

THE ROLE OF AUTONOMY-SUPPORTIVE TEACHING METHOD IN EFL LEARNING CONTEXTS WORLDWIDE

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Abstract

One of the ultimate objectivities of education is to produce proficient, confident, and self-reliant learners possessing life-long learning characters. To comply with this educational aim, it is critically indispensable for worldwide EFL teachers to design a wide variety of student-oriented, encouraging, and meaningful learning activities sustaining the internalization of the autonomy-supportive teaching method. This present small-scale qualitative investigation was conducted through library study approach. Twenty current autonomy-supportive teaching literatures were selected to yield new enlightenment toward globalized ELT stakeholders' beliefs concerning the critical importance of this student-centered learning mode in modern EFL areas. Based on the in-depth library analysis, the further utilization of the autonomy-supportive teaching method is highly recommended since EFL learners have transformed into more competent and self-reliant target language learners accompanied by the intensive learning supports addressed by language teachers. Some important suggestions are suggested for the future advancement of this current qualitative study.

Keywords: Autonomy-supportive teaching method, EFL learners' autonomy, library study

INTRODUCTION

The main objective of education is to enable learners become more autonomous individuals in their lives. Basri (2020) acknowledges that it is pivotal for globalized educationalists to not only transmit the intended skills or knowledge but also forge learners' independent characters to be transfigured into more competent citizens. Concerning this aforementioned conception, the nurturance of learning autonomy behavior had gained considerable attention in these decades due to the facilitative teaching-learning enterprises potentially incorporated by educators. Borg and Alshumaimeri (2019) strongly recommend EFL educators to promote more enjoyable learning atmosphere to cultivate learners' learning autonomy behaviors. By fully possessing a higher level of learning autonomy, learners will have broader opportunities to become more

strongly motivated to engage in various teaching-learning dynamics, be proactive in discovering novel knowledge, and attain more satisfying academic achievements.

These three major advantageous values was in line with Ryan and Deci (2017) stating that autonomous EFL learners are more capable of becoming more proficient and proactive academicians. However, EFL teachers are still struggling to create learning activities that can accommodate their learners' learning autonomy development. This argument strengthened the study from Mercer and Dornyei (2020) revealing that an overwhelming majority of EFL teachers are progressively encountering challenging moments while preparing particular teaching-learning activities supporting learners' learning autonomy behaviors. To diminish these unpleasant challenges, it is worth advocating for worldwide EFL teachers to start pondering more profoundly on other psychological aspects highly impacting the further development of learners' learning autonomy namely engagement, motivation, and self-confidence. Raya and Vieira (2020) assert that to elevate EFL learners' learning autonomy into greater development, educators are highly required to design specialized teaching-learning dynamics heeding a more exhaustive focus on engagement, motivation, and confidence. One of the probable teaching-learning solutions worldwide EFL teachers can continually utilize is the role of autonomy-supportive teaching. The main objective of this teaching mode is to enable each learner to possess a sense of belonging to the learning communities to fulfill their specific learning needs, interests, and preferences. Jang et al. (2016) believe that EFL learners can transform into more autonomous academicians when more pleasurable and encouraging learning activities are exposed to them.

On the other hand, EFL teachers are advised to actualize the aforementioned learning climates in their classroom contexts in order to enable all learners to attain more fruitful learning outcomes. Cheon et al. (2020) uncover that the majority of EFL learners having been exposed to autonomy-supportive teaching dynamics are more successful and motivated to constantly engage in various target language learning dynamics. Owing to these afore-mentioned conceptions, both educational institutions and EFL teachers are highly recommended to instill this student-oriented learning mode to empower their learners' learning autonomy behaviors. This rewarding benefit has shared a resemblance with Chinpakdee (2020) stating that with the actual embodiment of autonomy-supportive teaching enterprises, EFL learners can take charge of their learning activities by instilling more robust independent learning behaviors.

Thus, it is of key importance for worldwide EFL teachers to play their new roles as supportive learning facilitators to address more holistic, pleasurable, and meaningful target language learning dynamics. Pham et al. (2021) believe that in the tangible presence of supportive learning facilitators, EFL learners will be more capable of stipulating their pre-determined learning objectives and utilizing various efficient learning strategies. Since the successful incorporation of autonomy-supportive teaching has a mutual interplay with the teacher-learner rapport, it is worth emphasizing that EFL teachers need to grant their authoritative role to their learners. This action should be undertaken at the onset of autonomy-supportive teaching dynamics to address wider opportunities for learners to explore diverse fields of knowledge, conduct varied hands-on learning experimentations, and enhance their specific target language skills.

All these above-explicated perspectives are strongly supported by Alrabai (2021) arguing that EFL teachers are responsible for promoting more meaningful learning activities in which learners' learning autonomy behaviors can significantly thrive. it is crucial to keep in mind that the mutual and positive relationship between EFL teachers and learners should continually be nurtured. It is worth noting that during the sustainable engagement with the classroom complexities, learners will acquire varied cognitive, affective, and emotional support imparted by their teachers. Hence, it can be fairly assumed that the specifically-attained learning behaviors, achievements, and outcomes possessed by learners will bring about influential impacts on the

whole implementations of autonomy-supportive teaching enterprises. Wang et al. (2022) suggested EFL teachers to establish more positive relationships with their learners to increase their learning autonomy levels. Since autonomy-supportive teaching never stands alone without the existence of a sociocultural context, it is paramount for globalized EFL teachers to address a robust motivation and potent encouragement for the further advancement of learners' learning engagement as well as independent learning behaviors. Baker et al. (2020) strongly encourage worldwide EFL teachers to relentlessly prompt their learners to expend their fullest learning efforts to promote more proactive learning participation and elevate the designated self-reliant learning behaviors.

In consonance with this theoretical underpinning, zone of proximal development (ZPD) also plays another vital role during the implementation of autonomy-supportive teaching. ZPD can act as one of the cornerstones for EFL learners to elevate their specific target language skills with the minimum assistance from teachers or learning companions in the prospective learning encounters. This positive value happened since EFL teachers constantly impart constructive feedback, evaluate each learner's learning progress, and equip them with a vast range of compatible learning strategies. These beneficial learning impacts were strongly endorsed by Danli (2017) asserting that in the light of ZPD, EFL learners will have broader opportunities to foster their target language competencies to the utmost levels as their teachers continually arm them with meaningful feedback, effective learning strategies, and critical self-learning evaluations. The second aspect is of foremost importance since EFL learners' autonomous learning behaviors are highly trained to select a specific set of learning strategies harmonious with their current learning contexts.

By conducting this action, EFL learners will not merely become more independent academicians but also wise decision-makers capable of determining the best learning approaches suitable to their personalized learning needs. This perspective sits well with Nosratinia et al. (2014) stating that it is worthy of attention for EFL teachers to train their learners in utilizing some particular learning strategies to allow them to become more thoughtful decision-makers. To make all these matters happen, EFL teachers have to address adequate scaffolding at the beginning of autonomy-supportive teaching activities to enable them become more self-reliant knowledge discoverers without depending extensively on learning assistance. Chen (2020) argues ZPD can work as one of the propelling forces for EFL learners to efficiently capitalize on varied learning strategies appropriate to their present learning situations.

Five prior studies relevant to autonomy-supportive teaching had been conducted globally. The first study was conducted by Oga-Baldwin et al., (2017). They strongly suggested EFL teachers to nurture their learners' learning autonomy behaviors by promoting more student-centered and meaningful learning activities. In the subsequent study, Kassem (2018) discovered that in the light of student-centered learning instructions, EFL learners had become more skilled at adopting and adapting a vast array of appropriate learning strategies in which they progressively transformed into more independent knowledge seekers. In another study, Lamkhanter (2022) found out that a considerable number of university EFL learners infused a higher level of positive perceptions on learning autonomy behaviors during second language learning enterprises where they were deliberately expected to independently select the best learning methods to work for them. Subekti (2018) strongly advised Indonesian EFL teachers to internalize more pleasurable target language learning dynamics in which learners can improve their autonomous learning behaviors along with the specific skills they are currently possessing. At last, Wiraningsih and Santosa (2020) mentioned the importance of applying collaborative and personalized learning activities to sustain EFL learners' learning autonomy growth. Since none of these studies investigated the role of autonomy-supportive teaching method in worldwide EFL learning contexts, the researcher conducted this present small-scale library study to investigate the role

of the autonomy-supportive teaching method in worldwide EFL learning contexts. By adhering to this research objectivity, the following obtained research results can potentially provide illuminations for worldwide ELT experts, practitioners, educators, and curriculum designers to establish more mutual collaborative networking in utilizing the autonomy-supportive teaching method for significant advancement of EFL learning enterprises. To this end, one major research problem is put forward namely: what is the important role of the autonomy-supportive teaching method in worldwide EFL learning contexts?

METHODS

The researcher conducted this current-small scale qualitative investigation with the support of a library study approach to unfold specific rewarding insights impactful for the ELT field. Xu and Croft (2017) believe that a library study can generate more insightful research results contextual for the researchers’ research contexts. In accord with this aforementioned research objectivity, the researcher thoughtfully selected 20 prior autonomy-supportive literature accomplished by globalized ELT experts. By focusing on the 20 selected previous studies, the researcher hoped that worldwide ELT parties can take some initiatives to prioritize the further internalization of the autonomy-supportive teaching method to better promote more favorable, meaningful, and fruitful second language learning enterprises for diverse-wide ranging learners. The 20 chosen previous studies ranged from 2015 to 2022 year. The main reason of choosing these 20 prior studies is to encourage globalized EFL teachers to implement autonomy supportive teaching method in their classroom contexts. There were two encouraging matters motivating the researcher to conduct this study. Firstly, it is hoped that the subsequent research results can increase EFL teachers’ confidence and commitment to apply more student-centered learning methods in order to sustain learners’ learning autonomy behaviors. Secondly, the results of this present study can yield more renewed insights for EFL teachers on how to maximize autonomy supportive teaching method to the utmost potentials. In the data analysis process, the researcher expended more effort to categorize each most-appeared research result in the light of specific themes. By subdividing these research results into some particular themes, more comprehensible, applicable, and profound argumentations can be well-discerned by the intended global readers. More than that, each argumentation delineated by the researcher would be accompanied by interrelated theories and findings to generate more trustworthy research results. After conducting this categorization stage, the researcher reread, rechecked, and re-evaluated each argumentation with the support of his former lecturer. This ultimate stage is progressively essential to thoroughly ascertain that more accurate, authentic, and credible research results had been yielded in the current investigation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This part was initiated by profoundly explaining the two major specific themes based on the document analysis conducted by the researcher. Those two subdivided themes are (1) Autonomy-supportive teaching can produce more competent and independent target language academicians and (2) EFL teachers need to transform into more supportive learning facilitators before promoting the autonomy-supportive teaching approach.

Table 1. Autonomy-Supportive Teaching Can Breed More Competent and Independent Target Language Academicians

Theme 1	Authors
Autonomy-Supportive Teaching Can Breed More Competent and Independent Target Language Academicians	Abdulhay et al. (2016); Alrabai (2021); Oga-Baldwin et al. (2020); Fadaee et al. (2021); Gueta and Berkovich (2022); Karimi (2017); Kartal and Balçıkanlı (2019); Phithakmethakun and Chinokul (2020); Tan et al. (2021); Wang et al. (2016).

From the theme above, it can be argued that the incorporation of autonomy-supportive teaching activities can potentially produce more competent and proficient target language academicians. These two positive learning attributes do not happen by chance since EFL learners engaging in autonomy-supportive teaching dynamics are strongly willing to transfigure into more well-organized and confident academicians in managing their specific learning situations. This laudable learning behavior is correspondingly interrelated with the finding of Abdulhay et al. (2016) discovering that an overwhelming majority of university EFL learners are more manage their learning activities and become more well-prepared academicians after being introduced to autonomy-supportive teaching activities. Referring to this standpoint, three main prompting factors encourage these learners to gradually become more competent and independent academicians. First, they possess a higher level of liberty to select the learning activities compatible with their learning needs. Second, they are constantly prompted to become the managers of their existing learning enterprises. Last, they are continually trained to utilize a wide array of efficient learning strategies to overcome various learning obstacles. In harmony with these aforementioned learning initiatives, Alrabai (2021) demonstrated that to become highly-autonomous second language academicians, EFL learners should be given endless opportunities to relentlessly explore various learning environments suitable for their current learning situations, independently manage their learning dynamics, become more effective decision-makers. After doing all these autonomous learning behaviors, it is believed that EFL learners can obtain more satisfying and fruitful target language achievements since they can manage their learning activities properly. Baldwin et al. (2020) argue that through autonomous learning activities, EFL learners can simultaneously improve their target language skills and experience more meaningful learning dynamics.

The main purpose of incorporating autonomy-supportive teaching activities is to enable EFL learners to fully undergo more enjoyable, student-centered, and encouraging learning enterprises with the minimum support from their teachers. Concerning this point, EFL teachers are highly demanded to renew their old paradigm about becoming authoritative knowledge imparters. Rather, they should play their new roles as less-domineering learning instructors highly desirous of designing a vast variety of engaging second language learning dynamics for their learners. Fadaee et al. (2021) acknowledge that it is more likely for EFL learners to progressively become more competent and self-reliant academicians only if their teachers are strongly determined to disseminate a wide range of meaningful learning activities where all learners' learning needs and behaviors are thoroughly embraced. Furthermore, there are always plenty of reasons for EFL learners to depart earlier from the complex second language learning processes they are presently engaging with. Hence, it is increasingly necessary for language teachers to promote a more autonomy-supportive learning atmosphere amid the challenging learning obstructions confronted by their learners. By heeding more profound attention to this affective aspect, it can be acknowledged that EFL learners can continuously transform into more resilient, persistent, and motivated knowledge seekers in confronting varied learning obstructions. This finding is consolidated by Gueta and Berkovich (2022) highly recommending globalized EFL teachers to provide more student-centered learning activities to improve their learners' learning autonomy behaviors to the fullest potentials. In the same vein, the meaningful utilization of autonomy-supportive teaching activities can concurrently provide a sound basis for the significant advancement of EFL learners' communicative target language competencies. It can be simply stated that in the light of autonomy-supportive teaching dynamics, learners have garnered more robust self-confidence and motivation in communicating by using the target language. Autonomous EFL learners are considered as proficient target language academicians. Karimi (2017) strongly advocates worldwide EFL educationalists to commence their communicative learning exposure with the guidance of autonomy-supportive teaching method to increase learners' confidence, motivation, and commitment to express their thoughts by harnessing the second language. Lastly, the meaningful incorporation of the autonomy-supportive

teaching approach cannot be fully detached from the unique cultural, social, and psychological backgrounds possessed by each EFL learner. It means EFL teachers have to be more aware of previous learning backgrounds identical to their learners by implementing more emotionally supportive as well as culturally-responsive second language learning exposure where lifelong learning characters will be the utmost priority. Tan et al. (2021) confess that the cultivation of learners' learning autonomy behaviors can make them become life-long academicians willing to foster their skills or knowledge constantly.

Table 2. EFL Teachers Need to Transform into More Supportive Learning Facilitators before Promoting the Autonomy-Supportive Teaching Approach

Theme 1	Authors
EFL Teachers Need to Transform into More Supportive Learning Facilitators before Promoting the Autonomy-Supportive Teaching Approach	Azad et al. (2021); Basri (2020); Han (2021); Işık and Balçıkanlı, (2020); Kaur et al. (2015); Moè and Katz (2020); Nielsen (2019); Yılmaz and Arcagök, (2018); Zarrinabadi et al. (2021); Reeve and Cheon (2021).

It can be posited that the successful integration of the autonomy-supportive teaching approach is mutually interlinked with the supportive pedagogical behaviors displayed by EFL teachers. Simply put, worldwide EFL teachers have to be more eager to become more supportive learning facilitators upon the placement of autonomy-supportive teaching activities. The first and foremost action matter most is the existing teachers' mindset. While EFL teachers uphold a positive perspective that they are capable of creating meaningful autonomy-supportive teaching activities for their learners, they will be more energized to channel all the designated efforts for these positive learning dynamics to happen. On the other hand, when EFL teachers hold negative perspectives in their mindset, autonomy-supportive teaching method cannot run successfully in their lessons. Alrabai (2021) recommends EFL teachers to possess more positive perceptions toward autonomy-supportive teaching activities to avoid frustrating teaching-learning experiences. Furthermore, it is of critical importance for EFL teachers to maintain positive rapport and establish more solid collaborative networking with their learners before the internalization of autonomy-supportive teaching activities. Reflecting on this second essential action, EFL teachers have to create an anxiety-free classroom atmosphere where all learners are fully welcomed to explore a wide variety of probable learning strategies rewarding for their present learning conditions. Basri (2020) strongly prompted EFL teachers to induce more positive and supportive teaching-learning climates to foster learners' autonomy growth and target language competencies. Due to the ever-changing second language learning environments in this modern age, it is acceptable for EFL teachers to incorporate more feasible, applicable, and flexible pedagogical approaches strongly reinforcing the continual internalization of autonomy-supportive teaching activities. In this context, EFL teachers can potentially hold more exhaustive knowledge discovery activities, arm learners with plentiful learning strategies, and conduct collaborative group sharing. Han (2021) suggested EFL teachers to promote more collaborative learning activities to promote a higher degree of learning enjoyment for their learners.

Positive words encouragement also plays an important role in molding learners' learning autonomy behaviors. Hence, globalized EFL teachers need to impart positive encouragement to their learners whenever they are crammed with varied challenging learning hurdles. By embodying this action, it can be ascertained that EFL learners will be more capable of surviving and thriving in their current second language learning processes. This finding is strongly affirmed by Işık and Balçıkanlı, (2020) unveiling that a predominant number of university EFL learners are committed to embracing a wide range of challenging learning hindrances after being constantly motivated by their teachers. Moreover, it is worth accentuating that the successful incorporation of the autonomy-supportive teaching approach is also attributable to the existing EFL teachers' understanding of how this teaching mode works best in their specific learning environments.

Without possessing more insightful knowledge of the autonomy-supportive teaching method, there will be a small probability for EFL teachers to advance their learners' learning autonomy behaviors to the fullest potential. Nielsen (2019) advised educational institutions to equip EFL teachers with an adequate background knowledge of autonomy-supportive teaching method to promote more meaningful learning activities.

Since there is a mutual interplay among EFL learners' independent learning behaviors, confidence, and target language competencies, EFL teachers should promote more positive learning dynamics in which learners can share their opinions freely. Through this mutual sharing activities, EFL learners can become more confident, competent, and autonomous academicians. Yılmaz and Arcagök (2018) revealed that the majority of university EFL learners are motivated to share their thoughts confidently after being exposed to positive learning atmosphere. As a result, EFL learners can totally enjoy their entire learning processes and show their best learning performances. Reeve and Cheon (2021) scientifically finding out that a great number of EFL learners become more responsible, skilled, and proficient academicians after being introduced to autonomy supportive teaching activities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the specifically-obtained research findings, the meaningful incorporation of autonomy-supportive teaching enterprises can markedly elevate EFL learners' target language competencies, second language learning endeavor, motivation, and self-reliant characters in a long-term manner. Again, all these significant degrees of benefits cannot be actualized when target language educators do not play their new roles as supportive learning facilitators. Several shortcomings derived from this current small-scale library study need to be acknowledged. Firstly, since this present qualitative investigation merely reviewed a limited number of autonomy-supportive teaching literature, future researchers are strongly prompted to replicate this current study with a great number of pertinent literature to provide more robust research findings in various ELT aspects.

Secondly, since this present small-scale qualitative study only investigated the critical importance of autonomy-supportive teaching activities in globalized EFL settings, future researchers need to explore potential drawbacks induced by autonomy supportive teaching method to prepare EFL teachers' readiness to mitigate the potential learning obstacles. Contrary to all these above-explicated drawbacks, this present small-scale qualitative study provided a starting point for ELT stakeholders, particularly educators to start internalizing this student-centered learning mode that may potentially promote more holistic learning rewards to be attained by universal target language academicians.

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