



Exploring EFL Students' Attitudes and Challenges Toward Autonomous Learning: Algerian Higher Education Amid the Covid-19

Fatima Didane

Historical Documents Translation Lab, Department of English, Algiers 2 University, Algeria

Abstract

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools and universities worldwide, particularly in developing countries like Algeria, struggled with significant challenges of urgent and unexpected transition from face-to-face learning to online learning. During this pandemic, the heavy reliance on technology and online platforms led to a greater expectation of more learning autonomy. Within this context, this study addresses students' attitudes toward learning autonomy and explores the major challenges that hinder them from being autonomous. The present work is descriptive research, relying on a quantitative approach that describes quantitative data. The measurement tool that is used is a questionnaire administered to twenty-two (22) second-year EFL Algerian students. The collected data reveals that students show positive attitudes towards autonomous learning in the pandemic era. However, teacher support and collaboration with peers are also highlighted. In addition, several factors such as internet distraction, lack of social interaction, and lack of motivation are the dominant factors that hinder students from establishing learning autonomy in an EFL context. To this end, it is recommended that to facilitate autonomous learning; Algerian EFL students' readiness should be taken into account, and enhance students' autonomy with training and pedagogical tools in place.

Keywords: Attitudes, Autonomy, COVID-19 pandemic, EFL students

1. Literature Review

1.1 Need for Private Supplementary Tutoring

In the 2002-2003 academic year, the Algerian Ministry of Education introduced educational reforms to modernize traditional teaching methods by implementing the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) in schools. This approach was designed to redefine the roles and responsibilities of both teachers and students in language classrooms, promoting a learner-centered environment. The CBA aims to develop responsible, autonomous learners who actively engage in and take ownership of their learning process. Therefore, to maintain

continuity in education, a new mode of instruction known as "online learning" has become essential. Universities worldwide have adopted virtual classes to navigate the challenges posed by COVID-19. Concerning this, the COVID-19 pandemic forced educational systems globally to adopt online learning models rapidly, challenging both students and institutions, especially in developing countries like Algeria. For EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students, the sudden reliance on technology, combined with limited social interactions and restricted access to resources, created an environment in which students were expected to be more autonomous in their learning.

According to Najeeb (2013), learning a foreign language is closely connected to autonomous learning because language acquisition requires active engagement in an interactive and social process. In other words, autonomous learning encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning, which is essential in language learning, where consistent practice, self-reflection, and meaningful interaction with others are key. Through autonomy, learners are motivated to search for real-life communication opportunities, apply language skills in authentic contexts, and engage with diverse experiences that drive language development more effectively than passive classroom learning alone. It is also a concept that applies both inside and outside the classroom, focusing on students' ability to take charge of their own learning within real-life contexts (Nunan, 1997). Ponton (1999) defines learner autonomy as the characteristic of learners who independently demonstrate initiative in their learning activities, viewing autonomy as a part of broader self-directedness. Similarly, Allwright (1990) describes autonomous learners as those who are capable of self-reflection on their learning process and open to collaborative learning experiences. Together, these perspectives highlight autonomy as both an individual and social process, involving personal agency, reflection, and cooperative engagement in learning. The capacity for autonomy is understood as both an ongoing process and a developmental goal, it is not an innate skill but rather one that can be cultivated and enhanced over time (Holec, 1981, Littlewood, 1999). According to Holec, most learners are "not yet autonomous but are involved in the process of acquiring the ability to assume responsibility for their learning (Holec, 1981, pp. 25-26). This perspective highlights autonomy as a relative concept rather than an absolute state an ability that, as Holec notes, may be limited, especially when learners are at the initial stages of developing autonomous learning skills (Higgs, 1988, p. 41).

Recent studies continue to emphasize the importance of autonomous learning in language acquisition, particularly in the context of digital and online learning environments. Benson (2013) highlights that with the rise of digital tools and online platforms, learner autonomy has evolved to include greater engagement with self-directed online resources, mobile learning applications, and collaborative virtual communities. Reinders and Darasawang (2020) argue that the shift to online education has further reinforced the need for students to develop self-regulation skills, digital literacy, and metacognitive strategies to manage their learning effectively. Additionally, research by Hafner (2022) emphasizes that the development of autonomous learning is significantly influenced by technological affordances and institutional support. They highlight that while technology can facilitate learner independence, the role of teachers in scaffolding and guiding students toward self-directed learning remains crucial. Similarly, Chik and Ho (2023) stress the importance of integrating digital multimodal learning environments into foreign language education, as these platforms enhance student agency and engagement in ways that traditional classroom methods may not. These recent perspectives suggest that enhancing learner autonomy in contemporary educational settings requires a multidimensional approach, one that integrates digital tools, self-regulation strategies, and institutional support systems to ensure learners are equipped for independent learning beyond the classroom. Adaptive learning technologies, such as AI-driven tutoring

systems and personalized feedback mechanisms, have been shown to improve learner autonomy by offering customized learning experiences. These tools use algorithms to adjust content delivery based on individual student progress, reinforcing self-paced learning (Hafner, 2022). In EFL education, adaptive systems such as Grammarly, Speak English Fluently, and Rosetta Stone provide students with tailored language exercises that promote independent learning and self-assessment. Digital learning environments also facilitate collaborative learning, which is crucial for developing autonomy in language acquisition. Online discussion forums, Google Docs, and video conferencing tools (e.g., Zoom breakout rooms, Microsoft Teams).

The concept of autonomous learning has been extensively discussed in educational research, particularly in relation to language learning. Several theoretical perspectives support the development of learner autonomy, including constructivist learning theory, self-regulated learning theory, and sociocultural theory. These theories provide insight into how learners engage with their environment, regulate their own learning, and develop autonomy in both traditional and online educational contexts.

2. Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivist learning theory (Piaget, 1950, Vygotsky, 1978) posits that learning is an active process in which individuals construct knowledge based on their experiences and interactions. In this framework, learning is not simply the passive reception of information but an active process that requires students to engage in self-directed exploration, reflection, and problem-solving. In the context of online learning, constructivist principles emphasize student-centered instruction, where learners take responsibility for their learning process by seeking information, engaging in discussions, and utilizing digital resources (Jonassen, 1991). The shift to online education during the COVID-19 pandemic required Algerian EFL students to adapt to a learning environment that demanded greater independence, thus reinforcing the need for constructivist-based approaches that promote autonomy.

3. Self-Regulated Learning Theory

Zimmerman (2000) defines self-regulated learning (SRL) as a process in which learners take control of their cognitive, motivational, and behavioral aspects of learning. Self-regulated learning consists of three cyclical phases:

- **Forethought Phase:** setting goals and planning strategies for learning.
- **Performance Phase:** monitoring and adjusting learning behaviors.
- **Self-Reflection Phase:** evaluating progress and modifying future learning strategies.

In an online learning context, successful autonomous learners exhibit higher levels of self-regulation, as they must plan their learning activities, manage their time effectively, and monitor their progress (Reinders, 2010). However, students who lack self-regulatory strategies may struggle with online learning, particularly in environments with limited instructor guidance and technological challenges (Darasawang & Reinders, 2020). For Algerian EFL students, the sudden shift to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic required increased self-regulation skills. Students needed to develop time management strategies, use digital tools for independent learning, and maintain motivation despite reduced social interaction. This study explores whether Algerian EFL students were able to regulate their learning autonomously or faced obstacles in adapting to this new educational landscape.

4. Sociocultural Theory and Learner Autonomy

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory (SCT) highlights the role of social interaction and cultural context in learning. According to SCT, learning is mediated by social tools, such as language, technology, and collaboration with peers and instructors. This perspective suggests that learner autonomy is not merely an individual trait but also a socially constructed ability that develops through interaction with others. Benson (2011) emphasizes that autonomy in language learning is shaped by both personal agency and the learning environment. In online education, students often rely on digital communication platforms, discussion forums, and virtual collaboration to engage with peers and instructors. However, in contexts where online interaction is limited such as in Algerian universities with inadequate ICT infrastructure, the development of autonomous learning may be hindered (Hafner, 2022). Given the technological and institutional constraints in Algeria, this study examines how EFL students navigated their online learning experiences, understanding this balance between individual autonomy and external support is essential for assessing the effectiveness of online learning in fostering EFL students' self-directed learning abilities.

In the context of Algerian higher education, the importance of fostering autonomous learning, particularly among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, has gained increasing attention, especially given the rapid shift to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the limited integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in Algerian universities presents challenges, largely due to insufficient technological resources and a lack of structured support for autonomous learning. Consequently, as the Algerian educational system continues to evolve in response to technological advancements and changing societal needs, EFL students are encouraged to adapt to these complex challenges, highlighting the critical need for greater readiness and support for autonomous ICT-enabled learning.

Despite the Ministry of Education's efforts to modernize instruction through the Competency-Based Approach, the integration of ICT in Algerian universities has remained limited. Before the pandemic, online learning platforms were rarely utilized, and most instruction relied on traditional face-to-face teaching. The sudden shift to online learning during COVID-19 thus presented a significant challenge for students and instructors alike, particularly in fostering learner autonomy.

Hence, this study seeks to fill a gap in research by examining how Algerian EFL students perceive and navigate autonomous learning in an online context in higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the limited ICT infrastructure and the sudden shift to online learning, understanding students' readiness and obstacles is crucial for shaping future digital education policies. In this respect, by identifying key factors influencing autonomous learning, the study aims to provide insights into how institutions and educators can better support students in developing the necessary skills for independent learning. The findings are expected to contribute to the discourse on digital education by offering practical recommendations for fostering learner autonomy, improving instructional strategies, and enhancing student engagement in online learning environments. Ultimately, this research underscores the significance of cultivating autonomous learning skills to equip EFL students with the adaptability and resilience needed to thrive in increasingly digital and self-guided educational settings.

5. Research Questions

To reach the objectives of this work, the following questions are asked

Q1: What are English as a Foreign Language students' attitudes toward autonomous learning in Algerian higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Q2: What challenges hinder Algerian English as a Foreign Language students from achieving learning autonomy in an online environment during the COVID-19 pandemic?

6. Methodology

6.1 Context of Investigation and Sample Population

The target population of this study consisted of 22 second-year EFL students enrolled during the academic year 2021/2022. The study was conducted at the Department of English at Tizi-Ouzou University in Algeria. A purposive sampling method was used, meaning that participants were specifically chosen for their ability to provide relevant responses to the research questions as they are familiar with in-person and online learning environments.

6.2 Data Collection Tools and Data Analysis Procedures

This study employed a quantitative approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of students' perspectives on autonomous learning in an online environment. Data were collected through structured questionnaires. The questionnaire sought to gather statistical data and explore students' experiences in depth.

The structured questionnaire was designed to assess students' attitudes toward autonomous learning and identify challenges hindering their autonomy. The questionnaire included Likert scale items that measured various aspects of autonomous learning and the impact of external factors such as internet accessibility and motivation. The questionnaire is organized into three sections. The first section gathers basic demographic information about the participants. The second section explores students' familiarity with and attitudes toward autonomous learning. The third section identifies specific challenges students face within the context of online autonomous learning. Each section contains distinct items specifically designed to its particular focus. The data collected were analyzed quantitatively using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, emphasizing pattern identification and highlighting prevalent challenges encountered by students. Descriptive statistics, mean scores and frequency analysis were employed to summarize students' attitudes and identify key factors impacting their autonomy.

7. Results

Section I: Demographic Information

Table 1. Demographic Information of the participants

Demographics	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	3	13.6%
Female	19	86.4%
Age		
18-19	2	9.1%
19-20	16	72.7%
20-21	3	13.6%
Above 21	1	4.5 %

The gender distribution in this table indicates a predominance of female participants, who make up over 86% of the sample, compared to just 13.6% for males. In terms of age, most participants (72.7%) fall within the 19-20 age range, which is the largest represented group.

Smaller percentages of participants are found in the 18-19 (9.1%), 20-21 (13.6%), and above 21 (4.5%) age brackets.

Section II: Students' Attitudes towards Autonomous Learning

Q1: Have you heard of the term Autonomous Learning?

Table 02. Familiarity with the Concept of Autonomous Learning

Item	Frequency	Percent
Yes	9	40.9%
No	13	51.9 %

The table shows that 51.9% of participants responded "No," while 40.9% answered "Yes," indicating a slight majority leaning toward "No."

Q2: Are you a self-directed learner? (A learner who depends mostly on himself in learning)

Table 03. Self-Perception of Being a Self-Directed Learner

Item	Frequency	Percent
Yes	21	95.5%
No	1	4.5 %

The data indicates that 95.5% of participants consider themselves self-directed learners, while only 4.5% do not, indicating that most participants believe they primarily depend on themselves in the learning process.

Q3: According to you autonomous learning is:

Table 04. Definition of Autonomous Learning According to Students

Statement	Selected	Not selected	Frequency	%	Valid	Cumulative
<i>A total reliance on yourself in the learning process</i>	Selected	Not selected	11	50 %	50 %	100%
<i>The act of seeking answers without asking the teacher</i>	Not selected	Selected	8	30.4 %	30.4%	100%
<i>The ability to decide about what and how to learn</i>	Selected	Not selected	9	40.9 %	40.9%	100%

Most participants (50%) view autonomous learning as being completely self-reliant in the learning process, while a significant number (40.9%) also see it as the ability to decide on learning methods and content. A smaller proportion (30.4%) associate it with seeking answers independently of the teacher. This aligns with the overall mean score of 1.2727, which suggests that, on average, participants tend to lean more towards self-reliance in learning, as indicated by the minimum value of 1.00. In contrast, the maximum value of 2.00 reflects a lesser tendency toward seeking answers independently without teacher input. The standard deviation of further demonstrates a moderate level of variability in the participants' responses.

Table 4.1 Autonomous learning

Statement	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
According to you autonomous learning is	22	1,00	2,00	1,2727	,45584

Q4: I can learn independently without much teacher involvement during online courses.

Table 5. Learner Independence in Online Courses

Item	Frequency	Percent
<i>Disagree</i>	4	18.2%
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	8	36.4%
<i>Strongly agree</i>	2	9.1%
<i>Agree</i>	8	36.4%

The responses indicate mixed levels of confidence in independent learning during online courses. While 45.5% of participants agree or strongly agree that they can learn with minimal teacher involvement, 36.4% are neutral, and 18.2% disagree. This suggests that although nearly half feel capable of self-directed online learning, a significant portion either remains undecided or prefers some teacher guidance.

Q5: Which role do you take during online classroom instructions?

Table 6. Roles Adopted by Students During Online Classroom Instructions

Statement	Frequency	%	Valid%		Cumulative%
A receiver of knowledge	13	59.1 %	59.1 %		100%
An active participant	5	22.7%	22.7%		100%
Collaborator	1	4.5%	4.5%		100%
I do not take any role	3	13.6%	13.6%		100%

The findings reveal that the majority 59.1% view themselves as receivers of knowledge, indicating a preference for a more passive role where information is provided by the instructor. A smaller portion, 22.7%, see themselves as active participants, suggesting a moderate level of engagement in the learning process. Only 4.5% identify primarily as collaborators, reflecting a limited tendency towards teamwork. Additionally, 13.6% report that they do not take any specific role, which may indicate a lack of clarity or engagement in their learning process.

Q6: To what extent do you depend on your teacher?

Table 7. Level of Student Dependence on Teachers

Item	Frequency	Percent
<i>Always</i>	5	22.7%
<i>Often</i>	12	54.5%
<i>Rarely</i>	5	22.7%

The data displays that more than half of the participants selected Often suggesting that they depend on their teacher to some extent 54.5%, and a smaller portion selected Always and Rarely demonstrating either strong teacher reliance or a tendency toward self-reliance 22.7%

Q7: The teacher should only be a facilitator and guide

Table 8. Perception of the Teacher's Role as Facilitator and Guide

Item	Frequency	Percent
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	4.5%
<i>Disagree</i>	4	18.2%
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	3	13.6%
<i>Strongly agree</i>	1	4.5%
<i>Agree</i>	13	59.1%

As shown above, 59.1% of participants prefer teachers as guides rather than as authoritative figures in the learning process. Another 13.6% remain neutral, neither supporting nor

opposing this view. Meanwhile, a smaller portion disagrees (18.2%) or strongly disagrees (4.5%), indicating some preference for a more traditional, directive role from teachers. Additionally, 4.5% strongly agree with the statement, further supporting the teacher's role as a facilitator.

Q8: When I have a problem, I first try to solve it on my own, and only if I do not manage to do it I ask for the teacher's help

Table 9. Problem-Solving Approach Before Seeking Teacher Assistance

Item	Frequency	Percent
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	1	4.5%
<i>Disagree</i>	3	13.6%
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	1	4.5%
<i>Strongly agree</i>	3	13.6%
<i>Agree</i>	14	63.6%

As indicated above, most participants (63.6%) prefer to attempt problem-solving independently before seeking assistance from the teacher. An additional 13.6% strongly agree with this approach, reinforcing the value of self-reliance. Conversely, 13.6% disagree and 4.5% strongly disagree, suggesting that a small proportion may rely more on teacher assistance when facing challenges. Another 4.5% remain neutral, neither supporting nor opposing this view.

Q9: I study independently

Table 10. Frequency of Independent Study Habits

Item	Frequency	Percent
<i>Undesirable</i>	2	9.1%
<i>A little undesirable</i>	2	9.1%
<i>Quite desirable</i>	8	36.4%
<i>Desirable</i>	10	45.5%

The data reveals that a substantial majority of participants view independent study positively. Specifically, 45.5% consider it "Desirable," and 36.4% see it as "Quite desirable," indicating that most participants have a favorable attitude toward studying on their own. A small portion, 9.1%, finds it "A little undesirable," and another 9.1% finds it "Undesirable," suggesting that only a minority of participants are less motivated toward independent study.

Section III: Challenges

Q10: I face many difficulties during English online courses

Table 11. Challenges Faced by Participants in Online English Courses

Statement	Selected	Not selected	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %
<i>Poor network speed and stability</i>	Selected	Not selected	17	77.3%	100%
<i>Lack of personal motivation</i>	selected	Not selected	17	77.3 %	100%
<i>Lack of class interaction and participation with peers</i>	Not selected	Selected	5	22.7%	100%
<i>Lack of immediate feedback</i>	Not Selected	Selected	4	18.2%	100%
<i>Lack of ICT skills</i>	Selected	Not selected	15	68.2%	100%

The data in Table 11 reveals the most common difficulties faced by participants during online English courses. A significant portion of participants reported issues with poor network speed and stability (77.3%) as well as a lack of personal motivation (77.3%), indicating these as the

primary challenges. Additionally, 68.2% of participants mentioned a lack of ICT skills as a barrier. On the other hand, fewer participants felt challenged by the lack of class interaction and peer participation (22.7%) or the lack of immediate feedback (18.2%).

8. Discussion

This study examines students' attitudes toward autonomous learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and identifies key challenges faced by EFL students in Algerian higher education. The questionnaire findings provide clear and effective answers to the research questions, revealing that while Algerian EFL students are generally open to autonomous learning, numerous internal and external barriers hinder their ability to fully embrace this learning model.

A critical finding of this study is that many students perceive remote learning as an unfamiliar and challenging shift, largely due to the abrupt transition caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. With little to no prior experience in autonomous learning, they were forced to adapt to a model requiring a high degree of self-regulation and responsibility. Similarly, educators also faced difficulties in transitioning to remote instruction, as they were not provided with sufficient training or institutional support to facilitate online learning effectively. This sudden shift placed significant pressure on both teachers and learners, often leading to frustration and inefficiencies in the teaching-learning process. These findings align with previous research highlighting the importance of structured guidance in fostering autonomous learning (Little, 2007, Benson, 2013). Without adequate preparation, students struggle with self-directed learning, and teachers face difficulties in implementing effective online pedagogical strategies.

Another significant barrier that emerged from this study is the lack of ICT skills among both students and teachers. In today's increasingly digital world, technological proficiency is essential for successful engagement in educational and professional environments. Without adequate knowledge and training in digital tools, many students found it difficult to access, manage, and interact with online learning resources effectively. Similarly, teachers who lacked prior experience with digital platforms struggled to create engaging and interactive virtual learning environments. As Dawes (2001) noted, new technologies have the potential to transform education and facilitate efficient student-teacher communication in ways previously unavailable. However, without the necessary training and infrastructure, the effectiveness of technology-enhanced learning remains limited. Recent studies (Reinders & Darasawang, 2020, Chik & Ho, 2023) further emphasize that digital literacy and institutional support are crucial for fostering learner autonomy, particularly in remote learning settings.

Moreover, the study reinforces the importance of teacher feedback and structured support in promoting autonomous learning, aligning with previous research findings (Kim, 2014, Lee, 2016, Yunismar, 2019). According to Little (2007), fostering learner autonomy does not mean eliminating the teacher's role but rather transforming it into one that guides, monitors, and supports students in developing self-regulated learning strategies. The pandemic has underscored the necessity for resilience and adaptability in education, yet many students remain unprepared for the self-discipline required in autonomous learning. As Jossberger et al. (2018) highlight, self-direction empowers learners to take initiative, set personal learning goals, and persist despite challenges.

These findings suggest several important implications for enhancing autonomous learning in Algerian higher education. First, universities should invest in teacher training programs to equip educators with the necessary ICT skills and pedagogical strategies to support remote

and autonomous learning effectively. Second, integrating digital literacy courses into university curricula could help students develop essential skills for navigating online learning platforms independently. Third, learning materials should be thoughtfully designed to promote self-directed engagement, incorporating interactive elements that encourage critical thinking, reflection, and collaboration. Another key takeaway from this study is the critical role of digital literacy in promoting autonomy. Many students struggled with using online platforms effectively, which hindered their ability to engage in self-directed learning. To address this issue, universities also should integrate digital skills training into EFL curricula, ensuring students are proficient in using online resources, research databases, and learning management systems (LMS). Also encourage the use of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) or collaborative tools like Google Docs, to promote independent language practice.

The study also highlights that students with higher self-regulation skills were more successful in navigating online learning. To enhance students' self-regulated learning abilities, educators should introduce goal-setting activities where students define their weekly learning objectives and reflect on their progress. In addition, the use of blended learning approaches, combining face to face instruction with online tasks that require students to plan and monitor their learning. Finally, provide training in time management and metacognitive strategies, equipping students with the skills needed to track their learning and adjust their strategies accordingly.

The sociocultural theory suggests that learning is a social process, yet many students in this study reported feeling isolated in online classes. Following this theory, to foster collaboration and social engagement, instructors should implement peer-learning strategies, such as virtual group projects, discussion forums, and peer feedback activities to maintain a sense of classroom community. Similarly, the use of synchronous online discussions and interactive activities, such as problem-solving tasks and debates, to ensure active participation and develop mentorship programs, where more experienced students can guide those struggling with independent learning.

Additionally, institutional support systems, such as virtual mentorship programs and academic advising, could bridge the gap between independent learning and structured guidance. Providing students with access to digital learning communities and peer collaboration opportunities as well as establishing student support centers that offer workshops on independent learning, and digital competency could further enhance motivation and engagement. Future research could explore the long-term impact of these interventions on students' ability to sustain autonomous learning beyond the constraints of the pandemic.

9. Conclusion

This study highlights the complex dynamics of autonomous learning in the Algerian EFL context during the COVID-19 pandemic. While students hold positive attitudes toward autonomy, they still require foundational support in areas like motivation, structured teacher guidance, and peer interaction. Addressing these needs will be critical as higher education continues to integrate online learning formats. The study underscores the importance of preparing students with the necessary skills for independent learning, supported by strategic pedagogical resources, to foster resilient and self-directed learners in the Algerian educational landscape. Therefore, understanding EFL students' attitudes and challenges toward autonomous learning is vital for addressing gaps in Algeria's educational approach, especially in a post-pandemic environment where online and blended learning methods may continue to play a role. Identifying these challenges will allow educators to support students'

autonomous learning journeys better, enabling them to become more self-reliant and adaptive learners. By incorporating digital learning tools into EFL curricula, institutions can better support autonomous learning, equipping students with the skills needed for self-directed education beyond the classroom. Future research should explore the long-term impact of digital tools on autonomous learning and the role of teacher training in optimizing technology-driven learning environments.

References

- Allwright, D. (1990). Autonomy in language teaching and learning. *Language Teaching*, 23(3), 143-147. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444800006800>
- Benson, P. (2011). *Teaching and researching autonomy* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Benson, P. (2013). *Teaching and researching: Autonomy in language learning* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Dawes, L. (2001). What stops teachers using new technology? In M. Leask (Ed.), *Issues in Teaching using ICT* (pp. 61-79). London: Routledge.
- Hafner, C. A. (2022). Digital literacies and autonomous learning: The role of technology in fostering learner independence. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 35(4), 456-472. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2022.2047921>
- Higgs, J. (1988). Planning Learning Experiences to Promote Autonomous Learning. In D. Boud (Ed.), *Developing Student Autonomy in Learning*. London: Kogan Page Ltd, pp. 40-58.
- Holec, H. (1981). *Autonomy and foreign language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Chik, A., & Ho, J. (2023). Digital learning and learner autonomy: Rethinking strategies for online education. *Language Learning & Technology*, 27(2), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.10125/XXXXX>
- Jonassen, D. H. (1991). Evaluating constructivistic learning. *Educational Technology*, 31(9), 28-33.
- Jossberger, H., Brand-Gruwel, S., Boshuizen, H. P. A., & Gijsselaers, W. H. (2018). The influence of self-directed learning on the development of learning skills and learning outcomes. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 110(2), 172-188. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000250>
- Jossberger, H., S. Brand-Gruwel, M. W. L. van de Wiel and H. Boshuizen. 2018. Learning in workplace simulations in vocational education: A student perspective. *Vocations and Learning* 11(2): 179– 204.
- Kim, J. (2014). Teacher feedback and student autonomy in language learning. *Journal of Language Teaching*, 29(3), 245-260.
- Lamb, M., 2002. Explaining successful language learning in difficult circumstances. *Prospect*, 17 (3) , 35-52.
- Lee, H. (2016). The impact of teacher roles on students' self-directed learning in EFL classrooms. *Educational Research Journal*, 45(2), 113-126.
- Little, D. (2007). Language learner autonomy: Some fundamental considerations revisited. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1(1), 14-29. <https://doi.org/10.2167/illt040.0>

- Littlewood, W. (1999). Defining and developing autonomy in East Asian contexts. *Applied Linguistics*, 20(1), pp. 71-94.
- Najeeb, S. S. R. (2013). Learner autonomy in language learning. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 70, 1238-1242. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.01.183>
- Nunan, D. (1997). Designing and adapting materials to encourage learner autonomy. In P. Benson & P. Voller (Eds.), *Autonomy and independence in language learning* (pp. 192-203). London: Longman.
- Piaget, J. (1950). *The psychology of intelligence*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Ponton, M. K. (1999). The role of self-regulation in the development of learner autonomy. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 92(6), 337-347. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220679909598757>
- Reinders, H. (2010). Towards a classroom pedagogy for learner autonomy: A framework of independent language learning skills. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(5), 40–55. <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2010v35n5.4>
- Reinders, H., & Darasawang, P. (2020). *Innovation in language learning and teaching: The case of autonomous learning*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Yunismar, A. (2019). Exploring the relationship between teacher feedback and learner autonomy in higher education. *International Journal of Educational Studies*, 51(4), 402-416.
- Zimmerman, B. J. (2000). Attaining self-regulation: A social cognitive perspective. In M. Boekaerts, P. R. Pintrich, & M. Zeidner (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation* (pp. 13–39). Academic Press.

Appendices

Students' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to examine learners' degree of autonomy and attitudes towards autonomous learning during the pandemic among undergraduate second Year Bachelor students of English at Tizi-Ouzou University. It seeks to gather the students' attitudes towards autonomous learning and their challenges during COVID-19. Please answer the following questions by ticking (×) the option that best applies to you.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Section I: Background Information

Sex:

- Male
- Female

Age:

- 18 – 19
- 19 – 20
- 20 – 21
- Above 21

Section II: Students' Attitudes towards Autonomous Learning

Part 1:

Q1: Have you heard of the term Autonomous Learning?

Yes

No

Q2: Are you a self-directed learner? (A learner who depends mostly on himself in learning)

Yes

No

Q3: According to you autonomous learning is:

- A total reliance on yourself in the learning process
- The act of seeking answers without asking the teacher
- The ability to decide about what and how to learn

Q4: I can learn independently without much teacher involvement during online courses.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Strongly agree
- Agree

Q5: Which role do you take during online classroom instructions?

- A receiver of knowledge
- An active participant
- Collaborator
- I do not take any role

Part 2:

Q6: To what extent do you depend on your teacher?

- Always
- Often
- Rarely
- Never

Q7: The teacher should only be a facilitator and guide

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Strongly agree
- Agree

Q8: When I have a problem, I first try to solve it on my own, and only if I do not manage to do it I ask for the teacher's help

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Strongly agree
- Agree

Q9: I study independently

- Undesirable
- A little undesirable
- Quite desirable

- Desirable

Section III: Students' Challenges

Q10: I face many difficulties during English online courses

- Poor network speed and stability
- Lack of personal motivation
- Lack of class interaction and participation with peers
- Lack of immediate feedback