

## Imposing Teacher's Authority in EFL Classroom and its Consequences on Learners' Self-efficacy

### سلطة مدرس اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية داخل القسم وتأثيرها الإيجابي على استقلالية المتعلم

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#### Abstract:

Students face many challenges when they assume responsibility for their learning. This present research investigates the EFL students' and teachers' perceptions of the concept of learners' autonomy. It attempts to reveal teachers' authority and its impact on students' self-dependence in the EFL classrooms, which is necessary for accomplishing goals and objectives that students hold regarding their responsibilities and those of the teacher in the learning process. Furthermore, the current study finds out about targets show a heavy reliance on their teachers which may additionally be an obstacle to high-quality learning. The purpose of this research is to look further at techniques, methods, and ways that can promote and achieve EFL learners' autonomy at Saida University. Being an EFL learner is a challenging task that requires an achievement from an autonomous learner and this cannot be implicated without the instructor's guidance, instruction and motivation. However, one of the main features that might affect the student's autonomy in the EFL learning process is the teacher's authority; the power to give orders and instructions. How the educators are implementing their authority is significant in promoting students' self-engagement in learning.

**Keywords:** Learners, autonomy, challenges, responsibilities, process.

ملخص:

يفحص هذا البحث الحالي التصور السائد لدى طلاب ومعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية لمفهوم استقلالية المتعلم. يحاول الكشف عن سلطة المعلمين وتأثيرها على استقلالية الطلاب في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية، وهو أمر ضروري لتحقيق الأهداف والغايات. يحترم الطلاب مسؤولياتهم ومسؤوليات المعلم في عملية التعلم: كونك متعلما للغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية مهمة صعبة تتطلب إنجازا لمتعلم مستقل، ولا يمكن أن يكون هذا متورطا دون توجيه المدرب وتعليماته وتحفيزه. ومع ذلك، فإن إحدى السمات الرئيسية التي قد تؤثر على استقلالية الطالب في عملية تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية هي سلطة المعلم؛ القدرة على إعطاء الأوامر والتعليمات. إن الطريقة التي يطبق بها المعلمون سلطتهم مهمة حقا في تعزيز استقلالية الطلاب. ومع ذلك في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة الدكتور مولاي طاهر: يواجه طلاب السنة الأولى العديد من التحديات عندما يتحملون مسؤولية تعلمهم..

كلمات مفتاحية: استقلالية المتعلمين، السلطة، عملية التعلم، التحديات، المسؤولية.

## Introduction:

Since people try to learn more than one language to communicate with other people around the world, the importance of teaching and learning a language is increasing as their interaction with others. Furthermore, the teachers' authority and students' autonomy play a remarkable role in the learning process. on one hand, teacher's authority needs an ongoing intervention in the EFL classrooms practice to foster learner autonomy, They must be responsible for their students learning and process an appropriate understanding with a relevant practice to provide an effective learning style for a successful result. Autonomy in the educational world has attracted educational authorities' attention as the result of the rise of globalization. Learners' autonomy increases motivation to learn consequently; Learners must accept their learning responsibilities for a successful life career. Additionally, the promotion of an effective learning and teaching environment depends on the education system. Two research instruments are used: teachers' and students' questionnaires for this purpose. To affirm or reject proposed and assumed Data, a quantitative study is carried out on the situation of the first-year students and their teachers at the department of English, Dr Moulay Taher University of Saida. In the EFL classrooms, teachers and students share positive attitudes with each other. In another hand, teachers' authority can influence students' autonomy. Suggestions and recommendations to teachers, learners, are provided with the aim of building a concept of learner autonomy in EFL at the University Saida in Algeria. According to this, teachers' authority and students' autonomy have a terrific significance to integrate learning into Algerian classes for learning English. This study argues for an urgent need for promoting learner autonomy at Saida University which is a characteristic of almost all Algeria universities.

## 1. Definition of teacher' Authority:

In classrooms, Authority is a central phenomenon and misunderstood aspect. Authority is distinguished from other relationships of command and obedience by the super ordinate's right to command .Thus, when one person has the authority to command, someone else has the responsibility to obey. The ability to enforce obedience and the full right to give orders are also part of the authority. In another hand, the authority has been described as the "overpower".

The goal of education is to promote learning, but various perspectives on what is successful learning exist. The teacher must acquire an appropriate comprehension of relevant practice, and take the responsibility for their student's learning, to encompass a valuable teaching style.

Self-awareness of teachers or the intentions of their measures is incapable of marginalizing or damaging students from the learning process. To facilitate promoting students voices to materialize and grant a place for those voices in the higher education classroom, engaging critical reflection and critical teaching is essential, for the reason that, being critically reflective includes sincerely believing how effectively power can influence the educational transactions, and how one's suppositions can get the interest of both students and teachers themselves.

Teachers are free to determine what and how to teach; consequently, they have been characterized as autonomous decision-makers. However, they attentively should not confuse students autonomy with underestimating themselves and they need to say what they want as clearly as can be understood by the student and have no intention to hide it as Scrivener 2011 stated "... if you want to stop an activity, say stop now, please. Feel your natural authority and let it speak clearly". (P.76) Scrivener (2011); Whereas, students have been dealt with as an input of autonomous processors, claimed Palfreyman (2003)

"Learner's background has often been viewed by teachers as a setback in promoting autonomy". Learners and teachers are autonomous; the argument is based on that teaching and learning are required to be situated firmly within the social world of students and teachers, underlying both second language learning and language pedagogy. To comprise effective teaching, a teacher must possess appropriate understanding, relevant practices, and be responsible for their students learning, so they are in some sense autonomous.

### **1.1. Types of teacher's authority:**

To achieve learning effectiveness teachers need to make daily requests to their learners. Teachers differ from one to another in learning style, there are five types of teacher's authority which are: coercive, expert, reward, legitimate and attractive teacher's authority.

Firstly, coercive authority is considered by those teachers who believe that setting some boundaries is the main technique of tacking control in the classroom, which crossing the red line will lead to immediate punishment. Although learners can express their minds without restraint, except for crossing the boundary.

Secondly, expert authority is related to those teachers who have been characterized by their learners as a source of knowledge; learners are in such a state of believing that their teacher has adequate information about the area under discussion or the concerned subject. When the teacher is distinguished as such subsequently will gain learners' respect and confidence in the content of the lecture.

Thirdly, reward authority occurs when a teacher recognizes and rewards his students, either in front of his peers or with a prize, for example. This makes students feel valued and knowledgeable, and so they can receive even greater outcomes if the teacher follows this approach; it is a give-and-take relationship between the teacher and his students.

Fourthly, a legitimate authority implies that they have authority in the classroom because they are responsible for their students' actions and must carry out those duties. The students' view of legitimate power is that the teacher has the authority to make such demands and requests as a result of his or her position as a teacher .The attractive teacher's authority is the last type; this is when the teacher relies on their personality, relationship, or the fact that they share interests with their students. This personality style evolves as a consequence of the teacher's pleasing personality.

To sum up each teacher's goal and responsibility should thoughtfully consider the implementations of each of these types, including some amount of each of these five types of the teacher is considered essential for effective teaching.

#### **1.1.1. Learner's autonomy and motivation:**

Generally, the well-known description although not an accurate one for the term learner's autonomy is in the present literature by Henri Holec, (1981, p.17) who said: "Learner's autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's learning",

the core description of the view behind the student's autonomy is that the full reliability is on the learner to take charge of his learning, more willingly than depending on the instructor. Therefore according to Benson "The autonomous learner constructs knowledge from direct experience, rather than one who responds to someone's instruction.

To claim that a learner is autonomous is to say that he is capable of leading his or her learning and taking responsibility for all aspects of that learning. Noticing that learner autonomy refers to a broad subjective approach to learning; a self-directed approach in which students are in control of their education. They take an active role in their development and participate actively in it. Little (1990) argued that learner autonomy should not be seen as a synonym for self-learning because learner autonomy has to do with "the learner's psychological relation to the process and content of learning".

The notion of learner autonomy has three fundamental classifications which are: first is psychological learner autonomy, this type is a collection of internal personal motivation that inspires the students to take responsibility for their learning. The second is technical learner autonomy, this type regards learner autonomy as a mixture of competencies that students implement outside the classroom. Finally, the political learner autonomy type which promoting students' to select freely which learning method and techniques are appropriate for them to make decisions.

Benson stated "Learner's autonomy requires the content of learning, which the learner independently identifies ". The main idea behind learner autonomy is that students should take responsibility for their learning, rather than be dependent on the teacher. Learner autonomy may also be described as the characteristics of a person who freely engages in intentional learning behaviours.

### **1.1.2. Autonomy within independent learning:**

Autonomy persuades the student to figure out accountably about their process of personal knowledge accomplishment with help of motivation. There are two basic categories of learning in which they share autonomy as a regular characteristic for mastering a language in particular, which are; the independent learning outside instructional putting and lecture room mastering inside the classroom setting, although the most variety associated with autonomy is the independent or the impartial learning. Independent learning can be performed

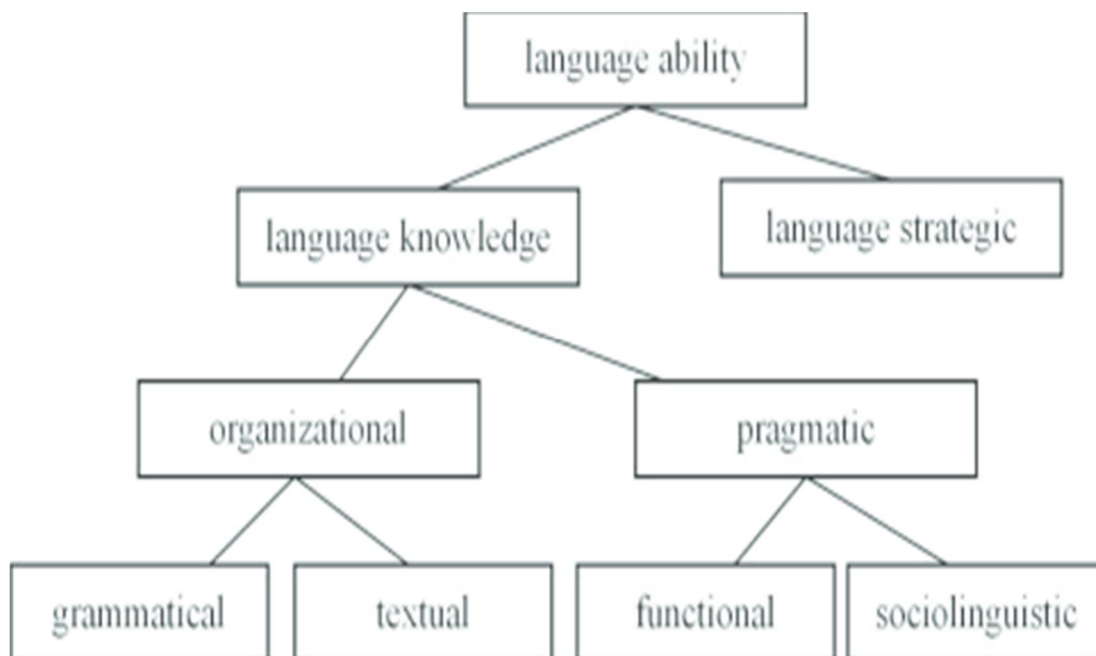
without the interference of the instructor by learning resources, tools, and frameworks such as; videos, TV, the internet, e-books, smartphones ...etc.

The independent learner should be able to determine the content and the course of learning to monitor his\her acquisition process, for facilitating the evaluation of what will be or was obtained. As he\she takes the full responsibility for setting their own learning goals they need to give choices to personalize learning in which making decision of what to learn, and how to learn is completely dependent on them. Additionally, the independent learners should have the capacity to acquire and develop cognitive strategies, to learn and implement their knowledge and skills. The cyclical nature of autonomous learning is presented in the figure below:

**Figure 1**

*The cycle of autonomous Learning and Language*

*Bachman's (1990) Model of language use complemented with "achieved goal" step*



**Source:** Language Testing in Practice. Oxford: <http://www.tcp-ip.or.jp/~ainuzuka/2001paperEnglish.htm>.

Implementing concrete examples is beneficial for demonstrating learning tasks to prepare for life-long learning. In the end to work effectively in the classrooms system student needs to support and develop self-respect and self-



esteem as well as respecting others. However, learning independently does not always refer to the same as autonomous students who can make clear decisions about how and what to learn, and how to beneficially obtain learning.

## **2. The Responsibility of Teacher in Learner's Autonomy:**

Today, autonomy in language learning is seen as a desirable aim. Without a trainer, it can be confused in several ways. Teachers, in reality, are in charge of developing self-employed students in the classroom. Moreover, the concept of autonomy in language learning is associated historically and theoretically with communicative language teaching (CLT)" (Nunan,1997); Subsequently, the impact of teacher roles of autonomy promoting in language learning is gaining extra consideration, therefore, emphasizing on teachers autonomy has in recent times increased. (Benson, 2001)

Learners rarely take responsibility for their learning on their own; instead, they need assistance from their teachers. Student autonomy does depend on educator autonomy in two sequences as (Little (1995) stated: firstly, to anticipate teacher to promote student autonomy, students need to certainly believe that they aware of what exactly makes an autonomous learner, otherwise it would be unreasonable to expect them to do so. To sum up, the teachers' responsibility is to develop autonomous learner throughout their practices, roles, exercises, and training in the classroom.

### **2.1. Teacher's Roles in Autonomous Learning:**

In classrooms where teachers sustain autonomy exhibits more inherent motivation, confidence, and superficial competence of students, to comparing students in classrooms with controlling instructions. Consequently, those learners with low self-motivation during the learning task appear to be over-controlled by their teachers, whereas, learners who are extremely motivated are those who elicit more autonomy sustain from their tutors. (Hamer, 2001) states: "The teacher can be a controller, a prompter, an assessor, an organizer, resource and participant". Teachers serves as a role model for the learners, so their actions must be appropriate in front of them; in another hand, teachers serve as a second parent to their learners; so, they play a variety of roles in the classroom and is an integral part of the learning process. They should have clear attitudes and beliefs concerning autonomous learning.

### **2.1.1. Teacher as a Controller :**

The role of a teacher as a controller is not advantageous for impartial learning, as the teacher is not in a position of a catalyst for independent work, but as a guard. This role characterizes teachers who provide adequate instructions for their learners, along with coaching on a standard basis. For instance, the teacher will act as a controller and guide his students when he wants them to touch (student-centered approach). Explicitly the teacher is simply controlling the lesson only, while the students are asked to make efforts and construct the lesson.

### **2.1.2. Teacher as a Prompter :**

This type characterizes teachers who are attempting for assisting students once they are encountered by different problems and obstacles through endowing arranged solutions and clarification; as to stimulate vocabulary and expressions or give suggestions. This role does not beneficially encourage impartial participation since it offers students turnkey solutions.

### **2.1.3. Teacher as an Assessor :**

Assessor means that the teacher assesses his students and himself. In addition to his way of teaching, they modify, add, admit and update their teaching methods, strategies, and approaches each time by making research actions and creating a portfolio; eventually, bring so many changes and new stuff, provides feedback, evaluated, and gives students grades. The assessor is a great role and it is very important because teacher assesses themselves can make teaching very joyful and fruitful.

### **2.1.4. Teacher as an Organizer :**

One of the most critical roles in the classroom is that of the teacher, who organizes students into small groups, provides guidance, and provides input. Organizing the surrounding environment, getting the students organized, planning and organizing events, time management, keeping track of records, and resource management; This function is extremely beneficial in promoting self-directed learning.



### 2.1.5. Teacher as a Resource :

It represents a teacher who assists students and provides them with information. He can convey vital information to them. Because these students are lazy and unmotivated, they are not suitable for independent learning. Teachers should focus on; dealing with it quietly, re-seating, risks should not be used and do not take it too seriously. 'Teachers' encouragements are beneficial in learning as the table shows:

**Table1**

*Teachers 'encouragement for students to develop their content issues*

Options	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes, all the time	78	78
Sometimes	22	22
No, not at all	0	0
Total	100	100

**Source:** Data gathered from the Departement of English at Dr Moulay Tahar University (Year 2020)

The findings that are shown in the table indicate that the vast majority of students (78%) agree that their teachers always invite and encourage them to develop their content issues. This implies teachers' high appreciation for their students to take part in developing their learning process. Whereas (22%) of students declare that their teachers sometimes urge them to learn and develop their content issues. This means that some teachers do not value this way of encouraging learning. No student selects the option "no, not at all". This indicates that teachers do efforts to encourage their students in such a way of learning variously.

**Table 2**

*Students' reactions about their teachers' appreciations for their way of learning*

Options	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	68	68
No	28	28
Maybe	0	0
Don't know	04	04
Total	100	100

**Source:** Data gathered from the Departement of English at Dr Moulay Tahar University (the Year 2020)

The table above demonstrates if the teachers' authority can make learners' design one of more self-directed learning experience or not. Most of the students **(68%)** are sure about the statement and they reveal that the authority of teachers will help learners create a more self-directed learning experience. This means that students understand the significance of teachers' authority to self-direct and self-regulate what to learn. Despite this, **(28%)** of students agree that teachers' authority does not motivate them to design their own self-directed learning in the process of encouraging autonomy. Very low percentages of students **(04%)** are not sure about the claim but they doubt it. These statistics may interpret that teachers' authority varies from one teacher to another, which may be due to teachers' commitments; or it is about learners that they do not have a clear idea about the impact of teachers' authority in EFL classrooms learning to create a self-directed experience.

### **Conclusion:**

This study seeks to investigate teachers' authority in the EFL classroom and its impact on the students' autonomy. Gaining knowledge is necessary to be able to communicate in English. It is the world language of communication as well as the language of scientific study. Students at stated university who are learning English as a second language appear to be dependent on their language teacher, at the same time they believe that they are capable of managing their education. In today's environment, such ability has become a need. The study is separated into two sections: the first is the theoretical section, which attempts to provide a wide range of concepts and ideas, which is an important first step toward a well-supported field study. On the other hand, the practical element aims to present teachers and students with their thoughts, and ideas on the topic at hand. The above-mentioned phase allows for the addition of findings that support or refute the research hypothesis. According to data from the questioning phase, teachers and learners both respond positively to the impact of autonomy on the development of learners' individual learning capabilities in general, and their self-independent learning in particular. As a result, this study provides light on the importance of autonomy in EFL classes, as well as the disparities in teacher and student viewpoints on the subject.

**Appendices:****Appendix1: Students' questionnaire**

Dear students,

The following questionnaire is designed for the sake of gathering data about teachers' authority in the EFL classrooms and its impact on learners' autonomy for the first-year students. Furthermore, you are kindly requested to answer this questionnaire. To answer these questions which will take no more than 20 minutes. I would like to bring to your attention that your cooperation will certainly ensure the validity of this research paper, therefore please answer it as honestly and sincerely as possible you can.

Thank you.

**Background Information:**

**Q1. Age:** .....

**Q2. Gender:**      *Male:* .....      *Female:* .....

**Q3. Does your teacher encourage you to develop your content issues?**

- Yes, all the time.
- Sometimes.
- No, not at all.

**Q4. Do your teacher's course activities encourage you to take initiative and responsibility for your learning?**

- Yes.
- No.

**Q5. Is it beneficial when your teacher asks you whether you have understood what he /she taught and helps you in case you have doubts?**

- Yes, all the time.
- Sometimes.
- No, not at all.

**Q6. Does your teacher provide you with useful and clear guidelines on how tasks should be completed?**

- Yes, all the time.
- Sometimes.
- No, not at all.

**Q7. Does frequently receiving verbal and \or written comments on your performance enhance your learning process and help you develop your skills?**

- Yes.
- No.

**Q8. Does your teacher put any kind of boundaries and punishments that might be less desirable for those students who are inclined to cross lines?**

- Yes.
- No.

**Q9. Do you think that teachers' authority can make learners' design one of the more self-directed learning experiences?**

- Yes.
- No.
- Maybe.
- Don't know.

**Q10. Do you find it beneficial when the teacher takes the whole responsibility for what and how you should learn?**

- Yes.
- No.
- Don't know.

**Q11. What does motivate you to learn more?**

- Asking a lot of questions to the teacher.
- Completing assignment.
- Others.

**Q12. It is known that "the teacher is a storehouse of knowledge who allocates the fact, concepts, and principles you require". To what extent do you agree with this statement?**

- Agree.
- Strongly agree.
- Unable to judge.
- Disagree.
- Strongly disagree.

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