

Exploring EFL Preparatory-School Teachers' Instructional Practice to Enhance learners' Autonomy and Motivation

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the instructional practice that EFL preparatory school teachers implement to promote motivation and autonomy of their learners. (102) EFL preparatory teachers respond to a questionnaire of two main dimensions and (30 statements). Results reveal that teachers' strongest practice that promote motivation are related to traditional methods (feedback, praise, explanation of value). In the other side, the weakest practice are modern strategies (technology, autonomy-supporting tools, interactive digital platforms). There is a partial readiness among EFL teachers to promote learner autonomy, especially in creating supportive environments, scaffolding, and encouraging independent work. Learners' planning strategies and self-evaluation, is not well implemented. Using digital tools directed to promote autonomy is moderately implemented. Moreover, formative assessment is used for providing feedback, not effectively for adapting instruction to individual needs, which limits its autonomy-enhancing potential.

Keywords: EFL Preparatory-School Teachers- Instructional Practice - Learning Autonomy- Motivation.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, many psychological factors has been widely recognized as one of the most decisive factors influencing EFL achievement and success. One of these factors is motivation. A great amount of research assert that motivated learners demonstrate higher levels of engagement, persistence, and achievement than their less motivated peers (Ushioda, 2008; Froiland , et al. 2012; Ellis, 2012; Weiler & Murad, 2022; Wu, et al. 2025). Motivation not only encourages learners to participate in the language learning tasks, but also determines the amount of effort they do and the duration for which they sustain that effort. Motivation typically exhibit learners' eagerness to participate, willingness to practice beyond the classroom, and resilience in the face of challenges (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008).

As motivation is viewed as dynamic, context-dependent, and multifaceted (Siaj & Farrah, 2024), research have increasingly highlighted the impact of teachers' instructional practice in promoting learners' motivation (e.g. Tuan, 2012; Al Othman & Shuqair, 2013; Ibrahim, 2019). Reviewing these studies, it is declared that teachers can enhance learners' motivation by creating enjoyable classroom experiences, reducing anxiety, employing diverse instructional strategies, and promoting learner autonomy and self-confidence. Recommendations of these studies highlight the implementation of effective motivational practice include breaking the monotony of routine learning, integrating varied activities and communication channels, encouraging positive attributions to effort rather than ability, and supporting students in developing appropriate learning strategies. These practice are especially vital in

EFL contexts, where learners often face additional challenges such as limited exposure to the language, anxiety, and unappealing learning environments.

In regard with the EFL context in Iraqi , research (e.g. Alrabai, 2016; Saleh & Majeed, 2021; Saif Al-Deen, 2025) have repeatedly shown that poorly designed instructional methods, difficult materials, and teacher-centered pedagogies significantly decrease students' motivation, whereas well-structured motivational practice can overcome many of these barriers and enhance EFL achievement.

Moreover, the Iraqi EFL classrooms often suffer from many of the motivational problems identified in other contexts, including reliance on teacher-centered methods, limited instructional variation, anxiety-provoking learning environments, and insufficient attention to learners' affective needs. These challenges collectively contribute to students' low motivation and disengagement, ultimately undermining the national goal of producing competent English users. Given the central role of teachers in shaping the motivational climate of the classroom, it is essential to investigate the specific instructional practice Iraqi EFL teachers employ and to determine the extent to which these practice foster or hinder learners' motivation (Saif Al-Deen, 2025).

In addition to the significance of motivation in shaping learners' engagement and success in EFL classrooms, learner's autonomy has also been widely recognized as a crucial component of effective language learning, as it enhances both the learning process and overall achievement (Ningsih, 2018) and exerts a positive influence on learners' personal and academic lives (Desai, 2020). According to Reinders (2010), this process of growth depends heavily on the instructor's motivation and support. Autonomous learners are expected to reflect more on their learning practice, take greater control over their progress and consequently learn more effectively and efficiently (Lan, 2018).

Furthermore, autonomy could be enhanced through multiple pedagogical practice and instructional approaches (Benson, 2011). As Yun and Chong (2025) state "supporting language learners in becoming independent leads to higher levels of proficiency and sustained success". Autonomy also contributes directly to language learning development: learners who take charge of their learning goals, select appropriate strategies, monitor comprehension, and evaluate outcomes demonstrating deeper understanding and improved performance (Ceylan, 2015). Zarei & Gahremani, (2010) confirm a positive correlation between autonomy and reading comprehension, while Koosha et al., (2016) assure that fostering autonomy in classroom settings has been shown to significantly improve students' overall learning outcomes (

Despite the growing the global interest in promoting learner autonomy (Saeheng, 2017; Karimi & Dastgoshadeh, 2018; Coronado, 2019; Huang, 2019; Indahwati, 2020), research in the Iraqi context remains limited, highlighting the insufficient autonomy level among EFL learners, which need more focus and attention.

Therefore, exploring instructional practice that effectively promote both motivation and autonomy is essential for improving EFL learning intended outcomes and supporting the successful implementation of English language curriculum in schools. In this regard, understanding how Iraqi teachers implement instructional practice that promote motivation and autonomy can shed light on the underlying reasons for persistent pedagogical challenges and bridge the gap between curriculum objectives and the actual classroom practice. Thus, the present research, not only informs national educational reform but also contributes to the broader field of EFL pedagogy by identifying context-sensitive motivational and autonomous directed practice that can support learners in achieving meaningful and sustained engagement with the English language.

Aim of the Research

The research tries to achieve the following aims:

1. exploring EFL preparatory school teachers' instructional practice to promote learners' motivation.
2. Exploring EFL preparatory school teachers' instructional practice to promote learners' autonomy.
3. **Deducing best instructional practice to promote learners' autonomy and motivation in EFL classrooms.**

Research Scope

The present research followed the descriptive approach using an analytical questionnaire to explore the instructional practice of EFL preparatory school teachers (n= 102 male and female) at 12 preparatory schools in Iraq which promote autonomy and motivation in EL classrooms.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

EFL motivation

Nature

The word motivation has been derived from the Latin word "movere" which means "to move." According to Tohidi (2012, 820), "motivation is defined as the force which guides and causes human behavior and movement. Tohidi added that motivation is the force that causes internal or external activity in a living creature. Thus, motivation is the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviors. Additionally, Mustafa and Gaber (2015) consider motivation as the process of supplying the incentives which will encourage, inspire, and influence students to act in a desired behavior to achieve an intended goal. Therefore, motivation is a strong force that changes the direction, the quality and willpower of behaviors. According to Shcunk and Mecce (2010), motivation is the psychological process responsible for initiating and continuing goal directed behaviors.

According to Ortega (2009, 168) motivation refers to the desire to initiate L2 learning and the effort employed to sustain it. Carreira (2012, 191) defines motivation as the tendency to exert effort to achieve goals. Ellis (2012, 75) illustrates that motivation is also believed to affect the pace of learning as well as the eventual achievement. In addition, motivated learners can be easily spotted inside a classroom or outside. They are keen to learn, eager to rehearse what they learn with their classmates or outside the classroom with other people. Their efforts to learn usually remain steady for an extended period. In other words, motivation is not just a desire to begin something, it also explains how much effort one is going to employ and for how long that effort will be sustained.

Gardner's concept of motivation is related to effort, want, desire, reason for behaviors and the affectivity associated with learning a second language and has a close link with language learning. Hence, motivation in SLA refers to the extent to which the language learner struggles to achieve a certain aim (instrumental motivation) or to become an indistinguishable member of the target community (integrative motivation). Having the desire to achieve a predetermined goal and making effort to achieve this goal are essential factors of motivation (Gardener, 2010).

To sum up, the previous definitions highlight motivation as multi-dimensional rather than a single, fixed construct. The definitions emphasizes effort, persistence, and the impact of motivation on learning pace and achievement, which firmly situates the construct within language learning contexts. Motivation is not static, but rather a dynamic construct influenced by internal and external factors.

The importance of developing EFL motivation

Martin(2010) stated that motivation has a direct influence on cognition including mental capacities that improve the decision-making power. In addition, Johnson (2008) pointed out that motivation is to be fixed with the student's commitment, engagement, and constancy to achieve academic work. He further confirmed that the commitment and motivation can be increased by cooperative learning rather than mere teaching via lectures.

Motivation is a complex concept and researchers in the field of second language acquisition have been exploring it. "Motivation, like the concept of gravity, is easier to describe (in terms of its outward, observable effects) than it is to define" (Dörnyei, 2011, 7). In addition, Dörnyei states that motivation explains why people decide to do something, how hard they are going to pursue it and how long they are willing to sustain the activity.

According to Ellis, (2012) motivation has a substantial effect on foreign language acquisition. So, researching and examining the role of motivation in learning English as a foreign language has received significant attention by linguists and educators. Lens and Ulrich (2004) asserted that motivation, being an important phenomenon, predicts the academic future of students.

Factors affecting learners' motivation

Reviewing previous literature, it could be revealed that teachers are the strongest factor who influence on EFL learners' motivation; from their personal characteristics, teaching styles, and motivational practice to the classroom atmosphere they create. Additionally, teachers' technology use, supportive environments, and opportunities for autonomy all play a significant role in shaping motivation.

Research by Akbari & Allvar (2010) find out a strong correlation between teacher characteristics and students' outcomes; as teachers' personal qualities, professionalism, and qualifications significantly affect learners' motivation. In addition, positive teacher's traits (e.g., enthusiasm, empathy, confidence, organization) improve learners' engagement and achievement.

Another important factor is the teacher's instructional strategies which strongly shape learners' motivation. In this regard, Dörnyei (2011) states that effective motivational practice include attention-getting strategies,

confidence-building strategies, providing clear goals and expectations and using varied motivational methods. In addition, Min & Chon (2021) reveal that ineffective or mismatched strategies can reduce learner engagement and motivation. Al Kaboody (2013) confirms this idea, stating that combining diverse strategies increases student engagement. Teachers should align strategies with students' preferences, motivation levels, and proficiency (Sugita McEown & Takeuchi, 2014). Thus, creating a positive classroom climate and supporting learner confidence enhances motivation.

Moreover, a positive emotional climate encourages participation and reduces anxiety. In this regard, Fiebre (2021) state that supportive, respectful, and safe classroom environments boost motivation. Students are more motivated when they feel secure and not judged as well as when they experience strong teacher–student and peer relationships. Furthermore, active participation, opportunities to interact, and meaningful communication tasks increase motivation and performance. Engagement is both a cause and a result of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2009). In addition, Working with peers increases motivation through social interaction, shared goals, cooperative learning benefits, and group work enhances engagement and performance (Arends & Kilcher, 2010). Another key factor is the use of technology, which supports independent learning and connects learners with authentic contexts. When used purposefully, technology increases engagement and enjoyment (Dimitroff et al., 2018).

Learner's Autonomy

Nature

Learner autonomy, a concept central to language education since the 1980s, has attracted the attention from scholars in the past few decades. The concept was first introduced by Henri Holec, who is frequently called "the father of learner autonomy in 1981". He defined autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Holec, 1981, p. 3). Dang (2012) states that however, Holec sees autonomous learning as a double process. On the one hand, it entails learning a foreign language; on the other hand, it involves enabling learners to freely apply their knowledge and skills outside the immediate context of learning. Thus, autonomous learning extends beyond a school context: it is a life-long process of constantly developing awareness. Dickinson (1987, 11) defined learner autonomy as "a situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all the decisions concerned with his or her learning and the implementation of those decisions".

Learner autonomy is defined as learners' ability to take charge of their own learning processes, is increasingly recognized as essential competence for successful language learning (Benson, 2011). Autonomous learners are more motivated, engaged, and capable of self-regulation, which in turn positively affects their academic achievement and critical thinking (Daniela, 2015).

The concept of autonomy in language learning was initially grounded in the notion of individual responsibility for managing the learning process. However, the concept of autonomy went through significant changes over the 1990s. Little (1991, 4) redefined autonomy as "the capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action". Subsequently, he emphasized that autonomy is cultivated through interdependence rather than isolation, highlighting that autonomous learning is not characterized by learning in isolation, instead, it involves the ability to make informed and reflective decisions about one's learning within a socially interactive context. Macaro (2008, 51) defined autonomy of language learning competence as "the ability to deploy a range and combination of cognitive and metacognitive strategies such that task achievement or more general learning can occur either in complementary fashion with the teacher's approaches and techniques, or independently of (or indeed in contradiction to) the teacher's approaches and techniques".

Characteristics of autonomous Learner

Autonomous learners are generally recognized for exhibiting distinctive traits that reflect their active engagement and purposeful management of their own learning. According to Chan (2001) there are mainly six key characteristics that define autonomous learners; independence from others, having self-confidence, behaving in discipline, a strong sense of responsibility, behaving based on own initiative, and the ability to exercise self-control. These traits not only facilitate autonomous learning in general but are also crucial in the context of reading. Having such characteristics, learners become capable of dealing with complex texts, both in academic and real-world settings.

According to Mistar (2001) autonomous learners are aware of their own learning methods and possess metacognitive knowledge, enabling them to monitor and regulate their learning processes effectively. They engage in learning tasks actively and show a willingness to take risks, such as communicating and attempting answers even when unsure.

Autonomous learners are also skilled at making informed guesses and are not hesitant to estimate answers when needed. They balance their attention between the form and content of what they study, ensuring accurate

comprehension and appropriate responses. Furthermore, they focus on building relevant vocabulary and contextual understanding as central learning goals. Finally, they interact with learning materials with an open mind, which supports deeper engagement and positive attitudes toward learning (Little, 1991). While these traits characterize autonomous learners in general, they hold particular significance in the context of reading, where autonomy is reflected in learners' ability to select meaningful texts, apply effective reading strategies, and maintain motivation and interest throughout the reading process.

Additionally, Guthrie et al., (2004) describe such autonomous learners as engaged readers. These readers demonstrate four key characteristics; First, they have strong cognitive skills, using comprehension strategies such as activating prior knowledge, generating questions, locating information, summarizing effectively, organizing ideas, and monitoring their understanding as they read. Second, they are intrinsically motivated, they enjoy the process of reading, trust their abilities, persist despite challenges, and work willingly toward understanding texts or completing reading tasks. Third, engaged readers are driven by a desire to build knowledge; they actively connect new information with what they already know, take notes, and often use visual organizers to deepen their understanding of texts. Finally, they engage socially while learning in productive discussions with their instructors and classmates with minimal off-topic distractions.

Factors Affecting Learner's Autonomy

The idea of learner autonomy encompasses two key dimensions. First, learners are expected to manage their learning on their own. Second, the idea of "taking responsibility" entails that learners take some roles which are normally done by teachers, such as setting the learning goals, selecting suitable learning approaches, and evaluating their progress (Yu, 2020). Both aspects show a shift towards empowering learners to be active participants in their own learning, therefore enabling them to make informed decisions and critically assess their progress.

Holec (1981) established five fundamental areas where learners should make informed decisions to achieve autonomy, namely, defining learning objectives, selecting content and determining its sequence, choosing learning methods and techniques, monitoring their learning process, and evaluating learning outcomes. Learners who understand these areas will gain the power to shape their learning experiences independently while moving from being passive learners to becoming active agents of their learning development journey. By applying these principles, learners should be trained to set clear learning goals, choose texts that match their interests and level, apply suitable strategies, track their comprehension and progress, and reflect critically on their understanding.

Such features are particularly evident in digital learning environments, whether in online or blended learning environments through adaptive course design, access to rich reading materials, and learning technologies that enable self-directed learning (Reinders & White, 2016). For instance, language learning platforms often provide features such as personalized feedback, progress tracking, and adaptive learning paths, which empower learners to take control of their learning.

According to Little (1991, 4), "autonomy is not synonymous with self-instruction; that is, autonomy is not confined to learning without a teacher. It is a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision, and independent action. It presupposes, yet also involves, interdependence: the capacity for collaborating with others, for taking responsibility for one's own learning and for collaborating in others' learning". Thus, learner autonomy should be examined not merely through individual performance but through the social contexts in which learning takes place.

Aldosari & Alsager (2023) believes that autonomy could not be taught, but rather provide opportunities to foster learners' autonomy. Fostering learner autonomy is thus a gradual and long process that requires not just the learning of certain skills but also the growth of a certain mindset.

Importance

Learning autonomy constitutes an essential factor in EFL contexts as it promotes both the learning process and the learning achievement (Ningsih, 2018). It has a positive impact on learners' own lives (Desai, 2020). Lan (2018) stated that autonomous learners learn more effectively and efficiently because they tend to frequently reflect on their own learning process and, as a result, they take control of their own learning. Similarly, autonomy can achieve different roles in education and can be implemented in a number of ways (Benson, 2011). Yun and Chong (2025) highlight that helping language learners to learn independently will make them more successful and proficient.

In the context of EFL instruction, learner autonomy is seen as a vital component in successful language learning programs, enabling learners to take initiative, participate in self-reflection, and actively monitor their language progress (Alm, 2024). Numerous studies have highlighted the shift in the learning process from teacher-centered instruction to learner-centered learning (Yu, 2020). This movement highlights the importance of

cultivating autonomy, as learners who are more independent tend to be more motivated, better equipped to face challenges, and more capable of monitoring their learning beyond the classroom.

Wahlers et al. (2024) investigated how the degree of autonomy influences learners' subjective experience of mental effort during reading comprehension tasks. Across two studies, participants read passages under conditions of high autonomy where they were allowed to choose passages aligned with their interests and low autonomy where passages were assigned without consideration of their preferences. Findings demonstrated that when learners exercised greater autonomy in selecting reading materials, they reported lower mental effort compared to those who exercised low autonomy, along with a more positive emotional state. This highlights that giving learners choice and control over reading materials is a key feature of reading autonomy, promoting motivation, engagement, and more effective comprehension with less cognitive load.

Based on the previous review of literature and related studies, it could be concluded that the best instructional practice for promoting motivation and autonomy are those that consider learners as active, responsible participants in their own learning while providing supportive, engaging, and well-structured learning environments. Effective instructional practice for promoting autonomy encompass offering meaningful choices, guiding learners in setting personal learning goals, and explicitly teaching cognitive and metacognitive strategies that foster independent participation. In addition, the literature emphasizes that teachers' behavior that promote motivation may include providing constructive feedback, using learner-relevant motivational strategies, building confidence, and maintaining an encouraging and safe classroom climate. Integrating technology thoughtfully, creating opportunities for independent practice, and ensuring contextually relevant instruction which further strengthen learners' sense of independence and engagement.

METHODOLOGY

Design

The recent research followed the descriptive approach using an analytical questionnaire describing the best instructional practice to promote autonomy and motivation in EFL classrooms. The questionnaire was administered to a sample of (102) male and female EFL teachers in the Iraqi preparatory schools. They were selected randomly from (12) schools. Those teachers represented a percentage of (87%) of the whole EFL teachers in the preparatory Iraqi schools. They have a ranged years of EFL teaching experience from 10 to 12

Instrument

Design: a questionnaire of two main dimensions was designed to explore the instructional practice EFL teachers use to promote autonomy and motivation in their classrooms. Based on the previous literature and related studies, the questionnaire was designed as a 3 Likert scale ranging from agree to disagree. It encompasses (30) statements distributed over two main dimensions (15 statements for motivation and 15 statements for autonomy).

Piloting the questionnaire: after preparing its statements in clear and academic style, it was validated by (11) specialists in TEFL (TEFL professors, EFL teachers and supervisors). Recommendations of the jury members were done accurately. To make sure of the questionnaire reliability and consistence validity, a group of (23 EFL teachers was requested to answer the questionnaire(out of the main sample). Results of the pilot study revealed that reliability value using Cronbach was (0.83), the correlation between the score of each item and the total score ranged between (0.53- 0.61). To further validate the questionnaire, the researcher examines the correlation between each item score and the total score of the domain to which the item belongs using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient ranged from (0.37-0.55) which indicated a high consistent validity.

Data collection

One hundred and two participants responded to the questionnaire. Their responses were collected and frequencies and percentages were calculated.

RESULTS

Teachers' instructional practice to promote motivation

The following statements describe the instructional practice that promote learners' motivation in EFL classrooms. These practice include creating secure and positive learning climate, using interactive tasks, providing technology

enhanced learning and encouraging assessment practice. EFL teachers' responses on dimension (1) were collected and counted quantitatively. Frequencies and percentages were calculated and analyzed.

No.	Statements	Percentage		
		Agree	Moderately	Disagree
1	I design learning tasks related to students' real-life interests.	61 %	9%	30%
2	I use authentic materials that encourage learners to participate in learning activities	80%	14%	6%
3	I use various classroom activities that suit learners' different styles of learning	8%	79%	13%
4	I provide meaningful communicative situations where students can use English fearlessly.	65%	21%	14%
5	I use peer communicative tasks to reduce anxiety when speaking .	6%	77%	17%
6	I praise students' effort rather than performance.	75%	16%	9%
7	I designed collaborative learning tasks .	%44	% 29	%27
8	I , at the beginning of each lesson, explain the value and usefulness of learning English.	% 83	%11	56
9	I give clear instructions that help students understand the task expectations.	%79	%14	%7
10	I offer timely and motivating feedback to students.	%81	%12	%7
11	I integrate multimedia materials (videos, podcasts, interactive tasks) to increase participation.	%41	%13	%46
12	I use online games and resources to create engaging learning experiences.	%39	%9	%52
13	I encourage students to answer online quizzes to track their own learning progress.	32%	12%	56%
14	I use online chatting that reduce students' fear of failure.	39%	10%	51%
15	I provide specific comments that motivate students to try harder.	83%	16%	1%

The data in the previous table, reveal clearly that although EFL teachers use supporting motivational practice, particularly in creating a supportive learning climate, using motivating feedback and providing communicative tasks, they demonstrate a lack in adopting technology-enhanced tools, and learner-centered strategies. In particular, some practice are used clearly to provide supportive learning climate, e.g. design learning tasks related to students' real-life interests, using authentic materials that encourage learners to participate in learning activities, provide meaningful communicative situations where students can use English fearlessly, praising students' effort rather than performance, explaining the value and usefulness of learning English, clear instructions that help students understand the task expectations and provide specific comments that motivate students to try harder. These practice demonstrate the teachers' awareness of the importance of creating safe and interactive learning environment through using communicative and interactive tasks that encourage learners to practice language freely and interestingly. These tasks reduce anxiety and enhance willingness to communicate. Thus, teachers' motivation supported practice are rooted in constructive feedback, supportive praise and the explanation of EFL value. Many teachers recognize the importance of meaningful communication and reducing anxiety which proven to enhance motivation. Moreover, teachers are highly committed to feedback, encouragement, and creating positive emotional support.

Other practice are used moderately, e.g. designing tasks linked to real-life interests, using various classroom activities that suit learners' different styles of learning and use peer communicative tasks to reduce anxiety when speaking. These practice demonstrate a motivational gap; some teachers still rely on textbook-driven tasks rather than learner-centered themes. In addition, some teachers may have difficulties in managing their classrooms or large class sizes, which reduce their use of peer or group work. Thus, most teachers successfully create a supportive climate, but many still struggle to connect learning to students' personal interests or foster collaboration.

Less practice are used related to integrate multimedia, use online games and online resources, use online quizzes and use online chatting to reduce fear. These practice indicate clearly limited use of technology in EFL classrooms. Possible reasons include poor internet connectivity or lack of devices (commonly reported in Iraqi schools), limited training on educational technology, overcrowded classrooms making technology management difficult, and the traditional teaching culture prioritizing textbook-centered instruction. Many students may never use platforms like Kahoot, Quizizz, or Google Forms because teachers feel unprepared to implement them. Moreover, multimedia such as short videos, animations, podcasts, or digital stories is rarely integrated, reducing opportunities for stimulating and multimodal learning experiences. Technology based practice is very weak, showing a critical need for professional development and infrastructure support.

To sum up, teachers' strongest practice that promote motivation are related to traditional methods (feedback, praise, explanation of value). In the other side, the weakest practice are modern strategies (technology, autonomy-supporting tools, interactive digital platforms).

Teachers' Practice to promote Autonomy

The second dimension encompasses statements that describe EFL teachers' practice to promote autonomy. These statements distributed over encouraging independent learning, metacognitive strategies training, providing autonomy supportive environment, and using formative assessment techniques. Teachers' responses on dimension (2) were collected and counted quantitatively, then frequencies and percentages were calculated and analyzed.

No.	Item	Percentage		
		Agree	Moderately	disagree
1	I offer opportunities to students to make choices about their learning tasks.	21 %	78 %	1%
2	I encourage students to set their own learning goals.	13%	13%	74%
3	I train students on strategies for planning their learning.	9%	22%	69%
4	I allow students to select materials that match their proficiency levels.	9%	8%	83%
5	I scaffold some learners' strategies (e.g., summarizing, guessing meaning, note-taking).	76%	22%	2%
6	I help learners monitor their own progress (reflect on their strengths and weaknesses).	13%	76%	16%
7	I encourage self-assessment after completing tasks.	11%	73%	21%
8	I reduce my control when my students want to be independent.	82.7%	11.8%	5.5%
9	I give students time to work independently on language-learning tasks.	76%	15%	9%
10	I provide constructive feedback that helps learners improve independently.	69%	22%	9%
11	I use digital tools (e.g., apps, online platforms) that allow students to practice English independently.	50%	32%	18%
12	I guide students to use online resources for extra practice.	58%	23%	19%
13	I provide optional digital tasks that learners can complete at home.	43%	12%	45%
14	I provide continuous feedback to help students improve.	83%	8%	9%
15	I use assessment to identify learning needs and adapt instruction.	40%	36%	24%

The results in the previous table reveal that despite EFL preparatory school teachers use valuable practice to promote, but they still need professional development on structured student choice, using more advanced self-assessment techniques, applying adaptive assessment for individualized learning and integrating effectively the autonomy directed digital tools. In relation to encouraging independent learning, moderate agreement among teachers on giving students time for independent work. Thus, EFL teachers promote autonomy behaviorally (independent work, reduced control) but not cognitively or strategically, demonstrating a limited and incomplete autonomy development framework. In general, some practice are strongly adopted (e.g. scaffolding, reducing control, independent work, feedback), other practice are limited (goal-setting, planning strategies, selecting materials, optional digital tasks), which suggests partial and inconsistent promotion of learner autonomy.

Some practice that support independent learning are used such as (reducing teacher control, independent work time), other practice are used less (e.g. allowing task choice, student goal-setting). These results demonstrate that teachers encourage independence, but do not promote decision-making or ownership of learning goals. Autonomy is permitted, but not co-constructed.

Regarding scaffolding autonomous strategies, teachers demonstrate strong practice to scaffold cognitive strategies, meanwhile, weak practice are devoted to planning strategies, self-assessment and monitoring progress. These results revealed that EFL teachers in the preparatory schools provide cognitive strategy support, but not deep metacognitive autonomy (planning, self-monitoring, evaluating) which in turn limits learners' ability to regulate their own learning.

Considering practice that support autonomy-supportive environment, more practice are directed to reduce control, continuous feedback and provide constructive feedback. In the other side, less practice are directed to allow students to select materials. These results reveal that the participants promote autonomy mainly through feedback and reduced control, but not through giving learners choice, agency, or personalization of materials.

In relation to digital tools and formative assessment, it is revealed that there is a focus on using independent digital tools, other teachers may use online resources. An observed focus also is on the use of adaptive assessment. These results reveal that the participants use digital tools moderately but showing low willingness to extend digital learning beyond the classroom. Additionally, formative assessment is used, but not consistently for individualizing instruction.

In conclusion, there is a partial readiness among EFL teachers to promote learner autonomy, especially in creating supportive environments, scaffolding, and encouraging independent work. Learners' decision-making, training on planning strategies, and self-evaluation, is not well implemented. High disagreement among the participants highlight that teachers hesitate to value full control over learning pathways. Participating learners in planning and self-assessment strategies are neglected highly. Using digital tools directed to promote autonomy is moderate implemented. Moreover, formative assessment is used for providing feedback, not effectively for adapting instruction to individual needs, which limits its autonomy-enhancing potential.

CONCLUSION

Based on the previous results, the following conclusions are stated

- Although many teachers succeed in creating positive learning climates that promote motivation, other essential motivational practice, such as using technology actively or integrating fully interactive and collaborative tasks, were less implemented across classrooms.
- Most participants offer independent work time and reduce control over learners, but rarely allow students to set their own goals, choose materials, or plan their learning, which indicates that behavioral autonomy is supported, but cognitive and metacognitive autonomy are neglected.
- The teachers use technological tools that enhance presenting language, but online games, digital tasks, and autonomy-supportive digital environments are not used effectively which reduce the opportunities for extended, self-directed learning outside the classroom.
- Many Teachers provide timely, constructive feedback, which promote motivation and basic autonomy, however, they do not consistently use assessment to diagnose learning needs, adapt instruction, or develop self-assessment skills which weakens learners' ability to take responsibility for monitoring and managing their progress. Moreover, planning strategies are rarely taught, limiting learners' long-term autonomy, especially in reading comprehension and independent learning contexts.
- The teachers demonstrate acknowledgment of the value of motivation and autonomy, however, they hesitate to implement practice that give learners real control over the learning process, indicating a need for professional training, institutional support, and curriculum alignment.

Recommendations

Based on the results and conclusion, It is recommended that

- Teachers should offer alternative task types that suits different difficulty levels.
- They should allow their students to choose topics, reading texts, or project formats that relate to their life situations and attract their attention.
- A brainstorming task should be held at the beginning of each session to co-construct learning goals with students.
- Teachers should train explicitly students how to plan (set goals, time plans), monitor (check progress, use checklists) and evaluate (reflect, self-assess).
- Teachers should digital tools to promote both autonomy and motivation
- They should create autonomy-supportive classroom practice such as reducing unnecessary teacher control, modeling self-directed learning practice, and encouraging peer collaboration and peer feedback.

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