An Investigation of EFL Female Teachers' and Students' Beliefs about Learner Autonomy in

Saudi Secondary Schools

Nouf Ahmed Alhejaily

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in TESOL and Applied
Linguistics

Presented to
University of Salford
The School of Humanities, Languages, and Social Sciences
College of Arts and Social Sciences

September 2020

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Acknowledgment

First and foremost, my immeasurable praise and appreciation go to Allah, who helped me to

achieve my goals during my PhD journey at the University of Salford.

My extreme and deepest gratitude goes to my wonderful supervisor, Dr. Siân Etherington, for

her support, guidance, and informative feedback as well as her advice that inspired me both

academically and personally.

I am also very appreciative of all the teachers, students, and schools who participated in my

study.

I cannot describe in words how grateful I am for my endless love, my mother and father,

whom I am truly blessed to have in my life.

Last but not least, I am highly indebted to my brothers, relatives and friends who strongly

believed in me and encouraged me during the whole journey.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents,

my brothers

and

my ambitious country

Abstract

The development of Learner autonomy (LA) is a key area of research within second language learning and teaching (Benson, 2001, 2008, 2010; Dam et al., 1995; Holec, 1981). The literature pertaining to LA is diverse; however, Benson's (1996) technical, psychological and political orientations are distinctive in providing different interpretations of LA. A significant body of research has examined LA in the university context (e.g. Al Asmari, 2013; Alzubi, Singh, & Pandian, 2017; Halabi, 2018; Javid, 2018; Tamer, 2013), but there is very little work in secondary schools, especially that studying both teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in the same context. This study investigates the beliefs expressed by EFL female teachers and students about LA in the Saudi secondary schools context at a key time when new educational policies toward LA are being implemented. It also considers what characterises the differences between the two sets of beliefs. To that end, a mixed methods approach was adopted. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with 8 EFL teachers and 8 students and from this data, a context-specific questionnaire was designed. It was administrated to 329 EFL teachers and 329 students in 2 Saudi cities. Follow-up interviews with 3 EFL teachers and 3 students further explored the findings of the initial interviews and the questionnaire. The combined findings indicate that teachers' and students' beliefs in the Saudi context are more complex and contradictory than previous literature might suggest. Although teachers appear to hold a more technical perspective that is connected to LA training, students seem to express more of a psychological perspective, where LA is seen as a capacity within every learner. Additionally, results reveal each group see the development of LA happening through different means. Teachers tend to view new policy

initiatives like the Tatweer project and new Saudi vision 2030 as affordances of academic and psychological support, whereas students additionally see these as providing social support such as increasing their sense of responsibility towards society. The implications for practice and policy are discussed in the final chapter.

Chapter 1: Context of the study

1.1 Introduction

Learner autonomy is an area that has been researched for over two decades (Little, 1991) and is still of growing interest, especially in EFL contexts (Benson, 2013). Although different definitions of LA were provided due its multifaceted nature, there is a consensus to define it as to take responsibility of ones' own learning (Benson, 2001). The rationale behind the focus on researching LA is highlighted in Knowles' claim (1975, p.14) that autonomous learners "learn more things and learn better than do people who sit at the feet of teachers, passively waiting to be taught". Therefore, it is a precondition for effective learning (Benson, 2001) and a prerequisite to motivation (Dörnyei, 2001) that is the key to success in Second Language Learning (SLL) (Dörnyei, 2005).

This study investigates English as a Foreign Language (EFL) female teachers' and students' beliefs about learner autonomy (LA) in the Saudi secondary schools context. The Saudi educational system is undergoing change, with new policy initiatives being introduced at the secondary level relating to the promotion of student-centred approach to teaching and learning, more involvement of students in their learning decisions, and equipping students with skills they need in their lives and learning (Alkanhal, 2016; Alyami, 2014). This policy approach is directly related to the position and development of LA in the classroom. In other words, it suggests that teachers should consider LA as a bigger part of their teaching practices, which will affect the outcome for students. Based on this, the aim of the present chapter is to familiarise the reader with the research context by describing the educational and some social changes, which justify the importance of investigating LA in secondary schools, especially in this key transitioning time. Therefore, the chapter begins with a brief general background of the Saudi context. This is

followed by a discussion of the King Abdullah project (Tatweer) for education development in schools, highlighting its rationale, the date of establishment and the changes it brought to the Saudi educational context. Attention is paid to key changes related to the school decision structure, system, English language and teacher-training programme in secondary education. Next, Saudi Vision 2030 is reviewed in terms of its rationale, the date of establishment and the changes it involved to the Saudi female context and education in schools. Then, the aims and questions of the study are presented before concluding with an outline of the thesis structure.

1.2 Background of the study

The current study is conducted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a country located in southwestern Asia. The total population of the country is 33.4 million people, with half the population under 25 years old (General Investment Authority, 2019). Islam is the Saudi religion, and Arabic is the mother tongue. In Saudi Arabia, every citizen has the right to learn, and education is free because of the significant role it has 'in developing human capital, and also contributing in acquiring the requirements and needs of labour market' (Ministry of Education, 2016). The Saudi general education is divided into five stages, as follows: nursery or pre-school for children aged 3–5 years; the primary stage, in which students aged 6–12 study for 6 years; the intermediate and secondary stages, both of 3 years' duration, for students aged 13–15 and 16–18, respectively; and higher education, offered to students aged 18 years and older, who can join colleges or universities to continue their education. The academic year consists of two semesters, each of 16 weeks' duration, in all stages; moreover, 2 weeks are added for final examinations in intermediate and secondary schools. Due to the Islamic and conservative nature of Saudi culture, the schools in

Saudi Arabia are single sex. Therefore, given that the current researcher is female, the study involves female teachers and students.

Saudi Arabia and various countries around the world have recently experienced pressure to update and reform their educational systems due to globalisation and the rapid advancement of technology. As a result, they aim to keep pace with the new requirements for such advancement. In Saudi Arabia, although there have been many attempts to reform the educational system in recent years, the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Project for Public Education Development (KAAPPED), also known as Tatweer (Hendrickson, 2012), together with Saudi Vision 2030 (Hvdit, 2018), signifies a major shift in Saudi education. Accordingly, the present discussion focusses on both reforms in the secondary stage in terms of their establishment dates, objectives and the change they involve, with the study targeting teachers and students in this context. The Tatweer project is introduced in the next section.

1.3 The Tatweer project

This section describes the Tatweer project's establishment date, its rationale and the changes it has made in the school decision structure, system, English language and teacher-training programmes. The 'Tatweer' educational project was established by King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz in 2007. The project title, 'Tatweer', is an Arabic word that means *development*. The motivation for the project emerged from the educational system's failure to build a knowledge-based society allowing each generation to fulfil the labour market requirements, leading to increasing unemployment in Saudi Arabia, a country with a high birth rate. As such, the project aims to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in Saudi schools by focussing generally on the four following areas: improving the school environment, providing technology, improving curricula,

encouraging more student involvement in extracurricular activities, and teacher training. According to Smith and Abouammah (2013), the project's budget was US$ 3.1 billion for the reform of the Saudi educational system. The project also involves key changes at the level of decision making and how the leadership operates in the school context, which thereby implies a different view of the schools' role as will be considered next.

1.3.1 Tatweer and the school decision structure

This section illustrates the changes the Tatweer project made in relation to the decision structure and leadership in schools. Alyami and Floyed (2019) conducted a qualitative study to explore female EFL leaders' perceptions and experiences of decentralisation and distributed leadership in the Tatweer project in Saudi schools. Their study is of key value to assess the change brought by this project in relation to the degree of centrality and leadership of the Ministry of Education in the school decisions. The findings show that the Tatweer project has led to the semi-decentralisation of schools compared with the previous full centralisation of the Ministry of Education. This decision-making process is maintained autonomously and internally in each school based on its needs, except in aspects related to recruitment of staff, curriculum and students' assessment, which are still controlled by the ministry. The gradual nature of educational reform in the Saudi educational system, which was previously extremely centralised, and the need for staff training with the introduction of new curriculum are seen as legitimate justifications in this context before the ministry can allow for school staff contributions in these respects. The project also involves another change related to decisions in schools: They are not made solely by school leaders as they were prior to the project, but rather, they are collaboratively reached.

The change also takes place on the leadership level. Alyami and Floyed (2019) demonstrated that the Tatweer project requires each school to establish an excellence team, which consists of several members of the school community who are responsible for self-evaluation, planning and school performance, helping 'improve the students' achievement and learning' (p. 3). In addition, students, parents and the local community are encouraged to contribute to schools' decisions. This also implies that schools can make a unique contribution to community participation, which will increase school effectiveness accordingly. Furthermore, the project innovates a local senior teacher who is responsible for teachers' development in the same discipline she teaches.

The highlighted changes in Alyami and Floyed's (2019) study are acknowledged to increase school staff, student and local community empowerment, motivation and ownership in female-led schools in Saudi Arabia. These researchers state:

> From our data, the new structure of the Tatweer schools in which the head teacher involves the teachers by delegating responsibilities and powers throughout the school was perceived by all participants as being very successful. In addition, the introduction of a governing body, which included the participation of students, parents and other stakeholders, has encouraged the wider community to be involved in each school's activities and decision making. This practice appears to be a major change in local school leadership within the country. (Alyami & Floyed, 2019, p. 9)

Ultimately, the Tatweer project involves a shift from the centralisation of the Ministry of Education to semi-decentralisation that respects a school's philosophy of self-evaluation, self-planning and includes its members, parents and the local community to fulfil the school vision. This encourages schools to become more autonomous in their decisions, which positively affects the quality of education in schools and supports the school's role in community contribution. Therefore, such changes are motivating compared with the previous situation as they tend to open up opportunities towards greater involvement of teachers and students in school decisions.

7

Having discussed the changes related to the school decision structure, the next section considers the contribution of the Tatweer project in the school system.

1.3.2 Tatweer in the secondary school system

This section will refer to school system before and after Tatweer implementation, specifically with the introduction of a new system called Mugararat to secondary schools. Prior to the Tatweer project, since the establishment of education in 1925, the previous system—called Sanawi—was the school system for students in secondary schools. The basic feature of this system was its focus on the grade point average (GPA), which depended only on the third year marks over two semesters, including the scores of a national standardised achievement test organised by the Ministry of Education for all students near the end of the second semester. This is because the admission at universities was conditional on a high GPA. For this reason, teachers and students put a high premium on students' achievement to pass the exam, and they tended to focus on the rote learning, memorisation and transmission models of teaching and learning.

In 2007, the Tatweer project introduced a new system called Mugararat to the secondary school system. Unlike the previous system, which depended on a GPA including only examination results, according to the Directory of Secondary Education, the Tatweer emphasised incorporating continuous assessment, projects, reports and portfolios in addition to examination, during the 3 years of the secondary stage (Ministry of Education, 2011). This stems from the concentration of the Mugararat system on:

الدور النشط للطالب في عملية تعلمه وفق النظرية البنائية، بحيث يبني بنيته المعرفية الخاصة به، ويولد المعرفة بناءً على خبراته الذاتية، ويدمجها في بنائه المعرفي بشكل ذي معنى ... هذا النظام يركز على التعلم القائم على نشاط الطالب وتوفير جميع البرامج والفرص والخبرات التعليمية (برامج المدرسة وخططها وبيئتها، وأنشطتها والمناهج التي تتبناها) التي تشجع وتحقق الاستقلالية والتعلم والنمو الذاتي والاكتشاف، والبحث والتفكير، في إطار من تكافؤ الفرص وحرية الاختيار.

The active role of the learner in his/her learning according to the constructivist theory. That is, he/she builds his/her own knowledge, generates it based on his/her personal experience and incorporates it in the construction of his/her own knowledge in a meaningful way… The active role of the learner and all programmes, opportunities and educational experiences (school programme, plan, environment, activities and curricula) are included to encourage and achieve autonomy, learning, self-growth and exploration, searching and thinking in a frame of equal opportunities and free choice. (Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 9)

Therefore, the Mugararat system views knowledge as constructed by the learner rather than transmitted from teachers to learners as the previous system suggested. Based on that, the learners' personal experiences are valued in this system, and the school needs to provide meaningful opportunities that help their self-growth. For this reason, the philosophy of learners' active role in the Mugararat system is translated into the engagement of students in decisions related to their learning and the promotion of different life and learning skills. Thus, the first change is that, contrary to the previous system—where students followed a fixed plan determined by their schools—more student choice is allowed in this system. The rationale for encouraging students' choice is reflected in objective 4 in the directory of secondary education, which is:

تنمية قدرة الطالب على اتخاذ القرارات الصحيحة بمستقبله مما يعمق ثقته في نفسه ويزيد اقباله على المدرسة والتعليم طالما أنه يدرس بناء على اختياره ووفق قدراته وفي المدرسة التي يريدها

To promote students' ability to make proper decisions for their future, which develops their self-confidence and increases positive attitudes toward school and learning since they study based on their choice and abilities, and in the school they want. (Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 7)

This indicates a desire for teaching in the Mugararat system to stress the importance of decision-making ability because of the psychological gains of promoting such ability in enhancing students' confidence and the approach to school and learning. According to the Directory of Secondary

Education (2011), students' choice in the Mugararat system is related to choosing the subjects

they would like to study based on their preference, abilities and plans in the light of the available

resources. In addition, there is a choice for students to accelerate their graduation in the new

system. That is, it is possible for students to reduce the duration of study in the secondary stage

from 3 to 2.5 years if they take summer courses or have a recognised certificate in a certain

discipline. For example, this system permits the equivalence of certificates like TOEFL or IELTS to

the English curricula in secondary schools based on certain guidelines. Consequently, it can be

said that the new system tends to be more flexible compared with the previous one, giving

students more room to make choices in their learning.

In addition to encouraging students' learning decisions, the Mugararat system stresses the

importance of learners' active role by helping them to develop skills related to dealing with

learning and life. Objective 8 in the directory is:

تنمية المهارات الحياتية للطالب، مثل: التعلم الذاتي ومهارات التعاون والتواصل والعمل الجماعي، والتفاعل مع
الآخرين والحوار البناء والمناقشة

To promote life skills for students, such as self-learning, cooperation, communication, groupwork, interacting with others, having constructive dialogue and discussion. (Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 8)

This system also promotes technical skills related to learning resources and the use of technology.

Objective 9 is:

تطوير مهارات التعامل مع مصادر التعلم المختلفة والتقنية الحديثة والمعلوماتية وتوظيفها إيجابيا في الحياة العملية

To develop the skills required for dealing with different learning resources, modern technology and information technology to utilise them positively in working life. (Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 8)

Based on this, the system tends to encourage the approach of skills development in teaching practices, especially those related to life, learning and the use of resources.

Having reviewed the difference between the Mugararat system and the previous one in terms of the change of focus, and consequently, its effect on teaching, the discussion proceeds to the change in university admission brought about by the Tatweer project. University admission prior to the Tatweer project depended on a high GPA in the third year, which included examination as the assessment method, as mentioned in the previous system. Since 2007, university admission was conditioned by GPA, General Aptitude Test (GAT) and Scholastic Achievement Admission Test (SAAT; Hendrickson, 2012). The difference that can be seen in terms of the GPA is that, in contrast to the old system, the Mugararat system involved different methods of assessment for students' GPA performance during all 3 years in the secondary schools. Another difference was the introduction of the GAT, which evaluated the use of 'language and mathematics to measure reading comprehension, logical relations, problem-solving behaviour, inferential abilities, inductional abilities' (Hendrickson, 2012, p. 8). Therefore, no prepared material was required for the test as the focus on the aforementioned skills that are important for the learning process. Unlike the focus of GAT and GPA in the Mugararat system, SAAT focusses on the memorisation of facts and material acquired during the 3 years. Both tests are organised by the National Centre of Assessment (Qiyas) in Saudi Arabia, and a brief review of them is provided in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Description of the General Aptitude Test (GAT) and Scholastic Achievement Admission Test (SAAT)

	GAT	SAAT
What it tests	-The verbal section evaluates reading comprehension and recognising logical relations. The questions in this section ask	Two types of test are offered, one for science colleges and the other for

	students to answer reading passage, sentence completion and verbal analogy questions. -The quantitative section evaluates solving mathematical problems based on basic mathematical measurements and inference skills.	humanities colleges. Both follow a multiple-choice format. -The science-based test focusses on the following subjects: biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics and English. -The humanities-based test concentrates on Islamic studies, Arabic language studies and social sciences, such as history and geography.
Exam material	There is no prepared material the students can study for the test because it focusses on general skills.	The exam covers all the materials students study in 3 years of secondary school with the following proportions: 20% for first year, 30% for second year and 50% for third year.

Although the nature of the SAAT indicates a focus on rote learning, the change is reflected in the notion that assessment does not solely depend on memorisation. Instead, the test also incorporates logic, comprehension and problem solving, as done in the GAT, in addition to continuous assessment, students' projects, reports and portfolios in the GPA in the new system. Therefore, varying the assessment methods on which university admission depends tends to encourage teachers and students towards a more student-based approach to teaching and learning.

To conclude, the Mugararat system contributes to emphasising students' role by allowing room for decisions related to their learning, encouraging equipping students with skills related to life and learning, and varying the student assessment methods. Therefore, it represents an important

change in secondary education compared with the old situation. Having examined the change initiated by the Tatweer project in the school system, the consideration moves next to the English language as the current study is interested in EFL in Saudi secondary schools.

1.3.3 Tatweer in terms of English in schools

This section reviews the Tatweer project's efforts in the development of English generally and secondary education specifically. Since the establishment of general education in Saudi Arabia in 1925, English has received greater emphasis by being the only foreign language taught in schools. The Tatweer project stresses the teaching of English by establishing a scholarship programme to enhance students' post-secondary educational opportunities in English-speaking countries. This is described as 'the largest scholarship programme in the history of not only the kingdom but the whole world' (Almousa, 2010, p. 719), and it aims to help qualified Saudi students enhance their academic performance and exchange scientific, educational and cultural experiences by visiting different countries. Bukhari and Denman (2013) evaluated the effectiveness of the programme by saying, the 'King Abdullah scholarship programme has been successful both in achieving its stated aims and in improving the capacity of the students involved to engage internationally' (p. 158). Such promising outcomes are seen as motivators for Saudi EFL students in secondary schools, according to their teachers (Alhejaily, 2016). In other words, the introduction of scholarships contributes to an increased level of student motivation and positive attitudes to learn English in secondary schools. Therefore, it can be said that, although the scholarship programme is for a higher educational context, it still signifies a motivating change for EFL Saudi secondary school students.

Another change brought by the Tatweer project is the initiation of the English Language Development Project (ELDP), which concentrates on improving the status of English in schools. With ELDP, English learning starts from the fourth grade, at the age of nine, rather than in the seventh grade as it did before the Tatweer project (Hendrickson, 2012). This is because English is seen as a tool to help the development of the country and is recognised as the language of science and technology that helps teachers and students to access various knowledge resources. Furthermore, this project changed all curricula, including English, in general education with the aims of improving the quality of education provided by the Ministry of Education and developing students' personalities. This is mentioned in objective 2 of the Tatweer project:

> To achieve a quantum leap in the public education curriculum to improve scientific, practical and thinking skills of students according to their abilities and tendencies, as well as taking into account special education. (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Project, 2007)

The curriculum was changed to promote self-learning due to the continuity it allows for lifelong learning; objective 4 was to 'provide students with self-learning skills and enable life-long learning' (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Project, 2007). After reviewing the general effort to develop the English language in the Saudi educational context, the discussion next considers the English curriculum in secondary schools.

One of the key studies in this regard is Alkanhal's (2016) research, which highlighted the difference between the old and new Tatweer curricula in secondary schools. She investigated Saudi EFL teachers' beliefs about the effect of the new curriculum established by the Tatweer project on their continuous professional development (CPD). Therefore, her study provided an evaluation of such change based on teachers' thoughts and practices. The study demonstrated

that, prior to the Tatweer project, the old English curriculum in secondary schools was exam based and concentrated more on grammar, which led teachers to use grammar-translation methods and drills in their classrooms. Each lesson in the unit focussed on a single skill or language feature, making them inauthentic for students. Such a design also encouraged the transitional model of learning, where the teacher's role is providing information, while students are passive receivers. Unlike the old curriculum, the communicative skills are stressed in the new Tatweer curriculum with the use of authentic texts and tasks that integrate language skills, grammar and vocabulary such as learners might come across in real life. The findings also show that teachers report positive influence of the new curriculum on their teaching practices and CPD, which in turn, affects their students' approach to learning. That is, a task-based approach to language teaching is more prevalent in their practices because each unit concludes with tasks that require pair or groupwork. In other words, with the new curriculum, teachers are confronted by a demand to change their old teaching methods and introduce a communicative and interactive teaching approach that emphasises learner contribution in learning. This means a shift in teachers' perceptions of students' role towards more consideration of students' opinions in their teaching. This demand also encourages teachers to be independent in educating themselves more. According to Alkanhal (2016),

> Teachers were more self-directed in their education. Though there had been some support from authorities to help teachers in implementing the change, teachers felt responsible for their learning and found their own individual ways to develop. Teachers overcame many obstacles while trying to implement the change . . . [T]eachers of this study reported that students are more enthusiastic and engaged in learning English. (Alkanhal, 2016, p. 61)

This means that the effect of the new Tatweer curriculum on teachers' perceptions and practices encourages creating a better motivational environment for students to learn.

The introduction of the scholarship programme, English in the fourth grade and development of English curricula by the Tatweer project in the Saudi educational system are general indicators of the improvements Tatweer brought to the EFL context. In addition, the development of the English curriculum in secondary schools has tended to positively influence teachers' perceptions and teaching practice, and accordingly, the quality of English teaching and learning in Saudi Arabia.

Having discussed the changes that are directed towards a more student-centred approach, in the next section, the thesis considers teacher professional development, called Khebrat (Ministry of Education, 2017), as part of transforming the educational system in Saudi Arabia to generate better graduates that contribute to the country's development.

1.3.4 The teacher-training programme (Khebrat)

This section describes the date of establishment of the teacher-training programme (Khebrat) initiated by the Tatweer project, as well as its rationale and the change it introduced. In 2017, a project called Khebrat—the Arabic word for *experiences*—was initiated to improve the Saudi teacher-training programme in the school context. It is interested in encouraging the international universities to implement the teacher learning and development programme by means of university-supervised immersion in K-12 schools in host countries during one academic year (Ministry of Education, 2017). The targeted participants for the project are school teachers, counsellors and principals. The project philosophy lies in the 'learning by doing' principle, that is, being exposed to and immersed in international practices in the school. In this way, the participants will engage in effective experiences that allow them to develop their competence in

English and change their thinking about 'teaching and learning, school management and leadership, and student counselling' (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 3).

Beyond the Khebrat project's concentration on improving the participants' language level and professional practices, the further significance of the project is that these key beneficiaries are considered change agents transferring their experiences to their schools in Saudi Arabia. For this reason, the change that can be highlighted here compared with the previous situation is that, by considering the participants as the change leaders, the Ministry of Education is delegating part of the teacher-training responsibility to school staff, which in turn, increases the sense of independence and ownership over the education process. Given that this study is interested in Saudi EFL teachers, the expected outcomes of English language teachers upon the completion of the training programme are delineated below. These reflect three areas for teacher development, namely, knowledge, practice and influence. According to the Ministry of Education (2017), after the training programme, it is anticipated that Saudi teachers will accomplish the following:

- Develop strong reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in English (at least a C1 score on the Common European Framework of Reference or its TOEFL or IELTS equivalent);

- Develop deep understanding of the social and cultural context underlying English language use;

- Develop strong knowledge of the approaches and methodologies related to language acquisition;

- Use effective English language teaching strategies;

- Use assessment strategies that are aligned with the instructional strategies and the outcomes of the curriculum;

- Create equitable learning environments that promote learning for all, including for students with special needs;

- Manage the classroom effectively;

- Build strong affective relationship[s] with the students to promote learning;

- Lead cultural transformations in their schools with particular focus on transforming professional collaborations among their peers through professional learning communities;

- Appropriate technology effectively to support teaching and learning, professional development and communication with parents;

- Lead transformation of practice school-wide. (p. 7)

In sum, Khebrat is an ambitious move to provide informative input to teachers, counsellors and principals by the immersion directed by international universities at the K-12 level in different host countries. Given that the participants are exposed to different educational contexts and interact with international experiences, this influences their language level, broadening their knowledge and enriching their practices and skills. It is also ambitious in the sense that the Ministry of Education encourages delegating some training responsibility to Khebrat beneficiaries compared with its previous centrality in the teacher-training programme.

1.4 Summary of the Tatweer project

In summary, the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz project (Tatweer) was initiated to help create a knowledge-based generation of young Saudi students who are capable of satisfying the labour market's needs and contributing to the country's development. Therefore, several changes were undertaken to improve the education in secondary schools. The discussion of the Tatweer project above considered changes related to the school decision structure, system, English language and teacher-training programme. Regarding the school decision structure, the movement towards semi-decentralisation and the distribution of leadership showed an approach that tended to respect school autonomy in its decisions and provided a sense of empowerment and motivation to its members. In addition, the project considered the active role of students in the Mugararat

system via varying the assessment methods, allowing room for students' choice and encouraging equipping students with skills related to their learning and life. Therefore, these are areas of change, as they were not present in the previous system.

The project also concentrates on improving the English language in the educational system in general, as reflected by the introduction of the huge project of the scholarship programme, the introduction of English to students at earlier ages compared with the previous situation and changing the English curricula in schools. At the secondary education level, the introduction of the new curriculum suggests that teachers should promote the student-centred approach in their classes. Finally, the Khebrat initiative is a recent move in the context of teacher-training programmes in Saudi Arabia towards engaging in international experiences that develop not only teachers' English level but also their knowledge, practices and skills. A further advantage of Khebrat can be seen in delegating some teacher-training responsibility to the teachers, who benefit from the programme to work as change leaders upon their return to their schools in Saudi Arabia. These moves are indicators of change in Saudi Arabia towards a greater involvement of schools, teachers and students in decisions related to teaching and learning. After the illustration of changes made by the Tatweer project, the next section moves to the second key change in Saudi, namely, Vision 2030, with a focus on how it relates to Saudi female autonomy. This is owing to the interest of the study in Saudi females' beliefs.

1.5 Vision 2030

In this section, a review of Vision 2030 is provided, including its date, founder and drive and the change it introduced to Saudi females and to Saudi education in schools. Vision 2030 refers to the intended overall economic plan of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia until the year 2030. The current

Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman founded this Vision in 2016. According to Hvdit (2018), there are two drivers for the Saudi Vision, namely, the increased Saudi population and decreased level of oil income compared with previous years. The first highlights the need to increase the labour force, with a primary aim of integrating women into that. According to Vision 2030 (2016), 'With over 50 percent of our university graduates being female, we will continue to develop their talents, invest in their productive capabilities and enable them to strengthen their future and contribute to the development of our society and economy' (p. 37). This indicates the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's tendency to open up Saudi society to support the important role of Saudi women in contributing to its socio-economic advances. This implies that the country is seeking to empower Saudi women to carry out their role effectively. To this end, Saudi Arabia has updated and revised the law and legislations that limited women's autonomy. The first step that highlights the change towards women's rights is lifting the driving ban. Saudi women can obtain a driving licence and are permitted to exercise their right to drive. Another monumental change can be seen in the revision of the labour system to produce more job opportunities for women and ensure the work environment is acceptable and safe for them (Sabir & Zaidi, 2019). Equality between women and men in their salaries and retirement ages is also stressed by the Vision. The personal status act was also updated to promote women's independence. Saudi women now have the right to autonomously apply for a passport, which allows them to travel if they are at least 21 years old without male authorisation or guardianship. Thus, the Vision is of a gradual transformative nature, aiming to adopt and encourage Saudi females' right to autonomy and independence.

The second motive of the Vision can be linked to education, which is seen as a key instrumental factor that brings about economic expansion. In other words, the development of education leads

to helping Saudi Arabia's economy shift from dependence on oil as a main and single source of income to human capital with knowledge, high skills, creativity and productivity, which will contribute to the country's prosperity. This will help meet the economic need to diversify resources. It can be said that it is a broader extension of what Tatweer provides, with more specification related to the educational knowledge and skills in the Saudi school context. According to the Ministry of Education (2016), this Vision indicates the investment in human capital for education by developing 'teaching methods that focus on the learner, not the teacher, and concentrate on including skills, personality development, improving confidence, and promoting a spirit of creativeness' (p. 2). Therefore, the Vision emphasises that learners are considered the heart of the educational process and all the effort should be exerted to improve their skills, personalities and thinking. Ultimately, the Vision outlines the basic and additional skills that the Ministry of Education is required to foster in students to address the labour market need (Ministry of Education, 2016). The basic skills cover three areas—thinking and learning, social and life skills and morals and values. (See Figure 1.1 for a full description of basic and additional skills in the Vision).
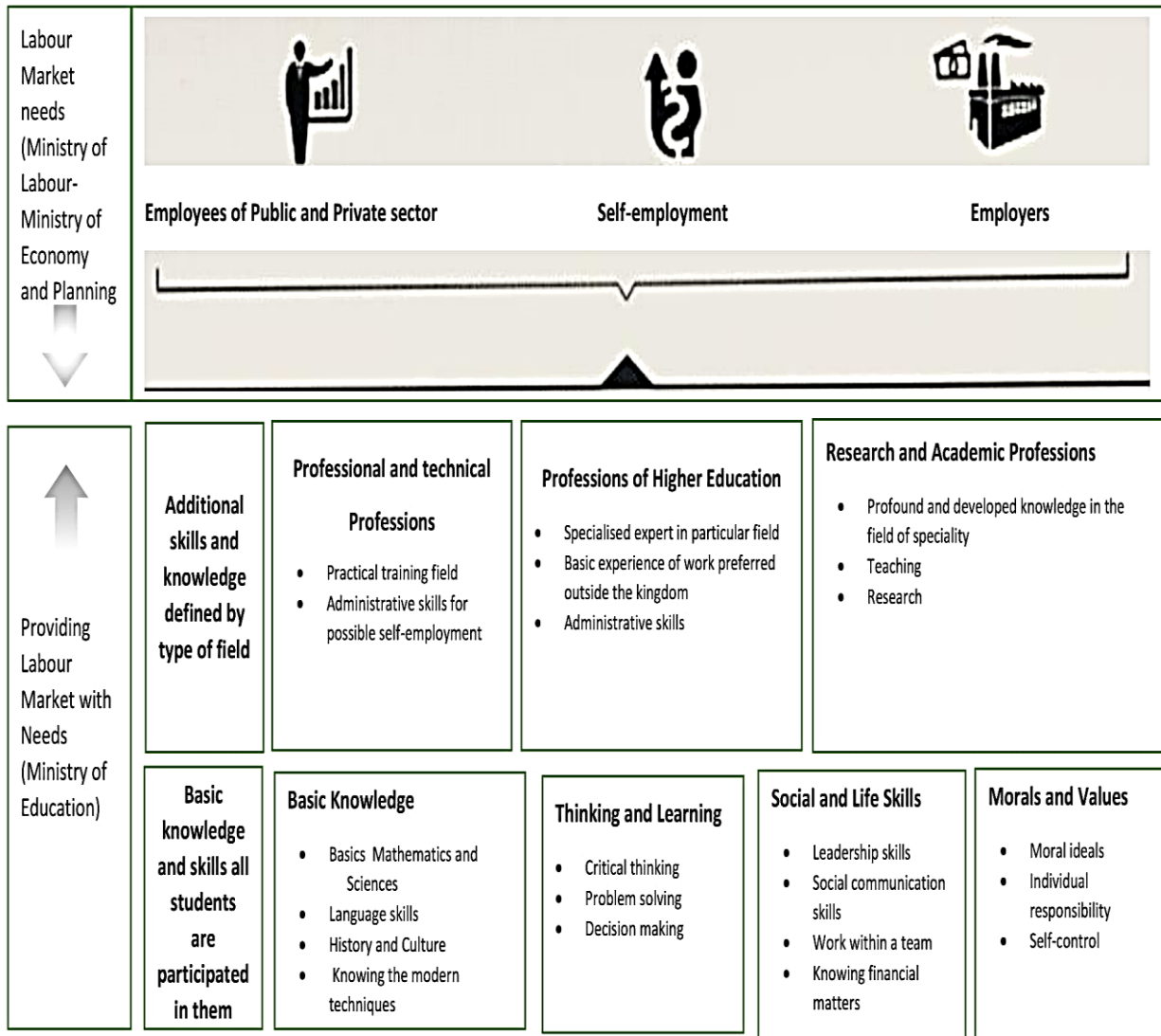
Figure 1.1: Outline of the skills recommended by Vision 2030 (Source: Ministry of Education, 2016).

The skills mentioned in thinking and learning, in addition to morals and values, have in common the notion of the individual's responsibility for them. In contrast, the social and life skills highlight the importance of responsibility in a social context. Therefore, the Vision demonstrates that the basic skills education needs to promote are related to students being responsible for their thinking, learning, morals and values, in addition to their life and social context.

To summarise, Vision 2030 represents a move to empower Saudi women, recognising their important role in the socio-economic development of the country. Based on that, the Vision has changed aspects related to driving, the labour system and personal status act to respect their autonomy and independence. Therefore, the Vision is seen as a gradual move towards the transformation of Saudi women's role in society. In terms of education, the Vision stresses the role of students and encourages the Ministry of Education to promote skills that help them engage with their responsibility for thinking, learning, morals and values. In addition, it encourages the development of skills related to students' responsibility in the social context. The overall summary of the Tatweer project and Vision 2030 is provided in the next section.

1.6 Overall summary

This chapter focusses on two moves that deserve special attention for their role in initiating change in Saudi Arabia, namely, the Tatweer project and Vision 2030. They share a focus on creating a knowledge-oriented economy that supports the younger generation's abilities in building the country and contributing to its prosperity and growth. Drawing on this at the educational level, the Tatweer project of schools in Saudi Arabia initiated several changes related to the school decision structure, system, English language and teacher training. Such changes positively affect the quality of teaching and learning in school, especially with the tendency of this project to foster greater involvement of schools, teachers and students in the educational process. On the social level, Vision 2030 exhibits special consideration of Saudi women owing to its intention to gradually transform Saudi society towards respecting female autonomy and independence. The translation of this intention into practices related to driving, the labour market and the personal status act are good indicators of opening up Saudi society for women's

empowerment. The Vision also indicates the importance of a student-centred approach for education to promote students' individual responsibility of learning, thinking, morals and values, in addition to their responsibility in the life and social context. Therefore, it can be said that the interdependence of the educational and social changes in Saudi Arabia is promising for Saudi teachers and learners. Given all the contextual backgrounds in Saudi secondary education, the chapter moves to illustrate the terminology of LA in the policy document.

1.7 The definition of LA in Saudi secondary education policy

Due to its multifaceted nature, the term *learner autonomy* was not literally mentioned in Saudi secondary education policies, as they do not take just one aspect of LA as central. Therefore, it is worth referring in this section to how the aforementioned changes relate to the definition of LA.

All the changes in secondary education are in line with the general definition of LA as taking responsibility for one's own learning. However, this responsibility is interpreted in different ways in the policy document. First, it is related to the involvement of teachers and students in decisions related to teaching and learning with the aim of enhancing students' learning experiences. With this aim in mind, changes related to the establishment of excellence teams and the innovation of local senior teachers for teachers' development allowed teachers to be responsible for decisions in schools regarding the planning, evaluation and improvement of school performance. Additionally, not only teachers but also students are encouraged to contribute to their school decisions. This is because such changes at the school decision level, compared to the previous centralisation of the Ministry of Education, help schools become autonomous, which in turn creates a motivating and empowering environment for teachers and students to foster and promote their contribution and responsibility to learning. The second meaning of this

responsibility is associated with allowing students' choice of study plans according to their preferences and abilities in the Mugararat system. Third, it also refers to the development of skills concerning the learning process in the Mugararat system and the Vision like self-learning, the use of learning resources and technology, and life skills like self-control, cooperation and leadership skills. Fourth, it means having an influence in a social setting, represented in the Vision's emphasis on students' responsibility to society as effective members contributing to the advancement and prosperity of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Additionally, it might be seen in encouraging teachers in the international teacher-training programme (*Khebrat*) to transfer their experiences and have an influence in developing other teachers' thinking about teaching and learning. This is because doing so will enhance their sense of independence and ownership over the educational process, which enhances the quality of teaching and learning in their classes. Therefore, it is possible to see that autonomy and learner autonomy, although not mentioned specifically in policy documents, run as multiple threads of many elements of autonomy throughout them. Having discussed the meanings related to LA in the policy document, the next section assesses the rationale for the current study to consider teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in this key time of transition in the Saudi educational system.

1.8 Significance of the study

The significance of the study will be discussed in this section, namely, the importance of LA in the broader EFL/ESL context and the importance of investigating teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in Saudi secondary schools at this time of policy changes.

The rationale of researching LA in EFL/ESL studies, which generally refers to taking charge and responsibility of one's own learning, is linked to its role in enhancing the quality and effectiveness of learning (Benson, 2001). This is because such responsibility includes that students determine their own needs and the suitable ways to consider these needs according to their learning goals. Therefore, with LA, learning becomes more purposeful, as it is based on learners' own experiences (Little, 1991). Additionally, being responsible for one's own learning helps to improve learners' decision-making ability, which according to Dam (1995), is associated with the notion of lifelong learning. Furthermore, the importance of investigating LA lies in its relationship to students' motivation (Dörnyei, 2001; Spratt, Humphrey & Chan, 2002; Ushioda, 1995), which is fundamental to learning a second language successfully (Dörnyei, 2005).

The significance of the current study lies in its contribution to fill a gap in LA literature. That is, to the best of my knowledge, it is the first to investigate LA in secondary schools in Saudi Arabia, with most LA research considering the university context, as will be discussed in the next chapter. Therefore, it presents an understanding of teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in the Saudi EFL context. By studying teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in parallel in the same context, the study also addressed a need for detailed contextualised studies in the ESL/EFL setting.

The findings of the study also provide insights into the type of LA support offered by teachers according to their beliefs, as well as to the needed LA support indicated in the students' beliefs. Furthermore, it offers an understanding of how teachers and students view responsibilities towards LA. Therefore, the findings may facilitate promoting LA in a way that considers students' needs and interests in learning, which accordingly leads to more purposeful and effective learning. This is because students' beliefs about LA help teachers understand what composes LA

for students, helping to promote it in their teaching practices (Lamb, 2010). Likewise, teachers' beliefs tell us about their readiness to adopt and promote LA in their practices. Studying beliefs from both students' and teachers' perspectives in the current research helps to illustrate whether students' and teachers' agendas in the classroom differ (Barcelos, 2003). According to Kumaravadivelu (1991), a mismatch between teachers' intentions and learner interpretations of language learning in the classroom should not be considered negative, but it needs to be recognised and properly addressed to open up opportunities for students to learn effectively.

In addition, the study contributes significantly to the Saudi secondary schools context, given that it explores LA at a key time when new policies towards it are being employed. This helps to recognise the role of these changes in promoting LA from teachers' and students' perspectives. This is because students' and teachers' beliefs in the study help to provide the lens through which much of the immediate context of LA in Saudi secondary schools could be revealed. Therefore, it is hoped that the findings of the study can be used as grassroots knowledge about views on LA to inform teachers, practitioners and policy makers, especially at this particular time of change in Saudi Arabia. Having explained the significance of the study, the aims and questions of the study are provided in the next section.

1.9 Research objectives and questions

The current study's aims are as follows:

- To investigate female EFL teachers' definitions of LA in the Saudi secondary schools context;

- To investigate female EFL students' definitions of LA in the Saudi secondary schools context;

- To explore female EFL teachers' beliefs about their role in the development of LA in the Saudi secondary schools context;

- To explore female EFL students' beliefs about their role in the development of LA in the Saudi secondary schools context;

- To investigate female EFL teachers' beliefs about the desirability and feasibility of students' involvement in classroom learning decisions;

- To investigate female EFL students' beliefs about the desirability and feasibility of their involvement in classroom learning decisions; and

- To compare EFL female teachers' and students' beliefs about LA within the same context.

To fulfil its aims, the study is carried out to answer the following research questions:

1. What beliefs are expressed by female EFL teachers in Saudi secondary schools regarding LA?

2. What beliefs are expressed by female EFL students in Saudi secondary schools regarding LA?

3. What characterises the difference between female EFL teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in the Saudi secondary schools context?

1.10 Outline of the thesis structure

The thesis is structured as follows:

The first chapter highlighted the changes in the Saudi educational system, namely, the Tatweer project and Vision 2030. These changes were considered about the school's decision structure, system (*Mugararat*), English curriculum and teacher-training programme (*Khebrat*). Subsequently, the relationship between these contextual changes and LA was reviewed to show how LA was defined in the Saudi secondary education policy. Next, the significance of the study was introduced before stating the research objectives and questions. The second chapter provides a literature review on the different perspectives of LA and its implementation in classrooms. It also considers the nature of beliefs and their importance in second/foreign language learning and teaching, as well as how they are conceptualised in the study. Then, it discusses the notion of LA in Western and non-Western cultures before reviewing the previous empirical research in different EFL contexts and the Saudi context. The third chapter discusses the research methodology. It considers the research paradigm and strategy before describing the research setting and sample. This is followed by a detailed justification of research instruments: how they were designed, piloted, amended and translated. Additionally, the framework for analysis is introduced before explaining the ethical procedures considered in the study. The fourth chapter presents the main interview results of female EFL teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in Saudi secondary education. The fifth chapter delineates the questionnaire results. It explains the statistical procedures followed in the study as testing the reliability and normality of the questionnaire's scales, using parametric and non-parametric tests to compare teachers' and students' beliefs, and conducting two separate Exploratory Factor Analyses for teachers and students. The sixth chapter presents the findings of follow-up interviews for teachers and students. It moves then to an overall summary of the study's findings with illustrative figures. The seventh chapter provides a holistic discussion of the key findings to answer the research

questions. Finally, the last chapter concludes the thesis with a summary of the research findings, the contribution of the study, its implications, limitations and suggestions for future research before the study's final words.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by outlining early ideas about LA, which emerged in the second language teaching community, with specific reference to the definition produced by Holec (1981). Then, it moves to the discussion of three main perspectives of LA—technical, psychological and political—established by Benson (1997); the discussion focusses on where they come from, how they conceptualise LA, what nature of LA they address and the criticism of each perspective. It also critically evaluates the suggested implementations for teachers and learners by different researchers in relation to these distinct LA perspectives. Next, the importance of investigating students' and teachers' beliefs about LA in the English as a second language (ESL)/EFL context and the research conceptualisation of these beliefs are considered. After that, different approaches to addressing the notion of LA in Western and non-Western cultures are presented before determining the current research's position in relation to these approaches. This is followed by a review of empirical studies on beliefs about LA in various EFL settings and the Saudi context. The chapter concludes by highlighting the research significance of this study.

2.2 The history of LA

The shift in second language teaching's educational philosophy towards a communicative approach contributed significantly to the rise of the notion of autonomy and self-direction in language learning (Gemmo & Riley, 1995). In this approach, language is viewed as a tool for communication, placing more emphasis on the communicative functions in language learning to help learners address their personal needs. Based on that, the learning process is seen as

'resulting in an extension of the range of meanings of which the individual is capable, as something learners do, rather than being done to them' (Gremmo & Riley, 1995, p. 153). Gremmo and Riley (1995) also stated that such emphasis is highlighted with the increased interest in learning foreign languages for different purposes (ESP). The variety of these purposes and personal needs stresses the importance of a more flexible approach to learning, such as learner-centred techniques, which cannot be incorporated into teacher-led classes.

Gremmo and Riley (1995) identified another key factor in the emergence of autonomy, namely, the vast spread of technology, which provided access to different information resources. This encouraged schools and universities to establish resource and counselling centres because they are seen as flexible and alternative opportunities to teacher-centred approaches, allowing students' choices and responsibility for their learning.

At the University of Nancy in France in 1970, The Centre de Researches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues (CRAPEL) established one of the first resource centres (Riley, 1986). It was a project directed by Henri Holec, the father of LA, which aimed at providing opportunities for adult learners to learn a foreign language. As a result of this project, Holec (1981) defined LA in a report titled *Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning*. His definition is considered the cornerstone of educational research, and it is the most cited definition in it (Benson, 1997, 2001; Little, 1991, 2004, 2007; Smith, 2008). He described LA as follows:

> To take charge of one's own learning is to have, and hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, i.e.:
> -determining the objectives;
> -defining the contents and progressions;
> -selecting methods and techniques to be used;
> -monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc.);
> -evaluating what has been acquired. (Holec, 1981, p. 3)

The assumption of learners' full responsibility in learning, in Holec's definition, is also reflected in Dickinson's (1987, p. 27) conceptualisation of LA as 'a mode of learning' where there is no involvement of a teacher, institution or any prepared learning material. Additionally, it is seen in Benson's (1997) reference to LA as the situation in which learners take charge of language learning outside the formal educational institutions and where there is no guidance or interference on the part of the teacher.

The definitions presented by Holec (1981), Dickenson (1987) and Benson (1997) emphasise total independence and self-directed learning. This can be linked to the etymological meaning of autonomy, which is derived from the Greek words 'autos' and 'nomos', meaning 'having its own laws', 'self-government' and 'freedom from external control or influence' (*Oxford Dictionaries*, 2019). However, in the formal educational institutions, this assumption is questionable for different reasons. First, the teacher's role cannot be totally dismissed in the classroom context: According to Little (1994), LA does not mean the abdication of the teacher's role. Second, regarding the learning material, for Paiva (as cited in Paiva, 2008), students usually learn via materials written by others. Third, certain guidelines related to the assessment and curriculum in the school context should be considered.

The view of LA as individualisation was encouraged by the popularity of the *self-access centre* in the 1980s and '90s (Benson, 2001); according to Gardner and Miller (1999), this is 'probably the most widely used and recognised term for an approach to encouraging autonomy' (p. 9). However, Little (1991) pointed out self-access centres' failure to attract high numbers of students and argued that even the motivated students need assistance, either 'because they do not know exactly what will correspond to their needs, or else because they do not know where to look for

what they want' (p. 48). Therefore, in opposition to the idea of individualisation, 'learner autonomy does not entail total independence' (Aoki & Smith, 1999, p. 22), and LA's development necessitates 'an unavoidable dependence at one level on authorities for information and guidance' (Boud, 1988, p. 29). This necessitates the notion of learner training, representing one of the earliest attempts to develop LA in language education; Benson (1997) identified this as the technical perspective of LA because he considered LA a complex phenomenon that can be interpreted in different ways. Therefore, in addition to the technical perspective, he established the psychological and political perspectives as the three main orientations of LA. These were seen as useful starting points for explorations of people's understandings and beliefs about LA (Benson, 1997).

2.3 The theoretical framework: LA perspectives

This section considers the different perspectives of LA established in the literature, moving from the technical to the psychological perspective, and finally, the political perspective.

2.3.1 The technical perspective of LA

According to Benson (1997), in its technical perspective, LA views language learning as a process of acquiring 'predetermined structures and forms' (p. 23), implying a positivist philosophy. This link to the learning philosophy justifies the rationale behind labelling this perspective as 'technical'. According to this perspective, learners need to be trained to use learning strategies and learning resources independently. Such strategies and resources are seen as means to allow the learners to cope with different learning situations independently (Benson, 2001; Cotterall, 1995).

Thanasoulas (2000) argued that the teachers' role in training students is crucial in this view. He said, 'To acknowledge . . . that learners have to follow certain paths to attain autonomy is tantamount to asserting that there has to be a teacher on whom it will be incumbent to show the way' (p. 11). Based on this, learners can be described according to the three following classifications: already autonomous, open to training or resistant to training (Wenden, 1991). According to Benson (1997), these classifications are given because the technical view regards learner behaviour as the sufficient condition for autonomy in learning. This indicates the tendency of this perspective to consider learning strategies and resources not only as tools but also as determiners of LA, without which, students are not autonomous. Since the technical view is interested in training students to use learning strategies and learning resources like self-access centres, these two points will be considered next.

2.3.1.1. Language learning strategies and LA

As mentioned above, the technical view considers LA as an outcome of utilising learning strategies. Griffiths (2013) stated, 'Strategies are an important element of learner autonomy, since it is by using strategies that learners are able to become autonomous' (p. 31). Learning strategies refer to the actions selected by learners either in a deliberate or automatic way to learn or regulate language learning (Griffiths, 2017). Oxford (1990) classifies language learning strategies into direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies are used to deal with the target language, and they refer to the cognitive process required for language learning. Benson (2001) considers this type of strategy as more connected to the development of LA than indirect strategies are because they are concerned with language learning cognitive operations. In contrast, indirect strategies are intended for general management of learning and divided further into metacognitive, affective and social strategies. It can be argued that, when learning strategies

35

are linked to Benson's (2001) three levels of control in LA (control over learning management, cognitive processes and learning content), the metacognitive, affective and social indirect strategies are within the control over learning management because their conscious use reflects such management.

The benefits of using learning strategies to develop LA are acknowledged in the influential work on learning strategies by Cotterall (1995), Oxford (1990, 2011, 2017) and Wenden (1991). According to Cohen (1998), strategy training 'can enhance students' efforts to reach language programme goals because it encourages students to find their own pathways to success, and thus it promotes learner autonomy' (p. 67). Similarly, Liu (2015) referred to strategies' role in enhancing students' language proficiency and engagement in learning, positively contributing to developing their LA level. Mariani (1991) also discussed the importance of study skills and learning strategies in helping learners to continue learning outside class. After the discussion of learning strategies, the next section considers the second part of the technical perspective, namely, the use of self-access for the development of LA.

2.3.1.2. Self-access centres and LA

Self-access centres are considered by Gardner and Miller (1999) as the most common approach to encouraging LA. This is because it offers a pragmatic solution for the diversity of learners' needs, preferences, weaknesses and language requirements (Sheerin, 1997). The resources in a self-access centre include 'audio, video and computer workstations, audiotapes, videotapes and computer software, and a variety of printed materials' (Benson, 2001, p. 114). For Benson (2001), for such an approach to be effective, importance needs to be given to learner training. Therefore, it can be argued that the self-access centre does not need to be seen as a place of resources, but

rather, as described by Gardner and Miller (1999), as the integration of the learning resources, students, teachers and the system for organising resources.

Sheerin (1997) referred to the role of self-access centres in developing LA, stating, 'The very practical nature of self-access lends point to learner training and learner development activities which, without the end-goal of self-access, can seem pointless to learners' (p. 65). This means that it fosters reactive autonomy wherein students are trained by their teachers. It also develops proactive autonomy where students proactively train themselves. In any case, this is conditioned by considering promoting LA as the main target of using the self-access centre. This clearly implies a technical view where LA is promoted by the use of learning resources like self-access centres.

The technical view can be criticised for different reasons. The essence of this view is that learner training is the main way to create autonomous learners, but showing students different methods and strategies of learning does not necessarily lead to LA as it is 'not exclusively or even primarily a matter of how learning is organised' (Little, 1991, p. 3). The tendency of learner training to operate via the one-size-fits-all principle is another point of criticism as this does not account for the variety of students' levels and needs. Even a single student may demonstrate high ability in one learning area and low ability in others. This is because LA is a process that is flexible to education intervention, not a state that is reached once (Candy, 1991). In addition, the division of students into autonomous and non-autonomous learners based on their use of the learning strategies or resources restricts LA to a single set of behaviours. This neglects the different ways by which LA may be manifested, which is related to learners' age, progression level and needs (Little, 1991). While, in the technical view, LA is seen as something provided to students by

training—without which, students are not autonomous—the discussion in the next section considers the psychological view of LA as an internal capacity where this division is invalidated.

2.3.2 The psychological perspective of LA

Little (1991) argued that learning is 'a process where each increment must be accommodated to what the learner already knows by various processes of adjustment and revision' (p. 15). This adjustment is of a self-governing and self-discovery nature to learners. Therefore, Little (1991) criticised Holec's (1981) definition of LA as learners' full responsibility in learning for neglecting how such a capacity can be exercised. He explained, 'autonomy in language learning depends on the development and exercise of a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action' (Little, 1991, p. 4) as crucial psychological capacities under which the learning management capacity lies. Littlewood (1996) added that ability and willingness constitute this capacity because these attributes are inseparable, and both are necessary for developing LA. In other words, even if some students can make decisions about their learning, they may not be willing to do so, while those who are willing may not be able. Thus, LA is not seen as the mastery of some strategies or using learning resources as the technical view suggests, but rather, as an internal capacity. Benson (1997) identified this view as the psychological perspective by which LA is defined as 'a capacity—a construct of attitudes and abilities—which allows learners to take more responsibility for their own learning' (p. 19).

The essence of the psychological view of LA is that the individual learner needs to regulate his/her learning. Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory can be linked to this view because regulating the responsibility for learning is associated with intrinsic motivation. This is because LA involves making different learning decisions that stem from learners' goals and preferences. This theory distinguishes between two types of motivation based on their origins and purposes, namely, intrinsic and extrinsic

motivation. Intrinsic motivation means that a behaviour is carried out for the enjoyment of performing a

task, while extrinsic motivation refers to instrumental ends, like external incentives, as the main reason

for a certain behaviour. In other words, intrinsic motivation is triggered from inside, while extrinsic

motivation arises from the anticipation of external rewards. According to Dickinson (1995), 'Self-

determination is where the locus of causality for behaviour is internal to the learner, and can be seen as

related to the applied linguistic concept of autonomy in its sense of a capacity for . . . learning' (p. 169).

This indicates that LA or self-determination tends to be more associated with being intrinsically motivated.

Nevertheless, it does not mean that extrinsic motivation indicates the absence of self-determination in the

behaviour performed; as Noels et al. (2000) pointed out, 'different types of extrinsic motivation can be

classified along a continuum according to the extent to which they are internalized into the self-concept'

(p. 61).

Self-determination theory also considers LA as a psychological need that should be met to

encourage a sense of self-fulfilment. It not only considers the intrinsic/extrinsic dichotomy but

also refers to the importance of satisfying three psychological needs, namely, autonomy,

competence and relatedness. In Deci, Vallerand et al. (1991), autonomy is conceptualised as

'being self-initiating and self-regulatory of one's own actions' (p. 327), while competence is

concerned with the ways of successfully achieving different external and internal outcomes and

the effectiveness in accomplishing the required practice. These researchers also described

relatedness as the development of a sense of affiliation and connection with others. The

satisfaction of the three needs catalyses the development of intrinsic motivation and self-

determination.

Another notion that can be related to the psychological view of LA is Dickinson's (1995)

conceptualisation of the responsibility for learning as including control over success and failure.

She mentioned that the reasons learners give for their success or failure have great implications for LA promotion. This can be linked to Dweck's (2006) concept of *mindsets*, which refer to individuals' assumptions about human attributes. These can be *fixed* or *growth* mindsets based on their changeability. In the former, success or failure is attributed to something static, whereas the latter would associate it with something of a changeable nature. Mercer and Ryan (2009) demonstrated that, when students relate successful language learning to their hard work, they have a growth mindset; in contrast, they have a fixed mindset if they perceive such success is related to a natural talent. The notion of mindsets seems to recall Weiner's (1974, 1992) attribution theory. Weiner distinguished four reasons based on three parameters, namely, the locus of control as external or internal to the student, the stability of the cause as fixed or changeable and the controllability of the cause by the student. The four reasons or attributions are luck, effort, task difficulty and ability. To illustrate how they affect a student's perspective, ability is stable while effort is unstable, but they are both internal to the study. Moreover, luck and task difficulty are both external to the student, but luck is changeable whereas task difficulty is stable. Effort and luck have changeability in common, but they differ in the locus of control and controllability. This is because effort is internal to the student and under his/her control, whereas luck is external and not under the student's control. Cleary and Zimmerman (2004) recommended that teachers should help their students come to an awareness that success in learning is under their control.

The psychological view not only includes a motivational dimension but also metacognitive and affective dimensions (Murase, 2007). The motivational dimension entails the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations mentioned above, which are both found in autonomous learners (Oxford, 2003). According to Zimmermann (2002), motivation highly affects LA and independent learning as it is a determiner of

whether learners intend to plan and carry out the activities and reflect on their learning. This leads to the metacognitive dimension, which refers to reflection (Wenden, 1998), as well as metacognitive processes like planning, monitoring and assessment of learning. Finally, the affective dimension covers anxiety, self-esteem and emotions, which should be controlled by learners to positively enhance their autonomy or prevent affecting such development negatively. It can be said that Murase's (2007) classification resembles the psychological view as it refers to the psychological capacities that help learners become independent and manage the constraints in their learning.

The psychological view of LA is also arguably linked to Benson's (2001) levels of control over the cognitive process. This is because they are more concerned with the operations underlying autonomy in learning than with learner behaviours. According to Benson (2001), such operations include attention, reflection and metacognitive knowledge of the task. Moreover, the metacognitive processes refer to planning, monitoring and evaluation of learning, while Wenden (1995) defined task knowledge as the learner's knowledge about the aim of a task, its requirements and its type. Thus, it can be said that these operations are in line with Little's (1991) emphasis in his definition of LA on the specification of the bases of the capacity of autonomy in language learning mentioned earlier.

In this view, autonomous learners are characterised as 'both cognitively and meta-cognitively aware of their role in the learning process, [and they] seek to create their own opportunities to learn, monitor their learning, and attempt actively to manage their learning in and out of the classroom' (Holden, 2002, p. 18). This indicates that the role of consciousness is of paramount importance to LA and LA is not only confined to classrooms. In addition, autonomous learners are proactive in taking initiative to learn, creating the appropriate conditions for their learning and managing the difficulties they might face. They are also reflective, which means they express

themselves objectively, and this helps them to be aware of their development in learning (Bruner, 1986). Little (2007) argued that reflection, active involvement and target language use constitute the key factors to help learn a second or foreign language autonomously.

Blidi (2017) argued that, even considering that all learners have the capacity to learn autonomously, it is necessary to acknowledge that students may need some support from their teachers. In this regard, Little (2007) suggested three pedagogical principles for the development of LA that are relevant to this view. First, learner involvement indicates allowing learners' full participation in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the learning process. Second, learner reflection means helping learners reflect on the content and process of learning. Little, Dam and Legenhausen (2017) argued that learner involvement and learner reflection depend on each other in taking responsibility for one's learning, which cannot be done without reflecting on learning, and reflection cannot be done without being involved in and responsible for learning. The third principle is target language use, which is of particular consideration to the autonomy of language learners. It stresses the importance of speaking and writing in the target language not only as a means of communication but also as a medium of learner reflection. According to Little et al. (2017), this will encourage the internalisation of target language proficiency.

It can be argued that the psychological perspective stresses the individual nature of LA, which is related to different psychological and metacognitive variables in the learning process. These are seen as a capacity that every student has to different degrees. Thus, this view rejects the assumption that there are no autonomous learners. Smith (2003) identified two pedagogical approaches for teachers to develop LA, namely, the weak and strong approaches. The weak approach is when teachers think their students lack the capacity to be autonomous, and as such,

they need to be trained towards autonomy. It can be said that the weak version of LA adopts the technical perspective mentioned above, accepting the notion of non-autonomous learners and placing greater emphasis on the teacher's role to train students to be autonomous. In contrast, the strong version emphasises that students already have different levels of autonomy and teachers should attempt to develop these levels by creating the desired conditions for LA jointly with the students. This view is similar to the proactive type of autonomy suggested by Littlewood (1999), which refers to learners' role and initiatives in their learning, while the weak version 'complements rather than challenge[s] the traditional structure of knowledge and authority' (p. 76) as learners have a reactive role in their learning. It can be argued that, although Sheerin (1997) linked proactive autonomy to the use of self-access centres, in the psychological perspective, this autonomy does not associate learners' initiatives with or restrict them to the use of learning resources; rather, it relates to their capacity to learn independently. Therefore, it resembles the strong version of LA.

Benson (1997) identified another difference between the technical and psychological perspectives of LA that is related to their underlying learning philosophy, stating,

> Constructivist approaches to language learning tend to support psychological versions of autonomy that focus on the learner's behaviour, attitudes and personality. Constructivism is associated with the notion that autonomy is an innate capacity of the individual . . . Constructivist approaches to language learning also tend to value interaction and engagement with the target language. (pp. 23–24)

This relationship might be justified in the light of Smith's (2003) strong version, in which teachers and students construct the suitable circumstances for learning together. Contrary to this, the technical view that he identifies is associated with the positivist philosophy by which LA is

maintained by certain methods, such as learning strategies and resources, as mentioned in the technical perspective.

Although the technical and psychological perspectives differ in conceptualising LA—that is, the former regards it as a quality provided to students while the latter regards it as an innate capacity that every student has—both address LA as an individual construct (Benson, 2001). For this reason, Benson (2001) criticised both perspectives for minimising the role of the social aspect in LA. As such, LA is not only about being an independent learner—whether by mastery of independent learning skills or becoming independent from constraints and regulating one's learning—but it also includes the notion of interdependence: 'Because we are social beings our independence is always balanced by dependence; our essential condition is one of interdependence. Total detachment is a principal determining feature not of autonomy but of autism' (Little, 1991, p. 5). This interdependence means considering that context is key when LA is conceptualised. This notion is supported in the political view of LA, which is discussed in the next section.

2.3.3 The political perspective of LA

Nicolaides and Fernandes (2008) discussed the interdependent nature of autonomy in Freire's political work, such as *Pedagogy of Oppressed* (1973) and *Pedagogy of Freedom* (1988). They mentioned that autonomy implies a capacity to be 'wholly integrated with different life dimensions, which involves intellectual, moral, affective and social political aspects' (p. 31). In contrast, independence usually refers to attitudes that are considered as indications for developing autonomy. It can be said that independence resembles the attitudinal part of what autonomy means, while autonomy covers the awareness of being influenced by the social

context, as well as being its influencer. Awareness of the two roles suggests that one is acting as

a socially responsible person. Thus, it can be said that, in this view, responsibility refers to the

individual's responsibility towards society to be an effective citizen. The two roles are also

reflected in Benson's (1997) reference to the transformative role of autonomy changing not only

individuals but also the society in which they participate. Thanasoulas (2000) stated,

> Learner autonomy is an ideal, so to speak, that can, and should, be realized, if we want self-sufficient learners and citizens capable of evaluating every single situation they find themselves in and drawing the line at any inconsistencies or shortcomings in institutions and society at large. (p. 11)

It should be mentioned that the responsibility here is associated with Carter's (2007) notion of

positive freedom, which is used as a substitution for autonomy (Nicolaides & Fernandes, 2008).

This is because positive freedom accepts acting according to the individual's free well, although

this is guided and constrained by the rules of society, while negative freedom assumes total

freedom of the individual, neglecting the consequences affecting the social context. This is in line

with Palfreyman's (2001) definition of conditional freedom of the learner in a sense that is not

absolute in the formal educational context. Rather, this freedom is conditional as it involves the

decisions that are acceptable in a particular context.

Although the previous terms like *independence*, *responsibility* and *freedom* seem to be more

related to autonomy in general rather than LA, a narrower focus can be justified by accepting

Benson's (2008) conceptualisation of learning. He argued that learning is 'an integral part of my

life, [and] it is important to me that I am able to conduct my learning in much the same way as I

wish to conduct my life' (Benson, 2008, p. 28). For him, life and learning are inseparable. If people

understand how to be autonomous in life, then they will understand how to be autonomous in

learning. Benson (1997) described this view of LA as the political perspective that respects

45

learners' rights. He defined LA as 'a recognition of the rights of the learners within educational

systems' (p. 29). He preferred the term 'control' in his discussion of this view, and he argued that

it 'is a question of collective decision making' (p. 33), not a mere personal choice. In addition,

discussing the political perspective, LA has been related to learners' power and freedom

(Pennycook, 1997). Based on this, it can be said that LA cannot be evaluated unless it occurs in a

social context, where power relations represent an integral part of the context.

The political view of LA indicates different perspectives for teachers and students, and this will be

discussed as a Freirean view of teaching and learning. In Gadotti's (2001) description, learning is

prior to teaching because certain reflections or indications from learners help us identify what

has been taught. In other words, 'teaching that does not emerge from the experience of learning

cannot be learned by anyone' (Freire, 1998, p. 31). This implies a rejection of transmitting the

knowledge to students where they are receivers rather than constructively participating in

building the knowledge. It also indicates promoting a sense of equality between teachers and

students, since in the Freirean view, students need to be treated 'as budding critical thinkers, on

a par with teachers' (Oxford, 2015, p. 66). Huang (2006) added that teachers need to increase

students' awareness of the constraints to their autonomy in their context.

The autonomy-supporting class is 'participatory, proactive, communal, collaborative, and given

over to constructing meaning rather than receiving them' (Bruner, 1996, p. 84). This helps us to

think that LA not only operates at the individual level but also at a class level, which means that

some classes can be more autonomous than others. According to Little et al. (2017), LA is not only

a capacity of individual learners but also a collective capacity that is developed interactively by

both teachers and students. This means that, in these classes, there are many opportunities for

learners to participate and actively engage in learning and that learners' initiations and contributions are more than welcomed. They are seen as integral parts of the class because learners are considered partners in the classroom. Moreover, an increased sense of group cohesion characterises the autonomous class where group- and pair work are encouraged. When seen through a political lens, learning is a process that is 'owned by' students, while teachers are counsellors or facilitators, respecting learners' autonomy by being open to 'new ideas . . . questions . . . curiosities of the students as well as their inhibitions' (Little et al., 2017, p. 49). In addition, this view indicates a refusal of the authoritarian model of teaching and a call to view teachers as oppression liberators in teaching to help students fulfil their power and liberty to improve society (Freire, 1998). For teachers, this alludes to teaching students potentially new ways of being, reflecting a new way of relating to their classmates, their teachers and their institution or to a wider society; this is different, for example, from adopting an individual technical view that focusses on dictionary skills or techniques to read quickly. Therefore, it can be said that the promotion of relatedness, as suggested by Deci and Ryan (1985) in self-determination theory, is linked to the political view of LA. This is because relatedness is defined by Deci, Vallerand et al. (1991) as 'satisfying connection with others in one's social milieu' (p. 327).

The political perspective shares 'the view that knowledge is constructed rather than acquired' (Benson, 1997, p. 22) with the psychological perspective. However, it shifts the conceptualisation of LA from an internal and individual concept to an external and social one. Not only that, but it brings an expectation of change and challenge to the status quo through empowering students in their context. Therefore, Benson (1997) argued that the underlying philosophy of this perspective is associated with the critical approaches to education where learning is 'a process of

engagement with social context which entails the possibility of political action and social change'
(p. 22).

Notions like oppression liberators and empowering learners to lead change in society may be radical for some contexts. However, at the same time, our understanding of LA needs to consider both its individual and social nature. To this end, leading experts in the field of LA gathered in Bergen, Norway to develop and agree to a definition called the *Bergen definition* (Smith, 2008). According to Dam et al. (1995), in this definition, LA 'is characterised by a readiness to take charge of one's own learning in the service of one's needs and purposes. This entails a capacity and willingness to act independently and in cooperation with others as a socially responsible person' (p. 1). Therefore, this definition emphasises the importance of the teacher's role in developing learners' psychological attributes, practices and interdependence in class (Smith, 2008). The Bergen definition is linked to a successful experience by Dam et al. (1995) with 11-year-old learners in an ESL context, namely, Denmark in 1993. These researchers studied the young learners' ability to be involved in the planning, organising, managing and evaluating the learning content and process. The findings showed that students were positive in taking charge of their learning and had a productive role in choosing the learning content. The difficulties the teachers reported in this project were not related to students' resistance, but rather, to the redefinition of the teacher's role. According to Dam et al. (1995), the contribution of this collaborative approach to developing LA in a school context was that it helped clarify that the classroom should be viewed as a fertile learning environment. For this reason, shifting the focus from teaching and learning is crucial because it leads to a change in teachers' and students' roles. Such an approach to LA requires constant evaluation, including 'teacher/learner and learner/learner interaction' (Dam et al., 1995, p. 78).

The approach described above is linked to the classroom-based approaches proposed by Benson (2001), which are seen as examples of promoting both independence and interdependence. These techniques emphasise the relationship between the teacher and student in the classroom. Dam (2000) stressed the importance of viewing the classroom as a setting where the responsibility is shared by teachers and students. Cooperative learning is also highly appreciated in these approaches. According to Gillies (2016), cooperative learning entails individual tasks for students, where interaction is an essential component of completing them. It also refers to the groups working together towards a certain goal. According to Swain (2000), both ways can be effective if the emphasis in using collaborative learning is on the joint exploration of the topic. Cooperative learning helps students to enhance their language level and develop their responsibility towards learning (Macaro, 1997). Little (1996) mentioned that the internalisation of a capacity to take part in the social interaction is what develops LA in language learning. This is owing to viewing language as communication to be learned by validating the meaning in a context through interaction (Little, 2007). Effective interaction requires active involvement of learners to use the language, which indicates 'receiving, production, interaction and mediation in speech and writing' (Little, 2007, p. 21). According to Scharle and Szabó (2000), such active interaction and presence of learners depends on students' acceptance and realisation of the notion that their success in language learning depends as much on them as it does on their teachers.

The Bergen definition is accepted in the current study for two reasons. First, it incorporates the individual and social nature of LA, as mentioned above. Second, the political perspective may be radical for the Saudi context. This is because, as argued in Chapter 1, the educational moves like Tatweer and Vision 2030 are initiated by the upper level—that is, government—instead of what the political perspective calls for, origination by the lower level—that is, teachers and students.

Therefore, considering that, in the Saudi context, the imposition of LA is from the top down, the current study is interested in Saudi teachers' and students' beliefs in this key transitioning time in the secondary schools context. This is because teachers' beliefs are an integral part of their practices, which help learners to develop LA, and students' beliefs affect their learning practices as discussed in Section 2.6.

Having described the different perspectives of LA, it is worth referring specifically to the way they relate to Saudi secondary education policy. As mentioned in Chapter 1, although the initiatives in the policy document do not include the term *learner autonomy*, they refer to the aforementioned three main perspectives of LA. That is, the technical perspective that considers LA as something offered by training is seen in the skills' development approach in the Mugararat system and the vision, including the use of learning resources and technology.

Moreover, the psychological perspective, which views LA as an internal capacity within each learner, is represented in the greater involvement of teachers and students in school decisions related to teaching and learning. It can also be seen in the room given to students' choices in the Mugararat system over their study plans to match their needs and interests. Furthermore, the political perspective, which emphasises the notion of having a positive impact on society, is administrated in the Vision's aim to encourage students' role towards society as being effective and responsible members in building Saudi society.

Importantly, the study accepts teachers' and students' beliefs and interpretations of LA. The framework discussed above will help consider the following questions: Are all three perspectives, namely technical, psychological and political, found in the EFL Saudi context? Are certain perspectives more common than others? For whom are they more common: teachers or students? Are there other perspectives that arise from the particular educational, cultural and

political context of EFL classes in Saudi secondary schools? The next section gives a summary of the theoretical framework of the study.

2.4 Summary of LA perspectives

The aim of discussing the LA perspective is to build a developed understanding of LA. To this end, the review started with Holec's (1981) definition of LA, the most cited definition in the field, and the earliest thoughts on individualisation and LA. Then, the technical perspective was discussed, followed by the psychological and political perspectives. Doing this helped demonstrate a gradual comprehension of LA by which each view is analysed and criticised. It also showed that these perspectives differ based on the nature of the LA they intend to promote; that is, the LA of an individual nature would focus on viewing LA as an activity provided by the teacher via training, assuming a technical view. Similarly, LA of this nature would be viewed as an internal quality that every learner has, aligning with a psychological view. In contrast, LA of a social nature would be assumed as a quality constructed with the teacher and others to empower students to change the context. Another difference is reflected in the underlying philosophy of learning that each perspective implies. That is, the technical view is linked to positivism, the psychological view to constructivism and the political view to the critical approach to learning. These differences influence how autonomous learners are described and how the teacher role is conceptualised in each perspective.

For the current study, LA could manifest in different ways in the Saudi secondary schools context. These manifestations can be inferred from both teachers' and students' beliefs, which include their practices. Therefore, having discussed how LA is perceived differently, the next section

proceeds to consider the different models proposed for implementing LA in classroom practices. It also demonstrates a link between them and the different LA perspectives discussed above.

2.5 Implementations of LA in classrooms

Many researchers have argued for the importance of promoting LA in the class for different reasons (e.g. Benson, 2001; Dam, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Dörnyei, 2001; Little, 1991, 2007). These reasons can be classified as related to academic, psychological and social gains. Academically, the need for LA prevails in learning because the nature of what is learned is complex and often entails personal change and investment. That is, students comprehend new information by linking it to what they already know (Little, 1991). According to Little (1991), this association is weak in the transitional model of teaching and learning, where much of the information provided involves little consideration of learners' experiences. Therefore, LA is important because it helps learning become more purposeful and effective in the short and long term as the learning agenda is set by students. Similarly, Benson (2001) considered LA a precondition for effective learning. From a psychological viewpoint, LA is a human need in different life aspects, including learning (Deci & Ryan, 1985), and a prerequisite to motivation (Dörnyei, 2001). The development of LA in the school context helps students enhance their decision-making ability, which is hoped to be transferred outside the class and their lives (Dam, 1995). In addition, success in fostering LA creates responsible, critical and useful members of society (Benson, 2001). Therefore, different models for the teaching or promotion of LA in the classroom are proposed to help students be actively engaged in their learning, as considered below.

According to Scharle and Szabó (2000), LA can be maintained by developing a sense of responsibility towards learning through three stages, namely, raising awareness, changing attitudes and transferring roles to the learners. They further suggested four types of activities within all three stages. These include activities about motivation, learning strategies, community building and self-monitoring. These activities move gradually from being tightly controlled by the teacher at the first stage to handing over the teacher's role to students at the last stage. Motivation activities are used to increase students' interest and self-confidence to take charge of their learning, while learning strategies activities are designed to raise students' awareness of what strategies they need to apply in performing different tasks. Group cohesion and cooperation are developed in community-building activities by doing pair and groupwork that helps students share the responsibility. The fourth type, regarding self-monitoring activities, focusses on helping students be 'their own teachers' (Scharle & Szabó, 2000, p. 48) in identifying their aims, resources and difficulties in learning with the objective of monitoring their learning regularly.

It can be argued that the aforementioned activities suggested by Scharle and Szabó (2000) may be applied by teachers to address different LA orientations. That is, learning strategies activities represent the development of LA in its technical view, while self-monitoring and motivation activities promote the psychological perspective of LA and community-building activities help increase students' sense of their role and responsibility in the group, and therefore, address the social nature of LA.

For the implementation of LA, Nunan (2000) suggested five graduated levels, which are as follows:

1. Awareness: This is learners' recognition of both the way a strategy is used and the favourite learning style. The process at this level focusses on the identification of strategies and learning styles;

2. Involvement: This represents learners' engagement in choosing their goals. The process at this level focusses on making choices;

3. Intervention: This comprises learners' modification of their goals and tasks, as well as the content of learning. The process at this level focusses on modifying tasks;

4. Creation: This is learners' formation of their goals and tasks. The process at this level focusses on creating tasks; and

5. Transcendence: This refers to learners' linking their classroom content to the world outside. The process at this level concentrates on helping learners become teachers and researchers.

An observation that can be made about the schemes of Scharle and Szabó (2000) and Nunan (2000) is that the levels share two points. First, both are gradual; second, for both, the starting point is raising awareness or bringing to the students' consciousness the importance of identifying the strategies they need or identifying their learning styles. Thus, the awareness level in both demonstrates a technical perspective of LA, promoted by the use of learning strategies. Yeh (2013) stated that both levels can be implemented together since they are interrelated. In other words, Nunan's (2000) five levels can be divided as follows: the first stage, raising awareness, includes awareness; the second stage, changing attitudes, includes involvement, intervention and creation; and the last stage, transferring roles, is transcendence.

In a similar manner, Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCintio and Turner (2004) distinguished three types of LA support teachers can apply in their classrooms. These are organisational, procedural and cognitive autonomy. Organisational autonomy involves supporting student control over the environment and the environmental factors to help their wellbeing, for example, by participating in forming the class rules and choosing seating patterns or group members. Procedural autonomy involves allowing students control over the form to motivate their initial engagement with learning activities. Examples of this support are giving students the opportunity to display their work as they like, choose the materials in a class project or select how they demonstrate their competence. Therefore, it can be argued that procedural support is more associated with reactive autonomy as it involves control over learning methods. The last type of support, cognitive autonomy, refers to encouraging students' control over learning by supporting their deep thinking. For instance, this may involve helping them become independent problem solvers, formulate their goals, design tasks of their interest or re-assess errors. According to Stefanou et al. (2004), this support is what leads to long-lasting effects on learning. For this reason, the cognitive autonomy may be linked to the strong version of LA, which implies a psychological view by which learners' control over the cognitive processes is encouraged, as Benson (2001) suggests.

Nunan's (2000) gradual levels, mentioned above, can be linked to the types of support identified by Stefanou et al. (2004) in two ways. First, the intervention level—which concentrates on task modification and the awareness level that focusses on using the learning strategies—tends to reflect procedural autonomy support as it shares the conceptualisation of LA as a control over the form or method. Second, the creation and transcendence levels are more linked to cognitive

autonomy. This is because the creation of tasks and transcending classroom experience to the outside world requires control over the cognitive processes of learning.

Benson (2001) also classified five types of practice to promote LA. First, the resource-based-approach is related to students' independent interaction with the learning material. Second, the technology-based approach is mainly about independent interaction with educational technology. Therefore, these two approaches describe the affordances or opportunities that help students in self-directed learning. Third, the learner-based approach refers to the direct production of the behavioural and psychological changes in the learner. It is concerned with enabling students to learn. Although there is reference to processes like reflection, self-monitoring and evaluation in this approach, they are seen as needed components in students' training programmes. From the perspective of different orientations of LA, it can be said that these three approaches reflect a technical view of LA. This is because the focus of the first two is on providing learning resources, while according to Nguyen and Gu (2013), a learner-centred approach emphasises the role of strategy training to help the development of LA. Fourth, classroom-based approaches focus on the relationship between the teacher and student in the classroom and aspects like learner control over the planning and evaluation of learning. Fifth, in curriculum-based approaches, learner control over the learning extends to the negotiation of the curriculum. Sixth, the teacher-based approach concentrates on the teacher role, teacher autonomy and teacher education in promoting LA. The effectiveness of this approach depends on teachers' engagement with the idea of autonomy, as well as their professional skills. It can be argued that Benson's (2001) approaches may be criticised for the neglect of the social media, which involves a social interaction. This is inferred by the distinction between resource-based and

technology-based approaches, which tends to be driven by assuming a monolithic function of technology. In addition, Benson's (2001) curriculum-based approach, mentioned in Section 2.2.1, seems to reflect this view: He refers to the effectiveness of this approach in allowing learner 'control over cognitive and content aspects of learning' (p. 170). Similarly, the view is in line with the classroom-based approach as it concentrates on learners' control over the planning and evaluation of learning.

The teacher's roles are the main focus of Voller (1997) in his approach fostering LA. These roles are those of a resource, counsellor and facilitator. The teacher's role as a resource refers to a teacher as a knower in the target language and an expert who direct students on the learning resources. This clearly indicates promoting LA in the technical perspective, where the knowledge of learning strategies and resources is of greater value. In contrast, the teacher as counsellor is related to the psychological view, because according to Voller (1997), counselling refers to a one-to-one interaction by which an advice is given to the students who need it. By serving as a counsellor, teachers help learners discuss their achievements, problems and how to solve or overcome these issues (Kongchan, 2002). Therefore, this role is more associated with developing LA as an internal capacity.

Teachers as facilitators offer two types of support, namely, technical and psycho-social support. The technical support can be featured by Boud's (1988) reference to

   - helping learners to plan and carry out their independent language learning by means of needs analysis (both learning and language needs), objective setting (both short and long-term), work planning, selecting materials, and organizing interactions;

   - helping learners to evaluate themselves (assessing initial proficiency, monitoring progress, and peer- and self-assessment);

- helping learners to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to implement the above (by raising their awareness of language and learning, by providing learner training to help them to identify learning styles and appropriate learning strategies). (p. 23)

From the perspective of different LA orientations, it can be inferred that the first two points are seen as promoting the psychological view of LA, which is concerned with fostering learner control over the learning process. This is because they refer to metacognitive processes like planning, monitoring their progress and self-evaluation. In addition, they allude to developing the students' capacity in setting objectives, carrying out their learning based on their needs in learning and language. In contrast, the last point represents fostering LA in its technical version. This is because the emphasis was placed on learner training of strategy use.

The second type of support provided by the facilitators is psycho-social support. Such support also seems to be linked to the psychological perspective of LA because the facilitator in this sense needs to have the following attributes:

- the personal qualities of the facilitator (being caring, supportive, patient, tolerant, emphatic, open, and non-judgmental);

- a capacity for motivating learners (encouraging commitment, dispersing uncertainty, helping learners to overcome obstacles, being prepared to enter into a dialogue with learners, avoiding manipulating, objectifying or interfering with – in other words, controlling – them);

- an ability to raise learners' awareness (to 'decondition' them from preconceptions about learner and teacher roles, to help them perceive the utility of autonomous learning). (Voller, 1997, p. 102)

In the same vein, Littlewood (1997) suggests that teachers can help students use self-access centres to develop three kinds of autonomy in language learning, namely, autonomy as a learner, communicator and person. The first type of autonomy can be developed by encouraging the use of learning strategies and practising independent work, which can be clearly linked to the

technical perspective of LA. In contrast, autonomy as a communicator refers to helping students use language creatively to communicate their meanings by using communicative strategies. Therefore, it can be said that this type of support helps students in constructing the meaning according to their needs; it does so via the medium of communicative strategies. Thus, teachers in this role develop LA in both its technical and psychological versions.

Littlewood (1997) demonstrated that autonomy as a learner and communicator assists students to develop autonomy as a person, which means expressing their personal meanings and creating personal contexts for learning. Thus, these kinds of autonomy overlap in practice. Training students to develop communicative strategies not only promotes autonomy as a communicator but also as a learner, offering a range of learning strategies by which, for example, students can deal with different texts or conversations. Likewise, the creative use of language, which serves to develop autonomy as a communicator, is also linked to allowing students to express their personal meanings, which consequently supports them to devise personal learning contexts.

This section reviewed the various approaches to how LA can be implemented in classrooms and showed how they indicate different realisations of LA. This is because teachers in the current study are asked about what they do to develop LA, as well as what they think it is, with their practices reflecting their conceptualisations of LA as demonstrated by the discussion above. Therefore, the next section considers the significance of investigating teachers' and students' beliefs in Second and Foreign Language SL/FL.

2.6 The importance of investigating beliefs in Second/Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

The importance of investigating beliefs in a second/foreign language learning and teaching context lies in that 'they may influence the processes and the outcomes of second/foreign

language learning/acquisition' (Kalaja & Barcelos, 2006, p. 1). Students' beliefs largely affect their approach to learning, as well as contributing to their achievements, because beliefs are 'the best indicators of the decisions individuals make throughout their lives' (Pajares, 1992, p. 307). The same applies to teachers' beliefs that are inevitable parts of teacher planning and decisions about classroom practices. Previously, students' beliefs have been described as misconceptions (Horwitz, 1987) and 'incorrect knowledge that learners have acquired about language, learning and the language learning process' (Wenden, 1987, p. 163). They are often evaluated in relation to scholars' opinion in the field of second language acquisition. That is, if they do not conform to established options in research, then they are erroneous. However, this classification of beliefs based on right and wrong is an outdated view that can be challenged for neglecting the subjective nature of beliefs in a certain context. Instead, students' beliefs need to be seen as interpretations of their context (Barcelos, 2006). According to Kalaja and Barcelos (2006), there has recently been a growing interest in beliefs in the applied linguistics research field since the focus is on learners and their contribution to second/foreign languages. This indicates a change in the value given to students' beliefs from considering them as mistakes needed to be corrected to keys that help understand a certain context from their perspective. According to Barcelos (2006), researchers should triangulate their methods to recognise students' emic perspective in a specific context. The same applies to teachers' beliefs that guide their practices, which may influence and be influenced by students' beliefs as they interact in the classroom. Stapleton and Shao (2018) argued that both students and teachers 'have come to be understood as . . . being situated in a context, whose behaviours make sense only when their needs, attitudes, beliefs, self-images, motivation, ideologies and identities are considered' (p. 363). This is because they considered that research in beliefs about language teaching and learning is also affected by the movement

from focussing on individuals' cognitive aspects to considering the sociocultural features that affect individuals in a context. Having explained the importance of beliefs in ESL/EFL contexts, in the next section, the thesis considered their definition in literature before demonstrating their conceptualisation in the study.

2.7 Defining the nature of beliefs

Beliefs are often associated with other terms like knowledge, action, attitudes and values, which lead to a variety of ways to define, determine and describe the nature of beliefs used in the literature. Such variation in the belief construct has led several researchers to describe them as messy (Pajares, 1992, p. 307) and elusive (Barcelos, 2006, p. 1). Therefore, it is useful to identify the relationship between beliefs and the previous terms, aiming to clarify the confusion around them.

Beginning with the difference between knowledge and beliefs, Borg (2003) stated that these two concepts can be distinguished based on 'the truth element'. That is, knowledge is objective and factual; therefore, the truth element is considered in 'some external sense' (Borg, 2003, p. 186). Unlike knowledge, beliefs are subjective, experiential and depend on what the belief holder accepts as true, even if it is not what others might agree with. This means that the belief holder will refer to his/her own thinking, experience, feeling and evaluation. Therefore, beliefs include a judgemental component (Borg, 2003; Pajares, 1992). Wenden (1999) acknowledged the individual nature of beliefs and that they are value laden, but she considered them a 'subset of metacognitive knowledge' (p. 436). In contrast, Woods (2006) argued that knowledge refers to how things are, and if we admit that beliefs have a value judgement, then they point to both how things are and how things should be. For this reason, knowledge is a subset of beliefs. This

argument supports Rokeach's (1968) earlier thoughts on beliefs as having a cognitive element known as knowledge. The current study lends support to the second argument and considers knowledge an element within belief. The difference between beliefs and knowledge can be used to justify, for example, why teachers in the same school who received the same training make different choices in their teaching practice, indicating that although they have similar knowledge, they hold different beliefs—which may still be related to each other. Beliefs filter knowledge as they construe a new phenomenon or knowledge (Pajares, 1992) and determine how it can be utilised (Nespor, 1987).

According to Rokeach (1968), beliefs comprise a behavioural component. They not only choose the intellectual tools that help interpret new knowledge but also define and guide behaviour or action. Accordingly, they are instrumental in the role they play in both knowledge and behaviour (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992). Actions, statements and intentions to behave in a certain manner may all be used as inferences to discover the unobservable construct, beliefs (Rokeach, 1968). It is worth noting that the way the relationship between beliefs and action is viewed is crucial in determining researchers' conceptualisations of beliefs. According to Pajares (1992), earlier approaches to research in beliefs, as in Horwitz's (1985) and Wenden's (1987) studies, have been criticised for viewing beliefs as affecting action only in a cause-effect relationship and separating them from the context. In this sense, the belief-formation process is in the mind.

Another conceptualisation of beliefs is found in Bandura's (1986) triadic reciprocality model of self-efficacy beliefs. In this model, beliefs are in a reciprocal relationship with their components, namely, behaviour, cognition and other personal or environmental factors. This means that there is a mutual relationship between the three factors rather than a linear cause-and-effect one. This

suggests that beliefs are changeable as they are in a constant relationship with the context. Thus, research on beliefs needs to consider that they should no longer be seen as static mental constructs, but instead, they are formed within a context and change according to it (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2006). In addition, reciprocity in this model does not necessarily indicate that all the factors in the context have the same influence. According to Bandura (1986), we may find that when personal factors are influential in the regulatory system, the environmental barriers are not strong. Thus, it can be said that Bandura's (1986) model offers justification of the mismatches between beliefs and actions. For example, teachers may believe in something but not implement it in their instructional practice due to powerful contextual issues in a certain educational setting.

Beliefs should be viewed as a proper system. Rokeach (1968) illustrated that the belief system constitutes attitudes and values. The involvement of beliefs in decision making turns them into values, while the cluster of beliefs around a certain situation with an imperative inclination to action comprises attitudes. The difference between beliefs, values and attitudes is in line with the above discussion since it accounts for the evaluative and behavioural roles of beliefs. Nevertheless, it is important to think of beliefs as a system that is related to another wider context. For example, some students' beliefs may be connected to family, school or society. This suggests that beliefs are sensitive to contexts. Thus, studying beliefs should consider the speciality of the context in which they are investigated as it might positively or negatively affect these beliefs.

Barcelos and Kalaja (2011) argued that beliefs are complex and dialectical. This is because of their paradoxical nature. They are social because they are constructed socially, while at the same time, they are individual as they vary from person to person. This means that, although belief is

considered one of the psychological individual differences (Dörnyei, 2007), significant others in social interaction may help form a new belief or strengthen an old one (Navarro & Thornton, 2011). Beliefs are at once rational, as they have logic, and emotional—as Borg (2001) suggested—in that they are influenced by emotions. He also mentioned that beliefs could be held consciously or unconsciously. Beliefs are also seen as available tools for students or teachers; sometimes, they decide whether to appeal to them depending on the situation, task and people involved. Having reviewed how beliefs are defined in the literature, the discussion proceeds to demonstrate how they are conceptualised in the study.

2.8 The current study conceptualisation of beliefs

The study acknowledges that cognition and action are important components in researching beliefs. It also accounts for the context in considering the factors that influence the participants' beliefs negatively and positively in the Saudi secondary schools context. For the current study, Bandura's (1986) model indicates that investigating teachers' and students' beliefs about LA is crucial in this transitional time in Saudi Arabia since the context is part of these beliefs, while beliefs are interpretations of the Saudi context. Even if they exist in a way that is different from what the literature suggests, they are specific to the EFL context in Saudi secondary school, which is part of and contributes to the wider TESOL and Applied Linguistics fields. The study agrees that beliefs are changeable in nature according to context, and it explores these beliefs in a specific time and context, especially after a key transition time in the educational system in Saudi Arabia. The conceptualisation of beliefs in this study involves what teachers and students think and do about LA. This conceptualisation is considered in the design of both the research instruments, discussed in the methodology chapter. Given that the current study takes place in a non-Western

context, it is worth touching on the discussion of LA and cultural settings before reviewing the previous studies in different EFL contexts.

2.9 LA and culture

There is a debate on whether LA is an ethnocentric concept or whether it is appropriate for application to non-Western contexts (Holliday, 2005; Pennycook, 1997; Riley, 1988). This section considers the different ways people relate to LA in Western and non-Western contexts to elucidate the 'associations between autonomy and language students' (Holliday, 2005, p. 110).

There are three different approaches to LA and how it is viewed in relation to particular cultural settings, namely, the native-speakerism, cultural relativist and social autonomy approaches (Holliday, 2003, p. 116). The first approach assumes that 'we' (native speakers) are autonomous in our educational context, in contrast to 'them' (non-Western students from other contexts). According to this approach, autonomy is seen as a Western concept that 'other' students are inappropriate for. At the same time, they (non-Westerners) can be taught how to be autonomous by 'corrective training'. Only students who act like native speakers and conform to the image drawn by them in their Western cultures can be considered autonomous. This approach holds a problematic conceptualisation of the learner as an operative to the plan of the teacher that focusses on certain technical needs rather than the real needs of the students.

The second approach emphasises the fact that each culture is different from others, and therefore, it is not sensible to expect that they (non-natives) will be autonomous in the same way as us (native speakers). As such, Pennycook (1997) suggested using 'cultural alternatives' (p. 35). This means creating and developing special methodologies that are appropriate for them. Unlike the first approach, which refuses the possibility of LA in non-Western contexts, the second

approach accepts the idea that it can be employed in any culture. Moreover, while the native-speakerism approach assumes the superiority of 'our culture' against 'theirs', a cultural relativist approach respects the individuality of each culture.

In contrast to cultural relativism, the social autonomy approach respects the different ways by which learners show their autonomy. It assumes that 'autonomy resides in the social worlds of the students, which they bring with them from their lives outside the classroom. [These are] often hidden by learning activities' (Holliday, 2003, p. 116). This also means that our professionalism should not consider the cultural stereotypes, but rather, see people as they really are. It can be said that this approach avoids culturalism in three ways:

- It neither starts with a description of a certain culture from a particular part of the world nor assumes that autonomy is mainly Western or related to other cultures;

- It is not affected by native speakerism, which highly influences TESOL professionalism, but goes beyond that to what students really bring with them from their worlds; and

- It assumes that autonomy is universal unless evidence is found to prove the opposite—and if it is not reflected immediately in student behaviour, this may be due to something that does not allow us to see it; thus, people are treated equally.

For the current study, the above discussion indicates that LA is not exclusive to a certain culture, for example, Western contexts, but instead, it can be explored in any situation. Based on that, the current study reviews the previous relevant empirical studies on students' and teachers' beliefs about LA in different EFL educational contexts in the next section.

2.10 Review of empirical studies on LA in different EFL contexts

In this section, the review is based on the following key themes: the desirability and feasibility of implementing LA, teacher and student roles in autonomous learning and the facilitators and barriers of LA in different contexts.

2.10.1 Desirability and feasibility of implementing LA

This section reviews a recurrent theme in researching LA in language teaching and learning, which is the practicability and desire to engage students in different areas regarding their learning. The studies described in this section have indicated that, although teachers say they would like to involve students in different areas of the course, their desire is not reflected in their practice. Borg and Al-Busaidi's (2012) study explored the beliefs of 200 teachers' about LA in the Omani university context. In their study, LA was investigated as student involvement in a range of language course decisions, such as classroom management, teaching methods, assessment, topics, activities, material and objectives. The researchers' main finding was that, generally, teachers were more convinced of the desirability of LA than its feasibility in all the previous areas of language course decisions. In addition, teachers did not think students could be autonomous in areas like objectives and assessment as they had the lowest feasibility in the study. This result was also reported by Duong's (2014) study with 30 teachers in the Thai university context, as well as Alibakhshi, Keikha and Nezakatgoo's (2015) study involving 120 Iranian secondary school teachers.

The feasibility of students' choice is different from one context to another. The results of these three studies were contradictory regarding the feasibility of students' involvement in choosing the type of activity, topic and teaching methods. While the choice of the activity type and topic were seen as the most feasible for Omani teachers (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012), according to

Alibakhshi et al. (2015), these areas were unfeasible in the Iranian school context. Similarly, allowing students' choices of teaching methods was regarded as unfeasible in the Thai university context (Duong, 2014), while it was feasible in both the Omani (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012) and Iranian (Alibakhshi et al., 2015) contexts. In Iraq, Alzeebaree and Yavuz's (2016) study indicated that Iraqi teachers in intermediate and secondary schools, as well as universities, consider selecting the textbook and deciding the time and place of the lesson as unfeasible in their context. In other words, they did not allow their students to make these decisions.

Two conclusions can be made from these findings. First, there is a difference between the desirability and feasibility of implementing LA in the EFL teaching context, where the former tends to be higher. Second, LA is perceived and constructed differently in EFL contexts. It is also noticed that the above studies in this theme addressed the desirability and feasibility only according to teachers' beliefs. How teachers and students view their roles in learning and teaching is considered next since this indicates where responsibilities are placed in a certain context.

2.10.2 Teachers' and students' role in the development of LA

This section investigates how teachers' and students' roles are perceived in different studies. The studies reviewed in relation to this theme indicated that assessment, teaching methods and lesson objectives are exclusively considered the teacher's role by students. According to Joshi (2011), university students in Nepal view the teacher role as mainly related to error correction and deciding both the content of learning and teaching method. This result was also found in students' beliefs in Yildirim's (2012) study, where the researcher interviewed four Indian university students in the United States. They added course planning and activities as areas reserved for the teacher's role.

University students' beliefs regarding their role were seen only as related to evaluating themselves in Nepal (Joshi, 2011), the United States (Yildirim, 2012) and Turkey (Bekleyen & Selimoğlus, 2016). Yildirim (2012) added that learning outside the class is another area students believe they are responsible for.

Areas like stimulating students' interest and ensuring students' progress were considered shared responsibilities between the students and teachers in the studies by Yildirim (2012) and Bekleyen and Selimoğlus (2016). Likewise, for Emirati students, this shared responsibility was generally viewed as related to the development in learning as they were found to believe in their teachers' roles as facilitators and counsellors (Al Ghazali, 2011).

Ultimately, the assessment, teaching methods and lesson objectives are mainly viewed as the teacher's role as indicated by students' beliefs, whereas they view their role in LA as related to self-evaluation. They also refer to shared areas of responsibility between them and their teachers like increasing the students' interest in English and assuring students' development in learning. It is observed that the studies reviewed here considered only students' beliefs regarding different roles in learning and teaching. The facilitating and hindering factors are discussed next because they are part of teachers' and students' views of LA.

2.10.3 Facilitators and barriers of LA in students' and teachers' beliefs

This section considers the factors that positively and negatively influence LA according to three classifications, namely, factors related to the educational system, the learner and the teacher.

2.10.3.1 Factors related to the educational system

In this section, three factors are reviewed in relation to the educational system. These are as follows: teaching practices and the examination system, the curriculum and time. Teaching

traditions and exam systems are considered by many researchers as major factors that affect both students' and teachers' beliefs about LA. Teachers in the secondary school context in Japan (Nakata, 2011) and Iran (Alibakhshi et al., 2015) reported that teacher-centred teaching traditions lead students to be over-reliant on teachers, minimising the students' level of autonomy in learning. The same result was found in teachers' beliefs in the university context in Iran (Xhaferi & Xhaferi, 2011). In addition, exams in secondary schools in Japan (Nakata, 2011) and Iran (Nasri et al., 2015), as well as the university context in Nepal (Joshi, 2011), were identified as barriers limiting LA in teachers' perceptions.

The curriculum is another key factor identified in relation to students' and teachers' beliefs about LA. Although the ways in which curriculum was discussed were different, it was considered as a barrier to LA in all the studies reviewed in secondary schools (Alibakhshi et al., 2015; Nakata, 2011; Nasri et al., 2015) in Japanese and Iranian contexts. The same was found in the university context in Oman (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012). Beginning with the early stage of choosing the curriculum, according to Nasri et al. (2015), teachers in Iran are not involved, but rather, they are given a prescribed curriculum; this affects teacher autonomy negatively and influences their ability to encourage student autonomy in learning. The Japanese secondary school curriculum was criticised by teachers for its goals that did not encourage LA (Nakata, 2011). Similarly, in Iran, the curriculum content was seen as a reason for problems found in learners' attitudes and motivation according to Iranian teachers (Alibakhshi et al., 2015). In Oman, the curriculum was also described as overloaded, putting teachers under pressure to communicate it in a relatively short time, leaving little time for them to promote LA in their teaching practices (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012).

Another factor that affects implementing LA in practice is time. Teachers in secondary school in Japan (Nakata, 2011) and the university context in Nepal (Joshi, 2011) considered lack of time as an obstacle that decreased their implementation of LA in practice, particularly because of the high density of the curriculum. This view was also shared by university students in Iran (Farahani, 2014).

In conclusion, teaching practices, the examination system and the English curriculum are seen as barriers for LA development by teachers and students in various EFL contexts. The English curriculum is considered a hindrance for different reasons related to the exclusion of teachers' choice; its objectives, content and high density, leave teachers little time to embrace LA in their practices. Having reviewed studies that relate to the effects of the curriculum and examination system on the development of LA, the next section considers how learners work as a factor to influence LA.

2.10.3.2 Factors related to the learners

In this section, two factors are reviewed in relation to learners. These are learner motivation and learner training. Motivation is reported as a factor that affects LA in many contexts. Xhaferi and Xhaferi (2011), Joshi (2011) and Arshiyan and Pishkar (2015) reported that teachers regard it as an important learner factor that positively helps LA to develop in the university context. According to Bekleyen and Selimoğlus (2016), students with a higher motivational level tend to use more autonomous learning activities. Likewise, the absence of student motivation is a barrier to LA development in the university context according to both teachers' beliefs in Oman (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012) and students' beliefs in Iran (Farahani, 2014).

Learner training on using independent learning skills was found as a facilitator of LA in teachers' beliefs in the university context in Oman (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012) and Malaysia (Yunus & Arshad, 2014). Humphreys and Wyatt (2013) trained Vietnamese university students to use an independent language journal and found an increased level of student awareness and practice of LA.

To summarise, the level of student motivation defines whether it is a facilitator or an obstacle according to teachers' and students' beliefs. Training students to use independent learning skills is seen as contributing positively to LA development in different EFL contexts. Having reviewed how learners are considered a factor affecting LA, the discussion proceeds to address teachers as a factor in the next section.

2.10.3.3 Factors related to the teacher

The factors considered in this section are concerned with teacher training and teaching experience. Researchers like Yunus and Arshad (2014) and Nasri et al. (2015) describe teacher training as an important determinant in university teachers' beliefs to implement LA in their teaching instruction in Malaysia and Iran, respectively. In these studies, teachers reported that lacking proper support and training for LA is an impediment that limits its use in their teaching. In Oman, Al-Busaidi and Al-Maamri (2014) conducted a qualitative study to explore the approaches and informative sources of teachers' beliefs about LA in a university context. Their findings showed that pre- and in-service teacher training is key to teachers' understanding of LA because they read for research, attend conferences and do presentations and projects, and all these activities contribute to their professional development.

Teachers' experience is another contributing factor to their conceptualising of LA. Al-Busaidi and Al-Maamri (2014) reported that teachers' reflection on their teaching experience and their observation of their students in class shape their understanding of LA. Teachers also refer to their experience as EFL learners and as parents in their children's learning experience. Thus, teacher-training programmes and teachers' experiences generate input for their beliefs about LA. Given all the themes reviewed in this section, an overall conclusion is provided next, summarising the main points.

2.11 Summary of empirical studies in different EFL contexts

The overall conclusion regarding the reviewed studies in different EFL contexts is that LA is conceptualised in different ways that are then reflected in teachers' and students' beliefs. Teachers generally believe more in the desirability of implementing LA than its feasibility in their teaching practices. The feasibility of LA varies according to the EFL context, but generally, teachers believe that allowing for LA in assessments and lesson objectives is unfeasible. For students, these two areas, together with the teaching method, are exclusive to the teacher role; students view their role in LA as related to self-evaluation. They also deem themselves and their teachers as both responsible for the development of LA and increasing their interest in learning English. Concerning the factors influencing the development of LA, teachers and students believe that teaching practices, the examination system and the English curriculum are obstacles, while learner training on independent skills contributes positively to LA development. They also consider motivation as a facilitator or barrier of LA depending on its level. Teacher-training programmes and teacher experience are seen as promoters of beliefs about LA. Having reviewed the previous studies in different EFL contexts, in the next section, the thesis considers studies in the Saudi context to develop a sense of how LA is viewed by Saudi teachers and students.

2.12 Review of empirical studies on LA in the Saudi context

This section focusses on reviewing the previous studies about LA in Saudi Arabia as the current study takes place in this country. The review is based on two themes, namely, the assessment of LA and teachers' and students' beliefs about LA.

2.12.1 The assessment of LA

The studies discussed in this section considered the evaluation of Saudi students' real level of LA. AlAsmari (2013) explored 60 EFL teachers' beliefs on their students' readiness for LA, their teaching strategies, the challenges they faced in developing them and whether there was any difference between male and female teachers' perceptions of LA in an English language centre at a university in Saudi Arabia. It was found that teachers acknowledged that their students pay attention to their performance, but they evaluated their students' abilities towards LA as low. Teachers were also focussing more on communicative skills and organising group discussions, and they were in favour of learner-centred approaches in their teaching practices. They further reported a lack of facilities, a poor level of learners' responsibility in learning, a lack of theoretical support in teachers' training programmes and a lack of reflection in teaching and learning as areas that need more improvement to promote LA in Saudi context. No difference was found between male and female teachers in their teaching strategies, while there was slight variation between them in describing their students' abilities to engage in LA without mentioning the reason for this difference. That is, male teachers were less likely to see students' LA abilities as high. For developing LA in the future, teachers mentioned that it is crucial for them to improve the teaching and learning process.

Using AlAsmari's (2013) questionnaire, Asiri and Shukri (2018) studied female teachers' beliefs about LA in Saudi Arabia. The study involved 50 teachers at King Abdulaziz University. Their findings are in line with AlAsmari's (2013) study, except they added two open-ended questions to the research instrument related to the practices teachers use to foster LA and difficulties they may face implementing LA in their classes. The thematic analysis of these questions revealed teachers' belief that a strong encouragement to learn autonomously can be maintained by adopting a learner-centred approach and encouraging students' engagement in groupwork. They also contended that concentrating on the four language skills can contribute to helping their students promote LA. The challenges in their beliefs were related to time, the institution, teachers, learners' effort and level. The most influential factor in teachers' beliefs was learners' poor English level, which they thought was a challenge to their implementation of LA in their teaching practices.

Tamer (2013) studied the readiness of 121 male Saudi students for autonomous learning in their preparatory year at a Saudi university. He also tried to identify the constraints of LA in this context. The results showed that students perceived low levels of responsibility regarding their English learning as they depended on their teachers in the class. However, they regarded themselves as responsible for learning outside the class and were motivated to develop LA and confident in their abilities to be in charge of their learning. According to Tamer (2013), this contrast in students' beliefs about responsibility and ability in learning may be justified: Although the students reported their confidence in their abilities, in practice, they may be reluctant to perform responsibly. The students suggested more practice of listening and speaking with authentic, interesting material rather than following prescribed syllabi, the use of technology in the classrooms and reducing the long class times in the preparatory year. The interviews with the

teachers demonstrated that half the teachers believed their students could be autonomous only if the appropriate required conditions were met. They thought their students were not motivated enough, and they mentioned that the main hurdles to LA at the Saudi university level were related to administrative restrictions that did not allow for teacher autonomy, the rote learning tradition and students' low level of English skills.

Alrabai (2017a) examined the readiness of 186 female and 133 male Saudi EFL learners for autonomous learning of English. The sample included participants in intermediate and secondary schools, as well as in universities. This was followed by 15 individual interviews. The findings revealed that Saudi students show satisfactory awareness of LA as reflected in their recognition of the importance of LA to EFL learning and their characterisation of autonomous learners as motivated, enthusiastic, participating and asking questions and learning on their own in and outside class. However, the researcher considered Saudi learners non-autonomous because they are highly dependent on their teachers; only 17.27% of the students reported they held sole responsibility for their learning. Therefore, although students reported high levels of confidence and motivation, Alrabai considered these levels misleading and inconsistent with how the students perceived responsibility in their learning. Thus, the study can be criticised for its conceptualisation of LA as full responsibility, where it is confused with individualisation, in which there is no role of the teacher (see Section 2.2).

Alrabai (2017b) conducted a study that surveyed 327 female and 303 male students in intermediate and secondary schools, as well as universities, in Saudi Arabia. The study intended to evaluate students' real level of LA and its relationship to academic achievement. The results indicated that students are not autonomous and low EFL academic achievers. It was also found

that female students demonstrate a higher level of LA and EFL academic achievement compared with their male counterparts.

In Alrabai's (2017a, 2017b) studies, the context can be criticised for the inclusion of intermediate and secondary schools and university without considering the sensitivity of LA to the context. In other words, researching LA in the school setting is not equivalent to the university context, which may have distinct implications for how the participants in these settings perceive LA; thus, neglecting to separate the contexts may have muddied the clarity of the results.

Alzubi, Singh and Pandian (2017) investigated students' beliefs about their practices of LA during their preparatory year at Najran University. A questionnaire was administered to 208 male participants. The descriptive results indicated that Saudi students reflect their ability to study independently; their knowledge about their beliefs, tasks and strategy; and their use of different sources to find information. They exhibited medium average scores in aspects like self-reliance, metacognition and information literacy. The students also had low scores on scales like linguistic competence and locus of control, reflecting their weak confidence in approaching the target language and their low ability to make choice in their learning.

The aforementioned studies were conducted to measure students' level of LA. The main assessment of LA level by students and teachers was that it was low, based on the students' effort, English level and responsibility towards their learning. Both groups also identified the barriers to the development of LA in the Saudi context as related to teaching traditions, lack of motivation and reduced class time in university. Teachers added the lack of training, lack of reflection on their teaching and administrative restrictions as challenges for adopting the development of LA in their practices. In contrast, the use of technology in the classroom and authentic material were

seen as facilitators of LA in students' beliefs. Having reviewed Saudi students' level of LA, the thesis moves on to examining teachers' and students' understandings of LA in Saudi Arabia in the next section.

2.12.2 Teachers' and students' beliefs about LA

This section reviews teachers' and students' interpretations of LA in Saudi Arabia. In a mixed-method study by Alrabai (2017c), he investigated Saudi EFL teachers' perspectives on LA. A questionnaire was administered to 136 teachers in a Saudi institution, and then 14 interviews involving female and male participants were conducted. It is not clear whether the teachers in his study taught in intermediate or secondary schools or university. The findings of the descriptive analysis indicated that the teachers' perspectives tended to be more attached to the psychological perspective of LA (Benson, 1997), and in their interviews, most teachers suggested that they perceived LA as total independence. The study is valuable in articulating these views; however, it appears that the political orientation was not included in the work. The study also showed that most Saudi teachers considered themselves responsible for most parts of learning, while some reported that they were not responsible for areas like lesson objectives, learning tasks and teaching methods, believing such areas are covered in the prescribed curriculum. The barriers for promoting LA in the Saudi contexts according to their beliefs related to learners—for example, learners only wanting to pass exams and being over-reliant on teachers. In addition, lack of teacher training, the density of the curriculum and insufficient time allotted for English classes and overcrowded classes were seen as contextual factors in the Saudi context.

In a new approach to LA, Alonazi (2017) worked through consideration of teacher roles. She investigated four roles of teachers in promoting LA, namely, those of facilitator, counsellor,

resource and manager. She also explored the barriers and solutions relating to LA in teacher practices. The study involved 60 teachers in secondary schools in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The findings suggested that, although teachers play the four roles in their teaching, according to their beliefs, the most frequent role was being a resource and advising students to use different learning materials. The barriers they reported were students' lack of skills for autonomous learning and the rules and regulations of schools, which restrict the teachers' freedom in choices regarding their teaching. The study used a quantitative instrument to target teachers' beliefs.

Another way of researching LA was found in Javid's (2018) study. He conducted a gender-based investigation to compare female and male university teachers' perceptions about the factors influencing LA. Specifically, he considered their perceptions regarding textbook and study materials, the teacher's support in language learning, learning strategies used by students and students' motivation and self-assessment. The study involved 30 female and 30 male participants who responded to a questionnaire. Teachers in this study showed positive attitudes towards the importance of LA in language pedagogy and supported the implementation of LA in their classrooms. The findings also revealed that teachers' support in language learning received the highest importance as an effective factor in promoting LA. This was followed by the role of the textbook and study material, then students' learning strategies as influential factors that affect the development of LA. The lowest factor ranked in their perception was Saudi EFL students' motivation and self-evaluation compared with the previous three factors. Regarding gender differences, only 6 out of 35 items reflected significant statistical differences in the t-test results. These items were as follows:

- The study material and activities should be according to the prior experience of students;

- EFL teachers should assign home-based language tasks and projects to students;

- Group work is a better strategy in learning English;

- A sense of harmony can be developed while working in a group;

- Saudi EFL identify their own strength and weaknesses;

-Saudi EFL students want to be the best in the English class'. (Javid, 2018, pp. 316–320)

The researcher did not justify the reason for such differences; however, it may be related to the idea that female students are evaluated as more autonomous than their male counterparts are. This was also found in Alrabai's (2017b) study.

Another comparison was made by Halabi (2018), but here, the gender was fixed as all the participants were females. This researcher examined teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in the context of the English Language Institute at King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. A questionnaire was administered to 44 teachers and 480 students; interviews were conducted with 16 teachers and 15 students. The students were all in their first preparatory year in a state university. The main findings showed that the teachers seemed to view LA as linked to the educational setting while students tend to associate it with informal settings and everyday practice. Regarding the effectiveness of autonomous practices in the classroom, students considered developing their communicative skills as essential for their language, which helped them engage actively in class. Teachers, in contrast, failed to understand this need, as they tended to think that students lacked interest in English class and only cared about passing exams. Another mismatch found between teachers' and students' beliefs related to the description of autonomous learners. Teachers believed that having positive attitudes towards learning and being self-motivated were the main characteristics of autonomous learners. They also referred to high intelligence and academic level. These descriptions were not reflected in students' beliefs as

they consider the effective use of study skills and learning strategies to be the points that truly distinguish autonomous learners. They also referred to having a strong personality as being bold and not afraid to make mistakes in their characterisation of autonomous learners. Another area of conflict was teachers' and students' beliefs on their relationship with each other. It is surprising to find that teachers in this study wanted to develop a friendship with their students, whereas some students were reluctant to do that as they preferred a formal relationship that respected teachers' authority. The personal attributes of the learner, teacher-centred approaches, lack of teacher autonomy and teachers' knowledge on how to promote LA were seen as barriers to LA. This study had the advantage of comparing teachers' and students' beliefs utilising mixed methods.

It is noticeable that, although the studies reviewed in this section studied LA after the educational reform in Saudi Arabia, there is no distinct reference to it despite the promising changes to adopting and encouraging LA in this context, as described in Chapter 1. In sum, the above studies show that is LA conceptualised differently by teachers. That is, for some teachers, it means total independence, while for others, it is a capacity to learn. Both teachers and students see learning strategies and study skills as an important facilitator of LA development. They also believe that personal attributes of the learner either foster or inhibit such development. In addition, both consider teacher-centred approaches as a hindrance to LA. However, there are differences between teachers' and students' beliefs in the university context, in addition to gender, in relation to LA in the comparative studies.

2.13 Summary of empirical studies on LA in Saudi context

In conclusion, the aforementioned studies in the Saudi Arabian context address two points, namely, the assessment of students' level of LA and students' and teachers' beliefs about LA. They show that Saudi students demonstrate a low level of LA for different reasons. The studies also indicate variations in the way teachers perceive LA and how teachers and students perceive LA in the university context. However, teachers and students have the same opinions of some facilitators and barriers. Teacher-centred approaches, low level of motivation and time are seen as obstacles for LA development. In contrast, learning strategies and study skills are perceived as facilitators that promote LA. Furthermore, the personal characteristics of the learner are considered by both groups to represent an important factor that may help or limit LA. For teachers, the institutions' restrictions, lack of teacher-training programmes and lack reflective approach to teaching are hindrances for their implementation of LA in their teaching practices. Comparative studies between male and female participants have indicated that gender is a factor influencing LA. Having reviewed the previous studies at the thematic level, the discussion proceeds to consider the conclusions regarding the sample and methodology of previous research to highlight the gaps in the literature.

2.14 Remarks regarding the previous empirical research to date/research significance

Based on the review discussed above, some points can be made in relation to the research methodology, sample and context level. At the methodological level, previous studies tended to assume a particular view of LA as most depended on questionnaires to investigate teachers' or students' beliefs (e.g. AlAsmari, 2013; Alibakhshi et al., 2015; Alonazi, 2017; Al-Rabai, 2017a, 2017b; Alzubi et al., 2017; Asiri & Shukri, 2018; Duong, 2014; Javid, 2018; Yunus & Arshad, 2014). At the research sample level, little work has been done in secondary schools compared with the

university context. In addition, research on investigating students' beliefs about LA is relatively low compared with teachers' beliefs. Furthermore, a great deal of the reviewed studies on LA either studied teachers' beliefs or students' beliefs. There have been few studies considering both teachers' and students' beliefs (e.g. Halabi, 2018; Joshi, 2011; Tamer, 2013; Xhaferi & Xhaferi, 2011), and such studies that exist all target the university context. At the contextual level, the previous studies in Saudi Arabia did not refer to the current changes towards LA in the Saudi educational context. As such, to the best of my knowledge, no study has provided a comprehensive picture of LA from both teachers' and students' perspectives in the given context, namely, secondary schools in general and Saudi schools in particular. To this end, the current research aims to address the gaps in literature by exploring teachers' and students' interpretations and practices of LA in parallel in the same context. The timing of the study adds to its significance as it studies LA in a critical period of change in the Saudi educational system.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a discussion of the research paradigm and the rationale for its use in the current study. Then the study design, research setting and sample are considered. Next, the research instruments used in the study are discussed, together with the way they were developed, piloted, amended and translated, as well as how the data obtained will be analysed in the chapters that follow. Finally, this chapter concludes with the ethical considerations related to the research methodology.

3.2 Research paradigm

As explained in the first chapter, the current study investigated both teachers' and students' beliefs about LA, especially with the introduction of new educational policies toward LA. The findings of this research will contribute to the development of an understanding of the immediate context of LA in secondary schools by indicating what teachers and students think and do about LA. To that end, the current research adopted a pragmatic paradigm that upholds the fitness for purpose principal. According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), priority in the pragmatic view is given to research questions and objectives. In other words, the pragmatic researcher chooses what is necessary and relevant to answer their research questions (Johnson et al., 2007; Punch, 2014; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2010). This means that pragmatism integrates various and complementary data sources (Creswell, 2014). Sale, Lohfeld and Brazil (2002) question the possibility of studying the same phenomenon using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Their argument is based on the belief that combining different methods is impossible because it requires mixing two ontologies and two epistemologies. This is known as the purist stance, which, according to Creswell and Clark (2011), classifies research as either a quantitative (positivist) or qualitative (interpretivist) paradigm. However, this polarisation of research into categories of either/or is challenged by Ercikan and Roth (2006). They argue that the paradigms are compatible with each other and incorporating both increase the productivity and meaningfulness of research. Thus, this study follows the pragmatic paradigm, as it was determined to be the best fit for answering the research questions and attaining the research objectives, and because reliance on one method is inadequate to depict the complexity of LA in the Saudi context. The study used the flexibility of this paradigm by incorporating qualitative and quantitative approaches in data collection and analysis to understand how LA is recognised by EFL teachers and students in Saudi secondary schools. The next section considers the ontological, epistemological and methodological framework of the current study.

3.2.1 Research ontology

Ontology refers to beliefs about the nature of reality (Creswell, 2013; Greene and Hall, 2010). The pragmatic inquiry views reality as diverse and changeable, allowing the researchers to choose what method works best for their investigation. Since pragmatism is described as a real-world, practical orientation (Creswell, 2014), the current study is considered to be pragmatic, as it is concerned with the real world phenomenon encountered by EFL teachers and students—that is the advocating of LA in the school context as the new Saudi educational policies suggest. Thus, this study incorporates two ontological perspectives: it explores LA in the context of Saudi EFL, which reflects the interpretivist view of reality as situation-specific and of emergent nature in

teachers' and students' meanings and practices of LA in secondary schools. It also takes into account that the reality of LA might be generalisable, as the positivist view suggests, thus using a large sample of teachers and students to obtain a broader understanding.

3.2.2 Research epistemology

Epistemology encompasses how knowledge is viewed and how the researcher reached it (Creswell, 2013; Greene and Hall, 2010). Because of the pragmatic stance of the current study, both subjective and objective knowledge are considered. The initial interviews and follow-up interviews were used to allow for the subjectivity of the opinion and experiences of the teachers and their students. According to Cohen et al., to obtain knowledge in qualitative methods, the researcher needs to 'get inside the person and to understand from within' (2011, p. 17). The thematic exploration of LA requires the researcher to take an active role and be directly involved in interpreting the data. This study also sought objective knowledge through the use of a questionnaire. This puts the researcher in the position of an observer, using quantitative statistical analysis with minimal involvement in order to encourage research objectivity. By integrating both types of knowledge, the current study provides mixed perspectives to understand the complexity of LA in the Saudi school context.

3.2.3 Research methodology

As practicality is the main characteristic of the pragmatic view, this study uses a mixed-methods approach, which Leech and Onwuegbuzie define as 'collecting, analysing, and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or in a series of studies that investigate the same underlying phenomenon' (2009, p. 265). It is a widely used approach in research for the advantages it offers, as discussed above (Bryman, 2007; Creswell, 2012, 2013).

A mixed-method approach brings the complementary strengths of both the quantitative and qualitative approach to the investigation (Bryman, 2012; Mackey and Gass, 2015). The use of interviews helps to overcome the questionnaire's tendency to decontextualise the research data, as the questionnaire pays less attention to variations among the participants. In the same manner, the use of a questionnaire helps to counter the criticism of the inability of interviews to generate generalisable data with small sample sizes. This study used semi-structured interviews with EFL teachers and students to allow a sensitivity to the Saudi context and to account for the complexity of the teachers and students' interpretations of LA. At the same time, a questionnaire was used to generalise the data and to generate statistical findings.

According to Cohen et al. (2011), mixed-method research helps to provide a more comprehensive understanding than using a single method. The interviews focus more on the possible interpretations offered by teachers and student, and the questionnaire seeks a broader understanding of LA in the Saudi context. Combining both in the study provides a rich and comprehensive view of LA in Saudi secondary schools.

This approach also encourages triangulation, which looks for validation and correspondence in the research results from the different instruments used (Greene et al., 1989). In this study, triangulation was achieved using follow-up interviews. The breadth provided by the questionnaire and the depth explored by the interviews helped to strengthen the validity of the research. This is because, according to Dörnyei, 'words can be used to add meaning to numbers and numbers can be used to add precision to words' (2007, p. 45). The study additionally used triangulation at the level of viewpoints in two ways. First, both the researcher and the participants were involved in the interpretation of findings by the use of member checking, as will be discussed in section

3.5. The study also triangulated the beliefs of the teachers and the students in order to gain a thorough understanding of LA in a Saudi secondary school context. Thus, using mixed methods increases the researcher's confidence in the ability of the findings to generate implications for teachers in the Saudi educational context as well as new research questions for further research.

However, a mixed-method approach has some limitations. First, it requires more effort than a purely qualitative or quantitative approach. This is owing to the complexity of interpreting data from different sources and perspectives, which makes it hard for a single researcher to conduct a mixed-method study (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Second, more time is required for data collection and analysis in this approach compared to conducting research using one approach. Still, the advantages of using mixed methods for the current study surpass the limitations, owing to its ability to answer the research questions, as discussed above. It also helps to increase the significance of this research because, as the literature review indicates, very little research has used this approach to investigate LA. Effective training on the use of mixed methods and time management can help to minimise the limitations of this approach.

3.2.4 Research strategy: sequential design

According to Creswell et al. (2003), there are two main designs for mixed methods studies: concurrent and sequential. In concurrent design, quantitative and qualitative data are collected at the same time. This study used sequential exploratory design, in which qualitative data collection and analysis are done first to inform the design of the second research instrument. In the first stage, semi-structured interviews were conducted with EFL teachers and students in order to overcome the lack of research in secondary schools in general and in the Saudi context

in particular at this transitional time for LA. Thus, the interviews were used to gain useful and deep insights into LA in Saudi secondary schools. In the second phase, the questionnaire was used, which was designed based on both previous studies and the qualitative data. A critical review of the previous literature is as important as the contextual dimension that comes from the interviews because such a design is 'effective in improving the content representation of the survey and thus the internal validity of the study' (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010, p. 110). For a detailed discussion of the design of the questionnaire, see part 3.4.2. The findings obtained from the questionnaire and the main interviews were used to inform the follow-up interviews that took place in the third phase of data collection. These interviews functioned differently than the interviews from the first stage—the follow-up interviews were used to further explore the different reasons and interpretations behind the findings of the two phases, while the interviews in the first phase were used for initial exploration of teachers and students' meanings and practices of LA. All the results from the three stages were combined to answer the research questions. Figure 3.1 shows the interaction of the qualitative and quantitative data sets to answer the research questions.
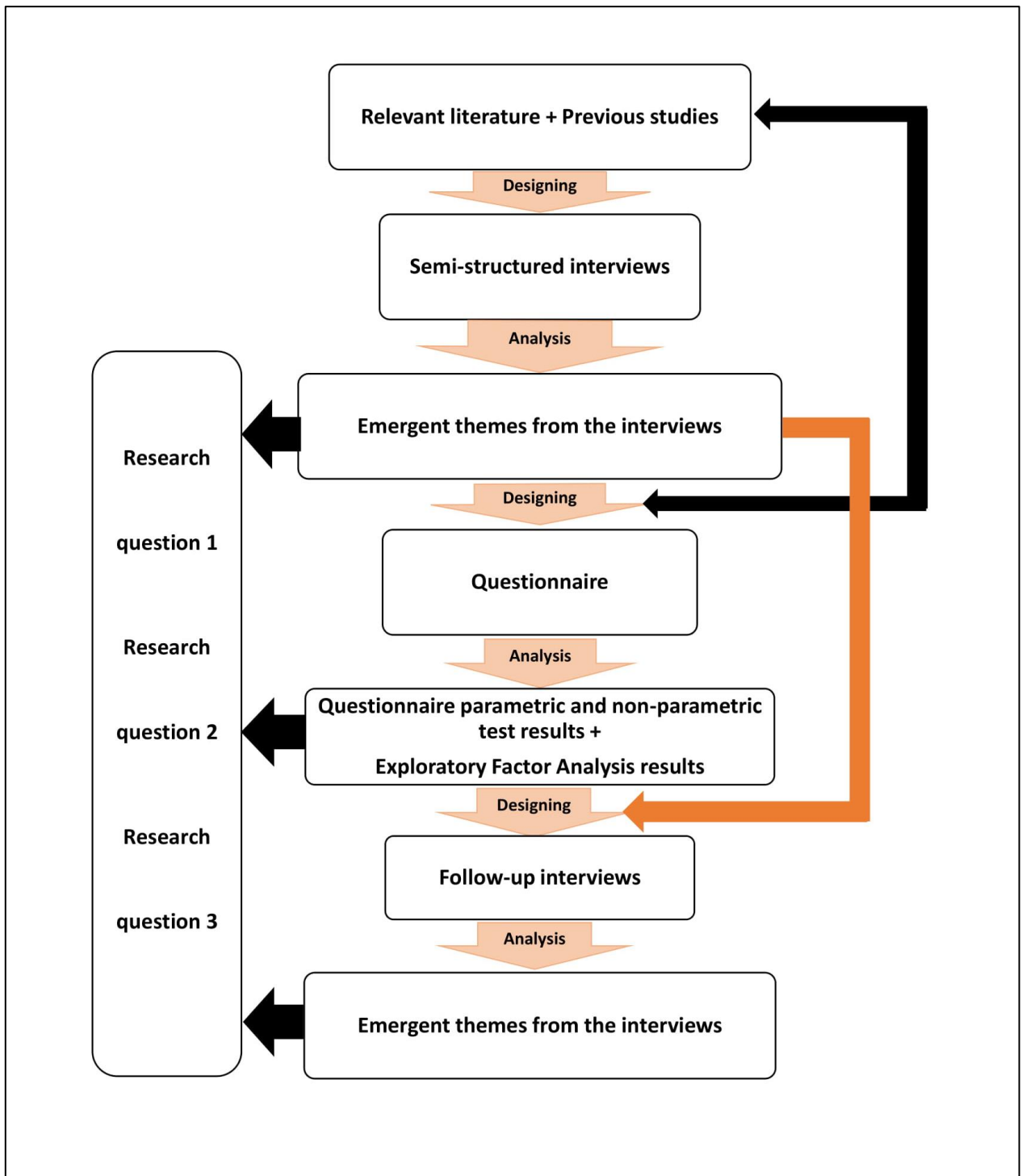
Figure 3.1: The study design

3.3 Research setting and sample

The current study took place in 93 secondary schools in two cities in Saudi Arabia: Tabuk and Medina. Convenience sampling was used, which Mackey and Gass (2005) defined as the data collected from the members of the population who were available at the time of the study. The participants for the main interviews in the first phase were eight EFL female teachers and eight EFL students. For the second phase, the questionnaire was distributed to 329 EFL teachers and 329 EFL students. In the final phase of research, the follow-up interviews involved three EFL teachers and three EFL students. A clear rationale for the participants in each stage will be provided in sections 3.4.1.3, 3.4.2.3 and 3.5.2, as each instrument used is discussed below.

3.4 Data collection tools:

3.4.1 Semi-structured interview:

The most common method used in qualitative research is interviews (Mann, 2016). The choice of individual interviews is probably because, as Kvale noted, they are useful 'to obtain descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of described phenomena' (1996, pp. 5-6). The interviews served three purposes: to gain insight into teachers and students' perspectives and practices on LA, to develop a questionnaire relevant to the Saudi context and to help answer the research questions in the study, as the study design suggests. Individual semi-structured interviews helped identify the variations within the context of Saudi EFL, taking the form of stories or lived experiences about LA, language teaching or language learning in secondary schools. According to Richards, this is particularly beneficial in the TESOL and Applied Linguistics field, which 'brings together people from different educational and

cultural backgrounds' (2003, p. 278), because these variations are seen as the 'richness of a world' (Richards, 2003, p. 39). Semi-structured interviews were conducted because they tend to provide more elaborated responses than completely structured ones (Petty, Thomson and Stew, 2012). The use of prompts is encouraged in semi-structured interviews in order to capture the emergent nature of qualitative data, and prompts also help the conversation progress, building a richer discussion. This type of interview also gives the researcher the freedom to pose the prepared questions in any order that flows with the conversation. It also matches the underlying philosophy of the interview, which is to explore the topic of research rather than to confirm existing knowledge (Richards, 2003). It is true that in semi-structured interviews, the researcher uses an interview guide, but according to Dörnyei (2007), this only serves to remind the researcher to cover the areas intended in the study, while still allowing the interviewee to thoroughly discuss the topic.

3.4.1.1 Interview design

In designing the interview guide, Creswell and Clark (2007) and Richards (2003) recommend starting with easy, general questions and moving to specific ones. In the current study, the interview questions were divided into two groups: general and specific. The general questions included "*Do you think learning English is important or not? Why*?" and "*How do you see learning English in Saudi Arabia?*" These first questions act as icebreakers, helping to create a relaxed atmosphere in which interviewees can open up. According to Dörnyei (2007), this is important because these first questions determine the quality of the rest of the interview responses. They also tend to affect whether the interviewee would like to continue or withdraw from the study.

The second group contains specific content questions, such as "*Tell me, how would you describe an autonomous learner? Use a concrete example from your own experience, please*", and "*If you feel you need to develop more your level of autonomy in learning, what sort of things do you think you need*?" A final question, *"Is there anything you would like to add?"* was added to overcome any failure on the part of the researcher to include certain issues that are important to interviewees but might not be deemed as such by the researcher when preparing the list of questions. It is worth mentioning that the study provides the general definition of the term *learner autonomy*, which refers to taking responsibility for one's own learning (Benson, 2001) on the information sheet, to avoid any misinterpretations of LA by the interviewees, given it was not stated literally in the policy document, as discussed in the first chapter.

The interview guide follows the current study's conceptualisation of the beliefs of what people think and do about LA in the context of a Saudi secondary school. However, the order presented below is intended to illustrate the interview design whereas the order in which the interview protocols was conducted is provided in appendix I.

General questions:

-Do you think learning English is important? Why?

-How do you see learning English in Saudi Arabia?

Specific questions:

Questions about the definition of LA

-What is the first thing that comes to your mind when I say our subject today is learner autonomy?

-Tell me, how would you describe an autonomous learner?

-Do you consider learner autonomy important? Why/why not?

-Do you think that what (you/your students) have learned in class is enough to improve

(your/their) level of English? Why/why not?

-If you feel (you/your students) need to further develop (your/their) level of autonomy in

learning, what sort of things do you think (you/they) need?

 -Do you think LA relates to you (as a teacher/as a student), or does it have more to do with

(your teacher/your students)? How?

-Is there a relationship between effort and learner autonomy? What does effort mean?

-What do you think are the factors that help promote LA?

-What do you think are the factors that limit the promotion of LA?

- Questions about the practice of LA

-To what extent would you like (to be involved/your students to be involved) in the choices of

the following:

Lesson objectives; course book; time of learning; place of learning; teaching methods; class

management; homework and tasks; assessment

-Is there any particular language skill (reading, writing, listening, speaking) that you find difficult

to develop your level of autonomy at? If yes, what is it? How do you know about this difficulty?

What is your advice for improve this skill? (For students only)

-Have you ever (written/asked your students to write) about what (you/they) have learned? What

are (your/their) feelings about (your/their) learning?

-Is there anything you would like to add?

3.4.1.2 Piloting the interview

Piloting the interview means to test it out on participants who share the same or similar characteristics of the main research sample. This helps the researcher identify the questions that need to be reworded to ensure better comprehension by the research participants. Dörnyei (2007) notes that a pilot test also gives the researcher the opportunity to develop their interviewing technique before conducting the main interviews. This is crucial because the quality of interview qualitative data depends to a large extent on the researcher's skill at eliciting informative responses. By piloting the interviews, the researcher may gain insights regarding the interview's context, such as the best timing, duration and the proper place to meet the participants. It should be mentioned that, according to Richards (2003), piloting in quantitative studies is different from that in qualitative studies, as the former includes more real testing of the tool. This is not meant to imply that piloting has no role in qualitative studies, but that it might result in less change compared to the piloting of quantitative tools.

The participants in the pilot study had the same characteristics of the intended sample in the main study; they were two teachers and two students from an EFL secondary school in Saudi Arabia. Prior to conducting the pilot study, emails were sent inviting the participants to take part and an information sheet and informed consent form were attached. They were then asked to provide their numbers and choose the time slot they preferred for the interview. The pilot interviews were conducted in April 2017 by mobile phone, as the researcher was in the United Kingdom while the participants were in Saudi Arabia. The procedures of the piloted interview began with welcoming the participants, then the interviewer introduced themselves and explained the

objectives of the study. The interview process was then explained, emphasising anonymity and confidentiality. At the end of each interview, the interviewee was thanked for their participation.

The amendment made as a result of the pilot interviews can be seen in the question "*To what extent would you like to (be involved/your students to be involved) in choosing homework and tasks?*" It was suggested that homework be separated from tasks because students distinguished between both and had differing opinions regarding each.

3.4.1.3 Conducting the main interview

As qualitative instruments, interviews require the researcher to engage with the context of the interview. According to Mann (2016), describing the interview context should include the following five points:

-why, referring to the topic of the interview;

-where, to describe the physical or institutional context;

-who, to identify the research participants;

-how, to illustrate the genre of the interview, the kind of questions and the interaction that occurred and

-what, referring to any internationally relevant material or the equipment used for recording.

The researcher will follow this suggestion to describe the interview context next.

As the rationale for choosing the interview as a method of data collection was explained earlier, the place of the interview will be described next. Both the teachers and students were

interviewed at their schools. The researcher met the participants in a quiet room prepared in advance to avoid background noise that might distract either party or negatively affect the recording. To prevent interruption during the interview, the researcher put a sign on the door indicating that an interview was in progress, as suggested by Mann (2016). Following all these procedures, according to Richards, 'prepares the grounds for the interview' (2003, p. 67).

To describe the "who" of the interview context, the study considered Robinson's (2014) four-aspects approach in interview sampling. First, the sample is defined. The current study targeted female EFL teachers and students in Saudi Arabian secondary schools. The participants' mother tongue was Arabic, and they were all Saudi Arabian citizens. The sample size was eight teachers and eight students in eight schools. Half of the interviewees were in governmental schools, and the other half, in private ones, as shown in Table 3.1. The researcher chose to involve interviewee students taught by interviewee teachers to compare their own views and experiences of LA within the same classroom. Thus, the total number of participants was 16, which according to Mann (2016) is sufficient, as the usual number in qualitative studies is between six to 12 interviews. The researcher preferred to conduct 16 interviews for two reasons. First, the aim of this stage in research was to intensively investigate the variety of teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in Saudi secondary education. Second, because the great details provided by the interviews help to present the readers in TESOL and applied linguistics with different EFL views and experiences about LA, they can relate to in their contexts. This consequently increases the trustworthiness of qualitative findings in research. Next, the sampling strategy was selected. Convenience sampling was used in this study, as mentioned in part 3.3. Then, sample sourcing was considered, including the ethical procedures followed. These procedures will be discussed in Section 3.8.

Table 3.1: The number of participants in the main interviews

School type	EFL teachers	EFL students
Governmental	4	4
Private	4	4

To protect the confidentiality of the interviewee, codes were given as follows: The letter T stands for teacher, S for student, G for governmental school, P for private school, and then a number is given. For example, TG1 refers to teacher number one in a governmental secondary school, and SP5 refers to student number five in a private secondary school. It should be mentioned that three dots (…), where used in presenting the qualitative findings where repetition was identified.

Although the type of interview and the kinds of questions, discussed earlier, describe the "how" of the interview context, the interaction that arises during the interview is of great importance for the description. The researcher is not only responsible for setting the physical environment in which the interview takes place, but also its interactive climate. The study used Richards' golden rule for a successful interview, which is to be 'a good listener' (2003, p. 53). Maintaining attention can be challenging, and the researcher avoided taking notes during the interviews that may distract the participants; instead, the interviews were recorded. The researcher was then able to focus on their body language and eye contact to show their interest in what the participant was saying. The researcher tried to give the interviewees the space to talk freely while adopting a neutral position during the interview process. The neutrality of the researcher helps to prevent a serious threat to research validity, namely the social desirability. According to Dörnyei (2007),

participants usually tend to conform to the expectations of the researcher, which can negatively affect the responses they provide. During the interaction, the researcher confirmed the interviewees intended meaning regularly by paraphrasing their answers and encouraging them to elaborate more, as the interview in this study sought the insiders' perspective. At the end of the interaction, the researcher concluded by expressing gratitude and respect for the participants' time and cooperation.

The final element in describing the interview context is the "what" of the interview context. Here, this refers to recording devices. Two recorders were used during the interviews, as Mann (2016) recommends having a back-up device. To avoid any recording issues, the researcher made sure the recorders' batteries were fully charged. The researcher covered the recording devices during the interview to reduce participant anxiety. The framework for analysis will be presented in part 3.6.

3.4.2 Questionnaire

The second data collection tool used in the current study was a questionnaire. Questionnaires are considered the most widespread quantitative method used in educational research and social science (Gorard, 2001; Lazaraton, 2005). The rationale for such popularity pertains to their versatile nature which, according to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010), means their ability to target different participants in different situations regarding different topics. They also help to save time and effort, not only in collecting a large amount of information but also in processing data during the analysis stage facilitated by the use of computer software. According to Bryman (2008), questionnaires also enhance the reliability of research results by decreasing the bias that might

come from the interviewer. The questionnaire is also known for its utility in collecting data on a perceived variable, which in this study refers to beliefs about LA, as opposed to objective or tangible phenomena in second language research (Mackey and Gass, 2016). Thus, the questionnaire is an appropriate research instrument for this study and will help in gaining an overview of the beliefs in regards to LA among the wider population of Saudi EFL teachers and students.

However, all research instruments have limitations, and the questionnaire is no exception. This discussion will focus on the limitations identified by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) in relation to participants' motivation, the quality of responses, the social desirability and the fatigue effect, and will demonstrate how this study was able to minimise these limitations. First, we consider the problem of unmotivated or unreliable respondents, and, second, the lack of opportunity to correct respondents' mistakes. The study determined that both limitations could be overcome by the administration method used by the researcher. In the current study, a face-to-face group-administration method was used, which means that teachers and students were targeted within their institutions by the researcher herself. This helped the researcher achieve three goals. First, it allowed the researcher to emphasise the importance of the study and the value of the participant's opinions in order to motivate them to provide accurate and thoughtful answers. Second, to avoid any misunderstanding, the researcher was available in case any participants wanted to ask any questions. Third, according to Gorard (2001), the presence of the researcher is helpful to confirm that the intended participants answered the questionnaire. Not only does this increase the quality of the participants' responses, but also the quantity because a paper-based questionnaire was used, which is considered to have a higher return rate compared to online questionnaires.

Regarding the social desirability effect, which relates to instruments that depend on self-reported data, the researcher emphasized to the participants that there was no right or wrong answer; the questionnaire gathered personal opinion which differs from one person to another. The anonymity of the questionnaire was also assured, in order to encourage participants to feel relaxed and respond accurately.

Another disadvantage of the questionnaire is the fatigue effect, which affects the validity of the data it provides. This means that participants may provide inaccurate answers because they feel tired or bored, which usually happens toward the end of a questionnaire (Mackey and Gass, 2016). The study considered this issue when designing the questionnaire by dedicating the last section to the easy demographic data of the participants. This choice was suggested by Oppenheim (1992) because personal or demographic data can be off-putting at the beginning of the questionnaire; he argued that the introductory part, where participants are more enthusiastic to answer the questionnaire, should be reserved for the main questions on the research topic.

3.4.2.1 Questionnaire Design

This study uses a six-page questionnaire, which is considered an acceptable length by to Dörnyei (2007) since it requires 30 minutes to complete. The format of the questionnaire consists of the title, study purpose and the rationale for taking part, instructions, sections, and, finally, a "thank you". The questionnaire title introduces the participants to the research area and helps generate expectations about the topic. Additionally, the purpose statement of the questionnaire helps participants understand the focus of the research and encourages them to recognise the value of their contribution. This is followed by instructions for participants; two sets of instruction were used in this study. The first set is the general instructions and appear on the first page; they

reference the number of sections and their focus. The second set is the specific instructions that indicate how participants should go about answering each section. These instructions are typed in bold to be identified from the rest of the text. To enhance the clarity of instructions, stressed by Mackey and Gass (2005) in terms of research validity, the instructions were accompanied with illustrative examples.

The questionnaire consists of three sections covering three different types of data described by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010). These are attitudinal, behavioural and factual questions. According to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010), attitudinal questions describe attitudes, opinions, beliefs, interests or values. Section (A) in the questionnaire covers the attitudinal questions about the participants' beliefs regarding LA, namely their beliefs about what LA is to them personally, what the factors are that promote or hinder LA in the context of a Saudi secondary school, and why LA is important. Section (B) involves behavioural questions, which refer to the frequency with which LA is practiced. In other words, it refers to how LA is put into practice. The inclusion of this section in the questionnaire is because many research studies on beliefs are criticised for overlooking the inferences of beliefs that can be represented in 'what people say, intend, and do' (pajares, 1992, p. 314), as discussed earlier in chapter 2.

In both sections (A) and (B), the questions were answered on a five-point Likert scale. The reason for using a Likert scale is that most research participants are familiar with this method. The choice of a five-response option is to ensure the clarity of the instructions, as with scales of more than five options, participants may find it difficult to differentiate between levels. In section (A), the scoring scale is as follows: "strongly agree" is assigned 1, "agree" is 2, "neutral" is 3, "disagree" is

4 and "strongly disagree" is 5. The use of the neutral mid-category is to consider the fact that participants might be unaware or unfamiliar with some aspects related to LA.

Oppenheim mentioned that non-factual variables such as 'awareness, attitude, precepts and belief systems' (1992, p. 149) yield different responses depending on their frame of reference, which cannot be the same for all participants. Thus, to avoid the variations that could arise from idiosyncratic interpretations of any item, multi-item scales were used in both sections (A) and (B). Dörnyei and Taguchi also mentioned that multi-item scales help to 'address range of aspects associated with the target concept... so the commonality among the items captures the core issue we are after' (2010, p. 25); hence, this is used in the current study to capture the multi-layered nature of LA.

Both teachers and students are presented with the same statements in sections (A) and (B), as the study aims to compare their views regarding LA within the same context. The last section is section (C), and it consists of the factual questions that report the demographic characteristics of research participants. Teachers were asked about their teaching qualification, educational background, school type, the level they teach, teaching experience, type of pre-service training, the frequency of their participation in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and the sources they use to access CPD. The students were asked about the type of school they attended, their level and pathway, whether they have ever studied in an English-speaking country and the duration of that study. Finally, the questionnaire concluded by thanking participants for their time and effort.

Regarding the construction of questionnaire items, the researcher follows two sources identified by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) for writing a successful items pool. The first source is the

qualitative data provided by the participants, which in this study consisted of the semi-structured

interview data of an exploratory contextual nature and the themes generated by the interviews

and the scales of the questionnaires, as shown in Table 3.2. The second source is established

questionnaires from the previous studies. Table 3.3 provides an example where both sources are

acknowledged. The full version of the questionnaire resources is provided in appendix L.

Table 3.2: Themes identified in the main interviews that inform the questionnaire design

Themes in the main interviews	The scales in the questionnaire
The technical view of LA	Section (A) What participants think about LA
The psychological view of LA	
The political view of LA	
The importance of LA	
The facilitators of LA development	
The barriers of LA development	
Students' involvement in learning decisions	Section (B) What participants do about LA
Teachers' and students' roles in LA	

The study framed the term *learner autonomy* in the questionnaire in a way that will be

recognisable by the participants. This is because the information sheet of the questionnaire

illustrated the general meaning of LA as being responsible for one's own learning before

distributing the questionnaire. Additionally, the inclusion of the above scales in the current study covered all LA perspectives identified by Benson's taxonomy (1997), technical, psychological and political, to help to understand the varieties in the orientation of LA in teachers' and students' beliefs about LA. The design of the questionnaire also included the importance of an LA scale to help recognise the reasons for the specific means with which LA was implemented in the classroom for teachers and the reason for LA development by students in their own learning. The facilitators and barriers of LA development were used as indicators of LA orientations in teachers' and students' beliefs. For the practices of LA in section B, the students' involvement in the learning decisions reflected how much choice was given to students in learning decisions, indicating the desirability and feasibility of LA in Saudi secondary schools. The last scale related to teachers' and students' roles in LA to help to understand where the responsibility lies in their beliefs.

Table 3.3: Example of a questionnaire scale and its sources

Beliefs about LA: the technical perspective		**Source**
3	LA means a student is professional in using learning strategies.	Interview data
18	Students need support in their use of self-access centre in order to develop their learner autonomy.	Sheerin (1997)
31	Developing LA means working on language learning strategies, such as how to memorise vocabulary better.	Interview data
43	The use of self-access centre by students promotes LA.	Gardner and Miller (1999)

50	Developing LA means providing students with learning how to learn.	Interview data + Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012)
59	The use of self-access centre by students does not promote LA.	Interview data
69	Schools providing learning resources helps promoting LA.	Interview data
55	In my classroom, I do not think it is important to spend a lot of time working on language learning strategies, such as how to memorise vocabulary better	Interview data

3.4.2.2 Piloting the questionnaire

Piloting the questionnaire helps to fix any problems before conducting the main research (Gorard, 2001). In the current study, the questionnaire was piloted on February, 2018, in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia. The participants recruited in the pilot study were female, and consisted of 100 EFL teachers and 100 students in secondary school, as shown in Table 3.4. This is because Gorard (2001) recommends a good pilot be conducted using the same sample characteristics intended for the main study. For further details about the participants in the pilot study, see appendix M and appendix N. It should be mentioned that due to time constraints, the researcher initially excluded incomplete questionnaires and continued to recruit participants until 100 participants had completed questionnaires. This size was rationalised because, according to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010), LA studies need about 50 participants for statistical significance, but some statistical procedures, such as factor analysis, require 100 participants. This number is also recommended by researchers like Bryman and Cramer (1990) and Gorsuch (1983) who consider

100 to be the minimal requirement for factor analysis. The framework for analysis will be presented later in part 3.6.

Table 3.4: The number of participants in the questionnaire pilot study

School type	EFL teachers	EFL students
Governmental	67	51
Private	33	49

Piloting the questionnaire resulted in the following amendments:

-One item was reworded to avoid confusion. The item "*Schools with smaller classes allow learner autonomy to be encouraged more than schools with bigger classes*" because class size might not be the right indication for the school type in Saudi. Thus, the item was reworded as "*Learner autonomy is more encouraged in private schools compared to governmental schools*" to express the notion more clearly.

-One item was added, namely "*Schools can help LA by encouraging students to join student clubs where they can develop their leadership role*". This is in order to consider school activities as a factor that may influence the opinion of LA held by teachers and students. Deconstructing the role of this factor reflects the different perspectives of LA that are worth exploring in the questionnaire.

 -The arrangement of the points in the Likert scales in section (A) were reversed to start with "strongly agree", as the participants suggested it was easier for them to answer this way.

-Items about teachers and students' roles were paired together to help the participants decide whether a role belongs to a teacher or a student. The words "teacher" and "student" were written in bold to avoid confusion.

-The option "none" was added to question six in section (C), "*What type of pre-service training did you study?*" in the teachers' questionnaire, as some teachers had no training.

-The instruction "Please tick all boxes that apply to you" was added to question eight in section (C), "*How do you access CPD?*" in the teachers' questionnaire because some teachers reported accessing CPD through more than one source.

3.4.2.3 Conducting the main questionnaire

After the revision of questionnaire items based on the pilot study, the questionnaire was given to 658 participants: 329 EFL teachers and 329 EFL students, as the researcher preferred to have the same number in each group in the comparison of their beliefs about LA in secondary schools. They were all Saudi Arabian citizens and native Arabic speakers. For the demographic data of the teachers, see Table 3.5, and for the students, see Table 3.6. The questionnaire was administered in October 2018 to female teachers and students in two cities in Saudi Arabia. In Tabuk, 170 teachers and 187 students were recruited from 44 secondary schools. Notably, the study covered all secondary schools in Tabuk and all EFL teachers there. In Medina, 159 teachers and 142 students were recruited from 49 secondary schools. During data collection, the researcher chose to match the number of students mainly to the number of teachers because teachers were fewer compared to students (with an average of approximately three EFL teachers in each secondary school). The strategy of collecting data was to start with teachers and the available students

following a planned school schedule, then alternately build on that number the next day until the researcher covered all secondary schools in Tabuk. Next, the researcher continued to collect data from Medina, aiming to reach more than 300 participants in each group. For this study, this number helped in the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for the questionnaire findings, as will be further discussed in part 3.6, because, according to Comrey and Lee (2013), the rating scale for the sample size in factor analysis is as follows: 100 = poor, 200 = fair, 300 = good, 500 = very good, and 1,000 or more = excellent. The total number of the questionnaire sample was 658 participants; therefore, unlike the interviews, it was difficult with this big number to ensure all students were taught by the participating teachers in the questionnaire.

Table 3.5 Demographic data for teachers in the questionnaire

Demographic characteristics of teachers	n=329
Do you have a teaching qualification?	
Yes	304
No	25
What is your educational background?	
Bachelor	305
Master	22
PhD	2
What is your school type?	
Governmental	264
Private	65
What level do you teach?	
First year	80
Second year	78

Third year	81
First and second year	29
Second and third year	15
First and third	21
All three years	25
How long have you been teaching English?	
1-2 years	34
3-5 years	33
6-10 years	104
11-15 years	60
More than 15 years	98
What type of pre-service training did you study?	
Integrative	278
Sequential	26
No training	25
How often do you take part in CPD activities?	
Once a week	45
Once a month	91
Once a year	77
2-3 times a year	108
Never	8
How do you access CPD?	
Through your school	34
Join another teaching network	61
Completely independently	45
Through school and joining teaching network	37
joining teaching network and completely independently	36

Through school and independently	27
School, teaching network and completely independently	89

Table 3.6: Demographic data for students in the questionnaire

Demographic characteristics of students	n=329
What is your school type?	
Governmental	231
Private	98
What level do you study?	
First year	33
Second year	100
Third year	196
What pathway do you study?	
Science	292
Arts	30
Administration	1
Have you studied in an English-speaking country?	
Yes	10
No	319
If (yes) How long did you study there?	
Less than a year	5
1-2 years	3
3-5 years	1
More than 5 years	1

For the full version of the teachers' and students' questionnaire see appendix O and appendix P.

3.5 Follow-up interviews

The aim of utilizing follow-up interviews was to allow for an in-depth understanding of the qualitative and quantitative findings obtained from the interviews and questionnaires. The study considered using member-checking technique, when designing the follow-up interview protocols, to validate the findings from the perspectives of the participants themselves. This technique is also helpful for avoiding researcher misinterpretation. Therefore, the follow-up interviews in the study not only seek participants' validation but also investigate the reasons behind the prevalence of a certain perspective or practice of LA in teachers' and students' beliefs. The following is an example of follow-up interview protocols, "*There is a tension between teachers and students views about support in LA. Teachers tended to look at the support of the students academically and psychologically to help LA but students tended to look at the social aspects of learning, having an impact in society and leadership role? Do you think that this is a fair assessment of how you as a teacher/student might see it? Why?*". Using this type of semi-structured interviews, as mentioned earlier, allowed for more participant engagement, interaction and addition to the research findings. For the main areas for discussion in the follow-up interviews and their sources, see table 3.7 below. The guide for the follow-up interviews is provided in appendix Q.

Table 3.7: The main findings informed the design of follow-up interviews

Main areas for discussion	Theme	Source
LA in teachers' beliefs was something they needed to train their students on while for students it was something initiated by themselves.	Reactive and proactive LA	The findings of main

Teachers considered the role of gruopwork in LA development; on the other hand, students were uncertain regarding the way it was used in class.	Groupwork and LA	interviews and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)
Teachers tended to associate LA development with private schools.	School type and LA	
Teachers' beliefs tended to refer to academic and psychological support whereas students considered the social aspects in learning and having impact in society.	Support for LA development	Main interviews
The role of the Tatweer project and Vision 2030 in LA development	Current changes in Saudi and LA	
Teachers and students used different examples of little teacher strategy and learning schedule in supporting LA.	The role of little teacher strategy and learning schedule in LA development	

3.5.1 Piloting the follow-up interviews

The follow-up interviews were piloted with four participants: two EFL teachers and two EFL students. Half in a governmental school and the other half in a private school. The only change that resulted from the interviews in this stage was related to the question '*Do you think the way students view their role in learning changes over time? When do you think it changes?*' The question was not clear for participants, therefore, to clarify the question, it was reworded as '*Do you think there is a role for social media in relation to LA or not? Why/why not*?'

3.5.2 Participants in the main follow-up interviews

Three EFL teachers participated in the follow-up interviews and their three EFL students from three secondary schools. All of them were Saudi females, and they were chosen from the questionnaire sample who expressed their willingness to take part in this phase. However, these participants were unlike interviewees in the main interviews to have more variation of teachers' and students' beliefs about LA. The researcher considered selecting teachers with various demographic characteristics like school type, teaching experience and teaching qualification. That is, two teachers had little experience (one and two years), while one teacher had been teaching for eight years. Additionally, two of them had teaching qualifications. As for the students, the interviewee teachers taught them to keep an element of comparison between their views and their teachers' views about LA in the same classroom. The selection of students was based on the school type and whether they studied English in an English-speaking country. One of the students studied English for four years in the United States, while the other two students studied English in Saudi Arabia. Table 3.8 indicates the number of participants in governmental and private schools. The total number of interviews was six because, as previously mentioned, this number is considered adequate in qualitative research (Mann, 2016). However, the distinction in the number of follow-up interviews and main interviews was related to the intended aim of each instrument in the research. That is, the aim of conducting the follow-up interviews was to validate the findings of the two previous instruments and further provide the interpretations of teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in Saudi secondary schools. Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct six follow-up interviews in the third phase, whereas the 16

main interviews were intended to thoroughly explore teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in the first phase of research.

Table 3.8: The number of participants in the follow-up interviews

School type	EFL teachers	EFL students
Governmental	2	2
Private	1	1

3.6 Framework for analysis

In this section, a description of the analytical approach used for the qualitative and quantitative data in the study is provided.

3.6.1 Qualitative data analysis

A thematic analysis was conducted in the main interviews and the follow-up interviews to extract themes in both teacher and student beliefs about LA. It is an inductive, data-driven approach to analysing qualitative data (Mann, 2016). It means to carefully scrutinise research data to find coherent and meaningful constructions that could be labelled as themes. This process requires first transcribing the data before coding them under a particular theme. During the coding stage of the current study, some codes were suggested by the interview guide, of a semi-structured nature, and the other codes were found in the data. Following Liamputtong's (2008)

recommendation, the interviews in the first and third stages of data collection were transcribed and analysed in Arabic, as it is advised to be close to the original data of the research. In the study, qualitative data were analysed in light of the theoretical framework discussed in the literature review.

3.6.2 Quantitative data analysis

For anonymity purposes, the questionnaires were coded with numbers and input into SPSS 25.0. Then, the data were cleaned and prepared, as this is a prerequisite step for the analysis stage. In the current study, this step checked for missing data, which was 181 missing data points out of a total of 51,143. According to Fabrigar and Wegener (2011), with such a low percentage of missing data, mean replacement can be used as a solution because it does not tend to change the data in this case. Then, the reliability of the multi-item summated scales was checked using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient as a preparatory step to help deciding and amending the scales for normality testing. Additionally, Skewness and Kurtosis scores and a histogram inspection were used to test the normality of the data. Given that the study is interested in comparing two independent groups of EFL teacher and student beliefs about LA in Saudi secondary schools, a t-test and Mann-Whitney test were utilised (Field, 2009; Pallant, 2013). For the t-test, a two-tailed significance was applied because the researcher assumed a difference between the two groups without specifying the kind of difference in the hypothesis; therefore, a non-directional two-tailed hypothesis was used (Connolly, 2007; Mackey and Gass, 2016). Furthermore, the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was considered in this study because it enables more insight into the grouping of the variables than other quantitative means (Robson, 2002). In the present study, EFA was decided

116

as an approach to analyse data to help to uncover the latent clusters within Saudi secondary teacher and student beliefs about LA that might differ from the ideas found in the established LA literature. Dörnyei (2007) mentioned that two important decisions need to be made when using Exploratory Factor Analysis in research. These are the extraction method and rotation method. The extraction method used was Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) because according to Kline (1994), it is the best choice that helps achieve uncomplicated structures in factor analysis. As for the rotation method, Direct Oblique with Kaiser Normalisation were used in the study because "Oblique rotations are based on more realistic assumptions [and] generally provide…more information than orthogonal rotation" (Fabrigar and Wegener, 2011, p.149).

3.7 Translation of instruments

The language in which research instruments were used is one of the important issues to consider in research. In the current study, both the interviews and questionnaire were conducted in the participants' mother tongue, namely Arabic. This was done for many reasons. First, to avoid a language barrier that would affect not only the quantity but also the quality of participants' responses (Mann, 2016). This is because if the participants do not properly understand the questions in the instruments, their responses are negatively affected, and the research validity is threatened. Second, the study is not intended to measure the participants' proficiency in English. Third, this was done to consider the nature of the targeted participants—EFL teachers and students in a secondary school context—more. According to Mackey and Gass (2005), translation becomes a necessity in applied linguistics as research in this field usually includes learners.

For the above reasons, the researcher and two external translators were involved in the translation process before the final form was agreed upon. The first translator is a lecturer at King Abdulaziz University who holds a BA with distinction in translation. The second translator is the head of translation at an office in Saudi Arabia. Both of them provided a translation certificate (see appendix R and appendix S).

The level of language used in research instruments is another crucial point to highlight here. Dörnyei and Csizér (2011) emphasized that the translated version of an instrument should focus on content rather than a literal translation. They also required the translated version to sound as natural as possible in the target language. In the current study, the researcher avoided ambiguous and double-meaning words and used simple and standard Arabic language that can be understood by both teachers and students.

3.8 Ethical considerations in research

All of the ethical procedures were considered, starting with gaining ethical approval for the study from the University of Salford (see appendix A). This was followed by a formal letter to the Director of Education in two cities, Tabuk and Medina city, to seek an agreement to approach research participants working in schools (see appendix B). Oppenheim (1992) recommends sending this official request in advance to conducting research in a targeted community. The permission was granted for the study as indicated in the director's reply (see appendix C). The researcher handed the information sheet and the informed consent (see appendix D, E, F and G) to both teachers and students requesting their agreement to participate in the study. They also had verbal discussion with the participants ensuring that they were fully informed about the

purpose and the intended outcome of research. The researcher tried to explain in her discussion to the participants that they could drop out at any time without any penalty. Finally, anonymity and confidentiality were protected throughout the research process. Participants' data were used for research purposes only and stored in a secure place, to which the researcher alone had access.

3.9 Summary

Discussion of the research instruments is provided in this chapter along with justification of the research paradigm and design. It also includes a description of the research sample and setting. A detailed discussion was provided on how the research instruments were developed, piloted, amended, translated and—briefly—how they will be analysed in the next chapter. Finally, the chapter concludes by considering the ethical procedures used during the data collection phases. The next chapter will consider an analysis of the qualitative data of the main interviews given the sequential design of the current study.

Chapter 4: Results from the main interviews

4.1 Introduction

As explained in Chapter 3, the research design of the study starts with the main interviews to qualitatively explore the understandings and interpretations of LA in Saudi secondary schools from the perspectives of teachers and students. The study conducted 16 interviews with eight EFL teachers and their eight EFL students to provide rich data about LA in the current context, contribute to building a context-representative questionnaire in the study, as its sequential design suggests, and answer its research questions. The current chapter presents the qualitative findings of the main interviews in the order of their answers to the three research questions, which are as follows:

1. What beliefs are expressed by female EFL teachers in Saudi secondary schools regarding LA?

2. What beliefs are expressed by female EFL students in Saudi secondary schools regarding LA?

3. What characterises the difference between female EFL teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in the Saudi secondary schools context?

 To this end, this chapter discusses the following themes: Benson's (1997) technical, psychological and political view of LA, the importance of LA, the facilitators and barriers of LA development, students' involvement in learning decisions and the role of teachers and students in LA development. As mentioned above, these themes are illustrated in teachers' results to answer RQ1 and then students' results to answer RQ2. After that, the chapter concludes with highlighting the differences between teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in secondary schools to answer RQ3.

4.2 Teachers' beliefs about LA in the main interviews (RQ1)

The results presented in this section provided an answer to the first research question regarding teachers' beliefs about LA. They showed that teachers' views about LA reflected a mixture of Benson's (1997) three main orientations of LA, namely, the technical, psychological and political perspectives. In other words, they did not stand alone but rather were complex and multi-layered. However, these views are presented in the order of their dominance in Saudi teachers' beliefs as the technical, psychological and political perspectives under separate themes to clearly present them to the reader.

4.2.1. The technical perspective as the prevalent view in teachers' beliefs

As shown in the literature review, the technical perspective of LA focussed mainly on the use of learning skills and resources to provide LA to students. One piece of evidence for this dominant view was found in teachers' answers to what they thought was needed to develop their students' level of LA. For example, TG4 commented,

> Reading skills and techniques of writing a book summary. Additionally, to know research skills like writing the introduction, body, conclusion and the coherence of ideas in their argument.

For her, the development of LA required the development of academic skills like reading and writing. Moreover, TG3 believed social media were of great use to autonomy for language learners. She stated,

I advise my student to follow Dr Omar in Snapchat because they like Snapchat and Instagram. I think mobile solutions help greatly because the students can download any application that helps them to learn English.

TG1's response combined the encouragement of using learning skills and resources. She commented,

Self-learning skills like using the learning resources [are needed]. The most important thing for students is to know about different learning resources like the course book, dictionary and Google. For example, some students know how to access Google, but at the same time, do not know how to use it effectively to access credible resources. Therefore, I advise them to use certain resources. This leads to the second point, which is research skills, such as how to be critical, how to assess the pros and cons of any topic, how to identify the main idea, how to make a comparison and identify the similarities and differences. I feel that this approach contributes to creating a young researcher.

It was clear from her answer that she believed in a skill-based approach to the development of LA as she suggested providing guidance on how to use different learning resources and the promotion of students' research skills. Her belief tended to imply that equipping students with these skills could 'create' autonomous students. The same view was shared by TP7, who preferred to start her guidance by demonstrating how to become an autonomous learner, at the beginning of the semester, to develop students' self-learning skills. She said,

I guide them to the right resources that lead them to self-learning, whether books or websites. Therefore, from the beginning of the semester, I start guidance on how a student can learn English in an academic way and how she can develop her language outside the school. I do so by introducing a PowerPoint presentation . . . I prefer the method of giving them advice on how to be autonomous learners from the beginning of the semester rather than waiting until the time before the examination.

The same teacher gave a description of autonomous learners. She stated,

She is a self-educated student who utilises the resources to support her learning by herself until she reaches what she aims for in her learning. She is also an autonomous learner who participates in the class and is an extensive researcher. Honestly, I use the autonomous students as models to their classmates to help them by sharing their experience of how they become autonomous in their learning.

Her description of autonomous learners included independence in using different learning resources, participation in class and intensive research. In addition, she mentioned that part of her approach in class was using the autonomous student as an example to explain the method that helped her to become autonomous. This line of thinking seemed to reflect the notion of training students on different strategies to be autonomous as suggested by the technical perspective of LA. This notion was also asserted by TP8 when asked about her initial thoughts about LA. She referred to her role in teaching students different learning strategies to help their English learning. She viewed autonomous learners as proficient in using learning strategies; she commented:

The fact that the teacher should not be a knowledge provider but an instructor who guides the students on how to learn, for example, how to compose a song from the words that they need to revise as a way to memorise and learn. There is also a brainstorming strategy used when the topic is new to students to know their background about it. Therefore, students become aware that my question needs brainstorming, but if the question requires analysis or classification, for example, they use the mind-mapping technique.

Researcher: Why?

TP8: Because when students become proficient in using different methods to learn English, this helps them to learn by themselves and become autonomous in everything they would like to learn.

This view justified her definition of effort; she viewed LA as a quality provided to students by training on different learning methods. She stated,

Effort includes that a student discovers how she learns. Therefore, effort means that after I teach the student different learning methods, she tries to discover herself and her abilities. For example, what is her strength? What does she need to work on? Therefore, she begins to know herself on her own. In other words, the first thing is about what I provide her with; then, the greater her effort is, the more she knows herself in learning.

Likewise, TP5 considered tasks as facilitators of the development of LA. This view seemed to imply that LA is provided to students by assigning some tasks. She stated, '*Tasks help a student to be autonomous in her learning*'.

The previous discussion showed clear evidence of the domination of the technical perspective of LA within teachers' beliefs. This finding informed us that teachers tended to highly emphasise the use of learning skills and resources, as they enable students to become autonomous learners. Unlike the technical view, which considers LA an external quality provided to students, the psychological view posits LA as an internal capacity in students, which will be discussed next.

4.2.2 The psychological view in teachers' beliefs

The psychological perspective of LA suggests that it is a capacity within each student. The results indicated that this view is discussed less than the technical view, yet more than the political perspective, according to teachers' beliefs. An example of this view was seen in TG2's response, which expressed that intrinsic motivation is required for the development of LA because the drive for student learning is internal. According to this teacher's view, this drive is of a particular consideration to learn English. She explained,

It has to be something inside her, as she would like to develop herself rather than to focus only on passing exams and having good grades. She needs to know that learning English is a continuous process. Even in university, she will find that most subjects are in English.

Therefore, if I would advise them to develop their level of learner autonomy, I will say they need to develop their intrinsic drive to learn English because it is beneficial in university study.

This view was also reflected in the first thing that came to TP5's mind about LA, which was the student's psychological attributes. These attributes included being self-confident, bold, not afraid to make mistakes or speak in front of the class and being responsible for own learning. This respondent also pointed to the change of the educational system towards the student-centred approach in learning. She commented,

A student's personality in class, like her self-confidence—when I ask her any question, she is not afraid to make mistakes. She speaks boldly. She is not worried about grades or how she answers in front of the class. In addition, I think an autonomous learner is a little teacher that takes charge of her learning, which is the new direction now in education. That is, most of the learning process depends on the student. I may guide and instruct the student in class, but she is responsible for everything in her learning.

Another example was demonstrated by TP6, who highlighted the role of self-assessment if she felt the need to develop students' level of LA. From her point of view, the first step to developing LA needs to be made by the student, and the teacher can help based on this. She said,

This essentially requires a student to assess herself to know her strengths and weaknesses and be able to introduce them to me. Then, my role is to help her by proposing the appropriate remedies.

As part of the psychological view, teachers were questioned about whether they had ever asked their students to write about what they had learned or their feelings about it. The aim of this question was to discover whether reflection represented part of teachers' practices in secondary schools. Five out of eight teachers reported they never did so, while three teachers mentioned different examples that did not grasp the aim of reflection in learning. For instance, TG1 and TG3

referred to advising students to keep a list, similar to designing dictionaries, to help them practise English. TG1 said,

> I mention more than once that when they go home, they need to keep a list. It includes writing the word, its equivalent in Arabic and English and whether they learn it in class or by themselves. Writing expressions will help their speaking skills. Therefore, I ask them to memorise and revise their lists to establish a much larger vocabulary and expressions they will use out of school because English needs practice.

TG3 asked her students to do the same thing. She mentioned,

> I ask them to take advantage from the lesson by keeping a notebook for life, written in English, and writing what they benefit from at this level, especially in the English subject. This is because I did that when I was in secondary school.

For TP5, a strategy called K-W-L seemed to be a reflective tool. The strategy referred to a learning schedule made of three columns—what I *know*, what I *want* to know, and what I have *learned*. According to her view, the last column may help students to reflect. She stated,

> I ask them to give their opinions about the class to assess the lesson, but I never asked a student to assess herself. Usually, students write what they have learned in the last column in the K-W-L strategy during the English class time.

However, her view implied that the K-W-L strategy was used without the involvement of self-assessment; it was part of her routine in class rather than reflection as a meaning-making process.

The evidence presented above showed that the psychological view appeared in teachers' beliefs about LA in teachers' reference to the psychological characteristics of autonomous learners like being motivated and able to assess themselves. However, this view received less focus in their beliefs compared to the technical perspective. Additionally, this finding helped to recognise that teachers tended not to consider using reflective exercises with their students in the class or

understand the importance of reflection as a key part in LA development. Interestingly, there was a reference to the change in the educational system towards more students' responsibility for their learning. Having reviewed the psychological perspective according to teachers' beliefs, the results move next to consider the least-viewed LA perspective in their beliefs.

4.2.3 The political view in teachers' beliefs

The political perspective of LA stressed the importance of the individual in his/her society. However, interview results showed that only three teachers, compared to the two aforementioned perspectives, reflected this view in terms of the academic gains to students. For example, TP8 described her approach to the development of LA as enhancing the criticality of students' minds and their ability to express their views freely. The reason for her approach was to increase their sense of leadership by creating an encouraging atmosphere where their role was to be appreciated in the context. She stated,

> Critical thinking skills and learning how to express her opinion . . . My aim is to help the student to know that she has a role in the place where she learns, her voice is to be heard and her opinion matters because I want students to be leaders.

The same teacher touched on the same perspective in describing the facilitators of LA development, like encouraging the initiation of students' clubs in schools, which will support their sense of ownership towards their learning. She commented that one facilitator would be the

> school administration, for example, establishing students' clubs through which the students are given the opportunity to express their opinions in their learning.

Similarly, TG3 referred to the role of schools in increasing students' awareness about the culture of community service programmes because she believed they provide useful opportunities to develop students academically. She stated,

> The school is building awareness and providing guidance to work in community services programmes, which the Ministry of Education supported recently. This enables a student to speak, explain, search and present, which positively supports her academic level.

The above section discussed the political view in teachers' beliefs, which was the least-viewed LA perspective. However, it helped to understand that this perspective was related to leadership, critical thinking skills and taking part in community service programmes to enhance their academic skills. This indicated that teachers linked the political perspective within classroom or educational settings, not as a citizen in the wider world and definitely not in a political sense of linking to policy or international identity. After reviewing Benson's (1997) three LA perspectives, the chapter proceeds to present teachers' views on the importance of LA in secondary schools.

4.2.4 The importance of LA

All the teachers in the interviews considered LA important for different reasons. For example, TG2 and TG3 pointed to the academic benefits of LA, such as enhancing the effectiveness of learning and ability to use different learning resources. TG2 stated,

> Sure, it [LA] is important, because when I depend on myself and search for information, it will stick in my mind compared to when someone gave it to me and I was a receiver, which is likely to be forgotten. However, if I am the researcher and search in more than one resource and website, I will have a lot of information.
>
> Researcher: So, you are talking about the effectiveness of learning and the use of resources.
>
> TG2: Yes, indeed.

TG3 believed in the importance of LA due to its necessity in light of the curriculum's shortcomings. She approved the new changes to the curriculum; however, she criticised the topics for their failure to catch female students' interests. She commented that LA is

> very important. It is true that our curricula integrate different language skills, unlike the previous ones; however, they include topics like car repair, football or basketball. I really do not know how they are useful to my students! The topics for boys and girls are the same. There is no specification in the topics for girls, such as makeup, fashion, mobiles or programmes, so I can use them to attract their attention. I mean, I feel the topics do not relate to students' needs or interests. Therefore, learner autonomy is important given the limitation of the curriculum in that.

Teachers also expressed that the importance of LA is not only academic but also psychological. For example, TP5 referred to the psychological importance of LA in secondary education. She stated that it is '*Important because it strengthens the student's personality and prepares her for university*'.

TG1 acknowledged LA's benefits in decreasing negative feelings like anxiety and increasing positive ones like self-efficacy and confidence. According to her, the psychological gains of LA lead to a better English level. She commented that LA is

> very important. First, it reduces the student's pressure because the autonomous learner has a sense of her ability in English. I have noticed that students who have a good background in English do not become anxious, even if I say we will have an exam or ask an external question that is not in the course book. They have self-confidence. The important thing is that learner autonomy increases the student's confidence in herself . . . This is reflected in her answers as she takes the main idea and writes with correct grammar and a good language level.

It was interesting to find that TP8 talked about the importance of LA to the student and the teacher. From her point of view, the importance of LA to students lay in motivation, self-

assessment and self-awareness, as well as considering their interests in learning. LA was also

important for her as an English teacher because it helped increase the language achievement

level of students. She commented that LA is

> important due to motivation. That is, in order for the student to like the English subject, it
> has to be according to her will. Learner autonomy helps her to become aware of her
> strengths and weaknesses, know how to search and what to search for based on her
> interests. In this way, she likes the subject and has positive attitudes towards it. Of course,
> learner autonomy is the only thing that increases self-awareness in the student. It is also
> important for the teacher because I want them to achieve the level I want. Therefore, the
> more learner autonomy they accrue, the more students' language level develops.

TP6 also shared a similar view that combined both the academic and psychological gains of LA.

She said,

> Learner autonomy is very important because it leads to learning new things and different
> learning methods, which develops the student's intellectual abilities and increases her
> awareness.
>
> Researcher: How?
>
> TP6: Because if the student is not aware of the importance of learner autonomy, she will
> not be serious in exerting effort; she will not be positive or insistent in her learning. I think
> one of the signs of the exerted effort is that she works on her learning.

According to this respondent, the importance of LA was related to its role in increasing learning

effectiveness, resulting in enhancing students' cognitive abilities. She further associated the

awareness of LA importance to students' motivation in exerting continuous effort in learning.

The above results in this section revealed that the importance of LA in teachers' beliefs was

associated with its academic benefits in enhancing learning and its psychological role in increasing

students' motivation, which helps to improve students' learning and intellectual abilities, as well

as prepare them for university study. Following the discussion of LA's importance in secondary

schools, the results further explore teachers' views of what would facilitate the development of LA in the SA context.

4.2.5 The facilitators of LA development

The results in this section reveal the complexity of Saudi teachers' beliefs in identifying the factors that support the development of LA in the Saudi context. That is, the same factor might refer to different perspectives on LA from Benson's (1997) scheme. For example, TG1 considered family as a facilitator of LA for playing the provider of resources role to the student. In addition, she pointed to the school role in training students on how to become autonomous learners. It was clear from her view that the role of family and school represented the technical perspectives of LA; the resources and training were seen as tools by which LA was provided to the student. She explained,

> The family has a role. When the mother and father are supporters, they can help a student to get used to being autonomous at a young age by providing learning resources for her. Additionally, awareness of learner autonomy is crucial. We should teach the students what it means and the different methods for its development.

For other teachers, the role of the family, school, teacher and student represented another LA perspective. This role was perceived as a motivator for students to be more autonomous. Teachers tended to focus on different sources for motivation, including self-motivation, as facilitators of LA, which reflected the psychological view of LA. For example, TG2 stated,

> home [may be a facilitator] if her family motivates the student at the beginning to be autonomous. In addition, when the student is motivated by the teacher to continue to learn, and of course, this motive needs to be internal. However, if she did something excellent and she did not receive motivation from home or the teacher, she might be frustrated and stop.

TP6 also shared this perspective. She commented,

The motivators start at home. Family has a role, too. Teachers, administrators and other students motivate the student as well. All play a supportive role in promoting learner autonomy for the student by enhancing the psychological motive in her, in addition to her desire for development and excellence in her learning.

TP7 made a similar point and described reading references on self-growth. She mentioned the facilitators of *'a student's desire for learner autonomy besides motivation from family. Also, reading in self-development books'*.

For TG4, confidence was an important psychological promoter of LA development. She referred to confidence in the student by the family or teacher, as well as the student's self-confidence. She also mentioned other facilitators related to the student, like her curiosity and continuous effort, stating,

Confidence from the family and teacher [are facilitators]—in addition to the fact that a student herself is confident, and therefore, usually autonomous. In addition, curiosity and continuous effort help the development of learner autonomy.

It was interesting to find that teachers referred to a strategy called *little teacher*, by which the students become teachers. In other words, the teachers who use this strategy hand over the teaching task or authority to students. For example, TP5 described how this strategy led her to discover more about students' abilities and confidence. She related,

I asked a group once to explain a lesson and there was a student I did not expect to take the little teacher role. She explained a complete lesson in a very wonderful way and I motivated her with a sticker. I also asked her to nominate the students who worked with her . . . I was surprised by the student's confidence in herself to the extent that she changed her tone according to what she explained. Honestly, I see great things when I ask them to do so.

It was clear from her answer that she believed the little teacher strategy helped the student to take responsibility for learning. In addition, TG4 pointed to the psychological and academic gains in relation to LA, such as increasing students' self-confidence, sense of achievement, motivation and explanation and presentation skills. She commented,

> We use the little teacher strategy and this role allows them to gain confidence. It also increases their interest, and this is reflected in their sense of big achievement, especially when their classmates applaud them.
>
> Researcher: Can you explain how you apply the little teacher strategy in class?
>
> TG4: I assign part of the lesson—not a complete lesson—to a certain student, and I tell the class that our friend will explain tomorrow. I find that the student is very good in her teaching and presentation. Sometimes, the students use games, and other times, they use PowerPoint for their presentations. Therefore, I leave them freedom in doing that.
>
> Researcher: What do you think this role requires?
>
> TG4: It requires the student to prepare. It also requires demonstration skills, and she depends on herself in that. I can say that, generally, this strategy motivates students to become autonomous in their learning.

The above section illustrated that teachers' views about the facilitators were complex because the same facilitating factor played disparate roles and therefore indicated disparate LA perspectives. However, the key promoters of LA in their beliefs related to learning resources and some psychological aspects like motivation and confidence. These promoters were related to family, school, teachers and students, and they mainly reflected the teacher's focus on the academic and psychological aspects of LA support. Similarly, the same focus appeared in their reference to a strategy called *the little teacher*, which they perceived as an encourager of LA academically and psychologically. Therefore, this finding helped highlight the central attention in teachers' views about LA support. Not only the facilitators of LA were discussed in teachers' beliefs, but also the restraints that might limit its development, as will be presented next.

4.2.6 The barriers to LA development

In the interviews, the teachers identified different obstacles to the development of LA. These were related to the students, teacher and educational system. In addition, they referred to different LA perspectives. For example, TG3 focussed on the barriers related to the student, such as a lack of self-motivation and awareness of LA. Her point of view seemed to imply the psychological version of LA, as she stated,

> Maybe frustration, demotivation, ignorance about learner autonomy, lack of goals or carelessness [would be barriers]. The awareness of learner autonomy is important. This is because if students know learner autonomy and its benefit, they will understand that learner autonomy depends primarily on them not the teacher.

In contrast, TG1 and TG4 mentioned obstacles related to the teacher, such as a lack of teacher motivation to students. For instance, TG1 explained, '*If the student does not find a response from the teacher and experiences discouragement or a lack of psychological support, this is a barrier*'. TG4 also referred to '*Frustration—if I do not praise or motivate the students, they become frustrated*'. It was clear from their views that both teachers valued the importance of extrinsic motivation in the development of LA.

TP5 identified hurdles related to teachers and students like teachers' lack of confidence in students' abilities and students' weak English level. Therefore, her comment invoked both psychological and academic barriers. She stated that the barriers include

> teachers' lack of confidence in what the students have and poor language levels as sometimes a student lacks basic English skills. I consider it as a barrier if the student is in the second year in secondary school and she does not know how to read.

Some teachers identified constraints related to the educational system. For example, TG4 criticised the second-year curriculum for its concentration on vocabulary learning and the

134

inclusion of uninteresting topics for students. She believed it failed to develop students'

motivation to learn English. She commented,

> The curriculum focusses on vocabulary. I really wish it were related to students' lives. For
> example, the curriculum of the third year in secondary school discusses sports, university
> and shopping; therefore, I feel the students become creative in these topics. Contrary to
> that, the curriculum for second year includes literary topics. I think that a curriculum that
> does not consider students' needs and interests does not promote their motivation to learn
> English.

Furthermore, TG2 pointed to the lack of resources in schools as a hindrance to LA. Her perspective

reflected the technical view of LA, promoting the use of learning resources in establishing LA in

students. She argued,

> Maybe the student herself likes to be autonomous in her learning, but she does not have
> access to the internet or the time to do so and she cannot compensate for this lack of
> resources—for example, if there is no self-access centre in the school.

Another example of the factors related to the educational system was provided by TP6, who

pointed to the relationship between the school type and LA. She believed that LA differs according

to school type. That is, the development of LA was less encouraged in private schools compared

with governmental ones. Her logic was that grades did not reflect students' effort in private

schools, in contrast to governmental schools. She commented,

> Learner autonomy in private schools is completely different from that in governmental ones
> in terms of students' level and care for learning. Learner autonomy is lower in private
> schools, although it is supposed to be the opposite. This is because students in private
> schools get marks easily, while they do not exert real effort, since the school administration
> focusses on its reputation to attract more students. Thus, the aim is more financial profit
> than adopting an educational view.

On another note, TG3 referred to hurdles related to the educational system, such as a lack of time due to high workloads in schools. She stated,

> As a teacher, I encounter difficulties since I am overloaded with many tasks (e.g. covering for teacher absences, shifts to monitor student entry and exit, marking exams, notebooks, projects, participation, using teaching strategies). This leads the teacher to burn out.

The qualitative findings in this section showed that students' psychology played a role in creating a barrier, as do their low English level, lack of teacher confidence and motivation to students. Additionally, they identified some obstacles regarding the academic system, such as a lack of resources and the high workload. It was interesting to find that the type of school might be an influential factor in LA development. Therefore, this finding will be explored further in the follow-up interviews in Chapter 6. Again, all these barriers demonstrated teachers' concentration on the academic and psychological aspects of teachers' understanding of LA support and helped to yield further implications for the study in the Saudi context. Given that the current study is interested in the SA secondary schools context, the following section shows which learning choices were given to students by their teachers in their classes.

4.2.7 Teachers' beliefs about students' involvement in learning decisions in class

The results of teachers' practices in relation to LA indicated that they allowed more space for students' involvement in choosing the place of learning and tasks, while such space was limited in terms of objectives, time of learning, teaching methods, homework and assessment. For aspects like the course book and class management, half the teachers left that choice to the students, while the other half did not. The qualitative data indicated how teachers justified these choices and how they created some spaces for students in the school context, which were given only over the form of learning.

Regarding the choice of lesson objectives, seven out of eight teachers did not involve their students in this choice. TG3 justified this by saying, '*It is my responsibility. I do not want to increase the load on students*'. For TP6 and TP8, the curriculum was the main reason for this decision. TP6 commented, '*No, because I have specific objectives to follow. These objectives are related to the curriculum*'; TP8 stated, '*I have to decide these things from what the curriculum requires*'. Only TG1 expressed that this option was desirable. She said, '*When it comes to my opinion, I like the idea . . . I might develop W (what I will know) in the K-W-L strategy to help them infer the objectives*'.

Half the teachers—four out of eight—disagreed with considering students' involvement in choosing the course book. TP5 questioned the possibility of this choice in any educational context. She argued,

> Course book! I believe that it is not allowed in any country. Even if I have the choice, still I will not let them choose because they do not know what content is needed for them. The course book must have main guidelines the students follow.

Her view was echoed by TP6, who was convinced that even if the choice was given in the Saudi context, she would not engage her students in this way due to the expected variations in students' choices. She commented,

> It is my responsibility as a teacher because I am more aware of what is beneficial for students than they are. If the choice is left to students' will, then their choices might differ greatly and I did not get anything.

Nevertheless, the other half of teachers agreed that they would engage students in choosing the course book if the Ministry of Education in Saudi did not impose it on them. For example, TG3

said, '*We as teachers do not have that choice. If I had the choice, I would definitely do that to help me consider their interests more*'. Similarly, TG4 believed in the need to involve students in the choice. She stated,

> The course book is decided by the Ministry of Education, but if it were possible to have the choice, then I would ask my students to search certain book series and discuss the selection. I feel this decision is a type of groupwork because we will be together the whole year.

As for involving students in class management, half the teachers disagreed with this concept. For example, TG2 said, '*I tell them the class norms, for example, rules for working in groups*'. Moreover, TG1 clearly justified the reason for her disagreement, stating, '*Class norms are given to students to maintain discipline*'. In contrast, the other half of teachers agreed with involving students in class management. TP6 stated, '*We reach an agreement between us. I mean, I accept their reasonable suggestions*'. Moreover, TP8 referred to the benefit of students' engagement in forming the class norms; she commented, '*Class rules are clear from the beginning and they participate in deciding them because they will remember them and be more committed*'.

Six out of eight teachers expressed their agreement to allow students' choice in learning tasks. For instance, TG4 allowed the choice of the methods used to perform the tasks. She said, '*Yes, I give them the idea, and they decide how they would like to do it*'. Furthermore, TG3 explained, '*I noticed that when I involve them in choosing the task, they are more committed to doing it*'. In contrast, two teachers disagreed with letting students choose learning tasks. For example, TP7 commented, '*No, I choose the task based on the skill I want them to practise*'. TG2 considered that her tasks covered different areas in learning that would help students' development. She stated, '*I design various tasks for the students that include doing research, providing examples or writing on a certain topic to help them develop their English level*'.

Similar to the views on tasks, five out of eight teachers agreed with engaging their students in choosing the place of learning. For example, TG4 referred to the positive effect of this choice on students' behaviours in the class; she said, '*Yes, because they feel more satisfied and active and participate more*'. For TP8, the choice of place enhanced students' comprehension. She commented, '*Yes, choosing the place is like opening the door for their understanding*'. In contrast, three teachers disagreed with allowing this option in their classes. For instance, TG2 stated, '*No, it is the responsibility of the teacher to choose the class, resources room, schoolyard or other place and make sure they are ready for students before the class*'. TP6 justified this in terms of maintaining students' attention. She explained,

> I prefer the class. If I go with my students to any place, they will be distracted easily. I even sometimes change students' seating patterns because they talk a lot. I do that not to control them but because I want them to concentrate on the class.

As for the teaching methods, five out of eight teachers disagreed with involving their students in this as they believed this choice was their responsibility. For TP8, this was related to her experience in selecting the appropriate methods for her students. She commented, '*I have the experience to see how they react to different teaching methods and what they like*'. This view was shared by TG1, who said, '*It is the teacher's role because of her experience in choosing the easiest, clearest and most effective way for her students*'. For TG3, this choice was left to students in the little teacher strategy. She explained,

> Generally . . . I choose the teaching method because it is my role as a teacher to decide the appropriate teaching method for the lessons. However, I leave this choice for them if they become little teachers.

Nevertheless, three teachers agreed to let their students choose the teaching methods in class. For example, TG2 said, '*I ask my students, if they find something difficult to comprehend, how would you like me to explain it?*'. TP6 provided a reason for this choice. She commented,

> I ask them, how would you like us to do that? I shape my teaching practice according to their interests to let them feel involved and show them that they have a say in my class.

TG4 narrated her experience in class. She stated,

> I used to teach grammar deductively by writing the form and then examples; then, a student told me that she would like it if I wrote examples and allowed them to infer the form. Students also asked me to present the new word as a puzzle, where they would try to guess until they reached the main word. I learn strategies and new things from my students, and I change my teaching practices accordingly.

Regarding the choice of homework, five out of eight teachers disagreed with giving this option to their students. TG1 said, '*No, but I consider students' circumstances as if they are upset or have an exam*'. TP8 justified her disagreement by saying, '*No, sometimes I feel they have a weakness in certain points, so I want them to refine or revise it more*'. However, three teachers agreed on students' choice of homework. For example, TG3 allowed this option even in terms of the ways the students might present the homework. She commented,

> Sometimes I choose, and other times they decide on the homework, including where to write it—for example, in the notebook or workbook. Honestly, for homework, I do not pressure students and I consider their opinions.

The same opinion was echoed by TP6. She stated,

> I ask them if they like us to collect all the homework for the whole unit or day by day. Sometimes, I leave them the choice of which part of the unit they would like to complete as homework. Therefore, I consider their preferences and levels.

In terms of the time of learning, seven out of eight teachers disagreed with engaging their students in this choice. For instance, TP6 considered time of learning to be related to the curriculum. She commented, '*No, class time is related to the curriculum, content and objectives. Therefore, I do not involve them in this choice*'. TP8 stated, '*Class time is predetermined by the school administration*'. The same view was shared by TP7, but she also stated that she would consider changing the schedule according to her students' needs. In her view,

> This is not related to the teacher, but to a schedule, which organises the school day. However, if I found the class time unsuitable for my students, I would definitely talk to the school administration.

Only one teacher agreed to involve her students in choosing the learning time for her class. She explained. '*Yes, they choose within the English period time, for example, times for breaks and tasks*'.

Teachers' beliefs regarding students' involvement in choosing the assessment methods showed that seven out of eight teachers disagreed with this for different reasons. For example, TP7 considered her assessment comprehensive enough. She stated,

> I assess my students on attendance, learning tools, participation, homework, tasks, portfolio, exams and behaviour . . . The portfolio includes the school logo, student CV, worksheets, projects, assessment form designed by the school and an index. It is important to mention that the CV should include distinctive achievements in her life; therefore, she needs to assess herself in order to write it.

TG3 had another reason for rejecting student choice on the assessment methods. She commented,

I assess the students because their assessment is not objective or real. For example, I ask them to assess one member of the group, and they gave 12 points when she really deserved 6. I think assessment is the teacher's responsibility.

Only one teacher reflected different ways of engaging students in her assessment in class. TP8 said,

If the assessment is for a task, I ask the whole class to assess a certain presentation. If it is for a language skill, then I use continuous assessment, in addition to formal assessment points like exams. However, I give my student feedback and ask her to imagine herself as a teacher—what grade would she give herself?

The above evidence showed that teachers tended to be resistant generally to engage their students in assorted learning decisions in class, such as lesson objectives, time of learning, teaching methods, homework and assessment methods. It was also noticed that the small spaces for students' choice were only given over the form of learning, such as choosing the form of homework or the teaching method in the application of the little teacher strategy in class. This finding demonstrated the low desirability and feasibility of students' involvement in learning decisions in class according to teachers' perspectives. It also suggested a key implication for teachers' and teacher training programmes in Saudi secondary education. Having discussed the desirability of LA regarding different decisions in class, the next theme considers where the responsibility for LA development lies in teachers' beliefs.

4.2.8 Teachers' and students' roles in LA

In the interviews, the teachers were asked whether LA was related to them or their students to identify how they perceived their roles and responsibilities towards LA. Five out of eight teachers considered that students' level of LA was related mainly to teachers, providing different

justifications for this view. For instance, TP7 demonstrated that she guided students by sharing

her learning experience gained when she was a student to represent a role model to the class.

Therefore, she perceived her role as supporting students psychologically to become more

autonomous learners. She commented,

> [It is] related to me because I play a role in guidance, which includes many things.
>
> Researcher: Can you explain further?
>
> TP7: I provide students with different perspectives and experiences I experienced, so they would like to become like me. I share with my students my learning experiences, and this includes motivation to be a model in front of them.

For TG4, LA was related to her as she provided academic support; according to her view, this was

the teacher's main role, like providing learning resources. She also shared the view of TP7 about

offering psychological support to students by speaking about her self-development journey in

learning when she was a student. She commented,

> I feel it is related to me because I play the role of instructor and adviser. This is already one of my tasks as a teacher. For example, I might ask a student about a certain task and she says she does not have internet access. Therefore, I bring her a modem and laptop to work with, or I give her a book to search for information. In other words, I try to facilitate the work, so the student does not give excuses like not having the resources.
>
> Researcher: So, you help her by providing resources.
>
> TG4: Yes. My role also includes guidance by talking about self-development as I sometimes tell them about things I have done in my learning, before discovering they were wrong. I talk to students about situations and stories I have been through so they can benefit from them. I really see that this approach motivates them greatly.

In a similar vein, TP6 believed that LA was related to her as she considered the teacher as

controlling LA. Her logic was that she defined her role in terms of academic support, such as the

assessment of the students' level and offering them psychological advice; she believed that

improving the students' level in these respects was crucially related to the integrity of the

teaching profession:

> It is true that learner autonomy is for the student herself, but I am the one who strengthens or weakens that. Therefore, the student sometimes does not know how to start or how to develop her level. Thus, it is the teacher's role to develop the student's level in all aspects of her learning because teaching is about integrity and having a message. For this reason, the teacher's role is to support the students by searching for their strengths and weaknesses. As for the negative aspects, I try to know the reason for them, and I will discuss that with my students.

For TP5, LA was related to doing tasks assigned by the teacher. Therefore, she believed that LA

was mainly related to her because students become autonomous by reacting to these tasks. In

addition, she supposed that self-learning is taught by the teacher. She commented,

> There are tasks that I asked them to do. This is because learner autonomy is related to . . . whether I do everything in class or allow their self-learning.
>
> Researcher: I understand from what you said that it is related to you.
>
> TP5: Yes.
>
> Researcher: Why?
>
> TP5: At the end of the day, I am the guider. If the lesson is new, the student will not be a self-learner from the beginning of the class to the end. I gave her something to search for; therefore, it is self-learning, and at the same time, it is not what I think self-learning to be. The teacher plays the role of instructor and adviser. Essentially, who teaches the student self-learning? The teacher.
>
> Researcher: Do you not think it is possible for the student to learn by herself?
>
> TP5: No, I have to give them something to follow . . . like an important task, and they continue the rest of their learning.

Similarly, TP8 believed that, for most of her class, LA was related to her because she allowed her

students some space for decision making in the class. In her view, the teacher was the main

determiner of LA. She commented,

In my class, there is a group of students that are autonomous before I teach them. However, from my point of view, I think the majority becomes autonomous when I give them the opportunity to be free in their learning.

Researcher: Why?

TP8: The students who are autonomous by themselves represent a minority. I feel that home contributes to that. However, for the rest, which is the majority, their level of learner autonomy is related to me because they see that there is space of freedom for them. The teacher is supposed to play an essential role in her students' level of learner autonomy from the beginning of the semester. What inhibits learner autonomy more than a teacher who restricts students until they become non-autonomous?!

In contrast to the teachers discussed above, TG3 and TG2 considered LA to be related to the students. For instance, TG2 explained this in relation to intrinsic motivation, reflecting a psychological view of LA. She stated,

They like English before I teach them. They have information. The purpose of their learning is not related to grades but because they want to be excellent in English. Therefore, they go to the next level with a rich background in English learned independently.

A similar view was shared by TG3, who did not consider school the essential factor in LA development. Instead, she was convinced that LA is in students' control. Consequently, her role was to support the students psychologically and believe in their abilities. She commented,

[It is] related to them and I like that.

Researcher: How?

TG3: Because it is impossible that learner autonomy comes from the school. The main development for learner autonomy is in a student's hand because she has to do that. For example, I tell my students that they have the ability to speak in English and be autonomous in their learning.

Researcher: Do you mean psychological support?

TG3: Yes, psychologically by praise . . . I have one student who is excellent, and I told her, you will become an important person in the future—do not forget that. Therefore, I see my role as complementary to what is essentially inside her.

For TG1, LA was related to both students and teachers. She explained,

At the start, the signal comes from the student, and then comes the cooperation between the teacher and the student. Therefore, she gives me a hint at the beginning that she is autonomous, like through her good pronunciation and the different vocabulary she knows. After that, I use this student as a model for her classmates, and I teach them about learning resources. I have to say that, sometimes, the students' level is related to me, and at other times, it is related to them.

Researcher: Can you give an example?

TG1: For instance, I have a student who is excellent in pronunciation but weak in writing, so I said to her, in order to develop your level of learner autonomy in English, you need to exert effort in developing your writing. Therefore, I play a positive role as a supporter.

According to her, LA was primarily related to the students, and then the teacher's role was to support the students academically by guiding them to learning resources and assessing their progress.

The results in this section revealed that, with a few exceptions, teachers considered LA development mainly related to them. This view was linked to their role in supporting students academically in assigning tasks, evaluating students and advising them to divergent learning resources. Additionally, they explained their role in providing psychological support to their students. This is a key finding that informed us about teachers' understanding of responsibility in LA development, which influenced the way they support LA with their students in the class. Subsequently, a summary of EFL teachers' beliefs about LA in the main interviews is provided.

4.3 Summary of teachers' results

The results presented above contributed to answering the first research question regarding EFL teachers' beliefs about LA in Saudi secondary schools. They showed that teachers believed in the technical, psychological and political perspectives of LA. This indicated that these perspectives are not separate, but intertwined in Saudi teachers' beliefs. Nevertheless, the dominant finding was that teachers seemed to believe more in the technical perspective of LA. This appeared in their heavy focus on the notion of how to learn, such as by using learning strategies, skills or resources. As for the psychological view, even though some teachers referred to the psychological attributes of autonomous learners, such as intrinsic motivation and self-assessment, teachers did not pay attention to reflection either by recognising its aim or importance in learning or applying reflective practices for students in their classes. In terms of the political perspective, although it appeared in teachers' beliefs, it was the least viewed LA perspective in the interviews. Additionally, it seemed to be more associated with notions like promoting students' critical thinking skills or encouraging students' participation in community service programmes to improve their academic level, not to stress the importance of the students' role in society. Therefore, their beliefs reflected LA within educational settings, not in the wider world or in the political view that relates it to policy or international identity.

The importance of LA in teachers' beliefs was linked to its academic gains in enhancing learning effectiveness and its psychological gains that helped students to learn better and prepare them for university studies. The key promoters were related to family, school, teachers and students, and they mainly related to learning resources and psychological aspects like motivation and confidence. In contrast, the barriers considered by the teachers were linked to the lack of the

aforementioned facilitating factors. Furthermore, a student's poor English level appeared in their beliefs as a hindrance to LA development, as well as to the mandated curriculum and high workloads in the schools. It was interesting to find that teachers considered a strategy called *little teacher* as providing academic and psychological support for LA development. The findings also showed an interesting reference made by a teacher to the relationship between the school type and LA development. Therefore, teachers' beliefs about the importance of LA, facilitators and barriers helped to understand that academic and psychological aspects were central to their perception of support in LA development.

The qualitative data also generally indicated resistance on the part of teachers when it came to involving students in different decisions related to their learning in the class. It was noticed that the very little room given to students' choice in teachers' beliefs was only over the form of learning beliefs, such as choosing the form of homework or the teaching method in the use of the little teacher strategy in the class. This finding informed us that the desirability and feasibility of students' involvement in learning decisions in class is low, as reflected in teachers' views in Saudi secondary schools.

Furthermore, teachers' beliefs showed that, with a few exceptions, they considered LA development to be essentially related to them. This was justified in terms of providing academic and psychological support to students. This result was considered a key point in teachers' beliefs about LA. It helped to recognise teachers' understanding of their role and responsibility in LA development, which accordingly affected how they would support LA in their teaching practices in class.

Finally, it was interesting to find a reference to the approach of the new educational system towards the students' responsibility for their own learning. This encouraged the study to consider the role of the new initiative in the Saudi context in LA development in follow-up interviews. Having discussed the teachers' main results and their contribution to our understanding of teachers' beliefs about LA in Saudi secondary schools, the following section moves the focus to students' views about LA in the interviews.

4.4 Students' beliefs about LA in the main interviews (RQ2)

In this section, the results of the main interviews helped to answer to the second research question. They indicated that students' beliefs about LA represented Benson's (1997) three main orientations of LA, namely, the technical, psychological and political perspectives. Saudi students' beliefs reflected that these orientations were not separate, but rather, complex and interconnected. The presentation of results under the themes of these orientations is separated for easier presentation, but by no means is this meant to suggest that they were separate in the Saudi students' beliefs.

4.4.1 The psychological perspective as the dominant view in students' beliefs

The psychological perspective of LA was defined in the literature as an internal capacity in a student. This was the most common view in Saudi students' beliefs as they referred to it in different ways. For instance, SP8 believed, '*If a learner is autonomous, no barriers will stop him because he has determination*'. Moreover, SP7 thought that the facilitators and barriers for the development of LA were determined by whether the students allow their influence; she commented that the influential factors were

self-confidence, fearlessness and the surrounding environment. If the person is surrounded with a positive environment, she will continue to be independent. The environment includes the classmates, family and school. All three play a role, whether positive or negative. However, if she is positive and responsible, they will not influence her. In contrast, when she is a negative person, does not have self-confidence or perseverance and is surrounded by negative people, then she will descend to their level.

A similar view was echoed by SG3, who referred to LA not as self-learning but instead as having control over her learning. She commented,

> Learner autonomy is knowing how to be influenced. It does not mean that I avoid being influenced by anything and stay closed minded and limited to my thoughts. It means I accept different ideas without being influenced by them and have the freedom to express my opinions. This freedom does not mean I reject or approve anything completely; it means I should have a personal filter and path in my learning process.

This view was also reflected in her description of the autonomous learner as an intrinsically motivated student. She stated that an autonomous learner is

> a student that has the willingness to learn language—especially in learning languages, no one can force you to learn a language you do not want to learn. If the student wants to learn a language, it will be easier and more enjoyable. In addition, practising language is enjoyable and helps you to learn more. Nowadays, English is not only used for education but also in many other fields, such as communication, TV and social media. Most conferences are held in English to be understood easily, and then they might be translated into other languages. Consequently, English is considered a mediator between many languages.

For SP7, a similar description of an autonomous learner appeared in her answer. She believed that autonomous learners learn because they enjoy learning, not achieving better marks. She stated, an '*Autonomous learner is not waiting for grades (marks); she learns to satisfy herself*'. Similarly, SG4 commented, '*Learning by myself is more beneficial to me than being taught by someone. You learn to enjoy learning new things you like and not for the grades*'. SP5 explained

that her curiosity and enjoyment in the learning process are the reasons behind her motivation.

She commented that she learned autonomously

> by not depending on only one source of information; I like to be more informed, read at home and not just at school. I am motivated to have answers for any question, even if it is extracurricular.

Another example of the psychological perspective in students' beliefs was seen in practising self-assessment on the part of the students. For example, SG3 explained,

> I have self-confidence. The bigger my self-confidence, the more I know that I have my own capabilities and mistakes are inevitable. In addition, acknowledging my strengths and weaknesses will make me reinforce strengths and overcome weaknesses. This helps me to reduce stress in learning.

Likewise, SG1 commented:

> I take notes of information I want to search for out of curiosity and not upon the teacher's request. In addition, I sit and evaluate myself to reduce stress before exams.

Students used self-assessment to identify the easiest and most difficult language skills in their learning and showed how they might monitor such difficulty. For example, SG3 stated,

> I believe speaking and listening are the easiest skills because they depend on skills you can develop by yourself. In contrast, writing focusses more on correct grammar, writing style, and word formation.
>
> Researcher: What do you do to develop this skill?
>
> SG3: Identifying the purpose of writing helps me a lot, for example, learning different academic writing styles, such as school reports, newspaper articles, homework or email. In addition, the more you practise writing, the better it gets.

For SP7, self-assessment was preferred in her English learning due to its truthfulness. She related,

Reading is easy, while it is difficult to be autonomous in writing.

Researcher: How did you identify this difficulty?

SP7: I tested myself because self-evaluation is honest.

Researcher: What do you do to improve this skill?

SP7: By practice, interacting and speaking more with people; the more I enhance my speaking, the more I benefit in writing. In addition, by paying attention to certain structures and expressions while listening in order to use them in writing.

SG4 did not find any skill difficult. She stated,

Reading is easy to learn independently; even if there are difficult words, I can understand them from the context. In addition, speaking can be easy to learn independently. As for a difficult skill, I do not believe there is such a thing, because even writing becomes easier with practice.

A further example of the psychological perspective in students' beliefs was shown in students' practice of self-reflection in their learning. For instance, SP8 referred to reflection as a meaning-making process that fostered her self-awareness. She commented,

I write points that I did not understand from the lesson and know what the reasons are for this—why I did not understand them. For example, I was not focused or someone distracted me in class. Then, I try to work on these points. Frankly, I do not write weekly, but I do it from time to time.

Researcher: How did writing about what you learned help you?

SP8: To know myself more.

Researcher: Do you mean more self-awareness?

SP8: Yes.

For SG1, self-reflection about her learning was associated with self-assessment. She also referred to its benefit in managing stress before the examination period. She stated,

I will give an example about myself; my English language level was much lower than my level was in other subjects—those I excel at. I tried to improve in English after I sat and reviewed myself, deciding that I would not be qualified if I did not learn it. Therefore, when you review yourself, it helps you to develop . . . In addition, I sit and evaluate myself to reduce stress before exams.

Researcher: When you said 'review myself', what did you mean?

SG1: I evaluate myself.

Some students referred to the K-W-L strategy as a reflective tool in their learning. For example, SP6 mentioned that the last column in this strategy helped her assess her learning. She commented,

We do that in class. It is called the learning schedule. It has a column named 'what have you learned?'; we do it as a group.

Researcher: Do you think it is helpful?

SP6: It helps me with things I did not know before, what I learned from the lesson and my weak points.

SG1 also referred to the use of this strategy for reflection and assessment of her learning:

Teachers use a strategy to list all we learned after class in a three-column table—what I knew (my background on this topic), what I want to know (further information that my teacher can help me with) and what I have learnt in class.

Researcher: Do you think this is helpful?

SG1: Yes, because the third column is where I know what points I am good at in the lesson and what points I need to work on more.

The above evidence showed a strong thread of the psychological view within the students' perspective of LA. This was demonstrated in their view that no factor could facilitate or limit LA unless they themselves allowed its influence. In addition, the psychological perspective appeared

in their reference to intrinsic motivation and self-assessment in learning. Furthermore, students believed in the role of reflection as a key part of their understanding of LA, which was seen in their practice of self-reflection and using the learning schedule (K-W-L) as a reflective tool in their learning. This contrasts the teachers' views described above, where the capacity of the student is not seen as such a powerful element of LA. Next, the results move to another LA perspective found in students' beliefs, namely, the technical perspective.

4.4.2 The technical view in students' beliefs

As mentioned in the literature review, the technical perspective of LA focussed mainly on the notion of training on the use of learning skills and resources, which were perceived as tools to provide LA to students. The results showed that this view were less presented than the psychological view in students' beliefs. Evidence of this view was found in SP7's answer to what she thought was needed to develop her level of LA. She believed that the development of LA would be maintained by the development of her learning skills, commenting that she needed

> to have communication and searching skills. There is also the brainstorming strategy to be able to reach ideas on my own. For example, when I finish reading, I summarise important ideas. If I improve all these skills, I will improve my LA.

Another example of this view was presented in SP6's description of the autonomous learner; she stated, '*A person uses different sources to learn, for example, using technology by watching clips frequently to help learning*'. SG3 considered training as a facilitator of LA development, stating,

> I worked on myself and got a chance or two to present and share my ideas with students. Many students do not have the potential and need to be trained by the school.

Researcher: Do you mean that school should provide training on LA?

SG3: Yes, guidance, counselling, and teach them skills of LA. For example, I was chosen before a year or two to attend a full debate workshop. However, many students have great ideas but do not know how to express them.

These are the only indications in the students' data of a technical view. The amount of data on this compared to the teachers' perspective is telling. Having reviewed the technical perspective in students' beliefs, the results in the following section discuss students' reference to the political view.

4.4.3 The political view in students' beliefs

The political perspective of LA highlights the value and influence of the individual in his/her society. The students expressed this view in different ways. For instance, when SG2 was asked about her motivation to be more autonomous in her learning, she mentioned participation in class and in society: '*By reflecting my effort, perseverance, interaction in class and with the society, my passion, and working to improve myself*'. SG3 has a similar view when asked about what she felt was needed to develop her level of LA. She referred to the political notion of affecting and being affected by society, commenting,

> I need support from society, by being surrounded with groups who want to learn and practise English.
>
> Researcher: Which types of groups?
>
> SG3: Groups in society that affect students, such as workshops and international initiatives that encourage students to practise English.
>
> Researcher: You have mentioned society. Is there anything you do for it yourself?
>
> SG3: Motivation and desire are the most important. Whenever the person wants to learn English independently, she will be more motivated to find unconventional ways of learning.
>
> Researcher: Unconventional ways? Can you give an example?

SG3: For example, by learning how to . . . start initiatives in English, or how to communicate your ideas and transform them from being educational to entertaining ideas that reflect the importance of English in our lives. Furthermore, what makes me delighted to improve my LA is thinking outside the box or creative thinking; this makes not only your actions but also your ideas unique. With this thinking, you will learn how to attract and influence people, you will be an influencer, and thus, your productivity will be better than that of ordinary people.

For SP6, the political perspective appeared in her description of the teacher's role as respecting students' rights and choices in LA. She stated,

Everything that is related to my learning is related to me in the first place, but the teacher has a role to grant each student her right and trust to choose anything related to her learning without restrictions.

It was interesting to find that SP7 referred to Vision 2030 as a motivator of the political perspective, that is, being an effective member of Saudi society. She commented,

If students love the subject so much, they will go outside and search for it, and one day, that may be a reason for them to be something big (valuable) in building Saudi society, especially with the new Vision [2030].

The above data indicated some link to the political view of LA within students' perspectives. Although there was a small amount of data, it is interesting to see how political aspects operated at the classroom level, in learning groups in society beyond the class, the wider political level (Vision 2030) and internationally (links to international groups through English speaking). Saudi students can see the political aspects of LA in several ways. This finding suggested a further examination of the role of new initiatives in the development of LA in the Saudi context. After presenting the political view, the following section considers students' views of the significance of LA in Saudi secondary schools.

4.4.4 The importance of LA

In the interviews, all the students reflected the importance of LA in their beliefs. For example, SG3 expressed that LA is important because it implies the notion of choice that leads for better academic achievement:

> With learner autonomy, you have the choice in learning, and you will be more creative in finding ways to learn since you love the subject. Thus, your results will be higher than those of other passive learners, or learners who only learn in academies, because they learn in a traditional way. Those learners will be bored, and therefore, their productivity will be low compared with yours.

A similar view was echoed by SP5, who believed that LA allows for better learning decisions. She stated, '*It is important because it helps you to discover yourself in learning and choose the field you enjoy the most, and therefore, it makes you creative and successful in this field*'. Similarly, SG4 believed that LA increased learning effectiveness as she would learn according to her preferences and her intrinsic motivation. She stated,

> It is important to know more; sometimes, I feel I know more than the teacher! Learning independently is more beneficial to me than being taught by someone. You learn to enjoy learning new things you like, and you do not do it for the grades.

Interestingly, SP7 referred to the importance of LA in English even after graduation, particularly with the scholarship programme. She commented,

> [LA is] very important; nowadays, many people say: When I graduate, I will travel and study abroad. So they have to spend more time on language learning compared with those who will study their major immediately. If they are autonomous learners already, of course, when they travel, they will be academically and psychologically ready and prepared to study in university.

The above data showed that students linked the importance of LA to the value of choice in learning, which helped students to improve their academic achievement and their ability to make decisions in learning. Following the review of LA importance in students' beliefs, the results look into their views of the encouraging factors for the development of LA in SA secondary schools context.

4.4.5 Students' beliefs about the facilitators of LA development

The results revealed that the students considered awareness, intrinsic motivation and self-confidence as helping factors for LA development in the Saudi context. Their beliefs reflected the psychological LA perspective as these factors were part of the students' psychological capacity. They also pointed to factors of a social nature like students' environment at home and in school, cooperative learning and peer learning.

SG3 mentioned awareness as an important psychological factor, stating,

> To have self-awareness and to be aware of how to improve yourself [are factors]. I read many books on self-development; the more you believe in your ideas and appreciate yourself, the more you become an autonomous learner.

For SG4, the developers of LA were responsibility and self-motivation. She referred to '*The fact that I want to be responsible and have the desire to be an autonomous learner*'. The same view was expressed by SP5, who identified '*Curiosity, to be well informed and to know that when I achieve something, I reward myself to increase my motivation. This is really helpful*'. Furthermore, SG3 pointed to self-confidence, self-efficacy, effort and intrinsic motivation as the main promoters of LA. She commented,

The learner should be self-confident and have faith in his/her capabilities. Learner autonomy does not come overnight; a learner must make effort to reach his/her goal and be satisfied. You do not sit and wait for success. You must seek it.

In addition to psychological facilitators, students referred to different social factors. For example, SG1 pointed to a supportive context that respected students' decisions. She explained that it is important

To be in a suitable environment that does not pressure the student, at home or school, to be independent in his learning decisions. Confidence plays a role, too. If the person is confident of his decisions, he becomes an autonomous learner.

For SG2, encouragement by the family, school and group cohesion in cooperative learning were promoters of LA:

Family and school support and appreciation.

Researcher: Is there anything you would like to add?

SG2: Yes. Learner autonomy includes considering others' experiences, like in a group project, where the students divide tasks and learn from each other. Therefore, in group projects, like in cooperative learning, we all work for the best interest of the group.

Similarly, SG2 referred to peer learning as a helping factor for improving her English and encouraging her to be more autonomous. She stated,

For instance, I watched movies because I like to improve my language. These movies were subtitled and not dubbed, so I listened to a word and read what it meant. This is how I learned English from the age of 6–7 years, and I am still learning to improve my English. That is why I am doing the best in English, along with one of my classmates—because we were self-dependent and were not limited to what we learned at school. We took from different sources outside of school. I always advise my other classmates to find a way they like to learn English, and I shared my way with them as well. I believe that everyone has a personal way to learn and we will benefit from each other . . . My one classmate and I speak to each other in English most of the time because we want to improve our language skills.

Researcher: So your classmate helped?

Student: Yes, she played a role in improving my English level. In addition, I encourage her and she encourages me to be more autonomous.

Some students mentioned the little teacher strategy in their classes, by which the teaching task was shifted to students. For example, SG2 referred to how her experience of that helped her psychologically to develop LA. She stated,

> I remember once, the teacher asked me to explain the lesson instead of her because I impressed her every time. I made worksheets for grammar and tried to explain the grammar to myself, as well as translating some words. Then, I asked my sisters to sit and act as if they were the students and I was the teacher. This helped me explain the lesson more comfortably, increased my self-confidence and reduced my stress in the class. I feel that played a role in my LA, self-reliance and self-confidence. I truly felt I was rewarded, to have someone older and more experienced than me asking me to do that. I was really happy.

For SP5, the little teacher strategy was more of an academic support in terms of developing her cognition and time management skills. She commented,

> The teacher asked me to explain one of the English lessons. First, I explained the main points. Second, I tried to explain the concept in a different way from the textbook's approach. I used demonstration tools for this. This helped me a lot because I read different references, which broadened my understanding and develop my thinking about the topic. I also needed to manage my presentation time and prepare myself well for the other students' questions. It was a great experience!

The results presented in this section demonstrated that students considered themselves the primary facilitator of LA. They also valued psychological and social factors like respecting students' choice by the family and school, groupwork and peer learning. Additionally, they referred to the little teacher strategy as a promoter of LA, academically and psychologically. This helped to understand that, for students, academic, psychological and social aspects were a main consideration for their understanding of LA support. In the following section, the main interviews

also discussed obstacles for the development of LA in Saudi secondary schools, according to students' beliefs.

4.4.6 Students' beliefs about the barriers to LA development

In the interviews, students pointed to different barriers to the development of LA. These were related to the students, teachers and educational system. Their beliefs reflected different LA perspectives. For example, some students reflected the psychological view of LA in their beliefs, pointing to factors that could be controlled by the student. For example, SG4 identified '*Hesitation in making decisions, I mean fear of failure*', while SP5 considered '*Lack of continuity*' as a barrier, which meant she considered her effort as the reason for limiting LA development.

Another obstacle mentioned in students' beliefs was too much interference in learning on the part of the teacher. SG2 stated, the '*Teacher's interference limits learner autonomy. Lack of self-confidence is the biggest barrier*'. For SG1, over-interference from both the teacher and parents was seen as a hurdle to LA development. She commented,

> Forcing prevents and kills learner autonomy . . . for example, parents, when they guide the child in everything—If the child did not want to do his homework, let him be, because he will be punished by the teacher for neglecting his homework and then understand consequences and take responsibility. Teachers can also prevent learner autonomy by assigning too many projects and homework assignments without giving students the chance to share their opinions. The teacher must give them this chance and then take their unanimous opinion; this makes students feel more appreciated and valued.

Some students identified constraints related to teachers, namely, the way they teach English in secondary schools. For instance, SP6 said, '*We study English in class as a subject; we do not learn it as language to practise*'. Furthermore, SG3 mentioned a focus on grammatical structures and vocabulary building, irrespective of students' interests and needs:

English taught in schools is limited to teaching grammar and vocabulary, with less focus on conversation skills; therefore, I must practise conversation to improve my English. The world is very open, and many fields are more accessible; for example, I always search for videos about beauty and makeup to watch something related to my interests and improve my English and communicate with the world.

In contrast, SP5's criticism was directed to the curriculum:

In class, we are restricted to grammar. As an Arabic speaker, whenever I speak I do not consider strict grammar and focus on the past or present tense. Therefore, I believe that the English curriculum should be smoother.

Researcher: Smoother in what sense?

SP5: In terms of not being limited and restricted to grammar use. I might express English in easy language and not necessarily using past continuous; all this grammar can be complicated. I also think there are vocabularies used in dialects that we were not taught to use; we are only taught to use the official English.

The above results illustrated that the barriers found in students' beliefs were related to students' psychology, such as lack of effort, weak decision-making ability and poor confidence level. It was also shown that teachers' over-interference was viewed as a hindrance to LA development in students' beliefs. Additionally, students had a critical view of the curriculum and the way teachers explained it in secondary schools. Therefore, these findings helped to understand the importance of psychological aspects in LA development to students and suggested further implications for the study in the Saudi context. Having reviewed the hindrances to LA development according to students' beliefs, the results in the next section proceed to discuss students' willingness to be engaged in various learning decisions in class.

4.4.7 Students' beliefs about their involvement in learning decisions in class

Students' beliefs about their desire to be involved in aspects related to learning in class, such as lesson objectives, the course book, class management, learning tasks, the place of learning, teaching methods, homework, time of learning and assessment methods were considered. It was found the students were willing to be involved in all aspects related to their learning, providing different justifications for this; the exceptions were the choice of learning time and assessment methods because they perceived these areas as mainly the teacher's responsibility.

All students wanted to be involved in deciding the lesson objectives for many reasons. SG2 referred to the sense of confidence, equality and partnership in the learning process. She said, '*I prefer that because it increases my self-confidence as it means that the teacher and I are on the same level*'. For SG3, this choice would affect her motivation to learn: '*Everything in education must be rationed based on things to reinforce students' learning process. Of course, I would like to be involved, because it affects my desire in learning when I set these objectives*'.

Regarding the course book, all the students expressed their desire to be involved in this choice. For SG1, this would help them consider the responsibility of their choice. She stated, '*Yes, so we do not complain later*'. For SP8, this choice meant more regard for her needs: '*This means my needs are considered*'. It also influenced students' motivation to learn; as SP6 mentioned, '*I like to choose the book that I am going to study, because if the teacher chooses it, I may not like it. So, I will not feel motivated to learn anything about it*'. However, SP5 had another reason related to a sense of ownership of the learning process, which '*Belongs to students and not the teacher solely. As students, there are also other things in the course book that we are not interested in, so why waste time?*'.

As for class management, all the students wanted to be engaged in that area. For example, SG3

linked the involvement in this area to a sense of equality in the classroom. She said, '*I would prefer*

to agree on that together because it helps to understand the teacher. In the learning process, the

student's role is as important as the teacher's role'. SG1 commented,

> I would like to be involved. Each class has a leader and assistant, so we choose who is responsible for everything in class, such as class hygiene, class arrangement and students' discipline inside the classroom.

For SP5, involving students in class management was a student's right. She also criticised how

groupwork operated in her class; they worked in fixed groups, where the idea of changing groups

if her first group was not a good fit was embarrassing for her. She explained,

> I would like to be consulted in class management, and I think it is students' right. For instance, the teacher would prefer to make us work in groups to encourage teamwork, but some students do not prefer that.
>
> Researcher: Why?
>
> SP5: It is not beneficial if one student makes the effort and the group takes the credit for it. We work in fixed groups, which are formed at the beginning of the term.
>
> Researcher: Does the teacher allow you to change groups if you want?
>
> Student: Yes, but I feel embarrassed to change groups.

Regarding learning tasks, the students reflected their willingness to be involved in that choice.

For example, SP5 said, '*Yes, I am supposed to be engaged in research and activities*' and SP7

commented, '*Yes, particularly performance tasks, such as projects. I think students should choose*

them'.

Similar to their view on tasks, all students wanted to choose the place of learning. For SG1, this choice was perceived as a reward for distinguished achievement and linked to fieldtrips. She also referred to the influence of place on students' emotions:

> It would be nice to be asked if they could take us to the school park. My school sometimes arranges fieldtrips to other schools, and we get new ideas for our school. In addition, the teacher sometimes takes excellent classes outside the class as a reward. Students should be asked about place because they get bored with the same place, lighting and décor.

SP5 pointed to the relationship between place and students' performance in class. She stated, '*If we are in one place, we will be bored. By asking students to choose the place, students will have more fun and perform better in class*'. For SP7, this choice was more related to students' comprehension and learning style. She commented, '*I think that place should not be the same because most students are visual, so they need to go out, see and learn in order to realise the subject more*'.

Regarding the teaching methods, six out of eight students expressed their willingness to be involved in this choice. SP8 pointed to the importance of this option in considering students' interests and needs. She mentioned, '*I would love to get involved in teaching methods, because sometimes, the teacher asks us to work in groups at the end of a very long day*'. Similarly, SP5 commented, '*Of course, because I do not prefer to have a teacher lecturing all the time, nor a teacher that puts all the effort on students. There must be an interaction; I believe that this will benefit students*'. SG1 also experienced this in her class, commenting,

> We have an English teacher in my school who asks whether we want the lesson to be fun, serious, narrative or one where we explain the lesson. This gives the opportunity to students to improve in this subject.

However, two students considered the choice of teaching methods as the teacher's role. For example, SG2 mentioned that she trusted her teacher's ability to present the lesson in a suitable way to meet their interests. She commented, '*I think that the teacher is responsible for that. I am sure that the teacher will not have a specific routine because she will get bored too, she will have diversity*'.

In terms of student involvement in choosing homework, six students mentioned that they would like to be engaged in that for different reasons. TP8 preferred to have this choice, remarking, '*Sometimes the teacher gives difficult assignments to evaluate our comprehension, other times she might give easy ones to motivate us. Generally, I like to get involved*'. In contrast, SP7 wanted to be involved because she criticised her teachers' use of homework, where '*Some teachers give homework of 10 questions as punishment*'. In contrast, for two students, the choice of homework was the responsibility of the teacher alone. For example, SG2 was confident in her teacher's choice of the homework assignments that would be useful for students. She stated, '*the teacher will give different homework assignments and these are for my benefit*'.

It was interesting to find that none of the students wanted to be engaged in choosing the time of learning. For SP5, time was one of the teacher's responsibilities. She said, '*No, the teacher is supposed to choose the time*'. SP6's refusal was related to her inability to judge time properly. She mentioned, '*The teacher chooses it because I cannot estimate it, but I can choose my time to learn out of the school time*'. In addition, SP7 believed that the teacher should decide the time from the beginning of the semester to maintain proper organisation of the school day. She commented, '*No, I think this should be set from the beginning to have more order*'. For SG3, the

choice of time by the teacher was more related to a class schedule. She said, '*As a student, I do not think time affects me, since class time is related to the class timetable*'.

Students' beliefs regarding the choice of the assessment methods revealed that seven out of eight students disagreed that they should be involved in that because they believed it was the teacher's responsibility. For instance, SG2 mentioned, '*I like to be evaluated without asking me because it is the teacher's task*'. For SP7, involving students might threaten the assessment because of the students' subjectivity. She also wished for the educational system to allow student assessments of the teacher, explaining,

> The teacher's evaluation of students should be the teacher's responsibility; a person can sometimes be greedy when asked about grades. In contrast, in terms of students' evaluation of teachers, I hope we can do that because some teachers change under supervision.

Only one student wanted to be involved in her assessment, clarifying that she was not interested in peer assessment. She wanted to be involved '*in any evaluation that concerns me, not to be asked to evaluate my classmates and their participation in class; that is embarrassing*'.

The above results revealed that students felt they should be involved in all learning decisions in class except choosing the time of learning and the assessment method, which they considered teachers' responsibility. This finding informed us that students expressed high desirability to be engaged in different learning decisions in class, which consequently indicates key implications for teachers and teacher training programmes in the Saudi secondary schools context. Having examined students' beliefs about various decisions in class, the results explore next whom they considered responsible for LA development.

4.4.8. Teachers' and students' roles in LA

To identify how students perceived their roles and responsibilities towards LA, they were asked in the interviews whether LA was related to them or their teachers. Seven out of eight students considered LA a co-developed construct related to both. For instance, SG1 explained that the development of LA was her responsibility, but at the same time, she referred to her teacher's support in identifying resources for learning English. She commented,

> It is mainly related to me because I work hard on myself, and generally, I like to enrich myself with information. The person should play a major role in his development and learning autonomy. However, I cannot ignore the teacher's role totally and say she does not do anything. She supports this autonomy from the beginning of the semester by helping me to find references or websites to answer some of my questions and improve my English. Even if some students do not react quickly, learner autonomy is still inside, and one day they will develop and become more autonomous.

SG3 considered that her teacher's role was to support her to enhance her capabilities:

> I think LA is related to both of us, but more to me; if I were to give a ratio, it would be 80% on the student and 20% on the teacher by the potential she offers. Nowadays, in Saudi Arabia, they are trying to reinforce students' self-learning.
>
> Researcher: Why 20%?
>
> SG3: Because, in the end, I am still in the learning process and I need the teacher to help me show my potential, since she has more experience.

SG4 referred specifically to self-determination of the autonomous student and viewed her teacher's role in terms of psychological support. She stated,

> Both. I determine if I need to learn or not; it is my own decision. Then, the teacher should help by guiding and by sharing her experience in her LA. If the teacher was an autonomous learner, students will be inspired by her ideas.

A similar view was echoed by SP8, who believed that her role in LA was related to self-development while the teacher supported this by encouragement. She explained that she placed the responsibility on

> me and my teacher. It is related to me because I am supposed to build myself to reach this level as an autonomous learner. It is related to my teacher as well because of her encouragement. For example, if the student is very shy and does not talk or share, the teacher should support and encourage her. Although autonomous learners should be independent, the teacher must support students' levels of LA and consider their individual differences.

It was interesting to find that SP6's belief about the teacher's role reflected a political view of LA, where it was perceived as the learner's right:

> Everything that is related to my learning is related to me in the first place, but the teacher has a role to grant each student her right and trust to choose anything related to her learning without restrictions.

Only one student, SP5, considered LA as related to her alone, regardless of the teacher's role. She justified this in terms of her effort and responsibility towards learning, which could be done even without the teacher's support. She commented,

> LA is related to me. I am the one who makes the effort and practises at home; I am the one who searches for information, prepares for the next class and tries to find learning methods . . . The teacher can play a role, but it is not that important.
>
> Researcher: Why?
>
> SP5: Because it is all about the student. It is the student's responsibility even if the teacher does not support it.

The results presented above indicated that the development of LA is a co-developed concept in students' beliefs, rather than restrained to either teachers or students. In other words, students

tended to believe that LA was mainly related to them because they are responsible for their development, determination, effort and motivation in learning. Nevertheless, they still recognised their teachers' academic and psychological support for LA development. This is a key finding in students' beliefs about LA that showed how they view their role and responsibility in LA development. This discussion of the notion of responsibility in LA is followed by a summary of students' results.

4.5 Summary of students' results

Students' results in the main interviews helped to answer the second research question concerning students' beliefs about LA in Saudi secondary schools. They indicated that their beliefs reflected a mixture of the technical, psychological and political perspectives of LA. Nonetheless, the prevalent perspective was the psychological view, which was clearly reflected in their view of the facilitators and barriers of LA. They expressed that nothing could positively or negatively influence their level of LA except if they allowed it. This view also appeared in their intrinsic motivation for the aesthetic enjoyment of learning and their self-assessment. Additionally, students considered reflection part of their understanding of LA as they practised self-reflection, and some of them used the learning schedule (K-W-L) as a reflective tool in their learning. As for the technical view, although it was seen in their reference to learning skills and resources, it seemed less common than the psychological perspective. Moreover, students' beliefs also showed a comprehensive political perspective of LA as operating not only at the classroom level, but also in society, the wider political sense of Vision 2030 and internationally. Therefore, their beliefs emphasised the political fundamental notions of LA, like learners' rights and interdependence, that is, influencing society, as well as being influenced by it. Students' reference

to Saudi Vision 2030 motivated the study to explore the role of the new initiatives in LA development in the follow-up interviews in Chapter 6.

The importance of LA in students' beliefs was associated more with the notion of choice that leads to enhancing their academic achievements and learning decisions. The key facilitators and barriers identified by students were linked to students themselves. That is, they referred to an awareness of LA, intrinsic motivation and self-confidence as promoters of LA development, while the absence of these factors suggested obstacles in Saudi secondary schools. In addition, the interviewee students referred to factors like respecting students' choice in family and school, while over interference limits LA development in their beliefs. Interestingly, other social factors like cooperative and peer learning appeared in students' views to encourage LA development. Students also referred to the little teacher strategy, which helped them to develop LA academically and psychologically, and criticised teachers' English teaching methods in schools and the English curriculum. Therefore, students' understanding of the importance of LA, the facilitators and barriers of its development helped to recognise that not only the academic and psychological aspects were key to their understanding of LA but also that social aspects contributed to LA support.

Furthermore, the qualitative data demonstrated that students felt they should be engaged in different learning decisions in class, except in the choice of time of learning and the assessment methods, which they believed were mainly the teacher's responsibility. This finding informed us that students highly desired to be engaged in different learning decisions in class.

The results also indicated that one of the key findings in students' beliefs was that they regarded LA a co-developed construct. That is, it was mostly related to them; they referred to their

responsibility for self-development, self-determination, effort and having the desire to learn. Simultaneously, they acknowledged their teachers' role in providing academic and psychological support for LA development. This result helped to understand how students perceived their role in LA development in Saudi secondary schools.

After reviewing the important results in students' views that helped to see how they understood LA in Saudi secondary schools, the next section summarises the key difference between teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in the main interviews.

4.6 A comparison of teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in the main interviews (RQ3)

This section contributes to answering the third research question about the characterised distinctions between the beliefs of these two groups.

One of the key findings of the main interviews was that, although teachers' and students' beliefs reflected all three LA perspectives, namely, technical, psychological and political, teachers appeared to hold a more technical perspective of LA, while students seemed to express more of a psychological view. In other words, teachers tended to perceive LA as something provided to students that can be maintained/achieved by training students on the use of learning strategies and resources, whereas students seemed to perceive LA as an internal capacity within each student. Another difference was characterised by the role of reflection in LA development, an integral part of the psychological perspective. This role was absent from teachers' beliefs, yet it was reflected in students' beliefs in disparate ways. Additionally, even though the political perspective appeared in teachers' and students' beliefs, it was perceived differently by each

group. That is, in teachers' beliefs, it was linked to developing students' critical skills and taking part in community service programmes aiming mainly to improve students' academic level, while for students, it was more related to the core notions of the political perspective like learners' rights, being influenced by society and being its influencer.

All teachers and students believed the importance of LA lies in its academic and psychological benefits. However, it was noticed that students tended to view such importance as relating to choice or having decision-making ability that helped to improve their academic achievement level. This is a key point investigated further in the follow-up interviews in Chapter 6.

Regarding the factors influencing LA development, motivation, confidence and awareness of LA were identified as facilitators of LA in teachers' and students' beliefs, whereas a lack of these psychological factors restrained LA development. Additionally, they both considered the little teacher strategy as a motivator for LA development, whereas they regarded the English curriculum as an obstacle. Factors like the availability of learning resources was also a key LA promoter in teachers' beliefs, while the students' low English level, teachers' high workload and private schools were hurdles to LA development. However, these factors seemed not to be regarded by students. They, however, considered respecting students' decisions in learning, in addition to peer learning and groupwork, as encouragement for the development of LA, whereas teachers' over interference in the class and their English teaching methods in schools were seen as barriers to LA development.

Another key difference was teachers' and students' beliefs about the desirability of LA in secondary schools, i.e., students' involvement in different learning decisions in the class. Teachers' beliefs reflected resistance on their part to engage their students in different learning

decisions in their classes, while the students expressed their willingness to take part in all these decisions, except for choosing the time of learning and assessment methods, because they reserved these areas for teachers.

The last important distinction was associated with the way the responsibility for LA development is perceived by teachers and students. That is, teachers tended to believe that they were mainly responsible for improving students' LA level, as they provided academic guidance and psychological support to their students. Unlike teachers, students considered LA a co-developed construct that was related to them in the first place; meanwhile, they recognised their teachers' role in supporting its development.

These interesting findings contribute to answering research questions, developing our understanding of EFL teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in secondary schools and suggesting greater implications for the Saudi EFL context. However, this interview data, while providing a valuable perspective on teachers' and students' views, did not allow for understanding the issues within a wider population. The next part of the study, therefore, used a questionnaire and Factor Analysis approach to broaden the scope and focus of the work.

5.1 Introduction

To build on the findings from the qualitative interviews, the next part of the research design used quantitative data from the questionnaire, that is the t-test, Mann-Whitney test and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), to provide more generalisable findings and get a wider sense of EFL teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in secondary schools. The questionnaire was administered to 658 participants, namely, 329 EFL teachers and 329 EFL students in two cities in Saudi Arabia, as mentioned in Chapter 3. The current chapter presents the results of the questionnaire that aim to answer the three research questions regarding beliefs about LA expressed by female EFL teachers (RQ1), students (RQ2) and the difference between both in Saudi secondary schools (RQ3). It starts with deciding and preparing the questionnaire's multi-item summated scales for normality testing to determine the appropriate statistical test for the comparison between teachers' and students' beliefs about LA, which contributes to the answer of RQ3. Following this, the results of Exploratory Factor Analyses (EFA) for teachers and students are presented before drawing the differences between them to help answer the three research questions.

5.2 Reliability of multi-item summated scales

As explained in Chapter 3, p.116, this section approaches data from the questionnaire's design. The first point in doing so is to measure the reliability of multi-item summated scales to decide which should be forwarded to the comparison between teachers' and students' beliefs. According

to Dörnyei (2007), the minimum acceptable reliability, indicated by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, should not be less than 0.6 in second-language studies. Following this rule, two decisions were made. First, the summated scales reported to have very low Cronbach's alpha results like total independence (0.397), the psychological perspective (0.405) and the political perspective (0.456) were not taken forward for further analysis at this stage. For the full version of all summated scales in the questionnaire, see Appendix T. Second, some summated scales could be amended by deleting items to improve the reliability and coherence of the scale to the required level suggested by this rule. The following table reports the original Cronbach's alpha values of the scales and the improved ones, specifying which items were removed. The Cronbach's alpha scores of the questionnaire scales, shown in the table below, were seen to be sufficient according to Dörnyei (2007) and Pallant (2013) for short scales including fewer than 10 items.

Table 5.1: Cronbach's Alpha Scores Before and After Item Deletion

Scale	Original Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha after amendments
Technical perspective	0.562	0.600
Learner autonomy (LA) and groupwork	0.606	0.632
Importance of LA	0.485	0.605
Proficiency level and LA	0.519	0.600
Current LA curriculum	0.519	0.631

One item was deleted in each of the above scales. For example, in the methodology (chapter 3) , it was shown that the technical perspective scale included eight items, but to improve the scale reliability, item 55 ('*In my classroom, I do not think it is important to spend a lot of time working on language learning strategies, such as how to memorise vocabulary better*') was excluded. This was because, conceptually, the item was more related to a preference for working on learning strategies than a belief about LA meaning. As for the LA and groupwork scale, item 13 ('*For groupwork to promote LA, there needs to be a choice in how groupwork happens*') was deleted as it was more about the way the groupwork operated than the conceptualisation of LA. Similarly, in the importance of LA scale, item 19 ('*There are more important things than developing LA in the class*') was removed. For the proficiency level and LA, the omission was for item 16 ('*Lower level language learners are more likely to develop LA than those who have attained a higher level*'), while for the current curriculum of LA scale, item 11 ('*The English language textbook does not support LA*') was eliminated.

After refining the construction of the scales, two items were recoded for scale reliability, namely, item 59 in the technical perspective scale and item 38 in the LA and groupwork scale, because they were negatively phrased. Table 5.2 presents the amended scales prepared for the normality checking in the next step of the analysis.

Table 5.2: Amended Scales Prepared for Normality Testing

Section A: Perceptions about learner autonomy (LA)	
Technical perspective (a = .600)	
3	Learner autonomy means a student is professional in using learning strategies.

18	Students need support in their use of self-access centres to develop their LA.
31	Developing LA means working on language learning strategies, such as how to memorise vocabulary better.
43	The use of self-access centres by students promotes LA.
50	Developing LA means providing students with learning how to learn.
rc59	The use of self-access centres by students does not promote LA.
69	Schools providing learning resources helps promoting LA.

LA and groupwork (a = .632)

2	LA indicates encouraging group work.
rc38	The use of group projects in the classroom does not help LA.
47	Developing LA means developing skills to work both independently and collaboratively.
60	The use of group projects in the classroom promotes LA.

Importance of LA (a = .605)

4	LA is important because it prepares students for university.
52	LA is important because it allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would.
63	LA is important because it has a positive effect on success as a language learner.
67	Awareness of LA in the classroom is important for promoting LA.

Responsibilities in learning (a = .658)

6	It is a student's role in developing LA to evaluate her learning and progress.
12	It is a student's role in developing LA to find ways of practising English.
28	It is a student's role in developing LA to stimulate her interest in learning English.
36	It is a student's role in developing LA to be responsible for her learning.
46	It is a student's role in developing LA to set learning goals.
54	It is a student's role in developing LA to identify her strengths and weaknesses independently.

61	It is a student's role in developing LA to practise English outside the class, such as watching English movies without subtitles in Arabic or listening to English songs.
71	It is a student's role in developing LA to learn from peers.
5	It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners evaluate their learning and progress.
17	It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners offer opinions on their learning.
27	It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners stimulate their interest in learning English.
45	It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners to set their learning goals.
53	It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners identify their strengths and weakness independently.
70	It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners to learn from peers.
Factors influencing LA: Language proficiency level in relation to LA (a = .600)	
33	Lower level language learners are less likely to develop LA than those at a higher level.
41	Higher level language learners are more likely to develop LA than those at a lower level.
The current curriculum and LA (a = .631)	
26	The current curriculum considers the students' needs to develop their LA.
51	The way in which the English language textbook is delivered supports LA.
School type and LA (a = .752)	
25	LA is more encouraged in private schools compared with governmental schools.
65	LA is less encouraged in governmental schools compared with private schools.
Section B: Practice of LA (a = .615)	
73	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners evaluate their learning and progress.
75	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners learn from peers.
77	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners stimulate their interest in learning English.

81	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners identify their strengths and weaknesses independently.
83	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners set their learning goals.
Students' involvement in learning decisions (a = .723)	
74	In my classroom, students can choose the teaching method used by the teacher.
76	In my classroom, students can choose how to be assessed in learning.
78	In my classroom, students can choose the homework.
80	In my classroom, students can choose the lesson objectives.
82	In my classroom, students can choose when to be assessed in learning.
84	In my classroom, students can choose the class rules that everyone works by.

Note. rc stands for recoded items like 59 and 38.

The study moved to assess the normality of the data as a prerequisite step before comparing teachers' and students' beliefs about LA. This is discussed in the next section.

5.3 Testing the normality of the data

As mentioned earlier, the importance of testing normality lies in that it determines the type of test to be used for the comparison between EFL teachers' and students' beliefs about LA, which helps to answer RQ3. In the study, different methods were used to check the normality of the aforementioned scales like the skewness and kurtosis scores and histogram inspection. Beginning with skewness and kurtosis, Trochim and Donnelly (2006) and Field (2009) suggested that the acceptable limits for the scale scores of the normally distributed data was ±2 (;). Following this rule, all scales were normally distributed except for the importance of the LA scale (skewness = 1.319, kurtosis = 2.072), as Table 5.3 shows.

Table 5.3: Skewness and Kurtosis values of the scales

Scale	Skewness	Kurtosis
Technical perspective	.603	.206
LA and group work	.635	.124
Importance of LA	1.319	2.072
Responsibility in learning	.249	-.363
Language proficiency level and LA	.490	-.497
The current curriculum and LA	.252	-.822
School type and LA	-.334	-.899
Practices of LA	-.584	.143
Students' involvement in learning decisions	.253	-.420

As for the histogram inspection, it indicated that all the scales appeared approximately normally distributed except for the importance of LA scale (see Figure 5.1). For all the histograms of the scales, see Appendix U.
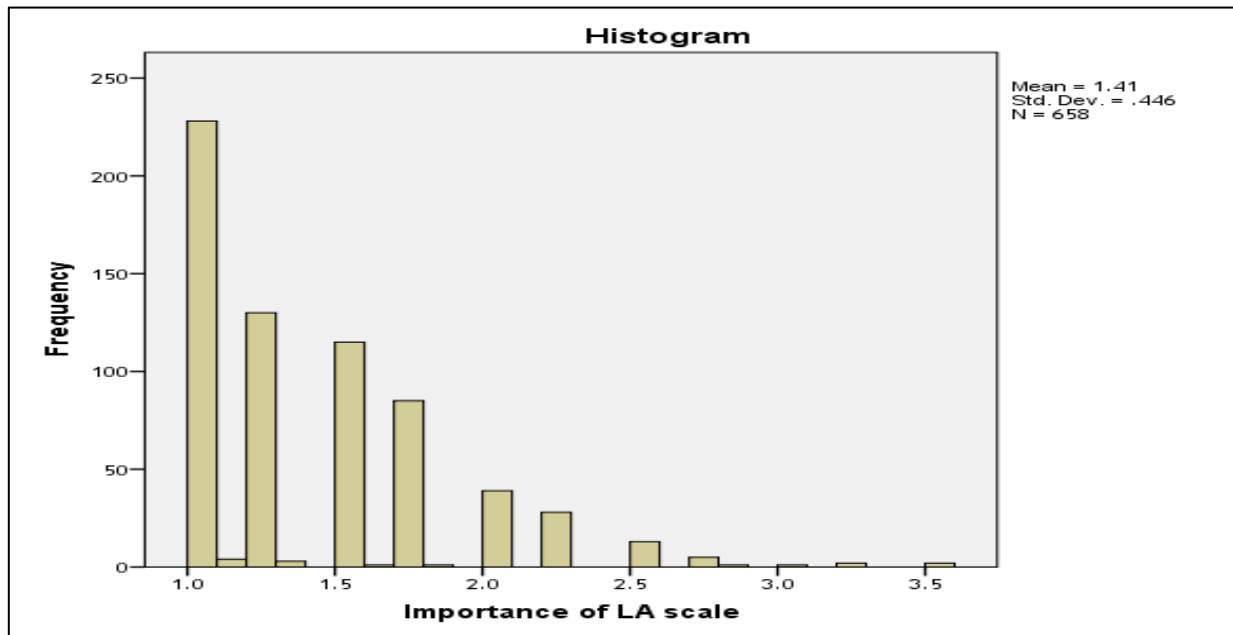
Figure 5.1: Importance of LA scale (non-normally distributed).

Therefore, a parametric test (*t*-test) was used for comparing the two independent groups of teachers and students in all the scales, whereas a non-parametric Mann–Whitney test was used for the importance of LA scale. This is because these tests help to show if there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups' answers. The results of both tests are provided below.

5.4 Comparing teachers' and students' beliefs in scales (RQ3)

In this section, the results of the *t*-test and Mann–Whitney test are reported to provide answers to the third research question regarding the distinction between teachers' and students' beliefs about LA.

5.4.1 Parametric *t*-test results

As mentioned above, the aim of using the *t*-test was comparing the normally distributed data of two independent groups, that is, EFL teachers and students, in terms of their beliefs about LA in Saudi secondary schools. Two-tailed significance was used in the study based on assuming that there would be a difference between the teachers' and students' beliefs about LA without determining the direction of the hypothesis. Table 5.4 presents the *t*-test results for teachers and students in all the scales.

Table 5.4: Results of the t-Test

	Scale	Group	Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
Section A					
	Technical perspective***	Teachers	1.6535	.000	−.37552

		Students	2.0290		
	Learner autonomy (LA) and groupwork***	Teachers	2.0756	.000	−.46992
		Students	2.5455		
	Responsibilities in learning***	Teachers	1.5905	.000	−.18045
		Students	1.7710		
	Language proficiency level and LA***	Teachers	2.0242	.000	−.55335
		Students	2.5775		
	Current curriculum and LA***	Teachers	3.0727	.000	−.51968
		Students	3.5924		
	School type and LA***	Teachers	3.0469		−.49013
		Students	3.5370	.000	
Section B	Practice of LA*	Teachers	3.7505	.033	.12118
		Students	3.6294		
	Students' involvement in learning decisions***	Teachers	2.1349	.000	−.28148
		Students	1.8534		

Note. *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$

As shown in the two-tailed significance column in Table 5.4, there was a significant difference between teachers' and students' beliefs in all the scales. They were all significant at the .001 level except for the practice of LA scale, which was significant at the .05 level. The scales in section A were about what the participants thought about LA, as was mentioned in the methodology chapter, and a Likert scale (1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree) was used for this section.

All the results in this section indicated that teachers were more likely to have lower scores compared with students. This suggested that teachers tended to show greater agreement on these scales than their students. In other words, teachers believed more in the notion of training and learning strategies as part of LA and that groupwork was a more important component of LA than students did. Teachers also put more emphasis on the notion of responsibility in defining teachers' and students' roles in LA. In addition, they were more likely to consider a high language proficiency level as important in promoting LA, and the current curriculum had a positive role in supporting LA compared with students. Furthermore, they believed more frequently that private schools were better than governmental ones in promoting and encouraging LA than students did. These are key notions in teachers' view of LA, which raise interesting points to be investigated further in the follow-up interviews, as reported in Chapter 6.

As shown in the methodology chapter, section B was about what the participants did about LA, and a Likert scale (1 = never to 5 = always) was utilised for this section. The results of the scale showed that teachers had higher scores compared with students, which reflected that teachers tended to promote LA more frequently in their teaching practices than students did in their practices of LA. However, students had a lower score on the student involvement in the learning decisions scale. This indicated that students tended to believe that they were given less choice in

their classes than their teachers reported. This is a key difference in teachers' and students' beliefs about LA because it informs us about the feasibility of engaging students in classroom decisions in Saudi secondary schools, according to both groups.

Having discussed the *t*-test results, the thesis considers the comparison of teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in a non-normally distributed scale using the Mann–Whitney test in the next section.

5.4.2 Non-parametric Mann–Whitney test results

To compare teachers' and students' beliefs regarding the importance of LA, the Mann–Whitney test was used because, as mentioned above, this scale was non-normally distributed.

Table 5.5: Results of the Mann–Whitney test

Scale	Mean rank				*p*-Value
	No.	**Teachers**	No.	**Students**	
Beliefs about importance of LA	329	284.27	329	374.73	.001

Table 5.5 shows a significant difference between teachers' and students' beliefs on this scale ($p <$ .001). A low score indicated that participants were more likely to consider the importance of LA, while a high score reflected the opposite. Since teachers had lower scores (mean rank = 284.27) on this scale compared with students (mean rank = 374.73), they tended to value the importance of LA in preparing students for university and improving their academic level more than students did. This finding will be explored in the qualitative follow-up interviews.

185

Next, a summary of the key findings in the comparison of teachers' and students' beliefs about LA is provided.

5.5 Summary of the comparison of teachers' and students' beliefs

The results of the *t*-test and Mann–Whitney test contribute to highlighting two important distinctions between teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in Saudi secondary schools, as required by the third research question. That is, they showed that teachers more strongly agreed with the questionnaire statements than students did. In other words, teachers held all the beliefs in the scales of section A (what participants think about LA) to a greater extent than students did. For section B, the key finding was that students had a lower score than teachers in the scale of students' involvement in learning decisions. This reflected that students believed there was little room for their choice in the class. Unlike the students, teachers felt that they gave their students sufficient choice regarding learning decisions in class. This tells us that students had higher expectations of LA practices in secondary schools than teachers recognised, and this has an interesting implication for teachers and teacher training programmes.

The results in the next section consider the Exploratory Factor Analysis for teachers, then students and the differences between both groups to help answer the three research questions correspondingly.

5.6 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Having explored teachers' and students' beliefs in the multi-item summated scales constructed from LA literature and qualitative findings of the main interviews, the study considered that there

might be another way in which the teachers' and students' beliefs clustered that diverged from what the literature or researcher expected. This alternative clustering could be discovered through Exploratory Factor Analysis, which has been used as an effective approach in the investigation of beliefs in various studies in ESL/EFL contexts (Ali, Wyatt, & Van Laar, 2015; Chan & Elliott, 2000; Oz, 2007). Exploratory Factor Analysis is a data reduction tool that helps to decrease a large set of data to more manageable and interpretable data sets, known as *factors* (Fabrigar and Wegener, 2011). Another reason that encouraged the use of Exploratory Factor Analysis was related to the reliability of the summated scales in the questionnaire. That is, although the questionnaire had an overall reliability of .879, which was considered good (Dörnyei, 2007), some scales in the questionnaires had low reliability, as mentioned in Section 5.2. Given this result, it was decided that the use of Exploratory Factor Analysis would help the study look at how the statements of the questionnaire clustered in teachers' and students' beliefs, uncovering underlying key structures within their understanding of LA in Saudi secondary schools.

To do so, two steps were needed to check the suitability of factor analysis to the current study. These were checking the sample adequacy for factor analysis and checking the factorability of the research data. The former was done by calculating the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure, which needed to be closer to 1 with a minimum acceptable score of 0.50 to indicate the sufficiency of the sample (Kaiser, 1974). Based on that, the research sample was adequate, with KMO = .732 for teachers and KMO = .638 for students. The factorability of the research data was important to reflect whether structures in the data could be detected by factor analysis in the study. It was assessed using Bartlett's test of sphericity, which was significant in the study for

teachers (X^2 (2926) = 7267, $p < 0.001$) and students (X^2 (2926) = 6174, $p < 0.001$), indicating that Exploratory Factor Analysis was useful for the research results.

The Exploratory Factor Analysis was conducted using principal axis factoring (PAF) as the extraction method and direct oblique as the rotation method, as justified in the methodology chapter. The selection of the number of factors was initially based on the Kaiser criterion, which suggested 26 factors for teachers and 28 for students, but the scree plot inspection showed that the inflection point was nine factors for teachers and four for students. Next, a visual representation of the extracted factors is presented by scree plots (see Figures 5.2 and 5.3). As such, nine factors were identified for teachers and four factors for students.
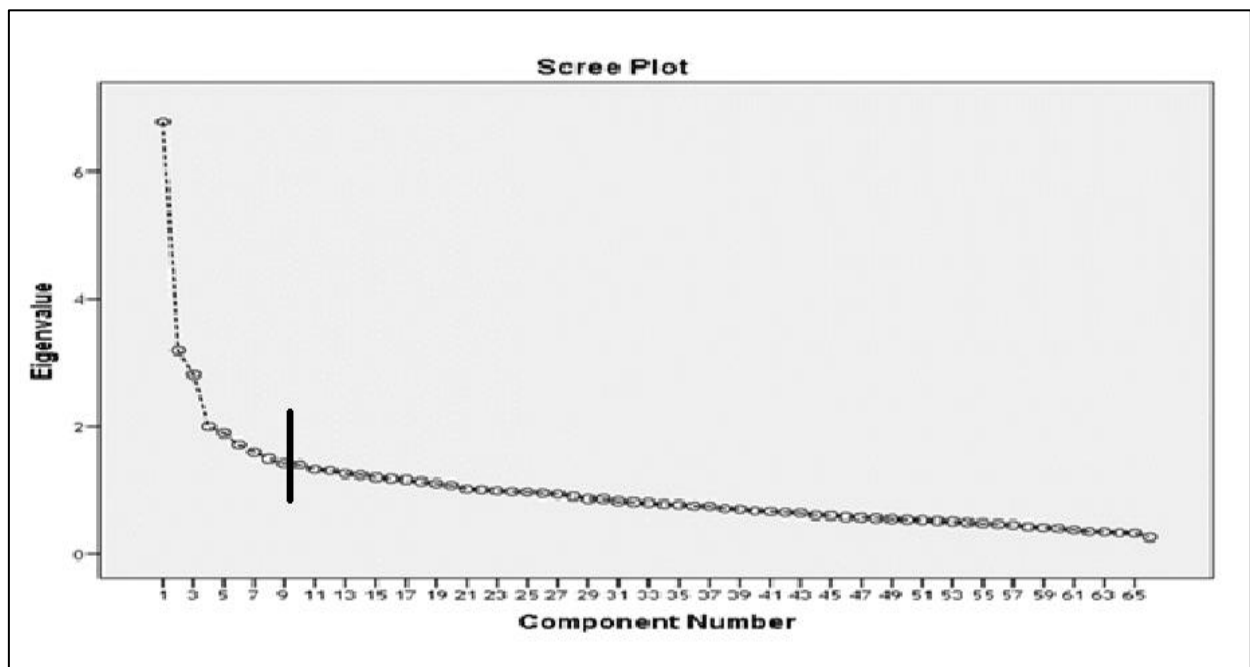
Figure 5.2: Scree plot for teachers' beliefs.
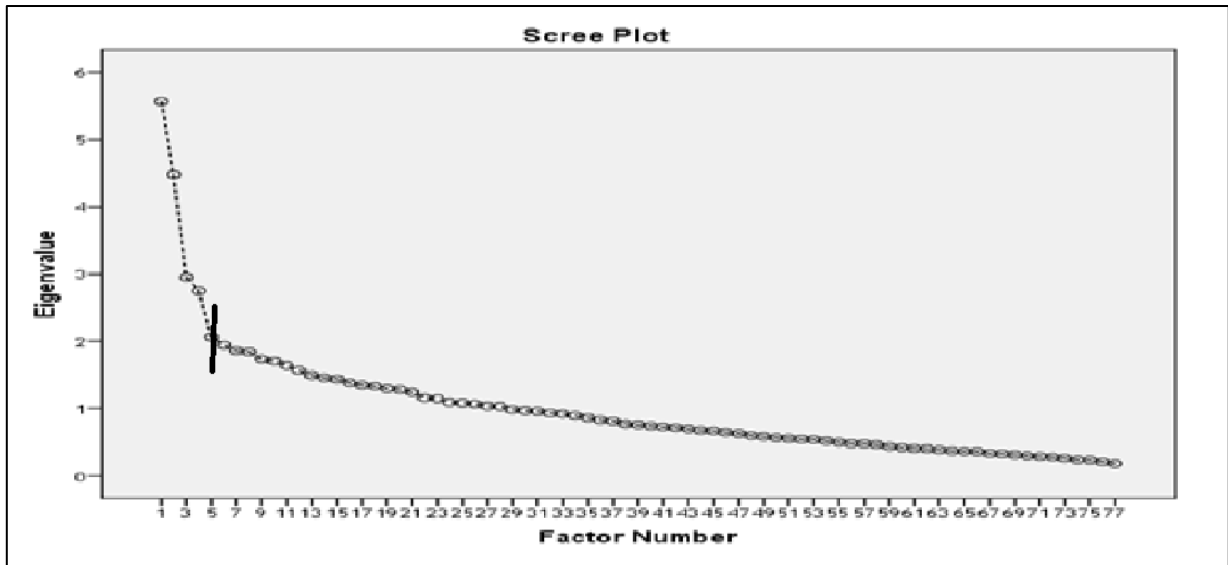
Figure 5.3: Scree plot for students' beliefs.

Eigenvalues were reported in the Exploratory Factor Analysis as they were indicators of the amount of variance justified by each factor. Kaiser (1960) suggested that the eigenvalue must be greater than 1 as each factor cannot explain less than one variable. Additionally, the percentage of variance and the cumulative percentage of factors were presented; according to Cohen et al. (2011), they both have explanatory power, the former for each factor and the latter for all the factors. In the present study, the extracted factors helped explain 36% of the variability in teachers' beliefs and 20.4% of that in students' beliefs about LA in the Saudi secondary schools context (see Tables 5.5 and 5.6). Based on this, it is worth mentioning that there was a lot of variance that was not explained by these factors. Therefore, the study incorporated a third research instrument, follow-up interviews, to further explore teachers' and students' beliefs about LA; these are discussed in Chapter 6. Titles were given to factors depending on the highest weight or load of an item. The highest load of items represented greater commonality to a factor. Variables within the factor structure that had less than .30 loading were not considered as salient:

189

Dörnyei (2007) recommended that items with loadings less than .3 should be suppressed. Having reviewed the decisions and statistical elements in Exploratory Factor Analysis, the next section moves to the results on the Exploratory Factor Analysis for teachers to answer the first research question relating to teachers' beliefs about LA.

5.6.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis for teachers (RQ1)

The table below presents the nine factors found in teachers' beliefs about LA.

Table 5.6: Extracted Factors and Their Variance in Teachers' Beliefs

Factor	Description	Eigenvalue	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	Reactive learner autonomy (LA)	8.297	10.776	10.776
2	Encouraging and enabling students' control over learning	3.928	5.101	15.877
3	Individualistic dimension of LA	3.212	4.171	20.048
4	Current curriculum	2.470	3.207	23.255
5	Peer and groupwork	2.363	3.069	26.324
6	Embracing student ability to learn autonomously	2.154	2.797	29.121
7	Student confidence	1.901	2.469	31.590
8	Psychological dimension of LA	1.800	2.338	33.928
9	School type	1.616	2.099	36.027

The factors found in teachers' beliefs, which referred to the common and powerful ideas in their conceptualisation of LA, were arranged according to the highest eigenvalues in the above table. This is because the eigenvalue represents the area that helps to explain most of the variance in

teachers' beliefs about LA (Fabrigar & Wegener, 2011). As can be seen in Table 5.6, the first factor had the highest eigenvalue, 8.30, compared with the eight other factors and accounted for 10.78% out of 36% of the total cumulative variance with all factors explained. This means that the first factor (reactive LA) was key to understanding how teachers perceive LA and had greater power and influence over the other factors in interpreting these beliefs. For all the rotated factor loadings in teachers' beliefs, see Appendix V.

The factors in teachers' beliefs were classified based on their reliability into weak and strong factors. The weak factors were individualistic dimensions of LA, embracing students' ability to learn autonomously, student confidence and the psychological dimension of LA, see Appendix W. Therefore, they will not be considered in the analysis. In contrast, the strong factors were reactive autonomy, encouraging and enabling students' control over learning, the current curriculum, peer and groupwork and school type. Thus, the focus will be placed on these factors in presenting the results. Below, the explanation of each factor and its reliability in terms of measuring internal consistency are discussed.

Teachers' beliefs about reactive LA

No.	Item	Loading
43	The use of self-access centres by students promotes learner autonomy (LA).	.551
63	LA is important because it has a positive effect on success as a language learner.	.516
18	Students need support in their use of self-access centres to develop their LA.	.503
17	It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners offer opinions on their learning.	.485

69	Schools providing learning resources helps promote LA.	.459
52	LA is important because it allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would.	.413
50	Developing LA means providing students with learning how to learn.	.381
67	Awareness of LA in the classroom is important for promoting LA.	.380
45	It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners to set their learning goals.	.369
47	Developing LA means developing skills to work both independently and collaboratively.	.354
61	It is a student's role in developing LA to practise English outside the class, such as watching English movies without subtitles in Arabic or listening to English songs.	.338
27	It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners stimulate their interest in learning English.	.333
4	LA is important because it prepares students for university.	.318
5	It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners evaluate their learning and progress.	.315
59	The use of self-access centres by students does not promote LA.	−.312-
Cronbach's alpha = .813 No. of items = 15		

As explained above, the first factor was the predominant and significant factor in explaining most of the variance in teachers' beliefs about LA. In other words, the widespread and prevalent ideas in teachers' beliefs about LA were explained by the first factor. This factor referred to the notion of reactive LA, which means that LA was seen in this factor as something provided to students, as the technical perspective suggests (Benson, 1997), after which they reacted to it. That is, by being trained on learning strategies or skills, supported by teachers psychologically and academically, students become autonomous learners. Therefore, the focus of this view was mainly the teacher's

role in LA. Only three items in this factor pointed to a student's role in learning, namely, items 43, 59 and 61; however, this role was still within the conceptualisation of LA as being provided, with a particular focus on learning resources.

This factor consisted of 15 items with a loading of greater than 0.3 and had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .813. Item 43 ('*The use of self-access centres by students promotes LA*') had the highest load, whereas item 59 ('*The use of self-access centres by students does not promote LA*') showed the lowest contribution to the factor. The loading of items showed that all items were positively loaded on the factor except item 59 ('*The use of self-access centres by students does not promote LA*'). The negative loading here was due to the negative phrasing of the item.

The above factor helped to illustrate key notions in teachers' beliefs about LA. That is, teachers tended to view LA as indicating a reactive role of the students, as they perceived it as a provided quality through training students on how to learn and offering them academic and psychological support. This view focused heavily on teachers' role in LA development, while the students' role was restricted to the use of learning resources, as the technical perspective of LA suggests. Next, the second key factor in explaining teachers' beliefs about LA is presented.

Teachers' beliefs about encouraging and enabling students' control over learning

No.	Item	Loading
83	In my classroom, I promote learner autonomy (LA) by helping learners set their learning goals.	.703
80	In my classroom, students can choose the lesson objectives.	.644
76	In my classroom, students can choose how to be assessed in learning.	.613

74	In my classroom, students can choose the teaching method used by the teacher.	.590
81	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners identify their strengths and weaknesses independently.	.580
78	In my classroom, students can choose the homework.	.542
84	In my classroom, students can choose the class rules that everyone works by.	.531
73	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners evaluate their learning and progress.	.512
77	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners stimulate their interest in learning English.	.471
82	In my classroom, students can choose when to be assessed in learning.	.458
75	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners learn from peers.	.324
Cronbach's alpha = .822 No. of items = 11		

This factor represented the second-strongest combination in teachers' beliefs about LA. By assessing the 11 items within the factor, it can be said that they referred to teaching practices like assisting students in different aspects related to learning, such as goal setting, self-evaluation and motivation to learn English. Additionally, these practices include allowing students' control over learning decisions in class, such as lesson objectives, assessment methods, teaching method, homework, class management and assessment time.

The second factor interpreted 5% of the variance in teachers' beliefs about LA, with a high reliability of .822. As shown in the table above, the highest load in this factor was for item 83 ('*In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners set their learning goals*'), while item 75 ('*In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners learn from peers*') had the lowest loading.

Therefore, the above factor showed that providing LA support in different learning decisions in the class was a key notion in teachers' understanding of LA. This finding supports the first factor that focussed mainly on teachers' role in LA development. The thesis moves next to another important factor in teachers' beliefs about LA.

Teachers' beliefs about the current curriculum

No.	Item	Loading
26	The current curriculum considers the students' needs to develop their learner autonomy (LA).	.757
51	The way in which the English language textbook is delivered supports LA.	.664
11	The English language textbook does not support LA.	−.536
Cronbach's alpha = .693 No. of items = 3		

Another factor that helped to clarify the main ideas in teachers' beliefs about LA was their view of the role of the current curriculum in LA development. It reflected the teachers' beliefs regarding whether the current curriculum helped work on LA development. The above factor loaded with three items and had a Cronbach's alpha of .693, explaining 3% of the variance in teachers' beliefs about LA. Item 11 ('*The English language textbook does not support LA*') had a negative loading due to the negative phrasing of the item. However, it was still related to the notion of the effectiveness of the current curriculum in relation to LA development.

Therefore, it can be said that a key part of teachers' beliefs about LA was that they viewed the current curriculum as a facilitator of LA development in Saudi secondary schools. In the next

section, the results proceed to another underlying structure found in teachers' understanding of

LA in this context.

Teachers' beliefs about peer and groupwork

No.	Item	Loading
71	It is a student's role in developing learner autonomy (LA) to learn from peers.	.717
70	It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners learn from peers.	.682
60	The use of group projects in the classroom promotes LA.	.433
75	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners learn from peers.	−.383
2	LA indicates encouraging groupwork.	.335
38	The use of group projects in the classroom does not help LA.	−.327
Cronbach's alpha = .644 No. of items = 6		

This factor showed a further construction in teachers' view about LA linked to recognising the role

of peer and groupwork in the development of LA. By assessing the six items within the factor, it

can be inferred that they considered peer and groupwork an encouragement of LA development

in class. The current factor had a Cronbach's alpha of .644 and helped to illustrate 3% of the

variance in teachers' beliefs about LA. Items 75 ('*In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners*

learn from peers') and 38 ('*The use of group projects in the classroom does not help LA*') are

negatively loaded, but they were still consistent with the factor. This was because item 75 is a

practice, and therefore, it was coded in the opposite manner to beliefs based on the Likert scale

in section B, whereas item 38 was negatively phrased.

The above-mentioned factor demonstrated that encouraging peer and groupwork in the class was a crucial component in teachers' understanding of LA in secondary schools. In the following section, the last factor revealing teachers' beliefs about LA is explained.

Teachers' beliefs about school type

No.	Item	Loading
65	Learner autonomy (LA) is less encouraged in governmental schools compared with private schools.	.759
25	LA is more encouraged in private schools compared with governmental schools.	.670
Cronbach's alpha = .773 No. of items = 2		

The last factor in teachers' beliefs showed the role of school type regarding LA. Specifically, teachers' beliefs tended to consider private schools a fertile environment for supporting LA compared with governmental schools. This factor was loaded with two items and had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .773. It accounted for 2% of the variance in explaining teachers' beliefs about LA.

Accordingly, the above factor drew our attention to an interesting notion in teachers' views about LA. That is, teachers believed that school type was an influential factor in LA development. This finding stimulates further exploration of the reasons behind such a belief in the follow-up interviews in Chapter 6. After the discussion of factors concerning teachers' beliefs, a summary of Exploratory Factor Analysis for teachers is provided next.

5.6.2 Summary of teachers' results in the Exploratory Factor Analysis

The results of the Exploratory Factor Analysis for teachers helped to answer the second research question regarding the beliefs expressed by EFL teachers in Saudi secondary schools. This is because it offered an exploratory approach that helped to reveal the underlying key notions in teachers' beliefs in the form of five factors. The first factor explained that teachers mainly believed in reactive LA that valued teachers' role in training students on learning skills and the use of resources, implying a technical view of LA that considered LA a provided quality to which the students reacted to become autonomous in learning. This was strengthened by the second factor that illustrated the teaching practices used to encourage students' control over different learning decisions in class. The third factor revealed that the current English curriculum is a promoter of LA development in secondary schools, whereas the fourth factor clarified that peer and groupwork was an essential belief in teachers' view of LA. Finally, the fifth factor showed that teachers perceived private schools a more supportive setting for LA development compared to governmental schools. Hence, all four aforementioned factors showed that teachers were generally satisfied with the ways they taught as supporting LA development—they did not really question their current practices. However, the last factor about school type appeared distinct from this overall teachers' belief about LA. Nonetheless, it is still a useful and interesting insight into the disparate contexts in which teachers are experiencing LA teaching in secondary schools. These findings uncover interesting thoughts in the wider sense of teachers' understanding of LA in the Saudi secondary schools context. The next section delineates Exploratory Factor Analysis for students.

5.6.3 Exploratory Factor Analysis for students (RQ2)

The results presented in this section helped to answer the second research question concerning students' beliefs about LA. Table 5.7 shows the four factors found in students' beliefs about LA.

Table 5.7: Extracted Factors and Their Variance in Students' Beliefs

Factor	Description	Eigenvalue	% of variance	Cumula-tive %
1	Proactive learner autonomy (LA)	5.563	7.225	7.225
2	Dual nature of LA	4.478	5.815	13.041
3	Scepticism about LA	2.950	3.831	16.872
4	Current teaching practices to develop LA in class	2.747	3.568	20.440

The factors found in students' beliefs, which represented the frequent and dominant ideas in their conceptualisation of LA, were arranged according to the highest eigenvalues in the above table. As explained in 5.6.2, the higher the eigenvalue is, the more the factor explains the variance in students' beliefs about LA (Fabrigar & Wegener, 2011). As can be seen in the table, the first factor had the highest eigenvalue, at 5.56, compared with the three other factors. It accounted for 7.23% out of 20.4% of the total cumulative variance that all factors explained. In other words, the first factor (proactive LA) was the most powerful factor compared with the others in explaining students' beliefs about LA. For all the rotated factor loadings in students' beliefs, see Appendix X. The discussion below considers the interpretation of each factor in students' beliefs and its reliability.

Students' beliefs about proactive LA

No.	Items	Loadings
52	Learner autonomy (LA) is important because it allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would.	.576
28	It is a student's role in developing LA to stimulate her interest in learning English.	.492
63	LA is important because it has a positive effect on success as a language learner.	.481
37	There is no barrier that limits students from being autonomous because autonomy comes from inside.	.443
36	It is a student's role in developing LA to be responsible for her learning.	.436
58	The use of social media in English by students does not help LA.	−.436
46	It is a student's role in developing LA to set learning goals.	.426
24	The use of social media in English by students promotes LA.	.424
77	I develop my LA by stimulating my interest in learning English.	−.421
32	Students can develop skills to learn English grammar independently.	.398
54	It is a student's role in developing LA to identify her strengths and weaknesses independently.	.370
73	I develop my LA by evaluating my learning and progress.	−.369
81	I develop my LA by identifying my strengths and weaknesses.	−.369
67	Awareness of LA in the classroom is important for promoting LA.	.358
14	LA means learning without a teacher.	.333
4	LA is important because it prepares students for university.	.331
61	It is a student's role in developing LA to practise English outside the class, such as watching English movies without subtitles in Arabic or listening to English songs.	.328
44	Only a teacher can teach English grammar. Students cannot learn it independently.	−.321-
Cronbach's alpha = .770 No. of items = 18		

The first factor was predominant in explaining the great variance of students' beliefs about LA. In other words, the most common ideas in students' beliefs about LA were interpreted by this factor. It referred to the notion of proactive LA, which implied students' initiative and active role in different aspects of their learning. This role included recognising the gains of LA, being responsible for their motivation and progress, believing in their ability to learn autonomously and practising English outside class. This factor implied that the locus of control was with the students, reflecting Benson's (1997) psychological view of LA.

This factor was loaded with 18 items, with a Cronbach's alpha of .770. As shown in the table above, five items were negatively loaded on the factor. This was because items 58 ('*The use of social media in English by students does not help LA*') and 44 ('*Only a teacher can teach English grammar. Students cannot learn it independently*') were negatively phrased. Items 77 ('*I develop my LA by stimulating my interest in learning English*'), 73 ('*I develop my LA by evaluating my learning and progress*') and 81 ('*I develop my LA by identifying my strengths and weaknesses independently*'). were practices; therefore, they were coded in the opposite manner to beliefs. Thus, the five negatively loaded items still fit with the factor conceptualisation.

The above factor helped to demonstrate a key notion in students' understanding of LA. For students, LA mainly suggested their proactive role. This view emphasised students' control and management of their learning, which resembled the psychological perspective of LA. Having discussed the first factor, the next section moves to present the second factor in explaining students' beliefs about LA.

Students' beliefs about the dual nature of LA

No.	Item	Loading
70	It is a teacher's role in developing learner autonomy (LA) to help learners learn from peers.	.524
60	The use of group projects in the classroom promotes LA.	.502
71	It is a student's role in developing LA to learn from peers	.474
50	Developing LA means providing students with learning how to learn.	.417
2	LA indicates encouraging groupwork.	.412
69	Schools providing learning resources helps promote LA.	.393
15	LA means being an effective member of society.	.385
39	LA means having influence in the social setting to be a leader.	.384
43	The use of self-access centres by students promotes LA.	.377
42	Schools can facilitate LA by encouraging students to join students' club, where they can develop their leadership role.	.354
27	It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners stimulate their interest in learning English.	.353
47	Developing LA means developing skills to work both independently and collaboratively.	.351
38	The use of group projects in the classroom does not help LA.	−.346
45	It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners set their learning goals.	.344
75	I develop my LA by learning from peers.	−.342
3	LA means a student is proficient in using learning strategies.	.323
18	Students need support in their use of self-access centres to develop their LA.	.305
Cronbach's alpha = .755 No. of items = 17		

This factor resembled the second-strongest combination in students' beliefs about LA. Indeed, this factor pointed to the notion of social and individual levels of LA. The social level was reflected by learning from peers, groups and the teacher. It also considered the notion of interdependence

and having an influence on the social setting, which implied the political view of LA identified by Benson (1997). The individual level referred to training on learning strategies and self-access centres. Therefore, the second factor referred to three roles of the students: being proactive in their learning, reactive to their teachers' support and active in their society. It also pointed to teachers' role in providing academic and psychological support for LA development.

The second factor was loaded with 17 items, with a Cronbach's alpha of .755. It explained 6% of the variance in students' beliefs about LA. Items 38 and 75 were negatively loaded on this factor, but they were still related to the conceptualisation of the factor. For item 38 ('*The use of group projects in the classroom does not help LA*'), the negative loading was due to the negative phrasing of the item. In contrast, item 75 ('*I develop my LA by learning from peers*') was a practice, and therefore, coded in the opposite manner from the beliefs. The loading of items shown in this factor indicated that item 70 ('*It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners learn from peers*') had the highest load, whereas item 18 ('*Students need support in their use of self-access centres to develop their LA*') had the lowest loading on the factor.

The aforementioned factor showed a key finding in students' understanding of LA. That is, students believed that LA is a construct that has two dimensions: social and individual. In other words, LA for students stressed the notion of interdependence in the class and beyond it in the wider society. Simultaneously, students believed LA included individual aspects within it like developing their skills on how to learn and utilising learning resources. Thus, this factor helped us to understand not only how students understand LA but also how they perceive their own role and their teachers' role in learning. The results proceed next to demonstrate another factor that interpreted students' beliefs about LA.

Students' scepticism about the current methods to promote LA

No.	Item	Loading
59	The use of self-access centres by students does not promote learner autonomy (LA).	.509
34	LA requires learners to be totally independent of the teacher.	.505
58	The use of social media in English by students does not help LA.	.424
38	The use of group projects in the classroom does not help LA.	.383
16	Lower level language learners are more likely to develop LA than those who have attained a higher level.	.346
55	In my classroom, I do not think it is important to spend a lot of time working on language learning strategies, such as how to memorise vocabulary better.	.329
65	LA is less encouraged in governmental schools compared with private schools.	.308
Cronbach's alpha = .600 No. of items = 7		

Another interesting factor that helped to explain the underlying core notions in students' beliefs about LA was their scepticism regarding the current methods to promote LA. This factor was the third in students' beliefs and tended to reflect students' uncertainty concerning a set of beliefs related to self-access centres, total independence, social media, groupwork, proficiency levels, learning strategies and school type. This appeared to contradict the factor above, but actually, it is just showing that, though students valued some of these notions, they still have underlying doubts about them. These doubts might come from a place of not seeing LA in the same way as their teachers, which raised further questions that will be considered in the follow-up interviews.

The third factor was loaded with seven items and accounted for 4% of students' beliefs about LA. The highest loaded item on this factor was item 59 ('*The use of self-access centres by students does not promote LA*'), whereas item 65 ('*LA is less encouraged in governmental schools compared with private schools*') was the least common item for the factor. Students' scepticism regarding items 59,58 and 55 might indicate their less focus on the technical view, which considered the use of learning resources as a provider of LA. As for item 34, this might show that students tended to perceive teacher's role as important for LA development and could not be totally dismissed. Additionally, item 16 appeared to imply that language proficiency level might not be a description of autonomous learner in their beliefs. It was interesting to find that students appeared to be sceptical regarding the application of groupwork in class as in item 38, and regarding the role of governmental schools as less supportive to LA compared to private ones.

The above factor showed an interesting structure within students' understanding of LA. It explained that notions like total independence from the teacher, the description of autonomous learners as having high proficiency levels and private schools as a better supportive environment for LA development are not part of students' understanding of LA in Saudi secondary schools. Additionally, this factor helped to reveal some doubts related to the technical perspective of LA, which might be less prominent in their beliefs. It was also noteworthy that the factor pointed to students' scepticism regarding the application of groupwork in the class. Therefore, these areas will be further investigated in the follow-up interviews. Next, the results present the last factor that helped to understand students' beliefs about LA.

Students' beliefs about the current teaching practices to develop LA in class

No.	Item	Loading
74	In my classroom, students can choose the teaching method used by the teacher.	.508
76	In my classroom, students can choose how to be assessed in learning.	.484
80	In my classroom, students can choose the lesson objectives.	.471
82	In my classroom, students can choose when to be assessed in learning.	.405
51	The way in which the English language textbook is delivered supports learning autonomy (LA).	−.398
84	In my classroom, students can choose the class rules that everyone works by.	.380
78	In my classroom, students can choose the homework.	.373
Cronbach's alpha = .661 No. of items = 7		

The fourth factor that contributed to clarifying students' understanding of LA was linked to their beliefs about the current teaching practices developing LA in the class. This factor considered different teaching practices regarding students' choice in learning, namely, the teaching method, assessment method, lesson objectives, assessment time, class management and homework. In other words, it mostly seemed to show what students understood as being normal practice relating to LA in their classrooms—that is to say, what actually happened in their classes.

This was the last factor in students' beliefs that explained 3.6% of their beliefs about LA. It was loaded with seven items with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .661. Item 51 ('*The way in which the English language textbook is delivered supports LA*') was negatively loaded on the factor, but it still fit with the factor meaning. This was because it referred to a belief regarding the teaching method of the English textbook , and therefore, coded in the opposite manner; all the other items

in the factor pointed to practices of LA. The difference between this factor and the second factor in teachers' beliefs, titled *encouraging and enabling students' control over learning*, was that the former included only the choices allowed for students by their teachers, while the latter moved beyond that to include how teachers promote LA in their teaching practices.

The above-mentioned factor showed that students' choice regarding learning decisions in the class was an essential notion in their beliefs about LA. After the discussion of factors in students' beliefs, a summary of Exploratory Factor Analysis for students is provided next.

5.6.4 Summary of students' results in the Exploratory Factor Analysis

The students' results presented in this section contributed to answering the second research question regarding their beliefs about LA. The reason is that Exploratory Factor Analysis for students helped to uncover the latent fundamental ideas within their understanding of LA through four factors. That is, the first factor, titled 'proactive LA', illustrated students' emphasis on their active role in learning, as they considered themselves as having the locus of control with them. This suggests a psychological perspective of LA as a capacity within each learner. The results also showed a key finding in students' beliefs related to understanding LA as a construct with a dual nature, as explained in the second factor. In other words, LA for students not only covered individual aspects like developing their skills and using different resources in learning, but also social aspects like interdependence in class and the wider societal context. Therefore, this factor informed us that students viewed their role in LA as being proactive in their learning, reactive to their teacher's academic and psychological support, and active in their society. It also helped to understand that the political perspective was part of how they perceived LA. Interestingly, the third factor revealed students' uncertainty regarding a set of beliefs about LA. This factor helped

to understand that total independence from the teacher, the relationship between the proficiency level and LA, and viewing private schools as more encouraging environments of LA are not part of how students understand LA in Saudi secondary schools. It also clarified that students had doubts regarding the technical perspective of LA and the application of groupwork in the class for the development of LA. The final factor in students' beliefs regarding the current teaching practices developing LA in the class helped to recognise that students' choice of learning decision in class is an essential notion in their understanding of LA in the Saudi secondary schools context. Therefore, these findings revealed crucial notions in students' beliefs about LA that drive our understanding of how they perceived it in this context. In the next section, the distinctions between teachers' and students' results are highlighted to help answer the third research question of the study.

5.7 Differences in the Exploratory Factor Analysis results between teachers' and students' beliefs about LA (RQ3)

This section helps to answer the third research question about the differences between teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in the results of the Exploratory Factor Analysis. One of the key findings was highlighted by the first factor in the results of both groups. That is, teachers believed in *reactive LA*, which referred mainly to the technical perspective of LA that considered LA a provided quality to which students reacted. This result was also supported by the second factor in teachers' beliefs about *encouraging and enabling students' control over learning*. This is because both factors heavily emphasised teachers' role in LA development. Conversely, the first factor in students' beliefs, *proactive LA*, was more associated with the psychological view that considered students' internal capacity to control their learning and have a proactive role in their LA development. Furthermore, unlike teachers, students had some doubts regarding the

technical perspective of LA that concentrated on the use of learning strategies and learning resources to enable students to become autonomous in their learning, as explained in the third factor in students' beliefs, *scepticism about current methods to promote LA*.

Another crucial disparity was identified in the fourth factor in teachers' beliefs, *peer and groupwork*. This factor emerged in the second factor in students' beliefs, the *dual nature of LA,* but it was developed more to have a greater sense of students' active role in the wider social setting. Therefore, students' understanding of LA included a reference to the political perspective, namely in the second factor, while teachers' beliefs lack this view. Another interesting finding in students' beliefs about the groupwork was that, though they believed in its role in LA development, they were sceptical about the way it was applied in secondary schools for LA development.

Teachers' beliefs about *the current curriculum*, as explained in the third factor of their results, highlighted another distinction between teachers' and students' views of LA in secondary schools. That is, this factor appeared in teachers' understanding of LA, yet it was absent from students' beliefs. This means that, for students, the curriculum was separate from their ideas about LA, which reflected the psychological and political perspectives, as explained above.

The last identified difference between teachers' and students' results related to *the school type,* the final factor in teachers' beliefs*.* Teachers tended to consider private schools to be better environments in encouraging LA development. This result was not shown in students' beliefs as a factor, yet it was part of their doubts explained in the third factor, *scepticism about the current methods to promote LA*. This reflected that, unlike teachers, for students, this notion was not part of how they perceive LA in secondary schools.

These findings were key to drawing a distinctive thread between teachers' and students' beliefs about LA. However, these questionnaire's findings, while providing valuable insights into teachers' and students' views in a wider population, did not allow an in-depth understanding of teachers' and students' views that the qualitative findings would bring. Therefore, the following part of the study used the follow-up interviews, which will not only validate the previous qualitative and quantitative findings discussed in chapters 4 and 5, but also discover more participants' rationales for these views in the Saudi secondary schools context.

Chapter 6: Results from the follow-up interviews

6.1 Introduction

To add to the findings from the qualitative main interviews and quantitative data from the questionnaire, the following part of the study used follow-up interviews, as explained in the study's design. This is not only to validate the findings regarding teachers' and students' beliefs by the research participants but also to understand better their reasoning behind these views. Therefore, the follow-up interviews in this chapter involved three EFL teachers and their three EFL students in Saudi secondary schools and were conducted according to the methodological choices described in Chapter 3. They investigated teachers' and students' beliefs regarding their dominant view about LA, students' involvement in learning decisions in class, and the importance of LA in secondary schools. They also explored the role of the Tatweer project and Saudi Vision 2030, the English curriculum, groupwork, school type, the little teacher strategy and the learning schedule (K-W-L) in relation to LA development, as well as the factors that influenced their beliefs about LA. For the full interview guide, see Appendix Q. This chapter starts with presenting the findings of teachers, then students, before referring to the distinctions between both groups to answer the three research questions correspondingly, that is concerning teachers' beliefs about LA (RQ1), students (RQ2) and the difference between them (RQ3) in the Saudi secondary schools context. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the study findings from the three phases with illustrative figures.

6.2 Teachers' results in the follow-up interviews (RQ1)

The results presented in this section provided an answer to the first research question, namely what beliefs are expressed by female EFL teachers in Saudi secondary schools regarding LA?

6.2.1 Reactive LA as the prevalent view in teachers' beliefs

As discussed in Chapter 5, one of the key notions of teachers' beliefs was reactive LA, as the first factor explained in the quantitative findings of Exploratory Factor Analysis for teachers. The results of follow-up interviews showed that all three teachers acknowledged this finding, as they believed in Littlewood's (1999) reactive autonomy. This means that they considered the goal or direction of learning as set not by the student but by the teacher, and then the student's role is to work towards that goal autonomously. Therefore, this view implied a technical perspective of LA, as it mainly valued the teacher's role in providing LA to students by training. For example, TP11 referred to training students by the teacher to have decision-making ability in their learning. She said, '*Their age group needs training to refine their personalities. Some students have weak personalities and cannot make decisions in their learning*'. For TG10, this was justified according to her role in providing academic and psychological support to students. She stated, '*The teacher guides her student according to her preferences, offering training and a motivational environment*'. In addition, TP9 believed in reactive autonomy because of the teacher's role and experience in the teaching and evaluation process:

> Even if a student is autonomous, she is affected by the teacher's experience—how the teacher brings and explains different ideas . . . English includes grammar, which students find difficult . . . so, as much as it is LA, the teacher still complements this because she has more experience and higher ability to assess students' levels.

The evidence presented above revealed that the interviewee teachers endorsed the first factor in the questionnaire findings, *reactive LA*. This is because of the tendency of this view to emphasise the teacher's role in providing LA to students, as the technical perspective suggests. Having discussed the dominant view in teachers' beliefs about LA, the results proceed next to consider their views regarding students' engagement in learning decisions in their classes.

6.2.2 Teachers' resistance to involving students in class learning decisions

As explained by the qualitative data of the main interviews in Chapter 4, teachers' beliefs reflected a resistance on their part to engage their students in class learning decisions. However, the quantitative findings of the *t*-test explained that teachers believed they allowed their students adequate choice regarding learning decisions in class, whereas students felt there was little room for that in the class. Thus, to understand more regarding teachers' perceptions of this kind of support (i.e. allowing students' choice), this area was revisited in follow-up interviews. The results indicated that all three teachers in the follow-up interviews were convinced that resistance on the part of teachers could be found in the Saudi secondary schools context. In their beliefs, this resistance was linked to how the teacher would view her role. TP11 explained,

> The absence of this kind of support is with teachers who still hold traditional teaching and have resistance to change, so they limits their role in academic and psychological support . . . As much as the teacher involves her students in learning decisions . . . I find that it is reflected in their academic and psychological results. They become more relaxed and like the lesson.

Similarly, TG10 considered the teacher's perspective of her own role as the reason for breaking this resistance. She commented,

> The teachers should see their role as providing academic, psychological and social support, which includes working on students to have leading personalities . . . When the teacher sees an autonomous and excellent student, she should take her as a partner.

Furthermore, TP11 linked the little choice allowed for students to another two factors, namely, lack of trust in the students' choice and the teachers' high workload. She explained,

> It's true that few teachers allow students choices . . . considering their age. The teacher sees herself as more knowledgeable and can consider all students' needs. Sometimes, it is because the teacher is pressured and has many responsibilities and commitments. Some teachers teach four classes.

Two teachers justified the small amount of choice in terms of how the space for choice might be perceived differently by the teachers. For example, TP9 stated, '*Some teachers think they are going soft and giving great opportunities to their students by listening to them and applying what students suggest*'.

The above results in this section corroborated the qualitative findings of the main interviews concerning teachers' resistance to engage their students in class learning decisions. In other words, this tells us that teachers tended not to consider this type of LA support in their teaching practices. The interviewees above interpreted this resistance to teachers' perceptions of their own role in class as being responsible for all these decisions, lack of confidence in students' ability to make choices, their high workload, or simply because their view of students' choice was not clear. This interesting finding suggests further implications for teachers, teacher training programmes and policy makers in the Saudi educational system. Following the review of teachers' beliefs regarding students' involvement in learning decisions in the class, the results investigate their views of the importance given to LA in secondary schools and the changes needed to develop it in this setting.

6.2.3 LA is important in secondary schools for preparing students for university

The qualitative findings of the main interviews presented in Chapter 4 showed that all teachers believed that LA is important for its academic and psychological benefits. The students also shared this view; therefore, the researcher was interested in further re-examining the importance of LA with other teachers in the follow-up interviews to discern if there are other aspects that weigh more in their beliefs. The results of the follow-up interviews indicated that LA in secondary school was perceived as important for all teachers as they believed it prepared students for university in different ways. For instance, TP9 noticed a change in students' level of responsibility and positive attitudes towards their learning. She mentioned,

> As a teacher, I teach a class in the intermediate stage as well. I noticed that a student in intermediate school thinks that her stage is not that important . . . that she cares less about her learning. This is unlike the secondary stage, where students start thinking about university admission. Students become more aware of LA; they know that, from the first year, the average counts and this is the first step to achieve their dreams. I was surprised at how the students changed in the secondary stage. They became more responsive, had more desire to learn, achieved a good level in class and some took summer courses when they thought they needed more learning.

In addition, TP11 described that part of her approach towards LA development was to point out how LA in secondary school could facilitate student learning at university, especially in terms of research skills. She commented,

> I reminded them that, after 3 years, they would study at university . . . So, even if they felt tired from research, this would make it easier to know how to look for any information and choose credible sources.

Thus, the importance of LA in teachers' beliefs tends to be associated more with its academic and psychological benefits in helping students to learn better and prepare them for university study.

Due to the importance of LA, teachers also acknowledged the need for some changes to be made in the Saudi educational system. For example, two teachers mentioned the necessity of updating teacher-training programmes to include LA practices as a clear component in their content. TP9 stated, '*I really want to have a training session on how to promote LA in my teaching*'. Similarly, TP11 also commented, '*Teacher-training programmes should focus on teacher flexibility in accepting new strategies and dealing with students to promote their sense of responsibility towards their learning*'.

The above data helped to demonstrate that teachers considered LA important in secondary schools because of its academic and psychological benefits in preparing students for university study. This is a key finding that might influence the way they develop their students' level of LA in their classes. The results additionally identified necessary changes related to teacher training programmes, according to teachers' beliefs, that need to be adopted to improve LA in the Saudi secondary schools setting. These changes include adding a practical component to training programmes on how to encourage LA in teaching practices, which is considered an important implication for teacher training programmes in the Saudi context. Subsequently, the results move to discuss the Tatweer project and Saudi Vision 2030 in relation to LA development.

6.2.4 The Tatweer project and Saudi Vision 2030 as providers of academic and psychological LA support

As presented in Chapter 4, the results of teachers' beliefs about LA in the main interviews implicitly indicated changes in the Saudi educational system, which were operated/administrated

by the Tatweer project.   Therefore, the study would like to explore more whether teachers in the follow-up interviews would see a relationship between LA and the new initiatives and changes in Saudi education (i.e. the Tatweer project and the new Vision), as well as their understandings of such relationships. The findings of the follow-up interviews showed that these initiatives were perceived as related to LA development. That is, they were considered opportunities for better academic achievement and psychological LA support to students. For example, TG10 stated,

> In the past, there were talented students, but there were no opportunities for them. Nowadays, Saudi Arabia pays more attention to students—believing that the more we work on students' personalities, the more we have an aware, educated and qualified generation for the future. This is because the Saudi Vision suggests that if we work on the base, which is the students, . . . this will improve the whole country. Therefore, the Tatweer project in education suggests the Mugararat system should provide learners with the opportunity to choose their subjects as if they were in university. They can also have summer courses. Students can now choose according to their preferences and time. This is wonderful because they will feel there is confidence in their decisions about their learning.

In addition, TP9 pointed to the motivating role of the introduced exams like GAT and SAAT, brought in by Tatweer, for LA. She said, '*Students have become more responsible with the introduction of GAT and SAAT because they care about their average and they have started thinking about different decisions regarding their learning*'.

The results presented in this section illustrated that the Tatweer project and Saudi Vision 2030 had a positive impact on the development of LA in teachers' beliefs, specifically in terms of supporting students academically and psychologically. After reviewing teachers' beliefs about the role of contextual changes in LA development, the following section pays more attention to their views about the current English curriculum, an essential component in secondary education.

6.2.5 The English curriculum as a facilitator to LA development in secondary schools

The current English curriculum in secondary schools received diverse teachers' views about its

relationship to LA development. That is, the qualitative findings of the main interviews viewed

the curriculum as a barrier that limits LA development. However, the quantitative findings of the

t-test and Exploratory Factor Analysis for teachers showed the opposite. In other words, the

current curriculum appeared as a factor in teachers' beliefs, as they believed in its facilitating role

to the development of LA more than students did. Due to this difference in their beliefs, the study

considered asking further teachers in the follow-up interviews. The findings reflected that two

out of three teachers in the follow-up interviews considered the current curriculum as promoting

LA. For instance, TP9 compared the old and new curricula, at stating,

> Comparing what I learnt when I was a student to what I teach now for the students, I find
> the new curriculum has better content, ideas, expressions and grammatical units compared
> with what I studied at the university level. I said to my students that they are introduced to
> a good curriculum at a younger age . . . When the curriculum is lower than the students'
> level or does not consider their interest, it does not help their LA.

The same teacher considered the use of different strategies in delivering the curriculum to

promote students' level of LA, which reflected a technical view of LA. She commented,

> Teaching differs from one teacher to another. When the teacher depends on rote learning
> but the students do not respond to learning this way, it does not support learner autonomy.
> In contrast, when the teacher depends on the new strategies we have in training sessions,
> such as active learning, brainstorming and psychomotor strategies. For example, I use the
> *four corners* strategy when I have a controversial subject and I would like to ask the
> students' opinions. The students go to any of the four corners—strongly agree, agree,
> disagree, strongly disagree—and explain their opinion. I also use the problem-solving
> strategy. For example, in a lesson about the relationship between parents and their
> children, I ask what if there is an ungrateful son—what solutions can we offer?

The above results indicated that, with further investigation in follow-up interviews, it can be concluded that there is a tendency for teachers to consider the English curriculum more as a promoter to LA development than a barrier. This finding helped us to understand that teachers highlighted the encouraging role of curriculum because it was more fitted within their technical view of LA. In other words, the current curriculum helped to apply and train students on various learning strategies. The results move next to discuss the role of groupwork in relation to LA in secondary schools.

6.2.6 The distribution of roles in groupwork helps LA development

The quantitative findings of teachers' beliefs in Exploratory Factor Analysis demonstrated that teachers believed in the encouraging role of group work in LA development, as illustrated by the fourth factor in their beliefs, *peer and groupwork.* Unlike teachers, it was interesting to find that students had doubts about the way groupwork was applied in the class to help the development of LA. Therefore, the study qualitatively considered teachers' ideas about the way groupwork helps the development of LA in Saudi secondary schools. The results of the follow-up interviews reflected that all teachers believed the way the roles were distributed in group work determined whether it would influence LA development. TG10 mentioned three conditions for a good application of groupwork in LA. She said, '*If the groupwork has good distribution of the roles and levels and is managed by time, it will help LA, whereas it will not help if the teacher focusses on a certain student with a fixed role*'. This means that, for her, a good distribution of roles in the group helps students to learn better. Similarly, TP11 reflected on her teaching and the choice of the group, focussing on the distribution of students' roles. She commented,

> If students choose based on the preferences and the roles they like, this is positively reflected in their commitment to do their roles. Only sometimes, I distribute their roles in a way that I consider useful for the students like working in different roles.

The findings in this section improved our understanding of the application of groupwork in teachers' practices for the development of LA in secondary schools. That is, teachers tended to concentrate on the distribution of roles in groupwork because it helps students academically (i.e. to learn more effectively). Given that the current study is interested in the context of SA secondary schools, the following section explores whether school type influences LA development in a particular way.

6.2.7 Private schools as a better environment for LA development

As presented in Chapter 5, the final factor in teachers' beliefs, *school type,* explained that teachers considered private schools a better environment for encouraging LA development. However, the quantitative nature of the questionnaire data would not allow investigating the rationale behind this view; thus, the study explored this notion in follow-up interviews. The teachers' results indicated that two out of the three teachers in the follow-up interviews agreed that private schools influenced positively the development of LA. For example, TP9 reflected a technical view that linked LA to the availability and use of resources. She mentioned, '*Governmental schools lack resources centres for students. I do not think that they facilitate LA more than private schools do*'. TP11 shared the same opinion: '*Private schools are better because there are different resources like self-access centres, libraries and language labs*'.

The above results provided further evidence of the technical perspective of LA in teachers' beliefs. This is because their main reason, to consider the private schools more efficient in LA

development, related to the availability of learning resources for students. Next, the discussion considers the role of the little teacher strategy in LA development.

6.2.8 The little teacher strategy as a provider of academic and psychological LA support

The results of the main interviews revealed that teachers used the little teacher strategy as a facilitator of LA development in secondary schools. Considering that such a strategy is a hallmark in Saudi teachers' commitment to developing LA, the study would like to understand in the follow-up interviews the ways teachers use it to develop LA in their classes. For all the three teachers in the follow-up interviews, the little teacher strategy was seen as an opportunity that provided academic and psychological support for LA development. For example, TP9 mentioned that it changed how her students felt towards a reading lesson. They became more enthusiastic to learn autonomously; as she explained,

> When I have a reading lesson, it is usually boring for my students . . . Therefore, I decided to ask, in every reading lesson, for any three students to do a presentation and discuss it with the class. It turned it from a boring lesson to very interesting to them. A student sees her friends presenting and becomes more curious to see what they will do. Even the student who did not engage before—she searches, talks about the subject and comments . . . The student has the freedom to assign marks, decide the homework and ask the others to perform some tasks in class or even outside class. I really see a difference. Everyone now waits for the reading lesson, and the good thing is that they encourage each other and bring some incentives . . . I read once that the best way to learn something is to teach it to someone else, and I really see this in my class.

In addition, TG10 explained that the little teacher strategy helped refine students' self-confidence in presentation and communication skills. She commented,

> It helps learner autonomy greatly. The student is the one who chooses the lesson and how she likes to explain, then starts to prepare it. I was really surprised by the activities and presentations of the students. It helped the students' self-confidence and allowed them to manage their communicative skills while standing in front of the other students,

221

communicate with them and overcome any difficulties that they might face. Sure, these skills will be needed in university; therefore, I think the little teacher strategy helps to enhance the students' personalities.

This interviewee referred to two types of support this strategy provides: First, it develops learning and skills, which fits into a technical perspective of LA; second, it develops the student's self-confidence, which indicates a psychological support of LA. Similarly, TP91 had a creative way of using the 'little teacher' strategy. She did not use it to explain a given lesson, but instead, to let autonomous students demonstrate their experiences in learning. She referred to the use of the learning strategies to learn independently, which implied a technical perspective of LA as the focus was on modelling how students become autonomous, in addition to the student's motivation as part of the psychological support. She stated,

It is usually used for explaining lessons in the curriculum, but I have one student who said she had a technique that helped her to learn vocabulary, which was by drawing. I asked her to explain her learning experience to the students by preparing a presentation, including her drawings and how she learned. You cannot imagine the benefit she has experienced in terms of her motivation to learn more.

The results above presented teachers' varying implementations of the little teacher strategy in class, which reflected that the focus in teachers' beliefs was the academic and psychological aspects in the development of LA. That is, for teachers, the little teacher strategy improved students' learning skills and strategies, besides increasing their confidence and motivation to learn English. In the following section, the discussion will consider another strategy called the learning schedule (K-W-L) used by teachers in secondary schools.

6.2.9 The learning schedule (K-W-L) as a classroom routine

The findings of the main interviews indicated that some students mentioned the use of the learning schedule's K-W-L strategy as a reflective tool in their learning in class, while teachers did not recognise the aim of reflection and lacked reflective exercises in their practices with the use of this strategy. Therefore, the study discussed this strategy with teachers in follow-up interviews, aiming to understand the purpose of this practice in classrooms. The qualitative data showed that the learning schedule was viewed in teachers' beliefs in the follow-up interviews as a classroom routine rather than a reflective tool that promoted LA development. For example, TG10 used the learning schedule as a diagnostic tool of students' level and motivation. She commented,

> I scan the personalities in the class, and the schedule helps me see them throughout the lesson. It helps to see what students have as a background about the topic, and based on that, what effort the lesson needs. For example, the first column helps to see the students who read more and research more when we brainstorm ideas about the lesson. The last column also helps to see who is interested in the subject and who would like to know more or is not interested at all. Therefore, it is a helpful strategy not only for the lesson but also for me to understand the students.

The above finding demonstrated that, although teachers reported that they apply the learning schedule (K-W-L) in their classes, it was noticed that they used it as part of their classroom routine rather than a tool for students' reflection on their own learning. This finding supports the main interview results, where teachers lack the role of reflection in their beliefs about the psychological view of LA. Having reviewed teachers' beliefs about LA and different strategies in their teaching practices, the results next look into the factors that influence their beliefs about LA in the Saudi secondary schools context.

6.2.10 Factors affecting teachers' beliefs about LA

In this section, the study considered the factors affecting teachers' beliefs about LA. This is because an understanding of these factors would help the study to develop greater implications for the development of LA in the Saudi secondary schools context. The findings of the follow-up interviews revealed that all three teachers believed that the teaching qualification influenced how they adopted LA in their teaching. For instance, TP9 referred to the nature of educational subjects that were prerequisites for the teaching qualification. She commented,

> I have studied the educational subjects that cover adolescent development and show that learner autonomy is one of their age group requirements and ways of thinking. In addition, I have discussed notions like students' involvement in learning because the student is an integral part and the most essential element in the learning process.

Furthermore, all three teachers considered teaching experience an influential factor to develop their ideas about LA. For instance, TP9 mentioned that her modest experience and teacher-training programmes made a difference in her thoughts about her role, which consequently developed her teaching practice towards LA development. She stated,

> My experience and the training sessions I attended encouraged me to consider that I am not an authority figure. I need to let the students speak for more than 80% of the class, and my role is to supervise and organise learning, while the student is the core. This also motivated me to promote students' learning experiences and increase their motivation in that way. So, I try to use different strategies to let the students participate more in their learning; for example, I ask them to do presentations . . . I also ask them for their feedback, which includes assessing themselves, the content and the class. This assessment has been very useful and helped me to focus on the way they learn and their preferences in learning.

It was interesting to find that, for TG10, the changes made in the Saudi educational system were the reason she learned about LA. She mentioned,

When I first started teaching, I was not familiar with learner autonomy. I feel that the new decisions and changes in the strategies and involving students in everything helped me a lot. Therefore, the student has become an active participant and has a role in learning.

The discussion above showed that teaching qualifications, teaching experience and the new changes introduced to the Saudi educational system were influential in shaping and developing teachers' understanding of LA in the Saudi secondary schools context. This interesting finding helped to yield useful implications for the study in the current context. After presenting the factors that affect teachers' beliefs about LA, a summary of the teachers' results in the follow-up interviews is presented next.

6.3 Summary of teachers' results

Teachers' results in the follow-up interviews contributed to answering the first research question concerning teachers' beliefs about LA in Saudi secondary schools. This is because they help to validate and justify the previous findings of the main interviews and the questionnaire with other teachers in Saudi secondary schools. The findings of the follow-up interviews revealed that teachers agreed that the prevailing view in their beliefs was associated with reactive LA and justified that in terms of the heavy focus of this view on the teacher's role in providing LA to students. Accordingly, this implied further key evidence of the dominance of the technical perspective in their LA beliefs. This also leads to another essential result that showed the concentration on teachers' role in the class. That is, teachers acknowledged that there is a tendency to resist their students' involvement in learning decisions in the class, which helped to understand that this type of LA support was not considered or provided in their teaching practices. Such resistance was explained by teachers' beliefs that they are responsible for all these

decisions in class, lacking confidence in their students' decisions, their high workload or because their perception of students' choice was not clear.

The findings also revealed that teachers believed LA is important in secondary schools mainly because it prepared students academically and psychologically for university study. This belief might influence the way they develop LA in their classes. Additionally, the findings pointed to changes deemed necessary by teachers to improve LA in the Saudi secondary schools context, such as including a practical component in the teacher-training programmes on how LA is promoted in their classes.

The presented results also reported the same kind of LA support provided by the Tatweer project and Saudi Vision 2030 (i.e. academic and psychological LA support), which informed the study about the role of these initiatives in LA development in Saudi secondary schools.

Additionally, the follow-up interviews further investigated the role of the current English curriculum in LA development. The findings helped to reach a conclusion that teachers tended to consider the English curriculum more as an encouragement to LA development than a barrier in secondary schools. It also helped to understand that the positive role of curriculum in the development of LA was more linked to their technical perspective of LA. That is, the curriculum helped to train students to use various learning strategies. Another finding that added further evidence of the prevalence of the technical perspective of LA in teachers' beliefs was that teachers considered the private schools more efficient in LA development because of the availability of learning resources for the students. This finding also reflected that teachers believed that the school type is an influential factor in the development of LA in Saudi secondary schools.

The qualitative findings also discussed teachers' views on some LA practices in secondary schools like groupwork, the little teacher strategy and the learning schedule (K-W-L) strategy. The application of groupwork was an interesting finding in teachers' practices for the development of LA in secondary schools. That is, teachers appeared to concentrate more on the distribution of roles in groupwork because it helps students to learn better. This indicates teachers' tendency to focus on the academic support of LA development in their employment of groupwork in the class. In addition, teachers perceived the little teacher strategy as a provider of academic and psychological LA support to students. This implied teachers' focus on these aspects for the development of LA in their classes. The findings also showed that, although teachers applied the learning schedule (K-W-L) strategy in their classes, it was more as a classroom routine rather than a tool to help students to reflect on their own learning. This reflected teachers' lack of consideration and application of reflection in their classes, which is a key part of the psychological perspective of LA.

Finally, the qualitative findings of the follow-up interviews showed that factors like teaching qualifications, teaching experience and changes in the Saudi educational system had a powerful influence on building and developing teachers' understanding of LA in the Saudi secondary schools context. All these qualitative findings helped to yield interesting implications for teachers and teacher training programmes for the development of LA in the current context.

6.4 Students' results in the follow-up interviews (RQ2)

The results presented in this section helped to answer the second research question, namely what beliefs are expressed by female EFL students in Saudi secondary schools regarding LA?

6.4.1 Proactive LA as the prevalent view in students' beliefs

As discussed in Chapter 5, one of the crucial notions in students' beliefs was proactive LA, as the first factor illustrated in the quantitative findings of Exploratory Factor Analysis for students. The results of follow-up interviews reflected that all three students supported this finding, as they believed in Littlewood's (1999) proactive autonomy. That is, the goal or direction of learning is set not by the teacher but by the students. Therefore, they rejected defining LA as a quality provided by the teacher via training as reactive autonomy implies. They believed instead that LA was about their willingness, initiative and proactive role to learn autonomously. This reflected a psychological perspective that viewed LA as an internal capacity within students. For example, SG11 stated,

> Teachers think they provide LA as a strategy on which they train their students. For me, this is not LA because it is something provided to the students but rather something that really comes from inside.

Similarly, SP9 seemed not to believe in reactive autonomy, where the direction of learning is set by the teacher and her role is to learn how to be autonomous. She commented,

> Whatever the teacher can offer for students, the student cannot be responsible for her learning unless she wants to. I take the responsibility to study and have great results. I do not think learning the strategies increases LA.

SG10 shared this opinion. She explained that LA is not about depending on the teacher to train students, but rather, it relates to a student's intrinsic motivation and self-assessment of her needs:

> Whether the training lasts one hour or many hours, if this person does not have the desire to develop herself and learn, she will not achieve anything. Any student who does not want

228

to be autonomous views the teacher role as explaining the curriculum and the student role as receiving the information to provide answers to the exam later. However, if she wants to be autonomous, she will understand that learning is for herself and her future. The autonomous student explains to herself and searches for information rather than directly asking the teacher. She defines her needs and looks for answers.

The findings presented above showed that the interviewees acknowledged the first factor in the questionnaire findings, *proactive LA*. This is because this view mainly concentrated more on the students' role in learning, as the psychological perspective suggests. The students refused to view LA as a quality provided by training them on learning strategies, as they believed that LA was essentially associated with their own motivation and self-assessment. After the discussion of the prevailing view in students' beliefs about LA, the results move next to consider their views regarding their engagement in learning decisions in the classes.

6.4.2 Students' willingness to be involved in learning decisions in class

As explained in the qualitative data of the main interviews, students would like to be engaged in learning decisions in the class, while teachers showed resistance to students' engagement, as reflected in their beliefs. Additionally, the quantitative findings of the *t*-test demonstrated that students felt there was little choice of their learning decisions in class, while the teachers considered that they provided adequate choices to their students in these decisions. Therefore, to apprehend more students' perceptions of this kind of LA support, this finding was revisited in the follow-up interviews. The results indicated that all the students in the follow-up interviews acknowledged that they were less involved in learning decisions in class than they would like to have been. Their beliefs demonstrated that there was some resistance on the part of their

teachers against involving them, while the students wanted more proactive roles in their classes.

For example, SP9 said,

> I am with the students' opinion because they are the ones who are presented with the choice, so their opinions reflect reality. The choice of classroom rules for some teachers is related to authority. They think they need to be serious with the students to keep them disciplined.

In addition, SG11 criticised teachers' resistance and linked it to a lack of trust in students' decision-making ability. She commented,

> Teachers leave little space for students' choice, but they think this space is big. Students want more freedom and greater space for their choices. I think some teachers think they are the only ones who make the decisions, and any attempt on the part of the student to be involved in that is rejected. The teacher thinks students have not reached a level where they can distinguish between right and wrong. Therefore, there will be a mess.

SG10 expressed her willingness to be involved in the class decisions and believed in the agreement between the teacher and students. She also criticised an experience in her class. She related,

> I like to have the choice and believe that students can participate in it, but the teacher might have another opinion and want to avoid the differences and varieties in students' opinions. Still, I think the teacher can manage to reach an agreement. My teacher introduced herself in the first class and narrated her rules immediately, without any consultation!

In the students' beliefs, the relationship between students and teachers was of great significance.

For example, SP9 expressed the notion of equality in her view of the support needed from teachers for LA development. She said,

> A student needs really to feel that she has a role where she studies to participate and add to the lesson, instead of feeling she is only a receiver. Sometimes, when she corrects the

teacher—which I see as kind of normal—the teacher does not accept that. This means that the teacher gives but never takes from the student . . . She feels superior when she is supposed to be like us. Learning is supposed to be mutual.

The same student referred to the importance of defining the relationship between teachers and students in terms of a partnership in the class instead of authority. She commented,

When the teacher does not look at herself but also look at the student . . . I mean, you teach me and I teach you. There are some teachers who will not accept any opinion other than their own, even if that opinion is wrong, to maintain their image in front of their classes.

In addition, SG10 pointed to mutual and constructive learning. Her view implied calling teachers for more engagement with their students in the class, indicating the need for this kind of support for the development of LA. She stated,

When a teacher's teaching style depends on giving, giving and giving, while the students are supposed to receive, this for sure will not help learners to take responsibility for their learning. This is unlike a teacher who gives and takes, for example, to see what background students have about the subject and then they build on that together.

The above results indicated that the support needed for LA development in students' beliefs was linked to more involvement in learning decisions in class. They criticised the teachers' resistance to involving them in these decisions and justified it in terms of teachers' focus on maintaining discipline in the class, in addition to their lack of trust in students' decisions. Unlike teachers, students preferred to reach an agreement with their teachers regarding decisions in class. The findings also drew attention to another part of the support needed for the development of LA in their beliefs, which was associated with the relationship between them and their teachers. That is, LA for students in Saudi secondary schools needed to be supported socially by encouraging a sense of equality, partnership and a view of learning as a mutual process rather than an authority.

This is a key finding in students' beliefs, which had implications for teachers and teacher training programmes in Saudi secondary education. The results next move to consider the importance to LA in secondary schools and the suggested changes to develop it in this context.

6.4.3 LA is important in secondary schools due to its role in lifelong learning

The qualitative findings of the main interviews in Chapter 4 illustrated that all teachers and students believed that LA is important for its academic and psychological gains. Nevertheless, it was noted that students were more inclined to view such importance according to the value of choice or having a decision-making ability in learning. Therefore, the study was interested in re-investigating the importance of LA with other students in the follow-up interviews to discover whether they might focus on some aspects more than others in their interpretations. The results of the follow-up interviews indicated that all the students believed in the importance of LA in secondary schools. This was not only linked to preparing students for university but also lifelong learning. For instance, SG11, commented,

> Academic life in university is very different from general education . . . Although LA becomes a necessity in university, students should start from secondary school. Therefore, even if they do not continue their education in university, LA in secondary school lets them move forward for lifelong learning.

SP9 also referred to time-management skills and self-development, linking them to LA in university and life. She stated,

> I feel that LA can be built from secondary school, as the intermediate level is a little bit young for it. When a student gets used to being responsible for her learning, she will not

find it difficult to manage her time, learn new things and develop herself not only in university but also in her life.

In the interviews, the students were asked if they could think of any needed changes in the Saudi educational context. SP9 referred to involving students in the assessment of teachers to ensure good-quality teaching. She said, '*Teachers improve their teaching when they have supervision . . . I suggest that teacher assessment should be continuous all the year, without any advanced arrangement*'. For SG11, she would like it if teachers mentioned the goal of an activity or strategy for students. She commented, '*I really wish the teachers would explain the aim of some activities, and I am sure they have good implicit value that will help students learn autonomously*'.

The above data helped to understand that students tended to consider LA important not only for university study but also more widely for their lives. This key finding informed us about the way students would like to develop LA in the class, which has interesting implications for teachers and teacher training programmes. Students also suggested changes to develop LA in Saudi secondary schools, such as engaging them in the assessment of their teachers and demanding the teachers explain the goal of activities to encourage more students' engagement in their learning. Again, these suggested changes indicated further implications for the study in the Saudi context. Next, the results proceed to discuss the role of the initiatives in the Saudi context, like the Tatweer project and Saudi Vision 2030 in LA development.

6.4.4 The Tatweer project and Saudi Vision 2030 as providers of academic, psychological and political LA support

As presented in Chapter 4, students' beliefs about LA in the main interviews implicitly indicated changes in the Saudi educational system like the Tatweer project and Saudi Vision 2030.

Therefore, the study considered a further examination of whether students in follow-up interviews acknowledged the relationship between LA and these new developments, as well as their interpretations of such a relationship. The findings of the follow-up interviews indicated that students considered the Tatweer project and Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia as initiatives that supported students academically, psychologically and politically. For example, SG11 stated,

> The Vision depends on the human capital in the 21st century, and it makes a big difference . . . The old system was not supporting LA, and the quality of education was not that good. Nowadays, the Mugararat system elevates students' skills in dealing with and evaluating different learning resources based on their needs and research. The country is investing in students to become more autonomous and have a positive influence on its building.

For SG10, Vision 2030 indicated the necessity for students to be autonomous to have a positive influence on their societies, indicating a political view of LA that emphasised the individual role in the social setting. She commented, '*The individual needs to be autonomous, since he is a student, to have a bigger and more effective role in society*'. Furthermore, SP9 believed the Vision increased students' motivation to be more autonomous in their learning:

> The Vision gives enthusiasm for the whole society and for us, the new generation, in particular. We now have more majors and broader scholarship programmes, and this encourages autonomy from all perspectives, particularly in learning.

The results presented in this section helped to recognise the role of the Tatweer project and Saudi Vision 2030 in promoting LA according to students' beliefs. That is, these initiatives support students' academically, psychologically and politically. In other words, they developed students' skills in dealing with learning resources, increased students' motivation to learn and stressed students' responsibility to society. After reviewing students' beliefs about the current initiatives

in the Saudi context, the following section considers their views about an integral element in secondary education, namely the current English curriculum.

6.4.5 The English curriculum as a barrier to LA development in secondary schools

The results of the main interviews discussed in Chapter 4 revealed that students considered the current English curriculum an obstacle to LA development in secondary schools. Additionally, the quantitative findings of Exploratory Factor Analysis showed that the current curriculum was not part of their beliefs about LA, while for the teachers, it encouraged LA development, as illustrated by the third factor in teachers' beliefs, *the current curriculum*. Therefore, the study decided to ask further students in the follow-up interviews to understand how they perceived the relationship between the current curriculum and LA, as well as the rationale behind their views. All students in the follow-up interviews reflected the belief that that the current curriculum did not support LA development. For instance, SG11 mentioned its failure to provoke higher thinking skills, in addition to its heavy focus on grammar and vocabulary rather than motivating and encouraging language use:

> When the curriculum discusses questions that require critical and creative thinking, this encourages students' curiosity to learn. Unfortunately, this is not applied to our curriculum as it includes direct questions. I benefit from the English curriculum only in some vocabulary and grammatical rules that I need to study for the exam, but honestly, it does not help me to know how to use it in real life.

Similarly, SP9 criticised the focus on grammar, stating,

> From my point of view, I do not think that it helps LA. The student does not go out able to have a fluent discussion. The curriculum is only grammar. I really wish that it focussed more on speaking, where students could discuss what they know, what they want to know and what they really need to know in their use of language. The curriculum helps LA if it is

comprehensive and does not focus on some aspect of the language over others, so when the student graduates, she knows a great deal of English.

The above results demonstrated that students regarded the curriculum as a constraint to the development of LA. This is because they criticised its focus on grammar and vocabulary building, which did not stimulate students' motivation to use the language and to develop autonomy in language use and communication. Therefore, the curriculum was not part of LA development in their beliefs. Again, this finding reflected the focus on the psychological aspects of students' beliefs about LA. The results move next to consider the role of groupwork in LA development in secondary schools.

6.4.6 The homogeneity of the groupwork helps LA development

The qualitative findings of the main interviews indicated that students considered the groupwork a facilitator of LA development in their beliefs about LA. However, the results of the *t*-test demonstrated that students showed less agreement that the use of groupwork in class helped the development of LA than teachers did. This finding was supported further by the results of students' beliefs in Exploratory Factor Analysis, which showed that students had doubts about how groupwork was employed in the class to help LA develop. Thus, the study decided to explore this area further in the follow-up interview to understand what the students looked for in the use of groupwork in class for LA development. All the students in the follow-up interviews believed that *the way* in which the groupwork operated determined whether it would help LA development for students. The focus in their beliefs was linked to the homogeneity of the group. For instance, SP9 said,

Groupwork does not help LA when the members of the group cannot communicate with each other or work with each other. I have to say that the most important thing in groupwork is understanding each other.

The same view was echoed by SG10, who pointed to the number of group members and choice of roles by students to maintain the homogeneity of the group. She explained,

When the group is small, we can exchange our opinions with each other. I also think that LA is not promoted if the group is not homogeneous as some problems might arise. Therefore, I prefer if students decide on their groups.

The above finding was key to understanding that, for the students, the nature of group dynamics and individuals' ability to work well and grow within that group environment were what the students sought to help them develop LA in class. This means that just putting students into groups would not work unless groupwork was considered the most beneficial condition for them to help the growth of LA. This suggested further implications for teachers and teacher development programmes concerning what makes an effective group, as will be discussed in Chapter 8. After presenting students' views on the role of groupwork, the following section discusses whether the school type influenced LA development in Saudi secondary schools.

6.4.7 Governmental schools as a better environment for LA development

As presented in Chapter 5, the results of the *t*-test indicated that students showed less agreement to consider private schools better than governmental ones in encouraging LA more than teachers did. Furthermore, this notion was part of students' doubts explained in the third factor, *scepticism about current methods to promote LA*. Therefore, the study investigated this idea qualitatively to understand the students' rationale behind this view. The qualitative results of the follow-up interviews showed that all three students believed that school type influenced the development

of LA and that LA was more promoted in governmental schools compared with private ones. For example, SP9 mentioned that marks reflected effort in governmental schools. This reflected a psychological view of LA that valued students' effort in their own learning. She also referred to the good quality of teaching in governmental schools as teachers there were more experienced. She stated,

> A student in governmental school knows that she cannot get marks easily. She will have high marks only if she works hard on herself. As students, we believe that governmental students can enter SAAT without revisions. In addition, governmental teachers have more experience in teaching because they would not teach in governmental schools until they have years of experience in private schools.

SG10 viewed the quality of teaching in private schools as poor. This is because learning in private schools involved high dependence on the teacher rather than encouraging students' effort. She commented,

> I am one of the students who had the opportunity to enter a private school, but I refused because I felt that there would be great dependence on the teacher. Most of my friends in private schools told me that their teacher gave them summaries for exams. This is because the teacher is afraid of being dismissed; therefore, there is no true learning there.

The above results provided further evidence of the psychological perspective of LA in students' beliefs. This is because their main justification to consider the governmental schools more efficient in LA development was that they encouraged students to exert effort and depend on themselves in their learning. Next, the discussion considers the relationship between the little teacher strategy and the development of LA.

6.4.8 The little teacher strategy as a provider of academic, psychological and social LA support

The results of the main interviews revealed that students referred to the little teacher strategy as an encourager of LA development in secondary schools. Therefore, the study would like to understand, in the follow-up interviews, the ways students found the little teacher strategy useful for the development of LA in the class. The qualitative findings of the follow-up interviews revealed that all the three students believed in the role of the little teacher strategy to help LA development as a form of academic, psychological and political/social support. For example, regarding teachers' lesser focus on student involvement in class, SG11 commented, '*I really believe that this is the case. Nevertheless, I can see supporting the student as a leader in the application of the little teacher strategy*'. Her reference to the leadership role in learning reflected the political/social support to LA that the little teacher strategy tends to provide. In addition, SP9 referred to the notion of having a role in the social setting that helped her to learn effectively, reflecting a political view of LA. She also described the little teacher strategy as an opportunity for academic support, that is, effective learning. She commented,

> One of the most helpful things for LA is when a student teaches the class and everyone listens to her; she feels that she has a role in her class. She is responsible for teaching the students without the teacher's help . . . When I become the little teacher, I prepare the lesson, organise it, discuss the main ideas, do a presentation and ask the students about the important parts. I also read the lesson very carefully to be prepared and ready for any question. This helps me increase my understanding as I feel the information sticks in my mind more when I teach.

For SG10, the little teacher strategy provided a psychological support for LA. She stated,

> It gives the students great confidence in herself and encourages her to face any difficulties in her learning independently. Therefore, she starts to see that learning depends on the

student. Students are involved in different decisions, like how to assign homework, encourage students to participate and give marks.

The results above explained different kinds of LA support provided by the use of the little teacher strategy in class. This reflected that the focus in students' beliefs was not given only to the academic and psychological aspects, but also social aspects were of great importance to them in the development of LA. That is, for students, the little teacher strategy enhanced the students' demonstration skills, increasing their confidence and decision-making ability in learning, in addition to stressing their sense of leadership and emphasising their role in the class. In the following section, the results consider a strategy called the learning schedule (K-W-L) used by Saudi secondary school students.

6.4.9 The learning schedule (K-W-L) as a reflective tool in learning

The findings of the main interviews showed that some students referred, in the psychological perspective of LA, to their use of the learning schedule K-W-L strategy as a reflective tool in their learning in class. The study discussed this strategy further with other students in the follow-up interviews, aiming to understand more the relationship between this practice and LA development in secondary schools. The results revealed that two out of three students associated the use of the learning schedule (K-W-L) with LA development in different ways. SP9 pointed to how the schedule helped her identify her needs and encourage her self-evaluation in learning English. She stated,

> I will tell you how I use it in my English learning. The first column is about what you know about the subject, while the second is about what you do not know and what you would

240

like to know about the subject. The good thing about this schedule is that the student is the one who decides rather than the teacher telling her what she needs to know. The student is the one who decides her needs in learning . . . The last column is about what you have learnt. It is like a summary of the lesson and you evaluate yourself on whether you understand everything you need to know from the lesson or from other students' information. Therefore, I believe it helps me to know more about my learning and my progress in English.

For SG11, the learning schedule encouraged organising her thinking about her learning and self-evaluation. It also enhanced learning management. In her view, however, it did not help LA if it was about rewriting the main headings in class. She commented,

I feel that the learning schedule helps LA even for the students with a weak level. This is because they will concentrate and think about what they want to know, what they have learnt and whether what they have learnt is from the class only or from something else. I think this helps students to manage their learning and think about what aspects they need to develop more in their English learning. In contrast, the learning schedule does not help LA when it is misapplied in the class—for example, if we open the books and write the main headings in the second column and the subheadings in the third.

The above finding explained that students applied the learning schedule (K-W-L) as a tool for self-reflection, not a classroom routine. That is, it helped them to decide their needs and evaluate themselves in learning. Therefore, this finding provided further evidence to the prevalence of the psychological view in students' beliefs in LA. Having reviewed students' perspectives on the role of the learning schedule in developing LA, the results examine next the influential factors on their beliefs about LA in the Saudi secondary schools context.

6.4.10 Factors affecting students' beliefs about LA

In this section, the study presented the factors that affected students' beliefs about LA. Again, identifying these factors helped the study to suggest greater implications for LA development in

Saudi secondary schools. All three students in the follow-up interviews found the Mugararat system, the current school system brought in by the Tatweer project, that allows more students choices over their study plans, as explained in Chapter 1, to have a positive role in promoting their LA. They believed that this system considered their decisions and choices regarding their learning, enhancing their LA. For instance, SG10 stated, '*The Mugararat system is similar to the university stage and has more space for students' decisions regarding their learning*'. The same opinion was reflected in SP9's answer: '*You feel like you are in university, but earlier, because you are allowed the choice of learning plans, subjects and the examination schedule. It is more conducive to LA*'. SG11 referred to her personal experience, commenting,

> I really believe in the Mugararat system. I prepared a personal plan and decided to have a summer semester in the previous year. The subjects I studied in that semester are now free time for me, or I can take a subject from the following level to finish my study. I will have only two subjects for final examinations next year. This is because I attended classes in the summer semester and used my time efficiently. These were my decisions, and the Mugararat system really respected them.

Another point about this system was that the number of subjects in the system was lower compared with the previous systems in Saudi secondary schools. SP9 and SG11 pointed out the benefit of this change in terms of developing their levels of learning autonomously. For example, SG11 stated, '*There are fewer subjects, which allows me to concentrate more on the weak points in my learning that I need to work on by myself*'.

The discussion above showed that the Mugararat system, introduced to the Saudi educational system by the Tatweer project, had a great impact on students' beliefs about LA in the Saudi secondary schools context. That is, it allowed students' choice in learning and enhanced their decision-making ability. This interesting finding helped to emphasise the positive role of the

Tatweer project in LA development. It also developed our understanding of the kind of support the students need for the development of LA and encouraged the suggestion of useful implications for teachers in Saudi secondary schools. Having reviewed the factors that influence students' beliefs about LA, a summary of the students' results in the follow-up interviews is presented next.

6.5 Summary of the students' results

Students' results in the follow-up interviews helped to provide answers to the second research question regarding students' beliefs about LA in Saudi secondary schools. This is due to their role in validating and interpreting the qualitative findings of the main interviews and the quantitative findings of the questionnaire with other Saudi secondary school students. The findings of the follow-up interviews showed the dominance of the psychological perspective in the students' data. As shown in Section 6.4 above, this view was linked to proactive LA. Students rejected a view of LA as a quality provided by training because they understood LA as essentially associated with their own motivation and self-assessment. Additionally, they did not restrict LA's importance to academic leaning for university, but instead linked it to the wider notion of lifelong learning to help to develop their decision-making ability. This psychological view was further seen in focusing on the psychological aspects in reviewing the role of curriculum, group work, school type and the learning schedule (K-W-L) to help the development of LA in secondary schools.

The qualitative findings also revealed the prevalence of the social perspective in students' beliefs. Students believed that LA should be supported socially by engaging them in learning decisions in class and developing the relationship between them and their teachers. They also criticised their teachers, as they felt teachers put matters of discipline above trust in students' involvement in

243

decisions. Furthermore, this social view was found in their perception of the little teacher strategy as providing not only academic and psychological support but also social LA support that emphasised their sense of having a role in the class. This informed us that the concentration in students' beliefs was not only for academic and psychological aspects, but also social aspects were highly important to them in the development of LA in Saudi secondary schools.

Moreover, the students' results helped to see the political perspective in their beliefs about the role of the Saudi initiatives like the Tatweer project and Saudi Vision 2030 in the development of LA, namely in stressing their effective role and responsibility to society.

Finally, the qualitative findings of the follow-up interviews helped to understand that the Mugararat system, brought in by the Tatweer project, is a factor that had a big impact on students' beliefs about LA in Saudi secondary schools. Given this, the finding indicated further evidence of the encouraging role of the Tatweer project in the development of LA and helped to reveal that this kind of support was what the students valued to develop LA in the current context. All the findings presented above encouraged the study to suggest interesting implications for teachers, teacher training programmes and policy makers in Saudi secondary schools. In the following section, the differences between teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in Saudi secondary schools are discussed.

6.6 Comparison of teachers' and students' LA beliefs in follow-up interviews (RQ3)

The findings presented in this section answered the third research question related to the differences between teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in the results of follow-up interviews. One of the key distinctions was that teachers' beliefs related to reactive LA because

they heavily concentrated on their role in providing LA to students, which suggested a technical perspective of LA. In contrast, students refused this technical view because their beliefs were associated with proactive LA that stressed mainly their role in their own learning, which reflected a psychological perspective of LA.

Another interesting disparity highlighted in the follow-up interviews was the relationship of school type in LA development in teachers' and students' beliefs. This is because teachers viewed private schools as more efficient in LA development in terms of the availability of learning resources for students. In contrast, students considered the governmental schools to be better for LA development because they motivated students to exert more effort and helped them to depend on themselves in their own learning. This difference, therefore, indicated further evidence of the technical perspective of LA in teachers' beliefs and the psychological perspective in students' beliefs. The same distinction in each group's perspective was seen again in explaining the role of curriculum, groupwork and the learning schedule (K-W-L) in LA development in secondary schools.

A further crucial distinction was seen in teachers' and students' beliefs regarding the importance of LA in secondary schools. For teachers, the importance of LA was essentially viewed in terms of preparing students academically and psychologically for university study. Conversely, LA importance was not limited to this preparation in students' beliefs, but also linked to a wider perspective of lifelong learning. This finding suggests that teachers' approaches to LA development are not aligned to student needs and wishes for the development of their own LA in Saudi secondary schools.

Another apparent difference was highlighted by students' focus on the need for the social support of LA, while this type of support was absent from teachers' beliefs. Students believed in the importance of their engagement in learning decisions in class, which will help the development of the student–teacher relationship, whereas teachers reflected their resistance to such involvement. Again, this was a key difference that helped us to understand that, while the students needed this kind of LA support in the class, teachers did not consider or provide this support in Saudi secondary schools.

Moreover, the findings helped to recognise the political aspect of LA in students' beliefs, whereas this view was not reflected in teachers' beliefs about LA support. That is, the role of the Tatweer project and Saudi Vision 2030 were seen as affordances of academic and psychological support of LA in teachers' beliefs, but for students, these initiatives additionally supported LA politically because they stressed students' responsibility as effective members of society.

All these interesting variations in qualitative findings in the follow-up interviews improved our understanding of teachers' and students' beliefs and encouraged the study to yield implications for teachers, teacher training programmes and policy makers for LA development in Saudi secondary schools. Next, a summary of overall findings is provided.

6.7 Summary of study findings

In this section, a summary of the overall findings of the study is provided. Focus is placed on findings of greater interest aroused by the main interviews, questionnaire and follow-interviews that provide insights into teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in Saudi secondary schools. The presentation of the main findings includes reference to figure 6.1 for teachers, and figure 6.2 for

students. Each of these figures provides a schematic view of the composition of beliefs about LA for each group.
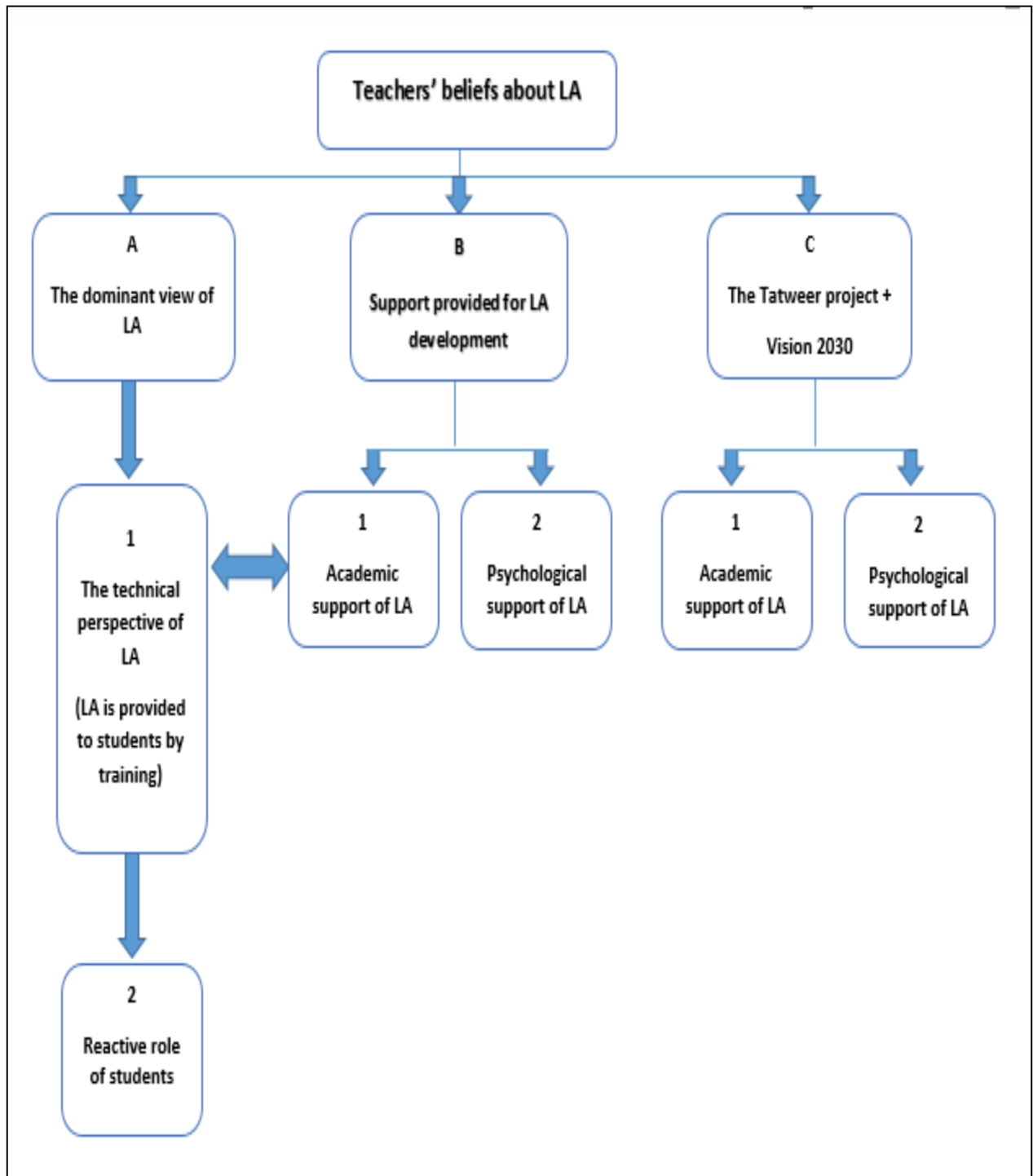
Figure 6.1: Teachers' beliefs about LA in the study
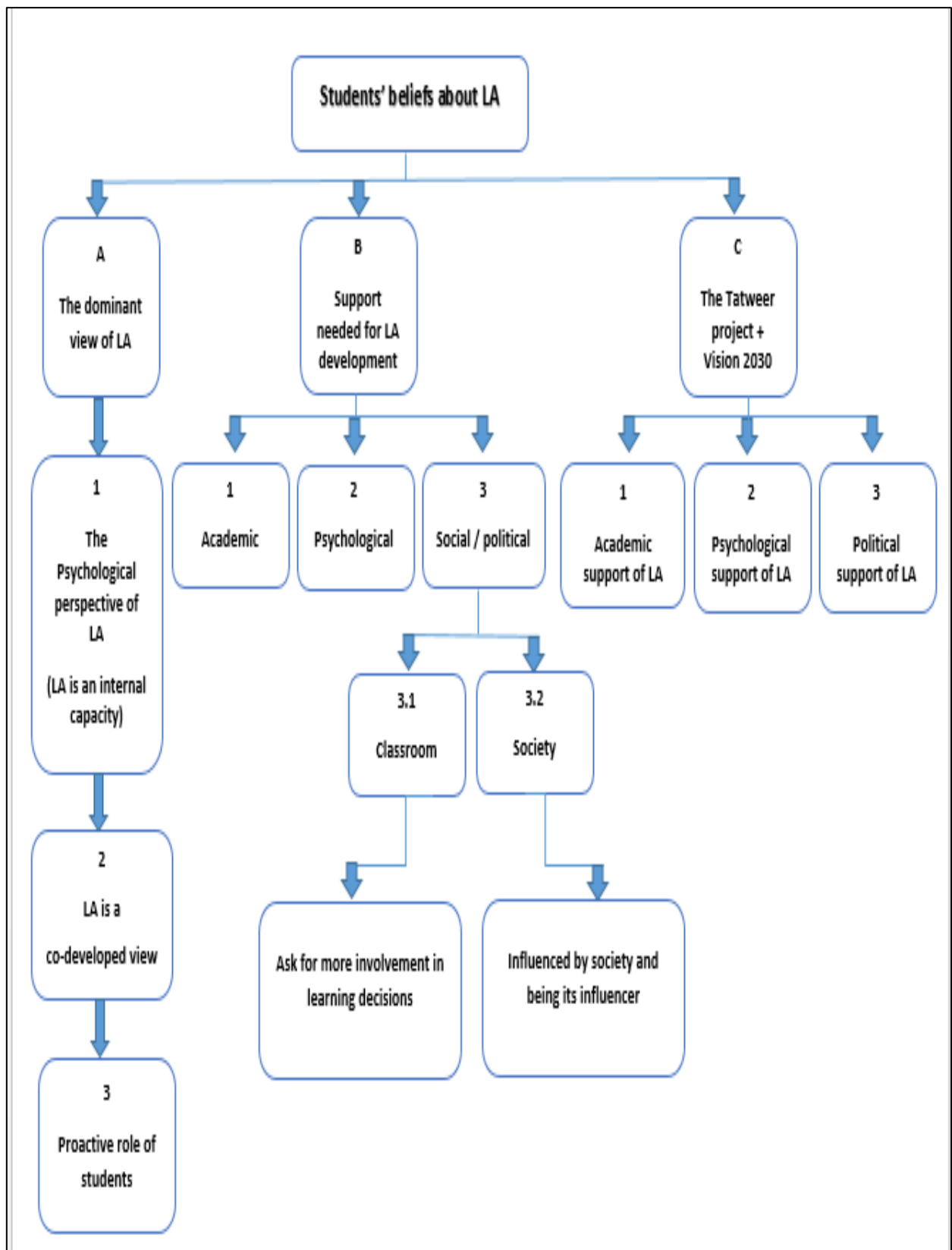
Figure 6.2: Students' beliefs about LA in the study

The findings indicate that the beliefs of both teachers and students reflected all the LA orientations identified by Benson (1997), namely the technical, psychological and political perspectives. They also recognised the importance of LA in secondary schools. Support of LA development appeared to be integral to their conceptualisations of LA. Additionally, they seemed to acknowledge the role of changes in Saudi education for LA development.

Although their beliefs seemed similar, closer inspection of the data revealed key differences related to the prevailing orientation of their beliefs, their justification of LA significance in secondary education, the type of support they encouraged for LA and the nature of the role of educational changes in LA development. The results of the main interviews showed that teachers seemed to perceive LA as a quality provided to students by teachers through training on how to learn, which reflected a technical view of LA (Figure 6.1, A1). For students, LA was not provided but rather an internal capacity within each student as the psychological view of LA suggested (Figure 6.2, A1).This is because they considered more likely the notion of having control over their own learning. Additionally, the findings of the follow-up interview illustrated that teachers considered the private schools as better environment for LA development because the availability of learning resources for the students, which mainly implied a technical view of LA (Figure 6.1, A1). On contrary, students perceived the governmental schools as more efficient for the development of LA because they encouraged students to exert more effort and motivated them to depend on themselves in their own learning. This, therefore, indicated a psychological perspective of LA in students' beliefs (Figure 6.2, A1). Moreover, the qualitative findings of the follow-up interviews showed a further evidence of the technical view in teachers' beliefs (Figure 6.1, A1) and the psychological view in students' beliefs (Figure 6.2, A1) related to the role of the current English curriculum in LA development. That is, it was perceived as a facilitator for LA

development in teachers' beliefs because it helped in training students to use different learning strategies whereas it was a barrier in students' beliefs because it did not motivate them to use the English language. Furthermore, the findings of the main and follow-up interviews demonstrated the importance of reflection, as a key part in the psychological view (Figure 6.2, A1), in students' beliefs and their use of the learning schedule (K-W-L) as a reflective tool in their practices whereas teachers did not recognised the value of reflection or include it in their classes.

Additionally, the qualitative data of both the main and follow-up interviews suggested that teachers tended to believe that LA was related to the teachers themselves, and they viewed their students' role as reactive to LA training (Figure 6.1, A2). By contrast, students appeared to view their role as proactive, as they took responsibility for their own learning (Figure 6.2, A3). This result was also found in the first factor, titled *proactive LA*, in the Exploratory Factor Analysis, as it referred to students' own role in the development of their LA. In the main interviews, students also appeared to acknowledge their teachers' role in supporting their LA, reflecting therefore a co-developed view of LA (Figure 6.2, A2).

The importance of LA according to teachers' and students' beliefs was another area of difference in the findings. In the main interviews, teachers appeared to link the importance of LA to academic aspects such as improving the effectiveness of learning, whereas for students it seemed also to be associated with their lives. The same result was found in their views regarding barriers to LA development. For teachers, a lack of resources and poor English proficiency seemed to be barriers to LA, whereas these barriers were less likely to be identified by students. Students indicated that they considered these barriers controllable mainly by students themselves, and that therefore no barrier limited LA development unless the student allowed them to.

Additionally, the results of the follow-up interviews with teachers showed that they tended to focus on distributing roles in groupwork to help students learn; however, students tended to emphasise that a sense of harmony and group cohesion helped groupwork promote LA.

In addition to having different viewpoints on LA meaning and importance, teachers and students varied regarding the type of support needed for LA development. The results of the main interviews with teachers suggested that LA development could be enhanced by academic support as guidance on learning resources and strategies (Figure 6.1, B1). They also mentioned psychological support such as motivating students to become autonomous (Figure 6.1, B2), while they did not refer to the role of reflection in LA. On the other hand, though students tended to agree on the role of academic (Figure 6.2, B1) and psychological support in developing LA (Figure 6.2, B2), they also needed more room for autonomous learning decisions in class (Figure 6.2, B3.1) because this suggested social LA support,. Teachers, on the other hand, tended to offer limited choice to students, as they appeared to consider most of these choices as their own responsibility. The results of the *t*-test reflected this finding, as students reported that they were given less choice than their teachers assumed. Another example of the importance of social LA support to students (Figure 6.2, B3.1) appeared in their views about the role of the little teacher strategy in LA development in the follow-up interviews. That is, this strategy was viewed as a provider of the academic (Figure 6.2, B1), psychological (Figure 6.2, B2) and social support (Figure 6.2, B3) that enhanced their sense of leadership and having a role in the class whereas the social support was absent in teachers' beliefs.

The results of the follow-up interviews suggested that teachers and students perceived the role of the Tatweer programme and Vision 2030 differently. Teachers appeared to view these changes

as providers of academic (Figure 6.1, C1) and psychological support for LA (Figure 6.1, C2), whereas students tended to consider them a form of not only academic (Figure 6.2, C1) and psychological (Figure 6.2, C2) support, but also political support for the development of individual responsibility to society (Figure 6.2, C3). This view was also found in the second factor, titled *dual nature of LA*, in the Exploratory Factor Analysis, as it included a reference to students' active role in society as not only influenced by society but also being its influencer, too (Figure 6.2, B3.2) while it was not suggested by teachers' results. Additionally, this finding might be linked to the difference between teachers' and students' beliefs about found in the political perspective of LA in the main interviews. That is, teachers tended to perceive LA as operating at classroom level while for students it was viewed as operating also in society, the wider political view of Vision 2030 and internationally. After this summary of the main findings collected through the research instruments, the following chapter discusses answers to the research questions of the study.

Chapter 7: Discussion

7.1 Introduction

The study has generated a considerable amount of quantitative and qualitative data. This chapter focusses on providing a holistic discussion of the key findings from both the questionnaires and interviews to enhance our understanding of LA in the Saudi secondary context according to teachers' and students' beliefs. It starts with a general review of teachers' and students' beliefs about LA. Then, a discussion of teachers' beliefs is presented, followed by students' beliefs about LA. Finally, the differences between their views are highlighted before the chapter is summarised.

7.2 Teachers' and students' beliefs about LA

The responses of the EFL teachers and students reflected Benson's (1997) technical, psychological and political perspectives in an interrelated manner in their beliefs about LA in the Saudi secondary schools context. In addition, their views highlighted the importance of LA in secondary schools; the role of teachers and students in LA development; and the role of the changes in the Saudi context, for example, the Tatweer programme and Saudi Vision 2030, in contributing positively to improving students' levels of LA.

Although the aforementioned LA perspectives merged in the teachers' and students' beliefs and in terms of the importance of LA, while teachers' roles and the Saudi initiatives were acknowledged to enhance LA, a closer examination of the data reflects essential differences between the teachers' and students' views on LA in this context. These differences are related to how the two groups mainly define LA, the factors underlying the importance of LA, the nature of

the teacher's role in fostering LA development and the ways teachers and students interpret the support provided by the Tatweer programme and Saudi Vision 2030 to LA in their beliefs. In the next section, the results of teachers' and students' beliefs about LA are discussed before highlighting the differences between them in Saudi secondary schools to answer the three study research questions respectively.

7.2.1 RQ1: What beliefs are expressed by female EFL teachers in Saudi secondary schools regarding LA?

One of the key results of the current study is that the teachers' beliefs about LA indicate their underlying philosophy of language learning and that their beliefs are associated with the technical view of LA as shown in the results of the main interviews. According to Benson (1997), this perspective frames LA as a result of acquiring pre-set structures and forms; therefore, it is set within the positivist philosophy. In the quantitative data, the results revealed that teachers appear to believe more in the technical view that values students' use of a suite of predetermined learning strategies and skills to employ different learning resources for helping students become autonomous learners. The qualitative data also reflected teachers' emphasis on the importance of training students to use learning strategies and resources and appealing to autonomous students as a model to help other students on how to learn autonomously. This result corroborates previous research highlighting the role of learning strategies (Cotterall, 1995; Griffith, 2013; Oxford, 1990, 2011, 2017; Wenden, 1991), strategy training (Cohen, 1998) and the use of learning resources like self-access centres (Sheerin, 1997) in developing LA. A possible explanation for the prevalence of the technical perspective on LA in teachers' beliefs may be

related to teachers' assumption that learning strategies, resources and learner training create autonomous learners, and without such tools, students cannot be autonomous. This view tends to represent the weak version of LA described by Smith (2003) because it expects that there is no spontaneous LA in students, and accordingly, they need to be trained towards it. For example, regarding learning resources, the quantitative data of Exploratory Factor Analysis showed that the school type is an influential factor in teachers' beliefs about LA. The teachers felt that private schools are better than governmental ones for the development of LA. The qualitative data of the follow-up interviews justified this in terms of the availability of learning resources that enable students to be autonomous. It also reflected that teachers consider a lack of resources a barrier to promoting LA in secondary schools as demonstrated in the main interviews. This result is consistent with the teacher beliefs in AlAsmari's (2013) study, where the same barrier was identified in the Saudi university context. Similarly, the importance given to learner training in teachers' beliefs is supported by some studies in different EFL contexts (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Humphrey & Hyatt, 2013; Yunus & Arshad, 2014).

Another justification of teachers' emphasis on the technical view may be associated with their focus on the academic aspects of learning, which were evident in their beliefs about the importance of LA. The results of follow-up interviews showed that teachers are more likely to think about LA in the service of learning development and preparation for future study rather than the improvement of the individuals for wider reasons related to living as opposed to study. This view is aligned with the conceptualisations by Little (1991) and Benson (2001) of LA as a prerequisite for effective learning. Teachers' high consideration of academic outcomes was not only reflected in the importance of LA but also in their identification of student's poor English level as a hindrance to LA development in the main interviews. This result is in accordance with

the teachers' beliefs in Asiri and Shukri (2018), where a low language level was regarded as the most influential barrier to LA in the Saudi university context. In addition, the teachers' concentration on academic gains was further seen in their view of groupwork in helping LA, which is one of the factors in teachers' beliefs in the quantitative data of Exploratory Factor Analysis. This result is explained by the qualitative data of the follow-up interviews, which indicated teachers' tendency to link the effectiveness of groupwork in LA development to the distribution of roles in the group to help students learn rather than considering other psychological aspects, such as group cohesion or harmony between group members. The centralisation of academic aspects in teachers' beliefs appeared to be associated with Littlewood's (1997) notion of the development of autonomy as a learner rather than a person, where teachers seem to direct their effort and practices to develop the use of learning strategies and encouraging independent work with/in resources. Therefore, the teachers' views in this study seemed to be interested in LA as a product rather than a process.

The way teachers perceived the importance of LA in secondary schools appeared to influence their beliefs about the nature of their role in supporting LA, which was consequently reflected in their teaching practices. The results of the main interviews demonstrated that teachers are more likely to relate students' level of LA mainly to teachers. The reason for this is has to do with teachers' providing academic support to students, such as guidance to different learning resources (e.g. references, websites or self-access centres), and offering training on learning strategies, as the technical perspective of LA suggests. This result is consistent with the findings related to female Saudi secondary school teachers in Alonazi's (2017) study, which indicated that the teacher's role as a resource—an expert and knower in guiding students to different resources in learning—is the most frequent role appearing in their beliefs about LA. In addition, another

justification of linking the responsibility of LA to teachers is related to their role in motivating students, which they consider a key facilitator leading to LA. In the qualitative data of the main interviews, teachers in the current expressed the belief that, when teachers do not motivate students, this is a barrier that may hinder their LA development. This result is in accordance with previous research acknowledging the relationship between motivation and LA and stresses— 'Without motivation, there is no autonomy' (Ushioda, 1996, p. 40)—and expressing that motivation comes before LA (Spratt, Humphrey, & Chan, 2002). Teachers' reference to both academic and psychological support for LA reflected three types of approaches identified by Benson (2001) to promote LA, namely, the resource-, technology- and learner-based approaches. He suggested that teachers should aim to foster students' independent interaction with the learning material and technology and emphasise the behavioural and psychological changes in learners by strategy training to conduct these approaches. It is noticed that teachers' beliefs in this study about psychological supports for enhancing students' level of LA seem to have focussed mainly on motivation, with the teachers recognising its importance. However, the respondents in the main interviews did not consider encouraging students' reflection on their learning as a meaning-making process; according to Little (2007), this is one of the key pedagogical principles for the development of LA. A possible explanation of this result could be that teachers lack reflection on their teaching practices, a result indicated by AlAsmari's (2013) study in a Saudi university context. It may also be simply that they were not aware of reflection's importance as a metacognitive process that helps students plan, monitor and evaluate their learning.

The result mentioned above, where teachers linked LA to themselves, could also indicate how they picture the student role in promoting LA. That is, the students' role was potentially viewed as being more about responding and reacting to the academic and psychological support provided

257

by their teachers than acting autonomously. This appears to reflect Littlewood's (1999) notion of reactive LA, which means that teachers set the direction of learning, then students react by considering the use of learning methods. Therefore, this belief again suggests an underlying philosophy that values training and modelling LA according to predetermined strategies and skills. For example, the results of the quantitative data from the Exploratory Factor Analysis, collected via the teachers' questionnaire, showed that the first factor in teachers' beliefs, labelled *reactive LA*, refers to academic support as training on learning skills, using self-access centres and learning resources. It also refers to teachers' role in helping students psychologically. Another example is the second factor, titled *encouraging and enabling control over learning*, which pointed to teaching practices that promote LA. This view, which indicates that the bigger role in fostering LA is that of the teachers, seems similar to Alrabai's (2017c) finding that Saudi teachers believe they are responsible for most of the learning aspects.

Another significant finding of the study was that teachers' beliefs in the main and follow-up interviews showed they are less likely to allow their students' choice regarding different aspects in their learning in class; they considered such choices part of teachers' responsibilities to foster LA. This result is in agreement with the previous studies, which tend to confirm that the feasibility of LA is lower than its desirability in different contexts (Alibakhshi et al., 2015; Alzeebaree & Yavuz, 2016; Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Duong, 2014). A possible reason for less students' involvement in learning in teachers' beliefs may be related to the way teachers think of their relationship to students. That is, teachers appear to think of this relation in a linear way as might be assumed in the reactive view of LA, where the teacher sets and decides on the course of learning, then the students interact with what the teacher offers without being engaged in choosing what is provided to them. The results of the main interviews indicated that teachers

give little room for students' choices. It is noticed that these choices tend to conform to two types of support of LA, namely, organisational and procedural support (Stefanou et al., 2004). An example of procedural LA support in teachers' beliefs is allowing student choice concerning the form of homework. This support is also reflected in students' selection of how to explain the lesson in the little teacher strategy, which is seen as an opportunity for academic and psychological support to foster LA. As for the organisational support of LA, it is seen in giving students' choice about the environment, such as choosing the group members in groupwork.

Another salient result demonstrating the way teachers think about LA seemed to be associated with how they interpreted the role of changes in Saudi contexts like the Tatweer programme and Vision 2030. The results indicated that teachers appear to perceive these as opportunities for academic and psychological support in LA development. This may be explained in light of the previous results, which showed that this is how teachers tend to perceive the nature of support for promoting LA. Therefore, in their beliefs about the role of these changes in fostering LA, teachers concentrate on what is consistent with their view, such as by highlighting the importance of learning resources, skills and motivation to students. In contrast, teachers tended not to view these initiatives in terms of providing political LA support because this view does not align with their positivist philosophy of learning. This also might be simply related to teachers' perception of the political perceptive in the main interviews as operating in the classroom level not in the wider political sense of society or Vision 2030. Having discussed teachers' beliefs in the study, the thesis moves to consider students' beliefs next.

7.2.2 RQ2: What beliefs are expressed by female EFL students in Saudi secondary schools regarding LA?

As was found with the teachers, the study results showed that students' beliefs about LA indicated their underlying philosophy of language learning and that their beliefs were associated with the psychological view of LA as demonstrated in the qualitative findings of the main interviews. This perspective views LA as an internal capacity by which learners take charge of their learning; therefore, it is set within the constructivist philosophy, which emphasises learners' interaction with the target language (Benson, 1997). In the quantitative data, the results of Exploratory Factor Analysis showed that the first factor in the students' belief was *proactive LA*, referring mainly to the students' role in psychologically managing the practices they use to promote their LA, including their adoption of social media. The qualitative data of the main interviews also reflected students' emphasis on the notion that LA is within each student, who can control and determine any influence of facilitators or barriers to her LA. Furthermore, students tended to believe that no barrier or difficulty can prevent LA development. In addition, they referred to having the ability and willingness to make learning decisions (Littlewood, 1996) and engage in self-reflection (Murase, 2007) in their beliefs about LA. They also considered the importance of self-assessment as part of their responsibility towards LA development, which is in line with students' beliefs in different studies (e.g. Bekleyen & Selimoğlus, 2016; Joshi, 2011; Yildirim, 2012).

A possible explanation of the dominance of the psychological perspective of LA in students' beliefs may be related to students' assumption that control needs to be internal rather than external for

a student to become more autonomous. This is reflected in students' tendency in the main interviews to associate LA with effort or hard work because they can control this factor in their learning. This belief, which considers the controllability of the cause in LA (Weiner, 1992, 1974), is what distinguishes autonomous learners. Students in the follow-up interviews tended to consider the governmental schools as more supportive of their LA as they focussed on effort as a factor in their assessments. Another piece of evidence is that the students in the qualitative data of the follow-up interviews disagreed that LA is associated with the notion of training as they seemed to believe more that it is related to their intrinsic desire to be responsible for their learning. This could also be justified in terms of having a growth mindset, which regards LA as a psychological attribute linked to something of a changeable rather than stable nature (Dweck, 2006).

Another justification of students' emphasis on the psychological view may be associated with their focus on the psychological aspects of learning as evident in their beliefs about the importance of LA. The results of the follow-up interviews showed that students were more likely to think about LA not only to prepare them for university study but also for lifelong learning. This result is consistent with Benson's (2008) view that learning and life are inseparable as learning is 'an integral part of . . . life' (p. 28). It is also in line with students' beliefs in Halabi (2018) study where students associated LA to informal settings. The qualitative data of the main interviews also indicated that students regarded LA as important because it helps their decision-making ability, reflecting a psychological view of LA aligning with Dam's (1995) view of the importance of LA. Students' high consideration of psychological outcomes was not only reflected in the importance of LA but also seen in their view of groupwork in helping LA. The qualitative data of follow-up interviews indicated that students tend to link the effectiveness of groupwork in LA

development to psychological aspects like communication, understanding each other and harmony between group members. This view is consistent with Deci, Vallerand et al.'s (1991) conceptualisation of group cohesion or relatedness as a psychological need in self-determination theory. The centralisation of psychological aspects in students' beliefs appeared to be associated with Littlewood's (1997) notion of the development of autonomy as a person rather than a learner. Therefore, students' views in this study seemed to be interested in LA as a process rather than a product.

The way students perceive the importance of LA in secondary schools in a wider sense appears to influence their views, which do not restrict LA to either teachers or students. The results of the main interviews showed that they instead consider it as a co-developed process, which is consistent with their constructivist philosophy of learning. This finding demonstrated that the students assigned themselves the bigger role in LA because they tended to perceive LA as a capacity inside the student that she can control by her self-determination. Therefore, they tend to believe in Littlewood's (1999) notion of proactive LA where the direction of LA is initiated by students. At the same time, they believe their teachers also play a role in their LA. Students referred in the main interviews to the academic support provided by their teachers, such as guidance to books, websites or other learning resources. In addition, they pointed to teachers' psychological support in terms of motivation and stimulating students' interests to learn English independently. This result is in line with undergraduate students' beliefs in Ecuador, where a significant relationship was found between teachers' motivational support to the learners and learners' attitudes to learn English autonomously (Bravo et al., 2017). However, the current result is in contrast to Sawan's (2016) study involving Libyan university students, who tended to reject the role of their teachers; in this study, a low correlation was found between the teacher role and

learner independence in their beliefs. The students in the current study believed that teachers' encouragement supports students to become more motivated and autonomous in learning English.

The student views described above, wherein LA is conceptualised as a co-developed process, tend to reflect Smith's (2003) strong version of LA, where the researcher argued that LA exists in different degrees in students and that a joint effort of teachers and students plays an important role in its progress. This result is in accordance with Dam's (2000) view of LA as a mutual responsibility in the classroom. Such a view in students' beliefs reveals their perceptions of the student and teacher role in LA. The quantitative data from Exploratory Factor Analysis indicated that the second factor in students' belief, labelled the *dual nature of LA*, includes both the teacher's and student's role, as well as individual and political/social aspects of LA. This factor includes three roles for students, namely, being proactive in their learning, active in their society and reactive to the teacher's support. As for the teacher's role, the factor considers the teacher's academic and psychological support for LA development. Nevertheless, the students believed they needed social/political support, a view that is related to more involvement in decisions concerning their learning in the class. This is evident in the results of the *t*-test, which showed that students considered they were given less choice in their classes compared with what their teachers reported. In addition, the qualitative data of the main interviews revealed their desire to be engaged in all learning decisions in the class except the choice of class time and assessment method, which they perceived as the teacher's responsibility. The qualitative data of the follow-up interviews explained the reason for students' calling for more involvement as related to students' willingness to have a sense of partnership, leadership and role in the class. The students

263

provided the example of using the little teacher strategy, which they perceived as an opportunity to develop this sense of social support in the class.

Students' beliefs about their low involvement in learning decisions may also help to reveal how they think of their relationship to teachers. The students in the follow-up interviews tended to think of this relationship in a cyclical way, with a conception of learning as mutual; this contrasts with Halabi's (2018) finding that Saudi university students believe in teachers' authority. Therefore, the students seemed to need Benson's (2001) classroom-based approach to develop LA. Such an approach considers the development of the relationship between teachers and students in the classroom and enables student control over different aspects related to their learning. In addition, the students wanted their teachers to provide cognitive support allowing control over learning, not just over the learning environment and presentation method as identified by Stefanou et al. (2004). Again, this could be justified in relation to their constructivist philosophy in learning, which is associated with psychological aspects; Stefanou et al. (2004) described cognitive support as the type of support that has long-lasting effects on LA.

Another significant result that indicated the way students think about LA seems to be associated with how they interpreted the role of changes like the Tatweer programme and Vision 2030 in the Saudi context. The results of follow-up interviews showed that students appear to perceive these as opportunities of academic, psychological and political support of LA development. This may be explained in light of the previous results, which showed that this is how students tend to define the nature of support to promote LA. The political support of these initiatives is related to students' beliefs concerning their responsibility towards society as participating in community building. One of the possible explanations for this is related to a constructivist view; as Benson

(1997) mentioned, both the psychological and political perspectives share the foundation of constructivist philosophy, with the latter involving the notion of change. Another reason for this view may be linked to students' young age and the characteristics of their age group; such features indicate they are more likely to think of these contemporary changes on the educational and societal level as chances for a bigger role and influential changes in society compared with their teachers. This also might be simply related to students' perception of the political perceptive in the main interviews as operating not only in the classroom level but also in society, in Vision 2030 and internationally, which reflected the fundamental political notions like interdependence and being an effective member in society.

7.2.3 RQ3: What characterises the difference between female EFL teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in the Saudi secondary schools context?

One of the key findings of the current study was the mismatches found in the way the two groups defined or perceived their roles in relation to LA. Teachers' beliefs tended to be associated with the technical view of LA, considering it a quality provided to students. Therefore, they were more likely to foster LA by training students to use learning strategies and resources to enable them to become autonomous. This reflects their apparent focus on LA as a product rather than a process. In addition, the teachers believed in the importance of LA for its academic gains in learning. Accordingly, they promoted autonomy for students as learners rather than persons. In contrast, the students' beliefs appeared to be linked to the psychological view of LA, perceiving it as an internal capacity within each student. They were more interested in having control, ability, willingness, self-assessment and self-reflection in their learning. This belief indicates that they tended to focus on LA as a process rather than a product. Furthermore, they considered LA

important not only for its academic outcomes but also wider aspects like lifelong learning. Their beliefs reflect that they would like to develop autonomy as persons, not only as learners.

Another area of difference related to the two groups' roles in LA. Teachers' beliefs seem to consider the main role in LA development as belonging to teachers as they adopted the resource-, technology- and learner-based approaches to LA. In these approaches, teachers provide academic guidance on strategies and resources, in addition to psychological support like motivating their students to become more autonomous. However, the teachers did not consider encouraging reflection in their classes. Teachers also tended to regard the role of students as reactive to the LA support provided by the teacher. In contrast, the students appeared to view LA as co-developed by teachers and students. They considered their role in LA as proactive as it related to their responsibility towards learning; at the same time, they recognised their teachers' roles in supporting them academically and psychologically to promote LA.

Teachers in the study appeared to allow less room for student choices regarding their learning decisions in class as they considered themselves responsible for these choices. They provided examples of small choices students could exercise related to the learning environment and the presentation method of their work. Therefore, teachers seemed to perceive their relationship to students in a linear way; that is, teachers provide support to LA in class and then students react to it. Meanwhile, students expressed their willingness to be involved in learning decisions, which they characterised as creating a sense of partnership in class. Therefore, although the teachers tended to use different approaches to support LA, the students seemed more interested in classroom-based approaches where the relationship between teachers and students would be

the focus. Students appear to view this relation in a cyclical way, seeing learning as a mutual process.

Finally, the changes in Saudi context were perceived as facilitators for LA development in both the teachers' and students' beliefs. Teachers seemed to think of these initiatives as offering academic and psychological support to LA, whereas students perceived them more as political support that stressed their role in building Saudi society. This might be related to another difference regarding teachers' and students' perceptions of the political perspective of LA. That is, the political view operated at classroom level as it was associated with the development of students' critical skills and participating in community service programmes mainly to enhance students' academic level. On the other hand, this view operated at wider level in students' beliefs, i.e. society, Vision 2030 and international contexts, as it was more related to the core notions of the political perspective like interdependence and being influenced by society as well as being its influencer. After presenting the differences between teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in the study, the following section provides a summary of the chapter.

7.3 Summary

The qualitative and quantitative data of the key findings were discussed in this chapter, giving possible explanations of the results related to the LA literature and previous studies. Teachers' and students' beliefs were presented separately before the differences were characterised to help answer the three research questions respectively. The differences related to the two groups' underlying philosophies of learning, which affected the LA orientation in their beliefs. The philosophy was also associated with focussing on LA as product or a process and whether

autonomy is developed as a learner or person more broadly. The next chapter gives a summary of the study, as well as elucidating its contributions, implications, limitations and providing suggestions for future research.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a summary of the key findings in the study. Following this, it considers the contribution of the study to LA in the Saudi EFL context. This is followed by a discussion of some implications for teachers, teacher training and policymakers in Saudi secondary education. The limitations of the study are also presented before concluding the chapter with some suggestions for future research.

8.2 Summary of research findings

This study investigated teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in Saudi secondary schools. The aims were to see how teachers and students define LA, their roles in LA development and the desirability and feasibility of learning decisions in class, as well as comparing their beliefs about LA in the same context. Approaching the topic from both perspectives will help generate a comprehensive view of LA in secondary school and answer the research questions, which are reiterated as follows:

1. What beliefs are expressed by female EFL teachers in Saudi secondary schools regarding LA?

2. What beliefs are expressed by female EFL students in Saudi secondary schools regarding LA?

3. What characterises the difference between female EFL teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in the Saudi secondary schools context?

The findings of the study showed that teachers and students reflected the technical, psychological and political views in their beliefs about LA. They both considered the importance of LA and the roles of teachers, students and the contemporary initiatives in Saudi education. However, upon close inspection, key differences were identified. Teachers tended to believe that LA is a quality provided to students by training them to use learning strategies and resources, while students appeared to define it as an internal capacity of each student related to her control over her learning. Therefore, the teachers' beliefs reflected a focus on LA as a product, while students' beliefs seemed to relate to LA as a process. Regarding the importance of LA, teachers seemed to consider it significant due to its academic outcomes in learning, while students tended to associate its importance with psychological gains and lifelong learning. Teachers and students also perceived the roles and responsibilities towards LA differently. That is, teachers appeared to consider students' role in LA as reactive, viewing the teacher as responsible for most aspects related to learning in class, while students tended to perceive their role as proactive as they believed in their responsibility towards their learning. The teachers in the study offered less choice to their students regarding learning decisions in class, whereas students wanted to be involved in them. Finally, the teachers perceived the initiatives in the Saudi context as opportunities for academic and psychological support to LA development, while the students also believed that they provided political support to LA development, highly stressing the individual's role as an effective member in society building. Having reviewed teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in the study, the contributions of the study are highlighted next.

8.3 Contributions of the study

The findings of the current study contribute to the existing literature by presenting an understanding of teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in the Saudi EFL context. To the best of my knowledge, the study is the first to investigate LA in secondary schools from the perspectives of teachers and students, while most LA research investigates either one group's views or takes place in a university context. Therefore, the study fills a gap in LA literature by exploring teachers' and students' beliefs about LA in parallel in the same context. It also contributes by responding to the need of ESL/EFL contexts for locally contextualised studies.

The findings of the study develop our understanding substantially on the distinctions between teachers' and students' views about LA in Saudi secondary schools. With a relationship to Benson's (1997) LA perspectives, teachers' beliefs about LA clearly relate to the technical perspective of LA in that it considers LA a quality provided to students by training them on the use of learning resources and strategies. This, therefore, reflects an apparent focus on LA as a product or result of acquiring predetermined strategies. However, students' beliefs are mainly associated with the psychological perspective of LA, which viewed LA as an internal capacity within each student related to notions like having control over learning, intrinsic motivation, self-assessment and self-reflection in learning. Consequently, this implies their view of LA as a process rather than a product. Understanding the different orientations of LA in teachers' and students' beliefs helps to recognise what composes LA for each group. Thus, the study helps to provide a lens to the aspects of main considerations to both, which affect learners' experiences in the class.

Furthermore, the study provides key insights into LA support in Saudi secondary schools. The findings indicated a difference between LA support offered by teachers and the needed LA

support expressed in students' beliefs. That is, teachers referred to academic and psychological support for LA development, whereas students illustrated that they required not only academic and psychological LA support but also social support. This kind of support can be provided by considering more students' involvement in learning decisions in the class, as suggested by students' findings, which will help students to have a sense of partnership and a role in class. This led to another kind of social support related to their relationship to teachers, which according to students, should be based on a view of learning and LA development as a mutual process and responsibility. Moreover, the study informs us that teachers' beliefs reflect that they develop autonomy as learners because they considered it important in preparing students for university study, while students were interested in developing LA as persons because they linked it to the ability to make decisions and the notion of lifelong learning. Therefore, the findings of the study may facilitate the promotion of LA in a way that considers students' needs and interests in learning, which leads to more purposeful and effective learning.

This study is also important because it explains how teachers and students view responsibilities towards LA in Saudi secondary education. The findings of the study showed that teachers believed that LA development mainly relates to them. For this reason, their beliefs are linked to reactive LA that considered LA a provided quality to which students react. Conversely, students' beliefs reflected that LA is a co-developed view that valued their proactive role in LA development; nevertheless, they acknowledged their teachers' role in LA development. Therefore, this finding helped to understand that the underlying positivist philosophy in teachers' beliefs and the constructivist philosophy in students' beliefs influenced their approach to adopting LA in their practices.

In addition, the study is a significant contribution to the Saudi secondary school context because it studies LA at a key time of change when new policies towards it are being implemented. The findings of the study illustrated that the Saudi initiatives, like the Tatweer project and Vision 2030, were viewed as academic, psychological support for LA development in teachers' beliefs, yet provided academic, psychological and political support for the development of LA in students' beliefs. Therefore, the study helps to illuminate the role of these initiatives in promoting LA from the perspectives of teachers and students in secondary schools.

Interestingly, the study also provides evidence of the political perspective of LA in Saudi secondary education, although the imposition of LA in the current context comes from the upper governmental level, which is contrary to what the political perspective suggests.

After highlighting the main contributions of the study, the thesis proceeds to discuss the implications for teachers, teacher training programmes and policy makers in Saudi secondary education.

8.4 Implications of the study

The findings of this study could be of noticeable value to EFL teachers, teacher training programmes and policymakers. Teachers need to be aware of LA for supporting students' needs in their learning. This could be done by using questionnaires that encourage students to express their opinions freely regarding their learning in class. This may also be maintained by having an open discussion with students that encourages the negotiation of teaching and learning. Considering students' needs is crucial for effective teaching and learning in class. For example,

students' beliefs in the study showed that they wanted to be involved in their learning to have a sense of responsibility towards their learning. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers allow more space for such decision making. This will affect not only students' learning but also their relationship with the teacher. This is because students' findings indicated a co-developed view of LA development. Therefore, teachers need to build a sense in their classes that learning is a mutual process, and joint effort characterises an autonomous class. The example of using the little teacher strategy is a promising practice, according to students' beliefs, because they found it useful for LA development not only academically and psychologically but also socially, like increasing their sense of partnership. This indicates to teachers how much choice is valued by students in their learning. Another part of understanding students' needs is considering employing small groups for groupwork, as well as allowing students their choice of group; students in the study believed that a sense of harmony and mutual understanding will encourage successful support for LA in the class and giving them these choices will foster harmony and illustrate such understanding.

The students' beliefs indicated that self-reflection is a key part of their understanding of LA. For this reason, it is recommended that teachers increase their awareness about the importance of self-reflection in learning to help them manage, monitor and evaluate their learning. In addition, it is advised that teachers should include reflective exercises for students as an integral part of each unit or lesson, as this will help students develop their metacognitive abilities in learning.

Teacher-training programmes are required to build awareness that LA is for lifelong learning. This is due to students' interest in developing autonomy as a person and not just as a learner, as shown in the students' beliefs in the study. Additionally, students in the current study believed in the

importance of allowing them choice in learning and involvement in class decisions. It is recommended, therefore, to explain to teachers the importance of this approach for LA development because it is more likely to improve students' decision-making ability, which is essential for continuous learning. The inclusion of practices that help students develop their level of LA as an important component in teacher-training programmes in Saudi Arabia is highly suggested, as shown in teachers' beliefs. In addressing teachers, it is essential to require teacher trainers to stress the importance of explaining the aims of tasks or activities for students to encourage them to see their benefits for LA development as suggested by students in the study. The more students are convinced of their gains, the more likely they will be to use them in learning outside the class. Furthermore, as the teachers in the study considered experience an influential factor that adds to their understanding of LA, it is advised to include experienced teachers' successful practices for LA development in teacher-training programmes. This will contribute to developing the practical component of these programmes and forming a motivator for other teachers to promote LA in their teaching practices.

The study's findings also provided implications for policymakers in Saudi Arabia. It is suggested for English curriculum designers to consider including a questionnaire at the end of the course book to help students evaluate its content. This is because students in the study believed the curriculum did not motivate them to use the English language. Furthermore, the findings of the study indicated that students considered reflection a key part in their understanding of LA. Therefore, it is encouraged to add reflective exercises to the English course book to help students evaluate their progress in learning.

Additionally, as some teachers in the study referred to high workloads as a barrier to developing LA in their teaching practices, it is advised to reduce teacher tasks that could be managed by the administrative staff. This would give teachers time for CPD and focussing more on the quality of their teaching; this would have positive effects on students' learning experiences in class.

Finally, as the new policies tend to yield positive changes towards LA according to teachers' and students' beliefs, it is suggested that involving students in 'lower-level' political activity and owning the decisions about their learning is a way to develop LA beyond the classroom, which has a greater impact. One way to make this happen is through the introduction of student councils and student Parliament at local and international levels. Adopting this approach will help the country in fulfilling the aim of Saudi Vision 2030 to establish a capable and knowledgeable generation that contributes positively and productively to building the new Saudi Arabia. The country may benefit from Kuwait's interesting experience of establishing a student Parliament in this regard, so measures adopted by this and other countries should be considered. Having reviewed the implications of the study, the next section considers the limitations of the study.

8.5 Limitations of the study

Several limitations related to the research sample and methodology are considered in this section. For instance, this study investigated LA in secondary schools according to female teachers' and students' beliefs because schools are segregated by sex in Saudi Arabia. Different results may appear with male teachers and students because gender was a factor that influenced LA in the previous studies in Saudi Arabia. In addition, given that the study involved teachers and students in two Saudi cities, the findings may not be applicable to other contexts. Another

limitation relates to the research methodology: The study relied on interviews and questionnaires, which generate self-reported data. No observation data were used; therefore, the study could not see how teachers and students implement LA in their real practices. Next, some suggestions for future research are provided.

8.6 Suggestions for future research

The findings of the study suggest that further research is needed on the following topics:

1. Considering more qualitative work with teachers and students to track development of their views of LA between secondary school and university;

2. Comparing teachers' and students' practices in governmental and private schools; both teachers and students in this study believed there was a relationship between LA development and school type for different reasons;

3. Building on this study with male teachers and students to see how gender affects participants' beliefs about LA;

4. Investigating the practices of LA through observation of classes and students' work outside the class; and

5. Conducting longitudinal research as the new policies become more embedded in the school curriculum and as Saudi society changes.

8.7 Final words

The current study presented a promising view of female EFL Saudi students who tended to have a growth mindset that attributed LA to effort and responsibility in learning. They linked LA to a wider perspective, where it was seen as a lifelong process and therefore different levels of support should be incorporated to help them develop LA as persons not only learners. Understanding their views and appreciating their learning decisions by their schools and teachers in secondary education will enhance the quality of teaching and learning in class, which consequently helps the Saudi Vision to achieve its aims in creating knowledge-based generation capable and responsible to contribute positively in building the new ambitious Saudi.

References

Al Asmari, A. (2013). Practices and prospects of learner autonomy: Teachers' perceptions. *English Language Teaching*, *6*(3), 1.

Al Ghazali, F. A. M. (2011). *Learner Autonomy in the UAE Context: An Investigation of Students' Beliefs and Conceptions of Autonomy in Learning English Language* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Salford).

Al Mousa, A. A. (2010). Experience of Scholarships to Foreign Univerisities in Saudi Arabia: A Model for Investment in Human Resources & Their Contribution to Development. In L. Bechir (Ed.), Arab Regional Conference on Higher Education (Cairo, May 31, June 1-2 2009). Towards an Arab Higher Education Space: International Challenges and Societal Responsibilities (pp. 717-724). Beirut: UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States.

Al-Busaidi, S. S., & Al-Maamari, F. S. (2014). Exploring University Teachers' Understanding of Learner Autonomy.*Theory & Practice in Language Studies*, *4*(10).

Alhejaily, N. (2016). An Investigation of L2 Motivational Strategies used by Female Saudi Teachers of English as a Foreign Language in Secondary Schools. (Unpublished MA dissertation), University of Salford.

Ali, M., Wyatt, M., & Van Laar, D. (2015). Pakistani postgraduate students' orientations for learning English as a second language: A factor analytic study. *System*, *51*, 77-87.

Alibakhshi, G., Keikha, A., & Nezakatgoo, B. (2015). On the Feasibility and Desirability of Learner Autonomy from Iranian EFL Teachers' Perspectives.*International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, *4*(6), 141-147.

Alkanhal, G. (2016). The Impact of Educational Reform on Female Saudi EFL Teachers' Continuing Professional Development in Secondary School. (Unpublished MA dissertation), University of Salford.

Allwright, D. (1988). Autonomy and individualization in whole-class instruction. In A.Brookes & P. Grundy (eds.) *Individualization and autonomy in language learning*, 35-44.ELT

Alonazi, S. M. (2017). "The Role of Teachers in Promoting Learner Autonomy in Secondary Schools in Saudi Arabia." *English Language Teaching 10* (7) 183-202.

Alrabai, F. (2017a). "From Teacher Dependency to Learner Independence: A Study of Saudi Learners' Readiness for Autonomous Learning of English as a Foreign Language." *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives 14*.(1)

Alrabai, F. (2017b). Exploring the Unknown: The Autonomy of Saudi EFL Learners. *English Language Teaching*, *10*(5), 222-233.

Al-Rabai, F. (2017c). Saudi EFL Teachers' Perspectives on Learner Autonomy. *International Journal of Linguistics*, *9*(5), 211-231.

Alyami, R. H. (2014). Educational reform in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Tatweer schools as a unit of development.*Literacy Information and Computer Education Journal*, *5*(2), 1424-1433.

Alyami, R., & Floyd, A. (2019). Female School Leaders' Perceptions and Experiences of Decentralisation and Distributed Leadership in the Tatweer System in Saudi Arabia.*Education Sciences*, *9*(1), 25.

Alzeebaree, Y., & Yavuz, M. (2016). Learner autonomy: Iraqi EFL teachers' beliefs. *European Scientific Journal*, *12*(31), 59-71.

Alzubi, A. A. F., Singh, M. K. M., & Pandian, A. (2017). The use of learner autonomy in English as a foreign language context among Saudi undergraduates enrolled in preparatory year deanship at Najran University. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, *8*(2), 152-160.

Aoki, N., & Smith, R. (1999). Learner autonomy in cultural context: The case of Japan. *Learner autonomy in language learning: Defining the field and effecting change*, *8*, 19-28.Education, Oman.

Arshiyan, P., & Pishkar, K. (2015). A Study of Iranian Professors' Perceptions of EFL University Students' Autonomy. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, *2*(5), 197-214.

Asiri, J., & Shukri, N. (2018). Female Teachers' Perspectives of Learner Autonomy in the Saudi Context. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *8*(6), 570-579.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundation of thought and action*. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice- Hall, Inc.

Barcelos, A. M. F. (2006). Researching Beliefs in SLA: A Critical Review. In P. Kalaja & A. Barcelos (eds.) *Beliefs about SLA* (pp. 231-238). Springer Netherlands.

Barcelos, A. M. F., & Kalaja, P. (2006). Exploring possibilities for future research on beliefs SLA. In P. Kalaja & A. Barcelos (eds.) *Beliefs about SLA* (pp. 231-238). Springer Netherlands.

Barcelos, A. M. F., & Kalaja, P. (2011). Introduction to beliefs about SLA revisited. *System*, *39*(3), 281-289.

Bekleyen, N., & Selimoglu, F. (2016). Learner Behaviors and Perceptions of Autonomous Language Learning. *Tesl-ej*,*20*(3), n3.

Benson, P. (1996). Concepts of autonomy in language learning. *R. Pemberton, E. Li, W. Or, & H. Pierson. Taking control. Autonomy in language learning*, 27-34.

Benson, P. (1997). The philosophy and politics of learner autonomy. In *Autonomy and independence in language learning* (pp. 18-34). Longman.

Benson, P. (2000). Autonomy as a learners' and teachers' right. In *Learner autonomy, teacher autonomy: Future directions* (pp. 111-117). Longman.

Benson, P. (2001). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning*. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Benson, P. (2008). Teachers' and learners'. *Learner and Teacher Autonomy: Concepts, realities, and response*, *1*, 15.

Benson, P. (2010). Teacher education and teacher autonomy: Creating spaces for experimentation in secondary school English language teaching. Language Teaching Research, 14, 259-275. doi: 10.1177/1362168810365236

Benson, P. (2013). *Teaching and researching autonomy* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Benson, P., & Voller, P. (1997). *Autonomy and independence in language learning*. Routledge.

Blidi, S. (2017). *Collaborative learner autonomy: A mode of learner autonomy development.* Singapore, Malaysia: Springer.

Borg, S. (2003). Teacher cognition in language teaching: A review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe, and do. *Language teaching*, *36*(2), 81-109.

Borg, S., & Al-Busaidi, S. (2012). Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Regarding Learner Autonomy. *ELT Journal, 66*(3), 283-292.

Boud, D. (1988). Moving toward autonomy. In D. Boud (Ed.), *Developing student autonomy in learning*, 2nd ed. (pp. 17-39). London: Kogan Page.

Bravo, J. C., Intriago, E. A., HolguĆn, J. V., Garzon, G. M., & Arcia, L. O. (2017). Motivation and Autonomy in Learning English as Foreign Language: A Case Study of Ecuadorian College Students. *English Language Teaching*, *10*(2), 100-113.

Brown, J., & Rodgers, Theodore S. (2002). *Doing second language research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bruner, J. S. (1996). *The culture of education*. Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J.S. (1986). The language of education. In J.S. Bruner, Actual Minds, Possible Worlds (pp. 121133). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bryman, A. (2007). Barriers to integrating quantitative and qualitative research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1*, 8-22.

Bryman, A. (2012). Social Research Methods (4th edn,) New York: Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A., & Cramer, D. (1990). *Quantitative data analysis for social scientists*. Taylor & Frances/Routledge.

Bukhari, F., & Denman, B. (2013). Student scholarships in Saudi Arabia: Implications and opportunities for overseas engagement. In *Higher Education in Saudi Arabia* (pp. 151-158). Springer, Dordrecht.CA: Sage.Cambridge University Press.

Candy, P. C. (1991). *Self-Direction for Lifelong Learning. A Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice*. Jossey-Bass, 350 Sansome Street, San Francisco, CA 94104-1310.

Carter, I. (2007). Positive and Negative Liberty. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2007 Edition), Retrieved July 14, 2016, from http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2007/entries/liberty-positivenegative/

Chan, V. (2001). Readiness for Learner Autonomy: What do our learners tell us? *Teaching in Higher Education, 6*(4), 505-518.

Chan, K. W., & Elliott, R. G. (2000). Exploratory study of epistemological beliefs of Hong Kong teacher education students: Resolving conceptual and empirical issues. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, *28*(3), 225-234.

Chang, L. Y. H. (2007). The influences of group processes on learners' autonomous beliefs and behaviors. *System*, *35*(3), 322-337.

Cleary, T. J., & Zimmerman, B. J. (2004). Self-regulation empowerment program: A school-based program to enhance self-regulated and self-motivated cycles of student learning. *Psychology in the Schools, 41*(5), 537-50.Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Cohen, A. D. (1998). Strategies in learning and using a second language. Harlow, UK: Longman

Cohen, L., Manion, Lawrence, Morrison, Keith, & Bell, Richard. (2011). *Research methods in education.* (7th ed. / Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion and Keith Morrison ; with contributions from Richard Bell ... [et al.]. ed.). London: Routledge.

Comrey, A. L., & Lee, H. B. (2013). *A first course in factor analysis*. Psychology Press.

Conway, J. M., & Huffcutt, A. I. (2003). A review and evaluation of exploratory factor analysis practices in organizational research. *Organizational research methods*,*6*(2), 147-168.

Cotterall, S. (1995). Readiness for autonomy: Investigating learner beliefs. *System 23*(2), 195-205.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L., & Guttmann, M. L. y Hanson, EE (2003). Advanced mixed methods research design. En A. Tashakkori y C. Teddlie. *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research*, 209-240.

Creswell, J. W. & Clark, V. L. P. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.

Dam, L. (1995). *From theory to classroom practice*. Authentik.

Dam, L.(2000). 'Why focus on learning rather than teaching? From theory into practice.' In: Little, D., DAM, L. and Timmer, J. (Eds) *Focus on Learning rather than Teaching: Why and How?* Papers from IATEFL Conference on Learner Independence. Krakow, 14–16th May 1998. Dublin: CLC, Trinity College

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behaviour*. New York: Plenum

Deci, E. L., Vallerand, R. J., Pelletier, L. G., & Ryan, R. M. (1991). Motivation and education: The self-determination perspective. *Educational psychologist*, *26*(3-4), 325-346.

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

Dickinson, L. (1995). Autonomy and motivation a literature review. *System*, *23*(2), 165-174.

Documents 131.London: Modern English Publications/The British Council.

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

Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Routledge.

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies* (pp. 95-123). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dörnyei, Z., & Taguchi, Tatsuya. (2010). *Questionnaires in second language research : Construction, administration, and processing.* (2nd ed. / Zoltán Dörnyei, Tatsuya Taguchi. ed., Second language acquisition research). London: Routledge.

Duong, T. M. (2014). EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy and Their Classroom Practices: A Case Study. *International Journal of Education and Management Engineering (IJEME)*, *4*(2), 9.

Dweck, C. S. (2006). Mindset: The New Psychology of Success. New York: Random House.

Dweck, C. S. (2008). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Random House Digital, Inc.

Ellis, G. & Sinclair, B. (1989). *Learning to learn English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ercikan, K., & Roth, W. M. (2006). What good is polarizing research into qualitative and quantitative?. *Educational researcher*, *35*(5), 14-23.

Fabrigar, L. R., & Wegener, D. T. (2011). *Exploratory factor analysis*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Farahani, M. (2014). "From Spoon Feeding to Self-Feeding: Are Iranian EFL Learners Ready to Take Charge of their Own Learning?" *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching 11* (1): 98–115.

Field A., P. (2005). Discovering statistics using SPSS:(and sex, drugs and rock 'n'roll). Sage publications.

Field A., P. (2009). Discovering statistics using SPSS. London: SAGE.

Freire, P. (1973). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Harmondswoth: Penguin.

Freire, P. (1998). *Pedagogy of Freedom*. Maryland: Roman and Littlefield.

Gadotti, M. (2001). Border Crossing: Freirean method and experiences. http://www.paulofreire.org/Biblioteca/frontera_i.htm.Accessed on July,28 ,2016

Gardner, D., Miller, L., (1999). Establishing Self-Access: From Theory to Practice. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Gardner, D., & Miller, L. (2011). Managing self-access language learning: Principles and practice. *System*, *39*(1), 78-89.

General Investment Authority, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (2019). Available from https://investsaudi.sa/en/why-saudi-arabia/

Gillies, R. (2016) Cooperative learning: review of research and practice. *Australian*

Gorard, S. (2001). *Quantitative methods in educational research : The role of numbers made easy*. London: Continuum.

Gorsuch, R. L. (1983). *Factor analysis* (2nd ed.) Hillsdale, NJ: Eribaum.

Greene, J.C., Caracelli, V.J. & Graham, W.F. (1989) Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 11, pp. 255-274.

Greene, J. C., & Hall, J. N. (2010). Dialectics and pragmatism: Being of consequence. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Sage handbook of mixed methods and social and behavioural research* (2nd ed., pp. 119–143). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.

Gremmo, M. J., & Riley, P. (1995). Autonomy, self-direction and self access in language teaching and learning: The history of an idea. *System*, *23*(2), 151-164.

Griffiths, C. (2013). *The strategy factor in successful language learning* (Vol. 67). Multilingual Matters.

Griffiths, C. (2017). Language learning strategies: A holistic view of language learners. *RL Oxford, & A.(. M., Language learning strategies and individual learner characteristics: Situating strategy use in diverse contexts. London: Bloomsbury*.

Halabi, N. (2018). *Exploring Learner Autonomy in a Saudi Arabian EFL Context* (Doctoral dissertation, University of York).

Hendrickson, P. B. (2012). Update on the education system of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In *American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers 2012 Annual Meeting*.

Holden, B. (2002). Listen and learn. *English Teaching Professional*, (23), 18-20.

Holec, H. (1981). *Autonomy in foreign language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon.

Holec, H. (1987). The learner as manager: Managing learning or managing to learn? In A. Wenden & J. Rubin (Eds.), *Learner strategies in language learning* (pp.145-156). London: Prentice Hall.

Holliday, A. (2003). Social autonomy: Addressing the dangers of culturism in TESOL. In Palfreyman & Smith (eds.), 110– 126

Holliday, A. (2005). *The Struggle to Teach English as an International Language*. Oxford: OUP.

Horwitz, E. K. (1985). Using student beliefs about language learning and teaching in the foreign language methods course.*Foreign Language Annals*, *18*(4), 333-340.

Huang, J. (2006). Fostering learner autonomy within constraints: Negotiation and mediation in an atmosphere of collegiality.

Humphreys, G., & Wyatt, M. (2013). Helping Vietnamese university learners to become more autonomous. *Elt Journal, 68*(1), 52-63.

Hvidt, M. (2018). The new role of women in the new Saudi Arabian economy. *Videnscenter om det moderne Mellem¯ sten.International Perspectives on Education and Society Series*. Bingley: Emerald Publishing.

Javid, C. Z. (2018). A Gender-based Investigation of the Perception of English Language Teachers at Saudi Universities Regarding the Factors Influencing Learner Autonomy.

Johnson, R. B. &Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: a research paradigm that time has come. *Educational Researcher*, *33*, 14-26. doi: 10.3102/0013189X033007014

Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Turner, L. A. (2007). Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of mixed methods research*, *1*(2), 112-133.

Joshi, K. (2011). Learner perceptions and teacher beliefs about learner autonomy in language learning. *Journal of NELTA*, *16*(1-2), 12-29. *Journal of Teacher Education,* 41(3), 39-54.

Kaiser, H. F. (1960). The application of electronic computers to factor analysis. *Educational and psychological measurement*, *20*(1), 141-151.

Knowles, M. S. (1975). *Self Directed Learning: A Guide for Learners and Teachers.* Chicago: Association Press.

Kongchan, C. (2002). Using learning profiles to inspire effective consultations. *rEFLections*, *4*, 15-30.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (1991). Language-learning tasks: Teacher intention and learner interpretation. *ELT Journal* 45 (2): 98-107

Lamb, T. E. R. R. Y. (2010). Assessment of autonomy or assessment for autonomy? Evaluating learner autonomy for formative purposes. *Testing the untestable in language education*, 98-119. *language acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Lazaraton, A. (2005). Quantitative research methods.*Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning*, 209-224.

Leech, N. L., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2009). A typology of mixed methods research designs. *Quality & quantity*, *43*(2), 265-275.

Liamputtong, P. (Ed.). (2008). *Doing cross-cultural research: Ethical and methodological perspectives*. New York: Springer.

Little, D. (1991). *Learner autonomy 1: Definitions, issues and problems*. Dublin: Authentik.

Little, D. (1994). Learner autonomy: A theoretical construct and its practical application. *Die Neueren Sprachen*, *93*(5), 430-442.

Little, D. (1995). Learning as dialogue: The dependence of learner autonomy on teacher autonomy. *System*, *23*(2), 175-181.

Little, D. (2002). The European Language Portfolio: structure, origins, implementation and challenges. *Language Teaching*,*35*(3), 182-189.

Little, D. (2004). Constructing a theory of learner autonomy: some steps along the way. *Future perspectives in foreign language education*, *101*, 15-25.

Little, D. (2005). The Common European Framework and the European Language Portfolio: Involving learners and their judgements in the assessment process. *Language Testing*, *22*(3), 321-336.

Little, D. (2007). Language learner autonomy: Some fundamental considerations revisited. *International Journal of Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, *1*(1), 14-29.Doi: 102167/illt040.0

Little, D. G., Dam, L., and Legenhausen,L. (2017). *Language Learner Autonomy : Theory, Practice and Research*. Second Language Acquisition (Clevedon, England).

Littlewood, W. (1996). "Autonomy": An anatomy and a framework. *System*,*24* (4), 427-435.

Littlewood, W. (1997). Self-access: Why do we do it and what can it do? In P. Benson & P. Voller (Eds.), Autonomy and independence in language learning (pp. 79–91). New York: Addison Wesley Longman.

Littlewood, W. (1999). Defining and developing autonomy in East Asian contexts. *Applied linguistics*, *20*(1), 71-94.

Liu, H-J. (2015). Use of learning strategies by EFL learners: A study of how it relates to language proficiency and learner autonomy. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, *5*(2), 21-35.

Macaro, E. (1997). *Target language, collaborative learning and autonomy* (Vol. 5). Multilingual matters.

Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2015). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. Routledge.

Mariani, L. (1991). Towards learner autonomy: From study skills to learning strategies. *Perspectives, 17*(1) 1-10.

Mercer, S., & Ryan, S. (2009). A mindset for EFL: Learners' beliefs about the role of natural talent. *ELT journal*, *64*(4), 436-444.

Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (2016). Education and Vision 2030. Available from www.moe.gov.sa/en/Pages/vision2030.aspx

Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (2017). Building leadership for change through school immersion. Available from www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/rfp-building_educational_leadership_for_change_cohort_2_final.pdf

Murase, F. (2007). Operationalising the Construct of Learner Autonomy: A Preliminary Study for Developing a New Measure of Language Learner Autonomy. In *proceedings of Independent Learning Association 2007 Japan Conference: Exploring Theory, Enhancing Practice, held in Kanda University of International Studies, Chiba, Japan* (pp. 5-8).

Nakata, Y. (2011). Teachers' readiness for promoting learner autonomy: A study of Japanese EFL high school teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *27*(5), 900-910.

Nasri, Najmeh, Hossein Vahid Dastjerdy, Abbass Eslami Rasekh, and Zahra Amirian. "Iranian EFL teachers' practices and learner autonomy: Do gender, educational degree, and experience matter?." *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching* (2015): 1-13.

Navarro, D., & Thornton, K. (2011). Investigating the relationship between belief and action in self-directed language learning. *System*, *39*(3), 290-301.

Nespor, J. (1987). The role of beliefs in the practice of teaching. *Journal of curriculum studies*, *19*(4), 317-328.

Nguyen, L. T. C., & Gu, Y. (2013). Strategy-based instruction: A learner-focused approach to developing learner autonomy. *Language Teaching Research*, *17*(1), 9-30.

Nicolaides, Christine Siqueira, & Fernandes, Vera. (2008). Learner autonomy in the light of Freire. *DELTA: Documentação de Estudos em Lingüística Teórica e Aplicada*, *24*(spe), 493-511. https://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0102-44502008000300006 169

Noels, K. A., Pelletier, L. G., Clément, R., & Vallerand, R. J. (2000). Why are you learning a second language? Motivational orientations and self-determination theory. *Language learning*, *50*(1), 57-85.

Nunan, D. (1986). Communicative Language Teaching: The Learner's View. In B. Das (ed.) *communicating and learning in the classroom community*, pp.176-190

Nunan, D. (2000). Autonomy in language learning. ASOCOPI2000. Retrieved August 1, 2016, from http://www.nuan.inf/presentations/autonomy_lang_learning.paf

Oxford Dictionaries. (2019). Autonomy. Retrieved from http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/autonomy

Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Oxford, R. L. (2003). Toward a more systematic model of L2 learner autonomy. In *Learner autonomy across cultures* (pp. 75-91). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Oxford, R. L. (2011). Strategies for learning a second or foreign language. *Language Teaching*, *44*(2), 167-180.

Oxford, R. L. (2015). Expanded perspectives on autonomous learners. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, *9*(1), 58-71.

Oxford, R. L. (2017). *Teaching and researching language learning strategies: Self-regulation in context*. Routledge.

Oz, H. (2007). Understanding Metacognitive Knowledge of Turkish EFL Students in Secondary Education. *Online Submission*, *1*(2), 53-83.

Paiva, V. L. M. D. O., & Braga, J. D. C. F. (2008). The complex nature of autonomy. *DELTA: Documentação de estudos em lingüística teórica e aplicada*, *24*(SPE), 441-468.

Pajares, M. F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research, 62*(3), 307-332.

Palfreyman, D. (2001). *The socio-cultural construction of learner autonomy and learner independence in a tertiary EFL institution* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Kent at Canterbury).

Palfreyman, D. (2003). The representation of learner autonomy and learner independence in organizational culture. In D. Palfreyman & R. C. Smith (Eds.), *Learner autonomy across cultures: Language education perspectives* (pp. 183–200). Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Palfreyman, D., & Smith, R. C. (Eds.). (2003). *Learner autonomy across cultures*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pallant, J. (2013). *SPSS survival manual*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

Pennycook, A. (1997). Cultural alternatives and autonomy. *Autonomy and independence in language learning*, 35-53.

Punch, K. (2014). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative & qualitative approaches* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, California: SAGE.

Richards, K. (2003). *Qualitative inquiry in TESOL*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Riley, P. (1988). The ethnography of autonomy. *Individualization and autonomy in language learning*, *4*(2), 13-34.

Riley, P. (ed.) (1986). Discourse and Learning. London: Longman.

Rokeach, M. (1968). Beliefs, attitudes and values: A theory of organization and change. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sabir, A., & Zenaidi, K. (2019). Saudi Arabia Reforms: The Changing Face of Saudi Women at Workplace with a Vision of 2030. *American Journal of Management Science and Engineering*, *4*(1), 1-7.

Sale, J. E. M., Lohfeld, L.H.,& Brazil, K. (2002).Revisiting the quantitative-qualitative debate: Implications for mixed-methods research. *Quality & Quantity*, *36*,43-53.
Saudi 2030 Vision. Available from: http://vision2030.gov.sa/ar/node/9. Last accessed October 2019

Saudi Vision 2030. Available from: http://www.vision2030.gov.sa

Sawan, F. M. (2016). The Relationship Between Motivation and Autonomy: A Study of Libyan University English Majors. *Science*, 2.

Scharle, A., & Szabo, A. (2000). *Learner autonomy: A guide to developing learner responsibility*. Ernst Klett Sprachen.

Sheerin, S. (1997). An exploration of the relationship between self-access and independent learning. In P. Benson & P. Voller (Eds.), Autonomy and independence in language learning (pp. 54–65). Harlow: Longman.

Sinclair, B. (1997). Learner autonomy: the cross-cultural question. *IATEFL Issues*, 139: 12-13.

Smith, R. (2003). Pedagogy for autonomy as (becoming-) appropriate methodology. In *Learner autonomy across cultures* (pp. 129-146). Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Smith, R. (2008). Learner autonomy. *ELT journal*, *62*(4), 395-397.

Smith, L., & Abouammoh, A. (Eds.). (2013). Higher Education in Saudi Arabia. Achievements, Challenges and Opportunities. The Netherlands: Springer. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-6321-0

Stapleton, P., & Shao, Q. (2018). Research in language teaching over two decades: A retrospective of the first 20 volumes of Language Teaching Research. *Language Teaching Research*, *22*(3), 350-369.

Stefanou, C. R., Perencevich, K. C., DiCintio, M., & Turner, J. C. (2004). Supporting autonomy in the classroom: Ways teachers encourage student decision making and ownership.*Educational psychologist*, *39*(2), 97-110.

Swain, M. (2000). The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue.*Sociocultural theory and second language learning*, *97*, 114.

Tamer, O. (2013). *A Dissertation on Students' Readiness for Autonomous Learning of English as a Foreign Language*. (MA dissertation). Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/9814281/

Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2010). Overview of contemporary issues in mixed methods research.

Thanasoulas, D. (2000). What is learner autonomy and how can it be fostered. *The Internet TESL Journal*, *6*(11), 37-48.

Thomas, R. M. (2003). *Blending qualitative and quantitative research methods in theses and dissertations*. Corwin Press.

Trochim, W. M., & Donnelly, J. P. (2001). *Research methods knowledge base* (Vol. 2). Cincinnati, OH: Atomic Dog Publishing.

Weiner, B. (1974). *Achievement motivation and attribution theory.* Morristown, N.J.: General Learning Press.

Weiner, B. (1992).Human motivation: Metaphors, theories, and research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Wenden, A. (1986). What do second-language learners know about their language learning? A second look at retrospective accounts. *Applied linguistics*, *7*(2), 186-205

Wenden, A. (1987). How to be a successful language learner: Insights and prescriptions from L2 learners. *Learner strategies in language learning*, *103117*.

Wenden, A. (1991). *Learner Strategies for Learner Autonomy.* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Wenden, A. L. (1998). Metacognitive knowledge and language learning1. *Applied linguistics*, *19*(4), 515-537.

Wenden, A. L. (1999). An introduction to metacognitive knowledge and beliefs in language learning: Beyond the basics. *System*, *27*(4), 435-441.

Wood, D. (2006). The social Construction of beliefs in the language Classroom. In P. Kalaja & A. Barcelos (eds.) *Beliefs about SLA* (pp. 201-229). Springer Netherlands.

Xhaferi, B., & Xhaferi, G. (2011). Developing learner autonomy in higher education in Macedonia. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *11*, 150-154.

Yeh, H. W. (2013). Developing an autonomous language learning framework in a blended learning environment: a Hong Kong case study'. *Technology Use and Research Approaches for Community Education and Professional Development*, 150-170.

Yildirim, O. (2012). A Study on a Group of Indian English as a Second Language Learners' Perceptions of Autonomous Learning. *Online Submission*, *3*(2), 18-29.

Yunus, M., & Arshad, N. (2015). ESL Teachers' Perceptions toward thePractices and Prospects of Autonomous Language Learning. *Asian Social Science*, *11*(2), 41.

Zimmerman, B. J. (2000). Attaining self-regulation: A social cognitive perspective. In *Handbook of self-regulation* (pp. 13-39). Academic Press.

Appendices

Appendix A: Approval letter for the study

25 January 2018

Dear Nouf,

RE: ETHICS APPLICATION AMR1718-08 – An Investigation of Learner Autonomy as Perceived by Female Teachers and Students of English as a Foreign Language in Saudi Secondary Schools

Based on the information you provided, I am pleased to inform you that your application AMR1718-08 has been approved.

If there are any changes to the project and/ or its methodology, please inform the Panel as soon as possible by contacting A&M-ResearchEthics@salford.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,

Dr Samantha Newbery
Chair of the Arts & Media Research Ethics Panel
Lecturer in Contemporary Intelligence Studies
School of Arts and Media
Crescent House, CH210
University of Salford
Salford M5 4WT
t: +44 (0) 161 295 3860
s.l.newbery@salford.ac.uk

Appendix B: Organisation Letter - consent to approach research participants

Date: January 2018

Dear Director of Education in Tabuk Region,

I am a student undertaking PhD degree in TESOL and Applied linguistics at the University of Salford. I am currently undertaking a research study titled: **An Investigation of EFL Female Teachers' and Students' Beliefs about Learner Autonomy in Saudi Secondary Schools.** The focus of this study is on the views of EFL teachers and students toward learner autonomy. The study also attempts to compare these beliefs in order to identify any potential differences between them within the same context.

Prior to undertaking the study, I need your agreement to approach Saudi EFL teachers and students in secondary schools to take part in the study.

The researcher will provide sufficient explanation of the information sheet, having a face-to-face discussion and try to show bigger effort to illustrate that participants could drop out at any time without any penalty. The information sheet will be provided to teachers and students. After that, the informed consents will be handed to teachers and students asking their agreement to participate in completing the questionnaire that will be administrated in their institutions. Finally, the questionnaire will be handed to teachers and students and collected from the participants in their institutions personally by the researcher.

I can assure you that the study will not disrupt the working environment in any way and any data collected will remain confidential. I am applying ethical approval for the study from the University of Salford.
My research is supervised by Dr. Sian Etherington

Yours sincerely,

Nouf Alhejaily
Contact email: N.alhejaily@edu.salford.ac.uk

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم
الإدارة العامة للتعليم بمنطقة تبوك
إدارة التخطيط والتطوير
قسم البحوث التربوية

الرقم :
التاريخ : ١٩/ ٥ / ١٤٣٨هـ
المرفقات : استبانة

وزارة التـعـليم
Ministry of Education

إلى : سعادة قائدة المدرسة الثانوية

وفقه الله

من : مدير التخطيط والتطوير

الموضوع : تسهيل مهمة الباحثة /نوف أحمد الحجيلي

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

إشارة إلى معروض المبتعثة / نوف أحمد الحجيلي الطالبة بجامعة سالفورد ببريطانيا لدرجة الدكتوراه، والذي ترغب فيه إجراء دراسة استطلاعية عن استقلالية المتعلم كما تراها معلمات ومتعلمات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المدارس السعودية الثانوية لتبني وذلك لمتطلبات البحث الذي تقوم به.

عليه، نأمل تسهيل مهمة الباحثة لتطبيق أداة رسالتها إذ تستهدف دراستها معلمات اللغة الإنجليزية وطالبات المرحلة الثانوية بمدينة تبوك .

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ،،،

عبدالرحمن بن ناصر الناصر

ص/ لإدارة التخطيط والتطوير
ص/ للأرشفة الإلكترونية

Appendix D: Information Sheet for the interviews

Title of the Study

An Investigation of EFL Female Teachers' and Students' Beliefs about Learner Autonomy in Saudi Secondary Schools.

Focus

The focus of this study is on the views of EFL teachers and students toward learner autonomy, which generally refers to taking responsibility of one's own leaning. The study also attempts to compare these beliefs in order to identify any potential difference between them within the same context.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

- To investigate female EFL teachers' definitions of LA in the Saudi secondary schools context;

- To investigate female EFL students' definitions of LA in the Saudi secondary schools context;

- To explore female EFL teachers' beliefs about their role in the development of LA in the Saudi secondary schools context;

- To explore female EFL students' beliefs about their role in the development of LA in the Saudi secondary schools context;

- To investigate female EFL teachers' beliefs about the desirability and feasibility of students' involvement in classroom learning decisions;

- To investigate female EFL students' beliefs about the desirability and feasibility of their involvement in classroom learning decisions; and

- To compare EFL female teachers' and students' beliefs about LA within the same context.

Methodology

The study will be conducted in three stages. This information sheet is regarding the first/third stage where the teachers and students will be interviewed using semi-structured individual interviews' protocols to discuss their beliefs about learner autonomy in Saudi secondary schools context.

Your Role in the Study

You will be asked to express your own view about learner autonomy in Saudi secondary schools context.

It is important to know that you have the complete right to withdraw from the study at any time without any explanation.

Confidentiality

Your data will be used for research purpose only.

The interview will be recorded and your data will be stored in a secure place (a password-protected device), where the researcher is the only one who has access to data.

Your data will be anonymised right from the start.

Anonymity

Your data will be used in the research anonymously and the research results will not reveal any data that you might be identified by.

Research Results

The result of this study will be made available to you. They will also be used in my PhD thesis and might be presented in academic journals or at academic conferences.

Further information:

If you have any question, please feel free to ask me following my presentation at the present or you can also contact me at my email address: N.alhejaily@edu.salford.ac.uk

Thank you

Title of the Study

An Investigation of EFL Female Teachers' and Students' Beliefs about Learner Autonomy in Saudi Secondary Schools.

Focus

The focus of this study is on the views of EFL teachers and students toward learner autonomy, which generally refers to taking responsibility of one's own leaning. The study also attempts to compare these beliefs in order to identify any potential difference between them within the same context.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

- To investigate female EFL teachers' definitions of LA in the Saudi secondary schools context;

- To investigate female EFL students' definitions of LA in the Saudi secondary schools context;

- To explore female EFL teachers' beliefs about their role in the development of LA in the Saudi secondary schools context;

- To explore female EFL students' beliefs about their role in the development of LA in the Saudi secondary schools context;

- To investigate female EFL teachers' beliefs about the desirability and feasibility of students' involvement in classroom learning decisions;

- To investigate female EFL students' beliefs about the desirability and feasibility of their involvement in classroom learning decisions; and

- To compare EFL female teachers' and students' beliefs about LA within the same context.

Methodology

The study will be conducted in three stages. This information sheet is regarding the second stage only, where a questionnaire will be designed in the current research based on contextualised data (i.e. the interview results of teachers' and students' views), in addition to literature on learner autonomy.

Your Role in the Study

You will be asked to express your own view about learner autonomy in Saudi secondary schools context.

It is important to know that you have the complete right to withdraw from the study at any time without any explanation.

Confidentiality

Your data will be used for research purpose only.

Your data will be stored in a secure place (a looked cabinet with locked office) where the researcher is the only one who has access to data.

Your data will be anonymised right from the start.

Anonymity

Your data will be used in the research anonymously and the research results will not reveal any data that you might be identified by.

<u>Research Results</u>

The result of this study will be made available to you. They will also be used in my PhD thesis and might be presented in academic journals or at academic conferences.

<u>Further information:</u>

If you have any question, please feel free to ask me following my presentation at the present or you can also contact me at my email address: N.alhejaily@edu.salford.ac.uk

Thank you

Appendix F: Informed Consent Form for Semi-Structured Individual Interview

I, the undersigned, acknowledge and confirm that the following is true:

1. I understand the scope of the research project as communicated to me through the information sheet in May 2017/April 2019.

2. I was allowed the opportunity to inquire and learn about the operations and my role in the study.

3. I consent to participate in semi-structured individual interview voluntarily and without compulsion.

4. I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the study without any risk or threat of penalty.

5. I have been informed how the data collected from and about me will be used in the study, stored, published and shared.

6. I have been informed that if I agree to participate in the individual interview, my responses will be recorded on a voice recorder.

7. I have been assured that all my data will be kept confidential.

8. I have been informed that the research results will be made available for me.

   I have been informed that I can contact the researcher on N.alhejaily@edu.salford.ac.uk any time I have a question about the research.

_____   _____   _____

Participant's name   Participant's signature   Date

Appendix G: Questionnaire Informed Consent Form

I, the undersigned, acknowledge and confirm that the following is true:

1. I understand the scope of the research project as communicated to me through the information sheet in February 2018.

2. I was allowed the opportunity to inquire and learn about the operations and my role in the study.

3. I consent to participate in filling the questionnaire voluntarily and without compulsion.

4. I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the study without any risk or threat of penalty.

5. I have been informed how the data collected from and about me will be used in the study, stored, published and shared.

6. I have been assured that all my data will be kept confidential.

7. I have been informed that the research results will be made available for me.

8. I have been informed that I can contact the researcher on N.alhejaily@edu.salford.ac.uk any time I have a question about the research.

_____   _____   _____

Participant's name   Participant's signature   Date

أسئلة عامة:

١-هل تعتقدين أن تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية مهم؟ لماذا؟

٢-كيف ترين تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في السعودية؟

أسئلة خاصة:

-ما هو أول شيء يخطر ببالك عند الحديث عن استقلالية المتعلم؟ ٤-أخبريني كيف تصفين طالبة مستقلة؟ اضربي مثالا من واقع تجربتك؟ ٥-هل تعتبرين استقلالية المتعلم مهمة؟ لماذا؟ او لم لا؟

- لماذا برأيك أن الطالبات تختلف مستوياتهن في اللغة الإنجليزية؟ هل تعتقدين انه توجد علاقة بين استقلالية المتعلم والمجهود أم لا؟ كيف؟ ٧-هل تعتقدين أن ما يتعلمه الطالبات كاف لتطوير مستواهم في اللغة الإنجليزية؟ لماذا؟ لم لا؟ ٨-إذا شعرت أن طالباتك يحتجن لتطوير مستوى استقلاليتهن، برأيك ماهي الأشياء التي عليهن القيام بها؟

-هل توجد مهارة لغوية محددة (قراءة-كتابة-استماع-تحدث) تجدينها صعبة لتطوير مستوى استقلالية طالباتك بها؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم فماهي؟ كيف عرفتي عن هذه الصعوبة؟ برأيك بماذا تنصحين لتطوير هذه المهارة؟

-هل تطلبين غالبا من طالباتك الكتابة عما تعلمنه وكيف يشعرن تجاه ما تعلمنه او ما قد يرغبن في تغييره تجاه تعلمهن؟

-إلى أي مدى تفضلين أن؟ أو هل تعتقدين أنه من اللازم أن تشركي طالباتك في اختيار:

-الأهداف

-الكتاب

-وقت التعلم

-مكان التعلم

-طريقة التدريس

-إدارة الصف

- الواجبات

-المهام

-التقييم

-كيف تصفين مستوى استقلالية طالباتك؟ هل هذا متعلق بك ام بهن؟ لماذا؟

برأيك ماهي العوامل المساعدة لتنمية استقلالية المتعلم؟

- برأيك ماهي العوامل المعيقة لاستقلالية المتعلم؟

- هل هناك شيء تودين اضافته أو الحديث عنه؟

شكرا جزيلا لوقتك ومشاركتك

Appendix I: Interview protocols

-Do you think learning English is important? Why?

-How do you see learning English in Saudi?

- Tell me, how would you describe an autonomous language learner? Use a concrete example from your own experience.

-Do you consider learner autonomy important? Why/ why not?

- Is there a relationship between effort and learner autonomy? What does effort mean?

-Do you think that what you have learned in class is enough to improve your level at English? Why/ why not?

-If you feel you need to develop more your level of autonomy in learning, what sort of things do you think you need?

-Is there any particular language skill (reading, writing, listening, speaking) that you find it difficult to develop your level of autonomy at? If yes, what is it? How do you know about this difficulty? What do you do to improve this skill?

-To what extent would you like to be involved? Do you think you should be?

-lesson objectives

-selecting course book

-time, place, pace of learning

-teaching methods

-class management

-homework

-tasks

-assessment

-Do you think LA is related to you or is it to do with your (teacher/ students)? How?

-What do you think the factors that help to promote learner autonomy?

-What do you think the factors that limit promoting learner autonomy?

-Is there anything you need to add?

Researcher: Hello!

Student: Hello!

Researcher: Do you think that learning English is important? Why?

Student: Yes, because most of us speak in English. It is a universal language we need to communicate with others. In addition, I need it if I travelled.

Researcher: You have mentioned that most of us speak in English, why do you think that?

Student: Social media, we spend most of our time on social media.

Researcher: Therefore, you think technology affected us?

Student: Yes.

Researcher: How do you see learning English in KSA?

Student: People are not accepting the idea of learning English as a subject, especially grammar. On the other hand, if you talk to students in English they can communicate by using language they learned outside the class e.g. from movie.

Researcher: Do you mean that people turnout to English as a language and not as a school subject?

Student: Yes, because they want to use and not study it.

Researcher: When you heard that our topic today is about learner's autonomy, what was the first thought that crossed your mind?

Student: My rights as a learner and what I can do to learn outside school.

Researcher: Can you describe an autonomous learner?

Student: First, I think the student must have the desire to do so, and not being forced to be independent learner. Maybe s/he has a bigger goal than just learn a language independently; maybe s/he wants to share her ideas with the world. I think this is really helpful.

Researcher: Do you think the student must have desire and goal to increase her motivation?

Student: Yes. If the student loved something, it will be in his/her daily life too. Let's say learning English, a student can educate himself/herself by reading novels or books, or to be introduced to other cultures. If the student was very interested in something, s/he will spend more time to gather as much information as possible and seize every opportunity to learn more.

Researcher: Tell me about your experience as an autonomous learner?

Student: I am mostly independent in learning English. I was in an elementary government school and they only teach English in the sixth grade. After that, I studied in a private intermediate school; most of my classmates had better English level compared to mine as they learned English since the fourth grade. However, I was not dependent on school curriculum, I would spend most of my time reading books, watching subtitled movies then I watched them without subtitles. I also practiced speaking with my father (May his soul rest in peace) and my level was good. Therefore, I believe that practice was most helpful to overcome the gap I had between my classmates and I. Sometime I think I am more advanced.

Researcher: I have noticed that indicated the relation between your learning autonomy and English level, can you explain further?

Student: If I am more independent and make an effort to read, educate, and gather more information, this will improve my English. I believe it's a positive relation as I shared experience earlier.

Researcher: Do you think that learner's autonomy is important? And why?

Student: Yes, it is important because it helps you to discover yourself in learning and choose the field you enjoy the most and, therefore, it makes you creative and successful in this field.

Researcher: Do you think that learning autonomy is somehow related to preference or interest?

Student: Yes, because what is taught in school might not suits my interests, but I will know my interests and preferences.

Researcher: What are your interests?

Student: In English, I like to read inspirational success stories such as Steve Jobs, or listen to TED talks.

Researcher: Why?

Student: There are moments when I feel I am lost and need inspiration to continue learning. So when I listen to their stories I feel I haven't achieved anything compared to their achievements while they were struggling.

Researcher: Is there a relationship between effort and learner autonomy or not?

Student: Definitely, nothing will come easy without making an effort. The more effort I make, the bigger achievements I make. It might be even bigger than what I expected from my learning autonomy.

Researcher: Do you think what students learn in English class is enough to improve their English level? Why?

Student: No, in class we are restricted with grammar. As Arabic speaker, whenever I speak I do not consider strict grammar and focus on past or present tense. Therefore, I believe that the English curriculum should be smoother.

Researcher: Smoother in what term?

Student: In terms of not being limited and restricted to grammar use. I might express English in easy language and not necessarily using past continuous, all these grammar can be complicated. I also think there are vocabularies used in dialects that we were not taught to use, we were only taught to use the official English use.

Researcher: Since you think that class is not enough, what would students need to improve students' English level?

Student: They need to practice language with English-speaker such as housemaid or driver. They can practice with themselves to the mirror; I often do that by imaging a situation with non-Arabic speaker and practice speaking. Few students participate in speaking in class. They can also practice by communicating with English-speakers in social media.

Researcher: What would you do to improve your LA? What do you need?

Student: There must be a sense of responsibility and to feel more responsible and independent to improve my learning.

- الباحثة: السلام عليكم

- المعلمة: و عليكم السلام

- الباحثة: هل تعتقدين أن تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية مهم؟ لماذا؟

- المعلمة E- طبعا مهم لأنها هي اللغة العامة في كل مكان و هي اللغة المهمة و حتى التواصل الاجتماعي الآن تستخدمي فيه حتى بالسفر نستخدمها Eأكثر البلاد تلاقي اللغة السياحية عندهم.

- الباحثة E-: كيف ترين اقبال الطالبات على تعلم في المملكة؟

- المعلمة E-: ايوه فيه اقبال لدرجة انك تشوفي المعاهد الصيفية بتشتغل بشكل كبير جدا أنه يبغوا يتعلموا هذا أكبر دليل على خلال الصيف و اقبالهم على تعلم اللغة.

- الباحثة: ايش أول شيء خطر ببالك لماقلت لك موضوعنا اليوم عن استقلالية المتعلم؟

- المعلمة: خطر على بالي التعلم الذاتي اللي الآن هم جالسين يبحثوا فيه مسألة التعليم المستمر واللي أساسه التعلم الذاتي.

- الباحثة: طيب لو بسألك كيف تصفين طالبة لغة مستقلة؟

- المعلمة: أول شيء من خلال اجاباتها دائما تلاقيها خارجه عن المنهج شويه, لما تسألي سؤال اعتيادي للطالبة البنت عادة تقول نفس اللي بأكثر English meaning وتعطيك translationالأبلة قالته لكن هذه الطالبة المستقلة تعطيك معلومات زيادة اضافية و طبعا عندها من كلمة يعني عندها مترادفات.

- الباحثة: يعني وسع المفردات و انها غير محدودة بالمنهج الدراسي؟

- المعلمة: ايوه هذا الواقع اللي انا اشوفه في الطالبة المستقلة.

- الباحثة: هل تعتبر استقلالية المتعلم مهمة أم لا؟ و لماذا؟

- المعلمة E- خلاص أنا ملاحظة على البنات: جدا مهمة. أول شيء تخفف من ضغوظات الطالب لأنه حاس بقدرته يعني مثلا مادة زي اللغة تلاقيها ما تتوتر هم حتى لو قلنا فيه امتحان أو سؤال خارجي أو شيء و عندها ثقة بالنفس. Eاللي ماشاء الله عندها خلفية كويسة عن اللغة تلاقي الطالبة المستقلة لا تخاف و لا شيء freeالمهم أنه يزيد ثقة الطالبة بنفسها.فلما أقول لهم بكره عندكم تعبير من نفسك يعني تعبير و كل شيء و تألف مضبوط بالقواعد(main idea)هي عارفه قدراتها و أنا لاحظتها فيهم من خلال الاجابات فممكن تأخذ الموضوع مضبوط.

- الباحثة: E ؟ هذا يدفعني أسألك هل هناك علاقة بين استقلالية المتعلم و تعلم اللغة

-المعلمة: طبعا التعلم باستقلالية هو الآن صار عندنا بديل عن المعلم زي مانقول فيه المعلم الالكتروني. عندك الآن الجيل الجديد يتابع الأفلام فتلاحظي كل المفردات أو المصطلحات entertainment الأجنبيةأكثر من جيلنا فتلاقيه أخذ كل لغته من الأفلام غالبا صراحة يحبون عندها جدا accentاللي سمعتها كثير ياخذونها من الأفلام فهذا تعليم استقلالي. الأفلام أثرت مخزون اللغة لدرجة فيه طالبة أنا سألتها عن جيد فسألتها انت درست كذا برا؟ قالت: لا بس أتابع أفلام أجنبية فكل هذا أثَّر فيها و انعكس على النطق بالإضافة لمعاني الانجليزية المختلفة اللي عندها فعندها مخزون لغوي. فأنا أشوف ان استخدامها لمصادر مختلفة تتعلم منها اللغة يعني انها طالبة مستقلة.

- الباحثة: هل تعتقدين وجود علاقة بين المجهود و استقلالية المتعلم أم لا ولماذا؟

-المعلمة: على حسب ايش هو الجهد المبذول يعني فيه طالبة باذلة جهدها في مذاكرة المنهج ...في مذاكرة اللي قالته أمس الأبله تلاقيها حافظته زي الكتاب لكنها ماهي مستقلة لأنها على المنهج ماشية. في المقابل يلعب المجهود دور في تنمية استقلالية المتعلم لما يعتمد على متابعة نفسها already تلاقيها ماشاء الله ماشية في تعلمها ما تحتاج للمعلمة لأنها هي Eشيء واحد هو ميول الطالبة, إذا هي مايله للغة

311

كثير تلاقيها تصحح للمعلمة اللي native speakers للمعلمة لما تكون تسمع الطالبة ل pronunciationلدرجة أحيانا تصحح الطالبة ال واقفة هنا فاستقلالية المتعلم نسميها هواية فأنا أحس الاستقلالية على رغبة الطالبة و الله أنا أرغب المادة أستقل فيها. مثلا عندي طالبة ممتاز و بدأت استقلاليتها في التعلم بمتابعة الأفلام فصار النطق المفردات متوسعة, و فيه طالبة ثانية الظاهر انها pronunciationال و تلاحظي انها تركز على القواعد فتسألك أسئلة خارج المنهج فلاحظت انه عندها تعلم ذاتي dictionary عن self-learningتسوي غير الأفلام و الأشياء هذه يعني أقدر أقول ان هذه الطالبة ما تتابع أفلام بس باذله جهدها في pronunciationبس في جوانب أخرى غير فتتوسع فيها. grammarاللغة...مسويه لنفسها مسار بحيث تتابع بالنت معلومات تخص

- الباحثة: هل برأيك مايتعلمه الطالبات في الصف كاف لتطوير مستوى استقلاليتهن؟

- المعلمة: لا أبدا لأن مجرد ال course limited اللي احنا نعطيه اياهم هذا معناته مو استقلالي هو محدود فممكن الأنشطة اللامنهجية هي اللي تبين استقلالية المتعلم. مثال: مجالات القصة القصيرة, مجالات الرسم أو ممكن تعتبر هوايات هنا بانت استقلالية الطالبات و ابداعهم هذه الاستقلالية تبع الهواية.

- الباحثة: يعني أفهم منك ان بهذه الأنشطة الطالبة بحثت بنفسها في الشيء اللي تحبه و اختارت الركن اللي يعجبها و اشتركت فيه و سوت العمل؟

-المعلمة: بالضبط و شفت ابداع واستقلالية.

- الباحثة: طيب إذا شعرت أن طالباتك بحاجة لتطوير مستوى استقلاليتهم ....؟

-المعلمة: أولا:مهارات التعلم الذاتي مثل: مصادر المعلومات هذه أهم شيء انها تعرف مصادر المعلومات المختلفة اللي هي مو شرط تكون ايش تكتب تعرف كيف تروح لأي موقع لأن فيه بنات يمكن googleالكتاب المدرسي أو القاموس, ممكن تشمل كيف لما تدخل على ماتعرف و بنفس لوقت تبغى انه يكون عندها مصادر و تتطلع أ و تكون مثلا ماهي عارفه الاستخدامات لما تختار فممكن أرشدها لمكتبة معينة في المنطقة. ثانيا: مهارات التفكير الإبداعي يعني كيف انها تنقد, كيف تطلع ايجابيات الموضوع و سلبياته, و ايش هي فكرته الرئيسية, و كيف تسوي مقارنة بين الأشياء, كيف تشوف أوجه الشبه والاختلاف بين الأشياء. كذا أحس اني أنا أسوي باحثة صغيرة فأحس اني صقلتها.

- الباحثة: هل سبق و طلبت من طالباتك الكتابة عما تعلمنه ....؟

- المعلمة: حصل طلبت منهم كذا مره انها ترجع للبيت كل اللي أخذته خلال الاسبوع تخليه ب قايمة يحتاج هذا الشيء انها تكتب الكلمة و polite question مثلا speakingمرادفها بالعربي و المعنى الانجليزي سواء اللي درسناه أو هي تجيبه من عندها و برضو كمان في would you mind? و could you please?زي

فأطلب منها تذاكرها و تراجعها عشان يكون عندها ذخيرة لغوية و أطلب منها استخدام هذه العبارات في البيت عشان الانجليزي ممارسة.

- الباحثة: طيب هل طلبتي منهم يكتبون عن شعورهم تجاه ماتعلموه؟

-المعلمة: تكتب الطالبة عن اللي تعلمته from your own opinion لا عشان أكون معاك صريحة. أنا لا حظت انه بكتب العلوم فيه ما فيها. E اليوم وايش شعورها تجاهه لكن كتب

- الباحثة: إلى أي مدى تفضلين أن تشركي طالباتك في اختيار:

* الأهداف

- المعلمة: أهداف الدرس لا نهائيا للأسف هذا الشيء احنا ما احنا متبعينه بس لو جيتي لوجهة نظري والله حلو بس ترى شوفي مايجي كذا بين يوم وليلة مو فجأة أقولهم ياالله اعطوني أهداف الدرس, لكن فيه نقطة انا ممكن بعدها أطورها تعطيني أهداف الدرس بعد كذا اللي هو جدول التعلم و هذه الاستراتيجية جدا رائعة. learning schedule

- الباحثة: ممكن تشرحين لي اياها؟

- المعلمة: هذا توجد فيه 3 أعمدة. أول عامود what do want to know و العامود الثاني revision هذا what do you know هذا ممكن لو أطوره انا كثير مع البنات أطلع منه بأهداف الدرس.

Appendix L: Items pool and their resources for the questionnaire format

Section (A): Beliefs about LA	Source	Why
Total independence		
Learner autonomy means to learn without a teacher.	Interview data+ Little (1991)	Some teachers and students in interviews refer to the notion of self-learning
Learner autonomy requires learner to be totally independent of the teacher.	Interview data	
Learner autonomy is a synonym for self-learning.	Interview data	
Developing learner autonomy means developing skills to work independently and collaboratively together.	Interview data	Indicating the social and individual nature is a mature view suggested by the Bergen definition. Students in the interviews refer to the idea of interdependence
Technical perspective		
Learner autonomy means a student is professional in using learning strategies.	Interview data	The technical view is the dominant view in teachers' beliefs according to the qualitative data. This view values learner training on skills. This view also emerged in students' beliefs.
Developing learner autonomy means providing students with learning how to learn.	Interview data+ Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012)	
In my classroom, we spend a lot of time working on language learning strategies such as how better to memorize vocabulary.	Interview data	
In my classroom, I do not think it is important to spend a lot of time working on language learning strategies such as how better to memorize vocabulary.	Interview data	
Psychological perspective		
Learner autonomy is a capacity that every learner has.	Interview data	In both teachers' and students' beliefs the psychological perspective emerged and it was the dominant
Learner autonomy requires a student to motivate herself.	Interview data	

Learner autonomy means developing the ability to evaluate ones' own leaning.	Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012)	view in students' beliefs. This view consider motivation and self-assessment as key factors to develop LA.
A learner with poor language skills still has autonomy.	Interview data	
Political perspective		
Learner autonomy is a human right for every learner.	Benson (1997) + Interview data	Students refer to notions like learners' right and being influential member in the social setting
Learner autonomy means making an influence in the social setting as to be a leader.	Benson (1997)	
Learner autonomy means to be effective member in society.	Interview data	
Little teacher strategy in the classroom shifts the authority from teachers to students.	Interview data	
Importance of LA		
Learner autonomy is important because it has a positive effect on success as a language learner.	Interview data + Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012)	Both teachers and students refer to learning effectiveness. The first chapter as well indicate the idea that teachers prepare students to university due to the change in exam nature as discussed earlier.
Learner autonomy is important because it allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would.	Interview data +Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012)	
Learner autonomy is important because it prepares students for university.	Interview data	
There are more important things than developing learner autonomy in the class.	Interview data	
Factors influence LA (facilitators + barriers)		
It is difficult to promote learner autonomy because it is not tested.	Borg and Alshumaimeri (2017)	I find it interesting to know about the relation between exams and LA in school context.
It is difficult to promote learner autonomy because students focus more on GAT (General Aptitude Test) and SAAT (Standard Achievement Admission Test)	Interview data	GAT and SAAT in presented in chapter 1 and I would like to know

It is easy to promote learner autonomy because students prepare for GAAT (General Aptitude Test) and SAAT (Standard Achievement Admission Test)	Interview data	more about its relation to LA development.
Teacher over interference in learning aspects prevents learner autonomy	Interview data	Students in the interviews mentioned this barrier.
Confident language learners are more likely to develop autonomy than those who lack confidence.	Interview data+ Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012)	Confidence is a psychological factor mentioned by the majority of teachers and students.
Motivated language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than learners who are not motivated.	Interview data+ Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012)	Motivation is psychological factor mentioned by the majority of teachers and students.
Higher-level language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than those who have lower level.	Interview data	Teachers refer to low language level as a barrier to LA development in the interviews.
Lower level language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than those who have higher level.	Interview data	
Lower level language learners are less likely to develop learner autonomy than those who have higher level.	Interview data	
Awareness of learner autonomy in the classroom is important to promote learner autonomy.	Interview data	Teachers refer to awareness as a factor related to LA.
Family interest in lifelong learning helps to promote learner autonomy.	Interview data	Family is a facilitating factor to LA development in teachers' and students' beliefs.
The current curriculum considers the students' needs to develop their learner autonomy.	Interview data	Both teachers and students mention the current curriculum as a barrier to LA development.
The current curriculum's focus on grammar and vocabulary promotes learner autonomy	Interview data	
The current curriculum's focus on grammar and vocabulary does not promote learner autonomy	Interview data	

	Learner autonomy is less practiced in private schools compared to governmental schools.	Interview data	
	Learner autonomy is less practiced in governmental schools compared to private schools.	Interview data	Teachers refer to school type in the interviews.
	Schools with bigger classes allow learner autonomy to be practiced more than schools with smaller classes.	Interview data	
	Schools with smaller classes allow learner autonomy to be practiced more than schools with bigger classes.	Interview data	
	Teacher's use of KWL technique in the classroom does not help learner autonomy.	Interview data	KWL is seen a reflective tool in students' beliefs in the interviews.
	Student's use of KWL technique in the classroom promotes learner autonomy.	Interview data	
	Teacher's use of KWL technique in the classroom help learners to become independent.	Interview data	
	Using little teacher strategy in the classroom does not help promoting learner autonomy.	Interview data	The little teacher strategy is mentioned by both teachers and students.
	Using little teacher strategy in the classroom helps learners to become independent.	Interview data	
	The use of group projects in classroom promotes learner autonomy.	Interview data	Students mentioned group work as a facilitating factor of LA development in the interviews.
	Learner autonomy indicates encouraging group work.	Interview data + Dörnyei (2001)	
	LA and language skills difficulty		
	Students consider writing the easiest skill to develop their level of autonomy in learning.	Interview data	Students used self-assessment to identify the easiest and most difficult language skills as explained in the interviews.
	Students consider reading the easiest skill to develop their level of autonomy in learning	Interview data	
	Only a teacher can teach the English grammar. Students cannot learn it on their own.	Karagöl (2008)	
	Students can develop skills to learn English grammar independently.	Interview data	

	Student role + Teacher role		
	It is a student's role in developing LA to evaluate her learning and progress.	Interview data + Chang (2007)	Teachers and students mentioned the notion of responsibility for LA development in the interviews.
	It is a student's role in developing LA to find ways of practising English.		
	It is a student's role in developing LA to stimulate her interest in learning English.		
	It is a student's role in developing LA to set learning goals.		
	It is a student's role in developing LA to identify her strengths and weaknesses independently.		
	It is a student's role in developing LA to learn from peers.		
	It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners evaluate their learning and progress.		
	It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners offer opinions on their learning.		
	It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners stimulate their interest in learning English.		
	It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners to set their learning goals.		
	It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners identify their strengths and weakness independently.		
	It is a teacher's role in developing LA to help learners to learn from peers.		
	It is a student's role in developing LA to practise English outside the class, such as watching English movies without subtitles in Arabic or listening to English songs.	Spratt, Humphreys and Chan (2002) + Interview data	
	It is a student's role in developing LA to be responsible for her learning.	Holec's (1981) definition + interview data	

Teacher training (Items for teachers only)		
Pre-service training helps me to thoroughly understand the theories of LA.	Al Asmari (2013)	Teacher training programme affects teacher cognition (Borg, 2003). It also helps to see the impact of the newly introduced training programme by Tatweer as mentioned in chapter 1.
Pre-service training helps me to know how to practice promoting LA in my teaching.	Researcher understanding of Saudi context in general	
Pre-service training helps me to consider promoting LA in my teaching.	Researcher understanding of Saudi context in general	
In-service training helps me to thoroughly understand the theories of LA.	Al Asmari (2013)	
In-service training helps me to know how to practice promoting LA in my teaching.	Researcher understanding of Saudi context in general	
In-service training helps me to consider promoting LA in my teaching.	Researcher understanding of Saudi context in general	

Section (B): Practice of LA	
In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners evaluate their learning and progress.	Chang (2007)
In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners learn from peers.	
In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners stimulate their interest in learning English.	
In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners identify their strengths and weaknesses independently.	

In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners set their learning goals.	
Students' involvement in learning decisions	
In my classroom, students can choose the lesson objectives.	Interview data + Holec's (1981) definition
In my classroom, students can choose the class rules that everyone work by.	Interview data + Holec's (1981) definition
In my classroom, students can choose the teaching method used by the teacher.	Interview data + Holec's (1981) definition
In my classroom, students can choose the homework.	Interview data + Holec's (1981) definition
In my classroom, students can choose how to be assessed in learning.	Interview data + Holec's (1981) definition
In my classroom, students can choose when to be assessed in learning.	Interview data + Holec's (1981) definition

Appendix M: Demographic data for teachers in the pilot study

Demographic characteristics	n=100
Do you have teaching qualification?	
Yes	95
No	5
What is your educational background?	
Bachelor	94
Master	5
PhD	1
What is your school type?	
Governmental	67
Private	33
What level do you teach?	
First year	23
Second year	21
Third year	13
First and second year	8
Second and third year	8
First and Third	9
All three yeas	18
How long have you been teaching English?	
1-2 years	10
3-5 years	13
6-10 years	28
11-15 years	26
more than 15 years	23
What type of pre-service training did you study?	
Integrative	85
Sequential	10
No training	5
How often do you take part in CPD activities?	
Once a week	12
Once a month	25
Once a year	28
2-3 times a year	32
Never	3
How do you access CPD?	
Through your school	19
Join another teaching network	20
Completely independently	14
Through school and joining teaching network	8
joining teaching network and completely independently	8
Through school and completely independently	7
School, teaching network and independently	24

Appendix N: Demographics of students in the pilot study

Demographic characteristics	n=100
What is your school type?	
Governmental	51
Private	49
What level do you study?	
First year	0
Second year	38
Third year	62
What pathway do you study?	
Science	54
Arts	41
Administration	4
Have you studied in an English-speaking country?	
Yes	1
No	99
If (yes) How long did you study there?	
Less than a year	1
1-2 years	
3-5 years	
More than 5 years	

An Investigation of EFL Female Teachers' and Students' Beliefs about Learner Autonomy in

Saudi Secondary Schools

What are the benefits to you when you fill in this questionnaire?

The purpose of this questionnaire is to support a study on the views of EFL teachers and students toward learner autonomy. Kindly fill in the form to the best of your abilities in the light of your insight. Taking part will help to better understand learner autonomy particularly in Saudi secondary schools context. All the information you provide will be kept confidential and anonymous.

Instructions: This questionnaire is divided into three sections. In Section A, you are requested to select the option which best reflects your belief about learner autonomy. In Section B, you are requested to select the option which best reflects your practice of learner autonomy. In section C, you are requested to provide general information about you.

Section (A)

Instructions: Pleases state your agreement or disagreement with the following statements by putting (✓) only once in front of each statement, as given in this example:

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Learner autonomy can be achieved by learners of all cultural backgrounds.		✓			

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Learner autonomy is a synonym for self-learning.					
2	Learner autonomy indicates encouraging group work.					
3	Learner autonomy means a student is professional in using learning strategies.					
4	Learner autonomy is important because it prepares students for university.					
5	It is a **teacher's** role in developing LA to help learners to evaluate their own learning and progress					
6	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to evaluate her own learning and progress					
7	Confident language learners are more likely to develop autonomy than those who lack confidence.					
8	Family encouragement in learning in and outside the class helps to promote learner autonomy					
9	**Pre-service** training helps me to thoroughly understand the theories of LA.					
10	Students consider writing the easiest skill to develop their level of autonomy in learning					
11	The English language textbook does not support LA.					
12	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to find her own ways of practicing English.					
13	For a group work to promote LA, there needs to be a choice in how group work happens					
14	Learner autonomy means to learn without a teacher.					

15	Learner autonomy means to be effective member in society.					
16	Lower level language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than those who have higher level.					
17	It is a **teacher's** role in developing LA to help learners to offer opinions in their learning.					
18	Students need support in their use of self-access centre in order to develop their learner autonomy.					
19	There are more important things than developing learner autonomy in the class.					
20	Preparing for GAT and SAAT helps students to become independent					
21	**In-service** training helps me to know how to practice promoting LA in my teaching.					
22	Students need support in their use of social media in order to develop their learner autonomy.					
23	Learner autonomy requires a student to motivate herself.					
24	The use of social media by students in English promotes learner autonomy.					
25	Learner autonomy is more encouraged in private schools compared to governmental schools.					
26	The current curriculum considers the students' needs to develop their learner autonomy.					
27	It is a **teacher's** role in developing LA to help learners to stimulate their own interest in learning English					
28	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to stimulate her own interest in learning English					
29	Motivated language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than learners who are not motivated.					
30	Learner autonomy means developing the ability to evaluate ones' own learning.					
31	Developing learner autonomy means working on language learning strategies such as how better to memorize vocabulary.					
32	Students can develop skills to learn English grammar independently					
33	Lower level language learners are less likely to develop learner autonomy than those who have higher level.					
34	Learner autonomy requires learner to be totally independent of the teacher.					
35	**Pre-service** training helps me to know how to practice promoting LA in my teaching.					
36	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to be responsible for her own learning.					

37	There is no barrier which limits student from being autonomous because autonomy comes from inside.					
38	The use of group projects in classroom does not help learner autonomy.					
39	Learner autonomy means making an influence in the social setting as to be a leader.					
40	It is difficult to develop learner autonomy because it is not tested.					
41	Higher-level language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than those who have lower level.					
42	Schools can help LA by encouraging students to join students' club where they can develop their leadership role.					
43	The use of self-access centre by students promotes learner autonomy.					
44	Only a teacher can teach the English grammar. Students cannot learn it on their own.					
45	It is a **teacher's** role in developing LA to help learners to set their own learning goals					
46	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to set her own learning goals					
47	Developing learner autonomy means developing skills to work independently and collaboratively together.					
48	Learner autonomy is a capacity that every learner has.					
49	A key part of LA is shifting authority from teachers to students.					
50	Developing learner autonomy means providing students with learning how to learn.					
51	The way in which the English language textbook is delivered supports LA.					
52	Learner autonomy is important because it allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would.					
53	It is a **teacher's** role in developing LA to help learners to identify their strengths and weakness themselves.					
54	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to identify her strengths and weakness herself.					
55	In my classroom, I do not think it is important to spend a lot of time working on language learning strategies such as how better to memorize vocabulary					
56	**In-service** training helps me to thoroughly understand the theories of LA.					
57	A learner with poor language skills still has autonomy.					
58	The use of social media by students in English does not help learner autonomy.					
59	The use of self-access centre by students does not promote learner autonomy.					

60	The use of group projects in classroom promotes learner autonomy.					
61	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to practice English outside the class such as to watch English movies without subtitles in Arabic language or Listen to English songs.					
62	Learner autonomy is a human right for every learner.					
63	Learner autonomy is important because it has a positive effect on success as a language learner.					
64	**Pre-service** training helps me to consider more promoting LA in my teaching.					
65	Learner autonomy is less encouraged in governmental schools compared to private schools.					
66	Teacher over interference in learning aspects prevents learner autonomy.					
67	Awareness of learner autonomy in the classroom is important to promote learner autonomy.					
68	**In-service** training helps me to consider more promoting LA in my teaching.					
69	Schools providing learning resources helps promoting LA.					
70	It is a **teacher's** role in developing LA to help learners to learn from peers					
71	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to learn from peers					
72	Students consider reading the easiest skill to develop their level of autonomy in learning					

Now let us move to the following

Section (B)

Instructions: **Please select the option which best reflects your practice in the following statements by putting (✓) only once in front of each statement, as given in this sample:**

		Never (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Always (5)
1	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners to use the internet in English				✓	

		Never (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Always (5)
73	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners to evaluate their own learning and progress.					
74	In my classroom, students can choose the teaching method used by the teacher.					
75	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners to learn from peers.					
76	In my classroom, students can choose how to be assessed in learning.					
77	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners to stimulate their own interest in learning English.					
78	In my classroom, students can choose the homework.					
79	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners to offer opinions in their learning.					
80	In my classroom, students can choose the lesson objectives.					
81	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners to identify their strengths and weakness themselves.					
82	In my classroom, students can choose when to be assessed in learning.					
83	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners to set their own learning goals					
84	In my classroom, students can choose the class rules that everyone work by.					

Section (C) for Teachers

Instructions: **Please provide the following information by ticking (✓) in the box.**

1- Do you have a teaching qualification? ☐ Yes ☐No

2- What is your educational background? ☐ Bachelor ☐Master ☐PhD

3- What is your school type? ☐Governmental ☐Private

4- What level do you teach? ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐3 (Please tick all boxes that apply to you)

5- How long have you been teaching? ☐1-2 ☐3-5 ☐6-10 ☐11-15 ☐more than 15

6- What type of pre-service training did you study?

☐ Integrative (I study the educational subjects within undergraduate stage)

☐ Consequential (I study the educational subjects after graduation)

☐one

7- How often do you take part in CPD (Continuous Professional Development) activities?

☐Once a week ☐Once a month ☐Once a year ☐ 2-3 times a year ☐ Never

8- How do you access CPD? (Please tick all boxes that apply to you)

☐Through your school ☐Another teaching network ☐Completely independently

☐Others (please specify)

………

………………………………………………………………

Thank you for your time and participation ☺

An Investigation of EFL Female Teachers' and Students' Beliefs about Learner Autonomy in

Saudi Secondary Schools

What are the benefits to you when you fill in this questionnaire?

The purpose of this questionnaire is to support a study on the views of EFL teachers and students toward learner autonomy. Kindly fill in the form to the best of your abilities in the light of your insight. Taking part will help to better understand learner autonomy particularly in Saudi secondary schools context. All the information you provide will be kept confidential and anonymous.

Instructions: This questionnaire is divided into three sections. In Section A, you are requested to select the option which best reflects your belief about learner autonomy. In Section B, you are requested to select the option which best reflects your practice of learner autonomy. In section C, you are requested to provide general information about you.

Section (A)

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Learner autonomy can be achieved by learners of all cultural backgrounds.		✓			

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Learner autonomy is a synonym for self-learning.					
2	Learner autonomy indicates encouraging group work.					
3	Learner autonomy means a student is professional in using learning strategies.					
4	Learner autonomy is important because it prepares students for university.					
5	It is a **teacher's** role in developing LA to help learners to evaluate their own learning and progress					
6	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to evaluate her own learning and progress					
7	Confident language learners are more likely to develop autonomy than those who lack confidence.					
8	Family encouragement in learning in and outside the class helps to promote learner autonomy					
9	Students consider writing the easiest skill to develop their level of autonomy in learning					
10	The English language textbook does not support LA.					
11	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to find her own ways of practicing English.					
12	For a group work to promote LA, there needs to be a choice in how group work happens					
13	Learner autonomy means to learn without a teacher.					
14	Learner autonomy means to be effective member in society.					

15	Lower level language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than those who have higher level.					
16	It is a **teacher's** role in developing LA to help learners to offer opinions in their learning.					
17	Students need support in their use of self-access centre in order to develop their learner autonomy.					
18	There are more important things than developing learner autonomy in the class.					
19	Preparing for GAT and SAAT helps students to become independent					
20	Students need support in their use of social media in order to develop their learner autonomy.					
21	Learner autonomy requires a student to motivate herself.					
22	The use of social media by students in English promotes learner autonomy.					
23	Learner autonomy is more encouraged in private schools compared to governmental schools					
24	The current curriculum considers the students' needs to develop their learner autonomy.					
25	It is a **teacher's** role in developing LA to help learners to stimulate their own interest in learning English					
26	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to stimulate her own interest in learning English					
27	Motivated language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than learners who are not motivated.					
28	Learner autonomy means developing the ability to evaluate ones' own learning.					
29	Developing learner autonomy means working on language learning strategies such as how better to memorize vocabulary.					
30	Students can develop skills to learn English grammar independently					
31	Lower level language learners are less likely to develop learner autonomy than those who have higher level.					
32	Learner autonomy requires learner to be totally independent of the teacher.					
33	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to be responsible for her own learning.					
34	There is no barrier which limits student from being autonomous because autonomy comes from inside					
35	The use of group projects in classroom does not help learner autonomy.					

36	Learner autonomy means making an influence in the social setting as to be a leader.					
37	It is difficult to develop learner autonomy because it is not tested					
38	Higher-level language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than those who have lower level.					
39	Schools can help LA by encouraging students to join students' club where they can develop their leadership role.					
40	The use of self-access centre by students promotes learner autonomy.					
41	Only a teacher can teach the English grammar. Students cannot learn it on their own					
42	It is a **teacher's** role in developing LA to help learners to set their own learning goals					
43	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to set her own learning goals					
44	Developing learner autonomy means developing skills to work independently and collaboratively together.					
45	Learner autonomy is a capacity that every learner has.					
46	A key part of LA is shifting authority from teachers to students					
47	Developing learner autonomy means providing students with learning how to learn.					
48	The way in which the English language textbook is delivered supports LA.					
49	Learner autonomy is important because it allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would.					
50	It is a **teacher's** role in developing LA to help learners to identify their strengths and weakness themselves.					
51	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to identify her strengths and weakness herself.					
52	In my classroom, I do not think it is important to spend a lot of time working on language learning strategies such as how better to memorize vocabulary					
53	A learner with poor language skills still has autonomy.					
54	The use of social media by students in English does not help learner autonomy.					
55	The use of self-access centre by students does not promote learner autonomy.					
56	The use of group projects in classroom promotes learner autonomy.					

57	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to practice English outside the class such as to watch English movies without subtitles in Arabic language or Listen to English songs.					
58	Learner autonomy is a human right for every learner.					
59	Learner autonomy is important because it has a positive effect on success as a language learner.					
60	Learner autonomy is less encouraged in governmental schools compared to private schools					
61	Teacher over interference in learning aspects prevents learner autonomy.					
62	Awareness of learner autonomy in the classroom is important to promote learner autonomy.					
63	Schools providing learning resources helps promoting LA.					
64	It is a **teacher's** role in developing LA to help learners to learn from peers					
65	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to learn from peers					
66	Students consider reading the easiest skill to develop their level of autonomy in learning					

Now let us move to the following
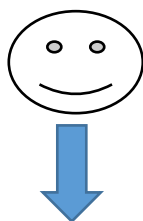
Section (B)

Instructions: Please select the option which best reflects your practice in the following statements by putting (✓) only once in front of each statement, as given in this example:

		Never (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Always (5)
1	I develop my LA by using the internet in English				✓	

		Never (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Always (5)
67	I develop my LA by evaluating my own learning and progress					
68	In my classroom, students can choose the teaching method used by the teacher.					
69	I develop my LA by learning from peers					
70	In my classroom, students can choose how to be assessed in learning.					
71	I develop my LA by stimulating my own interest in learning English					
72	In my classroom, students can choose the homework.					
73	I develop my LA by practicing English outside the class such as to watch English movies without subtitles in Arabic language or Listen to English songs					
74	In my classroom, students can choose the lesson objectives.					
75	I develop my LA by identifying my strengths and weakness myself.					
76	In my classroom, students can choose when to be assessed in learning.					
77	I develop my LA by setting my own learning goals					
78	In my classroom, students can choose the class rules that everyone work by.					

Section (C)

Instructions: Please provide the following information by ticking (✓) in the box.

1- What is your school type?   ☐Governmental   ☐Private

2- What level do you study?   ☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3

3- What pathway do you study?   ☐ Science   ☐Arts   ☐Administration

4- Have you studied in an English-speaking country?   ☐ Yes   ☐No

5- If your answer is <u>Yes</u>, How long did you study there?

☐ Less than a year   ☐ 1-2 years   ☐ 3-5 years   ☐More than 5 years

Thank you for your time and participation

Appendix Q: Follow-up interview protocols

Warming-up Questions

-Good morning. How are you?

-We are near the end of the year now. How is your teaching/learning gone so far this year? Have you had a good year?

- Do you remember when you filled in the questionnaire? How you find being part of the project so far?

Today, we would like to discuss some interesting findings about learner autonomy questionnaire to gain better insights on how teachers and students understand LA.

Reactive and proactive autonomy

-Come out from the questionnaire, I have done some work such as factor analysis, which seems to indicate two perspectives about LA. Teachers tend to think in a particular way about LA, which is something that they need to train students in while students tend to see that as something initiated by themselves. In your experience, does that sound like a fair decision to you? Could you say a bit more about how you understand what the teachers and students roles are in relation to LA?

-There is a tension between teachers and students views about support in LA. Teachers tend to look at the support of the students academically and psychologically to help LA but students tend to look at the social aspects of learning, having an impact in society and leadership role? Do you think that this is a fair assessment of how you as a teacher/student might see it? Why?

-How do you feel LA in secondary school? is it a thing that we need to pay attention to or not? If so, do we need to change anything we are doing? or change anything in teacher training programmes/ Is there anything you think your teachers might need some help with in order to help you? If yes, what is it?

The next set of questions is around ......

Timeline

 - Does the introduction of the Tatweer project and the Saudi new vision 2030 with its requirements make a difference in that or not? If yes, how it is implemented? How it make a difference?

The next set of questions is around ......

Curriculum:

-The results of the main interviews and the questionnaire illustrated that the current English curriculum in secondary schools received different teachers' views about its relation to LA development. However, it was not part of students' results in EFA and they did not consider it as a facilitator factor in the interviews ? In your experience, do you think that this the way teachers and students tend to see the curriculum? When the curriculum enhances LA? When is not? Why? Is it to do with its orientation? Types of activities included? Topics?

The next set of questions is around ......

Group work

-One of the questionnaire findings of teachers' beliefs in EFA demonstrated that teachers believed in the encouraging role of group work in LA development. The students also referred to it as a facilitator in the interviews. Nevertheless, their findings in EFA showed that they had some doubts regarding the way the groupwork was applied in the class to help the development of LA. Does that seem reasonable to you? What is the reason behind this difference? When the groupwork play a role in LA? When it is not?

The next set of questions is around ......

School type

-One of my findings is that private schools were seen as better environment for LA in teachers' beliefs. However, students were sceptical about this finding in the results of EFA. Is this the case? Do you think that it is a general view? What is the reason behind that from your point of view?

The next set of questions is around ......

Practices of LA

Motivation

-Teachers and students referred to motivation in their beliefs about LA. What is the relation between LA and motivation? How do they interact?

Students' involvement in learning decisions in the class

-One of the results of questionnaire indicated that students report their teacher allow less involvement in different aspects of their learning than their teachers think, e.g. in choosing classroom rules. Is it true in your experience? Is it to do with resistance? on part of whom the teachers? Students? Why?

The next set of questions is around ......

Demographic data

- Do you have a teaching training qualification or just a degree? If you have a teaching training qualification, do you feel you use that in terms of teaching and how does that affect the way you approach or think about LA or does not it at all? **Teachers**

If you are a teacher who have just a degree, do you feel a gap when people talk about these things? Do you talk to your colleagues who have got teaching training qualification? What is your experience? **Teachers**

-How much teaching experience in your position? What teaching experience do you have? After you have this experience did you get a sense that you have changed your view or developed different ideas about LA? **Teachers**

- As a Saudi **student**, do you think the school system (Mugrrarat) affect the way you understand the role of teachers and students or the way you make decisions about your learning? Why? In what way?

Additional questions:

-As a hallmark the Saudi teachers' commitment to developing LA, how much do they believe in **little teacher strategy**? How often the teachers use it? In what ways they use it?

-KWL strategy is reported by both teachers and students in their beliefs about LA. What is the purpose of it? Is it a classroom routine?

Winding down:

-How have you found being part of the project/ interview? Is it enjoyable? Does it raise things that you were not aware of before?

-Have you done any research on this topic yourself? Would you want to? Did you find any interesting things to think about?

Is there anything you would like to add?

 -If you have any questions about this, you can contact me on ....

-Do you want me to send you a copy of my report?

- **Thank you for your time and cooperation**

ALPHA CERTIFIED TRANSLATION

Membership No. 223972 - License No. 609

أسس المعرفة للترجمة المعتمدة

رقم العضوية223972 –ترخيص رقم609

I, Alpha Certified Translation, hereby confirm that to the best of my knowledge, ability and belief, that the provided translation is a true, accurate and complete of the original Arabic language interviews, conducted for data collection, into the English language in this thesis.

أسس المعرفة للترجمة المعتمدة
ترخيص رقم ٦٠٩ – رقم العضوية ٢٢٣٩٧٢
ALPHA CERTIFIED TRANSLATION
License No. 609

ALPHA CERTIFIED TRANSLATION - P.O.BOX 10149 Riyadh 11655
Tel.: 463 4710 - Olaya and Tahlia Cross Roads

مكتب أسس المعرفة للترجمة المعتمدة – ص.ب ١٠١٤٩ الرياض ١١٦٥٥
هــاتف:٤٦٣٤٧١٠–تقاطع شـارع العليا العــام مع شـارع التحلـية

Saudi Arabia, 07/12/2017

To: Ms. Nouf Alhejaili

Manchester, University of Salford

Email: N.Alhejaily@edu.salford.ac.uk

Certificate of Translation Accuracy

I, Haya Al-Gharbi, hereby confirm to the best of my knowledge, ability, and belief, that the provided translation is a true, accurate and complete translation of the original *Arabic* language interviews, conducted for data collection, into *English* language in this thesis.

_____

Haya Al-Gharbi

Rabigh 21911

Email: haya.gharbi@gmail.com

Appendix T: All summated scales in the questionnaire

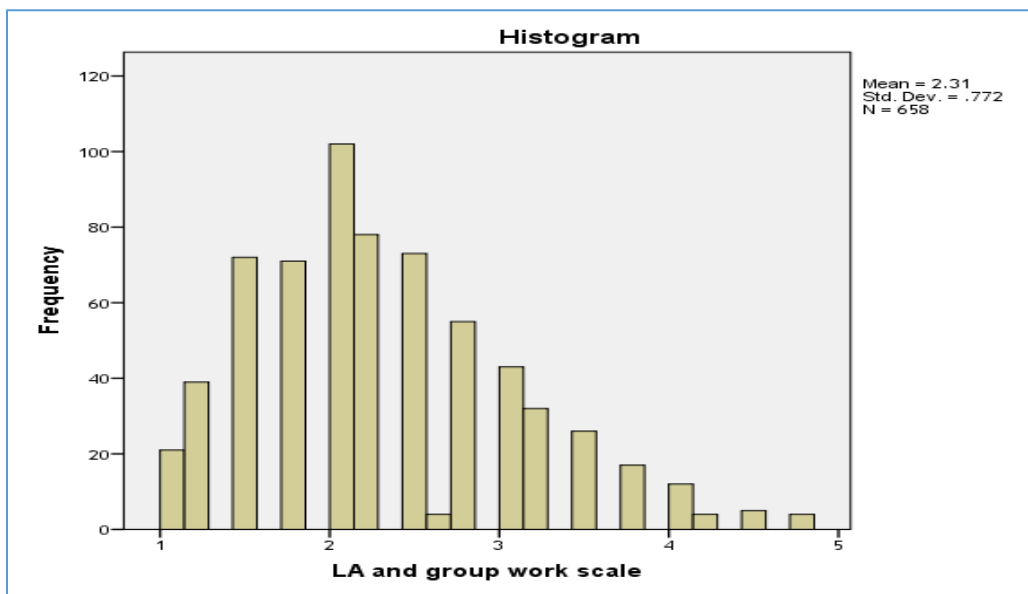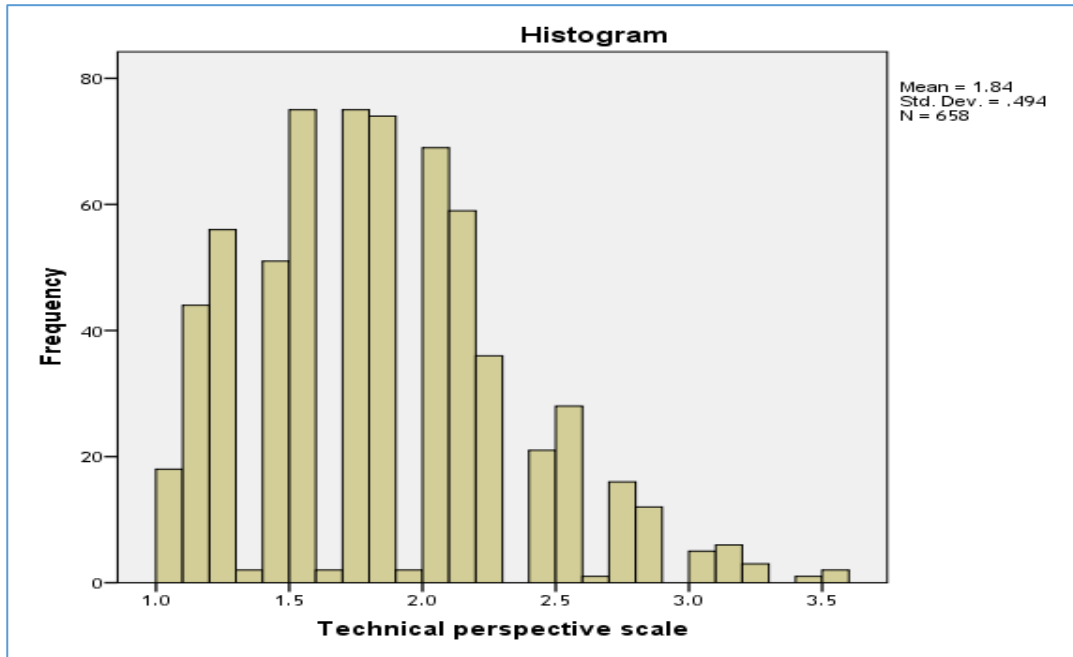|	
Section (A): perceptions about LA: total independence (a=.397)	
1	Learner autonomy is a synonym for self-learning.
14	Learner autonomy means to learn without a teacher.
34	Learner autonomy requires learner to be totally independent of the teacher.
Perceptions about LA: technical perspective (a=.600)	
3	Learner autonomy means a student is professional in using learning strategies.
18	Students need support in their use of self-access centre in order to develop their learner autonomy.
31	Developing learner autonomy means working on language learning strategies such as how better to memorize vocabulary.
43	The use of self-access centre by students promotes learner autonomy.
50	Developing learner autonomy means providing students with learning how to learn.
rc59	The use of self-access centre by students does not promote learner autonomy.
69	Schools providing learning resources helps promoting LA.
Perceptions about LA: psychological perspective (a=.405)	
7	Confident language learners are more likely to develop autonomy than those who lack confidence.
8	Family encouragement in learning in and outside the class helps to promote learner autonomy
23	Learner autonomy requires a student to motivate herself.
29	Motivated language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than learners who are not motivated.

30	Learner autonomy means developing the ability to evaluate ones' own leaning.
37	There is no barrier which limits student from being autonomous because autonomy comes from inside.
48	Learner autonomy is a capacity that every learner has.

Perceptions about LA: political perspective (a=.456)

15	Learner autonomy means to be effective member in society.
39	Learner autonomy means making an influence in the social setting as to be a leader.
49	A key part of LA is shifting authority from teachers to students
62	Learner autonomy is a human right for every learner.

LA and group work (a=.632)

2	Learner autonomy indicates encouraging group work.
rc38	The use of group projects in classroom does not help learner autonomy.
47	Developing learner autonomy means developing skills to work independently and collaboratively together.
60	The use of group projects in classroom promotes learner autonomy.

Importance of LA (a=.605)

4	Learner autonomy is important because it prepares students for university.
52	Learner autonomy is important because it allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would.
63	Learner autonomy is important because it has a positive effect on success as a language learner.
67	Awareness of learner autonomy in the classroom is important to promote learner autonomy.

Responsibilities in learning (a=.658)

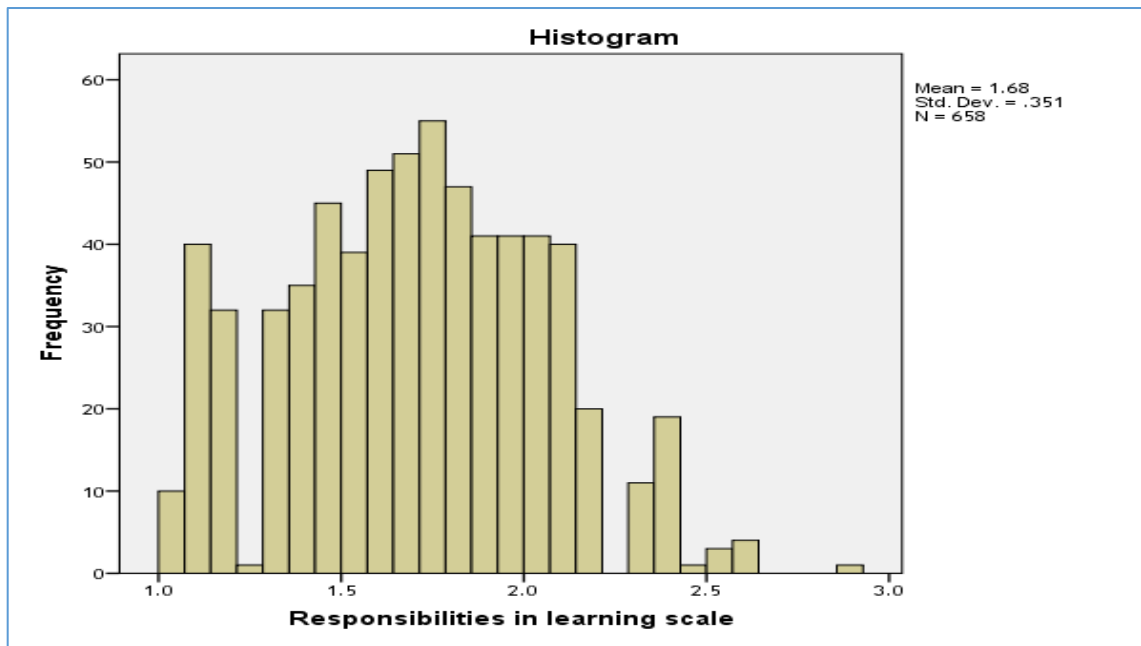| 6	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to evaluate her own learning and progress

12	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to find her own ways of practicing English.
28	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to stimulate her own interest in learning English
36	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to be responsible for her own learning
46	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to set her own learning goals
54	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to identify her strengths and weakness herself.
61	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to practice English outside the class such as to watch English movies without subtitles in Arabic language or Listen to English songs.
71	It is a **student's** role in developing LA to learn from peers.
5	It is a **teacher's** role in developing LA to help learners to evaluate their own learning and progress.
17	It is a **teacher's** role in developing LA to help learners to offer opinions in their learning.
27	It is a **teacher's** role in developing LA to help learners to stimulate their own interest in learning English.
45	It is a **teacher's** role in developing LA to help learners to set their own learning goals
53	It is a **teacher's** role in developing LA to help learners to identify their strengths and weakness themselves.
70	It is a **teacher's** role in developing LA to help learners to learn from peers.
Factors influence LA:Language proficiency level in relation to LA (a=.600)	
33	Lower level language learners are less likely to develop learner autonomy than those who have higher level.
41	Higher-level language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than those who have lower level.
Factors influence LA: The current curriculum and LA (a=.631)	
26	The current curriculum considers the students' needs to develop their learner autonomy.
51	The way in which the English language textbook is delivered supports LA.

Factors influence LA: School type and LA(a=.752)	
25	Learner autonomy is more encouraged in private schools compared to governmental schools.
65	Learner autonomy is less encouraged in governmental schools compared to private schools.

Section (B): Practice of LA (a=.615)	
73	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners to evaluate their own learning and progress
75	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners to learn from peers
77	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners to stimulate their own interest in learning English
81	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners to identify their strengths and weakness themselves.
83	In my classroom, I promote LA by helping learners to set their own learning goals
	Practice of LA: students' involvement in learning decisions (a=.723)
74	In my classroom, students can choose the teaching method used by the teacher.
76	In my classroom, students can choose how to be assessed in learning.
78	In my classroom, students can choose the homework.
80	In my classroom, students can choose the lesson objectives.
82	In my classroom, students can choose when to be assessed in learning.
84	In my classroom, students can choose the class rules that everyone work by.

Histogram

Mean = 1.68
Std. Dev. = .351
N = 658

Histogram

Mean = 2.66
Std. Dev. = .871
N = 658

Students' involvement in learning decisions scale

Histogram

Mean = 3.69
Std. Dev. = .728
N = 658

Practice of LA scale

Appendix V: Rotated factors in teachers' beliefs (Pattern matrix)

Items	Factor								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2					.335				
3						-.380-			
4	.318								
5	.315								
6								-.447-	
7							-.313-		
8								-.334-	
11				-.536-					
14			.328						
17	.485								
18	.503								
25									-.670-
26				.757					
27	.333								
30								-.538-	
33							-.435-		
34			.517						
38					-.327-	-.378-			
40			.366						
41							-.496-		
43	.551								
44						-.496-			
45	.369								
46								-.321-	
47	.354								
48			.362						
50	.381								
51				.664					
52	.413								
54								-.417-	
59	-.312-								
60					.433				
61	.338								
63	.516					.351			
65									-.759-
67	.380								

348

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
69	.459							
70				.682				
71				.717				
73		.512						
74		.590						
75		.324		-.383-				
76		.613						
77		.471						
78		.542						
80		.644						
81		.580						
82		.458						
83		.703						
84		.531						

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 39 iterations.

Factor 3: Individualistic dimension of LA

No.	Items	Loadings
34)	Learner autonomy requires learner to be totally independent of the teacher.	.517
40)	It is difficult to develop learner autonomy because it is not tested.	.366
48)	Learner autonomy is a capacity that every learner has.	.362
14)	Learner autonomy means to learn without a teacher.	.328
Cronbach's Alpha = .488 No. of items = 4		

Factor 6: Embracing student ability to learn autonomously

No.	Items	Loadings
44)	Only a teacher can teach the English grammar. Students cannot learn it on their own.	-.496-
3)	Learner autonomy means a student is professional in using learning strategies.	-.380-
38)	The use of group projects in classroom does not help learner autonomy.	-.378-
63)	Learner autonomy is important because it has a positive effect on success as a language learner.	.351
Cronbach's Alpha = .290 No. of items = 4		

Factor 7: Students' confidence

No.	Items	Loadings
41)	Higher-level language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than those who have lower level.	.496
33)	Lower level language learners are less likely to develop learner autonomy than those who have higher level.	.435
7)	Confident language learners are more likely to develop autonomy than those who lack confidence.	.313
Cronbach's Alpha = .528 No. of items = 3		

Factor 8: Psychological dimension of LA

No.	Items	Loadings
30)	Learner autonomy means developing the ability to evaluate ones' own learning.	.538
6)	It is a student's role in developing LA to evaluate her own learning and progress.	.447
54)	It is a student's role in developing LA to identify her strengths and weakness herself.	.417
8)	Family encouragement in learning in and outside the class helps to promote learner autonomy.	.334
46)	It is a student's role in developing LA to set her own learning goals.	.321
Cronbach's Alpha = .589 No. of items = 5		

Appendix X: Rotated factor loadings in students' beliefs (Pattern Matrix)

Pattern Matrix[a]				
	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
SMEAN(VAR00002)		.412		
SMEAN(VAR00003)		.323		
SMEAN(VAR00004)	.331			
SMEAN(VAR00014)	.333			
SMEAN(VAR00015)		.385		
SMEAN(VAR00016)			.346	
SMEAN(VAR00018)		.305		
SMEAN(VAR00024)	.424			
SMEAN(VAR00027)		.353		
SMEAN(VAR00028)	.492			
SMEAN(VAR00032)	.398			
SMEAN(VAR00034)			.505	
SMEAN(VAR00036)	.436			
SMEAN(VAR00037)	.443			
SMEAN(VAR00038)		-.346-	.383	
SMEAN(VAR00039)		.384		
SMEAN(VAR00042)		.354		
SMEAN(VAR00043)		.377		
SMEAN(VAR00044)	-.321-			
SMEAN(VAR00045)		.344		
SMEAN(VAR00046)	.426			
SMEAN(VAR00047)		.351		
SMEAN(VAR00050)		.417		
SMEAN(VAR00051)				-.398-
SMEAN(VAR00052)	.576			
SMEAN(VAR00054)	.370			
SMEAN(VAR00055)			.329	
SMEAN(VAR00058)			.424	
SMEAN(VAR00059)			.509	
SMEAN(VAR00060)		.502		
SMEAN(VAR00061)	.328			
SMEAN(VAR00063)	.481			
SMEAN(VAR00065)			.308	
SMEAN(VAR00067)	.358			
SMEAN(VAR00069)		.393		

SMEAN(VAR00070)		.524		
SMEAN(VAR00071)		.474		
SMEAN(BVAR00073)	-.369-			
SMEAN(VAR00074)				.508
SMEAN(VAR00075)		-.342-		
SMEAN(VAR00076)				.484
SMEAN(VAR00077)	-.421-			
SMEAN(VAR00078)				.373
SMEAN(VAR00080)				.471
SMEAN(VAR00081)	-.369-			
SMEAN(VAR00082)				.405
SMEAN(VAR00084)				.380

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 23 iterations.