

Teachers' perspectives and practice in using learning approaches to foster learner autonomy in Vietnam

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ARTICLE INFO

DOI:10.46223/HCMCOUJS.
soci.en.14.4.2915.2024

Received: August 20th, 2023

Revised: December 12th, 2023

Accepted: December 15th, 2023

Keywords:

higher education; learner
autonomy; learning approaches;
teachers' perspective;
undergraduate students

ABSTRACT

The research paper's primary objective was to understand teachers' reflections on the implementation of different learning approaches, including resource-based, curriculum-based, classroom-based, technological-based, teacher-based, and learner-based approaches, to foster Learner Autonomy (LA) of Vietnamese undergraduates. Applying learning approaches to encourage LA has been widely discussed; however, there is a lack of evidence of teachers' perspective and practice, in relation to their professional experience, of those approaches to cultivating LA. A survey was conducted at the Creative Language Center of Ton Duc Thang University (TDT CLC), Vietnam, to collect responses from lecturers who have different experience in teaching English at the tertiary level. The findings indicate that teachers, regardless of experience, focused more on classroom-based approaches, such as providing cooperative learning and peer discussion to foster LA. However, teachers with more experience tend to focus on learner-based approaches to provide more individual training and assistance to help students become more autonomous learners. Understanding the concept of learning approaches and their implementation is believed to benefit teachers, especially those with less experience, in fostering LA in their own teaching context.

1. Introduction

In recent times, there have been different definitions of Learner Autonomy (LA), a topic that has been a focus of academic discussions. Among them, LA is popularly known as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Holec, 1981, as cited in Ustunloughlu, 2009, p. 149). Autonomous learners, according to Little (1995), are able to set realistic goals, which can be achieved by the application of suitable methods and techniques, and the control and evaluation of self-learning process and progress. In other words, autonomous learners are responsible for self-regulation in learning, which is distinctive to different individuals (Benson & Voller, 1997, as cited in Najeeb, 2013; Ustunloughlu, 2009). LA is also considered as the ability to reflect one's own learning through learnt knowledge and willingness for self-management (Little, 1995), or the capacity to take personal responsibility for one's own progress and be aware of the requirements of self-assessment and determination of one's level of knowledge and skills (Gardner, 2000).

Techniques and skills to achieve LA in language learning have been widely discussed. Benson (2001), Little (2007, as cited in Najeeb, 2013), Chik, Aoki, and Smith (2018) agree that the inclusion of proper use of target language as the medium of instruction, a wide range of activities, and the constant self-evaluation of learning from teachers, learners and their peers is necessary to promote LA. In Asian context specifically, Littlewood (1999) believes that despite formal and teacher-centered approaches, LA can be depicted in different aspects of learning including the prevalence of learning management, cognitive ability development and learning content. In Vietnam, the effort to promote Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and student-centered learning to encourage LA can be hindered by situational problems such as big class sizes, test-oriented system, and heavy learning workload (Dang, 2010).

In Vietnam, the concept of promoting LA is not entirely unfamiliar as many papers have shed light on the issue. For example, Dang (2012) highlighted the positive perception of LA among Vietnamese students and emphasized the influence of the learning environment, specifically online learning, on autonomy. Similarly, Duong (2021) also found Vietnamese EFL students' positive perceptions of LA while being aware of the challenges they encounter in its implementation. Both papers underscored the importance of motivation, self-directed learning, and the role of teachers in promoting LA. In another paper, Le (2013) discussed an intervention program in fostering LA among Vietnamese university students regarding their language learning strategies, self-directed learning, and attitudes toward autonomy.

Although many efforts have been made to understand both teachers' and students' perceptions of LA in the Vietnamese context, the findings about teachers' practice of fostering LA are insufficient. Also, teachers' experience is believed to greatly influence their teaching philosophies and approaches, including how they promote learner autonomy. For example, less experienced teachers may rely more on traditional teaching methods, while experienced educators focus more on student-centered and autonomous approaches (Borg, 2006). Over time, teachers refine their strategies based on the observation of outcomes and transforming their pedagogical beliefs. Also, language proficiency plays a crucial role in a learner's ability to achieve autonomy. Higher language proficiency allows learners to understand and access a broader range of learning materials, to communicate effectively with peers and teachers, and to engage with complex academic content, all of which are essential for autonomous learning (Benson, 2001; Cotterall, 1995). Less proficient learners, on the other hand, may struggle to understand instructions and academic texts or to communicate their needs effectively (Cotterall, 1995).

To limit the effect of language proficiency on teachers' feedback in the current research, the target subjects of the research were students whose English proficiency was at the intermediate level. Also, the paper aims to find out the differences in teachers' perspectives and practice of using learning approaches to foster LA, in terms of their teaching experience. Therefore, the research question was formulated as:

What are the differences in teachers' perspectives and practice, in terms of their teaching experience, of using learning approaches to foster learner autonomy in Vietnam?

2. Literature review

2.1. Concepts of learner autonomy

The topic of LA or autonomous learners is often a subject of extensive debates and discussions, especially in the realm of language acquisition. "The ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Holec, 1981, as cited in Ustunloughlu, 2009, p. 149) should be considered one of

the most popular definitions of LA. According to Benson (2001), learner autonomy is seen as the ability to make informed decisions, set goals, select appropriate learning strategies, and reflect on one's learning experiences. In general, there are different perspectives of LA, and LA itself is an evolving concept that encompasses the learner's capacity to be independent and responsible for their learning.

The *psychological perspective* of LA discusses learners' self-regulation, motivation, metacognition, and individual characteristics (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In this perspective, Holec (1981, as cited in Najeeb, 2013, p. 02) defined autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning", highlighting the learner's capability to manage and direct their learning. Later, Little (1995, p. 175) considered autonomy as a "capacity to reflect on the content and process of learning under conscious control". Benson (2001, as cited in Ustunloughlu, 2009, p. 149) then offered a broader definition of autonomy as "the capacity to take control over one's own learning". Some other papers have associated LA with psychological qualities, such as the learner's desire to learn and metacognitive capacities (Breen & Mann, 1997, as cited in Bui, 2018), and the readiness or willingness to deal with increased responsibilities in their learning (Dam, 2003).

The *technical perspective* views LA as a situation in which learners are responsible for their learning (Dickinson, 1987, as cited in Dang, 2010). When a learner is immersed in a rich resource environment and is allowed to select how to learn to achieve his objectives, he can gain autonomy. For example, self-access learning centers with the provision of authentic materials and learning activities that are suitable for student needs, according to Jones (1995) and Koylan (2009) (as cited in Bui, 2018), are popular ways to foster LA. In order to achieve LA, according to those papers, there is a need for preparation and organization of learning activities, and constant technical support and consultation services in each learning environment.

The *sociocultural perspective* considers learner autonomy as a socially shaped variable (Smith & Ushioda, 2009) as a result of one's negotiation with his/her living environment. Learner autonomy is developed through individuals' practice of dealing with both personal and situational issues on a daily basis. As a result, research adopting this perspective, such as Miller (2009), Sinclair (2009), often provides learners with more contextual choices, dialogic negotiation, interactive activities, and critical reflection as autonomy-promoting practices.

Autonomous learners are also believed to be capable of setting realistic goals in learning and choosing suitable methods and techniques while learning, as well as monitoring and evaluating their learning progress (Cotterall, 2000; Erturk, 2016; Najeeb, 2013). Holec (1981), Little (1995) go further by claiming that autonomous learners have the capacity to reflect on their own learning by using their learnt knowledge and their willingness to collaborate with their peers. Similarly, according to Ceylan (2015), active participation in the social progress of learning and interpretation of new information based on one's own knowledge are characteristics of an autonomous learner.

According to Najeeb (2013), there are three primary pedagogical principles to foster autonomy in language learning. Firstly, learners should be involved in the learning process by sharing responsibility. More importantly, learners should be provided with opportunities to reflect on their learning through practices of critical thinking, monitoring, and evaluating their learning. Finally, the target language to be used by learners as the medium of instruction and while learning, also plays a crucial role in developing LA.

2.2. Learning approaches to promote learner autonomy

Benson (2001) proposed that autonomy can be promoted by the practices under six board headings, including resource-based, curriculum-based, classroom-based, teacher-based, learner-based, and technology-based approaches (see Figure 1).

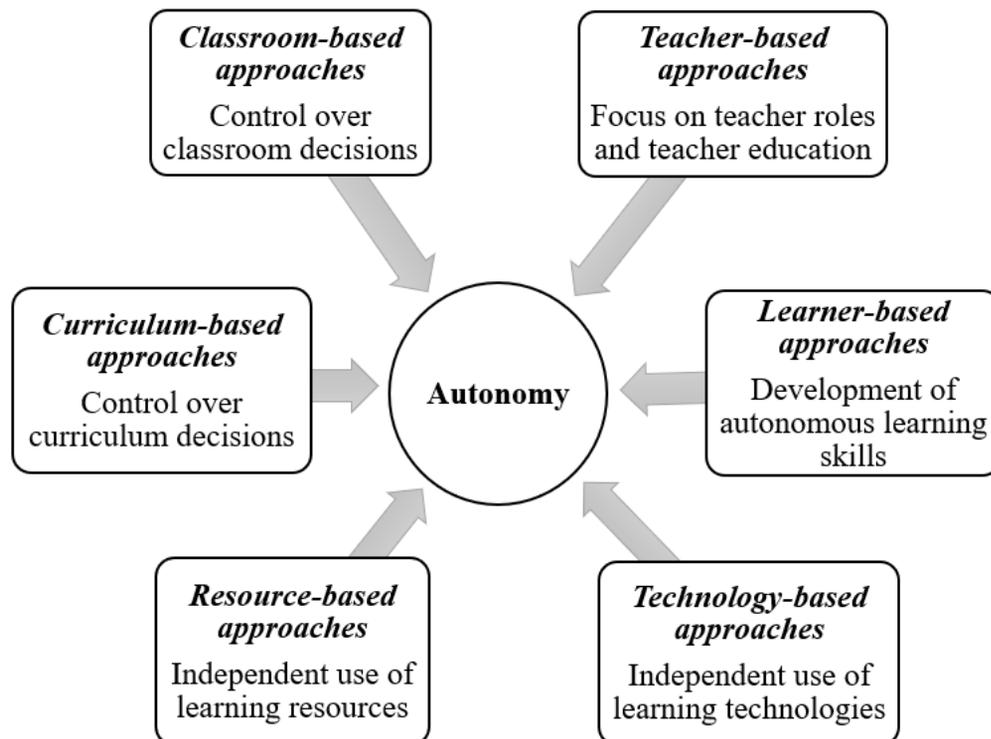


Figure 1. Learning approaches promoting learner autonomy

Source: Benson (2001)

Resource-based approaches

Resource-based approaches focus on how learners independently interact with learning materials. Students directing their learning through individual interaction with learning materials, as a result of resource-based approaches, are mostly in forms of self-study, self-access and distance learning (Nguyen, 2009). However, it has been argued whether situational elements, such as the freedom of choice, should be considered a part of LA, and this caused confusion to the concept of LA, specifically resource-based approaches (Najeeb, 2013).

The optimal forms of materials involve directed self-discovery tasks rooted in real-world information, practical instructional aids and activities that are not based on didactic materials, interactive tasks that enhance pair and group work, as well as supplementary materials for self and peer evaluation (Smith, 2015). Littlejohn (2014) argues that more opportunities for LA can be provided by the reorientation in task and activity types. He states that asking students to produce their own tasks and activities, for example, can successfully promote LA.

Curriculum-based

Curriculum-based approaches emphasize the idea of learners' control to the curriculum. The focus of such approaches lies in learners' participation in decision-making processes of learning content, activities, assignments, and also their evaluation of the study because one way to nurture LA within an applied curriculum is by a process syllabus, where learners can be significantly involved in choices related to learning content and methods, collaborating with their

teachers (Smith, 2015). Scaffolding and teachers' support are believed to guarantee the success of curriculum-based approaches and effectively promote LA (Nguyen, 2009).

Classroom-based approaches

Classroom-based approaches aim at learners' control over the planning and evaluation of in-class learning. To achieve these objectives, teachers need to collaborate with learners to balance both authority and accountability, for example in defining goals, managing the learning process, and determining evaluation and assessments (Smith, 2015).

The relationships and classroom practices are changed in which teachers' responsibility for controlling over learning goals, learning process and assessment of learning outcomes is shifted to learners. By doing this, learners can be involved in the management of their learning, through cooperation with peers and making use of teachers' support, which can eventually develop (Nguyen, 2009; Shi & Han, 2019; Ushioda, 2001, as cited in Smith, 2015).

Teacher-based approaches

The role of teachers and teachers' practice of promoting LA are the main focuses of teacher-based approaches. The enhancement of teacher professional development is the primary emphasis of teacher-based methods, with the purpose of bringing positive transformations in the classroom favoring LA through the alteration of teachers attitudes toward LA, the decrease in their dedication to learner autonomy, and the promotion of practices that support LA (Nguyen, 2009). Vieira, Barbosa, Paiva, and Fernandes (2008) believe that there is a mutual dependence between reflective teaching and learner autonomy, because not only does reflective teaching serve to foster LA, but it also represents the outcomes of such development.

Learner-based approaches

Learner-based approaches focus on the production of changes in learners' behaviors and psychology. The approaches, according to Cotterall (1995), require guidance on language learning strategies and methods, training based on research on good language learners and insights from cognitive psychology, and training that allows students to explore strategies and identify suitable methods. They also emphasize synthetic and integrated approaches that view learner training as an inherent aspect of language acquisition, and self-directed approaches that encourage learners to independently develop their skills through reflection on self-directed learning activities (Cotterall, 1995). Thus, focusing on providing students with the necessary skills to enhance their autonomy in language learning, and training strategies for learners is one popular form of the approach. It is therefore assumed that the integration of learning strategies in lessons can best promote LA, as it can promote learners' metacognitive skills (Nguyen, 2009).

Technology-based approaches

Technology-based approaches emphasize the ways learning and educational technologies independently interact with each other. Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is a common term among language teachers and learners in recent years. CALL is a contributing factor to the provision of opportunities for learners to promote LA, and the use of CALL technologies to develop LA should therefore be carefully considered (Benson, 2001).

Similar to resource-based approaches, technology-based approaches also assume the usefulness of learner opportunities made available by diverse forms of technology. In this regard, Littlemore (2001) claims that the roles of teachers should not be ignored in supporting and training students to use technologies effectively to encourage their LA. The roles of teachers and

learning strategies are, therefore, vital because the efficacy of technology-based approaches is decided by effective learning activities and opportunities.

2.3. Fostering learner autonomy in Vietnam

In fact, cultural background in Asian settings is often considered an obstacle in promoting the idea of autonomy; for example, Vietnamese students are deeply influenced by Confucian heritage, so they value teachers' instructions and are reluctant to respond to teachers' questions (Bui, 2018; Tran, 2013). According to Director, Doughty, Gray, Hopcroft, and Silvera (2006, as cited in Nguyen & Habók, 2020), Asian students are often seen as passive learners who show limited ability in critical thinking.

However, according to Trinh (2005), Asian learners are not innately un-autonomous, and it is the responsibility of educational systems to promote students' involvement in their learning. He, therefore, claims that the stimulation of LA in non-Western contexts is possible. Specifically, LA may be assumed to be absent in some other East Asian countries; however, this may not be true because while Western learners have "proactive autonomy", East Asian learners have "reactive autonomy" (Littlewood, 1999). Reactive autonomy means the activities follow a predefined set of directions. In contrast, proactive autonomy focuses on forming the direction of the activity by the attribution of its performance; in other words, learners' self-regulation in their own learning, determining objectives, choice of methods and techniques, as well as evaluation of their learning process. The author also agrees that teacher-student discussions about students' learning situations and their individual autonomous differences are necessary to promote LA. This highlights the importance of understanding the suitability of a certain form of LA to different learners' beliefs, preferences, and expectations. Teachers' own autonomy and careful choice of teaching methods and skills in the teaching context, therefore, play crucial roles in fostering LA (Reinders & Balcikanli, 2011).

In Vietnam, there have been initiatives to improve the situation. For example, Vietnam's National Foreign Language 2020 Project aims to make Vietnamese graduates independent and confident language users in communications, studying, and working (Ministry of Education and Training, 2016). The Project also highlights the necessity of making foreign language acquisition a strength of Vietnamese people in pace with national industrialization and modernization. The shift from teacher-centeredness to student-centeredness is, therefore, necessary to encourage students' self-regulation and participation in the learning process, because LA can be promoted by student-centeredness (Nguyen & Habók, 2020) and as the levels of LA increase, there should be a corresponding increase in the implementation of student-centeredness (Lak, Soleimani, & Parvaneh, 2017).

Some other research about promoting LA in the Vietnamese context has been noticed. For example, Trinh (2005) highlighted the crucial role of curriculum innovation in the effective stimulation of LA in English language education in the Vietnamese context. The innovative curriculum, according to the author, led to an increase in student engagement, language proficiency improvement, self-efficacy enhancement, and a shift in the teacher's role towards facilitation. In addition, some papers explored teacher and learner perceptions of LA. According to Nguyen (2011), Vietnamese learners are often interested in autonomous language learning and simultaneously value the guidance and support provided by teachers. The roles of teachers as facilitators of autonomy were also recognized in the paper. Understanding strategies to foster LA and the importance of involving students in setting their learning goals, according to Nguyen and Hoang (2010), Nguyen (2012), is necessary to encourage them to take ownership of their learning to become more autonomous learners. In another paper, Humphreys and Wyatt (2014)

highlighted the significance of a guided autonomy approach, structured autonomy activities, teacher training, goal setting, and peer collaboration in fostering LA among Vietnamese undergraduate students.

Despite a certain number of papers focusing on promoting LA in Vietnam, there is a lack of an in-depth understanding about teachers' perspectives and practice of promoting LA, in relation to their professional experience.

2.4. The relation between teachers' experience and their practice of promoting learner autonomy

Inexperienced teachers, who are often in the early stages of their careers, tend to create a structured and supportive learning environment to gradually lead to the introduction of autonomy. They focus more on the emphasis on clear instructions and the provision of structured tasks to guide learners (Borg, 2006). More specifically, teachers with less experience may start by incorporating autonomy in specific tasks and gradually give learners more responsibilities in learning once they gain confidence (Benson, 2001). In contrast, mid-career teachers might provide learners with opportunities to choose topics or materials to encourage decision-making (Richards & Lockhart, 1996). They also incorporate learner self-assessment and self-reflection to encourage metacognitive awareness (Williams & Burden, 1997).

More experienced teachers, in comparison, often integrate a variety of strategies to enhance autonomy into their teaching. According to Little (1995), instead of imposing a rigid structure, they always have room for creating opportunities for self-directed learning, encouraging learners to set personal goals in learning, and providing guidance and support. Their experience also helps them design effective tasks that facilitate LA. In terms of adapting to learner needs, while new teachers may struggle to adapt instructional materials and approaches to meet the diverse needs and interests of students (Yuzulia, 2020), experienced teachers are better at adapting their teaching methods to suit the diverse needs and abilities of their students, because they can recognize the varying levels of LA within a class and tailor their instruction accordingly (Smith, 2003). This adaptability is developed from the teachers' rich teaching experience and understanding of learner profiles.

Moreover, teachers with more experience strike a balance between providing necessary guidance and allowing learners to work independently. They are aware of suitable teacher intervention as well as opportunities for learners to explore, fostering a sense of responsibility and independence (Holec, 1981). In contrast, ensuring a balance between providing structure and allowing freedom for learners to make choices can be challenging for inexperienced teachers (Little, Ridley, & Ushioda, 2003). Also, Benson (2001) claimed that experienced teachers are able to notice challenges associated with promoting LA, such as resistance from students as a result of traditional teaching methods. Their experience, therefore, allows them to adopt coping strategies, such as employing interactive and student-centered activities, to gradually provide students with an autonomous learning environment (Little, 1995). However, overcoming students' resistance and ensuring engagement in autonomous learning can be challenging for teachers who are new in their teaching careers (Nasri, Dastjerdy, Rasekh, & Amirian, 2017).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research setting

The research was conducted at the Creative Language Center of Ton Duc Thang University (TDT CLC), Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. While teaching at the Center, lecturers are

often responsible for classes of different English proficiency, ranging from elementary to advanced levels. The students' learning program is mainly skill-based in which they are training for test preparation programs.

3.2. *Research sample*

The participants were 77 lecturers at TDT CLC, who were randomly selected for the research. All the participants were master's degree holders, and 62.3% of them had 05 - 07 years of experience in teaching English in higher education.

3.3. *Research instrument*

A survey including 28 items was constructed based on the careful investigation of the approaches used to promote LA, retrieved from Nguyen (2009). The items were then justified to be appropriate for the Vietnamese context. The survey, conducted using Google Forms, began with two items asking about their experience in teaching English at higher education and their overall perception of promoting LA in class. The following section elicited information about the participants' reflections on the use of different resource-based, curriculum-based, and technology-based approaches to foster LA. The final section collected lecturers' points of view about using other approaches, including classroom-based, teacher-based, and learner-based approaches. All the questions in the two sections were designed using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from *1-Totally disagree* to *5-Totally agree*.

3.4. *Data analysis*

The data is presented using descriptive analysis (Mean) to understand 1) how teachers consider the importance of fostering LA in their class, 2) their perspective towards the implementation of the resource-based, curriculum-based, and technology-based approaches in promoting LA, and 3) their practice of applying teacher-based, learner-based, and classroom-based approaches to promote LA. The differences in teachers' perspectives in terms of their experience are shown in each analysis using the One-Way ANOVA on SPSS.

4. **Result**

The data analysis uses descriptives Mean (M), ranging from *Totally disagree* (M = 1.00 - 1.80), *Disagree* (M = 1.81 - 2.60), *Uncertain* (M = 2.61 - 3.40), *Agree* (M = 3.41 - 4.20), to *Totally agree* (M ≥ 4.21).

4.1. *Teachers' consideration of the significance of fostering learner autonomy*

The data illustrating how teachers with different teaching experiences perceive the significance of promoting LA in intermediate-level classrooms is presented in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1

LA should be carefully promoted in class

Teachers' experience	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
From 03 years to less than 05 years	20	3.3500	.74516	.16662
From 05 years to 07 years	48	3.7500	.72932	.10527
More than 07 years	9	4.3333	.70711	.23570
Total	77	3.7143	.77557	.08838

Table 2

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.164	2	3.082	5.767	.005
Within Groups	39.550	74	.534		
Total	45.714	76			

With Sig. = 0.005, the opinions of teachers, who have different experiences, are distinct from each other. As can be seen from the descriptives, there is a difference in the level of agreement regarding the significance of fostering LA in intermediate-level classrooms in accordance with teachers' experience, from uncertainty (M = 3.35), agreement (M = 3.75), to total agreement (M = 4.33), as from the least to the most experience.

4.2. Teachers' perspective towards using resource-based, curriculum-based, and technology-based approaches to foster learner autonomy

The investigation of teachers' perspective, with their corresponding experience, on how resource-based approaches (3A-3C), curriculum-based approaches (3D-3K), and technology-based approaches (3L) are implemented to develop LA is shown in Table 3 and 4 below.

Table 3

Teachers' perspective towards the use of resource-based, curriculum-based, and technology-based approaches to foster LA

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
3A. I think that the resources should encourage students to do open-ended tasks to be more active and creative, rather than responsive and reproductive.	From 03 to less than 05 years	3.3000 .47016
	From 05 to 07 years	3.1042 .37129
	More than 07 years	4.1111 1.05409
	Total	3.2727 .59904
3B. I think that students should be allowed to evaluate their own learning progress.	From 03 to less than 05 years	2.6000 .59824
	From 05 to 07 years	2.3750 .70334
	More than 07 years	3.7778 1.09291
	Total	2.5974 .84697
3C. I think that topics offered in the resources should be suitable to students' interests.	From 03 to less than 05 years	3.5500 .82558
	From 05 to 07 years	3.2500 .56493
	More than 07 years	4.0000 1.00000
	Total	3.4156 .73181

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	
3D. I think that students should be involved in the decision-making process by being asked for their evaluation of the tasks.	From 03 to less than 05 years	3.3500	.67082
	From 05 to 07 years	3.0833	.49822
	More than 07 years	3.7778	1.30171
	Total	3.2338	.70517
3E. I think that students should be allowed to manage their own learning, by setting clear objectives based on their needs.	From 03 to less than 05 years	3.2500	.44426
	From 05 to 07 years	3.1458	.54537
	More than 07 years	3.8889	.92796
	Total	3.2597	.61564
3F. I think that students should be allowed to adjust and respond to learning plans and strategies.	From 03 to less than 05 years	3.0000	.56195
	From 05 to 07 years	2.7708	.59213
	More than 07 years	3.4444	1.13039
	Total	2.9091	.69171
3G. I think that students' self-reflection and feedback on the learning process should be encouraged.	From 03 to less than 05 years	3.1500	.81273
	From 05 to 07 years	3.0417	.58194
	More than 07 years	4.0000	1.00000
	Total	3.1818	.75615
3H. I think that students should be provided with opportunities to work together with others.	From 03 to less than 05 years	3.7500	.71635
	From 05 to 07 years	3.5417	.65097
	More than 07 years	4.3333	.70711
	Total	3.6883	.71192
3I. The curriculums often provide me with information on students' previous autonomous learning experiences.	From 03 to less than 05 years	2.7500	.91047
	From 05 to 07 years	2.1667	.51914
	More than 07 years	3.3333	1.22474
	Total	2.4545	.83580
3J. I found that the curriculums use different methods for study inside and outside the classroom.	From 03 to less than 05 years	3.3000	.57124
	From 05 to 07 years	3.1667	.59549
	More than 07 years	3.7778	1.09291
	Total	3.2727	.68126
3K. I found that students are provided with opportunities to use computer and internet technology to study effectively.	From 03 to less than 05 years	3.4500	.75915
	From 05 to 07 years	3.2708	.64378
	More than 07 years	4.0000	1.00000
	Total	3.4026	.74798

Table 4
ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
3A	Between Groups	7.705	2	3.852	14.568	.000
	Within Groups	19.568	74	.264		
	Total	27.273	76			
3B	Between Groups	4.020	2	2.010	4.404	.016
	Within Groups	33.772	74	.456		
	Total	37.792	76			
3C	Between Groups	4.187	2	2.094	6.293	.003
	Within Groups	24.618	74	.333		
	Total	28.805	76			
3D	Between Groups	3.662	2	1.831	4.144	.020
	Within Groups	32.701	74	.442		
	Total	36.364	76			
3E	Between Groups	6.988	2	3.494	7.090	.002
	Within Groups	36.467	74	.493		
	Total	43.455	76			
3F	Between Groups	4.853	2	2.426	5.333	.007
	Within Groups	33.667	74	.455		
	Total	38.519	76			
3G	Between Groups	14.914	2	7.457	13.933	.000
	Within Groups	39.606	74	.535		
	Total	54.519	76			
3H	Between Groups	12.674	2	6.337	11.603	.000
	Within Groups	40.417	74	.546		
	Total	53.091	76			
3I	Between Groups	4.090	2	2.045	3.938	.024
	Within Groups	38.429	74	.519		
	Total	42.519	76			
3J	Between Groups	4.751	2	2.376	4.890	.010
	Within Groups	35.950	74	.486		
	Total	40.701	76			
3K	Between Groups	5.541	2	2.770	7.810	.001
	Within Groups	26.251	74	.355		
	Total	31.792	76			

With Sig. < 0.05 among all the groups, it is evident that teachers' perspectives toward the implementation of resource-based, curriculum-based, and technology-based approaches to foster LA vary in correspondence with their experience.

In terms of resource-based approaches, the most experienced teachers agreed that the resources should provide students with open-ended tasks to complete for them to be more active and creative in learning ($M = 4.11$); students' evaluation of their own learning progress should be encouraged ($M = 3.78$); and the lesson topics should be suitable to students' interest ($M = 4.00$). However, the least experienced teachers disagreed with students being allowed to evaluate their own learning progress ($M = 2.60$), uncertain about the role of resources in encouraging students to do open-ended tasks and activities ($M = 3.30$) but agreed with the necessary for the book content to be matched with students' interest ($M = 3.55$). The last group of teachers felt uncertain about the role of resources in helping students become more active and creative ($M = 3.10$) and the content of the books to be relevant to students' interests ($M = 3.25$) and disagreed that students should be allowed to evaluate the progress in their own learning ($M = 2.38$).

Regarding curriculum-based approaches, the fact that students should be provided with opportunities to work together with others witnessed the agreement and total agreement of the three groups of teachers ($M = 3.54 - 4.33$). In addition, the most experienced teachers always agreed that students should be able to adjust and respond to learning plans and strategies; students should have opportunities to manage their own learning by setting clear objectives based on their needs; students' reflection on their learning experience through self-reflection and feedback should be encouraged; and students should be provided with opportunities to work together their peers ($M \geq 3.78$). Teachers of other groups always felt uncertain about all the above statements. When being asked about whether the curriculums in Vietnam often provide teachers with information about students' previous autonomous learning experiences, most experienced teachers showed disagreement ($M = 2.17$), while the other two groups of teachers were uncertain about it ($M = 2.75 - 3.33$).

When it comes to technology-based approaches, while the least and the most experienced teachers both agreed that computers and technology are applied in Vietnam for effective learning ($M = 3.45$ and 4.00 , respectively), the last group of teachers showed uncertainty about it ($M = 3.27$).

4.3. Teachers' practice of using classroom-based, teacher-based, and learner-based approaches to foster learner autonomy

Information on teachers' practice of using classroom-based approaches (5A-5E), teacher-based approaches (5F-5L), and learner-based approaches (5M-5N) to promote LA in relation to their experience can be found in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5

Teachers' practice of using classroom-based, teacher-based, and learner-based approaches to foster learner autonomy

Items		Mean	Std. Deviation
5A. My class includes cooperative learning.	From 03 to less than 05 years	3.9000	.55251
	From 05 to 07 years	3.8125	.49060
	More than 07 years	4.4444	.52705
	Total	3.9091	.54246

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
5B. My class includes portfolios (collection of students' written or spoken practice performance).	From 03 to less than 05 years	3.7000 .57124
	From 05 to 07 years	3.5208 .54537
	More than 07 years	4.1111 .60093
	Total	3.6364 .58285
5C. My class includes students' self-assessment.	From 03 to less than 05 years	3.4000 .59824
	From 05 to 07 years	3.3750 .56962
	More than 07 years	3.8889 .92796
	Total	3.4416 .63853
5D. My class includes out-of-class learning.	From 03 to less than 05 years	3.3500 .67082
	From 05 to 07 years	3.1458 .46078
	More than 07 years	3.3333 1.22474
	Total	3.2208 .64120
5E. My class includes self-directed learning.	From 03 to less than 05 years	3.1500 .67082
	From 05 to 07 years	3.1458 .65199
	More than 07 years	3.6667 1.00000
	Total	3.2078 .71336
5F. I create a psychologically safe learning environment.	From 03 to less than 05 years	4.0500 .68633
	From 05 to 07 years	4.5625 .61562
	More than 07 years	4.5556 .52705
	Total	4.4286 .65752
5G. I provide students with time for discussion with their peers.	From 03 to less than 05 years	4.0000 .56195
	From 05 to 07 years	4.0000 .50529
	More than 07 years	4.6667 .70711
	Total	4.0779 .57961
5H. I provide enough guidance to students to set realistic goals.	From 03 to less than 05 years	3.6500 .87509
	From 05 to 07 years	3.5208 .65199
	More than 07 years	4.3333 .70711
	Total	3.6494 .75683
5I. I stimulate and support students' reflection on cognitive aspects of learning.	From 03 to less than 05 years	3.3000 .92338
	From 05 to 07 years	3.0000 .65233
	More than 07 years	4.1111 .78174

Items		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Total	3.2078	.81657
5J. I help change students' misconceptions through training on learning strategies.	From 03 to less than 05 years	2.8500	1.03999
	From 05 to 07 years	2.7083	.79783
	More than 07 years	4.0000	1.00000
	Total	2.8961	.96769
5K. For dependent students, I provide extensive support for them.	From 03 to less than 05 years	3.4000	.75394
	From 05 to 07 years	3.3958	.64378
	More than 07 years	4.2222	.66667
	Total	3.4935	.71861
3L. For students who wish to study a language on their own, I encourage them to self-assess their progress.	From 03 to less than 05 years	3.6000	.88258
	From 05 to 07 years	3.3125	.74822
	More than 07 years	4.2222	.66667
	Total	3.4935	.82116
5M. I train students in skills and strategies on how to regulate their learning.	From 03 to less than 05 years	3.0500	.99868
	From 05 to 07 years	2.7500	.78551
	More than 07 years	4.1111	.92796
	Total	2.9870	.95275
5N. I train students to realize their learning potential.	From 03 to less than 05 years	2.9500	1.05006
	From 05 to 07 years	2.6250	.78889
	More than 07 years	4.1111	.92796
	Total	2.8831	.98641

Table 6

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
5A	Between Groups	3.029	2	1.514	5.796	.005
	Within Groups	19.335	74	.261		
	Total	22.364	76			
5B	Between Groups	2.750	2	1.375	4.411	.015
	Within Groups	23.068	74	.312		
	Total	25.818	76			
5C	Between Groups	2.048	2	1.024	2.619	.080
	Within Groups	28.939	74	.391		
	Total	30.987	76			

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
5D	Between Groups	.718	2	.359	.870	.423
	Within Groups	30.529	74	.413		
	Total	31.247	76			
5E	Between Groups	2.146	2	1.073	2.174	.121
	Within Groups	36.529	74	.494		
	Total	38.675	76			
5F	Between Groups	3.872	2	1.936	4.943	.010
	Within Groups	28.985	74	.392		
	Total	32.857	76			
5G	Between Groups	3.532	2	1.766	5.941	.004
	Within Groups	22.000	74	.297		
	Total	25.532	76			
5H	Between Groups	5.003	2	2.502	4.805	.011
	Within Groups	38.529	74	.521		
	Total	43.532	76			
5I	Between Groups	9.586	2	4.793	8.632	.000
	Within Groups	41.089	74	.555		
	Total	50.675	76			
5J	Between Groups	12.702	2	6.351	8.038	.001
	Within Groups	58.467	74	.790		
	Total	71.169	76			
5K	Between Groups	5.412	2	2.706	5.918	.004
	Within Groups	33.835	74	.457		
	Total	39.247	76			
5L	Between Groups	6.579	2	3.289	5.449	.006
	Within Groups	44.668	74	.604		
	Total	51.247	76			
5M	Between Groups	14.148	2	7.074	9.546	.000
	Within Groups	54.839	74	.741		
	Total	68.987	76			
5N	Between Groups	16.859	2	8.430	10.927	.000
	Within Groups	57.089	74	.771		
	Total	73.948	76			

As Sig_{5C} , Sig_{5D} and Sig_{5E} are > 0.05 , the teachers' viewpoints are similar. However, other Sig. numbers are all < 0.05 , which led to their different opinions.

Regarding classroom-based approaches, all the teachers agreed on their promotion of LA through cooperative learning and including portfolios ($M = 3.52 - 4.11$), with the total agreement ($M = 4.44$) of the most experienced teachers being an exception.

In terms of teacher-based approaches, while an uncertainty about teacher support with students' reflection on cognition in learning, changing students' misconceptions through training on learning strategies, extensive support for dependent students, can be seen among the least experienced teachers, with $M = 3.30, 2.85$ and 4.00 , respectively. Similar feedback can be found among those with the most experience in the first two statements and teachers' encouragement of students' self-assessment of their learning progress, with $M = 3.00, 2.89$, and 3.31 each. Furthermore, an agreement and total agreement with other practices, with M ranging from 3.49 to 4.67 , including creating a psychologically safe learning environment, providing students with time for discussion with their peers, and helping students to set realistic goals, can be seen among all groups of teachers' experience.

With learner-based approaches, the most experienced teachers agreed that they often train students in skills and strategies on the regulation of their own learning and to realize their learning potential, with $M = 4.11$, whereas other groups of teachers' experience were uncertain about both practices, with M ranging from 2.62 to 3.05 .

5. Discussion

In general, while most experienced teachers in the research believe in the role of resources in encouraging students to do open-ended tasks and activities to be more active and creative, and students should be allowed to evaluate their own learning progress, to gain autonomy in learning, less experienced teachers do not totally agree. This could be explained by the fact that teachers of less experience tend to focus on giving clear instructions and using structured tasks to guide learners (Borg, 2006) instead of providing students with opportunities to participate in open-ended tasks. In contrast, teachers with more experience emphasize a balance between providing necessary guidance and allowing learners to work independently. They usually understand when to intervene and when to let learners explore, fostering a sense of responsibility and independence (Holec, 1981). Also, a potential cause of this situation might be the inappropriate use of textbooks and other supplementary materials because the content of currently employed textbooks in Vietnam primarily emphasizes students' development of linguistic competence, rather than enabling their active involvement in interactive and experiential learning activities that are conducive to the enhancement of communication skills (Nguyen & Habók, 2020).

Regarding curriculum-based approaches, most experienced teachers believe in students' self-directed learning including them being allowed to be involved in the decision-making process, to collaborate with their peers, to adjust and respond to learning plans and strategies, to be offered to accessible materials and setting clear objectives based on their needs, and to reflect on their learning experience through self-reflection and feedback. However, teachers with less experience always feel uncertain about learners' control of their own learning. In this matter, Williams and Burden (1997) state that more experienced teachers often incorporate learner self-assessment and reflective activities to encourage metacognitive awareness. Experienced teachers also tend to integrate a variety of autonomy-enhancing strategies into their teaching, such as creating opportunities for self-directed learning, encourage learners to

set personal language learning goals, and provide guidance and support rather than imposing a fixed structure (Little, 1995).

There is also uncertainty among all teachers regarding the timely provision of information to lecturers concerning students' records of LA. In addition to the influence of cultural factors, this can also be attributed to the heavy test-oriented system in Vietnam, thereby putting pressure on their coverage of both the language curriculum and to develop students' communicative proficiency, as well as the burden on marking exam papers (Trinh & Mai, 2018), subsequently affect their capacity to effectively nurture LA.

Moreover, it is difficult for teachers, especially those less experienced, to change students' misconceptions through lectures, discussions, or reading materials, and training on learning strategies, and stimulate and support students' reflection on cognitive, affective, and social aspects of learning. It could be explained by the tradition of learning and teaching in Vietnam, in which students are deeply involved in passive learning, and the heavy test-oriented system and assignments (Trinh & Mai, 2018), which may lead to time constraints and a lack of proper training for changing students' misconceptions. However, the findings showed teachers', regardless of their experience, great effort in fostering LA through cooperative learning and including portfolios. This could be explained by the fact that teachers, no matter when they begin their careers, are aware of the crucial roles of cooperative learning regarding promoting LA.

The teachers generally agree on the recognition that the curriculum in Vietnam does offer students opportunities to collaborate and engage in shared activities with others. The finding can be attributed to MOET's efforts in advocating Communication Language Teaching (CLT) in teaching English in recent years. In 2008, the Vietnamese government embarked on a project to renovate foreign language teaching and learning within the national academic framework by recognizing English communication proficiency as a fundamental competence for Vietnamese students to become global citizens. MOET's Project 2020 primarily focuses on the equipment of the autonomous and confident use of English in communication, learning, and professional engagements in diverse multicultural and multilingual contexts for secondary and tertiary students (Lam & Albright, 2018). Similarly, all teachers agree on the necessity to integrate technology to facilitate the enhancement of LA. In fact, there should be more investment in CALL to promote LA because it offers two crucial facets significant for learners and learning: the practice on the control over learning content and opportunities for collaboration (Smith, 2015).

In addition, most inexperienced teachers are not confident about out-of-class and self-directed learning in the Vietnamese context. This can be explained by the fact that students are often passive learners who lack the capacity to deal with subject matters with comprehensive depth and autonomous self-teach or self-study (Director, Doughty, Gray, Hopcroft, & Silvera, 2006, as cited in Trinh & Mai, 2018). Especially, non-English majors, according to Trinh and Mai (2018), are often criticized for lacking the essential skills and strategies necessary to effectively acquire the English language by themselves. The concept of establishing a psychologically safe learning environment is widely embraced by the teachers, which shows their suitable understanding and awareness of the significance of a student-friendly environment that encourages LA.

When it comes to student-centeredness, teachers' provision to students with opportunities for discussion and negotiation, as well as support and guidance for students to set realistic goals is well noted, regardless of teachers' experience. This practice contributes to the advancement of

LA because teachers' assistance in executing their self-directed learning, defining goals and strategies, selecting materials, and evaluating their learning progress is a significant impact on the cultivation of LA within the educational environment (Raya & Sircu, 2013, as cited in Smith, 2015). However, the study reveals that only teachers with the most experience often offer students training in language learning strategies and realizing their learning capabilities, which the less experienced teachers do not focus on. It is commonly known that Vietnamese tertiary EFL teachers usually concentrate on teaching linguistic components such as Grammar, Vocabulary, Pronunciation and the four macro skills. However, they tend to focus on developing students' linguistic aptitude rather than communicative proficiency. Rarely do they create opportunities for students to sharpen their English skills through student-centered activities (Trinh & Mai, 2018). Moreover, teachers in their early stages of teaching careers may find it challenging to use appropriate instructional materials and approaches to meet the students' diverse needs and interests (Yuzulia, 2020); however, Smith (2003) claims that more experienced teachers know how to adapt their teaching methods to suit the diverse needs and abilities of their students, due to their ability to recognize the varying levels of LA within a class and make some adjustment to their instruction accordingly. Thus, gaining more experience in teaching career can help them become capable of providing students with suitable individual support in developing LA.

6. Conclusions & recommendations

In recent times, efforts have been made to promote LA in Vietnam; however, their results have mainly been confined to theoretical viewpoints and general perspectives from teachers and learners. This study, however, aims to understand teachers' perspectives and practice of a particular aspect to foster LA, entitled learning approaches. The findings provide valuable insights into differences in viewpoints of teachers with varying levels of experience in teaching EFL at higher education in Vietnam, about the concepts and implementation of learning approaches that play an important role in promoting LA. The study is believed to serve as an additional resource to enhance teachers' knowledge about the concepts of different learning approaches and how they could be employed to cultivate LA in the context of Vietnamese higher education.

The diversity in results also indicates that seasoned teachers tend to view LA as a significant element in the realm of teaching and learning and appreciate learner-centered activities. Less experienced teachers, therefore, would benefit and incorporate these viewpoints into their practices in fostering LA in their classrooms. However, more participants in future research are highly recommended to ensure the value of the data.

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