projects.	
37	Explaining things to myself helps me understand and remember what I'm learning.	
38	Engaging with authentic materials like English news articles, podcasts, and videos.	

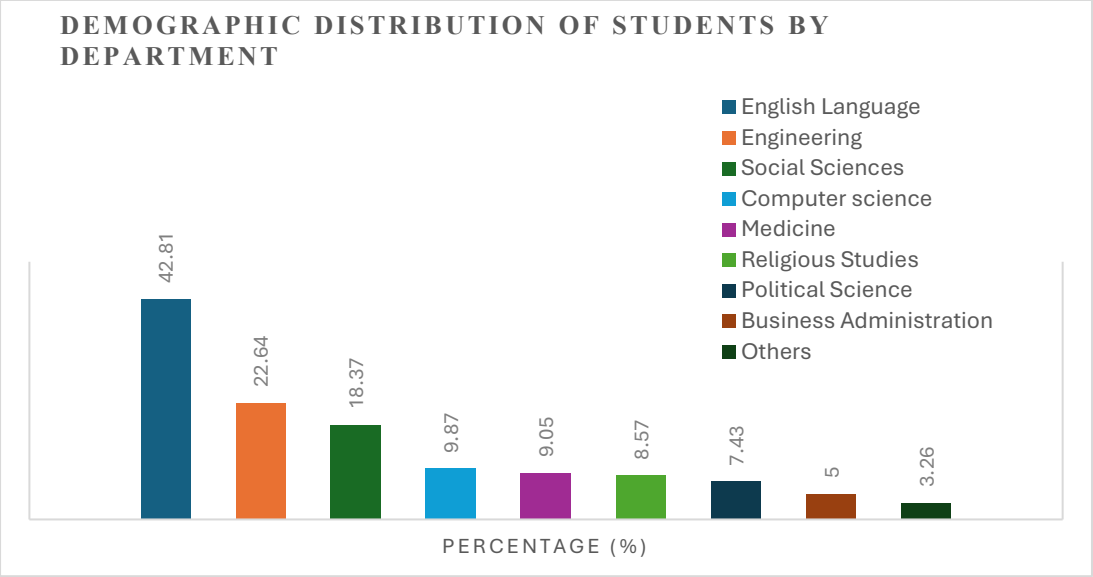
39	Communicating with English learners from different countries, either online or in person.	
40	Building a positive relationship with my teacher makes the subject more enjoyable and helps enhance my skills.	
General questions about learner autonomy		
	Questionnaire's items	Resources
41	Do you think learner autonomy is important in foreign language? □ Yes □ Unsure □ No	Interview data. Cotterall. (1995) Halabi, N. S. (2018)
42	Whose role is more important in developing learners' autonomy in the classroom? □ Students Role □ Teacher Role	
43-A	To what extent are you currently involved in the following decisions? (You can select more than one answer) □ Lesson objectives □ Teaching methods □ Homework and tasks □ Assessment	
43-B	To what extent would you like to be involved in the following decisions? (You can select more than one answer) □ Lesson objectives □ Teaching methods □ Homework and tasks □ Assessment	
44	Please rank the following language skills from most difficult to least difficult to enhance learner autonomy in English language classrooms: □ Reading □ Writing □ Listening □ Speaking	
45	Have you ever been asked by your teacher to reflect on what you have learned? □ Yes □ No	
46	Do you think that learner autonomy is a skill that anyone can learn? Or do you think? Is it an innate characteristic? In other words, can we say that some learners are autonomous by nature and others are not, and there is nothing we can do about it! □ Learnable Skill □ Innate Characteristic □ Both	

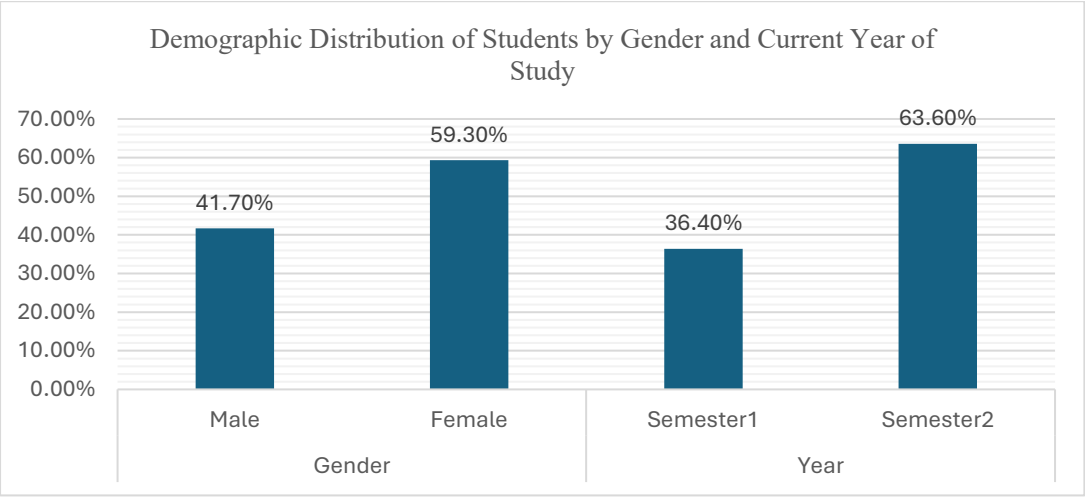
Appendix L: Students' views about the Importance of learner autonomy in foreign language learning

Participant Pseudonym	Response
Student Lina	Yes, it's necessary for success. Students need to take ownership of their learning instead of relying only on teachers. Passive learning won't help us improve.
Student Omer	I'm not completely sure. Sometimes, I struggled with access to the appropriate learning resources, I need to be guided by teachers, but I feel I did learn how to be more independent, which is important for any kind of learning.....
Student Amal	Yes, it's essential. Relying only on teachers isn't enough, students need to be responsible for their own learning to improve their language skills.....
Student Maha	Yes, learner autonomy is key because it motivates students to study more. When we take responsibility, we become more committed to learning...
Student Daniel	Definitely! Learning a language shouldn't stop when class ends. Students must continue learning on their own.....
Student Amir	I believe so. Being able to learn independently is a skill that should be developed, it helps students become more confident in using the language....
Student Linda	Yes, it's very important. Without autonomy, learning would stop when formal instruction isn't available. Taking charge of our own learning helps us stay consistent.
Student Ahmed	Absolutely! When students take control of their own learning, they learn more effectively, it makes studying more engaging and meaningful.
Student Maha	I'm uncertain. While I don't know if it directly improved my English, being autonomous definitely helped me develop learning habits that are useful for language learning.....
Student Ruby	Yes, learner autonomy is important. We had to take charge of our own learning, especially during challenging times when school closures...

Appendix M: Participants' Demographic Information







Teachers' Demographic Information		
	Frequency	Percent

Qualification	Certificate	17	5.5
	Diploma	6	1.9
	Bachelor's	23	7.4
	Masters	213	68.9
	Doctorate	49	15.9
	Others	1	0.3
Teaching Experience in Years	0-4	50	16.2
	5-9	120	38.8
	10-14	53	17.2
	15-19	43	13.9
	20-24	1	.3
	25 or more	42	13.6
Mainly Taught English Level	Year1	83	26.9
	Year2	96	31.1
	Year3	35	11.3
	Year4	95	30.7
First/ Native Language:	Arabic	287	92.9
	English	10	3.2
	Other	12	3.9
Nationality	Libyan	280	90.6
	Other	29	9.4

Appendix N: Participants' Beliefs Constraints to Fostering learner autonomy

Students' Beliefs about Internal Constraints to Fostering Learner Autonomy				
	N	Mean	Strongly Agree %	Agree %
16- A limited sense of duty and learners' over-reliance on the teacher are barriers to developing LA.	486	1.25	78.6	17.9
18- Learners' focus on passing exams rather than on actual learning is one of the barriers to developing LA.	486	1.40	65.8	28.8
15- One of the barriers to developing LEARNER AUTONOMY is that learners are not motivated to learn.	486	1.44	61.7	32.9
17- One of the barriers to developing learner autonomy is the limited English proficiency among Libyan learners.	486	1.54	60.7	27.4
14- One of the barriers to developing LEARNER AUTONOMY is that students are not confident in working independently.	486	1.56	56.0	28.8
Students' Beliefs about External Constraints to Fostering Learner Autonomy				
	N	Mean	Strongly Agree %	Agree %
23- One barrier to developing learner autonomy is universities that lack libraries, internet access, and other resources.	486	1.20	83.5	13.8
19- A full schedule for university students can be a barrier to the development of learner autonomy, as it may leave them with limited time and opportunities to take charge of their own learning.	486	1.22	81.1	15.8
20- Controlling or authoritative teachers make it harder for students to be autonomous at the Libyan university.	486	1.31	74.1	21.8
22- One of the barriers to promoting LEARNER AUTONOMY is the predominantly teacher-centred teaching approach in schools before students come to university.	486	1.51	59.3	32.7
24- One of the barriers to developing learner autonomy is the belief that the concept is not suited to non-Western learners.	486	1.55	54.6	37.3
21- One of the barriers to developing LEARNER AUTONOMY is the lack of awareness about what learner autonomy means and how it can be fostered. (Teacher - students…. etc).	486	1.84	37.2	44.9

Teachers' Beliefs about Internal Constraints to Fostering Learner Autonomy				
	N	Mean	Strongly Agree %	Agree %
16- A limited sense of duty and learners' over-reliance on the teacher are barriers to developing LA.	309	1.17	85.1	12.9

15- One of the barriers to developing LEARNER AUTONOMY is that learners are not motivated to learn.	309	1.18	85.8	12.0
18- Learners' focus on passing exams rather than on actual learning is one of the barriers to developing LA.	309	1.26	79.6	19.5
17- One of the barriers to developing learner autonomy is the limited English proficiency among Libyan learners.	309	1.39	77.3	13.9
14- One of the barriers to developing LEARNER AUTONOMY is that students are not confident in working independently.	309	1.44	73.5	15.2
Teachers' Beliefs about External Constraints to Fostering Learner Autonomy				
23- One barrier to developing learner autonomy is universities that lack libraries, internet access, and other resources.	309	1.11	90.9	7.4
20- Controlling or authoritative teachers make it harder for students to be autonomous at Libyan university.	309	1.24	79.6	16.8
24- One of the barriers to developing learner autonomy is the belief that the concept is not suited to non-Western learners.	309	1.28	81.6	12.0
21- One of the barriers to developing LEARNER AUTONOMY is the lack of awareness about what learner autonomy means and how it can be fostered. (Teacher -students…. etc).	309	1.37	72.8	21.4
19- A full schedule for university students can also be a barrier to the development of learner autonomy, as it may leave them with limited time and opportunities to take charge of their own learning.	309	1.40	77.0	14.6
22- One of the barriers to promoting LEARNER AUTONOMY is the predominantly teacher-centred teaching approach in schools before students come to university.	309	1.41	65.7	30.4

Appendix O: Overall, Language Learning enhancement by developing four sets of practices

(Students) Language Learning enhancement by four sets of practices and Characteristics					
Items of Self-management (Practices /Characteristics)	Students' response %				
	Yes	Unsure	No	Mean	Rank
37-Explaining things to myself helps me understand and remember what I am learning.	87.0	10.5	2.5	1.15	1
33-I make better progress in learning when I work on my own.	81.3	16.5	2.3	1.21	2
29- I plan my study time and set specific deadlines to achieve my learning goals.	76.1	23.5	0.2	1.24	3
32- I actively identify my weaknesses and take steps to improve them.	74.5	23.5	2.1	1.28	4
25- Evaluate and reflect on my own learning is helpful.	71.8	26.5	1.6	1.30	5
Items of motivation (characteristics and practices)					
34-Demonstrate a willingness to learn.	89.3	10.3	0.4	1.11	1
40- Building a positive relationship with my teacher makes the subject more enjoyable and helps enhance my skills.	85.8	13.6	0.6	1.15	2
28-I motivate myself when I feel down about my learning.	83.3	16.5	0.2	1.17	3
35- Using online language games and fun activities to make learning less stressful and more enjoyable.	82.5	17.1	0.4	1.18	4
Items of learning cooperatively					
36- Collaborating with my classmates on small group projects.	86.0	9.7	4.3	1.18	1
26 Getting feedback from my teachers or peers is very helpful.	83.1	13.6	3.3	1.20	2
39-Communicating with English learners from different countries, either online or in person.	81.1	15.0	3.9	1.23	3
Items of developing learning strategies (Practices /Characteristics)					
38-Engaging with authentic materials like English news articles, podcasts, and watching videos.	84.2	12.3	3.5	1.19	1
30- I break large tasks into smaller, manageable steps to facilitate learning.	79.4	19.3	1.2	1.22	2
27-Besides to the material I have given by teacher I independently use other recourses to learn some topics.	72.8	24.7	2.5	1.30	3
31- I independently use various strategies like taking notes, summarising, and translation to aid my learning.	71.6	24.7	3.7	1.32	4
P-value of items < .001***					

(Teachers) Language Learning enhancement by four sets of practices and Characteristics					
Items of learning cooperatively	Students' response %				
	Yes	Unsure	No	Mean	Rank
39-Communicating with English learners from different countries, either online or in person.	94.8	4.5	0.6	1.06	1
36- Collaborating with classmates on small group projects enhances skills.	86.7	10.7	2.6	1.16	3
26- Getting feedback from teachers or peers.	79.6	17.2	3.2	1.24	2
Items for developing learning strategies					
27_Independently using additional resources beyond the provided material.	96.8	1.3	1.9	1.05	1
38-Engaging with authentic materials like English news articles, podcasts, watching videos.	92.2	7.4	0.3	1.08	2
30- Breaking large tasks into smaller steps.	87.7	9.7	2.6	1.15	3
31-Using different strategies, such as taking notes, summarising, and visualising.	84.1	12.6	3.2	1.19	4
Items of motivation (characteristics and practices)					
34-Demonstrate a willingness to learn.	97.7	1.9	0.3	1.03	1
28- Self-motivation is important when facing challenges in learning.	94.8	3.9	1.3	1.06	2
35-Language games and fun activities make learning less stressful and more enjoyable.	79.3	16.2	4.5	1.25	3
40- Building a positive relationship with the teacher makes the subject more enjoyable and helps improve skills.	70.9	24.9	4.2	1.33	4
Items of Self-Management (Practices /Characteristics)					
25-Students' evaluation and reflection on their own learning.	93.9	5.2	1.0	1.07	3
32- Actively identifying and addressing weaknesses.	93.5	4.5	1.9	1.08	4
37-Self-explanation improves learning.	90.9	7.8	1.3	1.10	5
29-Planning study time and setting deadlines contributes to achieving learning goals.	86.1	4.5	1.9	1.23	1
33- Learn English better independently.	85.1	5.8	9.1	1.24	2
P-value of items < .001***					