



Peoples Democratic Republic of Algeria  
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research  
Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra  
Faculty of Letters and Languages  
Department of English Studies and Literature

# MASTER DISSERTATION

In  
Sciences of language  
Submitted and defended by:  
Terchi Aya

---

## The Impact of Research Projects on English as a Foreign Language Learners Autonomy

Case Study of Master One Students of Mohammed Kheider Biskra University

---

Dissertation submitted to the Department of English as Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for  
the Degree of Master in Science of Language

### Board of Examiners

<b>Dr. Tigane Ilhem</b> (Examiner)	<b>MCB</b>	(UMK)Biskra
<b>Dr. Turki Barkat</b> (Supervisor)	<b>MCA</b>	(UMK)Biskra
<b>Dr. Assassi Tarek</b> (Chairperson)	<b>MCA</b>	(UMK)Biskra

**Academic Year: 2024/2025**

### **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this dissertation titled The Impact of Research Projects on English as a Foreign Language Learners Autonomy, submitted to the Department of the English language and Literature at Biskra University, is my original work, and has not been presented to any other educational institution. All sources and references have been properly cited and acknowledged, and I have conducted myself with academic integrity throughout the process. I and fully understand the consequences of academic misconduct and affirm the authenticity of my dissertation.

**Miss. Terchi Aya**

Master student, Department of English

### **Dedication**

First and foremost, I thank Allah for giving me the strength, patience, and guidance to complete this work. Without His mercy and blessings, none of this would have been possible.

I dedicate this humble work to my beloved mother, whose love, prayers, and endless support have always been my greatest motivation.

I also thank all my friends, those who walked with me during my learning journey, my classmates, and those who supported me and helped me with this dissertation. You have all made a difference in my life.

To everyone who stood by me through both the good and hard times, I truly thank you from my heart.

I am proud of myself for reaching this point. I never imagined I would come this far, but with faith, strength, and determination, I overcame many challenges that could have stopped me. Alhamdulillah, I didn't give up.

Finally, I sincerely thank all the teachers who taught me from primary school until now. Each one of you has played a role in shaping who I am today.

May Allah reward you all.

### Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank Allah for giving me the strength and patience to complete this dissertation.

I would like to express my deep thanks to my supervisor, **Dr. Turki**, for his guidance. I am very grateful for his support, both as a supervisor and for the way he guided us as a teacher throughout this journey. His advice, kindness, and encouragement helped me a lot during this work.

I also thank the members of the jury, **Dr. Tigane Ilhem** and **Dr. Assassi Tarek**, for taking the time to read and evaluate my dissertation. I truly appreciate their comments and suggestions.

I would like to thank all the teachers of Mohamed Kheider at the English department. They were always kind, supportive, and professional. We shared many great moments and valuable lessons during these years, and I will always remember this journey with them.

Finally, I would like to thank all students who completed my questionnaire and teachers who kindly participated in the interviews.

### **Abstract**

This study explores the role of research projects in promoting learner autonomy among English as Foreign Language (EFL) students. It also aims to highlight the importance of autonomy in the learning process and show how it can be developed in EFL classrooms. The main issue is that many university students still rely heavily on their teachers, which makes it difficult for them to become independent learners. This study asks important questions about the autonomy of university students. And the utility research projects in developing learner's autonomy. We assume that research projects can be an effective tool to enhance EFL students' autonomy. The research was conducted with Master One students of as a foreign language and teachers at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. Two data collection tools were used: a questionnaire submitted to students and interviews with teachers. The analysis of the data showed that most students are aware of the importance of autonomy and believe that doing research projects help them improve their language skills, critical thinking, confidence, and sense of responsibility. Teachers also agreed that research work encourages learners to act more independently and become more involved in their studies. They stated that teacher support and feedback are important for helping students become autonomous. In conclusion, this study shows that integrating research projects in EFL classrooms can be a useful method to develop autonomy and support learner-centred teaching.

**Keywords:** EFL, Learner Autonomy, Research Projects

## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**L1:** First Language

**L2:** Second Language

**PBL:** Project-Based Learning

**RBL:** Research-Based Learning

### List of Tables

<b>Table 1 :</b> Five level Modal of Learner Autonomy .....	17
<b>Table 2 :</b> Classification Matrix of Research Based Learning and other Research Oriented .....	41
<b>Table 3 :</b> Students' Personal Definitions of Learner Autonomy .....	50
<b>Table 4 :</b> Students' Views on Factors that Support Independent Learning.....	57
<b>Table 5 :</b> Students Justifications on How Research Projects Enhance Confidence, Critical Thinking, and Autonomy in Learning English .....	58
<b>Table 6 :</b> Student Responses on How Conducting Research Projects Enhances Independence in Language Learning.....	61
<b>Table 7 :</b> How Students Handle and Overcome Challenges in Research Projects .....	63

## List of Figures

Figure 1: The Capacity to Take Control over Learning.....	15
Figure 2 : The Different Approaches Suggested to Foster Learner Autonomy .....	21
Figure 3 : Skills obtained From Projects .....	35
Figure 4 : Factors Affecting Writing Projects in L2.....	37
Figure 5 : Students' Gender. ....	48
Figure 6 : The Students' Choice of English. ....	48
Figure 7: The Students' Level of English. ....	49
Figure 8 : Students Familiarity with the Term "Autonomy".....	50
Figure 9 : Students' Engagement in Classroom Activities. ....	51
Figure 10: Students' Preferences for Classroom Activities. ....	52
Figure 11 : Students' Agreement with being Self-Directed Learners.....	53
Figure 12 : Psychological Components Affecting Academic Achievement. ....	53
Figure 13 : Students' Perception of Teacher Encouragement for Responsibility .....	54
Figure 14 : Aspects of Responsibility Encouraged by the Teacher.....	55
Figure 15 : Students' Perceptions of Responsibility for Learning Progress. ....	55
Figure 16 : Students' Reactions to Learning Difficulties. ....	56
Figure 17 : Students' Perceptions of the Impact of Research Projects. ....	58
Figure 18 : Students' Research Project Involvement during the Academic Year. ....	59
Figure 19 : Common Formats for Conducting Student Research Projects .....	60
Figure 20 : Students' Reported Challenges While Working on Research Projects.....	62
Figure 21 : Students' Views on Independence through Project Work .....	64



**List of Appendices**

**Appendix One: Students' Questionnaire**

**Appendix Two: Teachers' Interview**

## Table of contents

Declaration.....	I
Dedication.....	II
Acknowledgements .....	III
Abstract.....	IV
List of abbreviations and acronyms.....	V
List of Tables .....	VI
List of figure .....	VII
List of Appendices .....	VIII
Table of contents .....	IX
General Introduction.....	1
1. Statement of Problem.....	1
2. Significance of the Study .....	2
3. Assumptions.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
4. Research Questions.....	2
5. Research Aims.....	3
6. Methodology .....	3
6.1 Choice of Method .....	3
6.2. Population and Sampling.....	3
6.3. Research Tools:.....	3
7. Structure of the Study .....	4
Chapter One .....	5
Learner Autonomy.....	5
Introduction.....	6
1.1. Historical Overview .....	7
1.2. General Perspectives of Autonomy .....	9
1.3. The Importance of Autonomy in Language Learning .....	11
1.4. Types of Autonomy .....	13
1.4.1. Technical Autonomy .....	13
1.4.2. Psychological Autonomy .....	14

1.4.3. Political Autonomy .....	14
1.5. Levels of Autonomy .....	16
1.6. Characteristics of Autonomous Learners .....	18
1.7. Factors Influencing Learner Autonomy .....	19
1.7.1 Motivation .....	19
1.7.2 Anxiety .....	20
1.7.3 Attitude.....	20
1.8. Approaches to Fostering Autonomy .....	20
1.8.1 Learner-based Approaches .....	21
1.8.2 Teacher-based Approaches.....	22
1.8.3 Classroom-based approaches.....	22
1.8.4 Curriculum-Based Approaches.....	23
1.8.5 Resource-based Approaches.....	23
1.8.6 Technology-based Approaches.....	24
Conclusion .....	24
CHAPTER TWO .....	25
Research projects.....	25
Introduction.....	26
2.1 Research Projects: An Overview .....	27
2.2. Development of Research Projects .....	28
2.3 Types of Research Projects .....	30
2.3.1 Empirical Research Projects .....	30
2.3.2 Exploratory Projects.....	31
2.3.3 Group Research Assignments.....	31
2.3.5 Presentation-Based Research.....	32
3.6. Literature Review Projects .....	32
2.4. Significance and Benefits of Research Projects .....	33
2.5 Challenges in Conducting Research Projects .....	36
2.6 Teacher Role.....	38
2.7 Research Based Learning .....	40
2.8 The Role of Technology in Research Projects .....	42
Conclusion .....	43
Chapter 3.....	45
Data Analysis and Results .....	45

Introduction.....	46
3.1 Research Approach.....	46
3.2 Population and Sample of the Study.....	46
3.3 Data Gathering Tools.....	46
3.4 Student's Questionnaire.....	47
3.4.1 Description of the Questionnaire .....	47
3.4.2 Administration of the Students Questionnaire.....	47
3.4.3 Validating the Students' Questionnaire .....	47
3.5 Data Analysis .....	47
3.5.1 Analysis of Students' Questionnaire .....	47
3.6. Discussion and Interpretation of Students' Questionnaire .....	65
3.7 Teachers' Interview .....	66
3.7.1 Description of Teachers' Interview.....	66
3.7.2 Analysis of Teachers Interview .....	67
3.8 Teachers' Interview Discussion .....	78
3.9 Summary of the Findings .....	78
Conclusion .....	79
General Conclusion .....	80
Recommendations .....	81
Limitations of the Study .....	82
List of References.....	83
Appendix .....	
الملخص .....	



## **General Introduction**

English has gained significant dominance in today's world, it has become important in teaching, learning and every day communication .When teaching English to non-native speakers, the goal is to help them improve their language skills and assist them in developing their independence in the learning process. Autonomy has emerged as a crucial skill for students in becoming self-reliant and taking charge of their own learning, which involves being self-directed, setting goals and giving students the freedom to choose how they engage with their studies.

Learners benefit from autonomy, especially when conducting research projects, as it enhances their self reliance, problem-solving skills, and ability to navigate the steps of research without a guide. Consequently learners should be given the opportunity to study independently. The main motivation behind this research is to consider autonomy an effective skill that has to be developed in EFL classrooms through the active engagement in research projects, and emphasize the influence of educators in fostering student independence.

### **1. Statement of Problem**

Teaching and learning English as a foreign language (EFL) can be challenging, learners often face obstacles in their learning journey because of different reasons such as limited language skills , lack of awareness in language , culture and interaction that are important for effective learning . In the context of university level English studies, traditional teacher-centred methodologies dominate which makes autonomy a challenging goal to achieve. On the other hand, research projects constitute an opportunity for students to promote their autonomy which enables them to independently analyze information. Self dependent students are more likely to achieve better results in their studies. The need for understanding how EFL

learners autonomy can be promoted through conducting research projects is a major key, as well as identifying useful strategies that can be used to support autonomous learning. The role of the teacher in fostering this skill is crucial, as educators can guide students to enhance their self-regulated study. Through a qualitative approach, this study will investigate how developing independence impacts learner's language performance and confidence and provide practices that encourage autonomy in EFL context.

## **2. Significance of the Study**

The study attempts to explore how promoting autonomy through research projects can support EFL students to develop their language skills and engage more with the language. By questioning the teacher centred method this study seek to provide ideas that can help EFL educators make effective learner centred programs. Additionally, this investigation will highlight the benefits of fostering individualized learning by offering guidance on how to enhance student independence through the research projects.

## **3. Hypothesis**

- We assume that learner's autonomy can be promoted through research projects in an EFL context.

## **4. Research Questions**

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

- To what extent are EFL university students autonomous in their learning practices?
- How do research project contribute to the development of learner autonomy among EFL students?

- What role do the teachers play in supporting and fostering learners autonomy through research based activities?

## **5. Research Aims**

- Aim1: To determine the importance of promoting autonomy among English students.
- Aim 2: To highlight the significance of research projects in enhancing this skill.

## **6. Methodology**

### **6.1 Choice of Method**

This study will employ the descriptive qualitative method for data collection and analysis as an appropriate way of studying the hypothesis. This approach will provide valuable findings and serve the main purpose.

### **6.2.Population and Sampling**

**Population:** Master One English students at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra.

**Sample 01:** 37 students (randomly selected).

**Sample 02:** 05 teachers of the Departments of English Studies (randomly selected).

### **6.3.Research Tools:**

- Questionnaire to the students.
- Interview with the teachers.

For this study, a semi-structured questionnaire will be used to collect data. It includes a mix of open ended and close ended questions, exploratory question, justification questions. In addition a semi-structured interview will be conducted with teachers to gather in-depth insights into their perspectives on promoting autonomy in EFL learners. The interviews will



consist of open-ended questions aimed at exploring teachers' experiences, strategies, and challenges in fostering autonomy through research projects.

## **7. Structure of the Study**

### **Chapter one : Learner Autonomy**

This chapter outlines the foundation of learner autonomy, its importance in EFL context and its capacity to develop student's responsibility to be independent in their learning. It also discusses some definitions along with the historical background of autonomy. Moreover, the research highlights the role of self reliance in language learning. The study emphasizes some various aspects such as measuring autonomy, including learning strategies to encourage students to become autonomous learners.

### **Chapter Two: Research Projects**

This chapter outline the role of research projects in language education, focusing on its role in promoting learners autonomy. It also discusses strategies for incorporating research projects in EFL programs to encourage autonomous learning.

### **Chapter Three: Data Analysis and Results**

This chapter is devoted to the analysis of teacher's interviews which focuses on the development of strategies that should be employed to enhance EFL student's autonomy. Additionally, the student's questionnaire reviews learner's perceptions and attitudes towards autonomy at the university level.

# Chapter One

## **Learner Autonomy**

## **Introduction**

Education has always played a key role in shaping individuals and societies, providing people with the knowledge and skills for their growth and success. Over time, learning has witnessed multiple developments. In the past, teachers were the main source of knowledge, and students mostly listened and followed instructions. Nowadays, Teachers give more attention to their students, and students actively participate in their own learning processes. Students have started taking responsibility for their own learning, and they are not only dependent on their educators to guide them throughout their educational journey. As many professionals agree, learning becomes more efficient when students are active participants, responsible for their choices and actions.

Moreover, this concept is connected to learner autonomy, which means the ability of students to take control of their learning process. Instead of heavily relying on teachers for guidance, learners take responsibility for their progress and decisions. Autonomous learners always try to find ways to improve themselves; they are usually more motivated and confident. They know their strengths and weaknesses and try to work on them. This doesn't mean they learn alone, but they take an active role. Students learn more when they take part in their own education.

Learner autonomy is important because it helps students build useful skills like problem-solving, thinking critically, and staying motivated. When students take responsibility for their learning, they become more confident and independent. This is especially helpful in language learning because it allows students to practice and improve their skills outside the classroom. In short, autonomy helps learners become more independent and successful. This

chapter focuses on exploring the key aspects of learner autonomy, including its characteristics, influencing factors, and methods to promote it in educational context.

### **1.1. Historical Overview**

The word "autonomy" originates from the ancient Greek term "autonomia," which comes from "autos," signifying "self," and "nomos," meaning "law" which refers to self-rule (Quijano, n.d.). Although the concept of autonomy was not introduced in language learning until the 1970s, the idea itself had existed long before (Benson, 2013).

The focus on learner autonomy has been a central subject in language education since the 20th century (Smith, 2008). The idea of autonomy has developed over centuries, influencing multiple fields like philosophy, psychology, and education (Benson & Voller, 1997). Originating from ancient philosophical ideas, autonomy was at first related to self-governance and individual freedom (Benson, 2013). Over time, its meaning expanded, shaping educational theories and methodologies centred on students. In language learning, autonomy emerged as a key principle, highlighting the importance of students' ability to independently control their learning process (Smith, 2008).

The idea of autonomy was introduced to the realm of language learning through the Council of Europe's modern language project, which played a crucial role in introducing this concept to the field (Benson, 2001). Initially introduced as a plan, this project later evolved into a center for research and practical applications in language education. Yves Châlon, a defender of autonomy in language learning, established CRAPEL at the University of Nancy in France. Following his death, Henri Holec assumed leadership of the centre, where he continued to enhance and develop the principles of autonomy in language education (Benson, 2001).

Henri Holec played a crucial role in the development of learner autonomy, especially through his influential 1981 report for the Council of Europe. In this report, Holec defines learner autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Holec, 1981, p. 18) . This perspective marked a shift away from traditional teacher-focused methodologies, highlighting the importance of learner independence in determining goals, selecting learning strategies, and evaluating their own progress.

In the late twentieth century, there was a growing focus on learner independence in education. This shift was influenced by educational reforms that emphasized student-centred learning. The introduction of self-directed learning centre and technology in language education gave learners more practical ways to become independent (Little, 1991). Researchers like David Little highlighted the link between independence and language skills, suggesting that self-directed learning helps learners engage more and learn a language better (Little, 1991).

Over recent years, psychological perspectives, especially the self-determination theory by Deci and Ryan (2000), have enhanced our comprehension of learner autonomy. This theory emphasizes autonomy as a fundamental human requirement that boosts motivation and personal growth. Applying these concepts in education underscores the importance of creating learning environments that support autonomy to enhance intrinsic motivation and improve learning achievements.

The evolution of learner autonomy has been influenced by the ongoing interplay between theoretical advancements and real-world application, impacting modern educational strategies aimed at fostering self-reliant and empowered learners (Benson, 2013). The idea of learners taking control of their own learning has evolved over time due to changes in

educational approaches. When applied to language learning, it shows a trend towards empowering students to be more independent and motivated in their educational journey.

Autonomy can also be seen in adult education and self-directed learning, which help shape independent language learning (Riihimäki, 2013, p. 10). Benson (2001) explains that autonomy is not only related to the process of learning a language but is also influenced by other factors, such as society and social interactions, this means that autonomy in learning is not just about studying alone. Social factors, like culture and environment, also influence how independent a learner becomes.

In short, the history of autonomy, as a broad and complex field, has shown that it connects to many parts of people's lives and has improved education. It has also guided new teachers and researchers by providing important studies, documents, and findings.

## **1.2. General Perspectives of Autonomy**

Through individual and collaborative agency learner autonomy is the extent to which a learner can be said to initiate, organize, supervise, and assess their own learning in second language and can gain proficiency as well as integrate their L2 identity. In other words, learner autonomy involves the ability to manage one's own education through self-directed decision-making (Little, 2020). Students have to take responsibility and receive encouragement in making choices regarding their own education in order to acquire this autonomy (Scharle & Szabo, 2000). Additionally, autonomous learners are accountable not only for their learning choices but also for how they put their decisions into practice (Dickinson, 1987; Nunan, 1997).

Benson (2001) explains that autonomy naturally arises from self-directed learning, where learners determine their learning objectives, progress, and evaluation. Similarly, Littlewood (1996) defines autonomy as “learners’ ability and willingness to make choices independently” (p. 97). The goal is to create learners who do not rely entirely on their teachers but instead take full responsibility for their own learning. In this context, autonomous learners plan their learning activities, seek out additional resources, and assess their own progress.

Additionally, Benson and Voller (1997) outline five different ways in which autonomy is conceptualized: as independent study, as a set of skills for self-directed learning, as an innate capacity suppressed by traditional education, as learner responsibility, and as the right to control one's learning development. According to these interpretations, autonomy is a dynamic, context-dependent process that changes depending on the learner's surroundings and educational background rather than being a fixed attribute (Little, 1991).

Furthermore, autonomy is more than just a teaching strategy. It also represents a larger change in the balance of power in education, where learning is now seen as a process in which students actively create and shape knowledge rather than simply a social construct (Benson, 2011). Encouraging learner autonomy is crucial in modern classrooms since it improves motivation, self-control, and critical thinking, which, in consequence, helps students with independent problem-solving and lifelong learning (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

To elaborate, Learner autonomy is a two-dimensional concept, existing from dependence to independence on a continuum, could be understood as the ability to make well-informed decisions through not only self-discovery, but also balanced between the two. Suggesting the ability to make right choices by supporting self-exploration and discovery, not

the same as personal choices, yet both sides needing balanced in a process of learner ownership (Zoghi & Nezhad Dehghan, 2012).

### **1.3. The Importance of Autonomy in Language Learning**

Autonomy is one of the most important aspects of human development. Deci (1996, p. 2) highlights the innate urge for people to have control over their own decisions and actions by defining it as the capacity to act freely and voluntarily. This self-directed method is beneficial in a variety of disciplines, especially in education. Autonomy is more than independence; it is deliberate self-control and deliberate decision-making (Little, 1991). This self-directed method is beneficial in a variety of disciplines, especially in education, because it gives students the tools they need to study throughout their lives and adapt various linguistic and cultural contexts.

Usually, in regular language classes, the teacher leads the instruction, which might limit students from becoming independent learners. On the other hand, when students are encouraged to be more self-reliant through autonomous learning, they take an active part in their education and become better at acquiring language skills. EFL classes should be learner-centered, with a gradual application of learner autonomy. Candy (1991) states that "self-directed learners are those who take the initiative in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating goals, identifying resources, and evaluating their progress" (p. 24). When students are in charge of how they learn, they get better at the language and develop skills that help them keep learning throughout their lives. Furthermore, Candy (1991) asserts that autonomy occurs "when learners are involved in making choices and decisions about the content and the mode of what they are studying" (p. 24). This means that learners who actively participate in the learning process are likely to experience motivation, and motivated



learners tend to be successful in their learning. Autonomous learning is achieved when students actively participate in shaping their learning experience.

Holec (1981) emphasizes the importance of learner autonomy in language learning by stating, "Autonomous learners take responsibility for their own learning, making deliberate decisions about their goals and methods, which leads to more effective and motivated learning compared to those who rely entirely on teacher instruction" (p. 3). Students who take charge of their own learning by setting goals, choosing methods, and actively participating tend to achieve better results compared to those who depend solely on teachers. Active learners are usually more motivated and effective in acquiring knowledge, whereas passive learners may find it challenging to develop necessary skills. Fostering autonomy boosts problem-solving skills, maintains motivation, and enhances long-term language retention. This transition from teacher-driven teaching to a learner-focused approach is a fundamental principle in language education.

According to the MindBrainEd Think Tank (2024), autonomous learning enhances language acquisition because it develops essential skills such as:

- **Critical thinking:** Giving students autonomy motivates them to analyze, assess, and combine information instead of just passively absorbing knowledge.
- **Metacognitive skills:** Students gain a deeper understanding of how they learn, which enables them to adapt their strategies for improved results.
- **Effective time management:** As students enhance their discipline in managing their studies alongside other responsibilities.
- **Long-term language retention:** When students actively engage with the material, they understand it better and remember it more effectively over time.

For both educators and students, the main focus is enhancing proficiency in the specific language. There has been a recent debate about this topic. As stated by Little (2003), who suggests that as learners become more independent in their learning, their proficiency in the target language also improves. These two aspects learner autonomy and language proficiency complement each other: “The development of learner autonomy and the growth of target language proficiency are mutually supporting and fully integrated with each other” (Little, 2003, p. 14).

Encouraging autonomy in language education is crucial for nurturing independent learners who maintain a lifelong commitment to learning, as it plays a crucial role in language acquisition, enabling students to assume accountability for their learning, establish goals, and nurture important skills.

#### **1.4. Types of Autonomy**

Every academic scholar has defined learner autonomy in their own ways, and for most of them, autonomy splits into various categories. Benson (1997) noted three types of autonomy that are fundamental which are technical, psychological, and political. He connected them with three approaches to learning: which are positivism, constructivism, and critical theory. These types enable a detailed understanding of the ways in which learners control their learning activities.

##### **1.4.1. Technical Autonomy**

Technical Autonomy Refers to the capacity of students to use tools, resources, and learning practices to improve their language proficiency. It highlights the useful skills of learning organisation, such as planning study sessions and implementing efficient learning strategies. Since it emphasises self-directed learning over conventional teacher-led teaching,

this perspective is associated with positivism in language learning, as it prioritises self-directed learning over traditional teacher-led instruction.

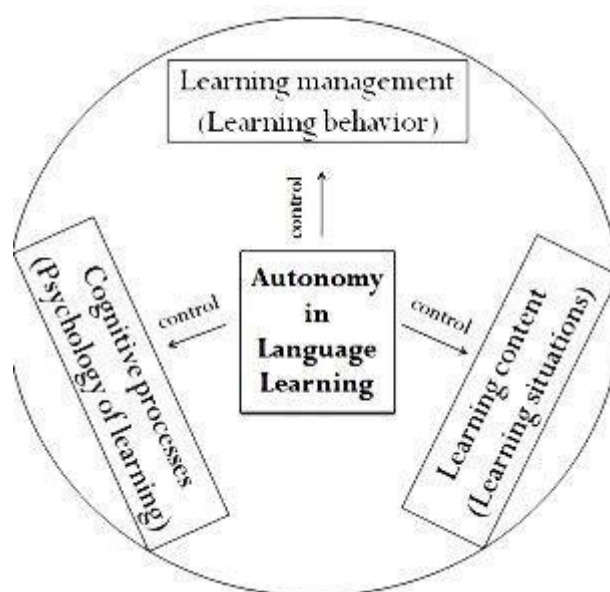
#### **1.4.2. Psychological Autonomy**

Emphasises internal elements, including confidence, motivation, and self-control. This type of autonomy, according to Benson (1997), is closely related to students' readiness to assume accountability for their education. Additionally, it supports constructivist methods of language acquisition, which place an emphasis on individual responsibility and the active use of the target language.

#### **1.4.3. Political Autonomy**

Political autonomy Refers to the ability of students to make decisions about their education by having control over their learning environment, resources, and procedures. It also emphasises how crucial it is to comprehend the larger social context and identify any obstacles that would prevent them from assimilating into the target language. According to Benson (1997), this perspective is linked to critical theory, which studies issues of control, power relations, and social change.

As Benson (1997) states, autonomy in language learning is not a singular concept but rather a combination of technical, psychological, and political dimensions. The figure below highlights how these dimensions interact through learning management, cognitive processes, and decision-making in learning contexts. It demonstrates that autonomy is developed through a balance of self-regulation, resource management, and control over learning situations, reinforcing the idea that autonomy is a multidimensional construct (Benson, 1997).



**Figure 1:** The Capacity to Take Control over Learning

(Benson, 2001, P. 47).

During a language learning experience, autonomy refers to a learner's ability to teach themselves, including planning, choose strategies and evaluating progress. It also encompasses the choice of instructional resources addressing individual differences and preferences. Additionally, by evaluating their knowledge and modifying their learning strategies for better understanding, learners control their cognitive processes. All these factors create the environment of independence and responsibility in language learning and the education ecosystem as a whole.

In conclusion, encouraging learner autonomy means establishing contexts that enable students to manage their learning. For example, by teaching independence in choosing options, guiding towards critical thinking, and giving adequate control of their learning processes, educators can help motivate and self-direct EFL learners. Such approach maximizes the effectiveness of language acquisition while fostering the ability to learn

independently for the future, thus making autonomy an essential feature of meaningful education.

### 1.5. Levels of Autonomy

By the late 1990s, researchers did come to an agreement that autonomy had to be conceptualized in terms of several levels. These levels have been explained with the help of various theories. Nunan (1997) for instance, was the first to identify different levels of autonomy in relation to a learner's undertaking a task within a learning content and process framework. According to Nunan (1997, as cited in Mailbi, 2013) there are five levels of autonomy:

- **Awareness:** At this stage, students start to understand the main goals of each session and the main ideas contained in the course materials.
- **Involvement:** Students participate more actively in their learning journey. They are given more freedom to choose how they want to improve their skills and to define their own learning objectives.
- **Intervention:** This stage shows how capable the students are of choosing what to do in class. They also take part in choosing the learning program's content.
- **Creation:** Learners independently establish their own learning objectives. They take initiative and assume full responsibility for their academic progress.
- **Transcendence:** In the final stage, students demonstrate complete autonomy. They are able to successfully continue learning outside of official educational settings without external support or guidance (Nunan, 1997, p. 195). These key stages are illustrated in the following table, which outlines the content of each level and the progression through each level.

Level	Learning action	content	process
1	Awareness	Learners are made aware of the pedagogical goals and content of the materials they are using	Learners identify implications of pedagogical tasks and identify their own preferred learning styles and strategies
2	Involvement	Learners are involved in selecting their own goals from a range of alternatives on offer	Learners make choices among a range of options
3	Intervention	Learners are involved in modifying and adapting the goals and content of the learning programme	Learners modify/ adapt tasks
4	Creation	Learners create their own goals and objectives	Learners create their own tasks
5	Transcendence	Learners go beyond the classroom and make links between the content of classroom learning and the world beyond	Learners become teachers and researchers

**Table 1 :** Five level Modal of Learner Autonomy

(Nunan, 1997, p. 195).

### **1.6. Characteristics of Autonomous Learners**

Learners who are autonomous are self-reliant and take responsibility over their individual studying. They are able to design their own learning coursework, set goals, and are aware of how to succeed in them. They gradually learn to control their own learning rather than relying on the teacher to lead them. They gain self-assurance and become more involved in their education as a result ("Educational Characteristics of Learner Autonomy," 2022). Candy (1991, p. 130) describes autonomous learners as individuals who are:

- Methodical and disciplined
- Logical and analytical
- Reflective and self-aware
- Curious, open, and motivated
- Flexible
- Interdependent and interpersonally competent
- Persistent and responsible
- Venturesome and creative
- Confident with a positive self-concept
- Independent and self-sufficient
- Skilled in information seeking and retrieval
- Knowledgeable about the learning process
- Able to develop and use criteria for evaluation.

In addition, autonomous learners develop a variety of features that enable them to direct their own learning experience. Establishing objectives, selecting instructional strategies, and evaluating their progress allow them to modify their plans of action when faced with

obstacles. Furthermore, they actively obtain new information and develop their problem-solving skills, which increase their independence in their academic efforts. Autonomous learners prioritize critical thinking when evaluating materials instead of just depending on external sources. The characteristics of autonomous learners include self-confidence, personal responsibility, and a permanent dedication to learning (Candy, 1991).

### **1.7. Factors Influencing Learner Autonomy**

Learner independence is not something that simply develops; it is influenced by a number of factors. By including particular factors, students can improve their independence. The main elements influencing learner independence are motivation, anxiety, and attitude. One of the most important educational objectives is to encourage learner autonomy to take responsibility for their own education. By investigating these components, learners can understand how these factors affect their capacity for self-directed learning and how educators can foster a learning environment that supports autonomy.

#### **1.7.1 Motivation**

According to Gardner (1985, p. 10), motivation stands for “the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning the language.” In other words, this refers to the amount of work a learner is willing to put into learning a language. Similarly, Ushioda points out that “autonomous language learners are by definition motivated learners” (Ushioda, 1996, p. 2). Motivation plays a big role in how students manage their own learning. When they're motivated, they're more likely to take charge, set goals, and figure out the best ways to learn. This engagement helps them make their own choices, which leads to more independence in how they learn (Dewi & Wilany, 2023).



### **1.7.2 Anxiety**

The learning environments where anxiety is most common have been the focus of many research studies. Students with high foreign language anxiety tend to avoid participation, miss classes, or delay assignments (Horwitz et al., 1986, as cited in Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 1999). Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999) explain that foreign language anxiety is linked to low self-confidence, self-esteem, and motivation, all of which can hinder learner autonomy. Student's willingness to participate in self-directed learning is hindered by anxiety, which has a negative impact on learner autonomy. It can lower their self-esteem and motivation, which may later affect how they learn and how well teachers use their teaching skills (Zhang, 2018).

### **1.7.3 Attitude**

Besides the previously mentioned factors, attitudes are considered to be another important aspect related to learner autonomy. These factors focus specifically on how learners approach and react to the language learning process. How students react can be greatly influenced by first thoughts and perceptions of the learning process. In this regard, Kollar and Fischer (2006) establish a connection between autonomy and attitudes. Similarly, Thanasoulas (2000) views attitude as essential for autonomy and a key factor in determining the success of a learning activity. He suggests that attitude reflects how individuals perceive themselves, others, their own culture, and the target culture.

## **1.8. Approaches to Fostering Autonomy**

Different methods and strategies have been implemented in the field of foreign language instruction to boost learner independence. The effectiveness of these strategies relies on establishing language learning environments that support autonomous learning. In other words, promoting learner autonomy requires designing educational situations that

encourage self-directed participation. To achieve this goal, many approaches have been suggested as solutions to help EFL learners meet their needs. According to Benson (2001) these methodologies can be classified into six primary categories. The six approaches to fostering learner autonomy were originally proposed by Benson (2001, as cited in Maaz, 2020), as shown in the following figure:

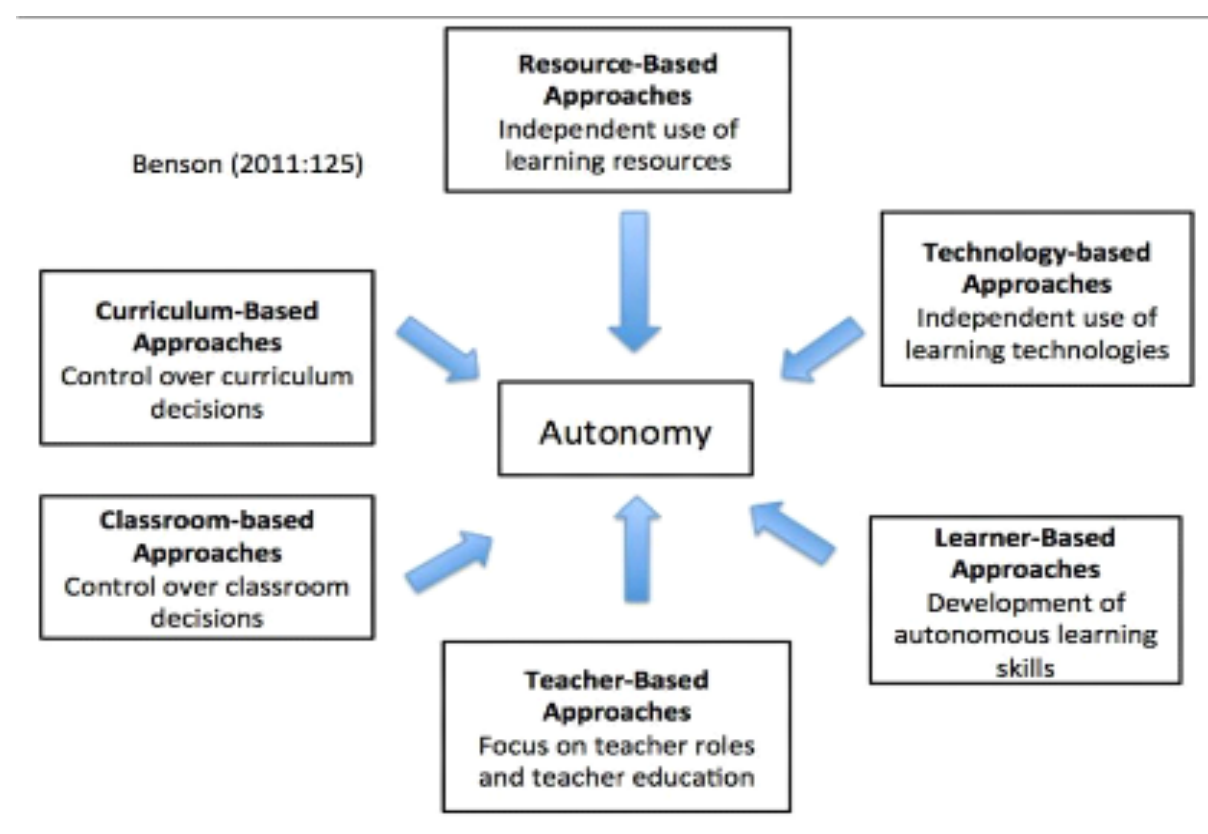


Figure 2 : The Different Approaches Suggested to Foster Learner Autonomy

(Benson 2001)

### 1.8.1 Learner-based Approaches

The learner-based method focuses on encouraging learners to take responsibility of their own learning by addressing their psychological and behavioural changes (Benson, 2001). The goal of this method is to give students the tools they need to become independent. According to Benson (2011), fostering learner autonomy requires connecting training to more

general theories of learner development. He emphasises that simply teaching strategies is not enough unless learners know how and when to use them reflectively. In this view, learner's autonomy can be better supported through self-regulatory reflective strategies, enabling the learners to understand and take charge of their own learning.

### **1.8.2 Teacher-based Approaches**

The teacher-based approach highlights the significant role of educators in fostering learner autonomy. According to Benson (2001), this approach emphasizes how teachers contribute to the development of autonomous learners by modifying their teaching roles. Rather than being the sole authority in the classroom, teachers are encouraged to act as facilitators, guides, mentors, and advisors, creating opportunities for students to take responsibility for their learning.

Additionally, Benson (2011) underscores the connection between teacher autonomy and learner autonomy. He suggests that educators must also develop their own independence to effectively cultivate autonomy among students, as teacher independence directly influences learners' ability to take control of their education. Moreover, Trilling and Fadel (2009) indicate the necessity for teachers to adapt to new classroom dynamics, where students work independently in teams to build essential 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

### **1.8.3 Classroom-based approaches**

Classroom-based approaches emphasize the importance of learners being actively engaged in planning, decision-making, and assessment within the classroom environment (Benson, 2001). By encouraging interaction between educators and students, this approach gives students the ability to establish learning goals and assess their own progress. The use of

portfolios is a crucial component of this strategy since it helps students become more self-aware, confident, and develop self-assessment (Benson, 2011).

Additionally, because interactions with teachers and peers increase student participation and accountability, cooperative learning is important for fostering autonomy (Onozawa, 2010). Teachers inspire students to take charge of their education by creating a collaborative and student-centred environment that promotes a shift in accountability.

#### **1.8.4 Curriculum-Based Approaches**

A curriculum-based approach gives learners more control over their education by involving them in decisions about the overall curriculum (Benson, 2011). According to Benson (2001), this indicates that students participate in the planning and assessment of their learning, not only in the classroom but also in the development of the course, he refers to this concept as a "process syllabus".

According to Dam (1995), student involvement can be seen in many areas of the curriculum, such as choosing resources, dividing positions in the classroom, assigning homework, choosing activities, and even influencing assessment techniques. Students who take part in these choices become more involved and accountable for their education. Benson (2011) notes that in order for this strategy to be effective, educators must offer structured assistance to help students make wise choices.

#### **1.8.5 Resource-based Approaches**

The resource-based approach emphasizes learners' independent interaction with learning materials and resources to enhance their ability to control their learning process, including planning, material selection, and evaluation (Benson, 2001). Indeed, Study guides, self-discovery exercises, peer-collaborative fluency activities, self-evaluation checklists,

student-generated content, and reading or listening exercises tailored to particular genres rather than individual texts are some examples of these resources, according to Sheerin (1991). The purpose of these materials is not just to present or test language content but to help learners explore external learning opportunities. Additionally, the accessibility of various resources, such as books and digital materials, plays a crucial role in fostering autonomy, with technology further expanding these possibilities (Benson, 2001, p. 113).

### **1.8.6 Technology-based Approaches**

This approach uses technology to help students learn on their own and become more independent. Benson (2001) says that technology-based learning gives students access to resources, allows them to communicate with classmates and teachers, and helps them use the language in ways that might not be possible in a regular classroom. A common example of this is Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), which provides students with different multimedia tools and interactive activities for self-study. Overall, using technology in learning makes it easier for students to take charge of their own learning by creating flexible environments that suit different learning styles.

### **Conclusion**

In language learning, learner autonomy plays an essential role because it helps students exercise control over their own learning experience. Students need to work hard to become more independent, and teachers should assist them by fostering an environment in the classroom where they are free to make decisions and reflect on their development. Despite the many advantages of being an independent learner, there are a number of obstacles that can make it challenging. In summary this chapter provides an overview of the importance of autonomy and how it can encourage students to take an active and responsible role in their education.

# **Chapter Two**

## **Research Projects**

## **Introduction**

Research projects have become an effective way to enhance students' learning experience, especially in EFL contexts. As they encourage students to explore specific topics, analyze information, and present their findings, thereby supporting active participation in the educational journey. These projects follow a research-based learning methodology, supporting students' self-directed learning, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills. Rooted in constructivist and experiential learning theories, they also develop learner autonomy by encouraging students to take ownership of their academic process. Students can take responsibility for their education and improve their capacity to independently explore and process information by participating in research activities such as case studies, presentations, and small-scale investigations.

This chapter focuses on exploring research projects by defining them, outlining their multiple types, and emphasizing their importance in the educational context. It discusses the possible challenges that may arise when applying these projects in EFL classrooms, and highlight the role that teacher plays in helping students complete their research. It also seeks to offer a clear understanding of how research projects support students' academic and personal growth. This chapter contributes to a in depth knowledge of how educators can effectively guide students through the research process, helping them develop not only language proficiency but also essential academic and life skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration, and independent learning.

## 2.1 Research Projects: An Overview

According to Singh (2006), research happens when a person observes something many times, collects information, and then makes conclusions based on that information. Kothari defines research as, “a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic” (Kothari, 2004, p. 1). Similarly, the Oxford English Dictionary (2002) defines research as “the systematic investigation of sources and materials to establish knowledge and draw interesting conclusions.” In addition, a research project is the outcome of an independent student-led investigation, supported by teacher consultation, with the goal of achieving a planned result within a given timeframe (Grynova et al., 2022).

According to Haines (1989), rather than focusing on a single language task, a project is an interesting topic that supports the development of a variety of skills, including social, mathematical, problem-solving, language, and communicative skills. On top of that, the term *project* has been used to describe an activity that stands in contrast to traditional educational practices, according to Legutke & Thomas, a project “is in some kind of opposition to whatever is considered mainstream educational practice” (Legutke & Thomas, 1991, p. 158).

An educational research project is a study conducted within an educational environment to investigate, analyze, and improve teaching methods, learning decisions, and overall outcomes. Research projects in education are structured academic assignments which provide opportunities for students to investigate a particular subject or problem, analyse information and present what they have learnt in a variety of ways, including multimedia products, written reports, and oral presentations (Thomas, 2000). These tasks range from simple assignments to more complex research papers, presentations, or group projects. These



projects emphasize student-centred learning, as learners take responsibility for selecting topics, conducting research, and synthesizing information (Bell, 2010).

Research projects are connected in the context of education with project-based learning (PBL), which supports active participation, problem-solving, and the application of knowledge in practical settings (Blumenfeld et al., 1991). Collis & Hussey (2003) define a research project as “a process of enquiry and investigation; it is systematic, methodical, and ethical, with a focus on helping to solve practical problems and increasing knowledge” (as cited in Magidimisha & Chipungu, 2019, p. 52). Moreover, research projects can be conducted individually or in groups, teamwork helps to develop communication and problem-solving abilities (Krajcik & Blumenfeld, 2006).

In conclusion, research projects in learning serve as a valuable pedagogical approach that enhances student autonomy, critical thinking, and real-world problem-solving. By engaging in research, students develop essential academic and professional skills that prepare them for lifelong learning (Thomas, 2000). These projects tend to involve students in the research process and can be carried in a variety of settings, including classrooms and higher education institutions.

## **2.2. Development of Research Projects**

Research projects have seen a significant change in education over the years. At first, they were mostly used to test what students had learned or to support students in exploring academic topics. But with time, they became more important in helping students take part in their own learning. This change happened because teaching methods also changed from teachers doing most of the talking to giving students more chances to think, ask questions, and apply what they learnt. Looking at how research projects developed helps understand

their important role in today's classrooms. They are now chances for students to develop as autonomous thinkers rather than simply paperwork. Students frequently learn about their interests, learning styles, and strengths through these projects. Because of this, research projects are an essential component of contemporary education.

Educational research studies began to emerge as a result of various interacting forces such as cultural and structural forces, personal initiative, and community collective practices. The trend was particularly highlighted during the academic support stage, and it was driven by political events as well as the dedication of the main stakeholders, who helped set the research goals (Boughey & Niven, 2012). Moreover, educational research studies developed in response to teachers' need for ongoing professional growth. They aimed to encourage reflective practice by linking theoretical knowledge with classroom teaching, with the overall goal of enhancing teaching quality and tackling emerging challenges in education. (Muñoz Martínez et al., 2015).

Research projects in education have developed as teaching moved from traditional, passive methods to more active and hands-on approaches. This change supports deeper learning, improves the quality of education, and helps both students and teachers build important skills, such as teaching techniques, use of technology, and communication (Pizarro, 2018). Research projects in education grew through teamwork between school leaders, teachers, and researchers. They focused on research that connects directly to classroom practice, with the goal of improving teaching methods and helping students learn better by using research to guide decisions in schools (Schenke, 2015).

Research projects in education have grown through teaching methods that focus more on students. These projects often combine learning with real research and development

activities. This helps students take a more active role in learning, use what they know in real-life situations, and connect what they learn in theory to actual practice (Juvonen, 2018). In addition, the necessity to address real-world issues gave rise to educational research projects, requiring collaboration between scholars, practitioners, and educational designers. The goal of programs like Networked Improvement Communities and the Strategic Education Research Partnership is to establish conducive conditions for this kind of study (Donovan, 2013).

In conclusion, the development of research projects shows a clear move toward more active and meaningful learning in education. As Muñoz Martínez et al. (2015) state, such projects help students connect theory with practice and support ongoing learning improvement. Over time, they have become useful tools that encourage students to think critically, work with others, and take charge of their own learning. This reflects a change in the role of learners, who are now more engaged in the learning process than they were in the past.

## **2.3 Types of Research Projects**

### **2.3.1 Empirical Research Projects**

Empirical research projects are structured research investigations that use data collection and analysis to address particular research questions. They can be used with a variety of research techniques in multiple fields, including technology, business, and education. Their value lies in producing evidence-based findings that advance theoretical knowledge and real-world application (Nguyen, 2023). Empirical research projects are intended to produce knowledge by experimentation and observation (Mende, 2009). In addition, these projects are systematic studies that collect and evaluate data from human subjects using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. In a field like English Studies, these initiatives seek to address particular research questions and advance broader knowledge (Kinkead, 2019).

### **2.3.2 Exploratory Projects**

In education, exploratory projects include a wide range of activities meant to improve learning via creative approaches and interdisciplinary cooperation. Exploratory projects in education allow students to take charge of their own learning by investigating topics they find meaningful. These projects support the development of critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork, as students plan and carry out their own research. This process enables students to express their experiences and gather perspectives from their peers, leading to a better understanding of their learning environment (Fisette, 2011).

### **2.3.3 Group Research Assignments**

Group research assignments are collaborative academic activities in which students engage collectively, often through virtual collaboration, to complete a research task. These assignments are intended to foster teamwork competencies and enhance academic performance, as demonstrated by their beneficial impact on tasks such as business case analysis (Fontana Angelo & McCarthy, 2018). These research assignments require students to work together in teams to investigate a particular topic. Through setting objectives, reviewing relevant literature, writing reports, and presenting their results, learners develop research abilities while also strengthening communication and collaboration skills in an academic setting (Alrefaie et al., 2020).

### **2.3.4 Individual Research Papers**

Individualized research in education is an important written assignment for a class at school or college which includes the student's own investigation and analysis of a topic. It aims to customize learning experiences based on each student's specific traits, supporting their intellectual and creative development while strengthening their professional skills. This method encourages well-rounded personal growth and ensures that educational objectives

match the learner's cognitive interests and personal needs (Spytsia & Khodakovska, 2022). It gives the student the opportunity to study a subject more closely and independently than they could in a traditional course.

### **2.3.5 Presentation-Based Research**

Presentations contribute significantly to the development of essential academic and professional skills, including analytical reasoning, oral communication, and confidence in public speaking—abilities that are valuable for both students and experienced researchers (Kim, 2023). In addition to skill-building, presentations offer meaningful networking opportunities, enabling learners to engage with potential mentors, collaborators, and future employers, thereby supporting their academic and career advancement. For senior researchers, such events often lead to increased motivation and productivity, as they facilitate collaboration, the exchange of ideas, and exposure to current research trends (Kim, 2023). Moreover, presentation-based research focuses on clearly sharing results using visual tools such as tables, charts, and graphs. Adapting the presentation to match the audience's level of knowledge and making complex information easier to understand helps improve clarity and interest. This approach supports the effective sharing and understanding of research findings (Oliinyk, 2024).

### **3.6. Literature Review Projects**

Literature review is an overview of the published work in a field of study projects. These projects consist of critically examining existing studies on a particular topic, highlighting gaps in current knowledge, integrating relevant findings, and offering background for future research. They play a key role in research proposals, theses, and systematic reviews (Hazari, 2023). A literature review project consists of systematically collecting, analyzing, and integrating existing studies related to a specific topic. It offers a

focused summary of key research, addressing particular questions or issues, and plays a crucial role in connecting academic work to established knowledge (Wentz, 2014).

#### **2.4. Significance and Benefits of Research Projects**

By actively engaging in research and projects such as end-of-term research papers, presentations, and group work tasks...etc, students develop the skills necessary to critically analyse information, examine supporting evidence, and achieve valid conclusions. Communication, comprehension of information, problem-solving, and critical thinking are among the skills that are developed by this method of learning. In addition, research projects improve students' academic understanding, encourage active participation, facilitate learning, and increase motivation and interest in the subject matter.

Through the use of organised techniques that increase output and efficiency, research projects enhance time management. Effective time management enables researchers to manage challenging assignments, set priorities, and reduce distractions, all of which contribute to the success of their projects. Research projects improve time management by necessitating structured planning, task prioritization, and delegation. Working with students on collaborative projects ensures efficient time use, encourages goal-oriented behaviour, and promotes accountability, leading to increased research productivity (Chase et al., 2013). Additionally, they contribute to improve time management by assessing existing practices, offering frameworks, tools, and methods, and recommending improvements. They support skill development and the exchange of best practices, ultimately resulting in more efficient planning and execution of project timelines (Ekambaram et al., 2017).

Research projects greatly improve cultural awareness by helping people understand and appreciate different cultural backgrounds and teachers use various teaching methods.

Projects, such as cultural exhibition projects, boost cultural awareness by allowing students to explore local knowledge and different ethnic histories. This helps them gain a deeper understanding of cultural importance and encourages creativity in social studies, ultimately enriching their learning experience (Widyanti & Rohman, 2024). By working in groups, students can share diverse perspectives and build mutual respect. This enhances relationships among classmates in addition to improving learning outcomes.

As Levy & Petrulis( 2012) explain, research projects enhance independent learning, encouraging students to take responsibility for their research process, promoting self-regulation and autonomy. Additionally, Fragoulis (2009) emphasizes that participation in research projects improves a variety of skills that support the independence of students, including collaboration, problem-solving, and communication. Researching enhances computing skills, while presenting in front of peers develops capacity for speech, responsibility, and self-confidence. Furthermore, by encouraging students to evaluate and choose appropriate resources, project work develops critical thinking, a crucial component of autonomy (Fragoulis, 2009). Students practice all four language skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—by working on projects including data gathering, analysis, and presentation (Richards & Lockhart, 1994).

This general method enhances general language proficiency. Moreover, students are more likely to be motivated and involved when learning activities are personally relevant and aligned with their interests, which can lead to deeper learning and improved retention of linguistic concepts (Dörnyei, 2001). Besides, activities such as investigation, problem-solving, and drawing conclusions foster higher-order thinking skills, which are essential for academic success (Brookhart, 2010). When integrated into research assignments, these

processes encourage students to engage deeply with content and think critically about their findings. This is especially helpful in EFL contexts as students develop their critical thinking skills in a second language.

The figure below represents the various skills that learners can acquire through engaging in research projects:

Process skills	Presentation skills	Management skills	Personal skills
Problem formulation	Effective use of language	Project planning	Independence
Problem solving	Data awareness	Setting objectives	Self-confidence
Assessing information	Oral communication	Project management	Self-reliance
Sifting and balancing evidence	Audience awareness	Progress review and evaluation	Self-discipline
Research techniques	Debating and arguing	Time management	Self-enquiry
Literature searching and sourcing	Persuading an encouraging	Working to deadlines	Imagination
Reading scientific information	Effective use of display technology	Working with others	Originality
Developing arguments	Report writing	Person management	Ability or learn
Designing investigations and experiments	Writing for different audiences	Coping with crises	Making decisions
Analysing data	Writing for different purposes	Entrepreneurship	Being adaptable
Attention to detail			Accepting criticism
Numeracy			
Literacy			
Computing skills			
Lab skills			
Safety awareness			
Writing for different purposes			

**Figure 3 : Skills obtained From Projects**

(Adopted from Luck, 1999) (as cited in, Luck, 2008).

This table categorizes essential skills into four main areas: process, presentation, management, and personal skills. Process skills focus on handling information and solving problems effectively. Presentation skills emphasize clear communication, both written and verbal. Management skills involve planning, organizing, and working efficiently with others. Personal skills relate to individual traits such as confidence, adaptability, and decision-making. Together, these skills are crucial for academic success, professional development, and personal growth.



## **2.5 Challenges in Conducting Research Projects**

While research projects provide helpful learning opportunities, students often experience a number of difficulties when working on these types of tasks. One major challenge is time management it might be difficult to balance research with other responsibilities at school. Students frequently complain that they do not have enough time to conduct research (Haleem & Asghar, 2023). Another significant obstacle is the difficulty of expressing ideas effectively in a foreign language, which constitutes an important challenge for non-native speakers (Balbag et al., 2024).

Many students find writing and presenting research projects in English as a second language (ESL) challenging (Qasem & Zayid, 2019). Lack of motivation and interest is another common challenge; students who find it difficult to connect with the subject matter tend to produce research projects of lower quality (Qasem & Zayid, 2019). Furthermore, students from different fields and educational levels are impacted by the challenging problem of lacking research skills in research projects. Due to a low level of research capabilities, many students find it difficult to complete crucial tasks like writing proposals, conducting literature reviews, and analysing data. This shortcoming frequently results in issues with supervisors and delays of project completion (Magali, 2019).

Research studies are greatly hindered by limited resources. These are enough to make it difficult to conduct successful research, from gathering data to managing projects. Lack of funding may stop the development of solid study designs and lead researchers to publish in less respectable journals, both of which can affect the validity of research findings (Bredan, 2020). In addition, collaborating on research projects can be challenging for a number of reasons. These issues typically result from complicated team dynamics, opposing objectives

among members, and a lack of equity or trust. When students or researchers work together on projects, they can face different types of challenges, like problems with technology, organization, communication, or rules set by institutions. These issues can make teamwork harder and affect the credibility of research. That is why it is important to plan well and use good strategies to improve how the team works and to obtain better results (Nova & Gonzalez, 2023).



**Figure 4 :** Factors Affecting Writing Projects in L2

(Qasem & Zayid, 2019,p. 34).

The figure highlights the various factors that can affect writing of research projects in a second language (L2). It illustrates how these factors are interconnected. These factors impact the overall progress and success of the research process, influencing the development and outcome of the project. The figure emphasizes that the path to completing an L2 research project is shaped by multiple overlapping factors that need to be managed effectively to achieve mastery and success.

In summary, these challenges become more difficult because of lack of prior experience and insufficient guidance. To overcome these obstacles, it is essential to implement an organized approach that provides students with the necessary tools and assistance. By acknowledging these challenges, educators and educational institutions can attempt to establish a more productive research-learning environment that fosters students' academic development and self-directed learning abilities.

## **2.6 Teacher Role**

Educators have a key role in helping students create meaningful research projects and implement them effectively. Teachers help identify topics that are interesting and relevant to students, often by observing their interests and discussions (Katz, 2013). Also, constructive feedback helps students refine their work and improve research skills. Teachers promote different skills and collaboration by facilitating the formation of small groups to investigate subtopics (Katz, 2013). They assist students in realizing the importance of their research outside of the classroom. In collaborative student research, the instructor's responsibilities include leading traditional labs or supporting non traditional research, encouraging cooperation between students and professionals, and developing interdisciplinary skills (Day et al., 2014). Educators help students make lists of related subtopics to research or topic webs (Katz, 2013). During research projects in the classroom, teachers play an essential in helping students organise their thoughts, make knowledge more accessible, and assess their understanding. They also foster a sense of scientific community and help students navigate outcomes that are unexpected (Peker & Dolan, 2012).

Teachers can expose students to important research methods and tools by using the book's guidance on designing studies, putting data collection strategies into practice, and evaluating findings (Şengül, 2024). The teacher role in helping students become more self reliant is

essential. Students can actively participate in their educational journeys thanks to this guidance, which eventually boosts their initiative and self-confidence. Teachers foster students' independence through the use of instructional strategies that encourage responsibility and active engagement. They assign tasks individually and in groups, get students involved in projects, and facilitate class discussion, all of which allow students to become more independent (Sembiring et al., 2024).

By fostering a comfortable and supportive environment, teachers can inspire students and minimise their anxiety about presenting their research projects. This entails putting into practice motivational techniques that prioritize effort over precision, viewing mistakes as teaching opportunities, and promoting the use of the first language (L1) as a coping method. These strategies not only help students overcome their fears but also build their confidence and competence in conducting research and presentation skills. Teachers can help students feel more at ease and willing to participate in oral communication in English during their presentations by offering a variety of learning opportunities and boosting their self-esteem (Matus, 2018).

To sum up, teachers play an important role in classroom research projects. They guide students through each step and help them understand how to ask questions and find answers. By giving instructions, offering feedback, and encouraging teamwork, teachers support students in building research skills and learning how to think more deeply. Their help also makes it easier for students to connect what they learn in class to real-life situations. In this way, teachers make research more practical and meaningful for students.

## 2.7 Research Based Learning

Research-Based Learning (RBL) is an approach to instruction that includes the process of conducting research into the curriculum. Through research activities, students actively contribute to the creation, exploration, and discovery of knowledge. RBL is an educational approach that integrates research activities into the learning process, enabling students to engage in inquiry, critical thinking, and the construction of knowledge through active participation in research projects. This method emphasizes the development of research skills, scientific identity, and an understanding of the values inherent in the scientific community (Liu et al., 2023). This eventually allows students to become responsible for their educational journeys and promoting learner autonomy.

Research-based Learning is important because it helps students develop essential 21st-century skills. Students improve their creativity, problem-solving skills, and ability to learn on their own by engaging in research-driven activities. Additionally, RBL bridges the gap between theory and practice by enabling students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world situations, which fosters a deeper understanding of the subject matter (Healey, 2005). According to Liu et al (2023), RBL changes how teachers teach in classrooms by getting students more involved. This way of learning not only helps students understand better but also teaches them important research skills.

The following table presents a classification of research-based learning based on student activity and research focus.

	Focus on...			
Level of student's activity		Research results	Research Methods	Research process
	Learning by research	... conduct a literature search on a research topic	... apply a chosen method to a given research question	... conduct their own research project (full cycle)
	Applied learning	...discuss research findings	... discuss pros and cons of particular methods	... plan research projects
			practice methods	...discuss research projects
	Receptive learning	... are presented research findings	... are taught research methods	... are taught about the research process
				...are taught academic skills

**Table 2 :** Classification Matrix of Research Based Learning and other Research Oriented

(Thiem, Preetz, &amp; Haberstroh, 2023).

The table provides a framework for classifying research-based learning around two dimensions: the level of student involvement from passive to active and the area of focus for learning (research results, methods, or process). It helps illustrate how students are engaged with research as recipients of knowledge, and eventually via full research projects. Each cell

in the table indicates a unique learning activity based on these criteria. The purpose is to assist educators in creating the types of research tasks that correspond with the level of student activity (or engagement) with the research experience.

### **2.8 The Role of Technology in Research Projects**

The way research projects are conducted in the classroom has been completely transformed by technology. It gives students immediate access to information, promotes collaboration, and makes gathering information and presentation easier. Using digital tools, students can participate in interactive learning, develop their critical thinking abilities, and investigate subjects more independently. Students can work more productively and creatively and enhance the learning process by incorporating technology into their research projects.

By fostering a more dynamic and interactive learning environment and integrating technology into classroom assignments increases student engagement. Digital resources such as data analysis software, multimedia tools, and virtual collaboration platforms are used to create captivating environments that hold students' interest and encourage active participation. Teachers can create a more engaging and stimulating learning environment that encourages student participation and deeper understanding by incorporating these technological tools (Alegre, 2023). When technology is applied in the classroom for research projects, students are much more engaged and motivated. Students who are more active and apply their knowledge in the real world achieve better learning outcomes and develop their communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills (Tsoy et al.,2023).

Students exhibit positive attitudes about using technology knowing its impact on their knowledge, skills, and confidence. The introduction of digital technologies has allowed students to extend the physical and cognitive boundaries of the classroom to become engaged

learners with access to the world (Yasin et al., 2024). Moreover, mobile technology in higher education classrooms has been found to positively influence students' learning outcomes and interactions (Jabbour, 2014). Furthermore, studies show that PBL participants express enhanced critical thinking skills and creative use of technology (García et al., 2024). Despite the widespread use of technology in classrooms like PowerPoint being the most popular tool, teachers' pedagogical approaches determine how effective technology-based instruction is (Ruggiero & Mong, 2015).

To conclude, technology integration in classroom research projects has shown significant positive impacts on student learning outcomes, engagement, and skill development. Teachers can design engaging and interactive learning environments that meet the various needs of their students by utilising tools like collaborative platforms, and adaptive learning systems. However, optimizing the advantages of technology integration involves addressing issues like access and equality as well as making sure that implementation plans are successful. The strategic use of technology will continue to be a key component of initiatives to enhance student outcomes and get students ready for the demands of the digital age as education changes.

### **Conclusion**

Engaging in classroom research projects significantly boosts students' academic growth by motivating them to be actively involved in their learning. They make educational experiences more meaningful by offering chances for investigation, critical thinking, and interaction with real world problems. However, thorough preparation, clear teacher guidance, and the availability of required resources are all necessary for these projects to be successful. A more dynamic and student-centred learning environment can result from resolving issues like time constraints and increasing student motivation. Teachers can establish an atmosphere



that encourages deeper learning and a sense of responsibility in their students by incorporating research projects into the classroom.

# **Chapter Three**

## **Data Analysis and Results**

## **Introduction**

In the two previous chapters, we have presented a review of learner autonomy and research projects. Whereas, the current chapter deals with the analysis of the findings. This in-depth study aims to understand the perspectives of both teachers and students regarding the development of EFL learners' autonomy through research projects. Interviews were conducted with teachers, and a semi-structured questionnaire was administered to Master One students of English at Mohamed Kheider Biskra University.

### **3.1 Research Approach**

The current study aims to explore the importance of promoting learner autonomy among English students and the role of research projects in enhancing it. According to the nature of the study, the researcher opted for a descriptive method. Consequently, a qualitative approach was applied to collect the necessary data for the research.

### **3.2 Population and Sample of the Study**

The present study analyses a sample of Master One students, and teachers at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. Thirty seven students responded to the questionnaire. As for teachers, five university teachers of English participated in interviews, during which they answered questions related to research projects and their role in promoting learner autonomy.

### **3.3 Data Gathering Tools**

To conduct this study, qualitative data were collected through a student questionnaire and teachers interviews.

### **3.4 Student's Questionnaire**

#### **3.4.1 Description of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire used in this study is divided into three sections which consist of eighteen items that are constituted of mix of closed-ended, open-ended, justification, and exploratory questions. It is designed to collect qualitative data on EFL learners' perceptions of learner autonomy and their experiences with research projects.

#### **3.4.2 Administration of the Students Questionnaire**

This questionnaire was submitted to Master One students of English at Biskra University, in printed and online forms. Thirty-seven students responded to the questionnaire. In addition, the choice of Master One students is due to the fact that they reached a relatively high level of proficiency. Moreover, since this study follows a descriptive approach, the sample size is appropriate to the selected methodology which does not require large samples. In consequence, it is assumed that the sample study would effectively represent the development of student's autonomy through the use of research projects.

#### **3.4.3 Validating the Students' Questionnaire**

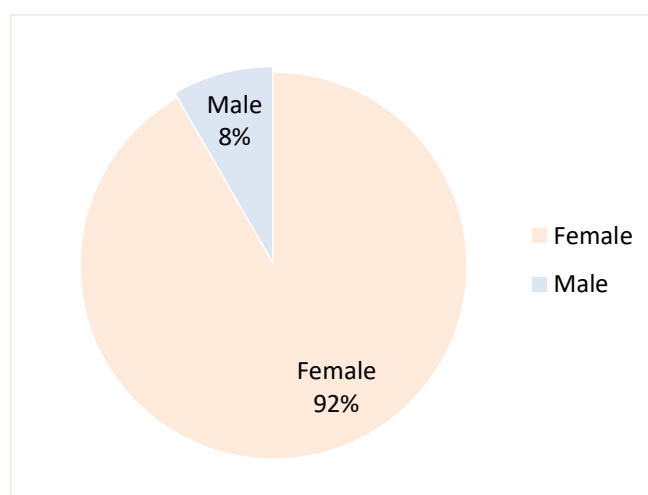
The questionnaire was reviewed by the supervisor after the elaboration of the first draft. Then, it was corrected and modified according to the supervisor's instructions.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

#### **3.5.1 Analysis of Students' Questionnaire**

##### **Section One: General Information**

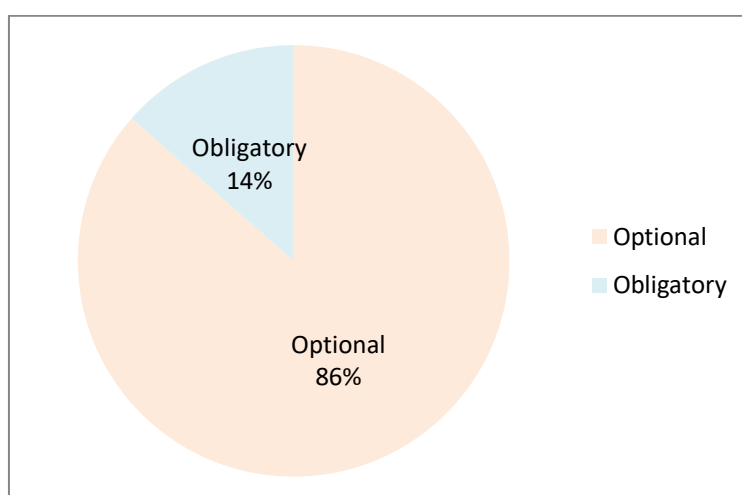
##### **Item one: Gender**



**Figure 5 : Students' Gender.**

From figure 6 above, it is noticeable that the number of females is more than males. Out of the 37 participants, only 36 students provided information about their gender, while one student chose not to mention it. 33 students (92%) are females, while only 3 students (8%) are males. This result shows that the difference between the number of females and males is 30%, indicating that the dominant gender among English students is female.

#### **Item two: Choice of Studying English**

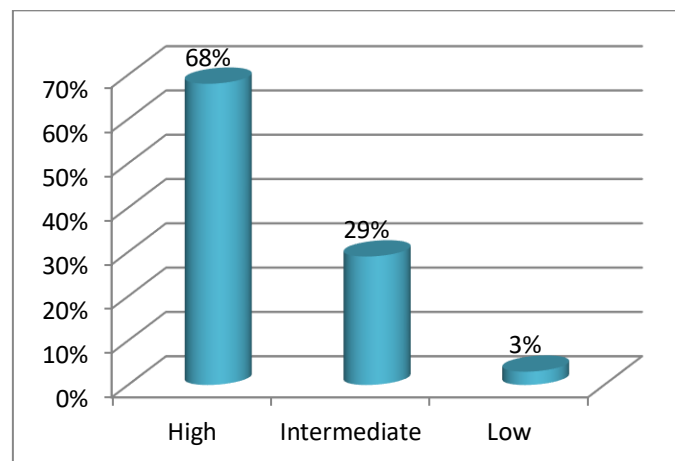


**Figure 6 : The Students' Choice of English.**

Figure7 shows that the majority of students (86%) stated that studying English was optional, which means that their decision to study English was made by personal choice. On

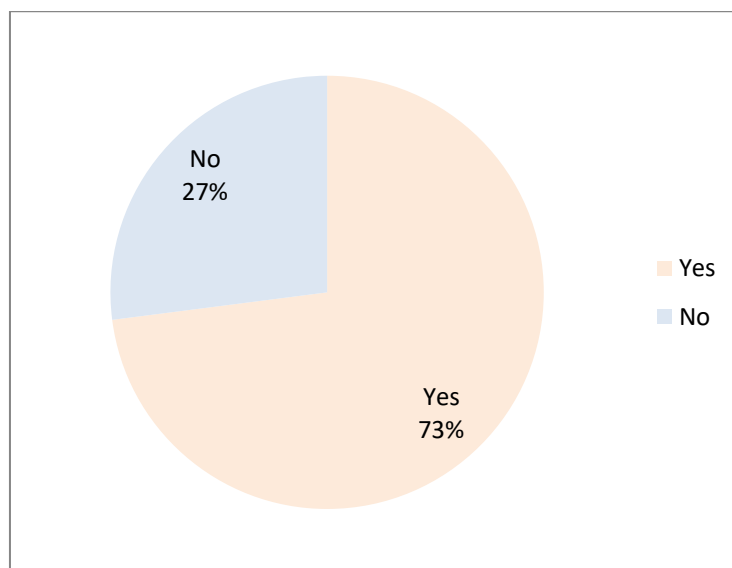
the other hand, the minority of students (14%) stated that studying English was obligatory, and there were external factors that led to such situation. Furthermore, the nature of the choice might cause a difference in motivation and engagement between the learners who chose to study English and those who were obliged.

**Item three: Level of English Proficiency.**



**Figure 7:** The Students' Level of English.

Based on the data above, 37 students responded to the questionnaire. Out of these, 25 students (68%) claimed to have a high level of English proficiency, 11 students (29%) stated having an intermediate level, and only 1 student (3%) reported having a low level. In other words, the majority of students consider their English proficiency to be strong, while the minority of students reported an intermediate level, and only one student recognized his /her low level of proficiency.

**Item four: Familiarity with the Term "Autonomy"****Figure 8 :** Students Familiarity with the Term "Autonomy".

The figure above shows that 27 students (73%) stated that they are familiar with the term autonomy; whereas, 10 students (27%) reported that they are not. This indicates that the majority of the students are aware of the concept, while a smaller group still needs to become more aware of learner autonomy.

- If yes, how would you define it in your own words?

The definitions provided by those who answered 'yes' offer insights into their understanding of the concept, are presented in the table below:

**Table 3 :** Students' Personal Definitions of Learner Autonomy

1. Learning independently and Taking responsibility for learning	"Learn by myself," "developing your level by your own," "Learning alone and by yourself". "Set goals independently".
---	--

---

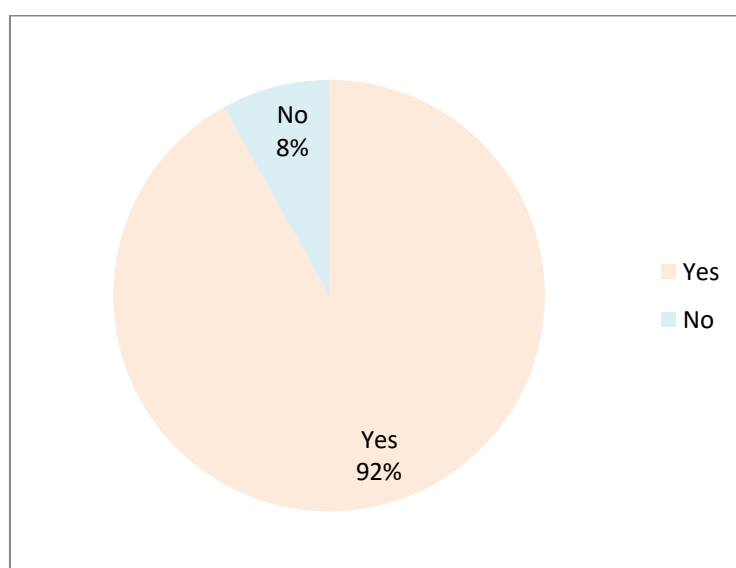
2. Self-regulation and strategy use	"Selecting strategies, monitoring progress"
3. Freedom and self-reliance	"Having freedom in making my own choices," "Self-reliant")

---

The students who were familiar with the term "autonomy" described it as independent learning and taking responsibility for their learning progress. While a few referred to goal-setting and self-regulation, this shows a deeper understanding of the concept.

## Section Two: Autonomy in the Classroom

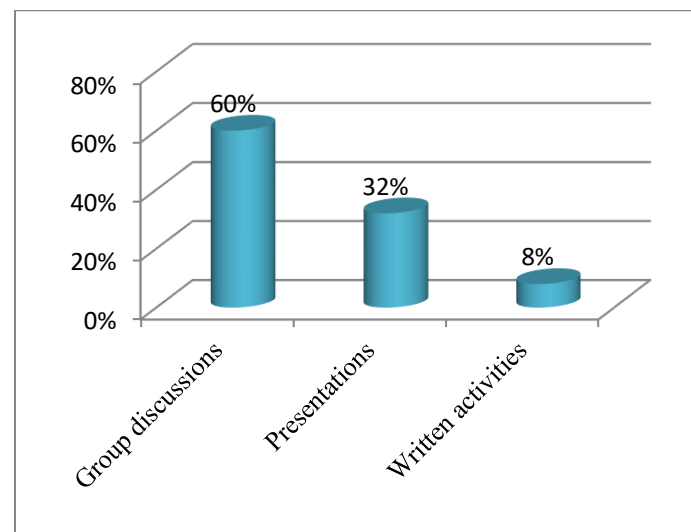
### Item five: Students' Engagement in Classroom Activities



**Figure 9 :** Students' Engagement in Classroom Activities.

From the figure above, 34 students (92%) answered yes meaning that they engage in classroom practices or activities. Whereas only 3 students (8%) stated otherwise, this indicates that the majority of the students like to practice English in the classroom.

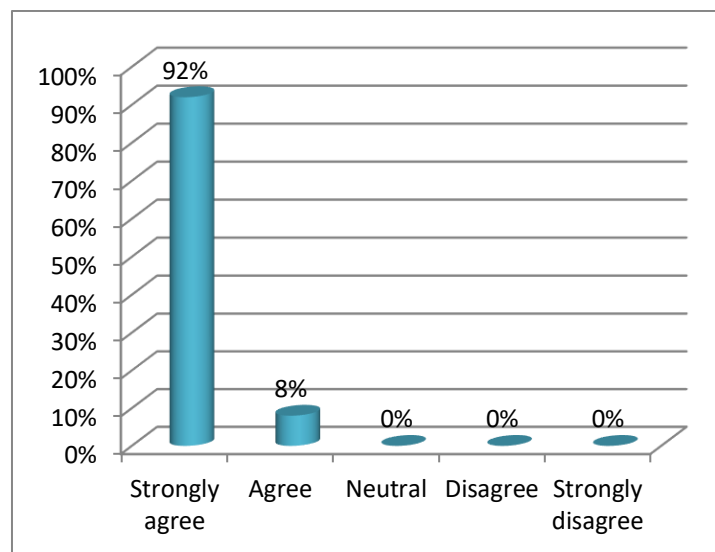


**Item six: Preferred Types of Activities during Class**

**Figure 10: Students' Preferences for Classroom Activities.**

The data shows that group discussions are the most preferred activity among students. 22 students (60%) indicated that they enjoy working in group discussions, while presentation was the second most preferred activity, chosen by 12 (32%) of the respondents. Written activities were the least preferred, with only 8% of students indicating a preference for them. This suggests that students have a greater preference for communicative and interactive activities in class.

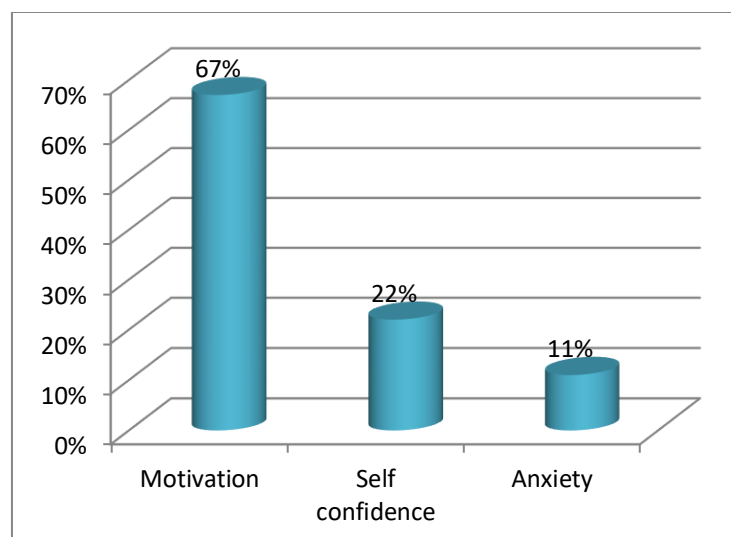
**Item seven: Students' Agreement with being Self-Directed Learners**



**Figure 11 :** Students' Agreement with being Self-Directed Learners.

Based on the data above, out of all the respondents 34 students (92%) strongly agreed and 8% agreed with the statement “I consider myself a self-directed learner”. This indicates that the majority of students believe they are capable of learning independently.

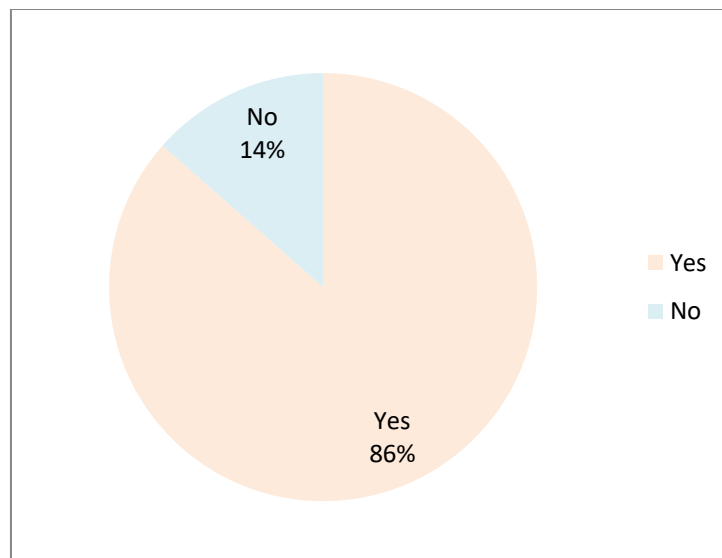
#### **Item eight: Psychological Components Affecting Academic Achievement**



**Figure 12 :** Psychological Components Affecting Academic Achievement.

Based on the students' choices, it can be observed that the majority of the students 25 (67%) out of 37 identified motivation as the most influential psychological factor, while 8 (22%) students chose self-confidence, and only 4 students (10%) selected anxiety. This suggests that positive psychological factors are seen as more important to academic success, while anxiety, though recognized by a small group, appears less influential, even though it can have a negative impact on students' academic performance

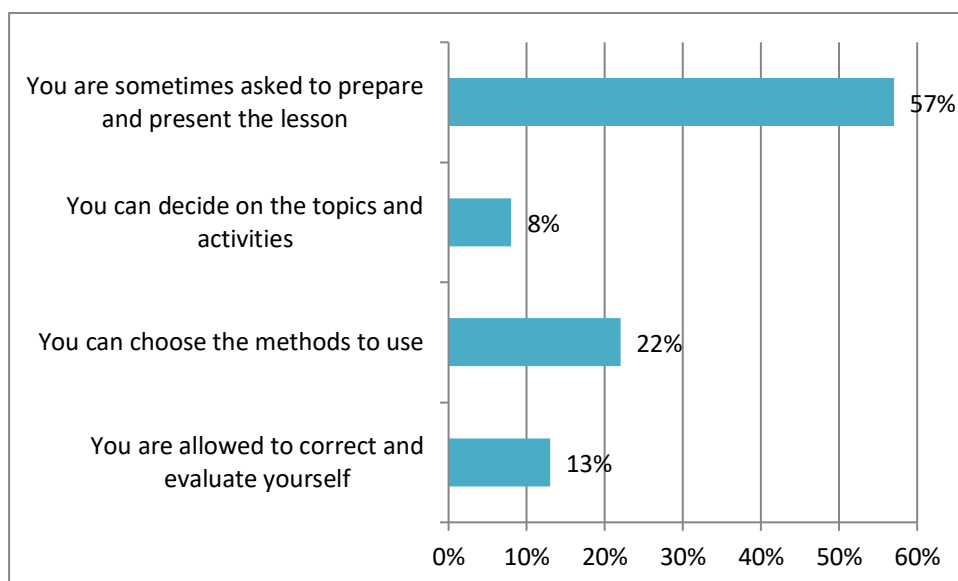
#### **Item nine: A) Students' Perception of Teacher Encouragement for Responsibility**



**Figure 13 :** Students' Perception of Teacher Encouragement for Responsibility

From the figure above, 32 (86%) students answered by “yes” meaning that their teacher encourages them to take responsibility in the classroom. However, only a small number of students disagreed. This shows that most students perceive their teacher as helpful in building responsibility and independence.

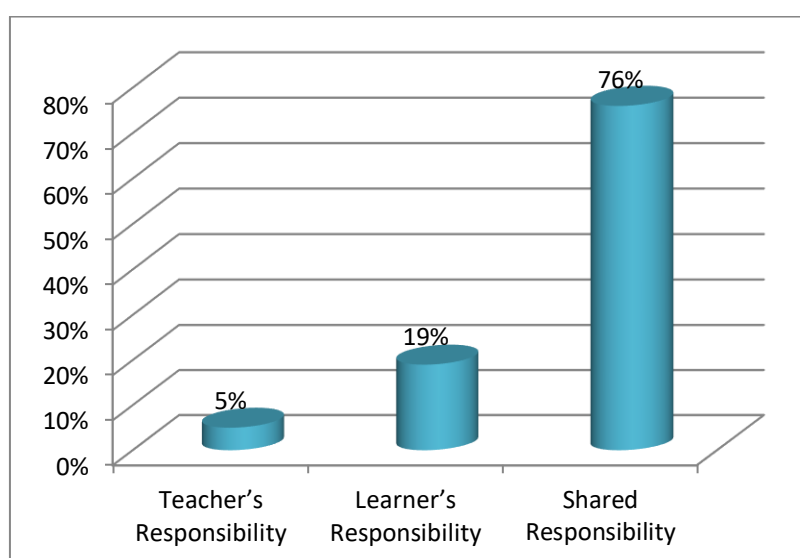
#### **B) Aspects of Responsibility Encouraged by the Teacher**



**Figure 14 :** Aspects of Responsibility Encouraged by the Teacher

The figure above shows that, most students (57%) identified being asked to prepare and present lessons as the main way their teacher encourages responsibility. Fewer students mentioned choice in methods (8%), self-evaluation (13%), or topic selection (8%). This means teachers support autonomy more through classroom activities rather than giving full freedom.

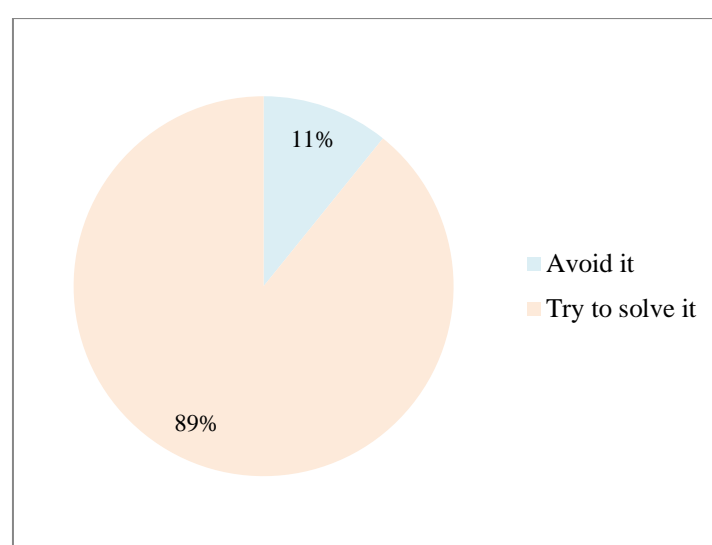
#### Item ten: Responsibility for Learning Progress



**Figure 15 :** Students' Perceptions of Responsibility for Learning Progress.

From the figure, it is noticeable that the majority of students (76%) view learning progress as a shared responsibility between the teacher and the learner. Only 19% think it is mainly the learner's responsibility, and a very small group (5%) see it as the teacher's duty alone. This reflects a balanced view of autonomy, in which learners take active roles in their learning while still valuing the teacher's support and guidance.

#### Item eleven: Student Reactions to Learning Difficulties



**Figure 16 :** Students' Reactions to Learning Difficulties.

According to the data, 33 (89%) students said they try to solve difficulties when they face them, while a few (11%) said they avoid them. This shows that students are capable of handling learning challenges independently.

**Item twelve:** In your opinion, what helps learners become more independent in their learning?

This question explores students' perceptions of the key factors that support the development of learner independence. The main themes identified from students' answers are presented in the table below:

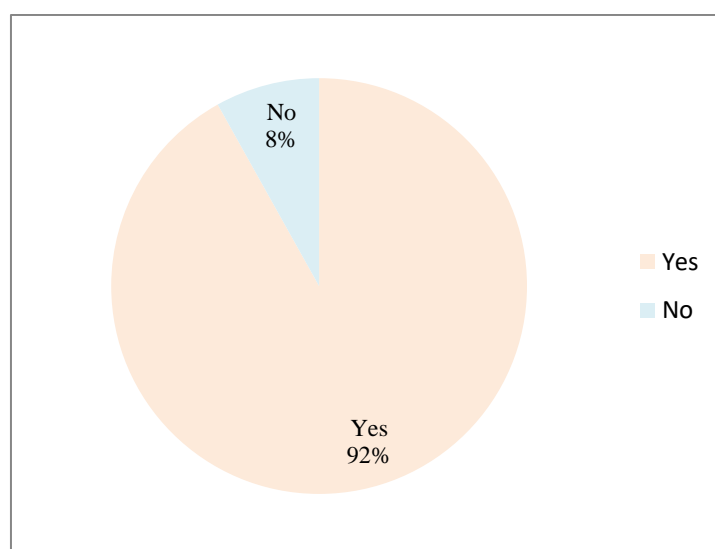
**Table 4 :** Students' Views on Factors that Support Independent Learning

1. Self-Reflection	"Assess their own strengths and weaknesses"
2. Goal Setting & Motivation	"Set a goal", "Self-motivation", "Time management"
3. Self-Discipline & Consistency	"Self-discipline", "Consistent practice"
4. Self-Regulated Learning	"Learn and search alone", "Self-regulatory"
5. Teacher's Role	"Teachers give opportunities", "Ask for more info"
6. Independent Learning	"Depend on yourself", "Learn from mistakes"
7. Use of Resources	"No distractions", "Online resources", "Learning strategies"
8. Time Management	"Manage time", "Set personal goals"
9. Cognitive & Emotional Factors	"Critical thinking", "Self-confidence", "Believe in self"
9. Technology & Online Tools	"YouTube", "ChatGPT", "Websites" "Learning through online facilities like websites"
10. External Motivation	"Teacher should not dominate"

The responses highlight key factors that promote learner autonomy, such as self-regulation, goal-setting, motivation, and the use of resources. Students emphasized the importance of being self-reliant, managing their learning, and having opportunities for independent practice, with teachers playing a supportive role in fostering independence.

### **Section Three: Research Projects and Learner Autonomy**

#### **Item thirteen: Impact of Research Projects on Confidence, critical thinking and Autonomy**



**Figure 17 :** Students' Perceptions of the Impact of Research Projects.

The data clearly reflect students' views on the positive impact of research projects. With 34 (92%) of students answering "yes," the majority believe that such projects enhance their communication confidence, critical thinking and learning autonomy. This agreement suggests that research activities are seen as effective in supporting independent and cognitive skills in language learning. Only 3 students (8%) answered "no," possibly due to different learning preferences or difficulties with research activities. Below is the justifications provided by students for their responses:

**Table 5 :** Students Justifications on How Research Projects Enhance Confidence, Critical Thinking, and Autonomy in Learning English

1. Self-Reliance and Independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "Research projects will grow skills in you, because you will automatically have to mostly rely on yourself."</li> </ul>
2, Confidence in Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "Research projects help improve communication skills by requiring me to read, write, and present ideas, which boosts confidence and autonomy."</li> </ul>
3,Critical Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "Research projects help learners explore topics in-depth,</li> </ul>

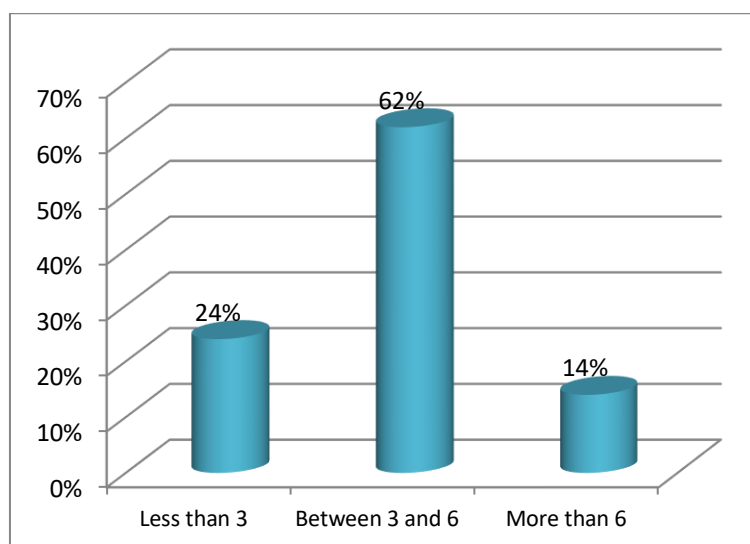
---

	improving critical thinking and problem-solving skills."
4. Learning Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "It teaches you how to be responsible and learn how to get the information and to present it."</li> </ul>
5. Skill Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "It helps you to rely on yourself and develop research and learning skills as it reduces the level of stress and fear of speaking."</li> </ul>

---

The majority of students view research projects as essential for developing autonomy, highlighting self-reliance, confidence in communication, and critical thinking. These projects also help build skills like public speaking and information organization, while promoting independence and responsibility.

#### Item fourteen: A) Number of Research Projects Completed This Year



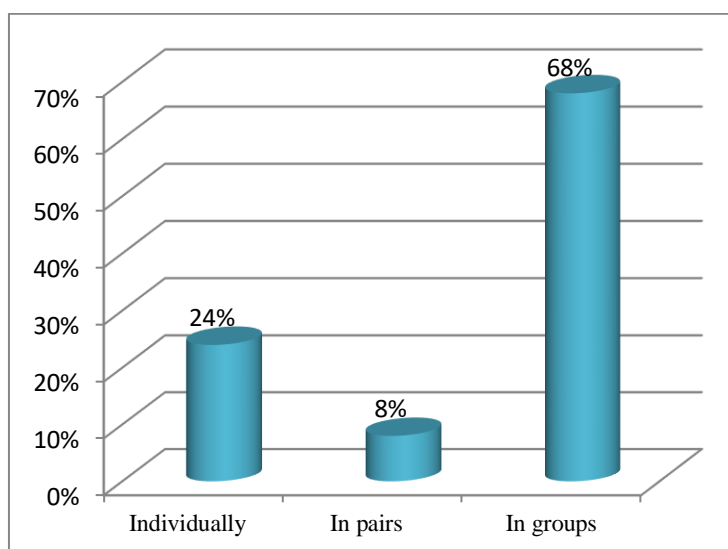
**Figure 18 :** Students' Research Project Involvement during the Academic Year.

The data show that most students (62%) have conducted between 3 and 6 research projects this academic year, indicating that most students have engaged in a sufficient number



of research works, and only 14% have worked on more than 6. This shows that students are somewhat engaged in research work. Meanwhile, 24% reported completing fewer than 3 projects research projects is fairly common. There is variation in how frequently students engage in such activities.

### B) Research Project Implementation :



**Figure 19 :** Common Formats for Conducting Student Research Projects

The data indicate that group work is the dominant format for research projects, with 68% of students reporting they usually work in groups. This suggests an emphasis on collaboration and peer interaction. Only 24% of students complete projects individually, and just 8% work in pairs, showing that individual or pair work is less common in the current classroom context.

**Item fifteen:** Can you share an experience where conducting a research project helped you feel more independent in your language learning journey?

This question explores students' personal experiences with research projects and their role in fostering independence in language learning. Many students share positive

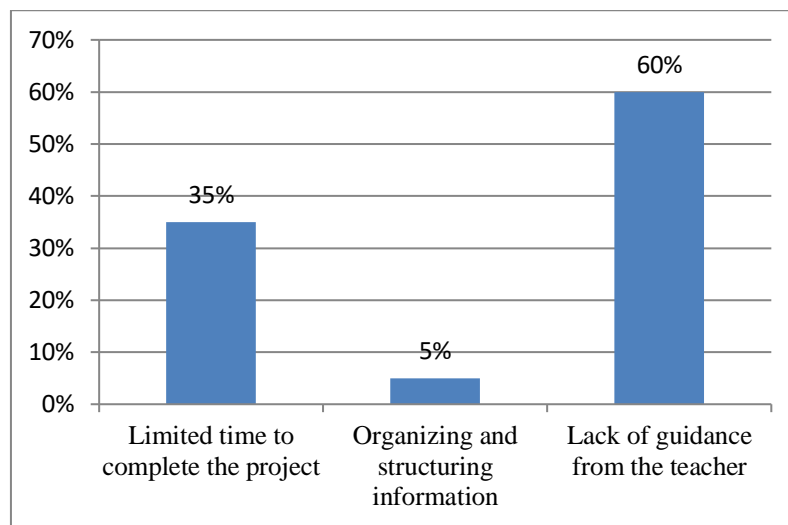
experiences, describing how research helped them gain confidence, overcome challenges, and become more self-reliant. The table below organizes these experiences into different themes:

**Table 6 :** Student Responses on How Conducting Research Projects Enhances Independence in Language Learning

---

<b>Self-Reliance and Independence</b>	"Engaging in research projects allows me to explore topics on my own, enhancing my independence in learning." "I feel more independent when I research on my own."
<b>Confidence in Language Skills</b>	"I presented my research project, which helped me feel confident in sharing my ideas and expressing myself." "Research projects improve my reading, writing, and speaking skills."
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	"Conducting research helps me think critically, find answers on my own, and improve my language learning." "I gained a better understanding of my topic, improving my critical thinking."
<b>Skill Development</b>	"Research projects improve my vocabulary and presentation skills." "I gained confidence from conducting my research independently."
<b>Ownership and Responsibility</b>	"I took responsibility for navigating my resources and trusting my writing skills." "I learned how to find information on my own and organize it for presentations."
<b>Overcoming Challenges</b>	"Research made me face my fear of presenting and increased my confidence." "I learned to navigate my doubts and challenges when working independently."

---

**Item sixteen: Challenges Faced by Students during Classroom Research Projects**

**Figure 20** : Students' Reported Challenges While Working on Research Projects.

As presented in the figure, the main challenge in conducting research projects is the lack of teacher guidance, reported by 60% of participants. This shows that students feel unsupported and may struggle to complete tasks independently. In addition, 35% stated limited time as a major issue, which indicates that students are under pressure due to deadlines. Only 5% mentioned difficulties with organizing and structuring information, suggesting that research skills are less of a concern compared to the need for support and time management.

**Item seventeen: How do you handle and overcome these obstacles?**

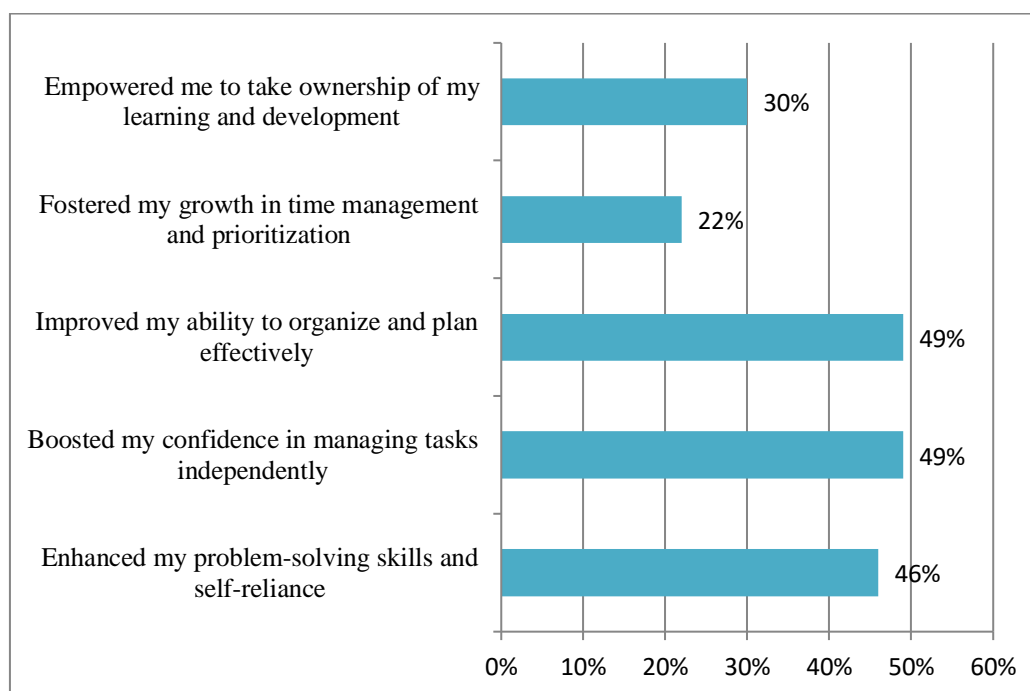
The following question seeks to uncover how students handle and overcome challenges during research projects. The majority of students rely on strategies such as time management, seeking help from peers or teachers, and using online resources, especially technology. These responses are categorized into the following themes in the table:

**Table 7 :** How Students Handle and Overcome Challenges in Research Projects

---

Asking for help (teacher, classmates, experts)	"I ask the teacher to give us instructions," "Ask upper students or teachers for advice."
Time management/organization	"By managing my time very carefully," "Create a detailed timeline to manage my time better."
Using technology/online resources	"Use AI as a consulting tool," "Use graphic organizers to structure my notes."
Working hard (staying focused)	"I spent the whole night trying to finish it," "By working hard."
Studying similar projects or examples	"I try to find similar projects and follow their structure."
Self-reflection and analysis	"I always try to analyze my work to see if it lacks something."
Staying motivated (confidence, determination)	"I motivate myself that I can handle it."
Seeking feedback or advice	"Ask for help from classmates or online resources."
Other methods	"Try to face challenges and make it more organized."

---

**Item eighteen: Perceived Benefits of Research Projects on Learner Autonomy****Figure 21 : Students' Views on Independence through Project Work**

The responses indicate that students perceive their independence during and after research projects as having a positive impact on various aspects of their EFL learning. The most selected responses were boosted confidence in managing tasks independently and improved ability to organize and plan effectively, each selected by 18 (49%) of students. Enhanced problem-solving and self-reliance was noted by 15 (41%) of students, showing increased independence in handling challenges. Fewer students identified time management and prioritization 8(22%) and taking ownership of learning 11(30%).

### **3.6. Discussion and Interpretation of Students' Questionnaire**

The students' questionnaire was designed to explore Master 1 students' perceptions of learner autonomy and the role of research projects in fostering independence in the EFL learning context at Mohamed Kheider Biskra University.

The sample consisted of 37 participants, with 92% being female and 8% being male. The majority of students stated that studying English was their personal choice. Which means that their motivation can be different. Besides, the majority of students evaluated their English level, with 68% claiming a high level, which may suggest that higher self-perception of proficiency could contribute to greater independence in language learning. The study also showed that students are familiar with the term "learner autonomy", as they understood the concept. This awareness indicates that they may have a strong understanding of autonomy, which can positively influence their leaning progress. In addition, the high level of engagement plays a crucial role in fostering learner autonomy. On the other hand, the small percentage of students who do not participate might point to individual differences, such as lack of self confidence or interest.

Moreover, many students described themselves as self-directed learners, likely due to learner-centred tasks such as group discussions, which they prefer. This shows they value independence and active participation in learning. Students considered motivation as the key psychological factor that influences learning. When asked about learning progress, they reported that the responsibility is shared between the learner and the teacher. They feel more motivated and confident when engaged in research projects. This highlights the teacher's role in creating a motivating environment.

In the same view, the findings reveal that the majority of students (89%) reported that they actively try to solve difficulties when they face them. This indicates that most learners are

capable of handling challenges on their own and willing to engage in self-directed problem-solving. However, students face challenges like limited guidance and time constraints, showing the need for better support and gradual teacher guidance.

Furthermore, based on students experiences (92%) believed that research projects help improve their confidence, critical thinking, and autonomy. Students justified this by stating that research projects require them to rely on themselves, organize their thoughts, develop communication skills, and critical thinking, supporting the role of projects in promoting learner autonomy. The majority of students reported that conducting research independently allowed them to explore topics on their own, enhancing their problem-solving and decision-making abilities.

In conclusion, based on the analysis of the students' questionnaire, the majority of EFL learners confirm the research hypothesis that research projects play a positive role in promoting learner autonomy.

### **3.7 Teachers' Interview**

#### **3.7.1 Description of Teachers' Interview**

A semi-structured interview was conducted to investigate the role of research projects in promoting learner autonomy in the EFL context. This interview was conducted with five EFL teachers from the Department of English Studies at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. Its purpose was to collect useful information based on their professional experiences and opinions concerning the development of autonomy through the use of research projects in language learning. The interview consisted of open-ended questions intended to explore teachers' views on the importance of learner autonomy, their strategies for encouraging autonomous learning, and the challenges they face in fostering independence among students. The first questions focused on general information about the teachers'

experience and their role in guiding student research projects, followed by questions directly related to how such projects can enhance self-directed learning.

### **3.7.2 Analysis of Teachers Interview**

A thematic analysis method is used to analyze data from teacher interviews.

**Q1. Have you incorporated research projects in your EFL teaching? If so, can you describe the types of projects you have used?**

**A:** “Yes, I have. Research projects can take the form of homework, assignments in a written expression module, research papers with the right research methodology in linguistics, and practice in a research methodology module.”

**B:** “Yes, I do use research projects when needed. without neglecting individual learning. Working in groups can be challenging. Some learners do not like such tasks. And keep silent. Consequently, the work will be done only by one or two learners.”

**C:** “Yes, I do use research projects, mostly presentations. Students choose a topic, conduct A research on it, and then present their findings to the class. It HELPS improves their language proficiency.”

**D:** “Yes, sometimes I ask students to work on presentations, analyzing short texts, or writing papers about topics related to what we study. These kinds of tasks help them practice the language while also learning how to search for information and organize their ideas.”

**E:** “I have not completely incorporated research projects in my EFL teaching. However, I have encouraged students to engage in smaller-scale research-based activities, such as analysing authentic language use and exploring linguistic phenomena.”



Most teachers said they include research projects in their teaching in different ways. Teachers A and D talked about using research papers, written assignments, and presentations that match the lesson content. Teacher C also mentioned using presentations, which help students improve their language and research skills. Teacher B uses research projects sometimes but explained that group work can be difficult because not all students participate equally. Teacher E does not fully incorporate research projects; nevertheless, she/he encourages small-scale research activities like analyzing authentic language use. In general, the answers show that teachers believe research projects are useful for developing both language and thinking skills, even if there are some challenges in applying them.

**Q2. What are your general thoughts on learner autonomy in EFL classrooms?**

**A:** “Learner autonomy means that you as a teacher try to build in your learners the sense of independence so they become responsible for their own learning. As a teacher, just guiding them and let them take the full responsibility for their process of learning.”

**B:** “Learner autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's own learning. This fact does not exclude the teacher's role in the classroom. Being autonomous is becoming self-reliant and responsible for your own learning. This ability helps learners to be effective and successful in their learning process.”

**C:** “I believe it's a good idea to improve the student skills in learning English.”

**D:** “It consists on his/her personal efforts to achieve the target goals.”

**E:**” Learner autonomy in EFL classrooms is essential for developing students’ ability to take charge of their own learning. So, fostering learner autonomy helps students become more responsible and motivated.”

All teachers emphasize the importance of learner autonomy in EFL classrooms. Teacher A focuses on developing student independence, with the teacher guiding the process. Teacher B highlights self-reliance and responsibility while acknowledging the teacher’s role. Teacher C said that autonomy helps with skill development. Teacher D mentions the personal effort required for achieving goals. Teacher E states that autonomy motivates students and helps them take charge of their learning. In short, all teachers agree on the significance of learner autonomy, though their views of the teacher's role and its impact vary.

**Q3. To which extent you think your students will benefit from project work? And why ?**

**A:** “They will highly benefit from research projects because they will improve their oral communication, self-confidence, and esteem during the presentations, as well as their written production and research skills through submitting the papers.”

**B:** “Research work is doing a collaborative and cooperative task. Learners can learn from each other. It can maximize interaction among learners and frequently they become more autonomous, less anxious, and more proficient.”

**C:** “It will make them work autonomously and show their competency in learning English.”

**D:** “Research works are very beneficial as they allow students to rely on themselves selves and cultivate their products.”

**E:** “I believe students will benefit significantly from project work as it enhances their language skills, critical thinking, and collaboration.”

Based on the teachers’ responses, all participants believe research work is very useful for students. Most of them mentioned that students improve their language skills like speaking and writing (A, E), and they also become more autonomous (B, C, D). Some teachers (A, B, E) added that research projects help students gain confidence, think critically, and communicate with others. One teacher (B) highlighted the importance of group work in reducing anxiety and promoting cooperation. All teachers agree that research work is beneficial and helps students become better English users and more independent learners.

**Q4. What strategies do you use to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning?**

**A:** “Through homework, assignments, extensive practice inside the classroom, tasks as more than theoretical parts, continuous evaluation, doing research, following the learner-centred approach, makes learners rely on themselves.”

**B:** “By giving them homework, asking them to do presentations of parts of the lesson, and engaging them in tasks where they have to make research and work on their own, they solve problems and make decisions alone.”

**C:** “Push them to practice a lot without giving much importance to the theoretical part.”

**D:** “I encourage students to take responsibility by assigning individual tasks, giving regular feedback, and using real-world materials.”

**E:** “I guide them in using authentic materials, and trying to create a supportive environment where they feel confident exploring language independently. Additionally, I give constructive feedback and encourage peer collaboration to help them take ownership of their progress.”

The teachers’ answers show that they use different strategies to help students become independent. The majority of teachers (A, B, D) use assignments, research tasks, and presentations to make students work on their own. They also focus on continuous practice (A, C) and real-world or authentic materials (D, E) to keep learning meaningful. Some teachers (D, E) also give feedback to help students take responsibility. One teacher (E) also encourages peer collaboration to support independent learning. These, strategies aim to make students more active and independent.

**Q5. How do you balance providing support with allowing students to work independently on research projects?**

**A:** “Supporting students during their research process is always present, either orally or writing feedback. Students receive guidance and instructions about what they will do. Then, they independently prepare their work and wait for support and feedback from their teacher.”

**B:** “To balance support and independence, I guide students at the beginning by explaining the steps and helping them choose topics. Then, I let them work on their own but stay available if they need help. I ask questions instead of giving answers, so they learn to think and decide by themselves. This way, they become more responsible and confident in their learning.”

**C:** "I support students by first helping them narrow their research topics. I provide clear guidelines at the start, then gradually give them space to work independently, offering feedback when needed. This encourages autonomy while maintaining guidance."

**D:** "Providing them with a plan, then they start their research works."

**E:** "By offering clear guidance at the beginning, helping students define their topics and structure their work."

The teachers shared similar strategies to help students take responsibility while still offering support. Most of them (A, B, C, E) said they guide students at the beginning, especially by helping them choose topics and giving instructions. Then, they allow students to work independently while staying available for help (A, B, C). One teacher (B) mentioned using questions instead of answers to build critical thinking. Another teacher (D) gave only a brief answer, saying they just provide a plan. The main approach is to support students at first, and then gradually let them work on their own.

**Q6. What skills (e.g., critical thinking, problem-solving, self regulation) do students develop through research projects?**

**A:** "all of them, they also learn how to work independently and present their ideas clearly."

**B:** "learners can develop all these skills if they are well engaged in their research projects. If the research project is done via AI apps and no ethical issue is considered, there will be no development."

**C:** "All the skills are developed if the research projects process goes in a convenient way."

**D:** “All of them, they also learn how to work independently and present their ideas clearly.”

**E:** “Through research projects, students develop critical thinking by analyzing information, problem-solving by overcoming challenges, and self-regulation by managing time and staying focused. These skills support both academic and personal growth.”

Most teachers (A, B, C, D, E) agreed that students develop all the main skills through research projects. Some teachers (A, D) also mentioned that students learn to work independently and present their ideas. One teacher (B) pointed that real development happens only if students are truly engaged and avoid overuse of AI tools. Another (E) gave a more detailed answer, explaining how each skill is built through the process. Overall, teachers believe these skills develop when research is done seriously and properly.

**Q7. What role do you play in guiding students through research projects?**

**A:** “Helpful, Advisor, Controller, Feedback Provider, Supporter, Motivator.”

**B:** “a facilitator, promoter, motivator, and counsellor. I guide students by offering advice, encouraging independent thinking, and supporting their development throughout the research process.”

**C:** “A monitor, overseeing students' progress and providing guidance when needed to keep them on the right path.”

**D:** “My role is that of a guide, helping students navigate each step of their research projects while encouraging independent learning.”

**E:** “My role in guiding students through research projects is to act as a facilitator and motivator.”

The teachers gave different answers, but they all show that they help students in many ways during research projects. Most of them said they support, guide, and motivate their students. For example, Teacher A said they are a helper, advisor, controller, feedback provider, supporter, and motivator. This shows they take an active role and try to assist students at different levels. Teacher B said they are facilitator, promoter, motivator, and counsellor. They also said they give advice and help students think for themselves. This means they focus on making students more independent. Teacher C described their role as a monitor, which means they watch students' progress and help them when needed. Teacher D said they are guide, leading students step by step and helping them learn on their own. Teacher E also said they are facilitator and motivator, which shows they support students while giving them space to work. In short, the teachers see their role as helping students without doing the work for them. They try to support students while also encouraging them to be independent.

**Q8. How do students generally respond to research projects? Do they find them engaging or challenging?**

**A:** “At first stage, they negatively respond and they protest that they cannot do much difficult tasks, but when you motivate them, support and encourage them, they will smoothly engage in the process and all the challenges disappear from step to step. They find them challenging at first, later they see it as an opportunity to look for facts and knowledge.”

**B:** "It depends on the nature of the research project. It can be engaging when the instruction is well explained. Learners feel more confident and can be effective. However, if the task is not clear enough, learners may encounter some challenges such as time constraints and difficulty of the project and material shortage."

**C:** "In my experience, excellent students usually find research projects engaging and enjoy the process."

**D:** "Students may find research projects either engaging or challenging, depending on their individual personalities and how they approach learning."

**E:** "As I did not have this experience with my students, I cannot give a direct answer."

The teachers have different views on how students respond to research projects. Most agreed that students often find them challenging at the beginning, especially when tasks seem difficult or unclear, as mentioned by Teachers A and B. However, with support and good instructions, students become more engaged and start to see the value in doing research. Teacher A also mentioned that motivation helps students overcome difficulties step by step. Teacher B added that the level of challenge depends on how the task is presented and the resources available. Teacher C said that high-achieving students usually enjoy research, while Teacher D noted that responses depend on each student's personality. Teacher E could not answer due to a lack of experience. These answers show that students' responses depend on several factors like support, task clarity, and individual differences.

**Q9. Have you observed differences in motivation between students working on research projects and those engaged in traditional learning activities?**



**A:** “Doing research projects makes students more motivated, active, self dependent. However, in traditional classrooms, they are less motivated, most of them passive, as they just rely on their teacher.”

**B:** “Doing research projects is very negotiating because it involves self-engagement, self-learning, and self-reliance. Through research projects, learners are given more chances to show their competences and abilities. They are given more power.”

**C:** “Yes. When some students see the successful presentations of their colleagues, they try to provide with better works.”

**D:** “Yes, definitely. When students are involved in research projects, they tend to show more interest and engagement. In traditional activities students just do them to meet requirements. But with research projects, many students seem more curious.”

**E:** “Yes, students usually seem more interested when they get to choose the topic and work in their own way. But with traditional tasks, some students lose interest because the work feels the same every time.”

The teachers’ answers show that students are generally more motivated when working on research projects compared to traditional learning activities. Teacher A mentioned that research projects make students more active and independent, while traditional methods lead to passivity and teacher dependence. Teacher B explained that research encourages self-learning and allows students to show their skills, which gives them a sense of power. Teachers C and D observed that students become more motivated when they see their peers succeed or when they are more engaged in the process. Teacher D also pointed out that traditional tasks are often done just to meet requirements, while research projects spark

curiosity. Teacher E added that allowing students to choose topics increases interest, unlike traditional tasks, which can become repetitive. The answers show that research projects help increase motivation by promoting independence, engagement, and personal involvement.

**Q10. Do you encourage students to work individually or in groups for research projects? Why?**

**A:** “I usually ask them to do projects in groups because they will acquire the sense of teamwork, benefit from each other. Logically, they became leaders and can take decisions. Cooperation creates the spirit of competition among them.”

**B:** “I prefer collaborative research projects, since they increase autonomous learning interaction between learners, especially for introvert learners. However, an individual research project is needed sometimes to see learners' individual process and proficiency.”

**C:** “I usually encourage students to work individually because it helps them build self-reliance and take full responsibility for their work. It also allows them to develop their own ideas without depending on others.”

**D:** “Working individually makes the student more knowledgeable, comfortable and confident.”

**E:** “I prefer group work because it teaches students how to cooperate, share ideas, and solve problems together. It also reflects real-life situations where teamwork is important.”

The teachers showed mixed views on individual and group work. Teachers A, B, and E preferred group projects, highlighting benefits like teamwork, idea sharing, and real-life skill development. Teacher B also noted that group work supports introverted learners,

though individual work is still important for assessing personal progress. In contrast, Teachers C and D preferred individual tasks, saying they help students build independence, confidence, and responsibility. The answers show that both approaches are useful, depending on the goals whether to promote collaboration or personal growth.

### **3.8 Teachers' Interview Discussion**

The findings of the teacher interviews align with the study's aim of exploring how research projects promote learner autonomy in EFL settings. Most teachers confirmed that they Incorporate research projects in various forms, highlighting their significance in improving language skills, critical thinking, and student responsibility. They emphasized the teacher's role in guiding and supporting students while gradually encouraging independence. Although some challenges were noted, such as unequal participation in group work, the overall perception of research tasks was positive. Teachers viewed research projects as more engaging and motivating than traditional tasks, especially when students were given choice and clear guidance. The shared perspectives suggest that research projects can effectively foster learner autonomy when implemented with proper support and structure.

### **3.9 Summary of the Findings**

The findings from both the student's questionnaire and teacher interviews confirm that research projects play a significant role in promoting learner autonomy in EFL settings. Most students reported being aware of the concept of autonomy and described themselves as self-directed learners. They showed the ability to solve learning problems independently and expressed that research projects helped them develop critical thinking, confidence, and responsibility. This suggests that many EFL students at Mohamed Kheider University are autonomous learners.

Teachers also agreed that research projects support the development of autonomy by encouraging students to act independently, engage actively, and evaluate their learning. They highlighted that research projects improve language skills and motivation, especially when students are allowed to choose topics and receive guidance throughout the process. Furthermore, the role of the teacher was emphasized as central in guiding students gradually toward independence. Teachers balance support with freedom by offering instructions, monitoring progress, and providing feedback. This confirms that teacher involvement is essential in fostering an environment where autonomy can grow.

In conclusion, the study shows that research projects are a valuable tool for enhancing EFL students' autonomy, aligning with the study's aim and significance. The results highlight the importance of integrating research work in language classrooms to develop independent, motivated, and skilled learners.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the fieldwork of the current study. It began with a brief explanation of the research methodology, followed by an analysis of the data collected through a student questionnaire and teacher interview. The aim was to explore the role of research projects in promoting learner autonomy in the EFL context. The results confirmed the research objectives and supported the proposed assumptions.

### **General Conclusion**

This study investigated the role of research projects in developing learner autonomy among Master One English students at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. It focused on determining whether students have independent behaviours, how research projects support their autonomy, and the role of teachers in fostering it. The main assumption was that engaging students in research tasks could enhance their independence and responsibility in the learning process.

A qualitative approach was employed, using a student questionnaire and teacher interview. The analysis of the results revealed that many students are aware of autonomy and reported working independently, particularly when involved in tasks that require critical thinking and decision-making. They viewed research projects as valuable in developing responsibility, confidence, and active learning.

Teachers confirmed that such tasks develop essential skills like self-direction and time management. They also highlighted the importance of guiding students throughout the research process and creating a supportive learning environment. Allowing students to select topics and work on their own was seen as effective in encouraging autonomy.

Finally, the findings support the assumptions that learner autonomy can be developed through research projects. The results emphasize the significance of integrating such tasks into EFL curriculum and the crucial role of teachers in guiding and supporting this development. This study contributes to a better understanding of how autonomy can be encouraged in EFL contexts and offers practical insights for adopting more learner-centered teaching practices.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the analysis of the data and the results of this study, some pedagogical recommendations are suggested for both teachers and students:

➤ **For teachers :**

- ✓ Include research projects as part of classroom activities to help students become more independent and motivated.
- ✓ Let students choose their own research topics when possible to make them more interested and involved.
- ✓ Support students step by step during the research process, especially at the beginning.
- ✓ Encourage group work, but make sure all students take part and share the work equally.
- ✓ Give regular feedback and help students deal with any problems they face.
- ✓ Teach students how to plan their time and organize their research to finish tasks well.
- ✓ Build a classroom atmosphere that supports autonomy by giving students some freedom to make decisions in their learning.

➤ **For students :**

- ✓ Choose topics that you like when doing research to stay motivated and interested.
- ✓ Work well with your classmates during group work, and make sure you contribute fairly.
- ✓ Try to solve problems by yourself before asking for help to build confidence.
- ✓ Think about what you have learned from each project so you can do better next time.
- ✓ Ask your teacher for feedback and use it to improve your work.
- ✓ Do not be afraid of making mistakes, because learning from them is an important part of becoming more independent in learning.

- ✓ Use technology tools (like Grammarly, Google Scholar, and online dictionaries) to improve your writing and research.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study faced a few limitations that made the research process more challenging:

1. Time-Consuming: Collecting interview data from teachers took a lot of time because many of them were busy. Although both face-to-face and online interviews were attempted, several teachers could not participate due to their tight schedules.
2. Lack of Research Experience: Although we have done some research projects in class before, like most Master's students this was our first time conducting a full academic research study. The lack of prior experience in handling all stages of the research process made some parts of the dissertation more difficult.

### List of References

- Alegre, E. M. (2023). Technology-driven education: Analyzing the synergy among innovation, motivation, and student engagement. *International Journal of Membrane Science and Technology*, 10(2), 1477–1485. <https://doi.org/10.15379/ijmst.v10i2.1507>
- Alrefaie, Z., Alrefaie, Z., Al-Hayani, A., Hassanien, M., Hassanien, M., & Hegazy, A. (2020). Implementing group research assignment in undergraduate medical curriculum; impact on students' performance and satisfaction. *BMC Medical Education*, 20(1), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1186/S12909-020-02137-X>
- Balbag, R. D., Basug, E., Corpuz, M., Espiritu, B., Luna, J., Mangaoang, G., Paguntalan, J., Palapal, J., Valdez, J., Escalona, J. M. S., Estrada, M. P., & Paraggua, C. B. (2024). Exploring the challenges of students in conducting their research study. *International Journal of Advance Research and Innovative Ideas in Education*, 10(1), 1031–1039. [https://ijariie.com/AdminUploadPdf/Exploring\\_the\\_Challenges\\_of\\_Student\\_in\\_Conducting\\_t\\_hier\\_Research\\_Study\\_ijariie22503.pdf](https://ijariie.com/AdminUploadPdf/Exploring_the_Challenges_of_Student_in_Conducting_t_hier_Research_Study_ijariie22503.pdf)
- Bell, S. (2010). Project-based learning for the 21st century: Skills for the future. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 83(2), 39-43. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00098650903505415>
- Benson, P. (1997). The philosophy and politics of learner autonomy. In P. Benson & P. Voller (Eds.), *Autonomy and independence in language learning* (pp. 18–34). Longman.
- Benson, P. (2001). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning*. Pearson Education.
- Benson, P. (2011). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning* (2nd ed.). Routledge.33
- Benson, P. (2013). *Teaching and researching: Autonomy in language learning*. Taylor & Francis.



- Benson, P., & Voller, P. (Eds.). (1997). *Autonomy and independence in language learning*. Longman.
- Bhattacharjee, U. (2020, November 2). Teachers' role in project-based learning. *Evelyn Learning*.  
<https://www.evelynlearning.com/teachers-role-project-based-learning/>
- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). *Assessment and classroom learning*. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 5(1), 7–74.
- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). *Assessment and classroom learning*. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 5(1), 7-74.
- Blumenfeld, P. C., Soloway, E., Marx, R. W., Krajcik, J. S., Guzdial, M., & Palincsar, A. (1991). Motivating project-based learning: Sustaining the doing, supporting the learning. *Educational Psychologist*, 26(3-4), 369-398. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.1991.9653139>
- Boughey, C., & Niven, P. (2012). The Emergence of Research in the South African Academic Development Movement. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 31(5), 641–653.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2012.712505>
- Bredan, A. (2020). Conducting publishable research under conditions of severely limited resources. *Libyan Journal of Medicine*, 15(1), 1688126.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19932820.2019.1688126>
- Brookhart, S. M. (2010). *How to assess higher-order thinking skills in your classroom*. ASCD.
- Campbell, C. M., & Ortiz, J. A. (1991). *Helping students overcome foreign language anxiety: A practical guide for teachers*. Newbury House.
- Candy, P. C. (1991). *Self-direction for lifelong learning: A comprehensive guide to theory and practice*. Jossey-Bass.
- Chase, J.-A. D., Topp, R., Smith, C. E., Cohen, M. Z., Fahrenwald, N. L., Zerwic, J. J., Benefield, L. E., Anderson, C. M., & Conn, V. S. (2013). *Time Management Strategies for Research*

Productivity. *Western Journal of Nursing Research*, 35(2), 155–176.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0193945912451163>

Dam, L. (1995). *Learner autonomy 3: From theory to classroom practice*. Authentik.

Day, D. A., Ferrari, N., & Broadbridge, C. C. (2014). The role of collaborative student research on the development of 21st century skills. *MRS Online Proceedings Library*, 1657, 11–16.

<https://doi.org/10.1557/opl.2014.400>

Deci, E. L. (1996). *Why we do what we do: Understanding self-motivation*. Penguin Books.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268.

[https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104\\_01](https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01)

Dewi, D. S., & Wilany, E. (2023). *The relationship between learner autonomy and motivation in efl speaking class*. <https://doi.org/10.36665/elp.v8i2.758>

Dickinson, L. (1987). *Self-instruction in language learning*. Cambridge University Press.

Donovan, M. S. (2013). Generating Improvement Through Research and Development in Education Systems. *Science*, 340(6130), 317–319. <https://doi.org/10.1126/SCIENCE.1236180>

Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge University Press

Educational Characteristics of Learner Autonomy. (2022). *Journal of Higher Education, Theory, and Practice*, 22(11). <https://doi.org/10.33423/jhetp.v22i11.5410>

Ekambaram, A., Stene, T. M., Johansen, A., & Michelsen, E. (2017). What are the practical tools for planning and managing time in projects? - A study in Norwegian organizations.

<https://sintef.brage.unit.no/sintef-xmlui/handle/11250/2586331>

Fisette, J. L. (2011). Negotiating Power within High School Girls' Exploratory Projects in Physical Education. *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal*, 20(1), 73–90.

<https://doi.org/10.1123/WSPAJ.20.1.73>

Fontana Angelo, R., & McCarthy, R. L. (2018). Group Assignments as a Class Element to Promote Performance in Virtual Groups. *Information Systems Education Journal*, 16(4), 4–12.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1188019.pdf>

Fragoulis, L. (2009). Project-based learning in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Greek primary schools: From theory to practice. *English Language Teaching*, 2(3), 113-119.

Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. Edward Arnold.

Grynova, M., Shvedchykova, I., Soloshych, I., Bunetska, I., & Soloshych, S. (2022). Project Approach in the Formation of Scientific and Research Competence of Students of Energy Specialities. 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.1109/MEES58014.2022.10005742>

Haines, S. (1989). *Projects for the EFL classroom: Resource material for teachers*. Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, UK: Nelson.

Haleem, B., & Asghar, S. (2023). Problems experienced by undergraduate students in conducting research in online distance learning. *Pakistan Journal of Distance & Online Learning*, 9(2), 93–109

Hazari, A. (2023). Review of Literature: Search Engines and Strategies (pp. 41–57).

[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-8925-6\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-8925-6_7)

Healey, M. (2005). *Linking research and teaching: Exploring disciplinary spaces and the role of inquiry-based learning*. In R. Barnett (Ed.), *Reshaping the university: New relationships between research, scholarship and teaching* (pp. 67–78). McGraw Hill/Open University Press.

Holec, H. (1981). *Autonomy and foreign language learning*. Council of Europe.

- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125–132. <https://doi.org/10.2307/327317>
- <https://doi.org/10.12783/DTSSEHS/ICAEM2017/19110>
- Jabbour, K. K. (2014). An Analysis of the Effect of Mobile Learning on Lebanese Higher Education. *Informatics in Education*, 13(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.15388/infedu.2014.01>
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (1999). *Learning together and alone: Cooperative, competitive, and individualistic learning*. Allyn and Bacon
- Juvonen, S. (2018). *The answer is project-studies! learning integration with research and development projects*. 2658–2663. <https://doi.org/10.21125/INTED.2018.0505>
- Katz, L. G. (2013). The teacher's role in the project approach. *Community Playthings*. <https://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/articles/the-teachers-role-in-the-project-approach>
- Kim, B. R. (2023). Presenting Your Research (pp. 671–694). *Cambridge University Press eBooks*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009010054.032>
- Kinthead, J. A. (2019). An Empirical Research Project in English and Writing Studies. *Journal of Academic Writing*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.31719/PJAW.V3I2.40>
- Kollar, I., & Fischer, F. (2006). Learner autonomy and self-regulated learning: A theoretical perspective. *Learning and Instruction Press*.
- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques* (2nd ed.). New Age International Publishers.
- Krajcik, J. S., & Blumenfeld, P. C. (2006). Project-based learning. In R. K. Sawyer (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of the learning sciences* (pp. 317-334). Cambridge University Press.
- Legutke, M., & Thomas, H. (1991). *Process and experience in the language classroom*. Longman.

- Levy, P., & Petrulis, R. (2012). How do first-year university students experience inquiry and research, and what are the implications for the practice of inquiry-based learning? *Studies in Higher Education*, 37(1), 85–101. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2010.499166>
- Linn, M. C., Palmer, E., Baranger, A., Gerard, E., & Stone, E. (2015). Undergraduate research experiences: Impacts and opportunities. *Science*, 347(6222), 1261757. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1261757>
- Little, D. (1991). *Learner autonomy: Definitions, issues, and problems*. Authentik.
- Little, D. (2003). *Learner autonomy and second/foreign language learning*. Council of Europe.
- Little, D. (2020). Language learner autonomy: Rethinking language teaching. *Language Teaching*, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444820000488>
- Littlewood, W. (1996). Autonomy: An anatomy and a framework. *System*, 24(4), 427–435. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X\(96\)00039-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X(96)00039-5)
- Liu, Y., Wang, H., & Zhang, L. (2023). Learning through 'Research Cognitive Theory': A new framework for active learning. *Heliyon*. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2405844025003305>
- Luck, M. (2008). *Student research projects: Guidance on practice in the biosciences* (J. Wilson, Ed.). The Centre of Bioscience, The Higher Education Academy.
- Luna, E. (2022, January 10). From teacher to teammate: Real-world projects challenge students and teachers alike. *Next Generation Learning Challenges*. <https://www.nextgenlearning.org/articles/real-world-projects-challenge-students-and-teachers>
- Maaz, M. (2020). *Teachers and learners attitudes toward project-based learning in promoting learners autonomy: A case study of Master Two students at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra* [Master's dissertation, Mohamed Khider University of Biskra]. University Repository.

- MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1991). Language anxiety: Its relation to other anxieties and to processing in native and second languages. *Language Learning*, 41(4), 513–534.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1991.tb00691.x>
- Magali, J. (2019). Research Projects Writing Skills and Other Challenges Faced by Master and PhD Students at the Open University of Tanzania. *International Journal of Social Science Research*, 7(1), 41–57. <https://doi.org/10.5296/IJSSR.V7I1.14668>
- Magidimisha, H. H., & Chipungu, L. (2019). *Spatial planning in service delivery: Towards distributive justice in South Africa*. Springer International Publishing.
- Mailbi, F. (2013). *Empowering learners' autonomy through the use of Internet: Case study of third year LMD students of Biskra University* [Master's dissertation, Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra]. Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra Repository. <http://archives.univ-biskra.dz/handle/123456789/4755>
- Marwan, A. (2017). Implementing project-based learning in an English for academic purposes class in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 7(1), 38-46.  
<https://doi.org/10.17509/IJAL.V7I1.6859>
- Matus, A. L. (2018). *Can teachers influence in their students' motivational and anxiety levels through the use of certain teacher strategies, so that students are able to produce more oral communication in EFL classes?* <https://repositorio.uahurtado.cl/handle/11242/24646>
- Miller, S. D., & Meece, J. L. (1997). Enhancing Elementary Students' Motivation to Read and Write: A Classroom Intervention Study. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 90(5), 286–299.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.1997.10544593>
- MindBrainEd Think Tank. (2024, August). The benefits of learner autonomy in language learning. *MindBrainEd*. <https://www.mindbrained.org/2024/08/the-benefits-of-learner-autonomy-in-language-learning/>

- Mitchell, J. J., & Bakewell, C. J. (1995). Teaching presentation skills. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 58(1), 45–51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/108056999505800110>
- Muñoz Martínez, M., Garay Garay, F. R., & Garay Garay, F. R. (2015). *La investigación como forma de desarrollo profesional docente: Retos y perspectivas*. 41(2), 389–399. <https://doi.org/10.4067/S0718-07052015000200023>
- Murray, G., Gao, X., & Lamb, T. (Eds.). (2011). *Identity, motivation, and autonomy in language learning*. Multilingual Matters.
- Nasri, M., Ghoniem, A., Al-Kiyumi, A., & Elyas, T. (2020). Impact of project-based learning on EFL learners' attitudes and writing skills: A study in higher education. *International Journal of Instruction*, 13(3), 33-48.
- Nasri, M., Shokrpour, N., & Kafipour, R. (2022). Project-based learning: An investigation into its impact on intermediate EFL learners' autonomy, motivation, and writing performance. *Education Research International*, 2022, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/6857277>
- Nova, N., & Gonzalez, R. A. (2023). Evaluating Collaboration in a Translational Research Ecosystem. *Systems*. <https://doi.org/10.3390/systems11100503>
- Nunan, D. (1997). Designing and adapting materials to encourage learner autonomy. In P. Benson & P. Voller (Eds.), *Autonomy and independence in language learning* (pp. 192–203). Longman.
- Onozawa, C. (2010). A study of the process writing approach: A suggestion for an eclectic writing approach. *Proceedings of Kyoai Gakuen College*, 10, 153–163.
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Bailey, P., & Daley, C. E. (1999). Factors associated with foreign language anxiety. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 20(2), 217–239. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0142716499002039>
- Pérez-Sanagustín, M., Hernández-Leo, D., Santos, P., & Blat, J. (2012). Monitoring Patterns of Student Interaction with a Virtual Learning Environment: A Case Study. *IEEE Transactions on Learning Technologies*, 5(3), 248–256. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TLT.2011.26>

- Pizarro, N. A. B. (2018). Using Research projects in the classroom to improve Engineering education. *Frontiers in Education Conference*, 1–7.  
<https://doi.org/10.1109/FIE.2018.8659057>
- Quijano, A. (n.d.). The power of autonomy: A journey through its history, importance, and practical applications. *Angela's Philosophy*. <https://angelasphilosophy.com/>
- Ranjbar, N., & Ghonsooly, B. (2017). The impact of project-based learning on EFL learners' motivation and self-efficacy. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 6(6), 182-190. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.6n.6p.182>
- Saban, A., & Çoklar, A. N. (2013). Pre-Service Teachers' Opinions about the Effects of Project-Based Learning on Students' Motivation. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 4(15), 83–92.
- Savery, J. R. (2006). Overview of Problem-Based Learning: Definitions and Distinctions. *The Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-Based Learning*, 1(1), 9–20. <https://doi.org/10.7771/1541-5015.1002>
- Scharle, Á., & Szabó, A. (2000). *Learner autonomy: A guide to developing learner responsibility*. Cambridge University Press.
- Schenke, W. (2015). *Connecting practice-based research and school development. Cross-professional collaboration in secondary education*.  
[https://pure.uva.nl/ws/files/2548376/164095\\_DEFINITIEF\\_Proefschrift\\_Wouter\\_Schenke\\_compleet.pdf](https://pure.uva.nl/ws/files/2548376/164095_DEFINITIEF_Proefschrift_Wouter_Schenke_compleet.pdf)
- Sembiring, V. B., Ndonga, Y., & Gultom, I. (2024). Contribution Of Parental And Teachers' Guidance Towards Independent Behavior Of Elementary School Children. *Jurnal Pendidikan, Sains, Geologi, Dan Geofisika*, 5(4), 989–995.  
<https://doi.org/10.29303/goescienceed.v5i4.517>
- Şengül, Ö. (2024). *Handbook of Educational Research for Beginners*.  
<https://doi.org/10.58830/ozgur.pub419>



- Sheerin, S. (1991). *Self-access*. Oxford University Press.
- Shin, J., Sutherland, L. M., Shin, H., Conradi Smith, K., & Conradi Smith, K. (2021). “I Became More Interested in Science”: The Impact of a Research Project on Students’ Motivation in Science Learning. *International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education*, 19(1), 75–95. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S10763-019-10031-5>
- Sidman-Taveau, R., & Milner-Bolotin, M. (2001). Constructivist inspiration: A project-based model for L2 learning in virtual worlds. *Texas Papers in Foreign Language Education*, 6(1), 63-82.
- Smith, R. (2008). *The history of learner autonomy*. The University of Warwick.
- Solis, S. L., & Sellers, P. (2012). Lessons from pre-service teachers: Learning to teach through research-based projects. *Childhood Education*, 88(3), 177–183. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00094056.2012.688147>
- Stoller, F. L. (2006). Establishing a theoretical foundation for project-based learning in second and foreign language contexts. In G. H. Beckett & P. C. Miller (Eds.), *Project-based second and foreign language education: Past, present, and future* (pp. 19-40). Information Age Publishing.
- Thanasoulas, D. (2000). What is learner autonomy and how can it be fostered? *The Internet TESL Journal*, 6(11).
- Thiem, J., Preetz, R., & Haberstroh, S. (2023). How research-based learning affects students’ self-rated research competences: evidence from a longitudinal study across disciplines. *Studies in Higher Education*, 48(7), 1039–1051. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2023.2181326>
- Thomas, J. W. (2000). *A review of research on project-based learning*. [http://www.bobpearlman.org/BestPractices/PBL\\_Research.pdf](http://www.bobpearlman.org/BestPractices/PBL_Research.pdf)
- Tinzmann, M. B., Jones, B. F., Fennimore, T. F., Bakker, J., Fine, C., & Pierce, J. (1990). What is the collaborative classroom? *North Central Regional Educational Laboratory*.
- Tobias, S., & Duffy, T. M. (2009). *Constructivist instruction: Success or failure?* Routledge.
- Trilling, B., & Fadel, C. (2009). *21st-century skills: Learning for life in our times*. Jossey-Bass.

- Ushioda, E. (1996). *Learner autonomy 5: The role of motivation*. Authentik.
- Vega, V. (2012). Project-based learning research review: Evidence-based components of success. *Edutopia*. <https://www.edutopia.org/pbl-research-evidence-based-components>
- Wang, H. (2020). How learner-centered instruction impacts college students' motivation and academic performance in English classes in China. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 15(8), 480-489.
- Weinstein, C. E. (1987). *Learning and study strategies: Issues in assessment, instruction, and evaluation*. Academic Press.
- Zare, P., & Othman, M. (2013). The relationship between learning styles and strategies used by EFL students. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(4), 187-193.
- Zhang, L.-N. (2018). Learner Autonomy and Learning Anxiety in English Class. *DEStech Transactions on Social Science, Education and Human Science*.
- Zoghi, M., & Nezhad Dehghan, H. (2012). Reflections on the What of Learner Autonomy. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 2(3), 22. <https://doi.org/10.5539/IJEL.V2N3P22>

# Appendix

Peoples Democratic Republic of Algeria  
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research  
Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra  
Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages  
Department of English Studies and Literature

## Student's questionnaire

**Dear Student,** I am a master two student conducting research for my dissertation, and I am interested in your experiences as an EFL learner. My research focuses on promoting EFL learners' autonomy in research projects. Your participation is important, as your answers will help provide valuable insights into this topic. Thank you.

### Section one: General Information

1. Gender :

A) Male ☐ B) Female ☐

2. Choice of English:

A) Optional ☐ B) Obligatory ☐

3. How would you evaluate your level in English?

A) High ☐ B) intermediate ☐ C) Low ☐

4. Are you familiar with the term learning autonomy?

A) Yes ☐ B) No ☐

If yes, how would you define it in your own words?

.....  
.....  
.....

### Section Two: Autonomy in the Classroom

5. Do you engage in classroom activities?

A) Yes ☐ B) No ☐

6. What type of activities do you prefer to work on during class ?

A) Written activities ☐

B) Group discussions ☐

C) Presentations ☐

7. I consider myself a self-directed learner (a learner who depends mostly on himself in learning)

A) Strongly agree ☐

B) Agree ☐

C) Neutral ☐

D) Disagree ☐

E) Strongly disagree ☐

8. In your opinion, what do you think are the key psychological components that can influence the academic progress in and outside the classroom?

A) Motivation ☐

B) Anxiety ☐

C) Self confidence ☐

9. Does your teacher encourage you to take responsibility in the classroom?

A) Yes ☐

B) No ☐

If “yes” it is because:

You are allowed to correct and evaluate yourself. ☐

You can choose the method to use. ☐

You can decide on the topics and activities. ☐

You are sometimes asked to prepare and present the lesson. ☐

10. Do you think that learning progress is?

A) Teacher's responsibility ☐

B) Learner's responsibility ☐

C) Shared responsibility ☐

11. When you face a difficulty in your learning, how do you usually act?

A) Avoid it ☐

B) Try to solve it ☐

12. In your opinion, what helps a learner become more independent in their learning?

.....  
.....

### Section Three: Research Projects and Learner Autonomy

13. Do you believe that engaging in research projects enhances both your confidence in communication, critical thinking, and autonomy in learning English?

A) Yes ☐

B) No ☐

Why or why not?

.....  
.....  
.....

14. How many project works have you worked on this year?

A) Less than 3 ☐

B) Between 3 and 6 ☐

C) More than 6 ☐

15. Are these projects usually conducted :

A) Individually ☐

B) In pairs ☐

C) In groups ☐

16. Can you share an experience where conducting a research project helped you feel more independent in your language learning journey?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

17. What challenges do you face while working on research projects in your classes?

A) Limited time to complete the project ☐

B) Organizing and structuring information ☐

C) Lack of guidance from the teacher ☐

How do you handle and overcome these obstacles?

.....  
.....

18. How do you see your independence during and after the project affecting your EFL learning?"

- A) Enhanced my problem-solving skills and self-reliance. ☐
- B) Boosted my confidence in managing tasks independently. ☐
- C) Improved my ability to organize and plan effectively ☐
- D) Fostered my growth in time management and prioritization. ☐
- E) Empowered me to take ownership of my learning and development. ☐

**Thank you**

# Teacher's interview

Dear teachers, I am a master two student conducting research on promoting EFL learners' autonomy in research projects. As part of my dissertation, I am inviting you to participate in this interview. Your insights and experiences would be invaluable to my study, and I would be truly grateful for your time and input. The interview will be brief, and your responses will be used solely for academic purposes.

**Thank you**

**Q1.** Have you incorporated research projects in your EFL teaching?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Q2.** What are your general thoughts on learner autonomy in EFL classrooms?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Q3.** To which extent you think your students will benefit from project work and why ?

.....

.....

.....

.....



.....  
.....  
**Q4.** What strategies do you use to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Q5.** How do you balance providing support with allowing students to work independently on research projects?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Q6.** What skills (e.g., critical thinking, problem-solving, self-regulation) do students develop through research projects??

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Q7.** What role do you play in guiding students through research projects??

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Q8.** How do students generally respond to research projects? Do they find them engaging or challenging?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

.....  
.....

**Q9.** Have you observed differences in motivation between students working on research projects and those engaged in traditional learning activities?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Q10.** Do you encourage students to work individually or in groups for research projects? Why?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Thank you**

## الملخص

هذه الدراسة تستكشف دور مشاريع البحث في تعزيز استقلالية المتعلم بين طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية تهدف إلى تسليط الضوء على أهمية الاستقلالية في عملية التعلم وإظهار كيف يمكن تطويرها في صفوف اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. المشكلة الرئيسية هي أن العديد من طلاب الجامعات لا يزالون يعتمدون بشكل كبير على معلمهم، مما يصعب عليهم أن يصبحوا متعلمين مستقلين. تطرح هذه الدراسة أسئلة مهمة مثل: هل طلاب الجامعات الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية متعلمون مستقلون؟ هل تساعد مشاريع البحث في تطوير الاستقلالية لديهم؟ وما هو دور المعلم في دعم هذه المهارة؟ نفترض أن مشاريع البحث يمكن أن تكون أداة فعالة لتعزيز استقلالية طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. أُجريت الدراسة مع طلاب السنة الأولى ماجستير في اللغة الإنجليزية والمعلمين في جامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة. تم استخدام أداتين لجمع البيانات: استبيان للطلاب ومقابلات مع المعلمين. أظهر تحليل البيانات أن معظم الطلاب يدركون أهمية الاستقلالية ويعتقدون أن القيام بمشاريع البحث ساعدهم على تحسين مهاراتهم اللغوية، والتفكير النقدي، والثقة بالنفس، والمسؤولية. كما اتفق المعلمون على أن العمل البحثي يشجع المتعلمين على التصرف بشكل أكثر استقلالية والمشاركة بشكل أكبر في دراستهم. وأشاروا إلى أن دعم المعلم وتقديم الملاحظات مهمان لمساعدة الطلاب على أن يصبحوا مستقلين. في الختام، تظهر هذه الدراسة أن دمج مشاريع البحث في صفوف اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يمكن أن يكون طريقة مفيدة لتطوير الاستقلالية ودعم التعليم المتمركز حول المتعلم.