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**Learner Autonomy under the Competency-Based Approach in the
Algerian Secondary School EFL Classroom: Reality, Hurdles, and
Solutions**

**Case Study of First-Year Students at Abidine Mohamed Secondary
School**

A thesis submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of *Master* in
Didactics.

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare under oath that all information in this master's thesis has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. This master's thesis is the product of my own independent work. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work. This thesis has neither been submitted to another committee, nor has it been published before.

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Dedication

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

This work is dedicated to all the members of my family, particularly my beloved parents.

To my brothers Abdelkader and Otmane. I thank you all for your endless help and
encouragement along my studies.

This work is also dedicated to my dear partner Amel. We have been together through this
since day one; we held each other's hands and pushed each other forward. I will never forget
the support I got from her.

Acknowledgments

First of all, praise is to Allah for giving me health, strength and spirit to overcome all the downs of life.

This work would not have been accomplished without the endless support of my supervisor, Dr. Miloud Bouchefra for his help, patience, and the valuable pieces of advice and wise insights he gave me throughout this research.

Also, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the examiners Dr. H. Ghembaza and Dr. M. Babou who kindly accepted to read this dissertation and provide me with their valuable comments and remarks.

To all my teachers and classmates at Dr. Moulay Tahar University. Last but not least, I thank all the secondary school teachers and students who generously helped me to carry out my research.

Abstract

Teaching English as a foreign language in secondary school has been a research subject in recent years. Researchers have investigated the effectiveness of traditional and contemporary teaching methods and approaches in emphasizing the importance of enhancing learner autonomy as they find it crucial for developing self-directed learning skills and improving language acquisition outcomes. In recent years, there has been a noteworthy increase in the adoption of the competency-based approach (CBA). It lays a strong emphasis on acquiring precisely defined information and skills. This study aims to investigate the role of the Competency-Based Approach in enhancing students' autonomy. It hypothesizes that there is a significant relationship between first-year students' autonomy and achievement under the CBA approach. To achieve the aim of this study, a mixed methods approach is selected under which three research instruments are selected to collect the necessary data: a student questionnaire administered to seventy (70) first-year students at Abidine Mohamed Secondary School; a teacher interview administered to four (4) teachers of English at the same school; and a checklist observation applied in three different classes of first-year pupils in the same research setting. The data collected is analysed through a quantitative analysis using the SPSS software and a qualitative analysis through thematic/content analysis. The findings show that students and teachers know the potential challenges of implementing the Competency-Based Approach in EFL classrooms. However, they assert the effectiveness of this approach in developing learner autonomy and communicative skills. This study recommends executing experimental research to measure students' autonomy level before and after implementing the Competency-based Approach to highlight its effectiveness in foreign language teaching and learning.

Keywords: Checklist observation, Competency-Based Approach, experimental research, interviews, learners' autonomy, mixed methods, questionnaire

Table of Contents

Declaration of Originality	I
Dedication	II
Acknowledgements	II
Abstract	IV
Table of Contents	V
List of Tables	VII
List of Figures	X
List of Abbreviations	XII
List of Appendices	XIII
General Introduction	01
Chapter One: Integrating ICT in Teaching and Learning	
1.1 Introduction	07
1.2. Competency-Based Language Teaching Approach in Foreign Language Education	08
1.2.1 Definition	08
1.2.2 Objectives	10
1.2.3 Principles of CBLT	11
1.2.4 Characteristics of CBLA	13
1.2.5 Assessment under CBA	14
1.2.6 The Implementation of the CBA in EFL Classrooms: Potential Challenges	16
1.3 Learner Autonomy	17
1.3.1 Definition of Language Learning	17
1.3.2 Oxford's Language Learning Strategies	18
1.3.3 The Nature of Learner Autonomy	20
1.3.4 Forms of Autonomous Learning	22

1.3.5 Characteristics of Autonomous Learning	23
1.3.6 Dimensions of Autonomous Learning	24
1.3.7 The Significance of Autonomous Learning	27
1.3.8 Learner Autonomy and Communicative Competency	28
1.4 Conclusion	30
Chapter Two: The Use of ICT in Improving Creativity in ELT	
2.1 Introduction	32
2.2 Research Methodology	32
2.3.1 Design	32
2.3.2 Research Variables	33
2.3.3 Research Setting	34
2.3 Participants and Sample Selection	35
2.4 Data Collection Instruments	36
2.5 Data Analysis Plan	38
2.6 Ethical Considerations	39
2.7 Conclusion	39
Chapter Three: Data Analysis and Interpretation	
3.1 Introduction	41
3.2 Data Analysis and Interpretation	41
3.2.1 The Student Questionnaire	41
3.2.2 Teachers' Interview	85
3.2.3 Checklist Observation	90
3.3 Discussion of the Findings	95
3.4 Conclusion	100
General Conclusion	101
References	107
Appendixes	111

List of Tables

Table	Page
Table 1. <i>Students' Perceptions of Classroom Communication</i>	41
Table 2. <i>Students' Beliefs About English Learning Objectives</i>	42
Table 3. <i>Students' Beliefs Learning Motivation and Skills</i>	44
Table 4. <i>Students' Beliefs About Self-Paced Learning</i>	45
Table 5. <i>Students' Beliefs About Learning Responsibility</i>	47
Table 6. <i>Students' Beliefs About the Learning Direction</i>	48
Table 7. <i>Students' Beliefs About Reconstructing Cognitive Information</i>	50
Table 8. <i>Students' Beliefs About Learning, Planning and Accessibility</i>	51
Table 9. <i>Students' Beliefs About Most Effective Learning Strategy</i>	53
Table 10. <i>Students' Beliefs About Evaluating Learning Outcomes</i>	54
Table 11. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Role in Setting Students' Learning Objectives</i>	56
Table 12. <i>Students' Perceptions the Teacher's Role in Providing Instant Feedback</i>	57
Table 13. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Teacher Being the Facilitator of the Information</i>	58
Table 14. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Guidance in English Learning</i>	60
Table 15. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Permission in Asking Questions and Making Suggestions</i>	61
Table 16. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Focus on Students' Communicative Competencies.</i>	63
Table 17. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Role in Boosting Learners' Willingness to Embrace Self-independent Learning.</i>	64
Table 18. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Adoption of the Appropriate Teaching/ Learning Approach</i>	66
Table 19. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Importance of Knowing the Learner's Strengths and Weaknesses</i>	67

Table 20. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Importance of Establishing an Interactive and Collaborative Learning Environment for Boosting Students Autonomy</i>	69
Table 21. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Role of Language Teaching Approaches in Developing Learners' Control, Goal-directness, and Autonomy</i>	70
Table 22. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Role of Language Teaching Approaches in Helping Evaluate the Students' Metacognitive Skills</i>	72
Table 23. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Focus of the Competency-Based Approach</i>	73
Table 24. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Focus of the Competency-based Approach on Learners' Linguistic and Communicative Competencies.</i>	75
Table 25. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-based Approach in Promoting Interactive and Collaborative Learning</i>	76
Table 26. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-based Approach in Focusing on Learners' Fluency</i>	78
Table 27. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-based Approach in the Learners Competencies and Learning Outcomes</i>	79
Table 28. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Focus of the Competency-based Approach on Learners' Centredness, Needs, and Progress.</i>	81
Table 29. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-based Approach in Facilitating Effective Classroom Participation</i>	82
Table 30. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-Based Approach in Promoting Learning Autonomy</i>	84

List of Figures

Figure	Page
Figure 1. <i>Conceptualization of Learner Autonomy (Nguyen & Habok, 2020, p. 126)</i>	27
Figure 2. <i>Students' Perceptions of Classroom Communication</i>	41
Figure 3. <i>Students' Beliefs About English Learning Objectives</i>	42
Figure 4. <i>Students' Beliefs About Learning Motivation and Skills</i>	43
Figure 5. <i>Students' Beliefs About Self-Paced Learning</i>	44
Figure 6. <i>Students' Beliefs About Learning Responsibility</i>	46
Figure 7. <i>Students' Beliefs About Learning Direction</i>	47
Figure 8. <i>Students' Beliefs Reconstructing Cognitive Information</i>	49
Figure 9. <i>Students' Beliefs About Learning, Planning and Accessibility</i>	50
Figure 10. <i>Students' Beliefs About the Most Effective Learning Strategy</i>	52
Figure 11. <i>Students' Beliefs About Evaluating Learning Objectives</i>	53
Figure 12. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Role in Setting Students' Learning Objectives</i>	55
Figure 13. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Role in Providing Instant Feedback</i>	56
Figure 14. <i>Students' Perceptions of Teacher Being the Facilitator of the Information</i>	58
Figure 15. <i>Students' Perceptions about the Teacher's Guidance in English Learning</i>	59
Figure 16. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Permission in Asking Questions and Making Suggestions</i>	60
Figure 17. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Focus on Students' Communicative Competencies.</i>	62
Figure 18. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Role in Boosting Learners' Willingness to Embrace Self-independent Learning.</i>	63
Figure 19. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Adoption of the Appropriate Teaching/ Learning Approach</i>	65
Figure 20. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Importance of Knowing the Learner's</i>	66

<i>Strengths and Weaknesses</i>	
Figure 21. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Importance of Establishing an Interactive and Collaborative Learning Environment for Boosting Students Autonomy</i>	68
Figure 22. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Role of Language Teaching Approaches in Developing Learners' Control, Goal-directness, and Autonomy</i>	70
Figure 23. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Role of Language Teaching Approaches in Helping Evaluate the Students' Metacognitive Skills</i>	71
Figure 24. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Focus of the Competency-Based Approach</i>	72
Figure 25. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Focus of the Competency-based Approach on Learners' Linguistic and Communicative Competencies.</i>	74
Figure 26. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-based Approach in Promoting Interactive and Collaborative Learning</i>	75
Figure 27. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-based Approach in Focusing on Learners' Fluency</i>	77
Figure 28. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-based Approach in the Learners Competencies and Learning Outcomes</i>	78
Figure 29. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Focus of the Competency-based Approach on Learners' Centredness, Needs, and Progress</i>	80
Figure 30. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-Based Approach in Facilitating Effective Classroom Participation</i>	81
Figure 31. <i>Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-Based Approach in Promoting Learning Autonomy</i>	83

List Abbreviations

- CBA: Competency-Based Approach
- CBE: Competency-Based Education
- CBLT: Competency-Based Language Teaching
- CLT: Communicative Language Teaching
- EFL: English as a Foreign Language
- EFL: English as a Foreign Language
- ELTL: English Language Teaching and Learning
- ESL: English as a Second Language
- ESP: English for Specific Purposes
- L2: Second/ Foreign Language
- LA: Learner Autonomy
- SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Science

List of Appendices

Appendix	Page
Appendix A: Students' Questionnaire	112
Appendix B: Teachers' Questionnaire	116
Appendix C: Observation Checklist	118

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Teaching a foreign language is an art, with the noticeable development in the educational and pedagogical sectors, the teaching environment has significantly shifted as teachers try to build their learners' language backup. Hence, appointing a competent teacher with excellent skills may control the narrative. Recent trends in foreign language education focused their research on language achievement and proficiency, with a considerable emphasis on language acquisition. That is why, nowadays, the teacher is less likely to be the chief responsible for the learning process, as the learner's willingness to learn individually has gone down to be the leading concept of independent learning or what is called autonomous learning.

In approaching the concept of autonomous learning, Richards and Schmidt (2010) explain that “autonomous learning refers to the principle that learners should be encouraged to assume a maximum amount of responsibility for what they learn and how they learn it. This will be reflected in approaches to needs analysis, content selection, and the choice of teaching materials and learning methods” (p.326). As some learners find themselves interested in learning through teaching methods of control, goal-directedness, autonomy, and self-efficacy, this has caused a change in the teacher's role, shifting from language controller to facilitator. At this point, distinguished researchers, including Oxford (1990), claim that integrating the appropriate teaching/ learning method or approach allows the learner to become more self-directed, for autonomy demands conscious control of one's learning processes.

As English language teaching may sometimes confuse, teachers need to distinguish between the two terms: *method* and *approach*. Richards and Rogers (1986) emphasize the relationship between the two terms in which the *approach* provides theoretical assumptions about language and learning and informs methods that should be in harmony with the proposed approach. Additionally, Richards and Rogers (1986) coin the term *method* as the umbrella term for the specification and interrelation of theory and practice. It encompasses

approach, design, and procedure. Nevertheless, Anthony's (1965) terming of *approach* is more related to pedagogical literature than that of any other scholar. He asserts that the *approach* reflects all the interdependent assumptions in language learning and teaching. In contrast, the *method* is the overall plan for systematically presenting language based on a selected approach. After clarifying the difference between language teaching/ learning methods and approaches, it is necessary to mention the most distinguished language methods and approaches that shape the contours of the language teaching and learning process.

From the early twentieth- century, many teaching methods have emerged and played a major role in the prosperity of the teaching/ learning process. To name some, the Grammar Translation Method focuses on teaching the literature and grammar of the target language deductively, with passages translated into and from the mother language. The Audio-Lingual Method emphasizes the teaching of listening over speaking, grammar over vocabulary, and accuracy over fluency. The Communicative Language Teaching Method (CLT), which aims at implementing communicative competence in teaching second and foreign languages, and a communicative syllabus and methodology is the best way to do this. For instance, in classrooms where CLT is applied, the teacher is expected to be a facilitator who can integrate target language learners into a communicative learning atmosphere (Richards, 2006).

In Nutshell, and as the twenty-first-century pedagogy has adopted new teaching methods in different contexts, the concept of good or bad teaching is no longer dependent on the teacher's efforts but rather on those of the learner. In light of this significant shift, in which the teacher's role changed from being a controller to an observer or facilitator, there has been a resolution to the ongoing debate surrounding teaching methods. This resolution suggests implementing approaches that cater to diverse learning styles and competencies; the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) stands out as a highly esteemed approach adopted in this regard.

When moving from elementary to secondary education, learners become more active and efficient in their learning performance through participating and involving themselves in interactive activities, as well as trying to practise their language regularly. This may result in limiting the teacher's role and turning it from the supreme controller of the input to a mere language facilitator. However, this is only the case for some learners, as others prove to be passive and highly dependent on the teacher. One undeniable reason for the student's activity in the classroom is that teachers may only sometimes be available to guide or instruct. Thus, learners find themselves obliged to be self-directed. At this point, it is necessary to choose appropriate teaching methods and approaches that reinforce learner-centredness and help improve learning skills competencies. For the most part, create a collaborative, active, and interactive teaching/ learning environment. Taking forward the case of first-year students at Abidine Mohamed Secondary School, this study seeks to investigate the adoption of the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) as a teaching approach chosen to reinforce autonomous learning among students. Moreover, investigating its application and the hurdles that may hamper it, besides the solutions to overcome those obstacles.

This study is significant because it attempts to bridge the gap between the theoretical and practical aspects of English language teaching and learning (ELTL). It seeks to study the feasibility of the CBA approach in a learner-centred environment by investigating the effects, hurdles, and solutions that go along with this approach. Moreover, it seeks to discuss the importance of providing complete guidance to encourage self-directed learning, notwithstanding its role in making the application of selected teaching approaches or methods successful for teachers and learners.

This study aims to investigate the adoption of the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) in foreign language classrooms to boost students' autonomous learning and the

challenges faced during the application process. To reach the aim of this study, the following objectives are created:

First, discovering the level of learner autonomy among first-year students. Second, determining whether CBA is beneficial or detrimental to foreign language teaching and learning. Third, investigating the difficulties that may hamper the application of CBA for triggering learner autonomy. Finally, exploring students' and teachers' attitudes towards the hurdles that may face the application of CBA in EFL classrooms and the suggested solutions to overcome them.

Moreover, this research study intends to answer the following questions:

- 1) How much autonomy do first-year Algerian secondary school students truly exhibit?
- 2) To what extent can the CBA approach foster EFL students' autonomy?
- 3) What are the difficulties that teachers may come across when implementing the CBA approach in a learner-centred EFL classroom?

Furthermore, it hypothesizes that:

- 1) First-year Algerian secondary school students may show interest in learning independently at their own pace.
- 2) There is a significant relationship between first-year students' autonomy and learning outcomes under the CBA approach.
- 3) EFL teachers are aware of the challenges they are likely to face when implementing the Competency-Based Approach in the EFL Classroom.

This study aims to adopt a mixed-methods approach to meet the scheduled objectives. It takes the case of first-year students at Abidine Mohamed Secondary School and teachers of English at the same school. To be confident of the results obtained and to have more reliable data, three instruments are chosen to collect the data for this study, including a students'

questionnaire, a teachers' interview, and an observation guided by a checklist. The aim of using the questionnaire and the interview is to explore the students' and teachers' attitudes towards the topic under investigation. These tools are reliable data collection tools that serve the aim of any study. However, the observation is used to investigate the actual situation in Algerian EFL classes. The sample size of this study is taken from the total population, representing seventy (70) students and four (04) teachers, selected randomly from the chosen population. After collecting data, the data will undergo two methods of analyses; statistical analysis using the SPSS software (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) to analyze quantitative data. On the other hand, qualitative data will be examined through thematic/content analysis.

The present study is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter summarizes, compares, and criticizes critical concepts, theories, and previous studies about the topic under investigation. The second chapter describes the researcher's steps in performing the research, including the research method, procedures, setting, sample, data collection tools, and methods of analysis. The third chapter presents the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the results. Moreover, this chapter establishes a strong conclusion that will validate or refute the research hypotheses. These chapters are divided and entitled under the following outline:

This study was bound to face several limitations that hampered the process of the research. First, the issue of time constraints, the period granted, was not sufficient to conduct experimental research in which the researcher investigated the actual situation of teaching English in secondary schools. Second, the research was constrained to a representative subset of four (4) teachers and did not encompass the selected sample of ten (10) because some respondents did not answer the questions and sometimes delayed or did not return the forms.

CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Introduction

Since the 1940s, the study of teaching methods and approaches in foreign and second language teaching has played a central role in applied linguistics. Scholars have made numerous efforts to conceptualise these methods' nature and systematically synthesise the connection between theory and practice within a specific method or approach. This chapter intends to discuss the significance of the language teaching approach. More specifically, the Competency-Based Language Approach (CBA). The chapter is divided into main sections. Section one sheds light on the competency-based language teaching approach from a theoretical perspective in which key definitions, fundamental theories, and critical concepts will be discussed. On the other hand, section two sheds light on self-directed learning and autonomy in foreign language learning. Key definitions, theories, models, and concepts will be discussed here.

1.2 Competency-Based Language Teaching Approach in Foreign Language Education

This section exclusively reviews the existing literature on the competency-based language teaching approach by exploring its definition, objectives, principles, characteristics, criteria, and application.

1.2.1. Definition

Most teaching methods and approaches in foreign and second education emphasise language learning inputs. These methods and approaches are used to improve language syllabuses, materials, and activities. Yet, scholars distinguish between the two terms even though others use them interchangeably. Richards and Schmidt (2010) provide comprehensive

definitions of the term method and the term approach, reaching a substantive conclusion regarding the application of the terms. They state that:

In language teaching, a method is a way of teaching a language which is based on systematic principles and procedures, i.e., which is an application of views on how a language is best taught and learned and a particular theory of language and language learning. (p.363)

Whereas, the term approach refers to “the theory, philosophy, and principles underlying a particular set of teaching practices” (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p.30). These different methods and approaches result from different views regarding the nature of language, the types of syllabuses to use, and the goals and objectives of teaching (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). In this regard, scholars classified language teaching methods and approaches into minor and major ones: the direct method, the audio-lingual method, the grammar-translation method, the silent method, the communicative language teaching approach, the natural approach, and the competency-based language approach.

In approaching the definition of the competency-based language teaching approach, Richards and Rogers (1987) provide the most comprehensive definition:

Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) applies the principles of Competency-Based Education to language teaching. Such an approach had been widely adopted by the end of the 1970s, particularly as the basis for the design of work-related and survival-oriented language teaching programs for adults. It has recently reemerged in some parts of the world (e.g., Australia) as a significant approach to planning language programs. (141)

Similarly, scholars, including Docking (1994), claim that “CBLT is an opportunity to revitalise their education and training programs. The quality of assessment will improve, and the quality of teaching and student learning will be enhanced by the clear specification of

expected outcomes and the continuous feedback that competency-based assessment can offer” (p.15). Richards and Rogers (1987) emphasise the strength of CBLT as a language-teaching approach that focuses on teaching language concerning the social contexts in which it is used. CBLT is often chosen as a framework for language teaching in situations where learners have specific needs and defined roles, allowing for a relatively accurate prediction or determination of the language skills they need. It also supports the behaviourist belief that language form can be inferred from language function. As denoted by most scholars, CBLT shares some features with Communicative Language Teaching in terms of building learners’ communicative competencies.

1.2.2. Objectives

Teachers need to adopt different teaching approaches in foreign and second language classrooms simply because there is no best way of learning. Therefore, teachers should use the most authentic teaching approaches to know their students’ needs and discover their learning styles and preferences. CBLT, by compression, is designed for the notion of competency rather than knowledge. Scholars distinguish five major objectives of CBLT, summarised as follows by Docking (1994); CBLT focuses on what students can do about language rather than what they want to know about it. It focuses on the competencies and learning outcomes of the learner. Additionally, CBLT supports the curriculum framework, syllabus specification, teaching strategies, assessment, and reporting. It aims to describe learners’ essential skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours. Ultimately, it aims to enable learners to participate effectively in the classroom. On the one hand, Auerbach (1986) provides a useful review summarising the other objectives behind implementing CBLT programs in an ESL or EFL context. CBLT aims to:

Firstly, enabling students to become autonomous and self-directed learners. Secondly, teach language as a function of communication about concrete tasks. Thirdly, focusing on students' behaviours rather than knowledge or the ability to talk about language and skills. Additionally, emphasising student-centred instruction in which objectives are defined in terms of individual needs, instruction is not time-based, and students progress at their own pace. Finally, developing specific and practical competencies related to the learners' needs and interests (Auerbach, 1986).

1.2.3. Principles of CBLT

First and foremost, identifying the principles of a particular language teaching approach requires distinguishing between an approach and a method. Richards and Rogers (1986) coin the term method as the umbrella term for the specification and interrelation of theory and practice, encompassing approach, design, and procedure. However, Anthony's (1963) comprehensive definition is considered the most accurate in pedagogical literature. Following Anthony (1963), the approach refers to theories and assumptions about the nature of language and language learning that serve as the source of practices and principles in language teaching. Based on this comprehensive terming, scholars could identify the approach principles in turn. Richards and Rogers (1986) review three main theoretical views of language and the nature of language proficiency that shape current teaching methods and approaches explicitly and implicitly. They are summarised as follows:

A. The Structural View. This orientation focuses on teaching language structure through teaching its structural elements for the coding of meaning. It aims to teach the language's phonological, grammatical, and lexical items. One example of this view is the Audio-lingual approach (Richards and Rogers, 1986).

B. The Functional View. This view focuses on teaching the functional meaning of language. It emphasises its semantic and communicative dimension rather than its grammatical structure. One example that supports this view is ESP (English for Specific purposes), which provides a functional account of learners' needs (Richards and Rogers, 1986).

C. The Interactional View. This view focuses on the interaction between teachers and students and the atmosphere of the learning situation. This approach follows counselling and social psychology learning concepts. Language teaching content, according to this view, is based on interaction. An example that shapes this view is the communicative language teaching approach (Richards and Rogers, 1986).

The axioms and theoretical framework provided by structural, functional, or interactional language models can guide a teaching approach. However, these models alone are inadequate and should be supplemented with language learning theories. Nevertheless, these principles were later used to develop language teaching methods and approaches (Richards & Rogers, 1986). The CBLT, in turn, shares the principles of the communicative language teaching approach, which are revised by Richards (2006). According to his research, communicative competence is based on the following principles:

First, the use of language for a range of different purposes and functions. Second, the use of language according to the setting and the participants. For example, knowing when to use formal and informal speech or when to use language appropriately for written as opposed to spoken communication. Third, the production and understanding of different types of texts. For instance, narratives, reports, interviews, and conversations. Additionally, the maintenance of communication, despite having limitations in one's language knowledge, is through using different communication strategies (Richards, 2006).

More importantly, Richards and Rogers (1986) argue that the competency approach can also be applied in various ways depending on the teaching situation, the learners' age, level, and learning objectives. They distinguish three categories of resources that incorporate the help the CBLT approach to language teaching: 1) Authentic materials transfer what the learners cannot learn from the outside world to the classroom and expose natural language to learners in various situations. 2) Task-based materials allow the target language learners to use the target language in specific roles. 3) Text-based materials provide a theme, task analysis, or practice situation description in the communication among the target language users.

1.2.4. Characteristics of CBLA

Competency-Based Education (CBE) is an educational movement that advocates a set of educational goals regarding students' knowledge, skills, and behaviours that should be covered by the end of the course. The characteristics of this educational movement are described by Schenck (1978) as:

Competency-based education has much in common with such approaches to learning as performance-based instruction, mastery learning, and individualised instruction. It is outcome-based and is adaptive to the changing needs of students, teachers, and the community. Competencies differ from other student goals and objectives in that they describe the student's ability to apply basic and other skills in situations that are commonly encountered in everyday life. Thus, CBE is based on outcomes from analysing tasks typically required of students in life role situations. (vi)

In this regard, CBLT serves as the application of CBE features, which focuses on competencies. Richards and Schmidt (2010) add that "CBE applies for an approach to teacher education which focuses on the skills and competencies which are thought to constitute effective teaching" (103). It is believed to improve the quality of teaching and learning

because of its focus on learning outcomes. Competency-based education shares the same characteristics as it focuses on refining essential skills and interactive behaviours. On this basis, CBLT and CLT have the same unique characteristics; Gustiani (2011) summarises them as follows:

A. Syllabus. A CLT syllabus provides space for language teachers to develop learning materials and activities in a lesson plan about a target language.

B. Classroom Activities. Many communication-related activities could be used in CLT, but in particular, including communication group discussions, simulations, and role-playing. These activities help language learners communicate with one another in the classroom.

C. Tasks and Materials. Communicative tasks allow target language learners to express themselves and use the target language. The learners are immersed in the environment when language is employed according to the context, time, and situation of real life by employing the communicative materials created by the students.

1.2.5. Assessment under CBA

The assessment of foreign language learning and teaching is highly valued as a key approach to gauge learners' overall progress. This evaluation encompasses various factors, including grades, performance, motivation, objectives, and outcomes. To approach the definition of assessment, Brindley (2001) states that:

Assessment refers to the Various ways of collecting information on a learner's language ability or achievement exist. Although testing and assessment are often used interchangeably, the latter is an umbrella term encompassing measurement instruments administered on a 'one-off basis, such as tests, as well as qualitative methods of monitoring and recording student learning, such as observation, simulations or project work. Assessment is also distinguished from evaluation,

which concerns the overall language programme and not just what individual students have learnt. (p.137)

In EFL classrooms, teachers adopt two forms of assessments to assess students' grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary needs, participation, and assessment. For the assessment of vocabulary needs, teachers are likely to use either formative assessment or summative assessment. In this regard, Brindley (2001) categorizes assessment into two types:

1.1.5.1. Formative Assessment

As defined by Brindley (2001), formative assessment refers to the evaluation conducted by teachers during the learning process, with the purpose of using the outcomes to enhance instruction.

1.1.5.2. Summative Assessment

Brindley (2001) asserts that summative assessment is the evaluation conducted at the end of a course, term, or school year. It aims to provide aggregated information on program outcomes to educational authorities.

More extensively, assessment under the CBA needs to be performance-based. As Docking (1994) notes, "instead of norm-referencing assessment, criterion-based assessment procedures are used in which learners are assessed according to how well they can perform on specific tasks" (p.16). Assessment under the CBA needs to be criterion-referenced instead of norm-referenced. Richards and Schmidt state, "Criterion-referenced is a test that measures a taker's performance according to a particular standard or criterion that has been agreed upon. The test taker must reach this level of performance to pass the test, and a test taker's score is interpreted concerning the criterion score, rather than to the scores of other test takers, which is the case with a norm-referenced test" (p.144). By this, the learner can determine the passing score on a test and achieve satisfactory learning outcomes. Therefore, CBLT is perceived as

prescriptivist since its purpose is to mold students into the existing social order and perpetuate class associations. In addition, teaching typically focuses on evaluating behaviour and performance rather than developing thinking skills (Richards& Rogers, 1986).

1.2.6. The Implementation of the CBA in EFL Classrooms: Potential Challenges

Due to the importance of the CBA in EFL teaching contexts, several studies have been conducted to investigate the potential challenges EFL teachers are likely to encounter during the process of implementation. In her thoroughly researched article, researcher Sharma (2024) points out the advantages of the CBA and key implementation challenges. She suggests three key challenges, summarized as follows:

1.2.6.1. Achieving Excellence

According to Sharma (2024), the implementation of the CBA in EFL classrooms requires achieving excellence in competency-based curriculums, addressing equity, quality, and breaking mediocrity to achieve it and break the path of mediocrity in general education trends.

1.2.6.2. Large Class Size

According to Sharma (2024), large class sizes hinder competency-based curriculum implementation due to the variation in student-instructor interactions and peer exchanges. Instructors may not adapt to different learning styles, limiting learner-centric interactive teaching methods. Minimizing class sizes can improve student performance by addressing individual learning difficulties.

1.2.6.3. Infrastructure for Learning

Sharma (2024) argues that a competency-based curriculum requires a transition from passive to active learning, which in turn requires the use of modern classrooms, creative centres, smart boards, laboratories, and cutting-edge technologies. Therefore, convincing administrators of the merits of this model is necessary.

1.3. Learner Autonomy

This section introduces the dependent variable, which is autonomous learning. It reviews some of the literature associated with autonomous learning and its effect on English language learning. Some definitions, characteristics, forms, types, and theories related to autonomous learning are defined, discussed, and synthesized.

1.3.1. Definition of Language Learning

In the broadest sense, foreign language learning is a process that relies on the individual's capacity to learn and perceive. Richards and Schmidt (2010) define learning as:

The development of a person's language. Some theorists use *learning* and *acquisition* synonymously. Others maintain a contrast between the two terms, using *learning* to mean a conscious process involving the study of explicit rules of language and monitoring one's performance, as is often typical of classroom learning in a foreign language context, and using *acquisition* to refer to a nonconscious process of rule internalization resulting from exposure to comprehensible input" (p.312).

Similarly, Krashen (1982) argues that "language acquisition is a subconscious process in which language acquirers are not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring language, but are only aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication" (p.10). Some language theorists distinguish between the two terms, in which "learning" refers to the formal study of second or foreign languages in classroom settings, whereas "acquisition" refers to the process of learning languages naturally (Moeller & Catalano, 2015). This

distinction has promoted linguistic and social knowledge g, emphasizing language proficiency and achievement.

1.3.2. Oxford's Language Learning Strategies

In contemporary research, language learning strategies have been long credited to Oxford (1990), as she synthesizes research from various contexts on two variables: learning styles and learning strategies. The scholar claims that all language learning strategies are related to the features of control, goal-directedness, autonomy, and self-efficacy. She states that: “learning strategies help learners become more autonomous because autonomy demands conscious control of one’s own learning processes” (p.166). Before delving into the different categories of learning strategies, it is important to provide a precise definition of what a learning strategy is. According to Oxford (1990), “a learning strategy refers to the specific action, behaviour, step, or technique, such as seeking out conversation partners or encouraging language learners to tackle difficult language tasks to enhance their own learning” (p.133). Additionally, Richards and Schmidt (2010) describe a learning strategy as “the learners attempt to work out the meanings and uses of words, grammatical rules, and other aspects of the language they are learning” (p.331). These definitions contribute to identifying the nature of learning strategies and, therefore, their types. In this regard, Oxford (1990) distinguishes six major types, as mentioned below:

1.3.2.1. Cognitive Strategies

According to Oxford (1990), cognitive strategies help learners make and strengthen associations between new and already-known information. They facilitate the mental restructuring of information. For instance, guessing from the context, analysing, reasoning inductively and deductively, taking systematic notes, and reorganizing information.

1.3.2.2. Mnemonic Strategies

Mnemonic strategies enable learners to relate a new item to something they already know. These devices help memorize information in an orderly string (e.g., acronyms) in a variety of ways, including by sounds (e.g., rhyming), by body movement (e.g., total physical response, in which the teacher gives an English command and learners physically follow it), or by location on a page or blackboard (the locus technique). Unlike cognitive strategies, mnemonic strategies rarely foster deep associations but relate one thing to another in a simple, stimulus-response manner (Oxford, 1990).

1.3.2.3. Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies are applied to identify own learning needs and preferences, plan for L2 tasks, gather materials, evaluate learning, and manage the learning process. This set of metacognitive strategies includes, among other things, deciding on task-related (rather than general) language goals (Oxford, 1990).

1.3.2.4. Compensatory Strategies

Compensatory strategies, or communication strategies, target speaking and writing skills. These strategies help L2 learners restore missing knowledge when using English in oral or written communication. To illustrate, guessing from the context while listening and reading compensates for a knowledge gap. For speaking, they include using synonyms, circumlocution, and gesturing to suggest the meaning. However, compensatory strategies for writing consist of some synonym use or circumlocution (Oxford, 1990).

1.3.2.5. Affective Strategies

Affective strategies are applied to identifying one's feelings, mood, and anxiety level. They help realize the learning circumstances or tasks associated with a fear of communicating in English that can sabotage learning. Deep breathing, laughter, positive self-talk, and praising oneself for performance are all effective strategies that help students deal with anxiety. Affective strategies benefit anyone learning a language, including native speakers, teachers, and language classrooms (Oxford, 1990).

1.3.2.6. Social Strategies

Social strategies aim to facilitate collective learning and help L2 learners understand the culture of the language they are learning. For instance, asking questions for clarification, learning about social or cultural norms and values, and studying together outside of class. For instance, social strategies are well represented in seeking out native friends or working with peers in a target language classroom setting.

Accordingly, the variation in learning strategies is vital in language development as long as this variation is complementary. However, theoretical distinctions can be made among these six types, notwithstanding the indispensability of learning, mainly since learners sometimes employ more than one strategy at a time.

1.3.3. The Nature of Learner Autonomy

Language art is an art that requires a wide range of skills, methods, and innovations. However, learning a language relies on the human capacity to learn and perceive. Recent trends in foreign language education focused their research on language achievement and proficiency, with a considerable emphasis on language acquisition. The latest innovative changes have integrated self-learning approaches corresponding to the learner's learning preference; self-directed learning is motivating and interesting. At this point, it is necessary to

provide a set of definitions of the so-called concept of autonomous learning. Professionally, Richards and Schmidt (2010) provide a comprehensive definition of autonomy. They state that:

Autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's own learning and to be responsible for decisions concerning the goals, learning processes, and implementation of one's language learning needs. The result is an autonomous learner, as compared to one who depends on others to make such decisions. In self-determination theory, autonomy refers to the human need to actively participate in determining one's own behaviour. However, this differs from independence, since we can freely choose to do what others want. (p.44)

Similarly, Holec (1981) describes autonomous learning as “the ability to take charge of one's learning” (p.3). Richards and Schmidt (2010) suggest that learners become able to control their learning. This will be reflected in approaches to needs analysis, content selection, and the choice of teaching materials and learning methods. On the other hand, Ustunloughlu (2009) finds various interpretations for the concept of autonomy, such as ‘self-independence’, ‘self-direction’, and ‘independent learning’. Nevertheless, there should be a big emphasis on the fact that there is no canon for the notion of autonomy in the field of applied linguistics and foreign or second language education, as this term carries different meanings and is related to different perspectives (Benson & Voller, 2013). Therefore, autonomy in learning is used in at least four different ways, as mentioned below:

First, autonomy relates to the situation where the learners study independently. Second, autonomy relates to self-directing learning by applying unique skills that can be learned and applied. Third, autonomy relates to the practice of learners' responsibility for their own learning. Finally, autonomy relates to the learners' right to determine the direction of their own learning (Benson & Voller, 2013).

Based on what was discussed above, autonomy in learning is more likely to be a concept rather than a method. Therefore, reaching out for a precise definition is subject to change based on the defined context.

1.3.4. Forms of Autonomous Learning

Autonomous learning proves successful in providing a way for learners to access learning and achieve satisfactory learning outcomes. There are several ways to categorize autonomous learning. Researchers distinguish two major forms of autonomous learning. According to Littlewood (1996), autonomy in learning takes two forms: proactive autonomy and reactive autonomy. The scholar outlines them as follows:

1.3.4.1. Proactive Autonomy

Learners with proactive autonomy can plan, monitor, and access their learning. They establish their own learning agenda and learning direction in this manner. This level of autonomy is often seen in Western cultures, such as Australian students (Littlewood, 1996).

1.3.4.2. Reactive Autonomy

Reactive learning autonomy occurs when learners do not create their own direction, but once initiated, allow them to organize their resources independently to achieve their goals. For example, if a task is assigned, the learner will eagerly complete it and may volunteer to form a group to deal with it (Littlewood, 1996).

In short, achieving autonomy in learning might be challenging for some learners. Thus, learners must raise awareness about what to learn and how to learn.

1.3.5. Characteristics of Autonomous Learning

According to Dickenson (1995), autonomous learning can be distinguished from learning as it allows the learner to identify the learning objectives of the course, plan their own learning objectives, select and implement learning strategies, identify the strategies that are ineffective/inappropriate and substituting others, and develop a rich repertoire of effective strategies. For Little (1996), autonomous learning has the features of establishing a personal agenda for learning, taking at least some sense of the initiatives that shape the learning process, or developing a capacity to evaluate the extent and success of one's learning. Chan (2001) extracts the best features of autonomous learners. He claims that autonomous learners are actively involved at all levels of learning, from goal-setting to defining the content and working out mechanisms for assessing achievement and progress. Also, in most cases, autonomous learners are decision-makers as long as the role teacher is not central. Here, learners can control their own learning, develop their learning agenda, and achieve satisfactory learning outcomes.

In exploring additional features of autonomous learners, Dam (1995) describes that: “a learner qualifies as an autonomous learner when he/she independently chooses aims and purposes and sets goals; chooses materials, methods, and tasks; exercises choice and purpose in organizing and carrying out the chosen tasks; and chooses criteria for evaluation” (p. 45). On the one hand, Sinclair (2000) emphasizes the importance of learner autonomy by structuring a framework that language learning, suggesting that autonomy is an embodiment of competency. It is achieved when the learners are accountable for their own learning. Also, learners' potential and enthusiasm to occupy such a role are not necessarily inherent. However, the advocacy of learner autonomy involves both linguistic and psychological aspects. To illustrate, autonomy can occur within and without the classroom (Sinclair, 2000).

Identifying autonomous learning characteristics has gained momentum among linguistics and scholars has sparked controversy in the field. Thus, students must adapt their learning state continually and take advantage of their knowledge, capacity, and the resources available to execute effective learning.

1.3.6. Dimensions of Autonomous Learning

For the conceptualization of autonomous learning, researchers Nguyen and Habok (2021) structure specific components of autonomous learning. They are willingness and capacity, each divided into several sub-components, as shown below:

1.3.6.1. Willingness

Willingness in learning is one of the leading components of learner autonomy, as nothing can be achieved without it. It involves two key components. They are:

1.3.6.1.1. Beliefs about Teachers' Role

For those who adopt autonomous learning, the teacher is more than an instructor; he/she is the facilitator and trigger of their learning. Those who view the teacher as just the classroom instructor are less likely to gain independent learning skills. Hence, learners' beliefs about their roles and their teacher's roles will significantly contribute to their willingness to embrace learner autonomy (Nguyen & Habok, 2021).

1.3.6.1.2. Motivation

The development of motivation is the locomotive of LA, conducive to the development of LA. Motivation is one of the tools with which learners equip themselves to enter the learning situation and enhance LA. As Littlewood (1996), Hsu (2005), and

Swatevacharkul (2009) claim, motivation is best conceptualised when it is subsumed under the notion of willingness (Littlewood, 1996; Hsu, 2005, cited in Nguyen& Habok, 2021).

1.3.6.2. Capacity

As for the concept of capacity, the conceptual framework developed by Benson (2013) is analysed. Accordingly, capacity consists of ability, desire, and freedom. These are discussed in the subsequent lines:

1.3.6.2.1. Ability

According to Benson (2013), ability represents knowledge and skills related to studying and language. Knowledge of studying is something other than metacognitive knowledge. For instance, metacognitive knowledge comprises knowledge of self as a language learner, socio-cultural, political, and physical learning context, knowledge of the subject matters, and knowledge of language learning processes (Sinclair, 2000). With metacognitive knowledge, students have directions and the ability to monitor their progress, attainment, and future paths (O'Malley et al., 1985, cited in Nguyen& Habok, 2021).

1.3.6.2.2. Desire

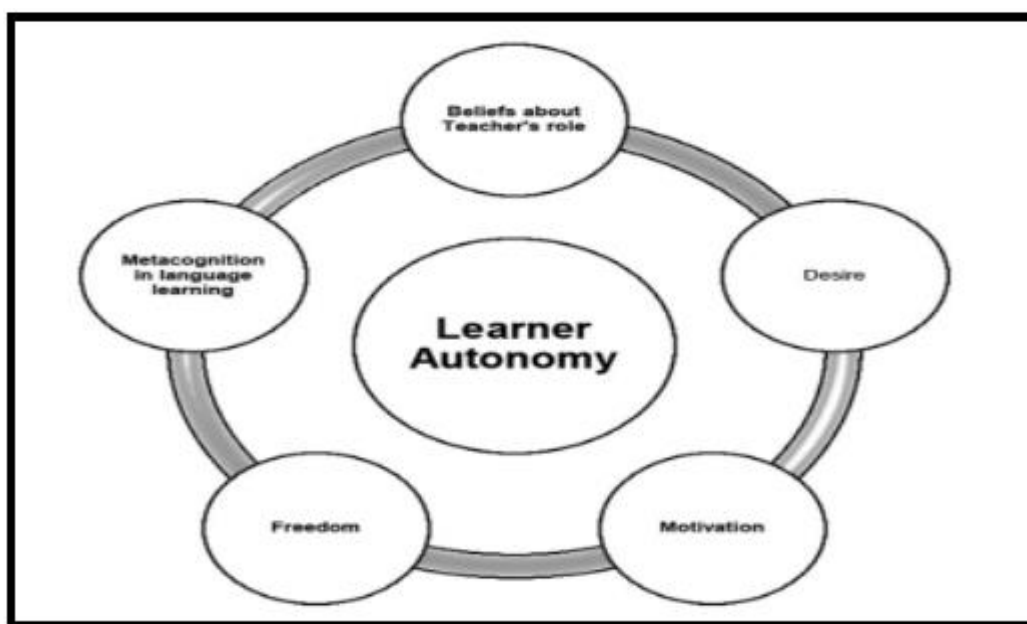
Informed by specific purposes, desire is how intensely learners intend to learn English and complete a learning task. The purpose may be interest in English, university requirements, or future job prospects. Students show their desire to obtain lessons in other places. Generally speaking, that action can be seen as the embodiment of learner autonomy (Nguyen& Habok, 2021).

1.3.6.2.3. Freedom

Freedom is denoted as “the degree to which learners are “permitted” to control their learning, either by specific agents in the learning process or more generally by the learning situations in which they find themselves” (Benson, 2013, p. 9). Lamb (2009) believes that freedom could be demonstrated through various observable activities that learners are allowed to do and which they do in reality to take charge of their learning. For example, students can ask their English teachers when they do not understand something or make suggestions to English teachers. Their autonomous activities include writing emails or Facebook statuses or listening to English frequently (Chan et al., 2002; Lamb, 2009, cited in Nguyen & Habok, 2021).

Figure 1

Conceptualization of Learner Autonomy (Nguyen & Habok, 2020, p. 126).



As shown above, willingness and capacity are important components for students to take over responsibility for learning English. Willingness includes two factors: beliefs about the teacher’s role and motivation. Capacity comprises Ability, which encompasses metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive skills, desire, and freedom, so for learners to achieve autonomy, achieving metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive skills is essential for this task. This is

consistent with what researchers have acknowledged, indicating that metacognition is crucial to learner autonomy.

1.3.7. The Significance of Autonomous Learning

Research has shown that autonomous learning is important for developing practical learning approaches. According to Richards (2014), autonomous learning helps learners maximize their responsibility for what they learn and how they learn it. They are involved in decisions about learning goals, methods, and tools and reflecting and assessing what they learned. Nevertheless, this claim was unfounded by a large body of research. It was argued that only some may want to learn this way or be able to, reflecting a way of learning that may not be suitable in non-western cultures. Benson (2013) suggests that autonomous learning requires active involvement in student learning by providing. Also, it provides choices and decision-making opportunities and encourages self-reflected learning.

According to Little (2003), autonomous learning has a considerable effect on the learning performance of L2 learners, only achieved through a set of respective steps. First, learning will become more efficient and effective if learners are reflectively engaged with their learning. Second, if learners actively commit to their learning, they can solve the motivation problem. To elaborate, effective communication depends on complex procedural skills that develop only through use. Language learning relies on use, giving learners social freedom (Little, 2003).

In respect of this, learners who take responsibility for their own learning are more likely to gain greater outcomes in learning a language out of class. As researchers acknowledge, the relationship between autonomy and language skills is dynamic as long as goals are achieved.

1.3.8. Learner Autonomy and Communicative Competency

The main aim of any student who learns a foreign language is ultimately to be able to communicate with people speaking that language. As experts claim, L2 learners are active, confident, proficient communicators. That is why considering the communicative competencies of the learners is very important. Richards and Schmidt (2010) state that “communicative competency is the knowledge of not only if something is formally possible in a language but also whether it is feasible, appropriate, or done in a particular speech community” (p.99). Communicative competency includes:

a. Grammatical Competence or Formal Competence. It refers to the knowledge of a language’s grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and semantics.

b. Sociolinguistic Competence or Sociocultural Competence. It refers to the knowledge of the relationship between language and its non-linguistic context, knowing how to use and respond appropriately to different types of speech acts, such as requests, apologies, thanks, and invitations.

c. Discourse Competence. It refers to knowing how to begin and end conversations, such as speech events, cohesion, and coherence.

d. Strategic Competence. It refers to the knowledge of communication strategies that can compensate for weakness in other areas (Richards& Schmidt, 2010, p.99).

The concept of autonomous learning has long been related to communicative competency. As Brown (2007) reinforces, communicative competence is one way to achieve learner-centeredness, and this is through drawing the learner’s attention to fluency, linking between form and function and communicative competence that integrates the organizational and pragmatic parts of the language, providing learners with the tools they need to

communicate in everyday situations, besides, involving them in the learning process through learner-centred, cooperative, and collaborative activities are all ways that teachers can help their students improve their language skills. In this case, the teacher becomes the facilitator and the co-communicator of the classroom as a participant who encourages the learner to accept their own ideas and initiate a conversation instead of just responding to teachers. Additionally, classroom interaction encourages motivation and self-esteem. As a result, learner autonomy achieves its highest level (Brown, 2007)

In a nutshell, autonomy in learning has been subject to interpretation, examination, and research. Research has argued that autonomy is promoted within a plethora of conditions that must be available to help learners boost their autonomy and become more focused and self-independent in their learning.

1.4. Conclusion

In summary, the literature review chapter has contributed to valuable information concerning prior research on the competency-based approach to foreign language teaching and learning and its relationship with autonomous learning. Many concepts, theories, and critical studies were discussed, explored, and authenticated by the finest researchers and scholars in the field. It has started by tackling the Competency-Based Approach through reviewing its definition, characteristics, principles, objectives, ways of assessment, and challenges. More extensively, the chapter has discussed the concept of autonomous learning in foreign language learning through reviewing its definitions, forms, characteristics, dimensions, and role in enhancing learners' communicative competencies. The subsequent chapter presents the research methodology.

Chapter Two: Research Methodology

2.1. Introduction

Due to the importance of research methodology, researchers have provided a comprehensive framework that guides all facets of any research study. This chapter is an attempt to review the methodology used in this research. It is devoted to describing the research method and the steps the researcher took to complete the study. The chapter is underlined under the following titles: research method, which encompasses the research design, type, and setting; the population and sample of the research; the data collection tools, including the questionnaire, the interview, and the checklist; the methods of analysis in which the data is analysed through the SPSS software and the thematic analysis method; finally, ethical considerations and issues of trustworthiness are discussed.

2.2. Research Methodology

The research methodology plays a crucial role in building the blocks of research and setting the overall plan for its execution. The research design, type, approach, and setting mainly consist of the research design. Discussed in detail as follows:

2.2.1. Design

Research refers to systematically examining a problem or phenomenon, employing a specific method and plan to gain the utmost understanding and establish principles and theories (Richards& Schmidt, 2010). The overall research outline, plan, and strategy used to answer the research questions is referred to as the research design. Creswell (2009) explains that selecting a research design is influenced by three essential elements: philosophical assumptions, strategies of inquiry, and specific research methods. That is why it is important to identify the quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research and consider them as research designs.

In this research study, the researcher opted for the descriptive exploratory design, as descriptive research allows the researcher to accurately describe the characteristics of the research situation (Johnson& Christenson, 2014). A descriptive study entails selecting an appropriate method that helps achieve the study's overarching aim, so here, the mixed-methods approach is considered the most effective method of performing the research. The mixed-methods approach is defined by Creswell (2009) as the procedure that employs both aspects of qualitative and quantitative methods. Similarly, Johnson and Christenson (2014) explain that the relationship between qualitative and quantitative methods is complementary, as both methods have strengths and weaknesses, so mixing them is thought to have satisfactory results.

On the other hand, some scholars refer to the mixed methods as triangulation; Richards and Schmidt (2010) describe it as “the process of collecting data from more than one source, e.g., interviews, observations, and documents.” (p.611). Issues concerning the use of triangulation in research include whether triangulation overcomes problems of bias, reliability, and validity or merely produces a fuller picture of a phenomenon, so it is crucial to combine research methods to provide a more expanded understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2009). Eventually, this research adopted a mixed-methods approach to reach the objectives and thoroughly describe the topic under investigation.

2.2.2. Research Variables

The conduction of any research project depends on selecting a topic for investigation and variables for examination. The research variable is thought to be “a property whereby the members of a set or group differ from one another. In comparing research methods, for example, different variables may be (a) the level of interest each creates and (b) the amount of time each method is used for” (Richards& Schmidt, 2010, p.623). Similarly, Johnson and

Christenson (2014) claim that choosing the research variable requires dynamic and consistency because the variable is a condition or characteristic that can take on different values or characteristics. Researchers divide variables into two main types: dependent variables and independent variables.

Richards and Schmidt (2010) define the dependent variable as the criterion affected or altered by changes in one or more independent variables. On the other hand, the independent variable is the factor or predictor believed to influence another variable, known as the dependent variable. In this study, the researcher wants to investigate the role of the CBA approach in learner autonomy, the challenges that may face teachers and students, and the proposed solutions. Therefore, the independent variable of this study is the CBA approach, and the dependent variable is learner autonomy.

2.2.3. Research Setting

Choosing the appropriate site for conducting a particular research study plays a significant role in its effectiveness. Burns and Grove (2011) define the research setting as “the location where the research is conducted. The authors further clarify that the selection of a particular setting in both quantitative and qualitative research is based on the purpose of the study, the accessibility of the setting or site, and the number and type of participants or subjects available in the setting” (p. 321).

For this research study, the chosen setting for this particular research is the secondary school of Abidine Mohamed. It is chosen first for the fact that the research aims to explore secondary school teachers’ and students’ attitudes toward the role of the CBA approach in learner autonomy and the fact that teachers are likely to use this approach in their instruction, especially in secondary education. Moreover, the aspect of accessibility has to be taken into

consideration. For the researcher to be able to conduct the study, the administration has allowed the conduction of the research through a questionnaire and an interview given to the target population.

2.3. Participants and Sample Selection

As the researcher carries out planning the research project, it becomes necessary to think about a set of integral elements of the research, such as the people needed to get involved or the category needed to get performed in the study; those people are referred to by researchers as the research population. According to Johnson and Christenson (2014), “population refers to the large group to which a researcher wants to generalize the sample results; the complete set of cases” (p.869). In the same manner, Richards and Schmidt (2010) explain that a research population is any set of individuals who share some common and observable characteristics and from which a sample can be taken. At this point, Dawson (2019) emphasizes that contacting even the research population is possible. That is why selecting several people to be involved in the study under a sample is better.

The research sample, according to Johnson and Christenson (2014), is “a set of cases taken from a larger population” (p.876). On the one hand, Richards and Schmidt (2010) consider the sample as an integral part of the execution of the research and without it, nothing can be achieved. They assert that selecting a sample revolves around giving the participants an equal and independent chance. Thus, it is necessary to identify the procedure by which the sample can be identified. Researchers distinguish two types of sampling: random sample and satisfied sample. This research opted for random sampling since it allows every member of the population to have an equal and independent chance of being selected (Richards& Schmidt, 2010).

For practical reasons, random sampling is considered the suitable sampling technique for this research study. First, randomization in sampling is important because it allows participants from different social statuses to participate in the study. Second, it helps the researcher make generalizations from the overall findings. Third, it gives the participants an equal chance of being selected (Dawson, 2019).

As this research aims to explore EFL teachers' and pupils' attitudes toward the role of CBA in learner autonomy, it targets first-year pupils and EFL teachers at Abidine Mohamed Secondary School. To reach this, a sample size of seventy (70) students and ten (10) teachers is drawn randomly. First-year students are selected as the population of this study because they have gained instruction in English for four years now, and their language proficiency level is presumed to be intermediate, so investigating the implementation of CBA for promoting autonomy in students is highly important.

2.4. Data Collection Instruments

Following the selection of the research design and population, choosing the appropriate methods, tools, or data collection instruments is crucial. Creswell (2009) claims that data collection methods require respecting the participants and the research setting. Thus, granting a closer look into the nature of data collection methods necessitates a proper definition of them. According to Dawson (2019), "data collection methods are the tools the researcher uses to collect data. They are divided into two main types: quantitative tools and qualitative tools" (p.22). More importantly, Johnson and Christenson (2014) assert that data collection methods allow the researcher to obtain data to be analysed and treated accordingly. Hence, establishing solid instruments makes the data vulnerable to dissection and comprehension.

The current study adopts a descriptive design with a mixed-methods approach. Therefore, three research tools are chosen to obtain the data for this research. A student questionnaire, a teacher interview, and an observation guided by a checklist. According to Johnson and Christenson (2014), “the questionnaire is a self-report data collection instrument filled by the research participants” (p.873). For the definition of the interview, the scholars state that “the interview is a data-collection method in which an interviewer asks an interviewee a set of questions” (p.860). However, observation is defined as “the state of watching the behavioural patterns of people” (p.866). Researchers consider these three instruments the most authentic data collection methods because they help define the research aim in the planning stage. They are chosen to enhance the authenticity of the research in which the aims become easily accessible, as explained below:

First, the questionnaire is chosen to explore first-year pupils’ attitudes towards the role of the CBA approach in promoting learner autonomy and the challenges they may face. The researcher will use the questionnaire to find out what the students think about autonomous learning and the CBA approach.

Second, the interview is chosen to explore EFL teachers’ attitudes towards the role of the CBA approach in promoting learner autonomy. The researcher will then be able to determine whether the CBA approach is beneficial or detrimental to promoting autonomy in learners.

Third, the observation checklist is chosen to investigate the situation of EFL classrooms at Abidine Mohamed Secondary School. Through the observation, the researcher will discover EFL students’ learner autonomy and the methods used to promote autonomy in learning. Additionally, it finds out whether the teachers implement the CBA approach to teach, assess, or administer learner autonomy.

2.5. Data Analysis Plan

After collecting the data needed for the conduction of the study comes the process of analysing data to achieve the research aims, so establishing a comprehensive plan is crucial in this phase. According to researchers, many methods exist for data analysis in which the data is analysed and treated numerically or non-numerically. Dawson (2019) argues that data analysis methods depend on whether the research is approached quantitatively or qualitatively. Examples of quantitative data analysis include numerical and statistical analysis. However, the qualitative data analysis methods include thematic, comparative, discourse, and content analysis.

This research study uses three tools to collect the data needed to generalize findings and draw conclusions. Therefore, three different methods of analysis are to be followed in this regard:

First, the data collected through the questionnaire tool will be analysed using the SPSS software, the simplest and most efficient way to categorize quantitative data, producing well-presented graphs, pie charts, and tables that can be included in the final report. For one reason, Dawson (2019) asserts that computer software is the quickest and easiest way to analyze large-scale surveys, such as questionnaires. It also helps the researcher overcome the analysis block.

Second, the data collected through the interview is supposed to be analysed through content analysis. In this type of analysis, the researcher analyses the teachers' responses and transcribes them. Content analysis helps treat open-ended questions, enabling the researcher to quantify the answers (Dawson, 2019).

Third, the classroom observation checklist is analysed qualitatively through thematic analysis. Dawson (2019) states that thematic analysis is a highly inductive method that helps identify and explain emerging themes. Through thematic analysis, the researcher can decode the list of categories or read through each element and let the categories emerge from the data.

2.6. Ethical Considerations

When conducting research, an essential element that should be considered is ethical considerations. For this research, the tools revolve around being both quantitative and qualitative. Before distributing the questionnaire, the participants will be explained the research and their consent will be acquired. Students are also assured that the data obtained will be used in academic research, and the analysis and interpretations will be confidential. Furthermore, it will be explained to the teachers that the research will be smooth, meaning that answering the interview will not take a significant amount of time.

2.7. Conclusion

This chapter has established the foundation for a thorough and open research project. We have created a clear road map for navigating the research process and guaranteeing the validity and reliability of our findings by defining the methodological approach. The thorough explanations of the population, variables, sampling strategies, data collection tools, and data analysis procedures offer a thorough framework for comprehending the research process. Because of this openness, readers are able to analyze the research critically and gauge how confidently the findings can be taken at face value.

Additionally, the methodology that was selected shows careful alignment with the research questions. The rationale for particular data collection instruments and analysis techniques, as well as the choice of mixed methods approach, indicate a well-thought-out plan designed to successfully meet the the research objectives.

Furthermore, this chapter lays foundation for the following chapters, which will carefully examine and interpret the data that has been gathered. The established methodology offers a prism through which the results are analyzed, enabling us to make significant inferences and offer insightful contributions to the field. In the upcoming chapters, we can expect a thorough discussion and analysis of the research findings thanks to this solid methodological foundation.

Chapter Three: Data Analysis and Discussion

3.1. Introduction

Upon the completion of data collection, the next phase is to analyze and interpret the results. This chapter is divided into two major parts. Part one presents the analysis and interpretation of the data of first-year students' questionnaire, EFL teachers' interview, and classroom observation at Abidine Mohamed Secondary School. The type of analysis used in this regard was approached through three different methods of analysis: statistical analysis, thematic analysis, and content analysis. On the other hand, section two provides a prospective discussion of the findings and delves into the meaning and relevance of the results. Moreover, this chapter is significantly important because it lists the research findings, reports the results concisely and objectively, and shows how the results are structured around the research questions and hypotheses.

3.2. Data Analysis and Interpretation

3.2.1. The Student Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire was addressed to seventy (70) students of first-year who were generously cooperative in this study. It consists of three main sections; each section has ten close-ended questions. The questionnaire's questions are analyzed through the SPSS software and interpreted as follows:

Section One: Beliefs about self-directed learning

Item 1: I can understand what is communicated in the classroom.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree

E) Strongly agree

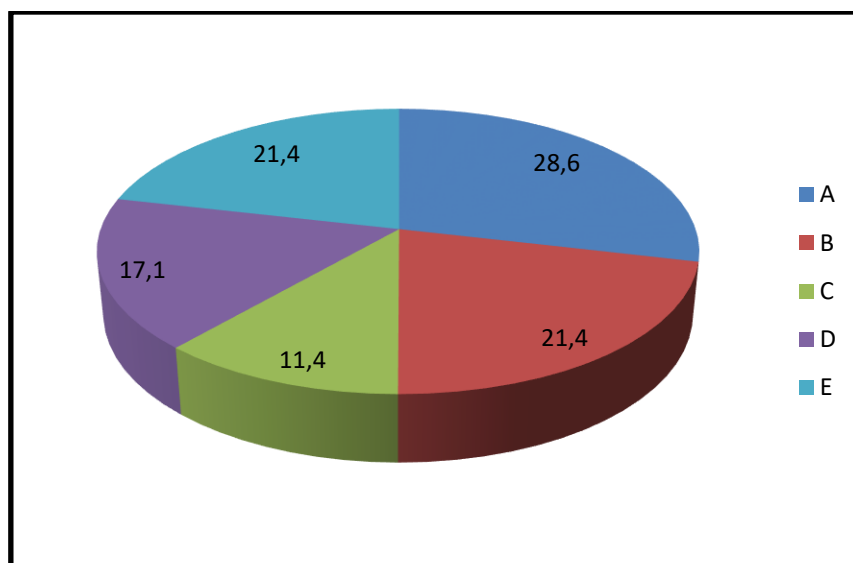
Table 1

Students' Beliefs About Classroom Communication

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	20	28.6	28.6
	B	15	21.4	21.4
	C	8	11.4	11.4
	D	12	17.1	17.1
	E	15	21.4	21.4
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 2

Students' Beliefs About of Classroom Communication



This item aimed to know whether first-year students could understand classroom communication. Table (1) and Figure (2) show that out of seventy (70) students, twenty (20) students (28.6%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Fifteen (15) students (21,4%) have disagreed. Eight (8) students (11,4%) were not sure about their answer. Twelve (12) students (17,1%) have agreed. Fifteen (15) students (21,4%) have strongly agreed.

Consequently, it seems that most students failed to comprehend the information conveyed in the classroom.

Item 2: I set my own objectives in learning English.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

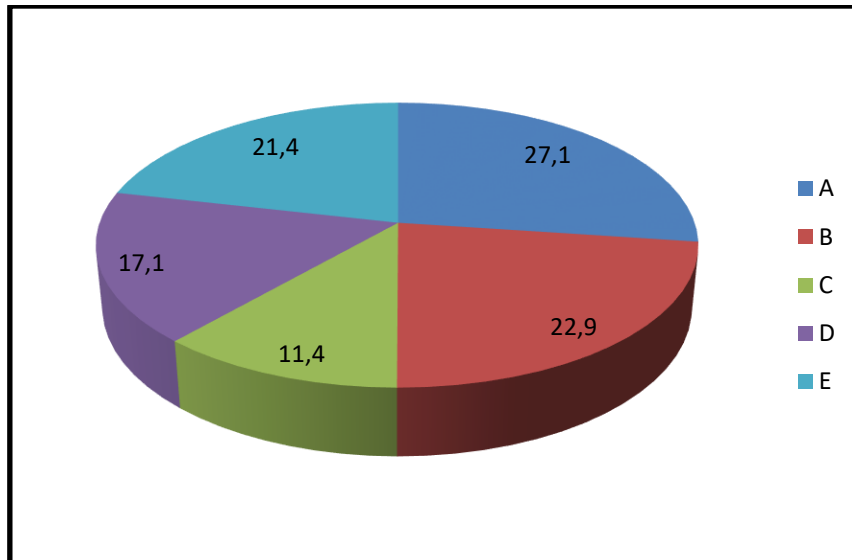
Table 2

Students' Beliefs About English Learning Objectives

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	19	27.1	27.1
	B	16	22.9	22.9
	C	8	11.4	11.4
	D	12	17.1	17.1
	E	15	21.4	21.4
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 3

Students' Beliefs About English Learning Objectives



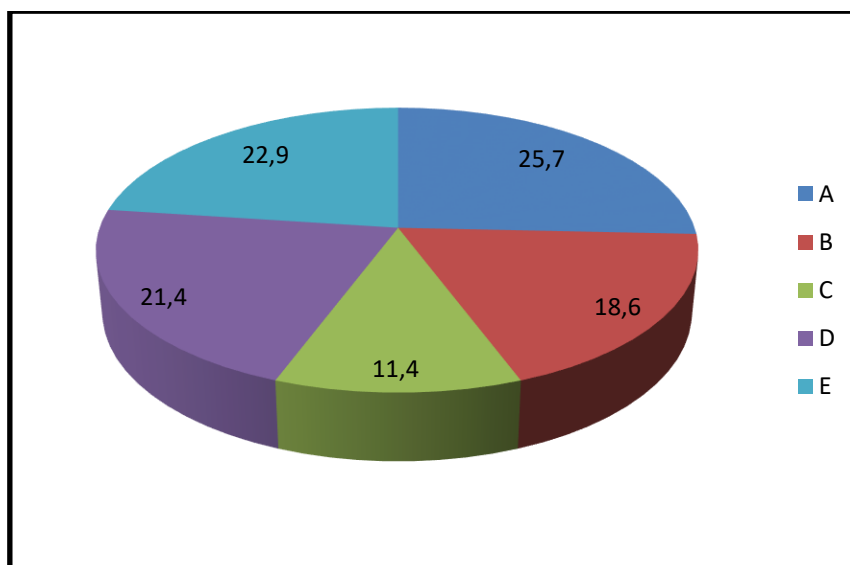
This item aimed to figure out whether first-year students could set their own learning objectives. Table (2) and Figure (3) reveal that out of seventy (70) students, nineteen (19) students (27,1%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Sixteen (16) students (22,9%) have disagreed. Eight (8) students (11,4%) were not sure about their answer. Twelve (12) students (17,1%) have agreed. Fifteen (15) students (21,4%) have strongly agreed. As a result, it seems that most of the students could not set their own learning objectives.

Item 3: I have the motivation and the skills to learn English.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

Table 3*Students' Beliefs Learning Motivation and Skills*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	18	25.7	25.7
	B	13	18.6	18.6
	C	8	11.4	11.4
	D	15	21.4	21.4
	E	16	22.9	22.9
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 4*Students' Beliefs About Learning Motivation and Skills*

This item aimed to know whether first-year students had the motivation and skills to learn. Table (3) and Figure (4) demonstrate that out of seventy (70) students, eighteen (18) students (25,7%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Thirteen (13) students (18,6%) have disagreed. Eight (8) students (11,4%) were not sure about their answer. Fifteen (15) students (21,4%) have agreed. Sixteen (16) students (22,9%) have strongly agreed. As a result, it seems that most of the students had neither the motivation nor the skills to learn English.

Item 4: I prefer learning at my own pace.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

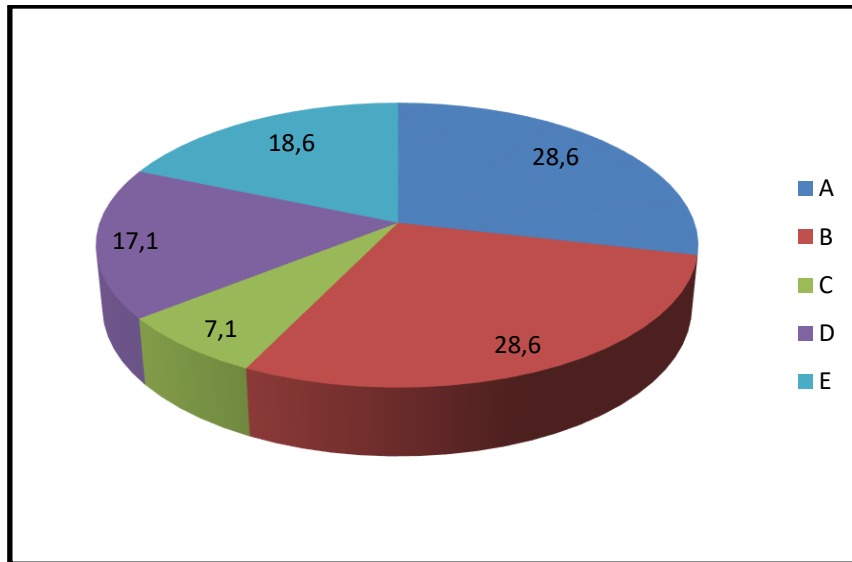
Table 4

Students' Beliefs About Self-Paced Learning

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	20	28.6	28.6
	B	20	28.6	28.6
	C	5	7.1	7.1
	D	12	17.1	17.1
	E	13	18.6	18.6
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 5

Students' Beliefs About Self-Paced Learning



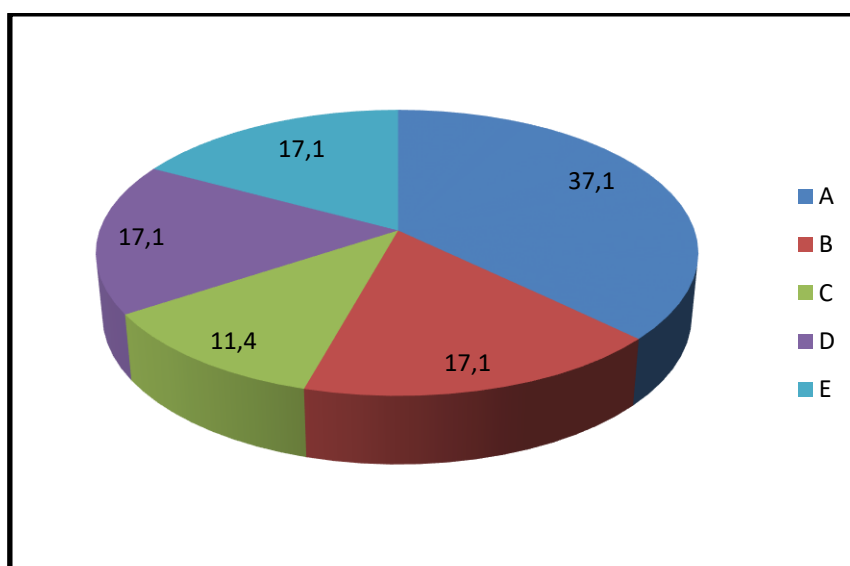
This item aimed to know if first-year students could learn individually at their own pace. Table (4) and Figure (5) figure that out of seventy (70) students, twenty (20) students (28,6%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Twenty (20) students (28,6%) have disagreed. Five (5) students (7,1%) were not sure about their answer. Twelve (12) students (17,1%) have agreed. Thirteen (13) students (18,6%) have strongly agreed. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the majority of first-year students were not capable of self-paced learning.

Item 5: I am fully responsible for my own learning.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

Table 5*Students' Beliefs About Learning Responsibility*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	26	37.1	37.1
	B	12	17.1	17.1
	C	8	11.4	11.4
	D	12	17.1	17.1
	E	12	17.1	17.1
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 6*Students' Beliefs About Learning Responsibility*

This item sought to know if first-year students were fully responsible for their own learning. Table (5) and Figure (6) reveal that out of seventy (70) students, twenty-six (26) students (37,1%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Twelve (12) students (17,1%) have disagreed. Eight (8) students (11,4%) were not sure about their answer. Twelve (12) students (17,1%) have agreed. Twelve (12) students (17,1%) have strongly agreed. Based on the data,

it can be inferred that most first-year students were not completely responsible for their own learning.

Item 6: I can determine the direction of my learning without the teacher's help.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

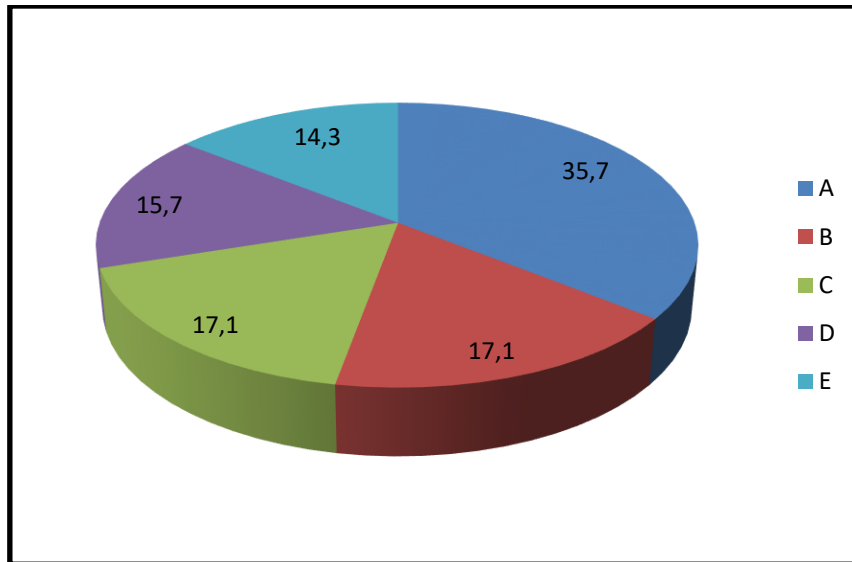
Table 6

Students' Beliefs About the Learning Direction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	25	35.7	35.7
	B	12	17.1	17.1
	C	12	17.1	17.1
	D	11	15.7	15.7
	E	10	14.3	14.3
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 7

Students' Beliefs About Learning Direction



This item aimed to know whether first-year students were able to determine their learning without the help of the teacher. Table (6) and Figure (7) reveal that out of seventy (70) students, twenty-five (25) students (35,7%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Twelve (12) students (17,1%) have disagreed. Twelve (12) students (17,1%) were not sure about their answer. Eleven (11) students (15,7%) have agreed. Ten (10) students (14,3%) have strongly agreed. The data we gathered indicates that the majority of students relied on the guidance of a teacher to assess their own learning.

Item 7: I can easily reconstruct my cognitive information.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

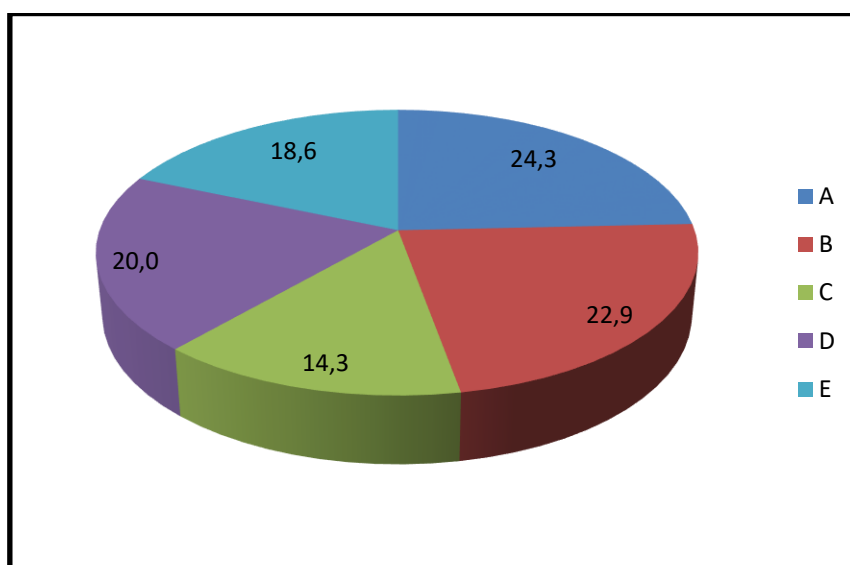
Table 7

Students' Beliefs About Reconstructing Cognitive Information

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	17	24.3	24.3
	B	16	22.9	22.9
	C	10	14.3	14.3
	D	14	20.0	20.0
	E	13	18.6	18.6
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 8

Students' Beliefs Reconstructing Cognitive Information



This item was designed to know the ability of first-year students to reconstruct their cognitive information. Table (7) and Figure (8) demonstrate that out of seventy (70) students, seventeen (17) students (24,3%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Sixteen (16) students (22,9%) have disagreed. Ten (10) students (14,3%) were not sure about their answer. Fourteen (14) students (20%) have agreed. Thirteen (13) students (18,6%) have strongly agreed. The

information we gathered suggests that most students lacked the ability to reconstruct their cognitive information on their own.

Item 8: I can plan, monitor, and access my learning.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

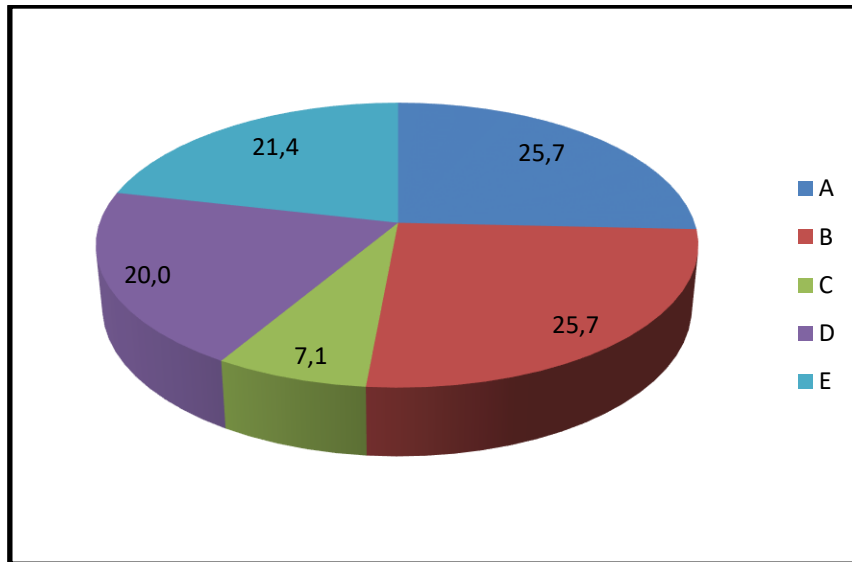
Table 8

Students' Beliefs About Learning, Planning and Accessibility

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	18	25.7	25.7
	B	18	25.7	25.7
	C	5	7.1	7.1
	D	14	20.0	20.0
	E	15	21.4	21.4
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 9

Students' Beliefs About Learning, Planning and Accessibility



This item aimed to know if first-year students could plan, monitor, and assess their own learning. Table (8) and Figure (9) show that out of seventy (70) students, eighteen (18) students (25,7%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Eighteen (18) students (25,7%) have disagreed. Five (5) students (7,1%) were not sure about their answer. Fourteen (14) students (20%) have agreed. Fifteen (15) students (21,4%) have strongly agreed. Based on the data we collected, it appears that the majority of students struggle with the skills of self-directed learning, such as planning, monitoring, and assessing their own learning progress.

Item 9: I can select the most effective learning strategy.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

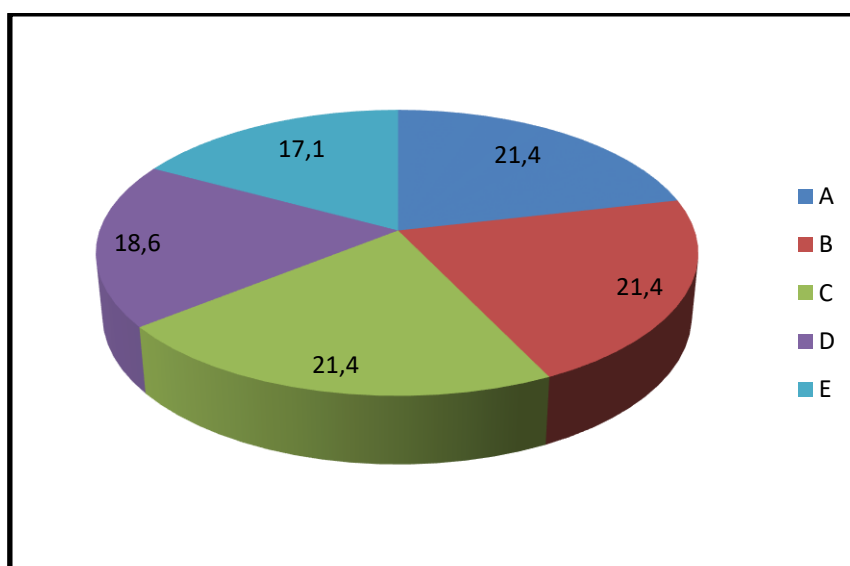
Table 9

Students' Beliefs About Most Effective Learning Strategy

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	15	21.4	21.4
	B	15	21.4	21.4
	C	15	21.4	21.4
	D	13	18.6	18.6
	E	12	17.1	17.1
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 10

Students' Beliefs About the Most Effective Learning Strategy



This item aimed to know if first-year students could select the most effective learning strategy. Table (9) and Figure (10) show that out of seventy (70) students, fifteen (15) students (21,4%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Fifteen (15) students (21,4%) have disagreed. Fifteen (15) students (21,4%) were not sure about their answer. Thirteen (13) students (18,6%) have agreed. Twelve (12) students (17,1%) have strongly agreed. Our

findings indicate that a significant number of students showed difficulty in selecting the most optimal learning strategy.

Item 10: I can evaluate the extent of my learning outcomes.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

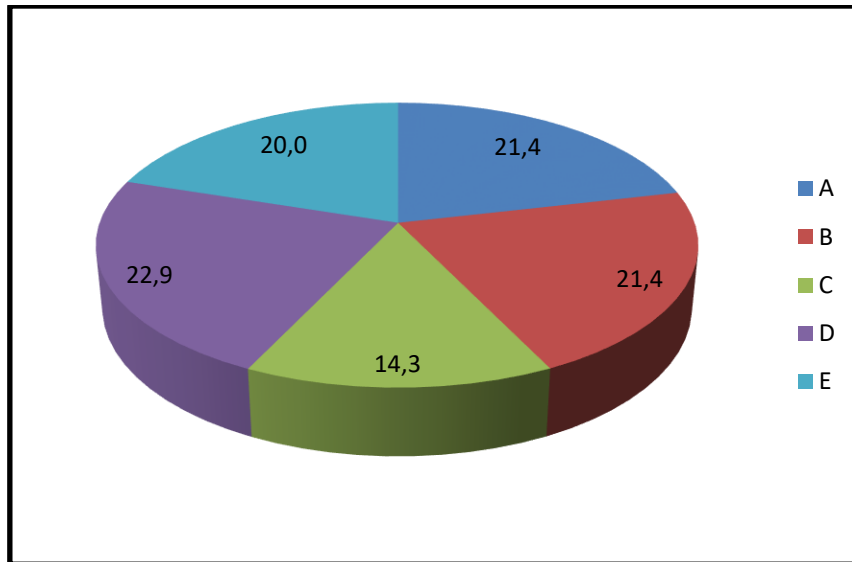
Table 10

Students' Beliefs About Evaluating Learning Outcomes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	15	21.4	21.4
	B	15	21.4	21.4
	C	10	14.3	14.3
	D	16	22.9	22.9
	E	14	20.0	20.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 11

Students' Beliefs About Evaluating Learning Objectives



This item aimed to know if first-year students could evaluate the extent of their learning outcomes. Table (10) and Figure (11) display that out of seventy (70) students, fifteen (15) students (21,4%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Fifteen (15) students (21,4%) have disagreed. Ten (10) students (14,3%) were not sure about their answer. Sixteen (16) students (22,9%) have agreed. Fourteen (14) students (20%) have strongly agreed. According to our findings, a portion of students were capable of evaluating their learning outcomes, while others faced difficulties in doing so.

Section Two: Students' Perceptions of the teacher's role

Item 11: The teacher should not set my learning objectives.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

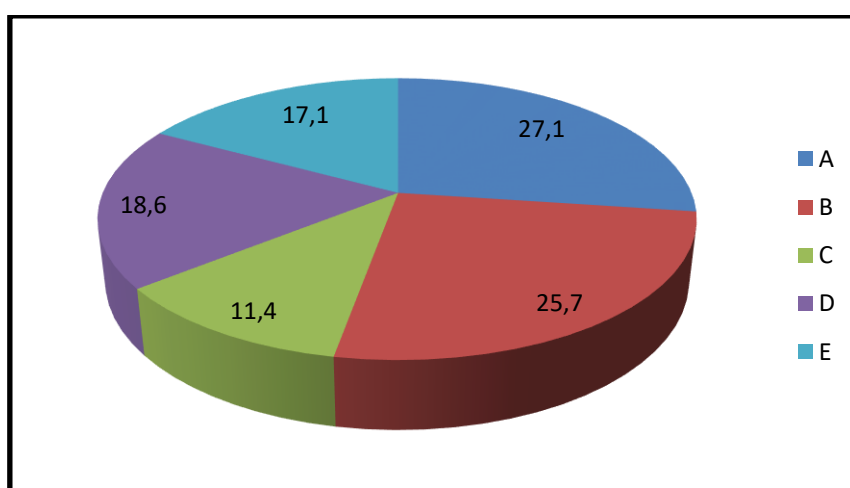
Table 11

Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Role in Setting Students' Learning Objectives

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	19	27.1	27.1
	B	18	25.7	25.7
	C	8	11.4	11.4
	D	13	18.6	18.6
	E	12	17.1	17.1
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 12

Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Role in Setting Students' Learning Objectives



This item was designed to know whether first-year students believed that the teacher should not set their learning objectives. Table (11) and Figure (12) show that out of seventy (70) students, nineteen (19) students (27,1%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Eighteen (18) students (25,7%) have disagreed. Eight (8) students (11,4%) were not sure about their answer. Thirteen (13) students (18,6%) have agreed. Twelve (12) students (17,1%) have strongly agreed. The findings show that most first-year students believed that the teacher should determine their learning goals.

Item 12: The teacher should not provide instant corrective feedback.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

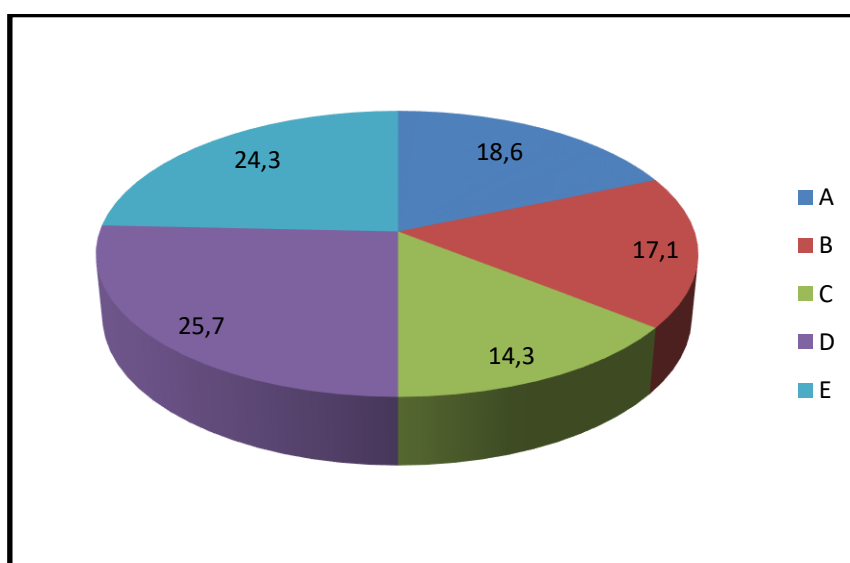
Table 12

Students' Perceptions the Teacher's Role in Providing Instant Feedback

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	13	18.6	18.6
	B	12	17.1	17.1
	C	10	14.3	14.3
	D	18	25.7	25.7
	E	17	24.3	24.3
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 13

Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Role in Providing Instant Feedback



This item was designed to know whether first-year students believed that the teacher should not provide instant corrective feedback or not. Table (12) and Figure (13) show that out of seventy (70) students, thirteen (13) students (18,6%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Twelve (12) students (17,1%) have disagreed. Ten (10) students (25,7%) were not sure about their answer. Eighteen (18) students (25,7%) have agreed. Seventeen (17) students (24,3%) have strongly agreed. The results indicate that the majority of first-year students held the belief that the teacher should give instant corrective feedback.

Item 13: The teacher should be the facilitator instead of the commander of the information.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

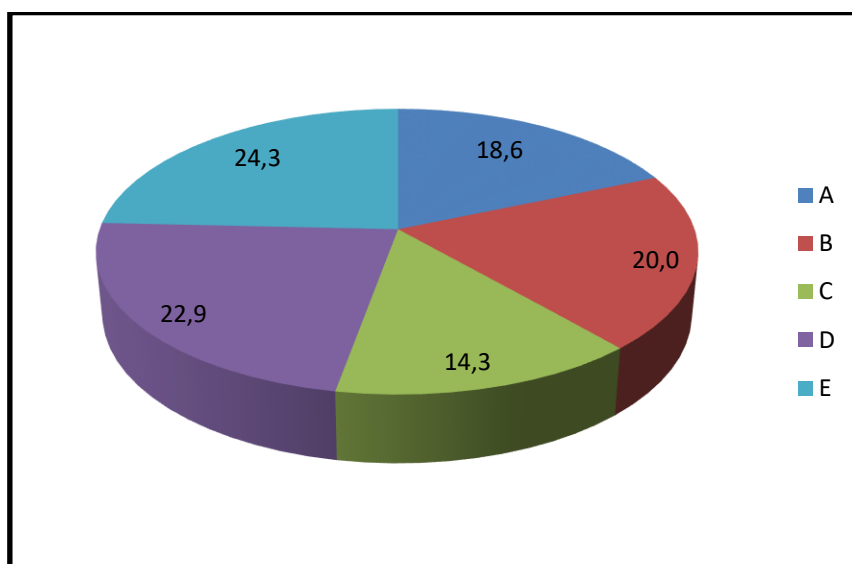
Table 13

Students' Perceptions of the Teacher Being the Facilitator of the Information

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	13	18.6	18.6
	B	14	20.0	20.0
	C	10	14.3	14.3
	D	16	22.9	22.9
	E	17	24.3	24.3
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 14

Students' Perceptions of Teacher Being the Facilitator of the Information



The purpose of this item is to determine the beliefs of first-year students regarding whether the teacher should act as a facilitator or a controller of information. Table (13) and Figure (13) demonstrate that out of seventy (70) students, thirteen (14) students (18,6%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Fourteen (14) students (20%) have disagreed. Ten (10) students (14,3%) were not sure about their answer. Sixteen (16) students (22,9%) have agreed. Seventeen (17) students (24,3%) have strongly agreed. Based on the results, it can be concluded that most first-year students held the belief that teachers should adopt a facilitator role rather than a commanding one when it comes to imparting information.

Item 14: The teacher should not guide students in learning English.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

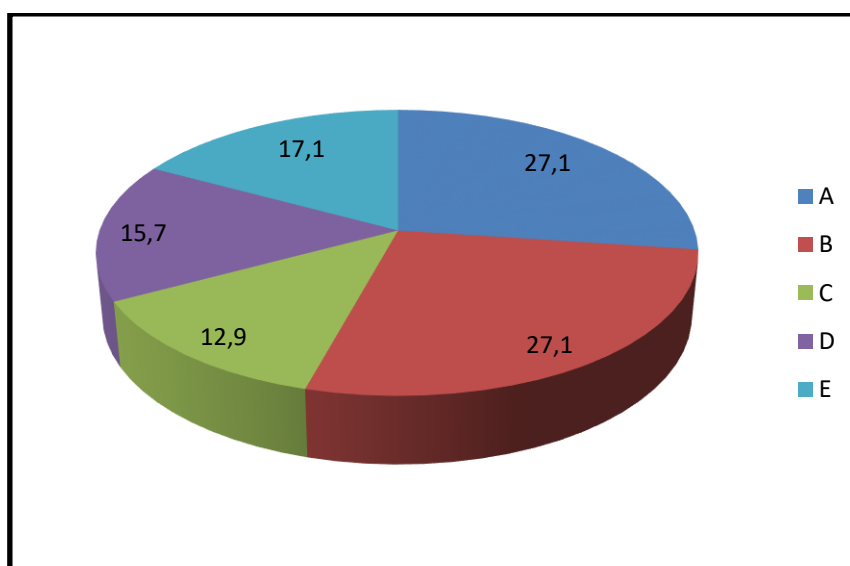
Table 14

Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Guidance in English Learning

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	19	27.1	27.1
	B	19	27.1	27.1
	C	9	12.9	12.9
	D	11	15.7	15.7
	E	12	17.1	17.1
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 15

Students' Perceptions about the Teacher's Guidance in English Learning



The purpose of this item is to determine the beliefs of first-year students regarding whether the teacher should or should not guide the students' learning. Table (14) and Figure (15) show that out of seventy (70) students, nineteen (19) students (27,1%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Nineteen (19) students (27,1%) have disagreed. Nine (9) students (12,9%) were not sure about their answer. Eleven (11) students (15,7%) have agreed. Twelve (12) students (17,1%) have strongly agreed. The findings suggest that a large proportion of first-year

students had the opinion that the teacher should take on the responsibility of guiding their learning.

Item 15: The teacher should allow students to ask questions and make suggestions.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

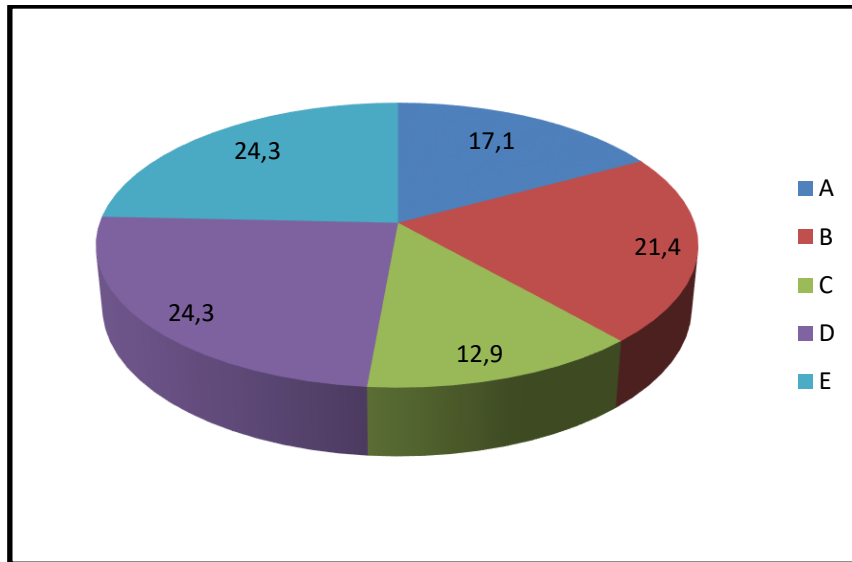
Table 15

Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Permission in Asking Questions and Making Suggestions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	12	17.1	17.1
	B	15	21.4	21.4
	C	9	12.9	12.9
	D	17	24.3	24.3
	E	17	24.3	24.3
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 16

Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Permission in Asking Questions and Making Suggestions



The purpose of this item is to determine if first-year students believed that the teacher should allow students to ask questions and make suggestions. Table (15) and Figure (16) show that out of seventy (70) students, twelve (12) students (17,1%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Fifteen (15) students (21,4%) have disagreed. Nine (9) students (12,9%) were not sure about their answer. Seventeen (17) students (24,3%) have agreed. Seventeen (17) students (24,3%) have strongly agreed. According to the findings, a considerable percentage of first-year students believed that the teacher should permit students to ask questions and provide suggestions.

Item 16: The teacher should focus on students' communicative competencies.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

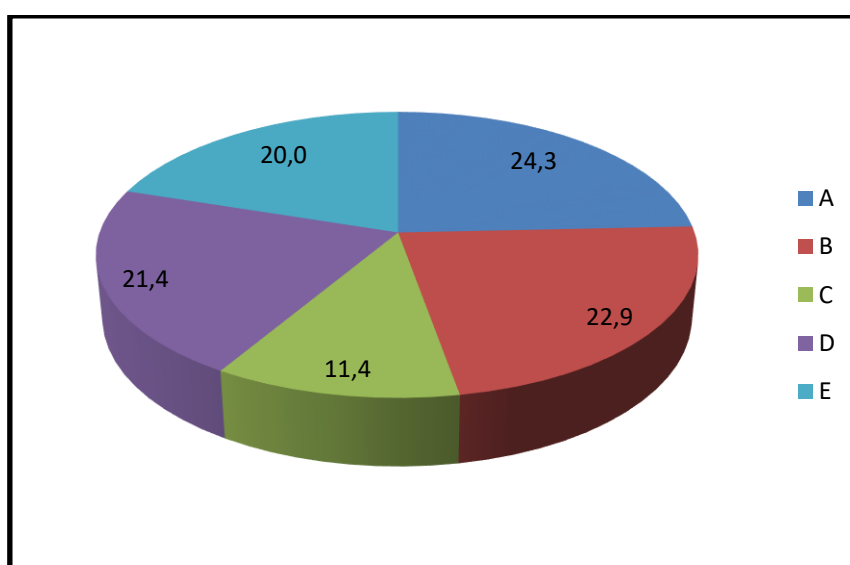
Table 16

Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Focus on Students' Communicative Competencies.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	17	24.3	24.3
	B	16	22.9	22.9
	C	8	11.4	11.4
	D	15	21.4	21.4
	E	14	20.0	20.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 17

Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Focus on Students' Communicative Competencies.



This item aimed to know if first-year students believed that the teacher should focus on their communicative competencies. Table (16) and Figure (17) demonstrate that out of seventy (70) students, seventeen (17) students (24,3%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Sixteen (16) students (22,9%) have disagreed. Eight (8) students (11,4%) were not sure about their answer. Fifteen (21,4) students (24,3%) have agreed. Fourteen (14) students (20%) have

strongly agreed. The data suggests that the majority of first-year students held the belief that their communicative abilities should not be the teacher's main focus.

Item 17: The teacher should boost learners' willingness to embrace self-independent learning.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

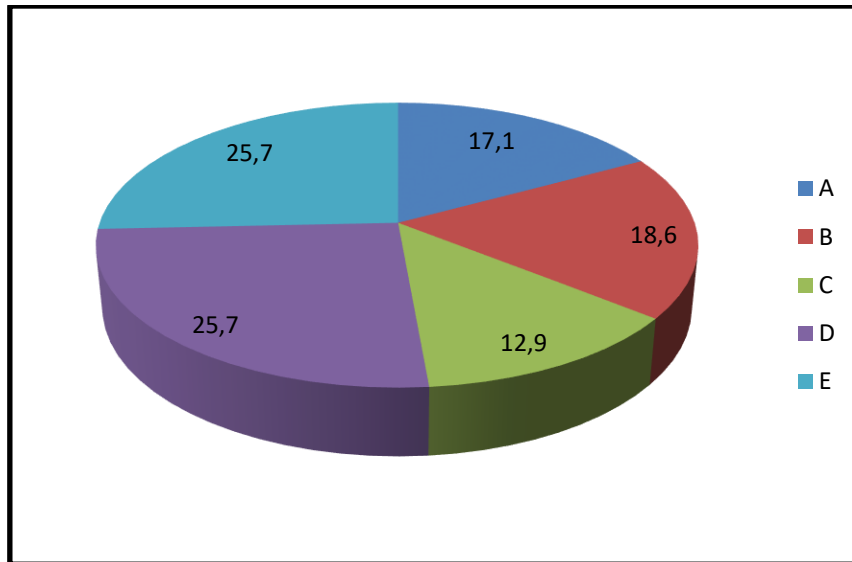
Table 17

Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Role in Boosting Learners' Willingness to Embrace Self-independent Learning.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	12	17.1	17.1
	B	13	18.6	18.6
	C	9	12.9	12.9
	D	18	25.7	25.7
	E	18	25.7	25.7
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 18

Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Role in Boosting Learners' Willingness to Embrace Self-independent Learning.



This item aimed to know if first-year students believed that the teacher should boost students' willingness towards self-independent learning. Table (17) and Figure (18) show that out of seventy (70) students, twelve (12) students (17,1%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Thirteen (13) students (18,6%) have disagreed. Nine (9) students (12,9%) were not sure about their answer. Eighteen (18) students (25,7%) have agreed. Eighteen (18) students (25,7%) have strongly agreed. Based on the results we obtained, it can be concluded that most first-year students felt that the teacher should encourage them to become self-independent learners.

Item 18: The teacher should adopt the appropriate teaching/learning approach.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

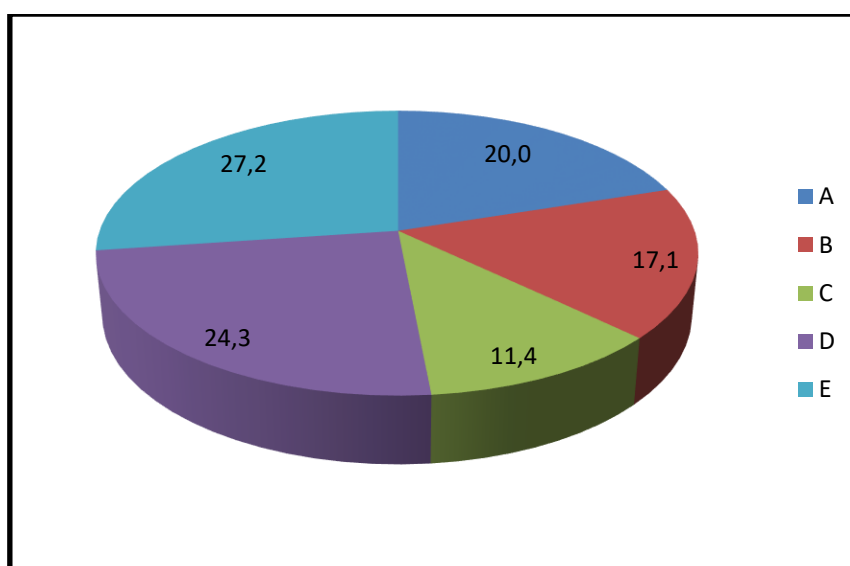
Table 18

Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Adoption of the Appropriate Teaching/ Learning Approach

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	14	20.0	20.0
	B	12	17.1	17.1
	C	8	11.4	11.4
	D	17	24.3	24.3
	E	19	27.2	27.2
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 19

Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Adoption of the Appropriate Teaching/ Learning Approach



This item sought to figure out first-year students' beliefs about whether the teacher should adopt an appropriate teaching-learning approach. Table (18) and Figure (19) demonstrate that out of seventy (70) students, fourteen (14) students (20%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Twelve (12) students (17,1%) have disagreed. Eight (8) students (11,4%) were not

sure about their answer. Seventeen (17) students (24,3%) have agreed. Nineteen (19) students (27,2%) have strongly agreed. The data reveals that the majority of freshmen students held the belief that teachers should utilize the right approach to teaching and learning English.

Item 19: The teacher should know his/her learners' strengths and weaknesses.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

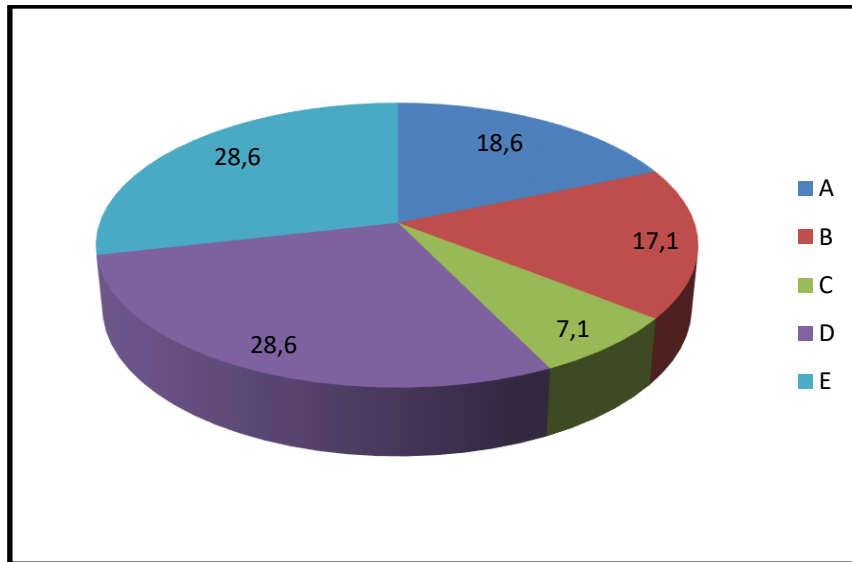
Table 19

Students' Perceptions of the Importance of Knowing the Learner's Strengths and Weaknesses

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	13	18.6	18.6
	B	12	17.1	17.1
	C	5	7.1	7.1
	D	20	28.6	28.6
	E	20	28.6	28.6
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 20

Students' Perceptions of the Importance of Knowing the Learner's Strengths and Weaknesses



This item aimed to identify first-year students' beliefs about whether the teacher should know students' strengths and weaknesses. Table (19) and Figure (20) demonstrate that out of seventy (70) students, thirteen (13) students (18,6%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Twelve (12) students (17,1%) have disagreed. Five (5) students (7,1%) were not sure about their answer. Twenty (20) students (28,6%) have agreed. Twenty (20) students (28,6%) have strongly agreed. Based on the data, it is evident that the majority of first-year students thought it was important for teachers to have knowledge of their learning strengths and weaknesses.

Item 20: The teacher should establish an interactive and collaborative learning environment to boost students' autonomy.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

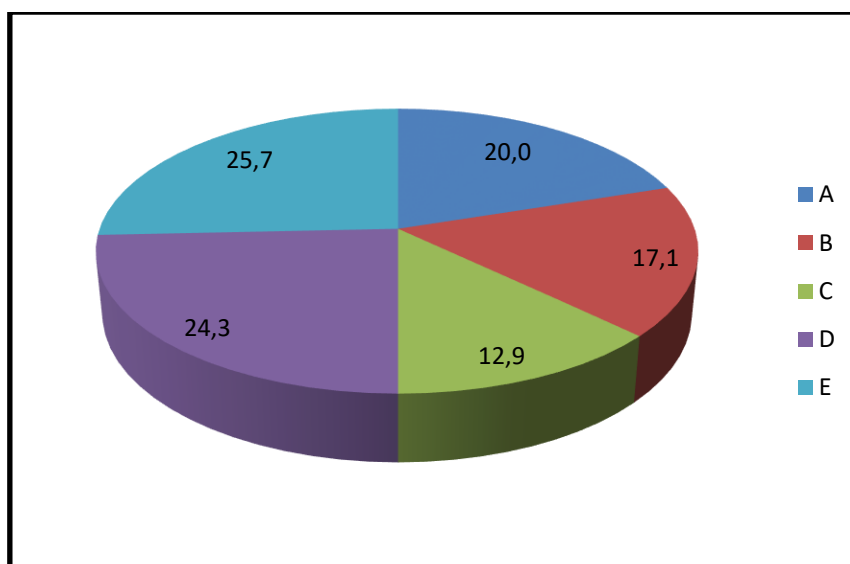
Table 20

Students' Perceptions of the Importance of Establishing an Interactive and Collaborative Learning Environment for Boosting Students Autonomy

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	14	20.0	20.0
	B	12	17.1	17.1
	C	9	12.9	12.9
	D	17	24.3	24.3
	E	18	25.7	25.7
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 21

Students' Perceptions of the Importance of Establishing an Interactive and Collaborative Learning Environment for Boosting Students Autonomy



This item was designed to assess the beliefs of freshman students regarding the importance of teachers creating an interactive and collaborative learning environment to enhance student autonomy. Table (20) and Figure (21) show that out of seventy (70) students, fourteen (14) students (20%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Twelve (12) students (17,1%)

have disagreed. Nine (9) students (12,9%) were not sure about their answer. Seventeen (17) students (24,3%) have agreed. Eighteen (18) students (25,7%) have strongly agreed. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the majority of first-year students believed that an interactive and collaborative learning environment established by the teacher would enhance students' autonomy.

Section three: Beliefs about the Competency-Based Approach (CBA)

Item 21: Language teaching approaches help develop the features of control, goal-directness, and autonomy in learners.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

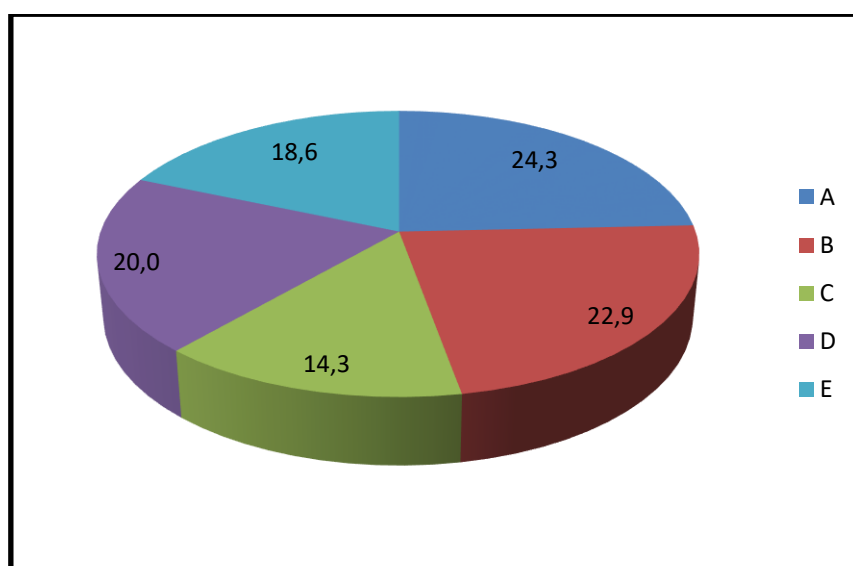
Table 21

Students' Perceptions of the Role of Language Teaching Approaches in Developing Learners' Control, Goal-directness, and Autonomy

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	17	24.3	24.3
	B	16	22.9	22.9
	C	10	14.3	14.3
	D	14	20.0	20.0
	E	13	18.6	18.6
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 22

Students' Perceptions of the Role of Language Teaching Approaches in Developing Learners' Control, Goal-directness, and Autonomy



This item was created to explore students' beliefs regarding the role of language teaching approaches in developing learning control, goal-directness and autonomy. As shown in Table (21) and Figure (22), out of seventy (70) students, seventeen (17) students (24,3%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Sixteen (16) students (22,9%) have disagreed. Ten (10) students (14,3%) were not sure about their answer. Fourteen (14) students (20%) have agreed. Thirteen (13) students (18,6%) have strongly agreed. The findings suggest that the majority of first-year students did not perceive language teaching approaches as effective in increasing their level of autonomy.

Item 22: Language teaching approaches help evaluate the learners' metacognitive skills.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree

E) Strongly agree

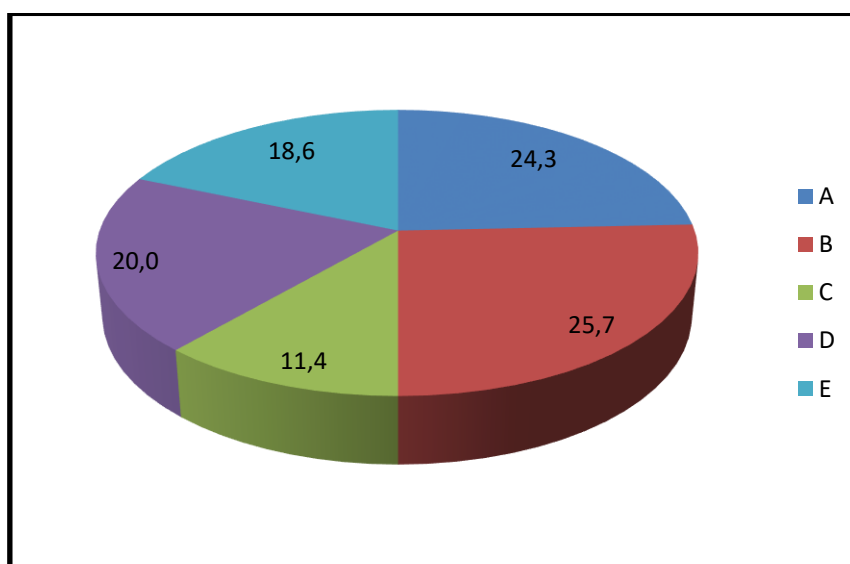
Table 22

Students' Perceptions of the Role of Language Teaching Approaches in Helping Evaluate the Students' Metacognitive Skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	17	24.3	24.3
	B	18	25.7	25.7
	C	8	11.4	11.4
	D	14	20.0	20.0
	E	13	18.6	18.6
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 23

Students' Perceptions of the Role of Language Teaching Approaches in Helping Evaluate the Students' Metacognitive Skills



This item aimed to explore students' beliefs regarding the role of language teaching approaches in developing metacognitive skills. As demonstrated in Table (22) and Figure (23),

out of seventy (70) students, seventeen (17) students (24,3%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Eighteen (16) students (25,7%) have disagreed. Eight (8) students (11,4%) were not sure about their answer. Fourteen (14) students (20%) have agreed. Thirteen (13) students (18,6%) have strongly agreed. As a summary, we deduce that first-year students did not believe in the effectiveness of language teaching approaches when it comes to developing their metacognitive skills.

Item 23: The Competency-Based Approach focuses on the learner's skills and objectives.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

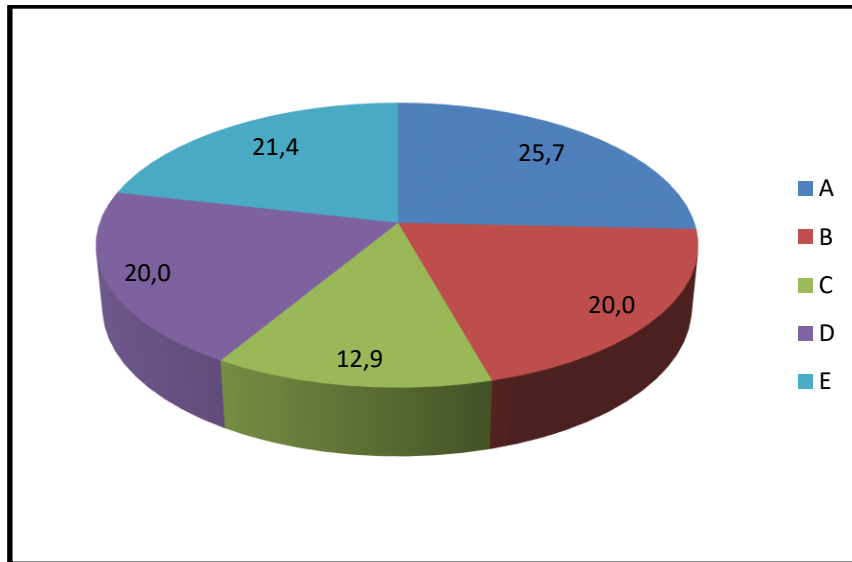
Table 23

Students' Perceptions of the Focus of the Competency-Based Approach

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	18	25.7	25.7
	B	14	20.0	20.0
	C	9	12.9	12.9
	D	14	20.0	20.0
	E	15	21.4	21.4
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 24

Students' Perceptions of the Focus of the Competency-Based Approach



This item aimed to know whether first-year students believed that the competency-based approach focuses on developing their learning skills and objectives. As displayed in Table (23) and Figure (24), out of seventy (70) students, eighteen (18) students (25,7%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Fourteen (14) students (20%) have disagreed. Nine (9) students (12,9%) were not sure about their answer. Fourteen (14) students (20%) have agreed. Fifteen (15) students (21,4%) have strongly agreed. The obtained results indicate that some first-year students believed in the effectiveness of the competency-based approach, while others might find it ineffective in a way or another.

Item 24: CBA does not focus on the learners' linguistic and communicative competencies.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

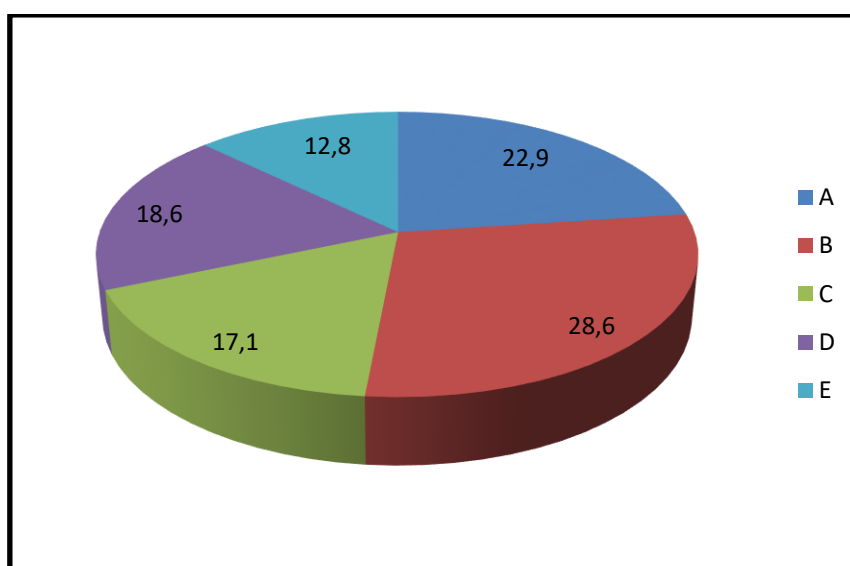
Table 24

Students' Perceptions of the Focus of the Competency-based Approach on Learners' Linguistic and Communicative Competencies.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	16	22.9	22.9
	B	20	28.6	28.6
	C	12	17.1	17.1
	D	13	18.6	18.6
	E	9	12.8	12.8
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 25

Students' Perceptions of the Focus of the Competency-based Approach on Learners' Linguistic and Communicative Competencies.



This item aimed to know whether first-year students believed that the competency-based approach focuses on their linguistic skills and metacognitive competencies. As demonstrated in Table (24) and Figure (25), out of seventy (70) students, sixteen (16) students (22,9%) have

strongly disagreed with the statement. Twenty (20) students (28,6%) have disagreed. Twelve (12) students (17,1%) were not sure about their answer. Thirteen (13) students (18,6%) have agreed. Nine (9) students (12,8%) have strongly agreed. In short, we conclude that the majority of first-year students believed that the CBA approach lies a great emphasis on learners' linguistic skills and communicative competencies.

Item 25: CBA does not promote interactive and collaborative learning.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

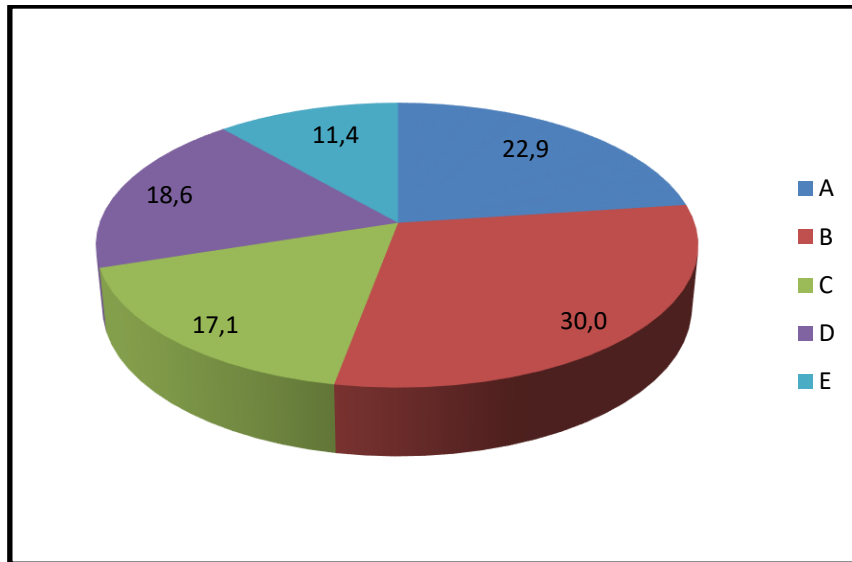
Table 25

Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-based Approach in Promoting Interactive and Collaborative Learning

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	16	22.9	22.9
	B	21	30.0	30.0
	C	12	17.1	17.1
	D	13	18.6	18.6
	E	8	11.4	11.4
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 26

Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-based Approach in Promoting Interactive and Collaborative Learning



This item aimed to know whether first-year students believed that the competency-based approach promotes interactive and collaborative learning. As shown in Table (25) and Figure (26), out of seventy (70) students, sixteen (16) students (22,9%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Twenty (20) students (28,6%) have disagreed. Twelve (12) students (17,1%) were not sure about their answer. Thirteen (13) students (18,6%) have agreed. Eight (8) students (11,4%) have strongly agreed. According to the results, we find that the majority of first-year students believed that the CBA approach promote interactive and collaborative learning.

Item 26: CBA does not aim to draw learners' attention to fluency rather than accuracy.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

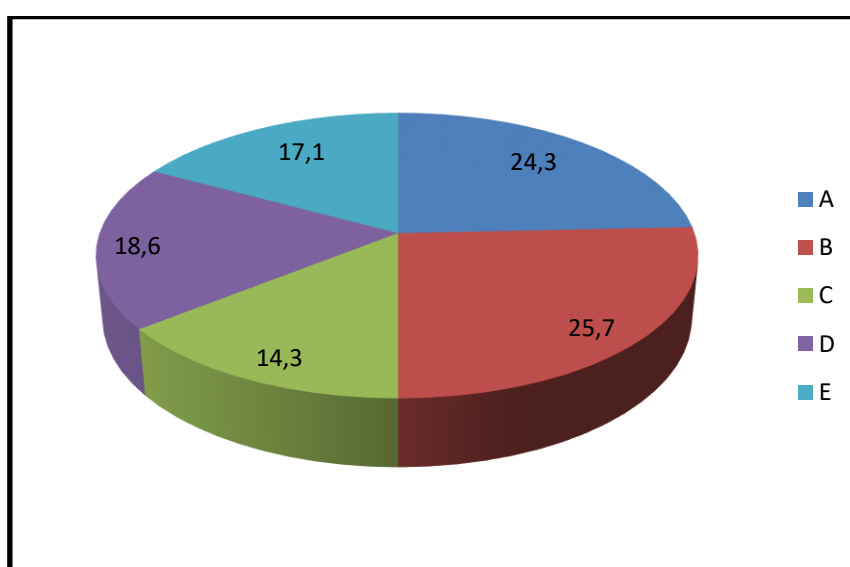
Table 26

Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-based Approach in Focusing on Learners' Fluency

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	17	24.3	24.3
	B	18	25.7	25.7
	C	10	14.3	14.3
	D	13	18.6	18.6
	E	12	17.1	17.1
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 27

Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-based Approach in Focusing on Learners' Fluency



This item aimed to know whether first-year students believed that the competency-based approach focuses on their fluency rather than accuracy. As revealed in Table (26) and Figure (27), out of seventy (70) students, seventeen (17) students (24,3%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Eighteen (18) students (25,7%) have disagreed. Ten (10) students (14,3%) were not sure about their answer. Thirteen (13) students (18,6%) have agreed. Twelve (12)

students (17,1%) have strongly agreed. The obtained results show that most of the students expressed the belief that the CBA approach maximizes its focus on fluency over accuracy.

Item 27: CBA focuses on the competencies and learning outcomes of the learner.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

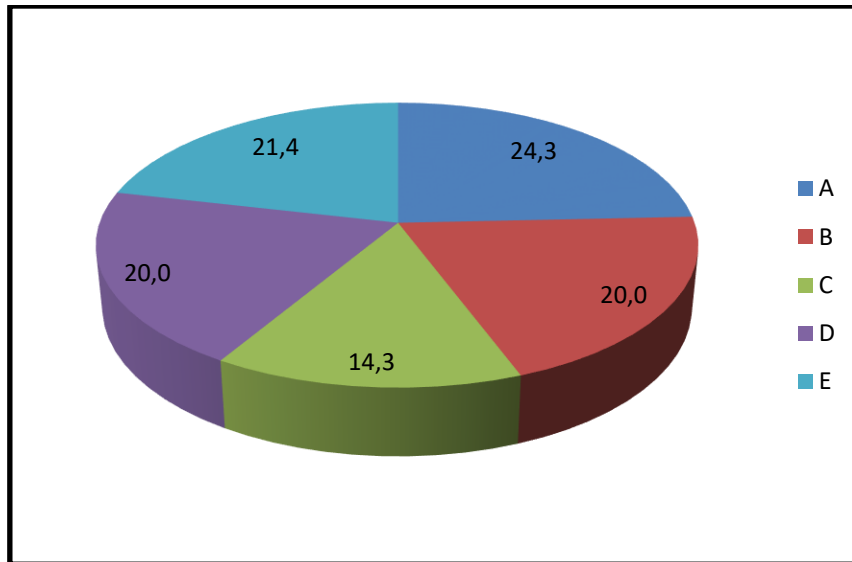
Table 27

Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-based Approach in the Learners Competencies and Learning Outcomes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	17	24.3	24.3
	B	14	20.0	20.0
	C	10	14.3	14.3
	D	14	20.0	20.0
	E	15	21.4	21.4
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 28

Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-based Approach in the Learners Competencies and Learning Outcomes



This item was designed to explore first-year students' beliefs about whether the competency-based approach focuses on their competencies and learning outcomes. Table (27) and Figure (28) show that out of seventy (70) students, seventeen (17) students (24,3%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Fourteen (14) students (20%) have disagreed. Ten (10) students (14,3%) were not sure about their answer. Fourteen (14) students (20%) have agreed. Fifteen (15) students (21,4%) have strongly agreed. From the presented findings, we deduce that most of first-year students believed that the CBA approach did not focus on their competencies and learning outcomes.

Item 28: CBA focuses on learner-centeredness, needs, and progress.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- F) Not sure
- G) Agree
- H) Strongly agree

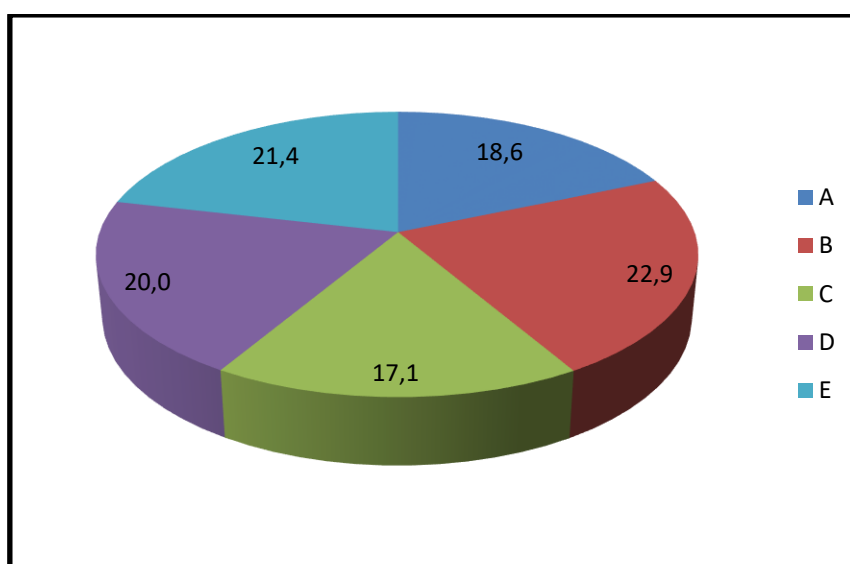
Table 28

Students' Perceptions of the Focus of the Competency-based Approach on Learners' Centredness, Needs, and Progress.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	13	18.6	18.6
	B	16	22.9	22.9
	C	12	17.1	17.1
	D	14	20.0	20.0
	E	15	21.4	21.4
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 29

Students' Perceptions of the Focus of the Competency-based Approach on Learners' Centredness, Needs, and Progress



This item aimed to explore first-year students' beliefs about if the competency-based approach focuses on learner centeredness, needs, and progress. Table (28) and Figure (29) show that out of seventy (70) students, thirteen (13) students (18,6%) have strongly disagreed with the

statement. Sixteen (16) students (22,9%) have disagreed. Twelve (12) students (17,1%) were not sure about their answer. Fourteen (14) students (20%) have agreed. Fifteen (15) students (21,4%) have strongly agreed. The results show that most of first-year students believed that the CBA approach focused on their learning centredness, needs, and progress.

Item 29: CBA aims to facilitate effective participation in the classroom.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

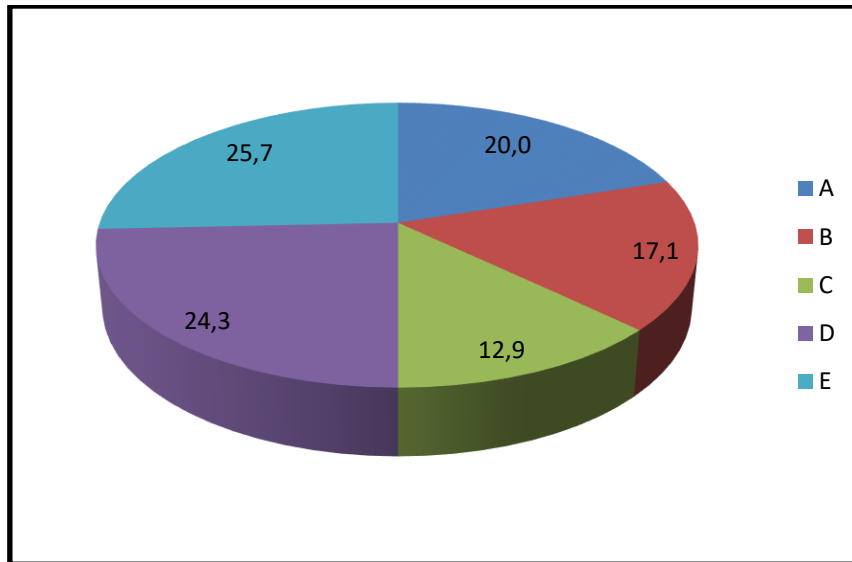
Table 29

Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-based Approach in Facilitating Effective Classroom Participation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	14	20.0	20.0
	B	12	17.1	17.1
	C	9	12.9	12.9
	D	17	24.3	24.3
	E	18	25.7	25.7
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 30

Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-Based Approach in Facilitating Effective Classroom Participation



This item wanted to discover first-year students' beliefs about the role of the competency-based approach in facilitating effective classroom participation. Table (29) and Figure (30) demonstrate that out of seventy (70) students, fourteen (14) students (20%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Twelve (12) students (17,1%) have disagreed. Nine (9) students (12,9%) were not sure about the information. Seventeen (17) students (24,3%) have agreed. Eighteen (18) students (25,7%) have strongly agreed. It seems that the majority of first-year students concluded that the CBA approach was successful in fostering active participation in the classroom.

Item 30: CBA promotes learner autonomy by teaching language as a function of communication.

- A) Strongly disagree
- B) Disagree
- C) Not sure
- D) Agree
- E) Strongly agree

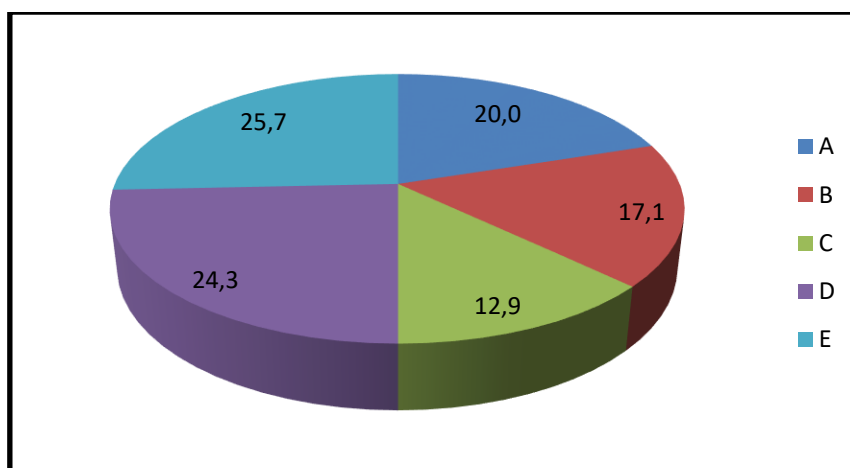
Table 30

Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-Based Approach in Promoting Learning Autonomy

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A	14	20.0	20.0
	B	12	17.1	17.1
	C	9	12.9	12.9
	D	17	24.3	24.3
	E	18	25.7	25.7
	Total	70	100.0	100.0

Figure 31

Students' Perceptions of the Role of the Competency-Based Approach in Promoting Learning Autonomy



This item aimed to know if first-year students believed that the competency-based approach promotes learning autonomy. Table (30) and Figure (31) reveal that out of seventy (70) students, fourteen (14) students (20%) have strongly disagreed with the statement. Twelve (12) students (17,1%) have disagreed. Nine (9) students (12,9%) were uncertain. Seventeen (17) students (24,3%) have agreed. Eighteen (18) students (25,7%) have strongly agreed.

Drawing from the analyzed data, it can be deduced that a large proportion of freshman students perceived the CBA as a crucial factor in promoting learner autonomy.

3.2.2. Teachers' Interview

The teachers' interview was addressed to four (4) EFL teachers at the secondary school. It tackled nine open-ended questions that reflect their perspectives on implementing the Competency-Based Approach with reference to its challenges and potential solutions. The interview was analyzed through content analysis. Here are the most significant results:

1. What foreign language teaching and assessment approaches do you find more authentic? Traditional or contemporary ones? Please name three approaches that you find helpful for foreign language instruction and assessment.

This question aimed to gain insights into the approaches employed by EFL teachers in secondary schools for teaching and assessing English learning. The teachers were given two options: traditional approaches and contemporary approaches. Here are the answers provided by the teachers:

- **Traditional Approaches: 2 interviewees**

The Communicative Approach (2), the Cooperative Language Learning Approach (1), the Audio-Lingual Approach (1), the Grammar-Translation Approach (1), and the Direct Method (1).

- **B. Contemporary Approaches: 2 interviewees**

Communicative Language Teaching (2), The Lexical Approach (1), The Situational Language Learning Approach (1), Task-Based Language Teaching (1), Project-Based Learning (1).

Based on the analysis of the teachers' feedback, secondary school EFL teachers find both traditional and modern teaching methods to be authentic and advantageous, emphasizing the Communicative Approach. This suggests that teachers prioritize language communication.

2. What are your thoughts on the Competency-Based Approach (CBA)?

This question aimed to know EFL teachers' thoughts on the Competency-Based Approach. The teachers provided four different answers. Here is the analysis and interpretation of their answers:

- **Positive: (2)**

Beneficial to teaching-learning instruction and language skills mastery; authentic in demonstrating learners' specific skills and knowledge.

- **Neutral: (2)**

Attractive to passive learners; effective for building learners' competencies.

- **Negative: (0)**

From the analysis of the teachers' responses, teachers' opinions on the Competency-based approach are likely to be positive in terms of skills mastery and learning performance. However, other teachers showed neutral opinions as the Competency-based approach is practical for learners whose central focus revolves around developing their receptive skills: listening and reading. Additionally, this approach has a significant effect on their competencies. This approach was well-received, with no negative feedback.

3. When applying the Competency-Based Approach (CBA), what skills and competencies do you focus on the most in your learners?

This question aimed to know which skills and competencies teachers emphasize when applying the Competency-based approach. The teachers provided four different answers, analyzed as follows:

- **Speaking skills: (1)**

- Writing skills: **(1)**
- Listening Skill: **(1)**
- Reading skills: **(1)**
- Communication skills: **(2)**

Based on the analysis of the teachers' responses, they prioritize the development of speaking skills, followed by writing skills, listening skills, and reading skills. Nevertheless, this approach emphasizes the importance of communication skills.

4. How is self-directed learning examined and assessed by the Competency-Based Approach?

This question aimed to know how EFL teachers examine and assess self-directed learning through the Competency-based approach. The teachers provided four different answers, analyzed as follows:

- **Learner-centeredness: (1)**

Teachers emphasize learners' abilities, preferences, and objectives.

- **Autonomy: (2)**

Teachers emphasize learners' autonomy and responsibility for their learning.

- **Acquisition: (1)**

Teachers emphasize the acquisition of specific competencies or skills, such as time schedules and curriculum completion.

Based on the analysis of the interviewees' feedback, it can be inferred that EFL teachers are prone to adopting the Competency-Based Approach to enhance learner-centeredness, autonomy, and skills acquisition.

5. To what extent can the CBA promote students' competencies and motivate them to learn?

This question sought to determine how effective the Competency-Based Approach was in enhancing students' skills and boosting their motivation to learn. The interviewees offered four separate answers, and here is the analysis of each one:

- Making group and pair work: **(1)**
- Fostering collaboration, personalization, and inclusivity: **(1)**
- Building confidence; teaching critical thinking: **(1)**
- Promoting competencies; raising motivation; identifying effective strategies; enhancing learning environment: **(1)**

Analyzing the teachers' responses leads to the conclusion that the Competency-Based Approach is highly beneficial for EFL teachers. Teachers can maximize the benefits of this approach by prioritizing collaborative learning, critical thinking, competencies, and motivation.

6. Why is the implementation of the CBA approach presumed to be challenging for some teachers? Name three reasons.

This question intended to uncover the reasons why certain teachers struggle with implementing the Competency-Based Approach. In this regard, the teachers were asked to name three reasons. The teachers provided the following answers, which are analyzed and interpreted as follows:

- Achieving excellence, broad recognition, and understanding; large class size: **(1)**
- The teacher's role as a mentor in classroom management: **(1)**
- No response: **(1)**
- Time constraints; resource limitation: **(1)**

The teachers' responses regarding the challenges of the competency-based approach indicate that various reasons make the implementation harder to achieve, such as large class

sizes, teacher roles, classroom management, time limitations, and limited resources. EFL secondary school teachers believed these reasons are the most recognized in the implementation process.

7. What obstacles will the teacher likely encounter when implementing the CBA approach in the Algerian teaching context?

This question was asked to identify the obstacles likely to hinder the implementation of the competency-based approach in the Algerian teaching context. The teachers' answers are analyzed and interpreted as follows:

- Classroom size; students' low level; classroom management: **(1)**
- Familiarity with teacher-centredness; low motivation; lack of communicative skills: **(1)**
- Students' low level: **(1)**
- Lack of training; diverse students' needs; time management; lack of authentic materials; lack of equipments: **(1)**

Based on this brief analysis of the teacher's responses to the obstacles to implementing the Competency-Based Approach, it can be concluded that the primary concerns of secondary school English teachers are large class sizes, students' low proficiency levels, and the lack of authentic instruction resulting from limited communicative skills.

8. What steps do you take to identify students' needs and objectives besides the ones dictated by the syllabus, and how can students accommodate them?

This question aimed to know teachers' various steps to assess their students' needs and objectives and how students can adjust accordingly. The teachers provided four answers, analyzed and interpreted as follows:

- Establishing a proper learning setting: **(1)**

- Assessing students' pre-requisites, considering their background and their previous concerns; categorizing them into groups: **(1)**
- Conducting assessments: **(2)**
- Engaging students in dialogues considering individual differences: **(1)**

By examining the teachers' responses, it can be concluded that secondary school teachers adopted different approaches to identify their students' needs and goals, prioritizing assessments, students' pre-requisites, classroom setting, group work, and individual differences. These steps guide teachers in identifying the needs and objectives of their students.

9. What skills can the CBA enhance to ensure autonomy in a learner-centered classroom?

This question was asked to discover what skills can be enhanced to ensure autonomous learning. The teachers provided four different answers, as shown below:

- Speaking skills; writing skills: **(1)**
- Listening skills; reading skills; speaking skills; writing skills: **(2)**
- Critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills; communication skills; self-assessment; metacognitive skills: **(1)**

Based on the teachers' feedback analysis, most teachers believed that the Competency-Based Approach promotes learner autonomy by improving both productive and receptive language skills, with particular emphasis on speaking and writing skills. On the other hand, cultivating cognitive, communication, and assessment skills is advantageous in promoting independent learning in secondary school classrooms.

3.2.3. Checklist Observation

The checklist observation was chosen as the third tool for this research. It aimed to observe students' and teachers' performance in three English teaching classrooms. The checklist consisted of four major sections, each with five elements to be ticked under the following values: 1) not observed, 2) more emphasis recommended, 3) accomplished very well. After attending with three different classes, here is the analysis and interpretation of the three checklists:

Section One: Learner autonomy

This section was created to observe students' self-directed learning in secondary school classrooms. In group one, which consisted of thirty-three students, it was observed that all elements were very well accomplished, which emphasized learner centeredness, motivation, and willingness, strong language production (speaking and writing), free learning and critical thinking; use of metacognitive strategies. In group two, which consisted of thirty-five students, it was observed that learner centeredness, strong language production (speaking and writing), and use of metacognitive strategies were slightly observed, which required more emphasis. However, motivation and willingness and free learning and critical thinking were not observed at all. In group three, which consisted of thirty-eight students, it was observed that learner centeredness, willingness, and motivation, and strong language production (speaking and writing) were slightly observed, which indicated that these elements should have taken much emphasis by the teacher. However, free learning and critical thinking, in addition to the use of metacognitive strategies, were accomplished very well.

Section Two: Competency-Based approach

Section two aimed to observe some aspects of the competency-based approach employed by the teachers in three different English teaching classrooms. In group one, which consisted of thirty-three students, it was observed that targeting learners' goals and immediate feedback for learners' performance were accomplished very well. The use of various teaching techniques and the focus on teamwork were not observed at all. However, measuring pupils' achievement of their objectives needed much emphasis by the teacher. In group two, which consisted of thirty-five students, it was noted that that targeting learners' goals and immediate feedback for learners' performance, use of various teaching techniques, the focus on teamwork, measuring pupils' achievement of their objectives were all accomplished very well. In group three, it was observed that two items were accomplished very well: content has clearly targeted learners' goals and objectives; and focus on teamwork were clearly noticed. On the other hand, the use of various teaching techniques and measurement of students' achievement needed more emphasises as these items were slightly observed. For the immediate feedback and assessment of students' performance, nothing was observed at all.

Section Three: The Teacher's Performance

The purpose of this section was to evaluate the teacher's performance and identify the key features of competency-based teaching in three different classrooms. In the first class, it was strongly observed that the teacher selected competency-based tasks at the beginning of the course. Also, providing corrective feedback and encouraging speaking and classroom interaction were accomplished very well. For the emphasis on language fluency, it was slightly noticed which required more emphasis. However, giving time to students to accomplished their tasks was not observed at all. In the second class, it was strongly noticed that the teacher selected competency-based tasks at the beginning of the course, provided

corrective feedback to his students, and encourage speaking and classroom interaction. Nevertheless, emphasising fluency over accuracy was slightly noticed which required much emphasis. For assigned tasks time management, nothing was observed. In the third class, it was strongly observed that teacher selected competency-based tasks at the beginning of the course and also provided corrective feedback for the learners. Nonetheless, two elements were slightly observed: emphasis on fluency over accuracy and speaking encouragement. For tasks time alignment, nothing was observed.

Section Four: Pupils' Performance

This section was designed to evaluate the pupils' very performance in secondary school EFL classrooms where the competency-based approach was used. In the first class, it was strongly observed that the pupils enjoyed listening and following the teacher's instruction. They also felt motivated to ask questions and participate in the course. Moreover, they strongly exhibited communicative competencies. However, it was slightly noticed that the pupils understood what was communicated inside the classroom which required more emphasis. For task accomplishment, nothing was observed at all. In the second class, it was slightly observed that the pupils accomplished their tasks without obstacles in which they exhibited a small extent of communicative competencies. Nevertheless, for the remaining elements: understanding classroom language, following the teacher's instructions, and feeling motivated and engaged, nothing was observed. In the third class, it was strongly observed that the pupils enjoyed listening and following the teacher's instructions. On the other hand, it was slightly observed that the pupils felt motivated or exhibit any communicative competence, which required much emphasis. For the accomplishment of the assigned tasks without obstacles, nothing was observed.

After analysing and interpreting the classroom observation, it is important to shed light on some extra observations that were highlighted during the attendance of the sessions. Here are the most significant observations:

Class One:

During the attendance with class one, it was observed that the pupils were encouraged to consider direct and indirect phrases and develop specific grammatical rules during the grammar lecture. The classroom environment was dedicated to a learner-centred approach, moving away from the traditional teacher-centric model. Most students showed motivation and engagement, with some struggling with English. Regular self-reflection and teacher feedback helped identify strengths and weaknesses, adjust strategies, and celebrate achievements.

Class Two:

During the attendance with class two, it was observed that the majority of students lacked motivation to learn independently, and they often resorted to relying on the teacher for tasks that required interpretation or comprehension. Despite the teacher's efforts to make the students autonomous, they still resorted to relying on the teacher for help and instruction. The teacher's goal was to help students overcome psychological obstacles by improving their communication skills, but this activity was insufficient to enhance critical thinking and linguistic abilities.

Class Three:

During the attendance with the third class, it was observed that the teacher initially engaged students, providing clear instructions and encouraging them to work harder. The teacher encouraged decision-making in the writing assignment, involving students in group

formation and allowing them to rearrange seats. The teacher promoted peer and self-correction feedback, but there was not enough time for each element. The noisy and crowded classrooms made it difficult to apply the competency-based approach. Lack of motivation, overcrowding, and inattention were the main reasons for students' and teachers' shortcomings.

3.3. Discussion of the Findings

This study explores students' and teachers' perceptions of the role of the competency-based approach in enhancing learner autonomy. In this regard, three research instruments were used to collect the necessary data for this study: a student questionnaire, a teacher interview, and an observation guided by a checklist. After analysing and interpreting the results, here are the most significant findings:

The analysis of the students' questionnaire showed a correlated inverse relationship between the competency-based approach and learner autonomy. The questionnaire consisted of thirty (30) questions that have deeply explored secondary school students' perceptions. Starting with section one, which explored the students' perceptions of self-directed learning, the results indicate that most first-year students struggle with understanding language classroom, setting learning objectives, and assessing their own progress. They rely on teacher guidance as they lack cognitive and reconstruction skills. Self-directed learning skills like planning, monitoring, and assessing progress are also lacking. A significant number of students appear to struggle with selecting optimal learning strategies and evaluating learning outcomes. However, some are capable of evaluating their learning outcomes. The results from section two, which explored students' perceptions of the teacher role demonstrate that first-year students believe teachers should determine learning goals, provide instant feedback, and adopt a facilitator role. They also believe teachers should guide students, allow questions and suggestions, and focus on self-independence. They believe teachers should use the right

approach to teaching English, understand students' strengths and weaknesses, and create an interactive environment to enhance students' autonomy. Additionally, most students believe that teachers should be aware of their learning strengths and weaknesses. Regarding section three, which explored the students' perceptions of the competency-based approach, the findings indicate that most first-year students do not believe language teaching approaches are effective in increasing their autonomy or developing metacognitive skills. The competency-based approach (CBA) is primarily based on learners' linguistic skills and communicative competencies, promoting interactive and collaborative learning. However, most students believe the CBA approach does not focus on their competencies and learning outcomes. Despite this, the majority of first-year students believe the CBA approach is successful in fostering active classroom participation and promoting learner autonomy.

On the other hand, the analysis of the teachers' interview showed a well-correlated relationship between the competency-based approach and learners' communicative skills and competencies. The interview consisted of nine (9) open-ended questions. After the analysing and the interpreting the teachers' responses, the results indicate that secondary school EFL teachers find both traditional and modern teaching methods authentic and advantageous, emphasizing the Communicative Approach. They prioritize language communication and the Competency-Based Approach, which focuses on developing receptive skills like listening and reading. The approach is well-received and promotes learner-centeredness, autonomy, and the acquisition of language skills. However, they confess that they face challenges such as large class sizes, low proficiency levels, and limited communicative skills. To overcome these obstacles, teachers suggest the adoption of various techniques, such as assessments, students' pre-requisites, classroom setting, and collaborative learning. To conclude, the teachers argue that the Competency-Based Approach promotes learner autonomy by improving productive and receptive language skills, with a particular emphasis on speaking and writing.

Furthermore, the analysis of the checklist observation, which consisted of four main sections, each section contained five main elements to observe. After analysing and interpreting the observation from three different classes, the results indicate that three groups of pupils achieved similar results, with learner centeredness, motivation, and strong language production being the most important observed elements. However, motivation, willingness, free learning, and critical thinking were not significantly improved. The competency-based approach was also examined in three English classrooms. From this observation, it is concluded that teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge are more likely to adapt to the CBA approach and manage their time efficiently. Transitioning from a traditional teacher-centred approach to a learner-centred CBA model requires significant training and adaptation, including understanding new pedagogies, assessment methods, and time allotted for each lesson phase.

To put it simply, analysing the meaning and importance of the results obtained from the three research instruments helps to place the findings in the context of the research questions and hypotheses. The hypothesis made earlier in this study suggested a strong connection between the autonomy of first-year students and their academic achievement when implementing the CBA approach.

3.4. Conclusion

Ultimately, the data analysis and interpretation process for the three research instruments used in this study have been thoroughly covered in this chapter. A thorough validation procedure was used to make sure the data was accurate and reliable.

Importantly, the results are highly significant because they are remarkably consistent with the initial research objectives and hypotheses. This alignment confirms the efficacy of the selected approaches in addition to bolstering the research's credibility. Additionally, the analysis accomplished the research aims that we had rigorously laid out at the beginning of the research.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Teaching English for EFL learners has gained momentum in the previous decades, as teaching methods and approaches have significantly impacted the teaching and learning process. Moving from traditional teaching approaches that emphasize explicit teaching of grammar, vocabulary, and the four language skills to implicit approaches that focus on enhancing learners' communicative competence and raising their motivation, engagement, and willingness to be responsible for their learning. In this context, this research study explores the role of the competency-based approach in enhancing first-year secondary school pupils' autonomy. This study aims to determine whether CBA is beneficial or detrimental to foreign language teaching and learning. Moreover, it aims to explore the difficulties that prevent the implementation of the Competency-Based Approach in EFL classrooms. Additionally, it aims to explore students' and teachers' perceptions of the topic under investigation. Ultimately, extracting the difficulties and suggesting potential solutions to overcome them.

Accordingly, this study poses the following questions: 1) How much autonomy do first-year Algerian secondary school students exhibit? 2) To what extent can the Competency-Based Approach foster learner autonomy? 3) What difficulties may teachers encounter when implementing the Competency-Based Approach in a learner-centred classroom? These questions are established upon the following hypotheses: 1) First-year pupils may show interest in learning independently at their own pace. 2) There is a significant relationship between first-year students' autonomy and learning outcomes under the Competency-Based Approach. 3) EFL teachers know the challenges they will likely face when implementing the Competency-Based Approach in the EFL Classroom. This study follows a mixed methods approach to answer these questions and validate the hypotheses. Three research

instruments are selected: a student questionnaire, a teacher interview, and a checklist observation, each designed to achieve a specific goal.

In an attempt to answer the first research question, a quantitative questionnaire is given to seventy (70) pupils from first-year population. The questionnaire aims to explore their perceptions of learner autonomy, the teacher's role, and the Competency-Based Approach. The results obtained from the students' responses indicate that there is a link between the Competency-Based Approach and learner autonomy. However, some students need help with self-directed learning, establishing goals, and evaluating their learning. They mainly rely on the teacher's instruction due to a lack of cognitive and metacognitive skills abilities. On the other hand, most students agree that the Competency-Based Approach encourages active classroom involvement and learner autonomy. These results validate the first hypothesis and conclude that first-year students exhibit some autonomy and may show interest in learning independently.

To answer the second research question, an observation guided by a checklist is used in three classrooms of first-year. The observation aims to investigate the actual situation of EFL classrooms in secondary schools. It aims to observe learner autonomy, the Competency-Based Approach, the teacher's performance, and the learners' performance. The results obtained from the observation indicate that learner-centeredness and strong language production are the most important elements observed in three different English classrooms. Despite efforts, there still needs to be more progress in enhancing motivation, willingness, self-learning, and critical thinking abilities. As a result, implementing the Competency-Based Approach necessitates substantial training and adaptation, encompassing the comprehension of novel pedagogies, assessment methodologies, and proper allocation of lesson time. These results confirm the second hypothesis, which states that a significant relationship exists

between first-year students' autonomy and learning outcomes under the Competency-Based Approach.

To answer the last research question, a qualitative interview was conducted with four (4) teachers at the secondary school. The interview aims to explore teachers' perceptions of the Competency-Based Approach implementation, potential challenges, and recommended solutions. According to the results of the teachers' interview, English secondary school teachers believe that incorporating both traditional and modern teaching methods is valuable and practical, with an emphasis on the Competency-Based Approach. They prioritize verbal communication, listening, and reading. They encounter challenges, such as huge class sizes, lack of motivation, lack of authentic materials, and sometimes motivation. To address these issues, teachers recommend using various strategies, including assessments and collaborative learning. These results confirm the last hypothesis, which states that EFL teachers are aware of the challenges they will probably face when implementing the Competency-Based Approach in the EFL Classroom. To sum up, the study's findings are consistent with the hypotheses and address the research questions.

Furthermore, the analysis of the data gathered from the observation checklist, teacher interview, and student questionnaire led to discovering EFL students' and teachers' perceptions of the role of the relationship between the competency-based approach and students' learner autonomy. The results pointed out some difficulties in implementing this very approach in secondary school EFL classrooms. On this basis, the researcher wanted to provide some solutions to these difficulties. They are mentioned as follows:

For students, it is highly recommended to:

- Engage themselves in interactive activities that enhance their communicative skills.

- Build confidence and increase self-esteem to know their gaps and work on filling them.
- Practice makes perfect, so the more the student practises English, the more he/she achieves speaking proficiency.
- Expand vocabulary over time in different learning contexts.
- Recognize the significance of developing language skills to achieve language mastery.

For teachers, it is highly recommended to:

- Trigger students' autonomous learning through assigning interactive tasks.
- Encourage active participation from all students in communication activities to gauge their different levels of involvement.
- Identify the obstacles students encounter when trying to communicate effectively and develop effective methods to support them in overcoming these obstacles.
- Incorporate interactive activities.
- Incorporate active learning into teaching.
- Implement interactive teaching techniques that complement the students' diverse learning styles.

With the help of these suggestions, the student will eventually feel motivated and eager to overcome any barriers and actively participate in classroom interactions. Consequently, the teacher will achieve success in implementing the competency-based approach in secondary school classrooms.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Students' Questionnaire

Dear student,

This questionnaire aims to discover first-year pupils' attitudes at Abidine Mohamed towards the effectiveness of the competency-based language teaching approach in promoting learner autonomy.

Your most appreciated contribution is expected to be honest and straightforward. Please read the questions carefully and then answer by ticking (✓) the appropriate box.

Thank you for your time and your collaboration

Section One: Beliefs about self-directed learning

Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I can understand what is communicated in the classroom.					
2. I set my own objectives in learning English.					
3. I have the motivation and the skills to learn English.					
4. I prefer learning at my own pace.					
5. I am fully responsible for my own learning.					
6. I can determine the direction of my learning without the teacher's help.					
7. I can easily reconstruct my cognitive					

information.					
8. I can plan, monitor, and access my learning.					
9. I can select the most effective learning strategy.					
10. I can evaluate the extent of my learning outcomes.					

Section Two: Perceptions of the teacher's role

Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1. The teacher should not set my learning objectives.					
2. The teacher should not provide instant corrective feedback.					
3. The teacher should be the facilitator instead of the commander of the information.					
4. The teacher should not guide students in learning English.					
5. The teacher should allow students to ask questions and make suggestions.					
6. The teacher should focus on students' communicative competencies.					
7. The teacher should boost learners' willingness to embrace self-independent learning.					
8. The teacher should adopt the appropriate teaching/learning approach.					

9. The teacher should know his/her learners' strengths and weaknesses.					
10. The teacher should establish an interactive and collaborative learning environment to boost students' autonomy.					

Section Three: Perceptions of the Competency-Based Approach (CBA)

Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Language teaching approaches help develop the features of control, goal-directness, and autonomy in learners.					
2. Language teaching approaches help evaluate the learners' metacognitive skills.					
3. The Competency-Based Approach focuses on the learner's skills and objectives.					
4. CBA does not focus on the learners' linguistic and communicative competencies.					
5. CBA does not promote interactive and collaborative learning.					
6. CBA does not aim to draw learners' attention to fluency rather than accuracy.					
7. CBA focuses on the competencies and learning outcomes of the learner.					
8. CBA focuses on learner-centeredness,					

needs, and progress.					
9. CBA aims to facilitate effective participation in the classroom.					
10. CBA promotes learner autonomy by teaching language as a function of communication.					

Appendix B: Teachers' Interview

Interview Consent

You are kindly invited to participate in an interview designed to conduct research for a Master's degree. The interview aims to explore secondary school teachers of English perceptions of implementing the Competency-Based Approach to foreign language teaching and assessment. The interview may last from 15 to 30 minutes to get the necessary information from the participants. Teachers' responses will be audio taped and we ensure that all responses remain anonymous, as we intend to look into eliciting the knowledge and the different perspectives on the role of the CBA in promoting learner autonomy in the Algerian teaching context. We hope your answers will be honest and straightforward.

I understand this information and fully agree to participate under these conditions.

Signed:

Date:

Interview Questions

Section One : Engagement Questions

- 1) What approaches to foreign language teaching and assessment do you find more authentic? Traditional or contemporary ones? Please name three approaches that you find helpful for foreign language instruction and assessment?
- 2) What are your thoughts on the Competency-Based Approach (CBA)?

Section Two: Exploration Questions

- 1) When applying the Competency-Based Approach (CBA), what skills and competencies do you focus on the most in your learners?
- 2) How is self-directed learning examined and assessed by the Competency-Based Approach?
- 3) To what extent can the CBA promote students' competencies and raise their motivation to learn?
- 4) Why is the implementation of the CBA approach presumed to be challenging for some teachers? Name three reasons.
- 5) What obstacles the teacher is likely to encounter when implementing the CBA approach in the Algerian teaching context?

Section Three: Exit Questions

- 1) What steps do you take to identify students' needs and objectives, besides the ones dictated by the syllabus, and how students can accommodate them?
- 2) What skills can the CBA enhance to ensure autonomy in a learner-centred classroom?

Appendix C: Checklist Observation

Researcher:

Observation number: 1 2 3

Department:

Date:

Duration:

Students' number:

Course:

Class:

Respond to each statement using the following scale:

1=Not observed

2=More emphasis recommended

3=Accomplished very well

All items marked as **not observed must be explained in the comments*

Section One: Learner Autonomy	1	2	3
1. Notable shift in learning from teacher-centredness to learner-centredness			
2. Raised willingness and motivation to learn			
3. Significance production in speaking and writing rather than reading and listening			
4. Demonstration of free learning and critical thinking			
5. Application of metacognitive strategies			
Section Two: Competency-Based-Approach			
1. Content targets learners' goals, outcomes, and competencies			
2. Use of an unlimited variety of teaching techniques			
3. Focus on group/ teamwork			
4. Immediate feedback/ assessment of pupils' performance			
5. Measurement of pupils' achievement of their objectives			
Section Three: Teacher's Performance			
1. The teacher selects competency-based tasks at the beginning of the course			
2. The teacher gives much attention to fluency over accuracy			
3. The teacher provides corrective feedback			
4. The teacher gives time to students to finish the assigned task			
5. The teacher encourages speaking and classroom interaction			
Section Four: Pupils' Performance			
1. Pupils understand what is communicated inside the classroom			
2. Pupils enjoy listening to the teacher and following his/ her instruction			
3. Pupils feel motivated to ask questions and participate in the course			
4. Pupils accomplish the task in time without obstacles			
5. Pupils exhibit observable communicative competencies			

***Observation notes**

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***Comments**

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Signature

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Résumé

Les chercheurs ont étudié l'efficacité des méthodes et approches d'enseignement traditionnelles et contemporaines en mettant l'accent sur le passage d'une classe centrée sur l'enseignant à une classe centrée sur l'apprenant. Ce changement a supervisé l'apprentissage autonome des apprenants. La présente étude vise à étudier le rôle de l'approche axée sur les compétences dans le renforcement de l'autonomie des élèves. Il émet l'hypothèse qu'il existe un lien important entre l'autonomie et les réalisations des élèves de première année dans le cadre de l'approche de l'ACA. Ces dernières années, on a constaté une augmentation notable de l'adoption de l'approche par compétences. Celle-ci met fortement l'accent sur l'acquisition de connaissances et de compétences précisément définies. Pour atteindre l'objectif de cette étude, une approche de méthodes mixtes est choisie, dans le cadre de laquelle trois instruments de recherche sont sélectionnés pour recueillir les données nécessaires : un questionnaire destiné aux élèves de soixante-dix (70) élèves de première année de l'école secondaire Abidine Mohamed ; un entretien avec l'enseignant administré à quatre (4) professeurs d'anglais de la même école; et une observation de la liste de contrôle appliquée dans trois classes différentes d'élèves de première année dans le même cadre de recherche. Les données recueillies sont analysées au moyen d'une analyse quantitative à l'aide du logiciel SPSS et d'une analyse qualitative à l'aide d'une analyse thématique/de contenu. Les résultats montrent que les élèves et les enseignants connaissent les défis potentiels de la mise en œuvre de l'approche axée sur les compétences dans les salles de classe EFL. Cependant, ils affirment l'efficacité de cette approche dans le développement de l'autonomie et des compétences communicatives de l'apprenant. Cette étude recommande d'effectuer des recherches expérimentales pour mesurer le niveau d'autonomie des élèves avant et après la

mise en œuvre de l'approche par compétences afin de mettre en évidence son efficacité dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage des langues étrangères.

Mots-clés : Autoformation, approche axée sur les compétences, méthodes mixtes, questionnaire, entrevues, observation de listes de contrôle, recherche expérimentale

المخلص

كان تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المدرسة الثانوية مادة بحثية في السنوات الأخيرة. قام الباحثون بالتحقيق في فعالية أساليب ومناهج التدريس التقليدية والمعاصرة في التأكيد على التحول من فصل دراسي يركز على المعلم إلى فصل دراسي يركز على المتعلم. أشرف هذا التحول على التعلم الموجه ذاتيًا للمتعلمين. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في دور النهج القائم على الكفاءة في تعزيز استقلالية التلاميذ. يفترض أن هناك علاقة مهمة بين استقلالية طلاب السنة الأولى والتحصيل في إطار نهج CBA. وفي السنوات الأخيرة، شهدنا ارتفاعاً ملحوظاً في اعتماد المقاربة القائمة على الكفاءات CBA حيث تركز بشكل كبير على اكتساب معلومات ومهارات محددة بدقة. ولتحقيق هدف هذه الدراسة، يتم اختيار نهج متعدد الأساليب يتم بموجبه اختيار ثلاثة أدوات بحثية لجمع البيانات اللازمة: استبيان للطلاب يتم إعطاؤه لسبعين (70) طالباً في السنة الأولى في مدرسة عابدين محمد الثانوية؛ ومقابلة للمعلمين أجريت مع أربعة (4) مدرسين للغة الإنجليزية في نفس المدرسة؛ وملاحظة قائمة مرجعية تطبق في ثلاث فئات مختلفة من تلاميذ السنة الأولى في نفس بيئة البحث. ويتم تحليل البيانات التي يتم جمعها من خلال تحليل كمي باستخدام برمجيات SPSS وتحليل نوعي من خلال تحليل المواضيع/المحتوى. تظهر النتائج أن الطلاب والمعلمين يعرفون التحديات المحتملة لتنفيذ النهج القائم على الكفاءة في الفصول الدراسية. EFL ومع ذلك، فإنهم يؤكدون فعالية هذا النهج في تطوير استقلالية المتعلم ومهارات التواصل. توصي هذه الدراسة بتنفيذ بحث تجريبي لقياس مستوى استقلالية التلاميذ قبل وبعد تنفيذ النهج القائم على الكفاءة لتسليط الضوء على فعاليته في تدريس اللغة الأجنبية وتعلمها.

الكلمات الرئيسية: ذاتية التوجيه، نهج قائم على الكفاءة، طرق مختلطة، استبيان، مقابلات، ملاحظة قائمة مرجعية، بحث

تجريبي