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Submitted By:
Rahma BELAMRI

Investigating the Role of Scaffolding in Enhancing Learning Autonomy in Primary School
Case of Teachers and Fourth- Grade Pupils at Ahmad Ben Alzain Primary School in EL-Ghrous, Biskra, Algeria

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Board of Examiners

Chairperson: Mr. Amrate Moustafa	**University of Biskra**
Supervisor: Prof. Saliha CHELLI	**University of Biskra**
Examniner: Dr. Boutheina AMRI	**University of Biskra**
Examiner: Ms Kenza MERGHMI	**University of Biskra**

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Declaration

I, **Rahma BELAMRI** do hereby declare that this submitted work is my original work, my own effort, free from plagiarism, and has not previously been submitted for any institution or university for a degree. I also declare that the list of references is provided forward indicating all the sources of the cited and quoted information. This work was certified and completed at Mohammed Kheider University of Biskra.

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Dedication

To my beloved parents,

Thank you for your unwavering love, *support*, *and sacrifices throughout every step of my journey*. *Your encouragement and belief in me have been the foundation of my strength and perseverance*. *This work is a tribute to your endless patience and guidance*. *I am forever grateful*.

To my brothers Moubarak, Adnane, *and my sister* Nour El Houda, *thank you for your constant encouragement*, *support*, *and belief in me*. *Your presence in my life has been a source of strength and inspiration*.

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Abstract

In recent years, learner autonomy has gained increasing recognition as a key goal in language education, especially in early learning contexts. The current reserach investigated the role of scaffolding techniques in fostering learner autonomy in an El-Ghrous primary EFL classroom. Grounded in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and supported by related pedagogical frameworks, the research explored how structured support can promote independent learning among fourth-grade pupils. It addressed a notable gap in Algerian foreign language education specifically, the limited awareness and incorporation of scaffolding and autonomy-supportive practices. A mixed-methods design was employed, incorporating semi-structured interviews with four English language teachers in El-Ghrous primary schools and structured classroom observations of one selected teacher at Ahmad Benzain Primary School. Findings revealed that while scaffolding strategies were applied, they were often used intuitively rather than with theoretical grounding, which reduced their overall effectiveness. Barriers such as insufficient training, resource limitations, and time constraints further hindered the integration of autonomy-promoting techniques. Despite these challenges, pupils showed increased independence when involved in well-scaffolded learning tasks. The study emphasized the need for targeted teacher training and further empirical research to assess the long-term effects of scaffolding on learner autonomy. Ultimately, it highlighted the importance of early and structured pedagogical support in cultivating self-directed learners.

Key words: Zone of Proximal Development, Scaffolding, Autonomy.

List of Acronyms

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

PYP: Preparatory Year Program

MEXT: Ministry of Education, culture, science, and Technology (Japan)

MOE: Minister of Education (China)

MAXQDA: Max weber Qualitative Data Analysis

Have A-GO: Have a go.

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Introduction

In primary education, fostering learner autonomy is a key objective in language learning. Autonomy enables students to take responsibility for their own learning, engage in self-directed tasks, and develop problem-solving skills that are essential for lifelong learning. However, achieving autonomy in the learning process requires structured support, particularly for young learners who may struggle with self-regulation and independent learning strategies.

Scaffolding plays a fundamental role in enhancing learner autonomy by providing temporary support that guides learners toward independent mastery. As Maybin, Mercer, and Stierer (1992) suggest, scaffolding involves ongoing interaction between teacher and learner, shaped by the moment-to-moment demands of the learning situation and the learner's level of understanding. Through scaffolding techniques such as modeling, guided practice, and strategic questioning, teachers can help learners develop the confidence and skills needed to take control of their learning. Research has shown that effective scaffolding not only improves language skills but also fosters motivation and self-efficacy in learners. The gradual release of responsibility from teacher to student allows learners to engage actively with the material and develop the ability to learn beyond the classroom.

One of the key factors influencing the success of scaffolding in fostering autonomy is the appropriate adjustment of support based on learners' needs. If scaffolding is too rigid, learners may become overly dependent on teacher guidance: if it is too minimal, they may struggle with complex tasks. As Bruner (1983) stated, "Scaffolding consists essentially of the adult 'controlling' those elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner's capacity, thus permitting him to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his range of competence." This approach aligns closely with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory and his concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which emphasizes that optimal learning, occurs in the space between what a learner can do alone and what they can

do with assistance. Therefore, implementing scaffolding strategies that are responsive to students' developmental levels is essential for promoting autonomy and long-term success in language learning.

Scaffolding techniques vary widely depending on learners' needs, the nature of the task, and the instructional context. Common techniques include modeling, think-aloud, questioning, peer collaboration, and role-play, each serving to clarify expectations, guide learners' thought processes, and build confidence. According to Gibbons (2002), "Effective scaffolding occurs when the teacher temporarily supports learners in ways that enable them to accomplish tasks they could not complete independently, while simultaneously encouraging increasing independence and control over the learning process" (p. 16). These techniques are not limited to academic content but also contribute to the development of metacognitive skills, as learners are encouraged to reflect, plan, monitor, and evaluate their own progress. Reiser (2004) adds that the ultimate aim of scaffolding is not only to help students succeed in a given task but also to foster their ability to function independently in future learning situations.

In recent years, educational researchers have increasingly acknowledged the importance of scaffolding in enhancing learner engagement, motivation, and performance. Yet, while its value is widely recognized, there remains a need for further explore how specific scaffolding techniques are applied in real classroom contexts and how they contribute to learners' development across different skill areas. This present study aims to investigate the use and effectiveness of scaffolding techniques among EFL teachers and learners in primary education, with a focus on how these strategies support learning processes and foster greater learner autonomy.

1 Statement of the Problem

Learning autonomy refers to students' ability to take charge of their learning and engage actively in the process. Brindley (1984, as cited in Nunan, 1988) identifies it as a core principle

of lifelong learning, emphasizing the development of individuals' capacity to control their own educational paths. This learner-centered perspective requires that instructional programs be aligned with learners' needs, and that students be involved in decisions regarding objectives, content, methods, and evaluation. As Little (1991) asserts, "the goal of education should be to create learners who are increasingly capable of assuming responsibility for their own learning" (p. 4).

Despite the growing emphasis on learner-centered education, fostering autonomy in primary school classrooms remains a significant challenge. In the Algerian context, young learners often lack the cognitive and metacognitive awareness necessary to take full responsibility for their learning. Benabed and Mekki (2021) found that students are generally unaware of metacognitive strategies, which hampers their ability to regulate their learning. Similarly, Elouchdi (2021) highlights the limitations of Algeria's primary education system, especially in the fifth grade, where rote memorization stifles the development of critical thinking and reflective learning. As a result, teaching remains predominantly teacher-centered, with students relying heavily on teachers for direction, motivation, and evaluation. This dependency restricts the development of key skills such as self-regulation, goal-setting, and independent problem-solving. At Ahmad Ben Alzain Primary School, as in many similar contexts, classroom dynamics often place the teacher at the center of the learning process, limiting students' opportunities to make decisions, reflect on their learning, or take initiative.

To address this challenge, scaffolding offers a promising approach. By gradually shifting responsibility from teacher to student, scaffolding provides tailored support that encourages independence while aligning with learners' abilities. Gibbons (2002) emphasizes that effective scaffolding involves offering just enough assistance to promote growth, helping students become more self-reliant over time. Rather than removing teacher involvement

entirely, scaffolding allows for structured guidance that supports students as they develop the skills necessary to manage their own learning.

2 Research Aims

The aims of this study are as follow:

1. Explore the incorporation of scaffolding techniques within the teaching process in primary school.

2. Explore the influence of scaffolding techniques as a fundamental base builder for the primary school pupils.

3. Rise teachers' awareness on improving their students' autonomy using scaffolding techniques.

4. Explore the lacks that teachers encounter during the incorporating process

3 Research questions

This research seeks to answer the following questions:

RQ1: Do primary school teachers incorporate scaffolding techniques through their tutoring process?

RQ 2: How do they maintain these techniques to improve learners' autonomy?

RQ 3: what are the challenges the teacher encounter during the the scaffolding process?

RQ 4: How does scaffolding techniques affect students' development of autonomy?

4 Significance of the Study

This study addresses a critical aspect of language education in primary schools: the role of scaffolding in promoting learner autonomy. While scaffolding is a well-established concept in educational theory, its specific application to fostering autonomy among young EFL learners remains underexplored—particularly within the Algerian primary education context. The findings of this research are expected to yield practical implications for classroom instruction, especially for EFL teachers aiming to create learner-centered environments.

By examining effective scaffolding techniques and the challenges teachers face in implementing them, the study offers actionable recommendations for enhancing autonomy-supportive teaching practices. It emphasizes the importance of gradually shifting responsibility for learning from the teacher to the learner through structured, scaffolded support.

Ultimately, this research contributes to both the theoretical understanding and practical application of scaffolding in primary EFL contexts. It not only deepens insights into effective scaffolding strategies but also encourages educators to incorporate scaffolded instruction into their daily practices. Furthermore, the study offers guidance for teacher training and curriculum development, aiming to support the creation of learning environments that nurture autonomy and long-term language development.

5 Research Methodology

5.1. Research Approach

A **pragmatist research paradigm** was adopted for this study, as it aligns with the practical nature of investigating real-world classroom practices and allows for the use of multiple data sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Accordingly, a **mixed-methods approach** was employed, combining qualitative and quantitative data to explore how scaffolding strategies are integrated into primary school classrooms to promote learner autonomy in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning.

5.2 Data Gathering Tools

In line with the mixed method approach, the qualitative component includes semi-structured interviews with primary EFL teachers to gain insights into their understanding of scaffolding, the challenges they face in implementing it, and their perceptions of its impact on learners' autonomy. The quantitative component involves a structured classroom observation using a checklist of scaffolding techniques to record how these strategies are applied in practice systematically

5.3. Data Analysis Procedures

The **qualitative data** obtained from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed thematically using **MAXQDA 2024** software, which facilitated the organization and interpretation of emerging patterns and themes related to scaffolding practices and teacher perceptions. Meanwhile, the **quantitative data** collected from the structured classroom observation were analyzed using **Microsoft Excel** to calculate the frequencies of observed scaffolding techniques and their implementation.

6 The Population and Sample

The sample for this study consists of four primary school English language teachers, who participated in semi-structured interviews aimed at gaining insights into their perspectives on scaffolding and learner autonomy. The participants were selected based on the distribution of English language teachers across the primary schools in El-Ghrous, ensuring representation within the available population.

In addition, one English language classroom was selected for structured observation, focusing on a lesson delivered by an experienced teacher. This classroom observation served the quantitative component of the study, enabling the researcher to examine the practical implementation of scaffolding strategies and address the corresponding research questions.

7 Delimitation of the Study

This study is delimited in the following ways:

1. **Scope of Scaffolding Strategies**: The research focuses only on selected scaffolding strategies that have been identified as effective in previous literature and are recommended by curriculum policy guidelines. These strategies were chosen to ensure relevance and alignment with national educational standards.

2. **Selection of Participants**: The teachers involved in this study were purposefully selected due to the limited number of English language teachers in primary schools and

their relevant teaching experience. This ensured the inclusion of participants who could provide informed and contextually grounded insights.

3. **Data Collection Design**: For the quantitative aspect of the research, four teachers participated in semi-structured interviews to provide a comprehensive view from the teachers' perspectives. Additionally, six classroom observation sessions were conducted with the same teacher to examine the application of scaffolding techniques across different classes. This provided consistency while allowing for varied classroom dynamics.

8 Structure of Dissertation

The present study consists of two parts; the first part is devoted to the theoretical background while the second part focuses on the fieldwork, which includes analysis, interpretation, and findings discussion of the focus study.

The theoretical part is divided into two chapters: **Chapter One** is dedicated to the first variable namely the concept of. The chapter highlights key theoretical underpinnings, particularly Piaget's theory of cognitive development, which views learning as a stage-based, constructivist process- and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which positions learning as a socially mediated activity that precedes development. The chapter concludes by discussing the contribution of the scaffolding concept within the educational framework.

Chapter Two addresses the second variable; namely, the concept of autonomy. It provides a comprehensive overview about autonomy explains its key components of and discusses challenges in fostering it. Ultimately, the chapter advocates for a balanced and context-sensitive approach to developing learner autonomy in language education.

Chapter Three, which constitutes the fieldwork section, presents a thorough analysis and interpretation of the collected data, offers detailed answers to the research questions, and concludes with a comprehensive general conclusion.

Chapter One

Exploring the Scaffolding Concept

Chapter One: Scaffolding Concept in the Educational Context

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Introduction

The current chapter introduces a theoretical background of the scaffolding, including its implementation in the educational framework. Scaffolding, a metaphorical term, denotes constructing new knowledge upon learners' existing knowledge by providing the appropriate assistance. However, it is crucial to consider learners' prior knowledge and their capacity. Furthermore, the chapter attempts to provide an inclusive view of Vygotsky's theory, which is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), as an underpinning foundation and as its influence on developing the strategy.

1.1 Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

Regarding the perspective on the learning process, the constructivist approach plays a crucial role in catalysing the development of psychology within the educational domain. Cognitive development is considered a foundational aspect of developmental psychology in which its main concern is how the learning process stems from constructed knowledge from previous experiences. Moreover, applying knowledge acquired in particular contexts should be relevant to realistic situations. Among the most influential theories in this field is **Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development**, which describes how children progress through distinct stages of intellectual growth.

To establish learning, Piaget (1952) suggested that children actively interact with the environment rather than simply inactive learners. According to Dimitriadis and Kamberelis (2006), "Piaget grounded his developmental learning theory in the individual learner and positioned children as active, intelligent, creative constructors of their knowledge structure" (as cited in Blake, B., (2015), p. 62). He proposed that children's cognitive capacities grow organically as they engage with their environment, identifying four universal stages of development:

- **Sensorimotor(Birth to 18-24 months):** discover Object permanence

- **Preoperational(2 to 7 years):** improve Symbolic thought

- **Concrete operational (7 to 11 years):** improve Logical thought

- **Formal operational (Adolescence to adulthood):** reasoning skill

Furthermore, Piaget (1952) believed that individuals are the main core in their learning process, emphasizing this, as those children are active, creative, and intelligent which enables them to activate their adaptation skills to fit in their environment. In his book "*The Origins of Intelligence in Children*", he claimed that the process of knowledge reception occurs within a complex mental mechanism that consists of two methods: assimilation and accommodation. On one hand, the assimilation process refers to the process of acquiring a new concept that is based on previous concepts learners already tackled. On the other hand, accommodation involves modifying certain cognitive schemas to integrate a new mental environment.

Figure 1.1

Accommodation and Assimilation
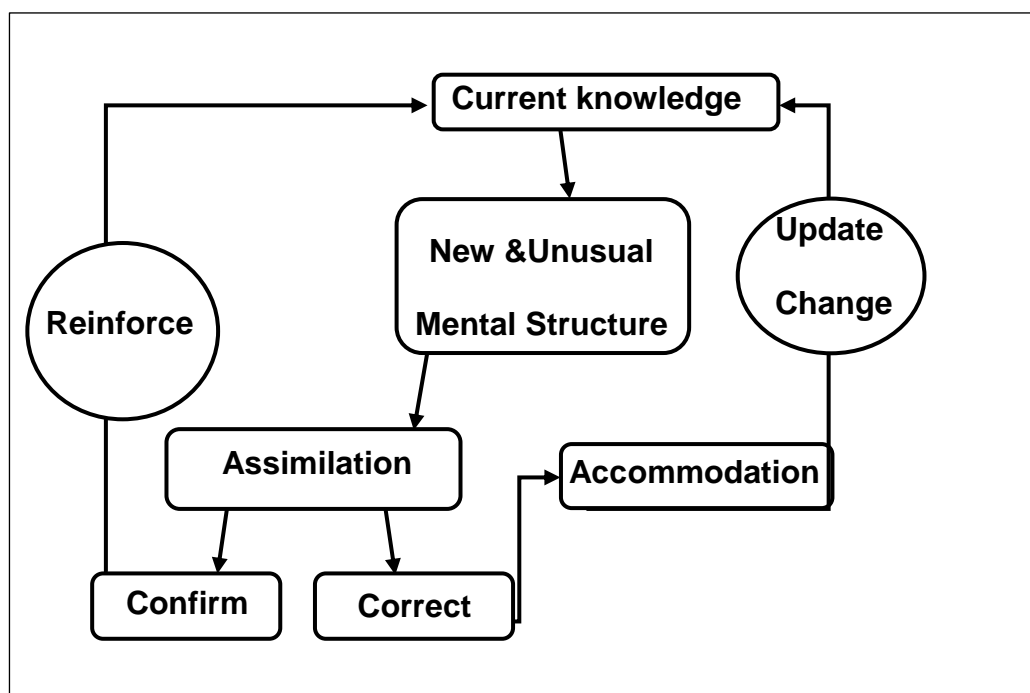
Figure 1.1 demonstrates the process of knowledge adaptation according to Piaget (1952). Owing to this mental process illustration, Piaget (1952) reinforces the learning process involving certain cognitive processes that enable the learners especially children to acquire new concepts. The role of the mental process takes the form of a perceptual framework as well as confirming that individuals are essential in the learning process neglecting the incorporation of the surrounding environment in shaping the cognitive ability of young learners.

Moreover, the main theories claimed by Piaget (1920) and behaviourism about the association between learning and development in the cognitive system are as follow:

- ***Development always precedes learning***

Piaget (1920), a pioneer in constructivism, claimed that there are certain development levels that children must reach to enable the learning process to occur.

- ***Learning and development cannot be separated***

For behaviourism scholars, learning is development, in which both occur because of each other.

The rejection of these theories has led to the emergence of the Zone of proximal, described as an area where organized learning sequences in mental development cause the oriented product of the learner. According to Vygotsky (1978): "Learning is not development; however, properly organized learning results in mental development and sets in motion a variety of developmental processes that would be impossible apart from learning. Thus, learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human, psychological functions."

1.2 Zone of Proximal Development Theory

Lev Vygotsky, during the social constructivism period, first introduced the "Zone of Proximal Development" in 1930. It delineates learners' mental development capacity, which allows them to accomplish certain tasks independently or with appropriate guidance and encouragement from a skilled partner. He insisted on the influence of social nature on learning development; the interaction between teacher-learners or groups of learners enables higher conceptual understanding and, therefore, their cognitive process. This interconnection was introduced by Vygotsky as the ZPD or "the Zone of Proximal Development" which is a gap of knowledge that could be filled by the learner or with adults' involvement. He defined it as "It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers." (Vygotsky, 1930, p. 86).

Figure 1.2

Zone of Proximal Development. (Source: Shabani et al., n.d, 2010, p.12)
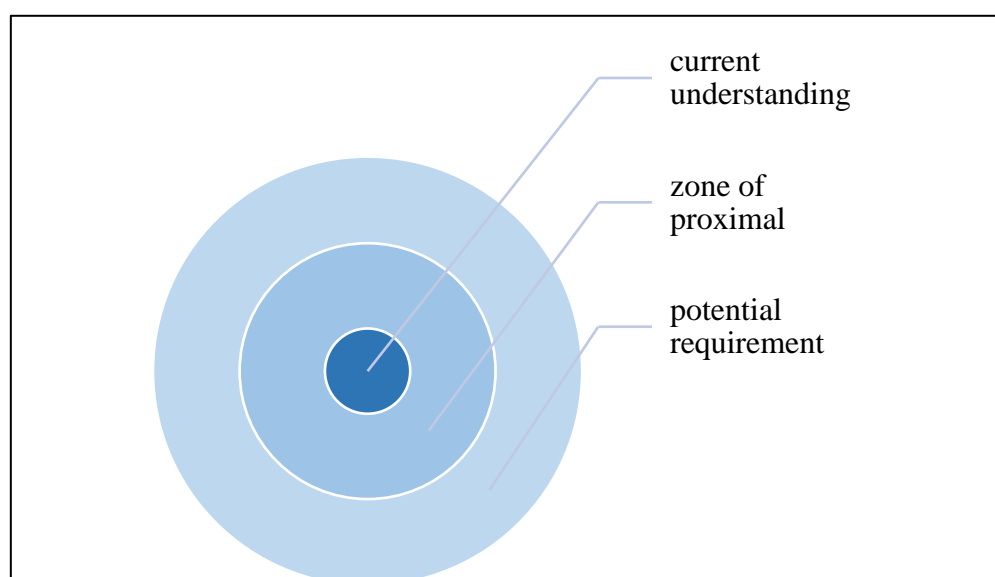
As Figure 1.2 shows, the Zone of Proximal is the discrepancy between the current level of perception that a learner can achieve without any help and what can be reached with appropriate assistance. Thus, indicating that the learning process cannot be separated from social interaction.

Moreover, before the introduction of the ZPD, the prevailing view was that development dictated learning. That means children's learning ability is associated with certain development levels that allow them to grasp the received knowledge. However, Vygotsky (1978) argues that the learning system is neither the development pathway nor restricted to; thus, determining the mental ability is only related to what he suggested one hand, "The actual developmental level" which means the current learners' abilities achieving particular tasks with the need of assistance " it reflects what is already developed or achieved" (Shabani et al., 2010). On the other hand, the "Zone of Proximal" highlights the case where learners need help to complete the intended task "The zone of proximal development defines those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

1.3 The Concept of Scaffolding in Education

Underpinned by Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal, Bruner, Wood and Ross (1976) postulated the notion of "scaffolding" as a key instructional strategy. Wood et al, (1976) describe scaffolding as "A process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task, or achieve a goal beyond their unassisted efforts". In addition, Gibbons (2015) defined scaffolding as what teachers do in the classroom, especially the support they offer, which plays a vital role in their students' academic success The expert provides structured support, gradually withdrawing assistance as competence increases" (p. 90). Owing to the gap inherent in the Zone of Proximal Development, scaffolding is suggested as a strategy to fulfil the intended

requirement of the learners through guided support. Wood et al (1976) found out that if the social nature is involved in the learning process through which imitating and modelling remain precedents.

Yet, it is distinct in the pedagogical framework, where tutors socialize with learners to reach certain goals. That is to say, the learners are being exposed to problem-solving occasions where they go beyond their learning efforts with the teacher leading them to attain the ultimate aim. In this case, Frances et al (1985) demonstrate that learners-teacher interaction is related to the genre under focus; taking writing skill as an instance, developing a successful text depends on the guide provided by the teacher interacting with the learners while writing their draft " It is this guidance that makes the teaching work"(p. 72). It can be said that scaffolding is the teacher's support since the enhancement process is within the learner's zone of proximal. Here, we turn our attention to the nature of this support, known as scaffolding.

1.3.1 Types of Scaffolding

The emergence of the scaffolding concept by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) which focuses on providing temporary support to learners as they construct new skills to grasp the knowledge, has evolved into a set of techniques that vary based on the learners' needs, the given task, and the instructional context. The researchers identified certain scaffolding types educators may use to support learners' understanding. Regardless of the variance, it is commonly categorized into **conceptual scaffolding, procedural scaffolding, verbal scaffolding, and strategic scaffolding.**

Figure 1.3

Types of Scaffolding Techniques
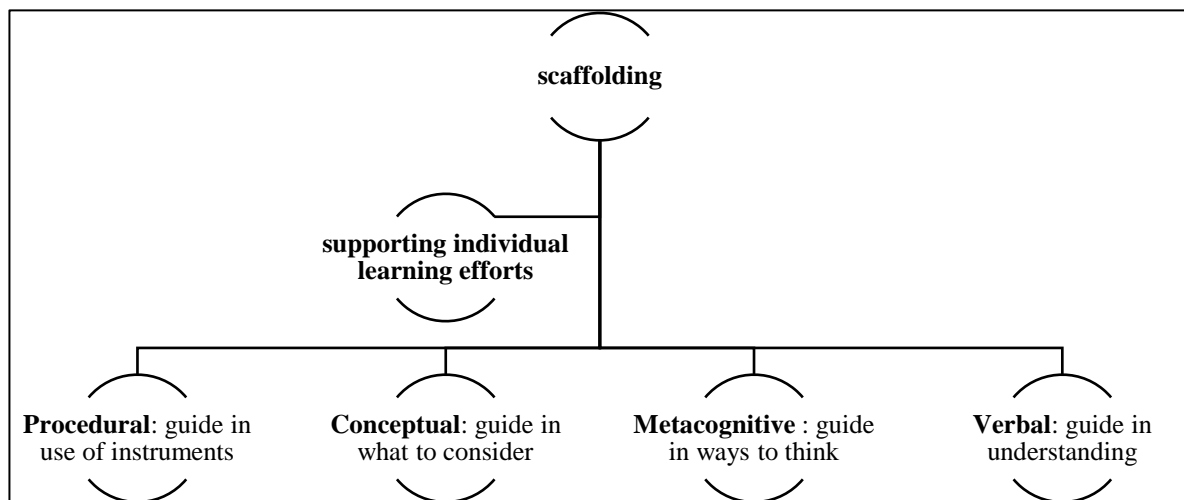
Note. Adapted from Open Learning Environments: Foundations, Methods, and Models (p. 123), by M. J. Hannafin, S. M. Land, & K. Oliver, 1999, Educational Technology Publications. Copyright 1999 by Educational Technology Publications.

Figure 1.3 summarized the types of scaffolding used within classroom instruction. Building on this, more illustration provided below:

1.3.1.1 Conceptual Scaffolding

Conceptual scaffolding designates the process in which assistance is provided to maintain the intended association between ideas of a certain context. Hannafin, Land, and Oliver (1999) explain:

Conceptual scaffolding, then, guides learners regarding *what to consider*. At times, this is accomplished by identifying key conceptual knowledge related to a problem or creating structures that make conceptual organization readily apparent. These structures can be made available through a variety of mechanisms, ranging from the graphical depiction of relationships among concepts to outlines featuring ordinate-subordinate relationships, to information and hints provided by experts. (p. 132).

The conceptual scaffolding, according to researchers Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976), refers to the given support that helps the learners build a comprehensive schema about the

concept under study. Likewise, it attempts to provide a groundwork for problem-solving tasks by creating a systematic structure to identify the basic principles related to the problem. In their study, concerning the implementation of scaffolding in an online learning environment, Jumaat and Tasir (2014) claimed, "Conceptual scaffolding helps students to decide what to consider in learning. It particularly guides them to prioritize fundamental concepts" (p. 76); thus, the instructor's scaffolding advocates learners' metacognitive level. In practice, the teacher gives **a concept map** showing parts of a plant and their functions using the target language before starting the activity.

1.3.1.2 Procedural Scaffolding

This type of scaffolding helps learners to utilize tools and references effectively. The aim is to ensure that learners understand the processes and the methods to complete the task.

It is implemented for complicated problems that require several tools to be accomplished. The required tools guide students through the steps necessary to complete a task or solve a problem "Procedural scaffolding, in addition, assists students in using available tools and resources" (Jumaat & Tasir, 2014, p. 76). For instance, the teacher models how to use a story planner worksheet, showing how to fill in the beginning, middle, and end.

1.3.1.3 Metacognitive Scaffolding

This type involves enhancing the metacognitive abilities of learners. It is prevalent for teachers to use metacognitive scaffolding with receptive skills that are based on thinking and comprehension. It attempts to develop learners' awareness about their learning process. For example, the teacher says to a child before a reading task, **"What do you think you'll learn from this story? How will you know if you understand it?"**

Figure 1.4

The Metacognitive Scaffolding Process. (Source: Vo et al., 2022)

Scaffold prompts incorporate processes, such as resource activation and metacognition, to help students use effective problem-solving strategies

Scaffolding

Instructor moves scaffold meaningful exchange between instructor and student to elicit greater student understanding of concepts and structured problem solving

Metacognition

Instructor moves

Instructor moves support the development and awareness of metacognition during a student-instructor exchange

Figure 1.4 shows the process of metacognitive scaffolding. While the purpose of scaffolding is to provide temporary support to learners, the metacognitive scaffolding model plays a crucial role in scaffolding their understanding and reasoning to find the answer. Since it deals with thinking, teaching study skills such as taking notes, planning, and how to evaluate the learning strategies they use " Metacognitive scaffolding supports the underlying processes associated with individual learning management. It provides guidance in how to think during learning." (Hannafin et al., 1999, p. 132)

1.3.1.4 Verbal Scaffolding

Verbal scaffolding tends to provide the learners with verbal instruction. According to Wood et al (1976) "process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts. The principle of this is to help the learners, especially children, to recognize their drafted compositions to get the answer and what is required by the task, "the principal form of that verbal interaction is a combination of reminding the child of the task requirements and correcting his efforts as he seeks to carry on." (Wood et al., 1976, p. 95). The tutor's role is to keep reminding the learner of the task

requirement and redressing the mistakes committed while he seeks to carry on. Provides children with language or strategies to complete tasks or express ideas. For example, in a group discussion, the teacher gives sentence starters like:

"I think ___ because…", "Can you explain why…", "I agree with ___, but…"

1.3.2 Scaffolding Techniques

The crystallization of the scaffolding concept reshaped modern education. Several researchers with the educator J. Bruner studied in depth the techniques used referring to Vygotsky's theory about the "Zone of Proximal Development" to serve learners' needs. Among the variety of techniques used, teachers ensure their effectiveness in teaching foreign languages mainly: **modelling, think-aloud, questioning, peer support, and role-play.** These techniques remain used in teaching foreign language for children due to their effectiveness in motivating children

1.3.2.1 Modelling

One of the main purposes of applying scaffolding is to improve learners' metacognition. Thus, modelling, which is a means of scaffolding, demonstrates how to complete a task such as solving the problem before asking learners to try it. When implementing the modelling scaffold, as stated by Orey (2010), cognitive tasks should be structured into sequential steps and articulated using direct action verbs, enabling learners to track the reasoning process. Additionally, the modelling involves presenting examples of what is expected from learners to do to complete the task. This includes showing how to ask questions, make requests, or describe objects in English. For instance, the teacher points to a picture of a cat and says, **'This is a cat. The cat is black.'** Then, pupils are asked to describe another animal using the same pattern.

1.3.2.2 Think-Aloud

Think-aloud scaffolding is considered one of the most effective teaching strategies for schoolchildren. It involves expressing thoughts while doing the intended task. The goal of this

scaffolding technique is to engage learners' discussion which allows them to build conceptual cognitive and metacognitive skills throughout interaction and engagement. By thinking aloud, the teachers' role is to verbalize their thinking process so learners immediately adopt and follow the process. As Orey (2010) explained, "Think-aloud modelling gives auditory substance to the thought processes associated with a task. For example, a teacher might verbalize her thought processes for breaking an unfamiliar word down into its parts so that it can be read".

1.3.2.3 Questioning

Questioning scaffolding helps students think more deeply and engage in meaningful learning. Instead of providing them with answers, teachers ask thoughtful questions that guide students to discover ideas on their own. These questions encourage students to analyse, connect concepts, and reflect on their understanding. By addressing learners to explain their thinking and consider different perspectives, questioning scaffolding builds confidence and problem-solving skills. Over time, students become more independent, taking charge of their learning while still receiving the right level of support from their teacher. Asking simple, clear questions supports children's language learning by encouraging them to speak and use new vocabulary. Questions should be open-ended when possible. For example, after reading a story, the teacher asks, **'What do you think will happen next?'** or **'How does the girl feel?'** These questions help children express thoughts in English.

1.3.2.4 Peer Scaffolding

Peer scaffolding is one of the basic group-working strategies. The scaffold occurs when students help each other learn by offering guidance, feedback, and support. This type of scaffolding is presented in various forms such as explaining a concept, asking guiding questions, or working through a problem together. Hence, peer scaffolding motivates learners to engage actively in learning while exchanging their understanding of certain concepts together. It involves communication and teamwork skills, as learners share ideas, clarify their

thinking, and build confidence. By implementing peer scaffolding, the more knowledgeable interaction between peers, the more assistance is provided to learners who are still developing their understanding. By learning with and from each other, students underpin their understanding in a way that feels natural and engaging. In a matching game, one child says the word aloud while the other finds the picture. This builds vocabulary through teamwork.

1.3.2.5 Role-play Scaffolding

Role-play scaffolding incorporation tends to enhance learners' knowledge acquisition from acting out particular situations within set boundaries with the teacher's assistance. It stems from one of the frameworks in which teachers guide individuals during systematic activities that are considered approximatively to real-life situations. Moreover, it allows learners to rehearse newly acquired abilities as well as make sense of strategies that are difficult to comprehend. This technique helps learners as it enables them to practice in a controlled environment where they can formulate new concepts and ideas in an interactive environment, Vygotsky claimed its crucial role in development, "Play creates a zone of proximal development of the child. In the play, the child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behavior; in play, it is as though he were a head taller than himself." (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 102). When actively participating in role-play exercises, students gain self-confidence and understanding of the concept. Students can relate the concepts they have learned to their actual experiences, making learning more applicable and enriching. Hence, scaffolding through the role-play technique gets learners to use their imaginations, social skills, and reasoning skills that are critical for their studies and within the workplace setting. Example: Students pretend to be in a shop. One says, **'Can I have an apple, please?**' and the other replies, **'Here you are!'** This builds confidence in using English socially.

Table 1. 1

Scaffolding Techniques and their Implementation

Scaffolding Type	Related Techniques	Mechanism of implementation
Verbal	Modelling	Language as a cognitive tool
	Think-Aloud	Guided interaction
	Questioning	Co-construction of knowledge
Procedural	Role Play	Structuring learning tasks
	Peer Support	Providing routines
		Engaging in authentic activities
Conceptual	Questioning	Encouraging reasoning
	Peer Support	Making connections
		Refining understanding
Metacognitive	Think-Aloud	Developing self-regulation
	Modelling	Planning
		Monitoring
		Evaluating learning

Note. The above table summaries the relation between the already discussed types and techniques of scaffolding notion. It is necessary to understand that strategies under the scaffolding umbrella complete each other. In other word, in order to improve any learning skill that match particular scaffolding type, it may need special technique so the scaffolding process could be applicable and fulfil learners' needs and requirement.

1.4 Scaffolding principles

Scaffolding teaching is described as a systematic process that goes beyond academic knowledge, to facilitate the perception of knowledge to reach the ultimate level within learners' zone of proximal development. Rosenshine and Meister (1992) extended the concept to classroom instruction, emphasizing practical teaching techniques for fostering a higher level of cognitive skills.

1.4.1 Providing Modelling

Modelling is one of the foundational scaffolding strategies in which a teacher illustrates how to perform a learning activity and how to use a thinking skill. Students can benefit from seeing an expert complete a given task because they learn how to think about problem-solving before engaging in the actual work themselves. This might be done via think-aloud, systematic demonstrations, or worked examples. With modelling, students have a cognitive frame to follow, which lessens ambiguity and apprehension while guiding them to achieve the goal.

1.4.2 Guided Practice with Prompts and Hints

Students participate in guided practice after modelling. In this phase, students begin a task while the teacher offers some structure. These help include guiding questions, hints, and feedback to aid the students in implementing strategies. The desired outcome is to reduce cognitive overload and frustration by providing the right level of support. This approach allows students to take more and more responsibility for their performance in a gradual manner. Consequently, through guided practice, students learn how to become independent learners.

1.4.3 Gradual Fading of Support

As the students become more skillful, the scaffolding provided to them should be reduced, as it is supportive and temporary. This involves the teacher's gradual fading of intervention, so they could for example give fewer more specific hints, shift from guiding the students through the process to asking broad questions, and make the task more complicated.

This phase promotes student's independence and ability to solve problems because it makes them utilize what they learned in a self-reliant manner.

1.4.4 Ensuring Mastery before Full Independence

Before taking scaffolding away completely, a student must show that they have mastered the necessary skills or strategies. This rule helps prevent students from assuming independence too early, which can lead to confusion or even errors. Teachers make sure there is mastery by evaluating comprehension, supporting important ideas, and providing practice opportunities. Once a student can perform the task, they can fully transition to independent learning without having to rely on scaffolding.

1.4.5 Encouraging Active Engagement

The use of scaffolding in education provides clear benefits when students take an active role in their learning. This method highlights the importance of developing critical thinking, self-regulation, and teamwork, which stands in stark contrast to simply memorizing facts. When students engage in discussions, tackle problem-solving tasks, and reflect on their experiences, they gain a richer understanding of the material. This kind of involvement not only boosts motivation but also encourages independence in learners and aids in retaining information over the long term. As a result, these active learning techniques make the complete educational journey more meaningful and effective.

1.5 The scaffolding Function

Wood et al (1976) pointed out the function of scaffolding during the teaching process. They identify six functions of tutoring with the incorporation of scaffolding, attempting to clarify how it works in the classroom.

Figure 1.5

Scaffolding Function. (Source: Wood et al., 1976)

scaffolding process		
	Recruitment	Engaging the learner's interest and commitment to the task.
	Reduction in degrees of freedom	Simplifying the task by breaking it into manageable steps
	Direction maintenance	Keeping the learner focused on the goal and preventing distraction
	Marking critical features	Highlighting key aspects of the task to help the learner recognize mistakes.
	Frustration control	**Minimizing stress and preventing discouragement during problem-solving.**
	Demonstration	**Showing an idealized version of the task to guide the learner's performance.**

Figure 1.5 illustrates the scaffolding functions proposed by Wood et al. (1976). The diagram presents the scaffolding process as comprising six key functions: recruitment, reduction in degrees of freedom, direction maintenance, marking critical features, frustration control, and demonstration. Each function is further explained with brief descriptions, such as engaging the learner's interest, simplifying tasks, maintaining focus, highlighting important aspects, minimizing stress, and providing models for performance.

The first function is recruitment, whereby the tutor draws the student's attention and requests that they participate in the assignment. The task is broken down into smaller parts to limit the number of degrees of freedom. By maintaining the learner on the path, maintenance of direction prevents them from being distracted or drawn to past successes. By identifying crucial aspects of the work and guiding the learner toward the right accomplishment, key features marking assists. Maintaining control of frustration is similarly important since it keeps the student motivated by avoiding stress or discouragement. Lastly, demonstrating makes the

activity easier to understand by providing a tangible model for the learner to imitate. Together, these roles gradually increase the learner's self-reliance and self-assurance.

1.6 The Relationship between Scaffolding and the Zone of Proximal Development

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal is considered as the root of the scaffolding. Several research argues about the relationship between the two concepts. On the one hand, some used the terms interchangeably; the zone of proximal is often equated with scaffolding techniques. For instance, Gilan (2024) regarded the zone of proximal as a scaffolding strategy. The study investigates the influence of ZPD and scaffolding on students' learning progress and problem-solving skills through an analysis of relevant studies. The results indicate that promoting learning independence and adaptability requires redefining certain concepts, adjusting teaching methods, and incorporating technology. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of critical thinking strategies and constructive feedback in helping students develop more advanced skills and adapt to new learning challenges.

However, Xi and Lantolf (2020) argue, "Any similarity is at best partial and at worst superficial." More precisely, the scaffolding involves a supportive process within the zone of proximal. This highlights that scaffolding involves supportive interactions that can occur within the ZPD because it is a more comprehensive framework encompassing a wider range of developmental processes. They suggest that equating these processes "adds nothing to Vygotsky's general theory and in fact may weaken and dilute the robustness of the theory."

Furthermore, Harry (2001) stated, "The term scaffolding could be taken to infer a 'one-way' process wherein the 'scaffolder' constructs the scaffold alone and presents it for use to the novice" The term is used to show a metaphorical link between the two concepts. In the pedagogical context, the emphasis is on controlling the elements of the provided task that get

in touch with the learners' capacity, so that combined efforts result in the zone of proximal of the Learners.

1.6.1 Scaffolding and the Four Skills Enhancement

Several prior studies emphasized the effectiveness of scaffolding strategies implemented within the pedagogical environment. For instance, in a Saudi Context, Al Eissa and Al-Bargi (2017) investigated the Impact of Scaffolding Strategies in Enhancing the Reading Comprehension Skills of University Students. The participants were thirty-three female students in the preparatory year program (PYP) who were registered at the proficiency level. They were divided into two groups in which both take the same reading classes yet the experimental group is exposed to the scaffolding strategies. The findings show the significant outcomes the posttest gathered after; the scaffolding strategies used as a motivational bridge that assisted them to improve their reading skills ability as well as expedited teachers' role in creating a positive environment where learners were able to accomplish initial tasks.

Several empirical studies explored the effectiveness of scaffolding techniques in enhancing students' writing skills. Nhung (2024) examined how scaffolding techniques affect the writing performance of first-year university students at Dai Nam University in Hanoi, Vietnam. Researchers have frequently implemented different scaffolding techniques to identify the most effective technique for striving for the target skill. They emphasized that the structured guidance provided sustains the students to structure their writing more clearly. The conducted research was on a sample of 114 students with diverse writing proficiency, based on given instructions by the 12 teachers responsible for the teaching course on writing. The post-test results showed the significant impact of implementing the techniques on the students' abilities. However, researchers insisted on careful selection of the techniques according to the task in focus; despite the effectiveness of various scaffolding techniques used, the templates show their function in facilitating the tasks.

Nevertheless, Azir (2019) used experimental research to probe the effect of one of the scaffolding techniques, peer scaffolding, in enhancing learners' speaking skills. The selected technique related to the socio-constructivist teaching technique focused more on oral competence during the learning process. The participants were 156 vocational college students immersed in interactive learning when they used the English language while communicating. Comparing the collected findings of the pre-test and post-test scores reveals that there was a clear advancement in student scores on the post-test; it indicates the successful application of the peer scaffolding because it provided an interactive environment between students. Owing to this, this technique fosters speaking skill competence as well as their confidence to be more cooperative and motivated to practice their English language.

Furthermore, learning a foreign language requires an active listening skill that underpins knowledge reception and learner interaction. Babu (2023) investigated the incorporation of scaffolding techniques within task-based language teaching, aiming to examine the effect of scaffolding techniques. The experimental study involves a set of four types of listening tasks, each with scaffolding techniques. The sample consisted of 120 first-year graduation learners, divided into an experimental group and a control group. With the conducting of a pre-test and post-test to check their improvement level, the gathered data indicates the significant improvement of the experimental group. Thereby, the study confirms that scaffolding techniques effectively improved learners' listening skills despite the challenges related to the skill.

Conclusion

This chapter has underscored the notion of "Scaffolding" in the educational framework and its core underpinning the "Zone of Proximal Development" theory that has led to its emergence. It has also illuminated the growing acknowledgement of scaffolding as an effective teaching-learning theory for different educational paradigms to emphasize its flexibility to serve different learners' requirements. Scaffolding is considered a crucial instructional strategy that facilitates the gradual transition from dependent learners to independent ones. Regarding this, different types of scaffolding as well as the common techniques used, were discussed according to their incorporation within classroom instruction. The systematic integration of scaffolding techniques in education is essential, as it not only improves task comprehension but also develops self-regulated learners able to tackle various learning challenges independently.

Chapter Two

The Concept of Autonomy in Language Learning

Chapter Two: the Concept of Autonomy in Language Learning

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Introduction

By the late 20th century, the pursuit of more effective pedagogical approaches prompted a paradigm shift toward learner-centred education, emphasizing the active engagement of students in their own learning processes. Scholars such as Henri Holic (1981) underscored the significance of integrating the political notion of "autonomy" into education, advocating for the cultivation of self-reliant, reflective, and competent learners. Rooted in constructivist theory, which posits that learning is an active, self-regulated process this emphasis on autonomy has significantly influenced educational policies worldwide, reinforcing the role of learners as active participants in shaping their educational trajectories rather than passive recipients of knowledge. This chapter delves into the concept of autonomous learning, discussing its theoretical foundations, practical applications, and its role in fostering independent learning. By tracing the historical development of autonomy in educational philosophy, the chapter highlights key perspectives that have shaped its integration into modern teaching approaches.

2.1 Autonomy in Language Learning

The term "autonomy" was first used in Western ethics and political philosophy. Originally, it comes from the Greek word **autonomía** (αὐτονομία), which is derived from **autos** (αὐτός) to mean "self," and **nomos** (νόμος) refers to "law" or "rule" to denote self-governance, independence, or the ability to make decisions without external control. Over time, the concept was applied across various fields. Most influential modern conceptions of autonomy emerged in the 18th and 19th centuries through the philosophies of Immanuel Kant and John Stuart Mill, allowing it to evolve into a multidisciplinary concept.

When it comes to the educational framework, it is regarded as a complicated social system where a variety of thought paradigms interact and diverge according to certain contexts.

Henri (1981), the father of autonomy, applied the notion of "autonomy" to language learning, considering it as a means to make students more engaged and self-sufficient. The study of this notion within the teaching-learning process reveals the effects that could be made concerning the decision-making capacity of the learners. Henri (1981) described the term as :

Il s'agit bien d'une capacité, "puissance de faire quelque chose" (10) et non d'une conduite, "façon d'agir" "Autonomie" est donc un terme qui décrit une compétence potentielle de comportement dans une situation donnée, celle de l'apprentissage, en l'occurrence, et non le ou les comportement (s) effectif(s) d'un individu dans cette situation.

Which has been translated as "It is indeed a capacity, a "power to do something", rather than a conduct, a "way of acting". "Autonomy" is therefore a term that describes a potential competence for behaviour in a given situation—in this case, learning—rather than the actual behavior(s) of an individual in that situation" (Holec, 1981, p. 03)

According to Merriam Webster, autonomy can be defined as "the quality or state of being self-governing". In this sense, learners are taking charge of their own learning. However, autonomous learning does not neglect the role of the teacher nor strictly self-instruction; instead, the role of the teacher allows them to recognize their own solution, promoting problem-solving skills and working independently. According to Henri (1981), "To be autonomous is to be capable of dealing with the definition of objectives of this kind". That is to say, a learner is not just passively receiving instruction but actively participating in shaping their own learning path. In the level of primary education, learners are not aware about how to be self-regulated, but through the interaction with the teacher, it enables them to identify the suitable learning strategy for them.

Autonomy, in its broadest sense, refers to an individual's ability to take charge of their actions, make independent decisions, and regulate their learning process. From a psychological

perspective, Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (1985) defines autonomy as a fundamental psychological need that fosters intrinsic motivation and self-regulation. In education, this means that learners who experience autonomy are more engaged, motivated, and persistent, as they have ownership over their learning objectives and strategies (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Autonomy is thus not merely about self-direction but also about the capacity to regulate one's learning, maintain motivation, and critically assess progress.

Additionally, from a sociocultural perspective, autonomy does not develop in isolation but through interaction with more knowledgeable individuals, such as teachers or peers. Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) suggests that learners first rely on external guidance before gradually internalizing control over their learning. This scaffolding process highlights that autonomy is not an absolute state but a dynamic, socially mediated process (Little, 1991). In this sense, autonomy is best understood as a continuum, where learners progressively move from dependence on external support to full self-direction.

2.2 Fostering Autonomy: Key Components of Independent Language Learning

Fostering autonomy allows children to deal with everyday tasks independently. Becoming an autonomous learner means a gradual gain of control over oneself learning goals and achievement. In doing so, it is essential to offer guidance from caring adults, especially teachers. Little (1991) stated,

"In order to maintain this autonomy, they must be aware of the social requirements of the different situations in which they are called upon to use the target language; sensitive to the varying psychological relations, they will have to the different persons with whom they must communicate; and capable equally of taking initiatives and responding to the initiatives of others" (pp. 27)

2.2.1 Social Awareness

To maintain autonomy in language use, learners must be aware of the social requirements of different situations. This means understanding the norms, expectations, and conventions that shape communication in various contexts. For instance, formal and informal settings demand different language choices, tones, and levels of politeness. A learner, who is socially aware, has the ability to adjust their speech accordingly, ensuring that their language use is appropriate and effective. Without this awareness, even a fluent speaker may struggle to communicate successfully in different cultural and social environments.

2.2.2 Psychological Sensitivity

Language learners also need to be sensitive to the psychological dynamics that emerge in communication. The way they interact with different individuals varies based on personal relationships, power dynamics, and emotional contexts. Understanding these nuances allows learners to communicate more effectively, fostering positive interactions and avoiding misunderstandings.

2.2.3 Interactional Competence

Autonomous language users must also be capable of both initiating conversations and responding appropriately to others' initiatives. That is to say, they should not only have the confidence to start discussions but also the ability to engage actively when others address them. Effective communication is a two-way process that requires active listening, turn taking, and adaptability. Learners who hesitate in taking initiative or struggle to respond meaningfully may find themselves disengaged from conversations, limiting their opportunities to practice and develop their language skills further.

Moreover, based on the work of (Benson &Voller, 1997; Wright, 2005), Nadjeeb (2013) discussed in his research, *learner autonomy in language learning*, the relationship

between autonomous learning and independent learning. He insisted on the use of both terms interchangeably:

> Independent language learning is characterized by optimizing or extending learner choice, focusing on the needs of individual learners, not the interests of a teacher or an institution, and the choice of decision-making to learners. It is also learner-centered which views learners as individuals with needs and rights, who can develop and exercise responsibility for their learning.

The researcher emphasized on fostering a learner-centered approach in order to enhance autonomous learning. However, when it comes to pupils learning, the teacher plays a crucial role in enhancing pupils' cognitive framework so that their autonomism.

Figure 2. 1

Autonomous learning model
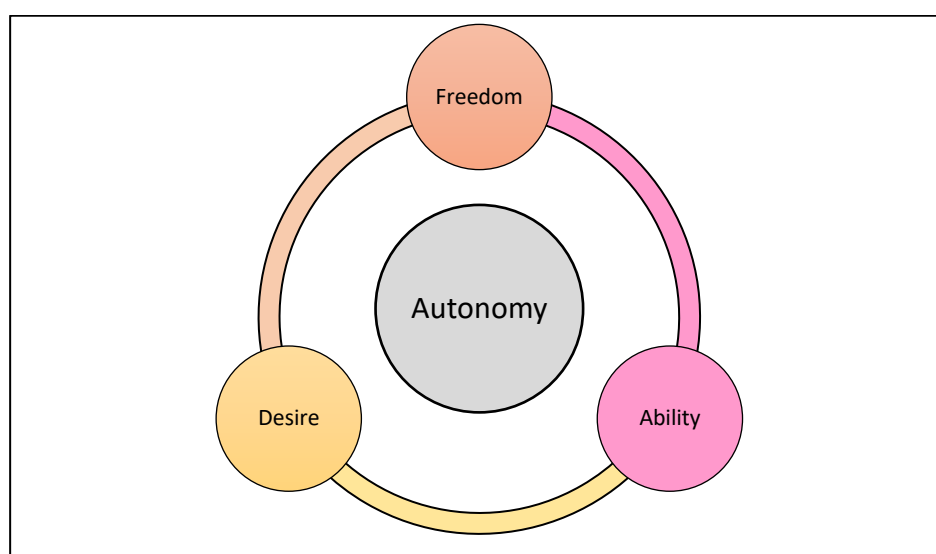
Note. Created by the author.

Figure 2.1 illustrates autonomous learning, which shows the base of autonomous learning from both sides, teachers and learners. The giving freedom to pupils, who are able to learn with desire, creates an advanced learning atmosphere where autonomy can be targeted. The visual representation highlights how creating space for learner choice and reflection

promotes not only academic independence but also lifelong learning skills. When teachers provide appropriate scaffolding and gradually release control, learners are more likely to take ownership of their learning and develop confidence in their abilities. This framework aligns with constructivist and sociocultural theories, which emphasize the learner's active role and the importance of supportive social interaction in the learning process.

2.3 Challenges in Promoting Autonomy in Language Learning

When it comes to fostering autonomy in teaching a foreign languages, it might be challenging for both teachers and learners. Teachers play a central role in fostering autonomy by creating learning environments that encourage self-directed learning, critical thinking, and independent problem solving. Yet, various institutional, cultural, and pedagogical barriers often hinder their ability to promote autonomy in the classroom effectively.

Some empirical studies have confirmed the presence of socio-cultural barriers that hinder the promotion of learner autonomy. Marzuki et al. (2023) noted that institutional constraints, such as rigid curricula and limited teacher training, significantly impeded the development of autonomous learning. They conducted a qualitative descriptive study, utilizing semi-structured interviews with six senior high school EFL teachers in Indonesia to explore their perspectives. The findings indicated that teachers often struggled to implement autonomy-supportive practices due to traditional, teacher-centered approaches and a strong emphasis on standardized testing. Additionally, Marzuki et al. (2023) suggested that institutional policies restricting technology integration further limited students' ability to engage in self-directed learning.

Similarly, Wiraningsih and Santosa (2020) argued that cultural factors, including hierarchical classroom dynamics and students' passive learning tendencies, contributed to the challenges faced by educators in fostering autonomy. Their descriptive qualitative study involved semi-structured interviews with four junior high school EFL teachers in Indonesia,

focusing on policy constraints, institutional challenges, teaching methodologies, and student backgrounds. The findings revealed that teachers struggled with a lack of institutional support, unscheduled academic events, and students' dependence on teacher guidance. These findings highlight the need for systemic changes in educational policies and teaching strategies to better support learner autonomy in EFL contexts.

Furthermore, it is necessary to consider that the main problem with autonomous learning in language teaching is the teachers' awareness of autonomy. Mardjuki (2018) indicated certain obstacles regarding the implementation of autonomy in the tutoring process that might cause obstacles while implementing autonomy:

2.3.1 Teachers' Perspectives and Beliefs Related to Learner Autonomy

In many educational frameworks, the cultural aspects influence the teaching approaches. In other words, the adaptation of the teaching approach, especially in the context of teacher-centred approach, is associated with certain social cultural norms that see the teacher as the central figure of the learning process. Their primary responsibility is seen as delivering knowledge, rather than facilitating student-led learning. The western educational models for teaching foreign languages have conflicts between some educators and the new teaching paradigm in terms of incorporation. This highlights the need for contextual adaptation when introducing new pedagogical strategies to ensure they align with cultural expectations and educational traditions.

2.3.2 Teachers' Lack of Competencies

Since a teacher's role is crucial in autonomy forestation, it might be challenging to apply it with the lack of knowledge about how to employ specific activities for a specific contexts. This may cause learners' demotivation and disengagement, so the teachers will find themselves dealing with passive learning instead of active one. Usually, the reason behind such acts is the lack of teaching training that insists on the necessity of pedagogical skills and knowledge to

create a learning environment that nurtures both motivation and autonomy. A holistic approach to teacher development is essential to address these challenges and foster a classroom setting that empowers students to take charge of their own learning.

2.3.4 Learners' Lack of Experience as Autonomous Learner

Learners' inability to maintain their independent learning could be a problem for fostering autonomy. Most language learners depend on the teacher's instructions instead of doing their activities by themselves. This goes back that learners are accustomed to the traditional teacher-centred approach, where the teacher plays the dominant role in controlling classroom activities. Consequently, Encouraging learner autonomy, therefore, requires not only a shift in teaching methodology but also gradual training and support to help students develop the confidence and skills needed for independent learning.

2.4 Autonomy and Educational Policy

Learning autonomy in education refers to students' ability to maintain their learning process, including setting goals and achieving them. It is understood as a goal rather than a teaching method or procedure. Initially, teachers play a vital role in guiding learners toward this goal, by creating a collaborative atmosphere, gradually encouraging them to increase their own responsibility of their own learning (Cavalcanti & Paiva, n.d.). However, autonomous incorporation in the educational framework differs from one country to another.

Numerous studies conducted about autonomy conception, within the educational policy of different countries, show the flexibility of this notion to serve learners' requirements. Stroupe, Rundle, and Tomita (2016) examined the development of learner autonomy in Japan. The participants were 16 university instructors from various departments in professional development workshops. The study highlights Japan's educational policy reforms by **MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology)** , which aim to promote learner-centred approach, though these efforts are hindered by rigid curricula,

university entrance exams, and limited teacher autonomy. Using questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations over two semesters, the researchers investigated how professional development influences teacher beliefs and practices regarding autonomy. Their hypothesis was that learner autonomy could be enhanced through teacher training, assuming that barriers to autonomy stem not just from students but also from teacher attitudes and institutional constraints. The findings showed that while teachers recognized the benefits of autonomy, they faced challenges such as time constraints, low student proficiency, and ingrained cultural expectations of teacher authority. However, through reflection and collaboration, instructors began acknowledging their own influence on student autonomy, highlighting the need for greater teacher autonomy, institutional support to integrate autonomy successfully in Japan's language education system.

Correspondingly, injin Lu & Yingliang Liu (2016) conducted research about Fostering the Concept of Autonomy in School-aged Children in China. The study examines learner autonomy within China's English language education reforms, emphasising how educational policy under the Ministry of Education (MOE) aims to shift from teacher-centred instruction to student-centred learning. The participants included 319 university students from various faculties in China who completed surveys, with a subset involved in case studies. Using a mixed-methods approach, the researchers gathered quantitative data through questionnaires and qualitative insights from case studies and interviews, exploring the relationship between students' secondary school basic education and their autonomy at the university level. The hypothesis suggested that the location of students' secondary education significantly influences their level of learner autonomy at university. The findings revealed that students from capital cities and general urban areas showed higher autonomy levels than those from rural or regional areas, likely due to differences in educational resources and teaching practices. The study also identified key barriers to autonomy, including exam-oriented learning, a lack of teacher training

in autonomy-supportive strategies, and rigid curricula. The authors propose a "Have-A-Go" model (try to do something) to bridge the gap between secondary and university education, advocating for more gradual autonomy-building strategies in China's education system.

2.5 Characteristics of Autonomous Learner

The evolution of autonomous learning ability requires a gradual shift in learning mindset, including the strategies used to enforce independent learning. Over time, autonomy becomes an integral part of their learning approach, allowing them to navigate their educational journey independently while still benefiting from occasional support and guidance. However, it should be noted that each learner has a special learning style and pace, which may influence their ability to develop autonomy. The teachers are required to recognize their learner' capacity during the teaching process, so they can set autonomy ensuring its long-term effect as an educational goal. Mardjuki (2018) provided a set of characteristics to recognize autonomous learners based on the work of Mardjuki (2018) provided a set of characteristics to recognize autonomous learners based on the work of Holec (1981), who is widely regarded as the pioneer in the field of learner autonomy:

- Develop a capacity for critical development, a capacity for critical thinking, decision-making, and independent action.

- They are capable of discovering "their learning potential, in addition to merely gathering knowledge about the learning process

- The ability to take responsibility for learning and for using appropriate strategies to achieve their general and specific objectives.

- Able to face heavy psychological demands that require learners to confront their weaknesses and failures.

- Maintaining self-control and self-discipline leads to self-esteem and self-confidence.

- Tend to give up total dependence on the teacher and the educational system.

- Aware that autonomy is a complex process of interacting with one's self, the teacher, the task, and the educational environment.

These attributes collectively define what it means to be an autonomous learner and highlight the crucial role of teachers in fostering them through responsive and supportive pedagogical practices.

2.6 Teacher's Roles

When teachers decide to shift to a learner-centered approach, while teacher-centred remains a requirement in giving guidance, teachers must state their roles with a focus on the learner and their learning process. Holec (1981) outlines five key functions that support this transformation namely, define his objective, define contents and progressions to be made, methods and techniques selection, and monitoring the learning procedure; and evaluation.

First, teachers assist learners in defining their objectives by helping them move beyond vague goals toward specific, actionable learning targets that reflect personal needs and contexts. This clarity allows students to take meaningful ownership of their learning. Once goals are established, teachers guide learners in selecting appropriate content and organising it into a coherent progression. This includes helping students identify relevant, often authentic, materials and sequencing them logically to support gradual skill development. Such guidance cultivates learners' ability to make informed decisions about what and how they study. For instance, instead of saying, "**I want to improve my English**," a learner using refined descriptive categories might say: "**I need to improve my pronunciation of past tense endings ('-ed' sounds) for better spoken fluency**."

Beyond content and goals, teachers play a crucial role in fostering metacognitive awareness through method selection, progress monitoring, and evaluation. By exposing students to diverse strategies and classroom activities, teachers enable them to experiment with

and adopt techniques best suited to their learning styles and capacities. Simultaneously, teachers support learners in monitoring their progress, encouraging reflection on both achievements and obstacles. This reflective practice helps students recognise patterns in their learning and develop adaptive strategies. Finally, evaluation becomes a shared responsibility, as learners are taught to assess both their outcomes and the processes they use. By establishing personal criteria and engaging in self-assessment, students develop a capacity for independent, lifelong learning. Collectively, these roles underscore the teacher's function as a guide who equips learners with the tools to manage and direct their educational journey.

Figure 2. 2

Autonomy framework. Source: (Stroupe, Rundle, & Tomita, 2016).

As Figure 2.2 shows, the role of teachers involves certain strategies to help them guide their learners. Evaluating learners can provide insight into learners' decision-making and to which the activities integrated in the classroom could enhance learning ability through their reflection of the goal setting. Through structured reflection and goal setting, students begin to understand their learning preferences and areas for growth. In turn, this allows teachers to

identify key areas of weakness that may be termed "lower keys" that require targeted support to foster greater autonomy. This diagnostic approach helps ensure that instructional practices are responsive to learners' needs and conducive to the development of independent learning skills. Thus, teachers will be able to identify the lower keys that should be improved to employ autonomous learning.

2.7 Advantages of Fostering Autonomy

Regardless of the challenges that may affect implementing the autotomy notion, educators such as Holic (1981), Little (1991), and Phil Benson (2011) emphasized its effectiveness and importance through their studies.

Fostering learner autonomy in language learning has several advantages, including increased motivation, improved critical thinking skills, and enhanced long-term retention of knowledge. Autonomous learners take responsibility for their learning, leading to greater engagement and self-regulation (Little, 1991). Research suggests that when students develop autonomy, they become more effective in setting goals, selecting learning strategies, and assessing their progress (Benson, 2011). Furthermore, autonomy promotes lifelong learning, as students acquire the ability to continue improving their language skills beyond the classroom (Holec, 1981).

Dam (2003) highlights that autonomy fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, leading to increased perseverance in overcoming language-learning challenges. When learners are encouraged to take charge of their learning, they become more self-motivated and proactive in seeking opportunities for practice and improvement (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012). Additionally, Benson (2013) argues that autonomy supports the integration of personalised learning strategies, allowing students to tailor their approaches based on their strengths, weaknesses, and learning preferences. Ultimately, autonomy in language learning empowers

students to become lifelong learners, equipped with the skills to continue developing their language abilities independently.

2.8 Criticism

While autonomy is often encouraged in language learning, scholars have highlighted its limitations. Nedelsky (1989) argues that autonomy is too individualistic, overlooking the social and cultural aspects necessary for acquiring a language. MacIntyre (1984, 1999) commented on how an excessive focus on autonomy can lead to detachment from communal learning, which is essential for developing linguistic competence. Kittay (1999) warns that autonomy reinforces educational inequalities, as learners from privileged backgrounds have more access to resources that support independent learning. Schneider (1998) questions whether all learners truly want autonomy, as many prefer structured guidance rather than taking full responsibility for their learning. Smail (2005) introduces the idea of the "illusion of autonomy," where students believe they are self-directed but lack the depth of understanding needed for meaningful progress. Brown (1995) criticised autonomy for fostering isolation, limiting interaction and engagement with native speakers and peers, both of which are critical in language acquisition. These critics suggest that while autonomy has benefits, its limitations should be acknowledged in language learning contexts.

Figure 2. 3

Autonomy criticism

Rjecting social and cultural aspect

Different learners' autonomous capacity

Overemphasis on autonomy leads to lack of support

Risk of Isolution in learning

Reject teacher's inolvement
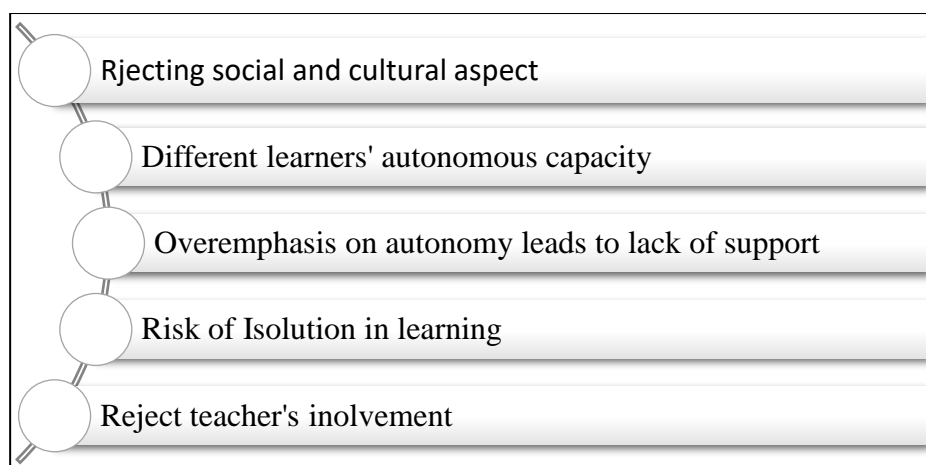
Note. Created by the author

Figure 2.3 provides a critical visual representation of autonomous learning by highlighting the interdependence between teacher support and learner agency. This diagram highlights several challenges associated with autonomous learning. It suggests that neglecting the social and cultural dimensions of education may hinder learners' holistic development. Variations in learners' capacities for autonomy can lead to unequal outcomes, and an overemphasis on independence may result in insufficient support, leaving some students without the guidance they need. Autonomous learning also risks promoting isolation by limiting opportunities for collaboration and interaction. Furthermore, it may downplay the essential role of teachers, whose involvement is vital for providing structure, mentorship, and expertise. These considerations indicate that, while autonomy is valuable, a balanced approach is crucial to address its limitations effectively.

Conclusion

The emergence of the autonomous concepts that engages with developing individualism has influenced different educational researchers to integrate the notion in the educational environment. Over time, the concept has seen different understandings from one domain to another. However, its integration within the educational field stated the crucial role that teachers play in developing learners' autonomy, particularly pupils. In addition, autonomy as a learning discipline refers to the ability to take responsibility for the own learning process. That is to say, the evolution of autonomy in language learning lays the foundation of long-term success, in which learners will be able to make decisions on what, how, and when to learn. It provides them with a conceptual framework about the structure of learning they should follow, which enables them to learn more languages. Moreover, more emphasis on fostering this concept in the educational policy is the key to transforming the traditional teacher-centred approach to a learner-centred approach.

Chapter Three

Analysis and Interpretation of the Findings

Chapter Three: Analysis and Interpretation of the Findings

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Introduction

This chapter outlines the practical dimension of the study, which investigates the role of scaffolding techniques in teaching English at the primary school level. It offers a comprehensive overview of the research methodology, detailing the instruments and procedures used for data collection and analysis. The chapter begins by describing the methodological tools and the rationale behind their selection. It then presents the data analysis, organized around the two primary sources: semi-structured interviews and structured observations.

3.1 The Research Paradigm

From a philosophical standpoint, any research study had to be grounded in a particular paradigm, in which the selected research methods were congruent with knowledge development. In the current study, the pragmatism paradigm had been selected along with ontological and epistemological worldview aspects. The conducted research aimed to explore the role of using scaffolding techniques in enhancing autonomous learning among English language pupils in primary school. In addition, it sought to measured the frequency and type of scaffolding strategies a teacher used according to the lesson structure. Therefore, the selected framework was deemed most appropriate for the study according to its nature, the research questions, and the aimed.

3.2 The Research Approach

A mixed-methods approach was adopted to address the research questions. The purpose of this selection was related to the nature of the research and both the questions and aimed of the study. Expanding upon this, the study sought to understand a particular social behaviour within the educational domain as well as explain the purpose behind its occurrence. Thus, determining the convergence of both qualitative and quantitative methods was sufficient to

carry out the study. Aligned with the pragmatist paradigm, a mixed methods approach would fulfil the current study requirement.

3.3 The Research Design

Scientific research must be grounded in a methodological framework that clarifies the relevant sources and types of knowledge applicable to the study. The design of this research reflects a convergence of qualitative and quantitative strategies. Specifically, the study employed a mixed-methods design, where qualitative inquiry was used to enrich and interpret the quantitative findings. To that end, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers prior to classroom observations. This sequencing allowed for a multifaceted examination of the data from different perspectives.

3.4 Population and Sample

The chosen sample consisted of four primary school teachers who were selected from four different primary schools at EL-Ghrous to participate in a semi-structured interview to spotlight their perspective. In addition, one English language teacher at Ahmad Ben Alzain primary school to serve the quantitative research questions using structured observation.

3.5 Data Gathering Tools and Analysis

3.5.1 The Semi- Structured Interview: Aim, description and Validation and conduction

The aim of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' perspectives and beliefs regarding the focus of the research. It sought to collect data on their understanding of autonomous learning and their knowledge of scaffolding teaching techniques as well as views regarding the connection between the concept of scaffolding techniques and their teaching strategies. To achieve this, semi-structured interviews conducted with four experienced English language teachers in primary schools.

The semi-structured interview involved ten questions, seven were open-ended and the remaining three were close-ended questions. Table 3.2 illustrates question and its purpose

Table 3. 1

The Interview Question and its Purpose

Question (s)	Purpose
1-2	To inquire how long teachers have been teaching the English language since the inclusion of the English language in primary school, and the obstacles they encountered.
3-4	To check their knowledge about both scaffolding and autonomous learning, and to provide conceptual information for them about it.
5	To explore their opinion about including the possibility of scaffolding within the learning process.
6	To gain knowledge about the range of strategies they use in teaching and their possible association with the concept of scaffolding
7-8	To confirm their understanding of both theories.
9	To discover teachers' attitudes in the case of adopting both concepts for their pupils.
10	To explore their point of view concerning the effect that may cause the incorporation.

The interview development aligns with the study's research questions. To ensure the validity of the research tool, the supervisor reviewed the list of interview questions. Due to the time shortage, no piloting test was conducted.

The interviews were conducted after obtaining consent from the teachers and school administrators. The time when the interview took place was different depending on the teachers' availability as well as the official place, and lasted approximately 20 minutes for each interview.

3.5.1.1 Interview Analysis Procedures

To address the first and third research questions and to obtain clear, meaningful, and objective responses, thematic analysis was employed. Thematic analysis was often adopted in analysing interview data that involves uncovering experience, aligning closely with the nature of the variables under investigation. Codes were derived inductively from the data to ensure that the emerging themes reflected participants' experiences and perspectives accurately.

MAXQDA24 employed for the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, as it supports systematic qualitative data analysis through coding, categorisation, and thematic exploration. This software facilitated the organisation of interview transcripts and enabled the identification of recurring themes relevant to the research objectives.

3.5.1.2 Study framework

To conducted the semi-structured interviews, school visits were undertaken as part of the data collection process. The participants included four primary school English teachers with varying years of experience. After getting the schools' permission, the researcher arranged a meeting according to their free time during schoolwork. The interviews were held as follows: Sunday, March 16th; Monday, March 17th; and Thursday, March 20th. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and was audio-recorded and manually recorded with the participants' consent. The semi-structured format allowed for both guided and open-ended responses, aiming to explored teachers' perceptions of the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing English instruction at the primary level.

To analysed the data, the process was carried out based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) systematic approach of thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) provide the researchers with a standard systematic analysis that involves six phases to generate the intended themes "the research may move backwards and forwards between stages to check one aspect of the analysis against one or more of the other steps in the analysis." (Howitt and Cramer, 2010)
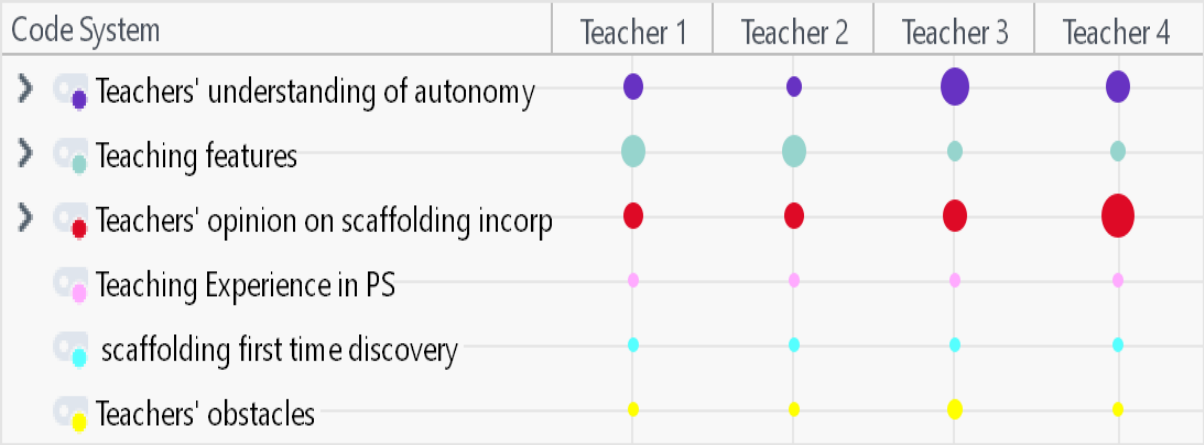
Table 3. 2

Braun and Clarke (2006). Six phases of thematic analysis. Source: (Howitt & Cramer, 2010)

Phase	Name	Description
1	Familiarisation with the data	Becoming deeply familiar with the content of your data.
2	Generating initial codes	Identifying meaningful segments in the data and labelling them.
3	Searching for themes	Grouping codes into potential themes.
4	Reviewing themes	Refining, combining, or discarding themes based on how well they fit the data.
5	Defining and naming themes	Finalising each theme with a clear focus and descriptive name.
6	Producing the reports	Writing the final analysis with data extracts and interpretation.

Therefore, a code matrix was included to illustrate the key codes identified after the coding process. It was important to note that the size of each circle reflects the density of coded data within the respective informant's transcript. In other words, larger circles signify a greater concentration of data associated with a particular code. Alternatively, these circles can be substituted with numerical values to represent the frequency with which the participants

referenced each code. These illustrate how initial codes were developed and subsequently organised into broader categories and themes.

Figure 3. 1

The Codes Matrix

Code System	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4
❯ Teachers' understanding of autonomy	●	●	●	●
❯ Teaching features	●	●	●	●
❯ Teachers' opinion on scaffolding incorp	●	●	●	●
Teaching Experience in PS	•	•	•	•
scaffolding first time discovery	•	•	•	•
Teachers' obstacles	•	•	•	•

The code matrix (Figure 3.1) displays the frequency of applied codes across individual interview participants. This visual aid allows for the comparison of thematic occurrences between participants, helping to identify dominant and underrepresented themes. For instance, the frequent appearance of 'Scaffolding as Support' and 'Teacher Guidance' suggests that these strategies were widely recognised. Conversely, the more selective appearance of 'Fostering Autonomy' may reflect varying beliefs or practices concerning learner independence. Such distribution patterns provide valuable insight into how teachers perceive and implement scaffolding within primary education.

3.5.1.3 Reporting the Semi-structured Interview Data

Q01: How long have you been teaching the English language in primary school?

Since we were dealing with educational pedagogy study, it was important to gain knowledge about their experience in teaching to get as much data as possible about their teaching process. Exploring teachers' experiences allows the researcher to understand their

awareness of students' abilities in learning a foreign language. The gathered data from the first question summarised in Table 3.3

Table 3. 3

Teachers' Experience of Teaching in Primary Schools

Teacher	Teaching Experience
1	2 years
2	3 years
3	3 years
4	3 years

As illustrated in Table 3.3, three teachers have been teaching English in primary school for three years, and only one among them has been teaching for two years. The teachers dealt with pupils of different levels, third-grade, fourth-grade, and fifth-grade primary school pupils. The results indicated that they were exposed to a variety of pupils with different mental development levels and teaching obstacles. Their professional backgrounds revealed a solid foundation for providing insights into the use of scaffolding techniques in young learner classrooms.

Q02: What were the difficulties you encounter while teaching the English language in primary school?

All the teachers claimed that they encountered various problems in teaching the English language in primary school. The main problem was that following graduation, the teachers went through a gap phase before beginning their teaching in primary school, which made it challenging them to adapt within the educational environment. Moreover, three interviewees stated that the designated time for teaching was not enough to adopt and adapt a particular teaching strategy, but only what was required in the lesson plan, including activities and games.

However, the second teacher claimed that it was enough as long as the teachers manage the time by dividing the lesson into sequences involving play-based tasks. For more insight, a sample from teachers' answers to enrich the analysis provided in Table 3.4:

Table 3. 4

Teachers' Responses on the Second Interview Question

Teacher	Response
1	No, I did not find any difficulties in teaching but lack of time scheduled for teaching and the period between my graduations and becoming a teacher.
2	The problem that I encountered during the first time is the classroom management, preparing new topics to discuss each time, lack of time because we unable to vary the topics due to the time which is 45 minutes only.
3	The main obstacle is when I start working as a teacher after the post-graduation transitional period, and the lack of teaching resources.
4	The problem that I encountered while teaching is Time. 45 minutes for each session. First, 2 sessions per week is not enough to teach English as a second Language. Second, learners come with no prior information and knowledge. Third, learners are learning two similar languages, same alphabet (French –English) with different pronunciations. -The lack of aides in primary schools.

Q03: What indicators signify a learner's autonomy in the educational context?

Concerning the third question, the teachers appeared unfamiliar with the concept of learners' autonomy. Thus, the research explained the concept of autonomy to clear the picture for them. Two teachers mentioned that they could recognise their learners' autonomy through their behaviours, body gestures, facial expressions, and initiating actions, explaining that learners' understanding was often reflected in their behavioural responses.

Alibali and Goldin-Meadow (1993) found that gesture-speech mismatches could predict a child's readiness to learn. Pupils indicate their learning process using their gesture-speech Mismatch, presenting their cognitive instability in learning. Meanwhile, T2 and T4 insisted that their learners were not independent yet, but a few of them emphasised that it was important for the teacher to control the learning environment by keeping learners in focus throughout the lesson.

Q04: Are you familiar with the concept of Scaffolding in education?

All the teachers answered with "No" regarding their knowledge about scaffolding theory in the educational context, despite possibly using such strategies in practice. Thus, follow-up questions and brief explanations could had encouraged further reflection or recognition of familiar teaching strategies related to scaffolding. Once the theoretical concept was explained, the participant was able to connect it with strategies they already used in their teaching. In precise terms, their response revealed a gap in terminology rather than in practice; after clarification, the participant identified scaffolding strategies they regularly employed. All the participants demonstrated a gap between theoretical knowledge and practical teaching, noting that theory was often overlooked in favour of practice. More precisely, they highlighted that there was a difference between the theory and its practical perspective. Adding, the external factors that may affect its implementation.

Q05: What do you think about incorporating scaffolding in the learning process?

The answers ranged from agreement to disagreement. Teacher 1 did not fully agree with the statement, instead expressing some reservations. The teacher acknowledged the potential benefits of scaffolding but expressed concerns about its practicality in large classrooms or with limited time. This suggested that while the theoretical value of scaffolding was recognised, some teachers face contextual challenges that affected their willingness or ability to implement it consistently. According to Teacher 1, while scaffolding could support pupils' learning, a careful planning and individual attention required, which were not always feasible due to time constraints and curriculum demands. Teacher 1's perspective underscored the importance of providing adequate support and training for teachers, especially in managing scaffolding effectively within diverse classroom environments. While the other teachers agreed on incorporating scaffolding in the learning process, they highlighted the necessity of adequate support, time, and training to implement it effectively. According to them, learners were still not aware of learning independence and the teacher was required to keep in touch with them when it comes to acquiring the language basics effectively.

Q06: What are the strategies you imply? Do you think they are similar or related to the scaffolding concept?

The question intended to explore the teaching strategies implemented and the possibilities of being associated with the scaffolding concept. The teachers provided an affirmative answer. They indicated that the strategies used mainly served the language acquisition in parallel with improving their learning styles, emphasising the importance of maintaining flexibility to adapt these strategies to learners' diverse needs and classroom contexts. The strategies used by the teachers are presented in Figure 3.2, and teaching method used in Figure 3.3:

Figure 3. 2

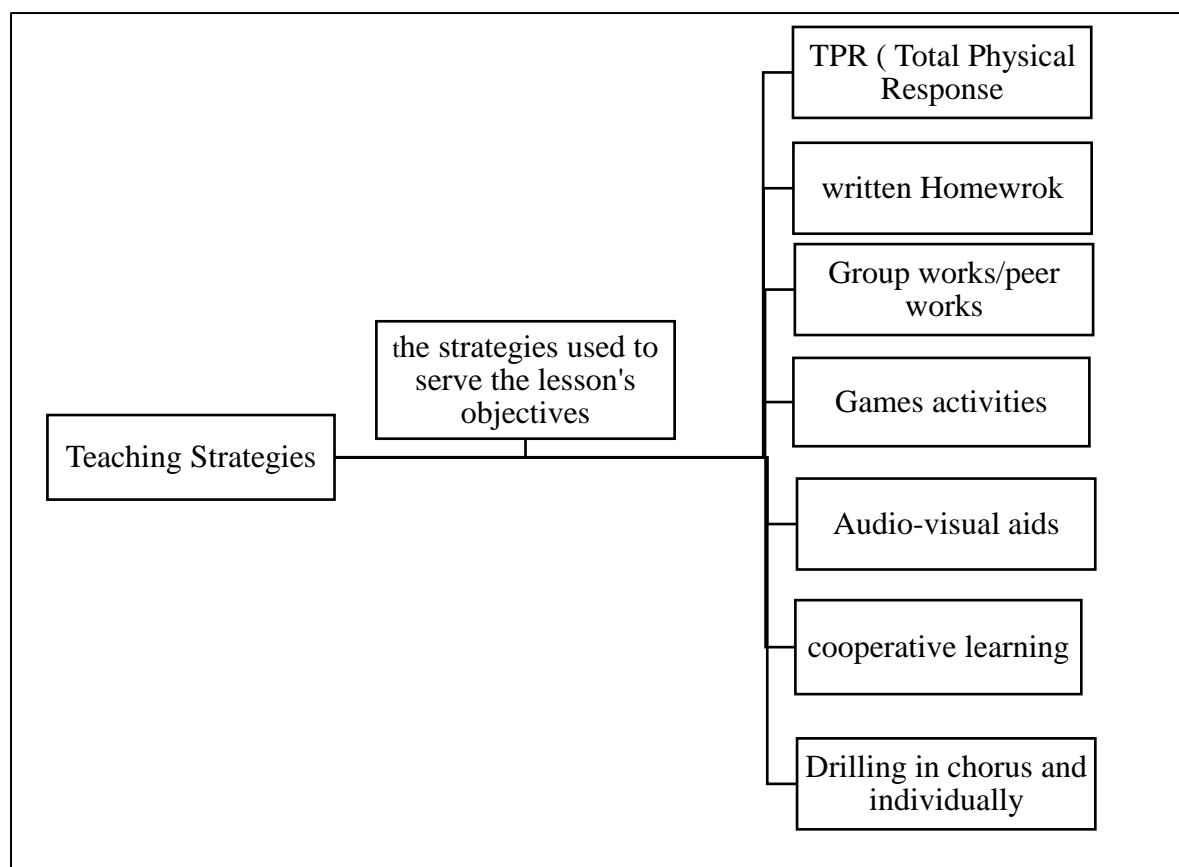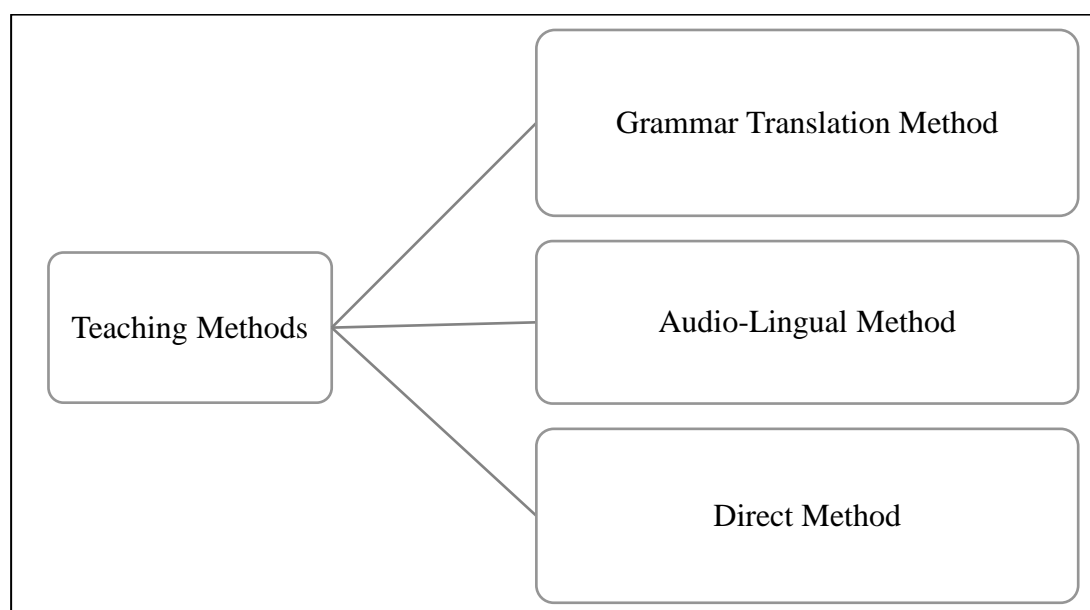*The Teaching Strategies Used by English Language Teachers*

Figure 3. 3

Teaching Methods Implemented

As seen in Figures 3.2 and 3.3 that all four teachers adapted their teaching methods and strategies to meet learners' requirements. By tailoring their instruction to suit students' levels and preferences, teachers provided temporary support that helped to bridge gaps in understanding (a core function of scaffolding). Furthermore, this flexibility suggested that the teachers recognized the importance of adjusting their instructional techniques based on learners' readiness, progress, and feedback, even if they did not explicitly referred to these practices as "scaffolding." Such findings underscore the implicit integration of scaffolding elements within everyday classroom practice.

Q07: Do you support emphasizing scaffolding incorporation to teach English language in primary school?

The four teachers agreed and insisted on implementing the scaffolding in teaching process. However, interviewees provided their thoughts on what they believed could be a successful activity to implement. The second teacher's previous responses provided some additional context that helped explaining this stance. When asked about the concept of scaffolding, the teacher stated that they were not familiar with the term, but acknowledged that using them might be effective in teaching English language and material involvement. Additionally, when asked about the teaching strategies they employed, the teacher mentioned using techniques like Total Physical Response (TPR), Concept Checking Questions (CCQ), and Instruction Checking Questions (ICQ) 14. While the teacher did not explicitly state these were forms of scaffolding, the description suggested they involved strategies to support and guide student learning, which aligned with the principles of scaffolding. Moreover, teacher 3 said, "Yes, I did support incorporating the scaffolding in primary school." The teacher's positive stance on scaffolding suggested that they believed it can significantly contribute to improving the effectiveness of English language instruction and enhancing learners' autonomy and independent learning abilities. Overall, the teacher was strongly in favor of emphasizing

the use of scaffolding techniques when teaching English in the primary school context. Teacher 4, however, expressed some reservations, noted that implementing scaffolding "seems that it takes time and we cannot be less controller of the classroom" and that "learner in need of the teacher." This indicated the teacher might had concerns about the feasibility and practicality of fully implementing scaffolding techniques given the constraints of the classroom environment and teaching schedule. Same thing went for the first teacher, appearing generally supportive of the idea of scaffolding, but had some hesitations about whether it can be effectively applied in the current primary school context. To explore scaffolding further, but also acknowledged potential challenges involved.

Q08: Can you provide an example of a lesson where you think it was effectively used scaffolding?

This question intentionally asked to explore the teachers' ability to maintain the suggested technique. The teachers' response implied that they recognized the importance of tailoring the scaffolding approach to the specific learning objectives and needs of the pupils. This suggested a level of flexibility and adaptability in the teacher's approach to scaffolding, which was an important characteristic of effective scaffolding practices. The examples provided by the teachers presented in the table 3.5:

Table 3. 5

Sample of Teachers' response on lesson example

Teacher	Lesson selected
1	**Reading lessons**. Writing lessons? Maybe. It is about the subject. **It is always about the subjec**t. I mean, it is really important to use the scaffolding. Yeah. I mean, it is like trampling over three subjects we cannot use very well. -I read and Discover and I read and enjoy.

2	I think technique like "modelling" can be suitable for most of lessons like **Reading and enjoy**, listening lessons; the others depends on the lesson objectives
3	There is a session named (**I read and enjoy** for PS4 and learn and enjoy for PS5) in both of them Learners will demonstrate their ability to learn through games (work in groups – peer learning). The teacher stands as a monitor , guide ,observing their work and giving help if they need
4	I think **Reading and discover** lessons listen and repeat, and I sing and have fun. These lessons are good if we want to imply this concept.

Table 3.5 highlighted various types of lessons provided by the participants. This suggested a growing shift towards autonomy-supportive teaching practices. All participants mentioned a shared lesson type: Reading. The main goal of foreign language teachers was to develop learners' proficiency in the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For fourth-year pupils, the primary objective of the curriculum was to improve reading skills, building on the foundation laid in the third year, which focused on writing. Thus, the intention was to maintain their ability to recognise how they were supposed to read in the English language. This was the reason behind teachers' selection of Reading lessons. For more understanding, figure 3 demonstrated the teaching/learning farmworker according to the didactic guide:

Figure 3. 4

The Teaching/ Learning Framework for the Fourth Year. Source: Didactic Guide 2023

b. **The Section Layout:** The section is the basic component of a sequence. It includes 5 *sessions* of **45 minutes** each. In each session, there is either one or 2 communicative *objectives* to be achieved through a set of *tasks*.

Section			
	Session 1	♫ I Sing & Have Fun	10 mn
		𝄞 I Listen & Repeat	35mn
	Session 2	📖 I Read & Discover	45mn
	Session3	📖 I read & Enjoy	45mn
	Session 4	✎ I Read & Write	45mn
	Session5	✎ I Play Roles	45mn

Table 4: **The Section Layout– Year 4**

As presented in Figure 3.4, reading was the most concern in the curriculum. Proving why the teachers agreed on incorporating scaffolding concept in the teaching process, since it devoted for learning improvement, there was a possibility to maintain this techniques for reading improvement. However, the curriculum did not only focus on the reading skill, but also the rest of skills writing, listening, and speaking through communication between the teachers and their pupils.

Q09: In what ways do you think scaffolding contributes to learner' autonomy?

The reason behind this question was gathering insights that could inform teachers to focus on fostering autonomy among their pupils   as well as encouraging them to become more conscious of the role they play in gradually releasing responsibility to learners. Teacher 1 expressed skepticism about the idea that scaffolding inherently leads to learners' independence, stating that they did not believe it necessarily fosters autonomy "they still need a guide. I did not think by themselves. I think it was hard. It was hard to did." In addition, the pupils   still in

need for the teacher to paved the learning path for them. Teacher 2 said, "I think it can build learners' Confidence and build their competence. However, it is necessary to not neglect the teachers' role especially controlling the learning environment." The teacher highlighted the potential for improving pupils' autonomy in their learning style, if teacher involvement remained an integral component. Likewise, teacher 4 expressed the same point of view, noting that learners' autonomy can be fostered with the support of the teacher. Yet, teacher 3 stated, " One of the key goals of scaffolding was to help pupils become independent learners, Improving the learning skills, building self confidence, encouraging effective, setting clear goals, involves the learners in the learning process. Still, the role of the teacher was to provide temporary support and guidance to pupils as they work through learning tasks."

To conclude, all teachers recognize the value of scaffolding, most of them agreed that teacher involvement remains crucial. They did not view autonomy as a process that learners can develop entirely on their own as much as it needs gradual, supported development, not a sudden shift in responsibility. Wood et al (1976) emphasized the adults' controlling, "This scaffolding consisted essentially of the adult "controlling" those elements of the task that were initially beyond the learner's capacity" (p. 90)

Q10: Do you think there will be any long-term effects on pupils' ability to learn independently?

The answers to this question revealed teachers' opinions on how independent learning might influence pupils' future academic and personal development and whether there would be an effectiveness in introducing the concept in the English language classes. The teachers provided positive answers involve agreement on the effect of scaffolding in the autonomous learning of their learners. Teacher 1 suggested that integrating the concept into teaching strategies might enhance learning ability, rather than teaching it as a standalone skill. Teacher 2 claimed, "Yes. It takes time to make your pupils able to learn independently. The existence

of a teacher is necessary and always be there whenever the lesson takes place"; in other words, the process of making pupils able to relay on themselves required support, guidance, and appropriate strategies.

Moreover, regardless of the main goal of scaffolding, independence learning, the role of the teacher remained vital. Teacher 3, on the one hand, stated, "Yes, I did, but if we add some modifications about time management of the session each week". It was important to mention that 45 minutes for each session was only enough for maintaining an activity that serves the lesson's objective, what was required from young learners to know about the language, and since the curriculum improvement was ongoing, the answer emphasised promoting independent learning. However, the teacher indicated the need for structural changes, especially in how the time managed during weekly sessions. This implied that the current schedule might not be sufficient to support a gradual development of learner autonomy. On the other hand, teacher 4 insisted that the results might cause a temporary effect, and then learners will need external support, either from teachers or from parents.

Following the analysis of the participants' responses and subsequent coding, three principal themes emerged and were delineated in the sections presented below:

Scaffolding in Classroom Instruction

The notion of scaffolding emerges as a significant theory from both teaching and learning perspectives. All the interviewees concede their unfamiliarity with the scaffolding concept, while still employing strategies that reflect its core methodologies in the teaching-learning process. Teacher 3 declares learning processes, such as, "I think cooperative learning, TPS (think–pair–share) strategy, games, and peer learning are similar to scaffolding." The participants view scaffolding positively and describe it as an instructional tool that helps learners engage with complex material through gradual, structured support. However, teachers

emphasise that the effectiveness of scaffolding depends heavily on specific conditions, such as student motivation, classroom dynamics, and time constraints.

From a teaching perspective, it is crucial to include the concept within teacher training programs, where teachers embed its notion in classroom lesson delivery. Moreover, support needs to be inclusive of the full range of techniques the theory entails, especially teaching theories, because a solid understanding of the theory is foundational before employing instructional strategies or techniques.

Looking at it from a learner's standpoint, teachers indicate that, despite their lack of knowledge about the scaffolding concept, learners' participation increases, as well as their comprehension—especially among those with lower language proficiency. Additionally, learners remain dependent on the teacher's presence, indicating that scaffolding does not always progress toward the intended goal of autonomy. This tension suggests that while scaffolding is widely recognised for its pedagogical value, its role in promoting learner independence is not always fully realised in practice. The findings point to a need for more deliberate use of scaffolding as a transitional tool—from support to self-regulation—rather than as a fixed teaching strategy.

Teaching Practices and Autonomy

This theme highlights the relationship between teachers' instructional methods and the inhibition of learning autonomy. The teachers acknowledge the potential for fostering pupils' autonomy. It is noticeable that reviewed teaching strategies focus on helping pupils grasp the language and its aspects; however, they do not strictly focus on learning how to learn the language, meaning learning skills. Across the data, there is a tendency for teaching to be heavily teacher-directed, which makes the pupils follow instructions and prevents them from being involved in lesson delivery—possibly due to a lack of time, which does not give teachers opportunities to empower pupils to become autonomous learners.

Awareness of Autonomous Learning

The data analysis suggests a mixed understanding of learner autonomy among the teachers. While they recognise the value of autonomous learning, they also face practical constraints and express doubts about their pupils' readiness for independent learning. Addressing these challenges and fostering a shared understanding of learner autonomy is an area for further professional development and support. From the learners' perspective, they are not aware of learning independently or relying on themselves in solving problems; they often seek guidance from teachers or their parents. The teachers also emphasise that learners who acquire the English language at a younger age have a considerably higher level of strategic competence than those who do not. These attitudes might be shaped by educational traditions that prioritise teacher authority and exam-focused outcomes.

3.5.2 The Structured Observation: Aim, Description, validation and Conduction

The ultimate aim of this data-collecting tool was to provide a careful description of both learners' and teachers' activities that might be interconnected with the focus study. The selection of the structured type of observation was to procure certain features on the participants' behaviours and actions during classroom instruction. To gain an overall understanding of the implementation of the study, the researcher observed the teaching strategies employed throughout the lesson.

The structured observation was divided into three main parts. The first part delved into the characteristics of the scaffolding technique that might be used by the teacher within teaching instructions. Thus, the main part of the process focused on with the scaffolding techniques used by the teacher to move smoothly from teacher-centred to learner-centred. The second part examined the indicators of learners' autonomy. The various instructions given by the teachers cause a responsive behaviour that could indicate whether the learners were independently acquiring the knowledge or the contrary. The last part of the structured

observation analysed the teacher's role. In this case, the researcher detected the teacher's behaviour while using the intended technique in teaching. It should be taken into consideration that when providing a supportive and interactive setting, learners became highly active and communicate when immersed in contexts that promote authentic language used. Thus, the role of the teacher was to control the learning environment to achieve the lesson's objectives. Table 3.6 demonstrated the structure of developing a structured observation:

Table 3. 6

The Structured Observation and the rationale behind each Item

The Section	The content	The purpose
1	Scaffolding techniques' features used by the teacher	Discover different techniques within the teaching process
2	Students' behaviour as an indicator of their autonomous capacity	Gain knowledge about learners' corresponding behaviour while interacting
3	The teacher's role in supporting autonomous learning	To explore the role of supporting to make learners independent

The structured observation items based on the aforementioned literature review. This research instrument validated by the supervisor to start conducting the classroom observation. However, due to the lack of time, no piloting was conducted.

Classroom observations were conducted over a period of two weeks, specifically on Sundays and Wednesdays, in alignment with the teaching schedule. On each observation day,

three sessions were carried out, each involving a different fourth-year class. In total, 12 sessions were observed across four days. The observations focused on the use of scaffolding strategies to promote learner autonomy. Table 3.7 provides a summary of the classroom observation schedule.

Table 3. 7

Structured Observation Process and Its Management

Week	Day	Sessions	Classes Observed
Week 1	Sunday	1	3 fourth-year classes
	Wednesday	1	3 fourth-year classes
Week 2	Sunday	1	3 fourth-year classes
	Wednesday	1	3 fourth-year classes
Total		**4 Sessions**	**12 Classroom Observations**

3.5.2.1 Observation Analysis Procedures

Microsoft Excel used to analyse the data obtained from the structured observations. Its functionality allowed for analyzing and identifying patterns in the classroom observational data. Microsoft Excel was used to analyze the data obtained from the structured observations. Its functionality allowed for organizing the data, calculating frequencies, and identifying patterns across the observed classes. Frequency counts were used to quantify the occurrence of specific scaffolding techniques and learner autonomy behaviors throughout the different classroom sessions.

3.5.2.2 Study Framework

The findings of the semi-structured interview revealed that the teachers were not aware of the concept of scaffolding in the educational context; however, they insisted on the association between the concept of scaffolding and their teaching strategies. The structured observation took place on the following periods: Sunday, 6th April; Wednesday, 9th April; Sunday, 13th April; Wednesday, 16th April, with three fourth-grade pupil groups. Based on this, the structured observation was shaped on the checklist (Appendix xx).

3.5.2.3 Reporting the Structured Observation

In order to analyse the obtained data through the session within two weeks, each observation lasted 45 minutes, during which each occurrence of a target behaviour recorded as a single instance, meaning:

1 = Occurred one time through the four sessions.

2 = Occurred twice through the four sessions.

3 = Occurred three times through the four sessions.

4 = Occurred four times through the four sessions.

Class A:

**Table 3. 8**

Scaffolding Techniques Used by the Teacher Frequency

Behaviour / Technique	frequency	percentage
Breaking tasks into manageable steps	4	14%
Providing hints, prompts, or cues	4	14%
Modelling a skill or strategy before pupils try	4	14%
Using questioning to guide student thinking	3	11%
Encouraging peer collaboration and discussion	3	11%

Offering visual aids, graphic organizers, or anchor charts	4	14%
Adjusting support based on student need (gradual release)	3	11%
Providing immediate, constructive feedback	3	11%
Total	28	100%

As portrayed in Table 3.8, frequencies and percentages of each technique were observed during the observation. The teacher tended to use diverse teaching techniques during the sessions. This variety of techniques observed were the consequence of the lesson's parts prepared for the pupils and their needs requirements organized by the policy makers. The intention behind this table was to find out the most used technique in the first-class environment, clarifying and investigating more about the teaching techniques and their relation with our study. Hence, Figure 3.5 displayed the goal explained above:

Figure 3. 5

Teaching Techniques Used by the Teacher for class A
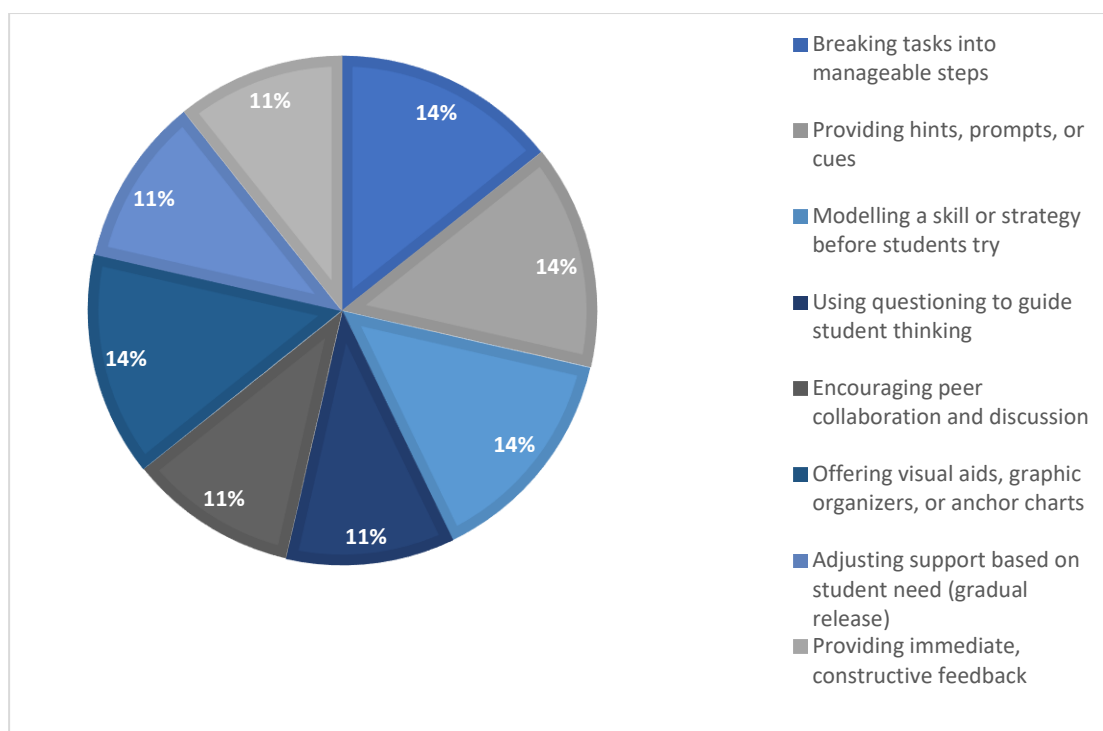
According to Figure 3.5, four out of eight techniques were observed to be used the most, with a percentage of 14% for each one. The techniques' numbers, as follows 1, 2, 3, 6, were the ones with their ordered names briefly: Breaking tasks into manageable steps, providing hints, modelling a skill or strategy, and offering visual aids. Techniques with the highest frequency could be considered the most consistently observed, possibly reflecting key areas of learner engagement or teacher scaffolding. The technique of breaking tasks into manageable steps indicated that the teacher prioritized helping pupils to navigate complex tasks by simplifying them into more achievable parts. Additionally, its consistent application suggested that the teacher viewed this technique as an effective approach for guiding learners within their Zone of Proximal Development. The idea of using breaking down certain concepts related to the limited cognitive ability of children that made it difficult for them to grasp complex information or even easy ones, but clarification needed. This indicated the role of the teacher in dividing the lesson delivery process into steps to enable the pupils to follow gradually. Moreover, the rest of the techniques, providing hints, modelling skills, and offering visual aids

to guide pupils, were also observed during the classroom teaching process and were among the most commonly used techniques. We noticed that the teacher used them spontaneously, often in support of visual memorisation, particularly as emphasised in the curriculum of fourth-grade pupils, it emphasised the importance of memorising the structure of the letters and their pronunciation. The latter helped learners for the coming year to realise the letters in the written form and the phonetic one.

Nevertheless, the other techniques using questioning, encouraging peer collaboration, adjusting support based on learners' needs, and providing immediate and constructive feedback were displayed to be the least frequent. The reason behind their less used related to the classroom factors. The teacher indicated that preventing questioning was due to the limited time, which was not enough to allow pupils to think about the tasks' requirements. Additionally, we noticed that the structure involved simple basics of the language. The same thing for encouraging collaboration, providing feedback, because learners were known for having too much energy that may cause a problem in achieving the target objectives. In addition, the learners prevented asking questions or assistance from the teacher because of shyness or fear of rejection.

Indicators of learning autonomy

**Table 3. 9**

Indicators of Learner Autonomy

Behaviour	Frequency	Percentage
Pupils take initiative in tasks	4	29%
Pupils ask questions and seek clarification independently	1	7%
Pupils attempt problem-solving before asking for help	2	14%

Pupils work collaboratively without constant teacher intervention	4	29%
Pupils reflect on their learning (self-assessment, metacognition)	3	21%
Total	14	100%

Table 3.9 revealed the frequency and percentage of learners' autonomous behaviour observed. The aim was to gain knowledge about the pupils' behaviour outcomes of the techniques used, as discussed beforehand. For further illustration, Figure 3.6 conveyed the aim through a visual representation:

Figure 3. 6

Indicators of Learner Autonomy
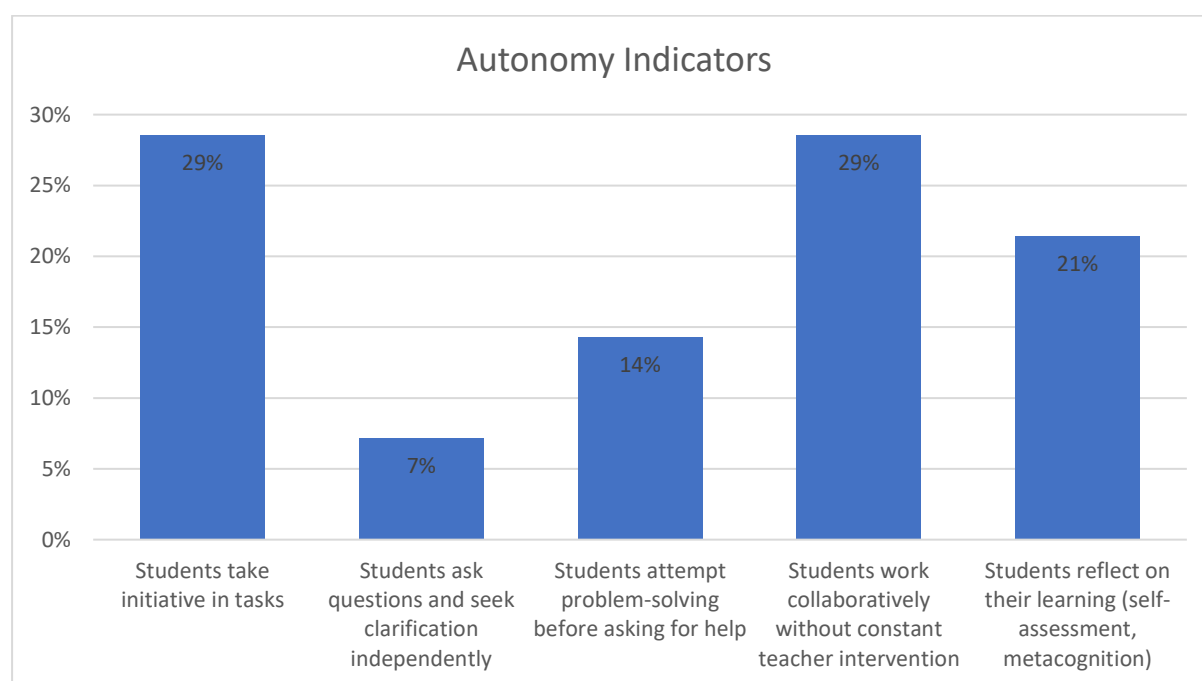
According to Figure 3.6 above, the two main behaviours reported mostly occurred throughout the sessions, with a percentage range of 21% to 29% among the four indicators. Namely, pupils took initiative in learning, pupils worked collaboratively, and pupils reflected on their learning were the most prominent. The pupils demonstrated the behaviour of taking

initiative in tasks when they showed the ability to answer the presented tasks independently, without explicit teacher direction. This involved voluntarily participating in oral games using the target language and attempting to apply newly acquired vocabulary or structures in spoken form. They also tended to integrate their prior knowledge when forming basic sentences with the new vocabulary.

On the other hand, pupils working collaboratively without constant teacher intervention was the most frequently observed behaviour. It was necessary to take into consideration that the teacher's encouragement for collaborative work was not highly detected in the previous report. Although the teacher did not explicitly employ strategies to raise the level of collaboration, observation revealed that pupils engaged in working together and reflected on their learning.

This suggested that elements of autonomous learning could emerge independently of direct teacher scaffolding. For instance, pupils corrected each other's mistakes and encouraged one another to engage with the questions, which reflected their potential ability to be self-regulated and to seek mediated assistance highlighting their growing independence within the learning environment. Nevertheless, we observed progressive improvement in pupils' questioning and problem-solving skills.

Teacher's Role in Supporting Autonomy

Table 3. 10

Teacher's Role in Supporting Autonomy

Teacher' role	Frequency	Percentage
Encourages pupils to set their own learning goals	4	31%
Allows pupils to make choices in learning tasks	2	15%

Provides opportunities for self-assessment and reflection	4	31%
Reduces direct instruction over time (gradual release)	1	8%
Encourages pupils to justify their answers and thinking	2	15%
Total	**13**	**100%**

Table 3.10 presented an overview of observed teacher behaviours that support the development of learner autonomy. The table highlighted the frequency and percentage of each technique used in the classroom. This summary helps identify which practices were more commonly applied and which may require further emphasis. As it was presented in the table, there was a balance of the teacher's role in the teaching-learning process. Thus, Figure 3.7 summarises the roles as follows:

Figure 3. 7
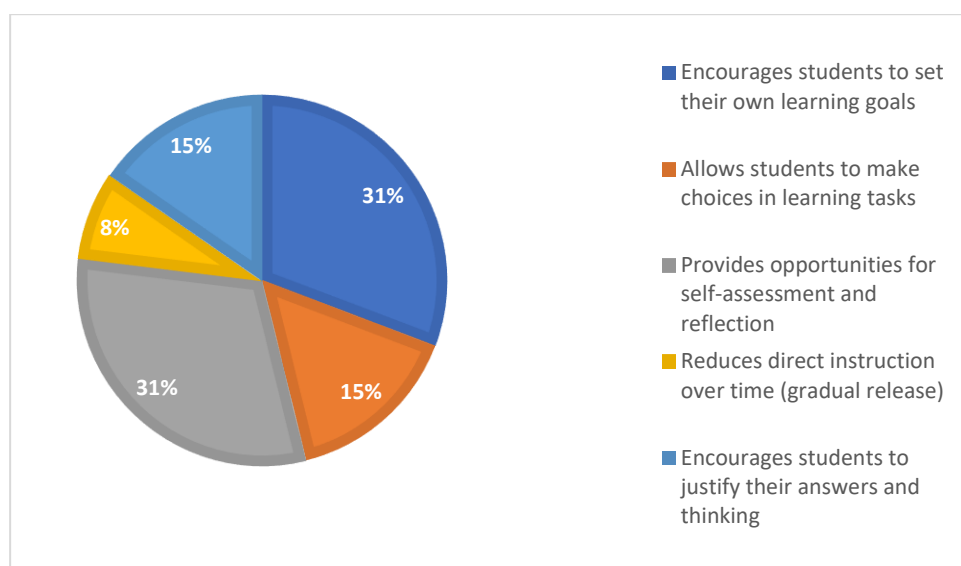
Teacher's role in Enhancing Autonomy

Figure 3.7 outlined the observed frequencies and percentages of teacher behaviours that supported learner autonomy. The most frequently noted techniques **were** encouraging pupils to set their own learning goals and providing opportunities for self-assessment and reflection, each **accounting** for 31% of the total. The teacher encouraged pupils' responsibility and ownership, even without a largely teacher-led approach. Nevertheless, the high percentage still **reflected** the guidance provided by the teacher in helping pupils understand how the learning process **worked**. Other behaviours, such as allowing pupils to make choices in learning tasks and encouraging justification of answers and thinking, **were observed** less frequently, both appearing at 15%. This attributed to time constraints within the schedule. The least observed behaviour **was** reducing direct instruction over time (gradual release), which **comprised** only 8% of the total. This **showed** that the learners **still needed** direct support from the teacher. These findings **highlighted** which autonomy-supportive practices **were** more consistently presented in the classroom and **suggested** areas where instructional approaches **could be further developed** to enhance learner autonomy.

Class B:

1. Scaffolding Techniques Used by the Teacher

Table 3. 11

Scaffolding Techniques implemented

Behavior / Technique	Frequency	Percentage
Breaking tasks into manageable steps	3	10%
Providing hints, prompts, or cues	4	13%
Modelling a skill or strategy before pupils try	4	13%
Using questioning to guide student thinking	4	13%
Encouraging peer collaboration and discussion	4	13%

Offering visual aids, graphic organizers, or anchor charts	4	13%
Adjusting support based on student need (gradual release)	4	13%
Providing immediate, constructive feedback	4	13%
Total	31	100%

Table 3.11 revealed a balanced use of techniques across all sessions in class B. The tutor appeared to employ a range of techniques throughout the sessions. Consequently, Figure 3.8 supported the objective stated earlier:

Figure 3. 8

Techniques Used by the Teacher for Class B
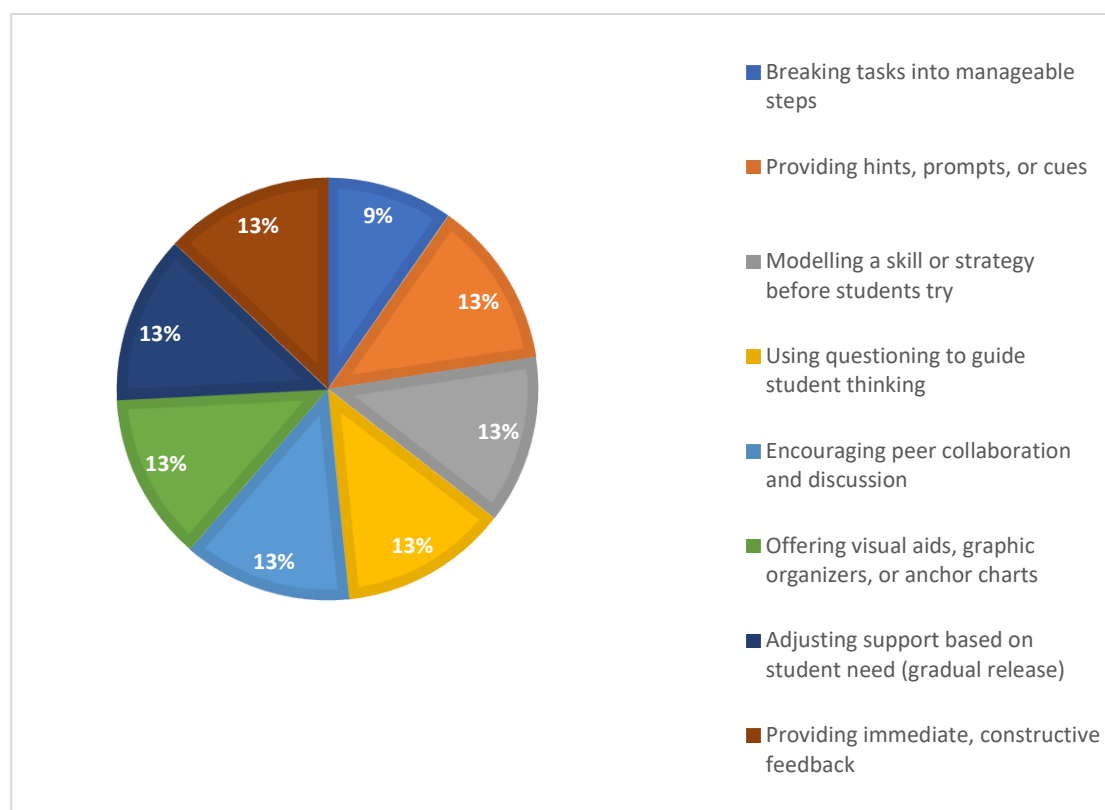
As stated above in **Figure 3.8**, the teacher **tended** to integrate various techniques. Unlike in **Class A**, the teacher **maintained** a balanced use of all techniques except one. This was primarily due to differences in the classroom environment, as each classroom **varied** in terms of pupils' educational levels, the learning atmosphere, and the teacher's ability to manage behaviour and maintain a quiet setting. Moreover, the deliberate adaptation of techniques **may have positively influenced** learner engagement and academic performance. This finding **aligned** with the study's broader aim of examining how scaffolding techniques support learner autonomy across varied classroom environments. The only exception **breaking tasks into manageable steps was observed only once** throughout the sessions, as it was not a central component of the teacher's instructional approach during that lesson.

2. Indicators of Learner Autonomy

Table 3. 12

Indicators of learner autonomy

Behavior / Technique	Frequency	Percentage
Pupils take initiative in tasks	4	29%
Pupils ask questions and seek clarification independently	2	14%
Pupils attempt problem-solving before asking for help	1	7%
Pupils work collaboratively without constant teacher intervention	4	29%
Pupils reflect on their learning (self-assessment, metacognition)	3	21%
Total	14	100%

Table 3.12 presented the behaviour of learners in frequencies and percentages because of the Scaffolding Techniques implemented by the teacher. To understand more about Class B learners' behaviours and outcomes, Figure 3.9 used intentionally to transform the growth of behaviour and their values:
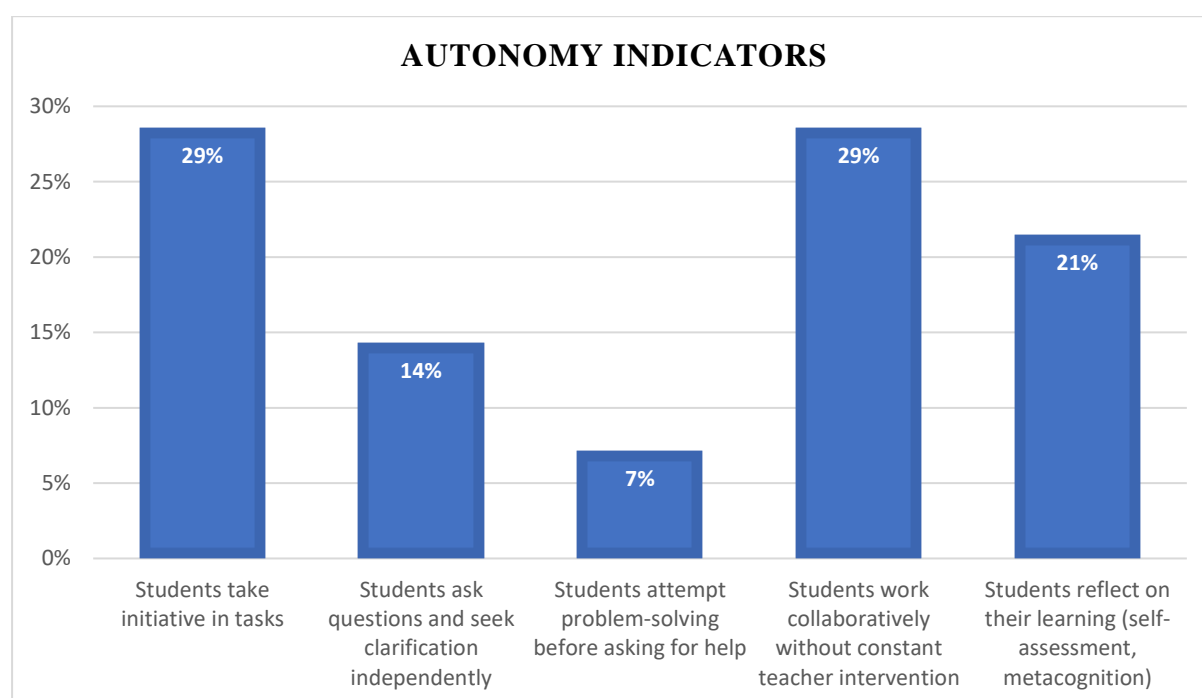
Figure 3. 9

Learners' Behaviour Results

Figure 3.9 showed the growth of learner autonomy behaviours during the four sessions of observation. Three out of five indicators were reported as the most commonly observed, with percentages ranging from 21% to 29%. These indicators were 1, 2, and 5, labelled as: pupils took initiative in tasks, pupils asked questions seeking clarification, and pupils reflected on their learning. As the teacher allowed collaboration and discussion throughout the learning process, it provided learners with the opportunity to take initiative in tasks. The percentage for the second indicator (14%) indicated that learners rarely relied on themselves to ask questions collaboratively or seek clarification from the teacher. As for the third indicator, the variety of teaching strategies used beyond those recorded during observation led to attempts by pupils to

solve tasks or problems independently. The 7% recorded for this behaviour suggested a developing level of problem-solving skills. For instance, when pupils took time to solve problems without the teacher's immediate guidance, it demonstrated their ability to use prior knowledge that was previously taught with teacher support. This occurred either individually or through peer collaboration. Nevertheless, the use of guided questioning **offered** a pathway for self-reflection, **encouraged** pupils to revise their mistakes, and **helped** them understand what they **were supposed to do next**.

3. Teacher's Role in Supporting Autonomy

Table 3. 13

Teacher's role

The role	Frequency	Percentages
Encourages pupils to set their own learning goals	4	31%
Allows pupils to make choices in learning tasks	2	15%
Provides opportunities for self-assessment and reflection	4	31%
Reduces direct instruction over time (gradual release)	2	15%
Encourages pupils to justify their answers and thinking	1	8%
Total	**13**	**100%**

Table 3.13 revealed the incorporation of teacher's role in enhancing the pupils' autonomy. Thus, the research intended to grasp the value of teacher's presence, portrayed the obtained data results in Figure 3.10 to clarify more about it:
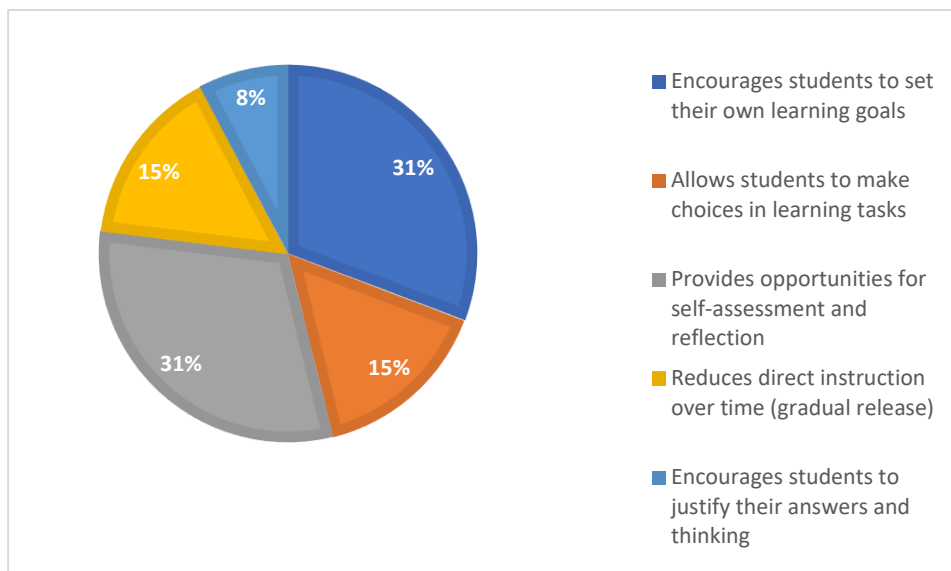
Figure 3. 10

Teacher's Role

Figure 3.10 showed the teacher's role in terms of percentages and frequencies. Throughout the four sessions conducted in Class B, the teacher maintained two major roles at 31%, and two additional roles at 15%. The two roles with the highest percentages were Role 1 and Role 3: encouraged pupils to set their own learning goals and provided opportunities for self-assessment and reflection. The direct instruction provided by the teacher enabled learners to recognise their goals during lesson delivery without seeking assistance. Allowing them to assess themselves led to improvements in their ability to recognise their learning methods and identify the mistakes they made while learning. In addition, a balance noted between Roles 2 and 4 allowing pupils to make choices in learning tasks and reducing direct instruction over time. Since the teacher offered guidance and support, maintaining these roles reflected moments when pupils were encouraged to become more independent during the teaching

learning process. However, only 8% of the observed behaviours involved encouraging pupils to justify their answers and thinking. This low percentage was likely due to time constraints, which limited the teacher's ability to implement this practice within the 45-minute sessions fully.

Class C:

1. Scaffolding Techniques Used By the Teacher

Table 3. 14

Techniques Used by the Teacher

Behaviour / Technique	Frequency	Percentage
Breaking tasks into manageable steps	4	13%
Providing hints, prompts, or cues	4	13%
Modelling a skill or strategy before pupils try	4	13%
Using questioning to guide student thinking	4	13%
Encouraging peer collaboration and discussion	4	13%
Offering visual aids, graphic organizers, or anchor charts	4	13%
Adjusting support based on student need (gradual release)	4	13%
Providing immediate, constructive feedback	3	10%
Total	31	100%

Table 3.14 displayed frequencies and percentages of each of the techniques used by the teacher. The researcher intended to find out the most used techniques for Class C. Hence, inserting figure 3.11 to illustrate the above aimed:

Figure 3. 11

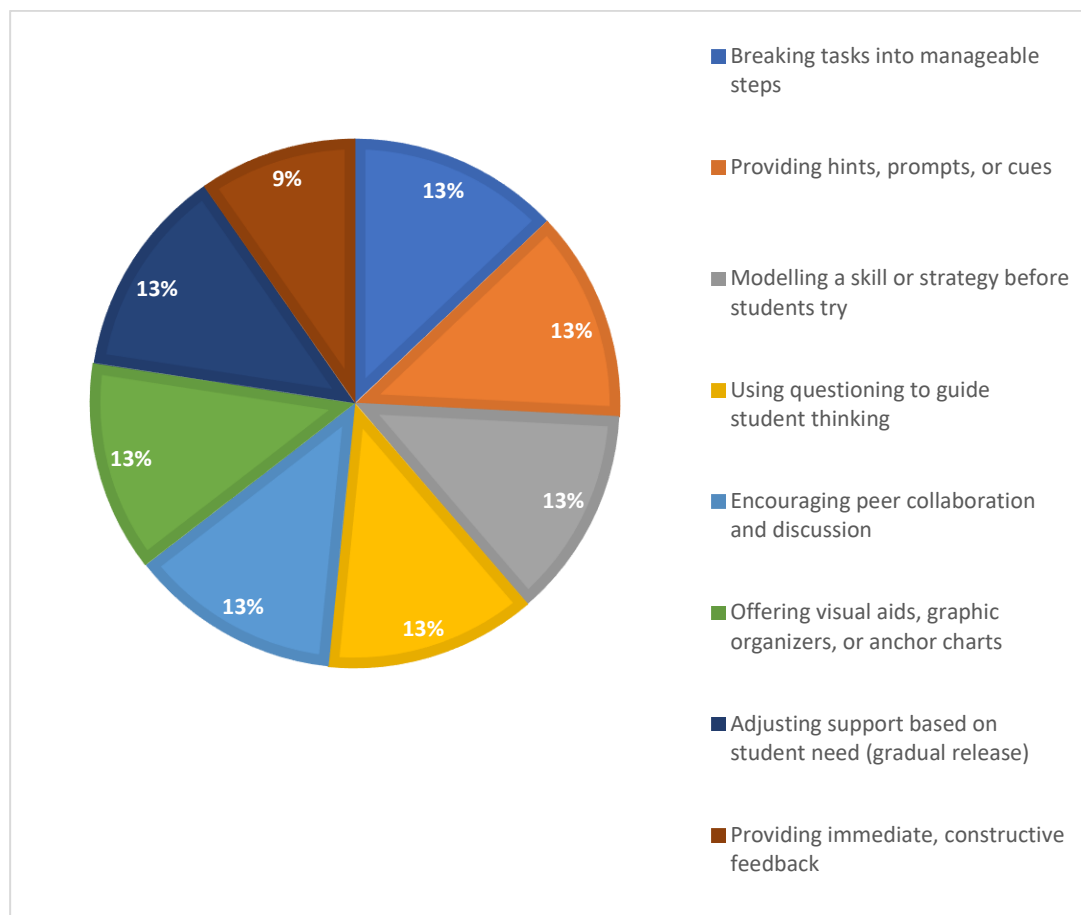*Techniques Used by the Teacher for Class C*

Figure 3.11 displayed that seven out of eight techniques used by the teacher, each with a percentage of 13%, except for one technique, which used at a rate of 10%. Techniques number 1 through 7 were: breaking tasks into manageable steps, providing hints, modelling a skill or strategy before pupils tried, using questioning to guide student thinking, encouraging peer collaboration and discussion, offering visual aids, graphic organizers, or anchor charts, and adjusting support based on student need (gradual release). The data implied that the teacher in Class C maintained the principles of scaffolding techniques, ensuring that learners received

varied and structured support throughout the sessions. The technique of providing immediate feedback used less frequently, accounting for only 9%, likely due to its lower priority in instructional planning and situational constraints during classroom implementation.
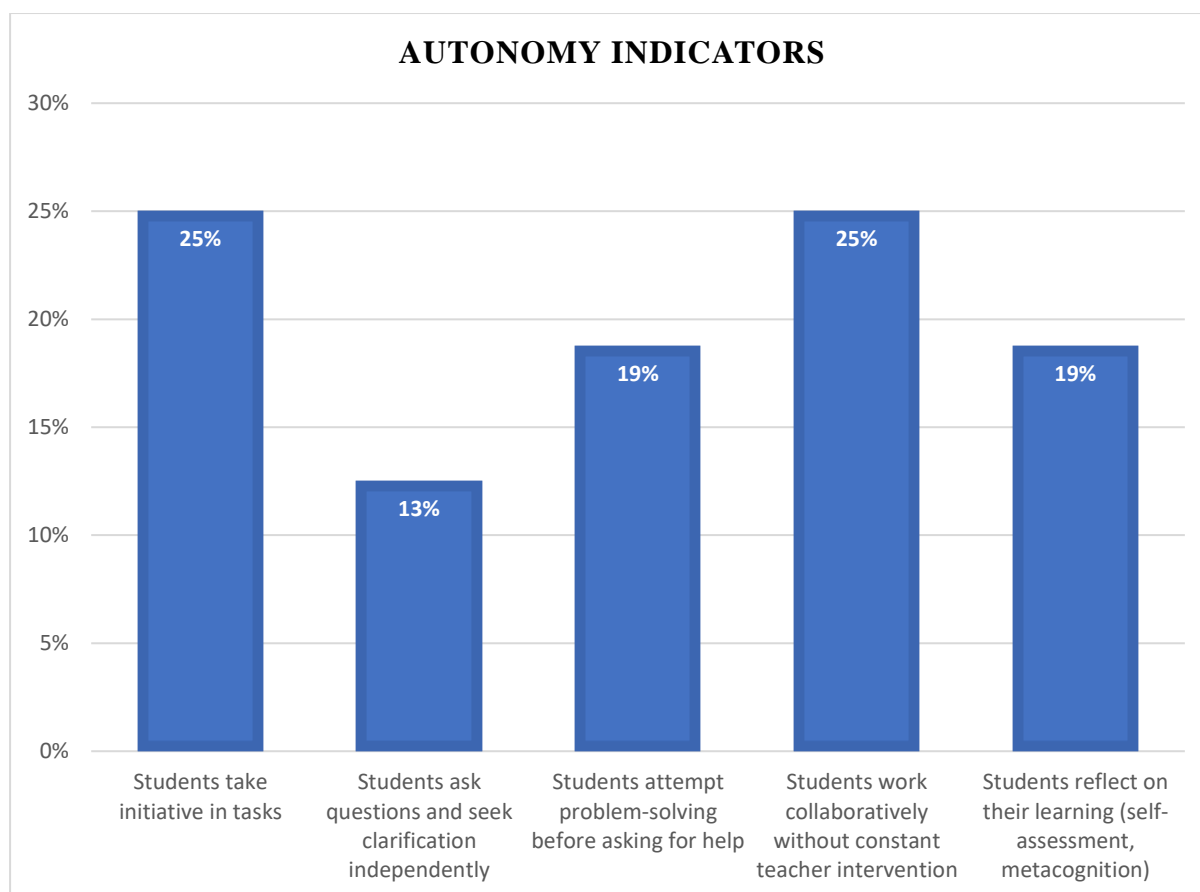
2. Indicators of learner autonomy

Table 3. 15

Indicators of learner autonomy

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Pupils take initiative in tasks	4	25%
Pupils ask questions and seek clarification independently	2	13%
Pupils attempt problem-solving before asking for help	3	19%
Pupils work collaboratively without constant teacher intervention	4	25%
Pupils reflect on their learning (self-assessment, metacognition)	3	19%
Total	**16**	**100%**

Learner autonomy indicators presented in Table 3.15. In order to find out the most observed indicators, Figure 3.12 devoteed to highlight the most common indicators between learners:

Figure 3. 12

Learner autonomy indicators

AUTONOMY INDICATORS

In Figure 3.12, two out of six indicators were reported as the most common behaviours of autonomous learners, each with a percentage of 25%. These were Indicator 1 (pupils took initiative in tasks) and Indicator 4 (pupils worked collaboratively). These indicators reflected pupils' interest in learning the English language, prior experiences where initiative was encouraged, and a growing sense of confidence. Moreover, the design of the tasks played a role; open-ended, engaging, and meaningful activities naturally invited interaction and shared responsibility. Cultural and familial backgrounds also influenced behaviour, particularly in contexts where initiative and group work were highly valued. Altogether, these elements contributed to a learning environment where taking initiative and collaboration were not only possible but also encouraged. In the same context, the indicators attempting to solve problems independently and reflecting on learning were each reported at 19%, pointing to developing metacognitive skills and persistence. However, pupils asking questions and seeking

clarification independently was the least observed behaviour, with 13%, indicating a potential

area for further support. Overall, the data highlighted strengths in peer collaboration and task

engagement, while also suggesting that fostering more student-driven inquiry could further

enhance learner autonomy.

**3. The role of the Teacher**

Table 3. 16

Teacher's Role

The Role	Frequency	Percentage
Encourages pupils to set their own learning goals	4	25%
Allows pupils to make choices in learning tasks	3	19%
Provides opportunities for self-assessment and reflection	4	25%
Reduces direct instruction over time (gradual release)	2	13%
Encourages pupils to justify their answers and thinking	3	19%
Total	**16**	**100%**

Table 3.16 provided an outline about the frequency and the percentage of each element

above. Thus, the major role the teacher played during the teacher-learning process for the Class

C illustrated in Figure 3.13:

Figure 3. 13

Teacher's role for improving autonomy in Class C
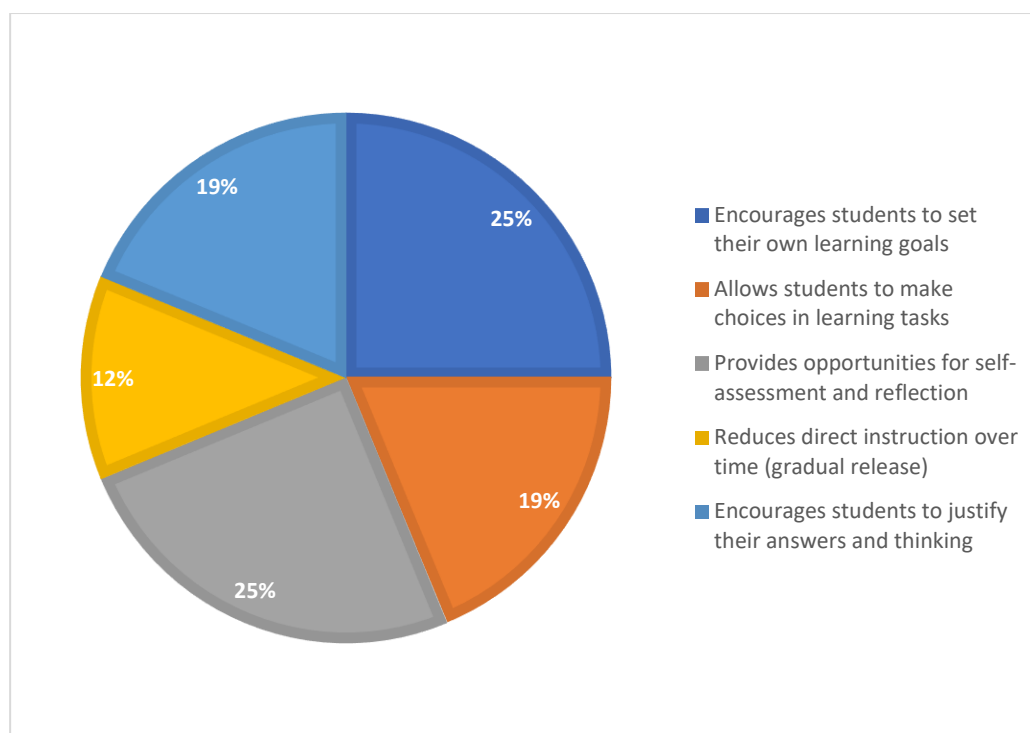
The most frequently observed practices were encouraging pupils to set their own learning goals and providing opportunities for self-assessment and reflection, each accounted for 25% of the total. These actions reflected a strong emphasis on fostering student ownership and metacognitive awareness. Allowing pupils to make choices in learning tasks and encouraging them to justify their answers and thinking were each noted at 19%, indicating efforts to support decision-making and critical thinking. However, the least observed practice was reducing direct instruction over time, with a 13% occurrence, suggesting that while autonomy was encouraged, there remained a reliance on teacher-led instruction. Overall, the teacher's role aligned well with autonomy-supportive practices, though further emphasis on gradually shifting responsibility to pupils could have strengthened these efforts.

3.4 Discussion of the findings

After presenting a detailed interpretation of the results from both the structured observations and teacher semi-structured interviews, this section provides a comprehensive synthesis and discussion of the key findings. It explores how the results may be interrelated and examines whether there is convergence or divergence between the quantitative and qualitative data.

Initially, teachers acknowledged the importance of scaffolding in fostering learner autonomy. They confirmed the use of scaffolding techniques aimed at helping pupils grasp aspects of the English language. While they recognised autonomy as a key goal in the learning process, they also reported that pupils demonstrated emerging autonomous behaviour. Teachers expressed confidence in their efforts to nurture this autonomy through intentional support and the gradual release of responsibility.

Moreover, during the interviews, teachers emphasised several important observations. First, they insisted on the crucial role the teacher plays in foreign language instruction, highlighting the need to act as both a monitor and a controller to maintain an effective learning environment. Second, teachers agreed on the value of incorporating new teaching methods specifically scaffolding as it aligns closely with learning improvement. However, they noted a need to restructure lesson timing to integrate scaffolding and autonomy-oriented goals within the curriculum effectively. Third, a key barrier to learner autonomy identified pupils' limited awareness of their own learning skills. Teachers often felt compelled to adopt a teacher-centred approach to ensure lesson objectives were met. Limited resources and external factors outside the classroom compounded this challenge.

Additionally, the structured observations revealed that teachers consistently applied several scaffolding principles, including modelling, think-aloud, questioning, peer support, and role-play, as proposed in Chapter One. Modelling was frequently observed, involving

techniques such as demonstrating a skill or strategy before pupils attempted it themselves (14% in Class A, 13% in Classes B and C). This approach provided clear examples for pupils to follow. Similarly, while think-aloud was not directly mentioned in the data, the use of guiding questions (11% in Class A, 13% in Classes B and C) was associated with think-aloud practices, where teachers verbalised their thought processes to prompt pupil reflection.

Questioning emerged as a prominent scaffolding technique across all classes. Its role in stimulating critical thinking and problem solving was evident, as teachers used targeted questions to guide student thinking. Peer support was also apparent, particularly through collaborative activities and discussions (11% in Class A, 13% in Classes B and C). These practices fostered shared learning environments where pupils supported each other's progress.

Although role-play was not explicitly referenced, the strategy of breaking tasks into manageable steps (14% in Class A, 10% in Class B, 13% in Class C) could be associated with role-play. This was especially true when tasks designed to simulate real-world scenarios or required pupils to engage in activities that mimicked social or professional roles. Such activities encouraged active participation and allowed pupils to apply knowledge in practical contexts. Taken together, these scaffolding techniques illustrate the teacher's active role in guiding pupils through the learning process. This achieved through a combination of direct instruction, strategic questioning, peer collaboration, and structured tasks that supported the development of independence and critical thinking.

Based on these results and interpretations, it can be concluded that teachers recognise the significant role of scaffolding in fostering learner autonomy. The data suggests that practices such as modelling, questioning, and peer collaboration were closely linked to the development of autonomy in the classroom. Furthermore, the findings underscore the importance of encouraging student reflection and goal setting as essential components in supporting autonomy. Therefore, the findings address the research questions and support the

hypothesis that scaffolding techniques, when effectively implemented, contribute to promoting learner autonomy in primary education. In addition, the findings not only enriched the theoretical discourse on Vygotsky's sociocultural approach and its connection with scaffolding, but also provided a detailed view of its contribution in the childhood education. While previous studies focused largely on adults learning context, this research contributes a new perspective by examining scaffolding practices in Algerian EFL classroom. As highlighted previously, scholars such as Vygotsky (1978) and Gibbons (2015) have emphasized the importance of scaffolding in supporting language development and autonomy. Thus, the study built on that foundation by demonstrating how specific techniques are applied in Algerian primary classrooms to promote autonomy.

Conclusion

This chapter devoted into interpreting and discussing the study's findings, by analysing the obtained data from both semi-structured teachers' interviews and structured observation. First, the research method, population, and sampling were discussed, along with the rationale behind the selection of the data gathering instruments. Second, the chapter covered details about the procedures of collecting data through structured classroom observations and teachers' interviews. It also included the description, analysis, and interpretation of the study's results and findings. Summary and discussion of the results revealed that primary school teachers affirmed the significant role of scaffolding techniques in promoting learner autonomy. Moreover, the teachers consistently emphasised that strategies such as modelling, questioning, peer collaboration, and opportunities for reflection were essential for supporting students in gradually developing autonomy. Additionally, concerning the type of relationship between scaffolding and autonomy, the majority of teachers agreed that effective scaffolding directly fosters and enhances learner autonomy within the primary classroom setting.

General Conclusion and Recommendations

General Conclusion and Recommendations

In contemporary educational contexts, fostering autonomous learning in teaching foreign languages has become a key target, since it enhances learners' mental development and takes charge of their learning process. However, developing autonomous learning, particularly among children, often requires structured support. This is where scaffolding, a concept grounded in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, plays a crucial role. This study investigated the role of scaffolding techniques in the development of learner autonomy in primary EFL classrooms, with the goal of informing more learner-centred and developmentally appropriate teaching practices. It emerged in response to the observed lack of awareness regarding learner autonomy and its role in the Algerian EFL context. While autonomy is a desired outcome, teachers often lack the theoretical grounding or practical tools to implement scaffolding effectively.

The research was undertaken due to the lack of awareness about the autonomy concept and its contribution to the teaching-learning process in Algeria. Understanding autonomy improvement and being aware of the learners' Zone of Proximal Development enables the teacher to enhance their ability to acquire the intended language properly. Moreover, scaffolding as a support mechanism for developing learner autonomy is insufficiently applied and studied in foreign language learning environments. Therefore, the research examined how scaffolding techniques contribute to developing learner autonomy among primary school EFL learners.

Based on the results obtained from the semi-structured interview, the four interviewees agreed on the role of scaffolding techniques in enhancing learning autonomy in the EFL classroom. They emphasised the importance of teachers' guidance during the teaching process. However, they claimed that due to external pressures such as time and lack of teaching resources, it is challenging to fulfil the intended requirement to develop an autonomous learner.

Moreover, the participants insisted that teaching instructions prioritise the use of theories in practice over a deep understanding of the theoretical constructs, yet it is necessary to take into consideration that a thorough comprehension of these underlying theories remains essential. Teachers could use various teaching strategies that serve the needs and requirements, but neglecting that their effectiveness may vary depending on individual learner differences. Thus, it is crucial to be aware of pupils' Zone of Proximal Development and include the scaffolding concept to raise their capacity to become competent, confident, and skilled to take ownership of their learning.

Furthermore, the results of the classroom structured observations revealed that the lack of awareness of specific scaffolding techniques, such as discussion, collaboration, and questioning, hindered the development of learner autonomy. These strategies were either underused or applied inconsistently. Despite this, pupils still exhibited signs of increased autonomy during tasks that encouraged independent engagement, particularly when they were given opportunities to make choices, solve problems, or work without direct teacher intervention. These instances suggested that even minimal scaffolding, when aligned with learner needs, could foster greater independence and self-regulation among young language learners.

Drawing on that, the research question could be answered by:

▪ **Do primary school teachers incorporate scaffolding techniques through their tutoring process?**

According to the data obtained, it is concluded that they do use multiple scaffolding techniques without their awareness of the theory. Teachers claimed that they use different teaching strategies in correspondence with their pupils' needs. As well as didactic guide requirement. Several teachers relied more heavily on visual support and repetition, while others emphasised peer collaboration and systematic guidance. For instance, several teachers

mentioned using modelling, guided questioning, and visual aids to support student understanding. This suggests that while scaffolding is being practised, there may be a gap in theoretical understanding, which could affect how intentionally and effectively it is applied. These findings are consistent with Gibbons (2015), who noted that teachers, even without formal knowledge of the term, often practice scaffolding intuitively. This ensures the effectiveness of scaffolding if teachers become aware of the notion and include it within their teaching process.

▪ **How do they maintain these techniques to improve learners' autonomy?**

Regardless of the lack of knowledge about scaffolding and autonomy concepts, it is noticeable that teachers employed a variety of teaching methods aimed at supporting students' independence and gradual responsibility for their learning. Although these practices were not always applied systematically, they demonstrated an intuitive understanding of how to foster autonomy. With further professional development, teachers could strengthen the intentional use of these techniques, aligning them more closely with theoretical frameworks to maximise their effectiveness. Little (1991) insisted that, "The development of learner autonomy will depend crucially on the initiatives the teacher takes…learners will not develop their capacity for autonomous behaviour simply because he tells them to." emphasised by the participants' claims on the importance of the teacher's instructions. This underscores the importance of teacher support and guidance in helping learners become autonomous.

▪ **What are the challenges the teacher encountered in improving learners' autonomy?**

Both the data obtained from semi-structured interviews and structured observations indicate several challenges related to improving learner autonomy. These challenges include limited teacher training in autonomy-supportive practices, time constraints, and a lack of consistent strategies to encourage student independence. First, scaffolding techniques as well as autonomy were not formally addressed in the teacher-training curriculum, leading to

unintentional or inconsistent application. Second, it was challenging for the teacher to manage between applying teaching strategies, achieving the lesson's objectives, and focusing on pupils' autonomy. "Much of the scaffolding that occurs in classrooms is done by teachers who are not consciously applying a particular theoretical model, but who are responding to the immediate learning needs of their students."(Gibbons, 2015, p. 16). Thirdly, not all teaching strategies are designed to promote autonomy; their effectiveness depends on how they are used and the specific teaching context. Some strategies serve different instructional goals and may not inherently support learner independence.

- **How do scaffolding techniques affect pupils' development of autonomy?**

Providing temporary support and guidance, scaffolding enables pupils to accomplish tasks that they would not be able to do independently. As pupils progressively master these tasks with less teacher assistance, they develop the skills and confidence necessary to take responsibility for their learning. That is what is emphasised by Bruner (1983), highlighting that scaffolding involves providing structured support, which is progressively reduced as learners become more competent. This approach fosters autonomy by encouraging students to take ownership of their learning as they gain confidence in their abilities. According to the teachers, pupils can recognise how to answer certain questions since they have been gradually guided through similar tasks and exposed to repeated patterns during instruction.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research

Researchers often encounter various challenges that can hinder the research process. Concerning this study, a major difficulty was the limited availability of resources related to the incorporation of scaffolding in primary school contexts, especially Algerian context. Most existing studies on scaffolding and its connection to learner autonomy have been conducted in scientific subjects such as mathematics, with relatively little focus on foreign language learning. Another challenge was the complex nature of the topic itself. The study draws on a

range of theoretical frameworks, including sociocultural theory, mentalism, behaviourism, and constructivism, as well as study skill theories like metacognitive awareness. This theoretical diversity led to the decision to conduct an exploratory study, rather than a purely experimental one. Additionally, while previous research on scaffolding and autonomy often relied on experimental designs to measure effectiveness, this study aimed to explore how these concepts are naturally implemented in classroom practice particularly in the primary EFL context.

<div align="center">**Recommendations and Pedagogical Implications**</div>

In light of the study's findings, several recommendations can be made:

1. For Teachers

▪ Teachers should be enrolled in training programs that address the use of scaffolding techniques to promote autonomous learning.

▪ Teachers should assess students' current abilities and adjust their support based on each learner's Zone of Proximal Development. This ensures that tasks are challenging but achievable.

▪ Giving pupils choices in tasks, topics, or strategies empowers them, fosters responsibility for their learning, and encourages learners to support one another, increasing autonomy in a social context.

▪ Make pupils aware of the purpose behind each strategy and how it helps them learn better and become more independent learners.

▪ Following Bruner et al (1976) six teaching steps. These implicit strategies supported learner engagement and contributed to gradual autonomy.

2. For Researchers

▪ For future research, researchers are recommended to conduct the study experimentally with primary school pupils from the beginning of the year to measure its long-term effect. This

would provide deeper insight into how sustained scaffolding affects students' independence across different educational stages.

▪ While many studies focus on teacher practices, there is a need to include pupils' voices. Future researchers could explore how learners perceive and experience scaffolding and how it influences their motivation and sense of autonomy.

▪ Researchers may focus on which specific scaffolding strategies (e.g., modelling, questioning, peer support) are most effective in promoting autonomy in different contexts or subject areas.

3. For Future Research:

For future studies about the scaffolding notion and its relation with the Zone of Proximal, studies should explore the differential impact of various scaffolding techniques individually to determine its distinct impact on learner development such as modeling, questioning, feedback, and collaborative dialogue on learners' progression through their ZPD. Researchers are encouraged to draw on Vygotskian theory while also integrating contemporary instructional models to analyze how different forms of assistance contribute to learner autonomy and competence.

Further investigation on practical levels is required into teacher training for scaffolding practices. Teachers' ability to identify students' ZPD and to provide contingent support is crucial for effective scaffolding. Therefore, studies could examine how professional development programs enhance teachers' awareness and implementation of scaffolding strategies in real-time classroom settings.

Additionally, future research could focus on the role of technological tools in facilitating scaffolded learning within the ZPD. Digital platforms, interactive software, and AI-based tutoring systems present promising avenues for offering personalized support, especially

in remote or hybrid learning environments. Such studies would contribute to the growing body of research on digital scaffolding and its alignment with sociocultural theories of learning

Lastly, it is recommended that further studies pay closer attention to learners' perceptions and emotional responses to scaffolded instruction. Affective factors such as motivation, self-efficacy, and anxiety may significantly influence the effectiveness of scaffolding. Incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews, reflective journals, or think-aloud, protocols could provide richer insights into the learner experience and the nuanced dynamics of support within the ZPD

To sum up, promoting autonomy should be prioritised during early childhood education. Being autonomous at a young age allows learners to adopt the learning process, and over time, they will be able to recognise their strengths in learning and improve them, as well as fix their weaknesses. However, it is important to provide them with the structural guidance they need to gradually release and become independent learners. Scaffolding, with its basic relation to independent learning improvement, could be used to enhance the learning abilities of the Algerian context.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The semi-structured Interview

Question 01: How long have you been teaching English language in primary school?

Question 02: what were the difficulties you encounter while teaching the English language?

Question 03: What indicators signify a learner's autonomy in an educational context?

Question 04: Are you familiar with the concept of scaffolding in education?

Question 05: what do you think about incorporating scaffolding in the learning process?

Question 06: What are the strategies you imply? Do you think they are similar or related to the scaffolding concept?

Question 07: do you support emphasizing the incorporation scaffolding to teach English language in primary school?

Question 08: Can you provide an example of a lesson where you think it is effectively used scaffolding?

Question 09: In what ways do you think scaffolding contributes to learner autonomy?

Question 10: Do you think there will be any long-term effects of scaffolding on pupils' ability to learn independently?

Appendix B: Structured Observation

Exploring the incorporation of Scaffolding Techniques to enhance learners'

Autonomy in Primary school

Observation structure

Observer Name: _____

Date: _____

Class/Grade Level: _____

Lesson Topic: _____

Duration of Observation: _____45 min_____

Scaffolding Techniques Used by the Teacher

technique	observed
Breaking tasks into manageable steps	
Providing hints, prompts, or cues	
Modelling a skill or strategy before students try	
Using questioning to guide student thinking	
Encouraging peer collaboration and discussion	
Offering visual aids, graphic organizers, or anchor charts	
Adjusting support based on student needs (gradual release)	
Providing immediate, constructive feedback	

2. Indicators of Learner Autonomy

Behaviour	Observed
Students take initiative in tasks	
Students ask questions and seek clarification independently	
Students attempt problem-solving before asking for help	
Students work collaboratively without constant teacher intervention	
Students reflect on their learning (self-assessment, metacognition)	

3. Teacher's Role in Supporting Autonomy

TEACHER'S ROLE	OBSERVED
ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO SET THEIR OWN LEARNING GOALS	
ALLOWS STUDENTS TO MAKE CHOICES IN LEARNING TASKS	
PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT AND REFLECTION	
REDUCES DIRECT INSTRUCTION OVER TIME (GRADUAL RELEASE)	
ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO JUSTIFY THEIR ANSWERS AND THINKING	

ملخص الدراسة

حظي مفهوم التعلم الذاتي في السنوات الاخيرة باهتمام كبير باعتباره هدفًا رئيسيًا في تعليم اللغات، لا سيما في المراحل المبكرة من التعلم. كان الغرض من البحث الحالي هو التحقيق في دور تقنيات الدعائم التعليمية (Scaffolding) في تعزيز التعلم الذاتي وصقل المهارات لدى التلاميذ عند تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في مجال التعليم المبكر بمنطقة الغروس- الجزائر . وقد استند هذا البحث بشكل كامل على نظرية فيجوتسكي الاجتماعية حول النظم التعليمية ، مدعومًا بنظريات تدريس ذات صلة، لاستكشاف الكيفية التي يمكن بها للدعم المنظم أن يعزز التعلم المستقل لدى تلاميذ السنة الرابعة ابتدائي، مع التركيز على فجوة ملحوظة في تعليم اللغات الأجنبية بالجزائر ، وتحديدًا ضعف الوعي عند تطبيق مختلف الاستراتيجيات التعليمية لتعزيز الفهم وكذا عدم قدرة التلاميذ على التعلم بشكل ذاتي . لذلك فقد تم اعتماد تصميم بحثي منظم شمل مقابلات مع أربعة معلمين في مادة اللغة الانجليزية بمختلف ابتدائيات بلدية الغروس، بالإضافة إلى اجراء ملاحظات بحثية اعتمدت على حضور حصص تعليمية بمدرسة أحمد بن الزين الابتدائية اين تم ملاحظة وتحديد السلوكيات المتعلقة بالبحث المطروح. كشفت النتائج أن تقنيات الدعم التعليمية كانت تُستخدم بشكل متكرر، لكنها غالبًا ما كانت تُطبق بطريقة تلقائية دون سند نظري واضح، مما أثر سلبًا على فعاليتها. كما واجه المعلمون عدة عوائق، منها نقص التكوين، وقلة الموارد، وضيق الوقت، مما أعاق دمج هذه التقنيات. ومع ذلك، أظهر التلاميذ قدرًا معتبرا من الاستقلالية عندما شاركوا في مهام تعلمية مدعومة بشكل جيد. أكدت الدراسة على ضرورة توفير تكوين موجه للأساتذة، وإجراء بحوث تجريبية إضافية لتقييم الآثار طويلة المدى لتقنيات الدعم التعليمية على استقلالية المتعلم في مراحله الدراسية، مسلطةً الضوء في الختام على أهمية توفير دعم تربوي مبكر ومنظم من أجل تنمية متعلمين قادرين على توجيه تعلمهم ذاتيًا.