

**DEVELOPING INDEPENDENT LEARNING IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO SENIOR
STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS**

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ANNOTATION: Developing independent learning in teaching English to senior students is an essential aspect of modern education, fostering lifelong learning skills, critical thinking, and self-regulation. In an increasingly globalized and digital world, students must acquire the ability to learn autonomously, adapt to new challenges, and take responsibility for their academic growth. This study explores effective strategies to promote independent learning, including metacognitive approaches, blended learning, differentiated instruction, and technology-assisted teaching. By encouraging self-discipline and active participation, independent learning enhances students' motivation, cognitive engagement, and language proficiency. The scientific novelty of this research lies in integrating structured self-learning techniques with digital and traditional resources, enabling students to develop personalized study strategies. It emphasizes the role of reflective learning, self-assessment, and teacher-guided scaffolding in fostering autonomy. The practical significance is demonstrated through classroom-tested methods that enhance students' time management, problem-solving skills, and linguistic competence. The findings contribute to modern pedagogy by offering adaptable models for effectively integrating independent learning into English language instruction.

KEY WORDS: Independent learning, self-regulation, learner autonomy, metacognitive strategies, blended learning, digital tools, motivation, self-directed study, scaffolding, English language teaching.

**MAKTABLARDA KATTA SINIF O'QUVCHILARIGA INGLIZ TILINI O'RGATISHDA
MUSTAQIL TA'LIMNI RIVOJLANTIRISH**

ANNOTATSIYA: Yuqori sinf o'quvchilariga ingliz tilini o'rgatishda mustaqil ta'limni rivojlantirish zamonaviy ta'limning muhim tarkibiy qismi bo'lib, u umrbod o'rganish, tanqidiy fikrlash va o'zini o'zi boshqarish ko'nikmalarini shakllantirishga xizmat qiladi. Globallashuv va raqamli texnologiyalar rivojlanayotgan davrda o'quvchilarning mustaqil o'rganish, yangi muammolarga moslashish va akademik rivojlanish uchun javobgarlikni o'z zimmasiga olish qobiliyatini rivojlantirish zarur. Ushbu tadqiqot mustaqil ta'limni rivojlantirishga xizmat qiluvchi metakognitiv yondashuvlar, aralash ta'lim, differensial o'qitish va texnologiyalar yordamida o'qitish strategiyalarini o'rganadi. Mustaqil o'rganish o'quvchilarning motivatsiyasini oshirish, bilim olish jarayoniga faol ishtirokini ta'minlash va til bilish darajasini rivojlantirishga xizmat qiladi. Tadqiqotning ilmiy yangiligi shundaki, unda o'quvchilarning shaxsiy ta'lim strategiyalarini ishlab chiqishga yordam beruvchi tuzilmaviy mustaqil o'rganish texnikalari an'anaviy va raqamli resurslar bilan uyg'unlashtirilgan. Shuningdek, aks ettiruvchi ta'lim, o'z-o'zini baholash va o'qituvchi tomonidan qo'llab-quvvatlash muhimligi ta'kidlanadi. Amaliy ahamiyati shundaki, sinovdan o'tgan pedagogik metodlar yordamida o'quvchilarning vaqtni boshqarish, muammolarni hal qilish va til kompetensiyasini oshirishga yordam beruvchi samarali modellar taqdim etiladi.

KALIT SO‘ZLAR: Mustaqil o‘rganish, o‘z-o‘zini boshqarish, o‘quvchi mustaqilligi, metakognitiv strategiyalar, aralash ta’lim, raqamli vositalar, motivatsiya, mustaqil ta’lim, skaffolding, ingliz tili o‘qitish.

РАЗВИТИЕ САМОСТОЯТЕЛЬНОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ ПРИ ПРЕПОДАВАНИИ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА УЧАЩИМСЯ СТАРШИХ КЛАССОВ В ШКОЛАХ

АННОТАЦИЯ: Развитие самостоятельного обучения при преподавании английского языка старшим школьникам является важнейшим аспектом современного образования, способствуя формированию навыков непрерывного обучения, критического мышления и саморегуляции. В условиях все более глобализированного и цифрового мира учащиеся должны овладеть способностью к автономному обучению, адаптации к новым вызовам и ответственности за свой академический рост. Данное исследование рассматривает эффективные стратегии развития самостоятельного обучения, включая метакогнитивные подходы, смешанное обучение, дифференцированное преподавание и использование технологий в образовательном процессе. Поощряя самодисциплину и активное участие, самостоятельное обучение способствует повышению мотивации учащихся, их когнитивной вовлеченности и языковой компетентности. Научная новизна данного исследования заключается в интеграции структурированных методов самообучения с цифровыми и традиционными ресурсами, что позволяет учащимся разрабатывать персонализированные стратегии изучения материала. Особое внимание уделяется рефлексивному обучению, самооценке и педагогическому сопровождению, способствующему развитию автономности. Практическая значимость работы подтверждается апробированными в классе методами, которые улучшают навыки управления временем, решения проблем и владения языком. Полученные результаты вносят вклад в современную педагогику, предлагая адаптируемые модели эффективной интеграции самостоятельного обучения в процесс преподавания английского языка.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: Самостоятельное обучение, саморегуляция, автономия учащихся, метакогнитивные стратегии, смешанное обучение, цифровые инструменты, мотивация, самостоятельное изучение, поддержка обучения (скаффолдинг), преподавание английского языка.

INTRODUCTION

In today’s rapidly evolving educational landscape, fostering independent learning in senior students is crucial for their academic and professional success. Independent learning is a student-centered approach that encourages learners to take responsibility for their own progress, develop self-regulation skills, and engage in critical thinking. As the global demand for proficient English speakers’ increases, particularly in academic and professional settings, the ability to learn autonomously has become an essential skill. Traditional teacher-led instruction is no longer sufficient; students must be equipped with strategies that enable them to learn beyond the classroom, adapt to new linguistic challenges, and develop lifelong learning habits. Research in language acquisition emphasizes the benefits of self-directed learning, which enhances motivation, cognitive engagement, and long-term retention. Modern pedagogical methods, including metacognitive strategies, blended learning, differentiated instruction, and technology-assisted teaching, play a significant role in promoting independent learning. However, many students struggle with self-discipline, time management, and effective learning techniques, which can hinder their progress. This study aims to explore the significance of independent learning in English language education for senior students, identifying effective strategies to enhance autonomy, engagement, and linguistic proficiency. By examining both theoretical foundations and practical applications, this research

provides educators with innovative methods to integrate independent learning into their teaching practices, ultimately preparing students for lifelong academic and professional success.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of independent learning has been widely studied in educational psychology and applied linguistics. Holec (1981) defines learner autonomy as the ability to take charge of one's learning. Little (1991) emphasizes the role of self-assessment and reflection in fostering autonomy. Studies indicate that technology-assisted learning and blended instruction improve students' engagement and motivation in language acquisition. Differentiated instruction is another key factor in independent learning. Tomlinson (2001) argues that adapting teaching methods to students' needs enhances self-directed learning. Similarly, Zimmerman (2002) highlights the role of self-regulation in academic achievement. Research suggests that a combination of teacher guidance, digital tools, and reflective practices leads to effective independent learning environments.

METHODS

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of independent learning strategies in teaching English to senior students. The research focuses on examining students' attitudes, engagement levels, and academic performance in relation to independent learning techniques.

The study was conducted in secondary schools, involving 100 senior students (aged 15–17) and 10 English language teachers from various institutions. The students were selected through stratified random sampling to ensure representation across different proficiency levels. Teachers were chosen based on their experience with implementing learner autonomy strategies in English language teaching.

Data Collection Methods

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| Surveys and Questionnaires | A structured survey was administered to both students and teachers to assess their perceptions of independent learning, challenges they face, and their preferred learning strategies. The questionnaire included Likert-scale questions (e.g., 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) to quantify students' attitudes toward self-regulated learning. Open-ended questions allowed participants to elaborate on their experiences with independent learning. |
| Classroom Observations | Observations were conducted over six weeks in English language classrooms to analyze students' engagement in self-directed learning activities such as goal-setting, peer collaboration, and self-assessment tasks. A standardized observation rubric was used to assess students' participation, motivation levels, and ability to manage their own learning. |
| Interviews with Teachers | Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 English teachers to gain insights into the effectiveness of different independent learning techniques and the challenges they |

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| | encounter. Questions focused on teaching strategies, scaffolding techniques, and the role of digital tools in promoting independent learning. |
| Academic Performance Analysis | Students' academic performance was measured before and after the implementation of independent learning strategies. Pre-test and post-test scores from standardized English assessments were compared to evaluate the impact of self-directed learning on students' language proficiency. |

Table.1.

The quantitative data analysis involved examining survey responses through the application of descriptive statistical measures, including the calculation of mean values and standard deviations, in order to identify overarching trends in students' attitudes and perceptions toward independent learning practices within the context of their English language education (Oxford, R. L., 2017; 55). Furthermore, in order to assess the effectiveness of independent learning strategies in enhancing students' academic performance, a comparative analysis was conducted using a paired t-test, wherein pre-test and post-test scores were systematically evaluated to determine whether the observed differences in performance were statistically significant.

In the realm of qualitative data analysis, open-ended responses obtained from survey participants, as well as transcripts from in-depth interviews with both students and teachers, were subjected to a rigorous process of thematic coding, through which key recurring themes and patterns related to various perspectives on independent learning were identified and analyzed in depth. Additionally, classroom observations were meticulously categorized based on predefined criteria that encompassed students' levels of engagement, their ability to exercise self-discipline, and the extent to which they actively participated in learning activities, providing further qualitative insights into the effectiveness of independent learning approaches.

To ensure that the study adhered to rigorous ethical standards, all research participants were required to provide informed consent prior to their involvement in the study, thereby guaranteeing that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they fully understood the nature and purpose of the research (Ushioda, E., 2011; 109). Moreover, stringent measures were implemented to maintain the confidentiality of the collected data, ensuring that students' identities remained anonymous and that no individual participant could be personally identified based on the information provided. The study was conducted in strict accordance with established ethical guidelines for educational research, thereby ensuring that none of the participants experienced any form of disadvantage or negative consequence as a result of their involvement in the research process.

By integrating both quantitative and qualitative analytical approaches, this research methodology offers a systematic, data-driven framework for exploring the role of independent learning in English language education, ultimately providing a comprehensive understanding that combines statistical insights with in-depth qualitative perspectives on the practical implementation and impact of independent learning strategies in academic settings.

RESULTS

The results of this study provide a comprehensive analysis of the impact of independent learning strategies on senior students' English language proficiency, motivation, and overall academic engagement. By synthesizing quantitative and qualitative findings, this section presents key patterns observed in students' performance, self-regulation skills, and perceptions of independent learning, as

well as insights from teacher experiences and classroom observations. The results are categorized into three main areas: (1) students' academic performance, (2) learner motivation and engagement, and (3) teacher perspectives on the implementation of independent learning.

To assess the effectiveness of independent learning strategies, pre-test and post-test results were compared, measuring improvements in students' English language skills across four key domains: reading comprehension, writing proficiency, listening skills, and speaking fluency (Little, D., 1991; 70). The pre-test results indicated that only 38% of students demonstrated proficiency across all language areas, with noticeable weaknesses in writing and speaking, where over 60% of students scored below the expected competency level. However, after the structured implementation of independent learning strategies including metacognitive exercises, goal-setting activities, and technology-enhanced learning tools the post-test results showed a statistically significant improvement in all assessed areas.

Reading Comprehension is the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency increased from 42% in the pre-test to 78% in the post-test, indicating that self-directed reading tasks, such as independent research and reflective reading logs, helped improve students' ability to analyze and interpret texts.

Writing Proficiency is a notable improvement was observed in students' writing skills, where proficiency levels increased from 35% to 71%, suggesting that self-assessment techniques and guided peer review activities contributed to greater accuracy and coherence in written expression.

Listening Skills are the post-test results revealed a 20% increase in listening comprehension scores, with students reporting that regular exposure to authentic audio materials and self-paced listening exercises allowed them to better understand spoken English in various contexts.

Speaking Fluency which students initially struggled with speaking fluency due to a lack of confidence and hesitation, the integration of self-directed speaking activities such as recorded speaking tasks, role-playing exercises, and pronunciation apps resulted in a 30% improvement in fluency and articulation by the end of the study.

A paired t-test analysis confirmed that the observed improvements across all skill areas were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), providing strong empirical evidence that independent learning strategies effectively enhance students' language proficiency (Tomlinson, C. A., 2001; 43-45). The findings from student surveys and classroom observations revealed that the introduction of self-directed learning strategies had a profound impact on learners' motivation, self-efficacy, and engagement levels. Increased intrinsic motivation responses indicated that 74% of students felt more motivated to learn English when given opportunities to set their own learning goals and track their progress, compared to only 47% before the implementation of independent learning strategies. Many students reported that they developed a greater sense of ownership over their learning, which led to more active participation in classroom activities and independent study sessions. Improved self-regulation and time management are prior to the study, only 41% of students reported using structured learning schedules or study plans.

However, after being introduced to metacognitive learning strategies such as self-assessment checklists, reflective learning journals, and online language tracking tools this number increased to 81%, demonstrating that students became more proficient in managing their study time and learning resources effectively. The study also examined the role of digital learning platforms, mobile applications, and online resources in fostering independent learning (Holec, H., 1981; 90). Classroom observations revealed that students who regularly engaged with interactive learning tools such as vocabulary-building apps, self-paced grammar exercises, and online discussion forums showed significantly higher levels of engagement and confidence in using English outside of the classroom. The insights gained from teacher interviews provided valuable perspectives on the challenges and benefits of fostering independent learning among senior students. A majority of

teachers (80%) reported that incorporating independent learning strategies led to a more dynamic and student-centered learning environment, where students were more willing to take initiative and actively contribute to discussions (Reinders, H., 2018; 491-505). While teachers acknowledged the benefits of independent learning, 70% expressed concerns that some students particularly those with lower proficiency levels still required structured guidance and external motivation to remain consistent in their learning efforts. Teachers emphasized the need for gradual scaffolding techniques, such as guided inquiry tasks and peer mentoring, to help students transition from teacher-led instruction to full autonomy (Andrade, M. S., & Bunker, E. L., 2009; 23). Some challenges were identified in implementing technology-enhanced independent learning, with 42% of teachers noting that students initially struggled with self-discipline when using digital resources, as they were easily distracted by non-academic content. However, structured digital literacy training and progress-tracking tools helped mitigate this issue over time.

The results of this study indicate that independent learning strategies significantly enhance students' English language proficiency, motivation, and self-regulation skills. The findings highlight that when students are provided with structured autonomy, metacognitive learning strategies, and access to digital learning tools, they demonstrate higher levels of engagement and improved language acquisition outcomes. However, the study also underscores the importance of teacher guidance and scaffolding, particularly for students who struggle with self-discipline and time management. These results contribute to the ongoing discourse on learner autonomy in second language acquisition, demonstrating that a balanced approach which integrates independent learning with teacher support can lead to sustained academic growth and long-term language proficiency in senior students. The implications of these findings suggest that educators should actively incorporate independent learning strategies into their teaching methodologies, while also ensuring that students receive adequate scaffolding and digital literacy training to maximize their learning potential.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight that independent learning strategies significantly enhance students' English proficiency, motivation, and self-regulation skills. The improvements in reading, writing, listening, and speaking support previous research emphasizing the role of learner autonomy in second language acquisition. The integration of self-directed reading tasks, reflective writing exercises, and digital speaking practice proved effective in fostering linguistic competence, aligning with studies on technology-assisted learning (Dörnyei, Z., 2005; 201). A key takeaway is the increase in students' intrinsic motivation and self-regulation abilities, consistent with self-determination theory (Benson, P., 2011; 985). Students who set their own goals and tracked progress showed higher engagement and responsibility. The rise in self-monitoring skills aligns with studies on self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 2002; 64-70), highlighting that digital tools enhance personalized learning experiences. However, challenges emerged, particularly for lower-proficiency students who struggled with self-discipline and consistency. Teachers noted that some learners required structured guidance and scaffolding. Additionally, distractions in digital learning posed initial difficulties, emphasizing the need for explicit digital literacy training. Educators should balance autonomy with teacher guidance, incorporating goal-setting workshops, reflective journals, and blended learning models.

Curriculum designers must integrate self-directed learning components like flipped classrooms and project-based tasks. Policymakers should prioritize digital literacy training and provide teachers with professional development to implement independent learning strategies effectively. Further studies should examine long-term effects of independent learning on language retention and explore cultural factors influencing learner autonomy. Comparative research across different educational settings could refine best practices for self-directed language learning worldwide.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that independent learning fosters linguistic proficiency, motivation, and self-regulation in senior students. However, structured teacher support remains essential, especially for lower-proficiency learners. By integrating self-directed strategies, metacognitive techniques, and digital learning tools, educators can empower students for lifelong language acquisition in an increasingly self-driven learning environment.

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