

EFL Teachers' Pedagogical Approaches to Fostering the Transition toward Autonomous Reading in Indonesian Senior Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This study explored the pedagogical approaches English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers use to support students' transition toward autonomous reading in senior secondary schools in Jakarta, Indonesia. Thirteen EFL teachers, consisting of eight females and five males aged twenty-nine to forty-eight, participated in this qualitative multiple case study. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis of lesson plans, reading tasks, and reflective journals. The data were analyzed manually using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and meanings. Four major approaches emerged: gradual scaffolding from guided to independent reading; strategic instruction to develop metacognition; motivational, supportive classroom environments; and teacher modeling combined with collaborative peer learning. The findings showed that teachers supported reading autonomy by gradually transferring responsibility to students, building awareness of reading processes, strengthening motivation and choice, and using modeling and peer interaction to prepare students for independent reading. The findings imply that teacher education, curriculum design, and classroom practice should support planned, reflective, and context-sensitive approaches that balance teacher guidance with increasing learner responsibility and promote sustained autonomous reading practices.

Keywords: autonomy; EFL teachers; metacognitive strategies; reading instruction; secondary education

Introduction

Reading has long been recognized as central to language learning and academic development (Ilyas et al., 2025; Monaghan, 2023; Müller & Kovač, 2024). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, reading extends beyond vocabulary recognition and text

comprehension. It also supports independent learning and intellectual growth (Song et al., 2025). As globalization and technological advancement increase demand for proficient English readers, language education has shifted from teacher-centered instruction to learner-centered engagement. In this new landscape,

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teachers are encouraged to help students develop responsibility for their own learning (Lee & Kwon, 2023). However, many EFL learners still rely heavily on teachers for guidance, feedback, and motivation. This dependence often limits their ability to engage in reading as an autonomous, lifelong activity. Encouraging learners to take charge of their reading, therefore, becomes not only a pedagogical goal but also a vital skill for their future academic and professional success (Casteleyn, 2025).

Across foundational and recent scholarship, learner autonomy is consistently understood as the learner's developing capacity to take responsibility for learning through goal setting, strategy selection, monitoring, reflection, and self-evaluation (Benson, 2013; Holec, 1981; Little, 1991). Recent studies further associate autonomy with stronger motivation, engagement, confidence, and sustained learning (Cullen & Oppenheimer, 2024; Namaziandost et al., 2024; Tahiri & Mouratidis, 2024). In reading, autonomy involves more than completing tasks independently. It requires learners to make informed decisions about what and why they read, select appropriate strategies, monitor comprehension, and evaluate their progress. These abilities make autonomous reading an important part of sustained language development rather than simply an alternative form of classroom activity.

Importantly, learner autonomy does not mean learning without teachers. Rather, previous scholarship presents autonomy as a gradual process in which learners assume increasing responsibility while teachers provide appropriate guidance and progressively reduce support (Benson, 2013; Little, 1991; Vangrieken

et al., 2020). This process requires opportunities for learners to make choices, reflect on their progress, and exercise greater control over learning decisions. In EFL contexts, the teacher therefore remains important in creating conditions that support learner responsibility while responding to institutional expectations, curricular demands, and students' readiness for independent learning (Gupta et al., 2024; Vieira, 2020).

Empirical research strongly supports this developmental view of autonomy. Across studies of extensive reading, strategy instruction, and dynamic assessment, learners show greater independence when they receive explicit strategic support together with opportunities to plan, monitor, and evaluate their reading (Ali et al., 2022; Alemu et al., 2023; Estrada Araoz et al., 2023). Although these studies employ different instructional designs, their findings point to a common principle: autonomy develops more effectively when teacher guidance prepares learners to manage reading decisions themselves. Instruction's value therefore lies not simply in providing reading strategies, but in helping students learn when and how to use them without continuous teacher direction.

A second pattern across previous research concerns learner choice, interpersonal support, and meaningful participation. Studies of teacher-student relationships, literature-based instruction, book clubs, reading circles, and reader response activities consistently suggest that learners are more willing to assume responsibility when they feel supported and when reading allows personal choice and interpretation (Cui et al., 2023; Isozaki, 2022; Bist & Kandel, 2024; Sun et al., 2024; Sevy Biloon

et al., 2023). Research on learner emotion reaches a similar conclusion, showing that autonomy is associated with greater enjoyment and reduced anxiety when learners experience supportive learning conditions (Resnik & Dewaele, 2021). Considered together, these findings suggest that reading autonomy depends not only on cognitive strategy use but also on classroom relationships and learning conditions that encourage students to participate, make decisions, and persist with challenging texts.

Research on learning beyond the classroom and digital support extends this pattern by showing that autonomy can continue outside scheduled lessons when students have access to appropriate resources and clear learning purposes (Al Shlowiy & Raj, 2024; Tajeddin et al., 2023). Digital applications, online learning activities, competence development, and artificial intelligence-based reading support have been associated with greater learner choice, engagement, and management of reading activities (Chikovani & Pipia, 2022; Ibrahim & Hashemifardnia, 2024; Pan et al., 2024). Across these studies, however, the technology itself does not appear to be sufficient. Its contribution to autonomy depends on how it is connected to strategy use, reflection, learner choice, and continued instructional support. It suggests that pedagogy remains central even when autonomous reading extends beyond the physical classroom.

Taken together, previous studies show that strategy instruction, meaningful choice, supportive relationships, opportunities for collaboration, and access to learning beyond the classroom support reading autonomy. At the same time, important limitations remain. Much

of the evidence comes from short interventions, questionnaire data, single courses, or higher education settings. Many studies identify factors associated with autonomy or evaluate particular interventions. However, fewer explain how teachers combine these elements in ordinary classroom practice. In particular, limited attention has been given to how teachers decide when to provide guidance, when to reduce it, and how to maintain comprehension and motivation while responsibility gradually shifts to students.

This gap is especially relevant in Indonesia. Existing Indonesian evidence suggests that learners may still rely heavily on teacher guidance even when teachers encourage autonomous learning (Khulaifiyah et al., 2022). However, little is known about how teachers in senior secondary schools respond to such dependence through their everyday reading instruction. Evidence is particularly limited concerning how teachers combine scaffolding, strategy instruction, learner choice, reflection, and peer interaction across public and private school settings. Therefore, greater attention is needed to teachers' practices to explain how the general principles identified in previous research translate into classroom processes that support a gradual movement from guidance to independence.

This study examined the pedagogical approaches EFL teachers used to facilitate students' transition from guided reading to autonomous reading in senior secondary schools in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Method

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative multiple case study design to examine how EFL teachers promoted reading autonomy within their teaching contexts. This design was selected because it allowed close examination of teachers' experiences, beliefs, and pedagogical practices in their actual school settings. It also enabled cross-context comparisons to identify common patterns and differences in how teachers supported students in becoming autonomous readers.

The study emphasized detailed contextual understanding rather than statistical generalization. The study examined instructional practices, challenges, and pedagogical reasoning reported by individual teachers, then compared cases to identify recurring patterns. The qualitative multiple case study design was therefore appropriate for examining how teachers promoted reading autonomy across different EFL teaching contexts.

Instrument

The primary research instrument was a semi-structured interview guide developed to meet the research objective. The interview guide focused on three main areas: teachers' understandings and beliefs about autonomous reading, the classroom practices they used to promote reading autonomy, and the challenges they experienced when helping students become more independent readers. The semi-structured format ensured that all participants discussed the same central topics while allowing teachers to explain their experiences and practices in greater detail.

Document analysis provided complementary evidence. The documents examined consisted of lesson plans, reading tasks, and reflective journals prepared by the participating teachers. The analysis focused on evidence of how teachers planned, implemented, and reflected on reading activities intended to promote student autonomy. These documents were used to compare teachers' interview accounts with their documented instructional practices.

Participants

The study was conducted in seven public and private senior secondary schools in Jakarta, Indonesia. The participating schools differed in their resources and student populations, providing variation in the institutional contexts in which reading instruction was delivered. These schools taught English as a foreign language, and reading was an important part of students' English language learning. Including different school contexts allowed the study to examine how teachers promoted reading autonomy under varying instructional conditions.

The study included thirteen EFL teachers, eight female and five male. Their ages ranged from 29 to 48 years. Most participants held a bachelor's degree in English education. In contrast, several held a master's degree in English education or general education. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who met three criteria: they had at least five years of teaching experience, were actively involved in teaching reading, and demonstrated reflective engagement with their teaching through professional discussion, classroom experimentation, or journal writing. These criteria ensured that participants had relevant reading-instruction experience and

could provide detailed accounts of their efforts to develop student autonomy. Table 1 summarizes the participants' profiles.

Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the research process. Participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and voluntary

nature before giving consent. Confidentiality was maintained by keeping their personal information and institutional details anonymous. Participants could withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. These procedures protected participants' privacy and ensured voluntary participation throughout the research process.

Table 1

Participant Profile

Characteristic	Participant Profile
Number of participants	13 EFL teachers
Gender	8 females and 5 males
Age range	29 to 48 years
Educational qualification	Most held a bachelor's degree in English education; several held a master's degree in English education or general education.
Teaching experience	At least 5 years
Teaching responsibility	Actively involved in reading instruction
Additional selection criterion	Evidence of reflective practice through professional discussion, classroom experimentation, or journal writing
School context	Public and private senior secondary schools in Jakarta
Number of schools	7

Data Collection

Data were collected from September, 2025 to October, 2025 through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Interviews were conducted face-to-face whenever possible to support natural communication and deeper engagement. When face-to-face meetings could not be arranged, researchers conducted online interviews via Zoom to ensure participation without disrupting teachers' schedules. Each interview lasted approximately thirty-five to forty-five minutes, and all sessions were

recorded with participants' consent for transcription and analysis.

During the same data collection period, participants emailed relevant lesson plans, reading tasks, and reflective journals. These documents provided supporting evidence concerning how teachers planned, implemented, and reflected on reading activities intended to develop student autonomy. Combining interview data with classroom documents allowed the researchers to compare teachers' reported practices with evidence contained in their instructional materials.

Data Analysis

The interview transcripts and classroom documents were analyzed manually using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2022). This approach was used to identify recurring patterns of meaning related to the pedagogical approaches teachers employed to promote autonomous reading.

The process began with reading and rereading the interview transcripts and documents to become familiar with the content. During this initial phase, the researcher took notes and made reflections to capture preliminary impressions. This careful, repeated reading helped ensure the analysis remained closely connected to participants' actual words and experiences rather than preconceived assumptions.

Manual coding was used throughout the analysis. Meaningful statements, phrases, and descriptions related to the research objective were first assigned initial codes. The researchers then compared related codes and grouped them into broader categories. The researchers then reviewed and refined these categories into themes that captured recurring patterns across the interview and document data. Throughout this process, the researchers repeatedly returned to the original data to ensure the developing themes accurately reflected participants' accounts and the documentary evidence.

To ensure the credibility of the findings, the analysis incorporated triangulation across data sources. The interview data were compared with information from lesson plans, reading tasks, and reflective journals to confirm theme consistency. Patterns that appeared in both the

verbal and written data were given particular attention.

This comparison strengthened the credibility of the interpretation by checking whether patterns identified in the interviews also appeared in the classroom documents. The final themes were then carefully described and supported with representative quotations and examples, forming the foundation for the presentation of findings in the next section.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

Analysis of the interview and document data produced four themes concerning how teachers supported students in becoming more independent readers: gradual scaffolding toward independent reading, strategic instruction for metacognitive development, motivational and supportive classroom environments, and teacher modeling and collaborative learning practices. Across the four themes, the data showed that teachers did not treat reading autonomy as the immediate removal of teacher assistance. Instead, they described a gradual transfer of responsibility in which students first received explicit support, practiced particular ways of approaching texts, reflected on their reading, and progressively assumed greater control over reading decisions. The document data supported this pattern by showing instructional activities that combined teacher guidance, student reflection, independent tasks, and peer participation.

Gradual Scaffolding toward Independent Reading

Teachers in this study viewed reading autonomy as a developmental process that

must be carefully supported through structured guidance. Most described starting with explicit instruction and teacher-led activities before gradually transferring responsibility to students. One participant explained, "In the early weeks, I read with them and explain every step. But as the weeks go by, I let them take control of the discussion and decide which parts to focus on" (Participant 3). Another teacher echoed this approach, saying, "At first, I guide them in selecting texts and help them summarize each paragraph. Later, they choose their own materials and work in small groups without my constant supervision" (Participant 7). Several participants emphasized that this transition was gradual and intentional, designed to help students gain both confidence and skill. As one noted, "Autonomy does not happen instantly; it must be built slowly, just like learning to ride a bicycle, first with support, then on their own" (Participant 11).

These accounts show a common sequence across the teachers' practices. Teacher involvement was strongest at the beginning of the learning process, particularly when students selected texts, identified important information, or learned to summarize what they had read. Responsibility then decreased as students demonstrated greater ability to do these activities themselves. Participant 3 described gaining more control over classroom discussion, while Participant 7 described a similar shift in text selection and group work. Although the activities differed, both accounts reflected the same underlying practice: students took on greater responsibility only after guided participation.

Many teachers also mentioned that scaffolding included modeling reading strategies

and providing structured frameworks that students could later adapt independently. One participant shared, "I show them how to preview, predict, and question the text. After several sessions, I ask them to apply these steps without my demonstration" (Participant 5). Another teacher remarked, "When students are ready, I step back and become more of a listener. I only help when they really need clarification" (Participant 9). Some teachers used reading logs and guided questions to support this gradual independence. In contrast, others assigned self-directed reading projects to reinforce ownership. As one participant put it, "My role changes from an instructor to a coach. I want them to know that reading is something they can manage by themselves" (Participant 12). The interview accounts also indicate that the transfer of responsibility involved a change in the teacher's role. Participant 5 described direct demonstration in the initial stages, whereas Participant 9 reported reducing intervention once students could continue reading with less assistance. Participant 12 described this change as moving from instructor to coach. Taken together, these statements suggest that teachers did not withdraw from instruction completely. Their involvement became more selective, with assistance provided when students encountered difficulty rather than throughout every stage of reading.

The documentary evidence reinforced this pattern. Lesson plans and reflective journals showed that teacher guidance and structured activities were followed by opportunities for students to manage reading tasks with less direct assistance. Reading logs and guided questions also provided temporary structures that helped students record and organize their

reading before engaging in more independent work. The convergence between the interviews and documents indicates that gradual transfer of responsibility was not simply a belief expressed by teachers but was also represented in their instructional planning and reflective practice.

Strategic Instruction for Metacognitive Development

Teachers consistently described metacognitive awareness as the foundation of reading autonomy. They explained that students must first become conscious of their own reading processes before they can manage them independently. Many teachers taught students to plan, monitor, and evaluate their reading, often through explicit strategy instruction. One participant shared, "I teach them to ask themselves questions while reading, for example, 'Do I understand this part?' or 'What does this paragraph mean to me?' It trains them to be more aware of their thinking" (Participant 2). Another teacher emphasized planning and self-monitoring, saying, "Before reading, I ask them to predict the topic and set a purpose. During reading, they highlight what confuses them and later check if their predictions were right" (Participant 8). Several participants described how these activities helped students become more independent learners. As one explained, "When they start noticing their own mistakes or confusion without waiting for me to point it out, I know they are becoming autonomous readers" (Participant 4).

The teachers' accounts identify three connected processes in their strategy instruction: preparation before reading, monitoring during reading, and evaluation after or during the completion of a task. For example, Participant 8 encouraged students to establish a

purpose before reading and then check their understanding as they progressed. Participant 2 focused on self-questioning to make comprehension visible to the learner. Participant 4 identified recognizing confusion without teacher intervention as evidence of increasing independence. These responses suggest that teachers associated autonomy not simply with reading alone but with students becoming able to identify and respond to their own comprehension difficulties.

Reflection was another common strategy for strengthening students' metacognitive control. Teachers often incorporated reading journals, summary logs, and post-reading discussions into the learning cycle. One participant stated, "After reading, I ask them to write about what strategies worked and what did not. It helps them see progress and adjust their approach next time" (Participant 6). Another added, "Sometimes we discuss in pairs about what helped them understand the text. Peer reflection makes them realize there are many ways to approach a text" (Participant 10). Teachers also encouraged students to track their reading goals and challenges over time. As one teacher expressed, "I tell them to write their reading goals each month and review whether they achieved them. This habit helps them manage their own progress" (Participant 13).

These data show that teachers used reflection for more than recording completed reading. Teachers used it to encourage students to evaluate the effectiveness of their own strategies and make decisions about subsequent reading. Participant 6 emphasized adjusting based on previous experience, Participant 10 introduced comparing strategies through peer discussion, and Participant 13 connected

reflection to personal goal setting. The practices therefore shifted evaluation away from being performed exclusively by the teacher and placed part of that responsibility on students.

Lesson plans and reflection sheets further evidenced this emphasis on planning, monitoring, and self-evaluation. The documents included activities that required students to reflect on their strategy use and evaluate their reading progress. The agreement between the interviews and documents suggests that metacognitive instruction was a recurring component of teachers' efforts to build reading autonomy rather than an isolated classroom activity.

Motivational and Supportive Classroom Environments

The teachers consistently emphasized that motivation was a key factor in helping students become independent readers. They believed that students were more likely to read autonomously when they found reading enjoyable and personally meaningful. One participant explained, "Students will not read on their own if they see reading as only a task. I try to make it something they want to do, not something they have to do" (Participant 5). Another teacher added, "I let them choose reading materials that match their interests. Some students like stories about friendship or adventure, while others prefer science articles. Their choices make them feel in control of their learning" (Participant 1). This sense of ownership was strengthened through encouragement and recognition. As one teacher shared, "Even when their comprehension is still limited, I always say, 'Good effort, you are improving.' That positive feedback keeps them reading outside class" (Participant 10). Teachers

also created a relaxed atmosphere by integrating enjoyable activities such as storytelling, role play, or reading games, which helped sustain students' interest and confidence.

The interview data indicate that teachers approached motivation through three related practices: allowing choice, recognizing effort, and making reading personally engaging. Participant 1 linked text choice to students' sense of control, while Participant 10 described encouragement as a way to sustain participation even when comprehension remained limited. Participant 5 distinguished between reading as an imposed classroom requirement and reading as an activity students might willingly continue themselves. These accounts show that teachers saw motivation as closely tied to autonomy because independent reading requires students to keep engaging with texts when direct teacher supervision is absent.

Many participants viewed emotional support as just as important as instructional design. They noted that students became more independent when they felt safe making mistakes and expressing opinions. As one teacher reflected, "When students know I will not judge them for misunderstanding a text, they dare to read more difficult materials" (Participant 3). Another teacher described how a caring classroom culture motivated readers: "I try to build a sense of trust. When they feel that the classroom is a supportive space, they are not afraid to explore new texts" (Participant 12). Teachers also mentioned the importance of linking reading topics to students' real lives and social experiences. "I usually connect reading materials with their community or local issues. They realize that reading can help them

understand their own world," said Participant 6. Some teachers encouraged peer appreciation by having students share favorite passages or recommend books to classmates, reinforcing a shared enthusiasm for reading. As Participant 9 summarized, motivation grows when students inspire each other. I need to provide the space and encouragement." The participants' responses further show that emotional safety influenced students' willingness to take greater responsibility. Participants 3 and 12 both linked a nonjudgmental atmosphere with students' readiness to approach unfamiliar or more difficult texts. Participant 6 built on this by connecting reading to students' communities and everyday experiences, while Participant 9 emphasized peer encouragement. Thus, the classroom environment supported autonomy not simply by making reading enjoyable, but by reducing students' dependence on teacher approval and giving them confidence to select, interpret, and discuss texts more independently.

Across these accounts, choice and support operated together. Choice without encouragement could leave less confident readers uncertain about what to do. At the same time, constant teacher direction could reduce students' opportunities to make their own decisions. The teachers therefore described a classroom environment in which students were given room to choose and explore while still receiving reassurance when difficulties occurred.

Teacher Modeling and Collaborative Learning Practices

Teachers described their own behavior as central to promoting autonomous reading. Many saw themselves as role models who could demonstrate curiosity and enthusiasm. One

participant noted, "If I show that I love reading, they believe reading is something valuable. I often share what I read and how I understand it" (Participant 2). Such modeling made the reading process visible and encouraged imitation. Alongside this, collaboration was used to reinforce independence through shared responsibility. Teachers organized peer discussions, reading circles, and group projects where students exchanged interpretations. As one teacher put it, "When they discuss their reading with friends, they realize that understanding can come from themselves, not only from the teacher" (Participant 5). Another reflected, "I let them lead small reading groups. They ask questions, answer, and even disagree. That is when I see autonomy in action" (Participant 8).

The data suggest that teacher modeling served two purposes. First, teachers demonstrated that they personally valued reading. Second, they made normally hidden reading processes visible to students. Participant 2 modeled both interest in reading and the process of making sense of a text. At the same time, Participants 5 and 8 described shifting interpretive authority from the teacher to students through discussion and student-led groups. In these activities, learners were expected not only to understand a text but also to explain, question, and defend interpretations with their peers.

Several participants also noted that their modeling included sharing reading challenges and strategies for overcoming them. "I tell my students that I also struggle with complex texts and show them how I deal with it. They learn that good readers keep trying," explained Participant 4. Another teacher added,

"Sometimes I read aloud in class and think aloud, so they can see how readers question and predict while reading" (Participant 7). Peer collaboration was also seen as a bridge between guidance and independence. "When they teach each other in reading circles, they start to realize they are capable of learning without my constant input," said Participant 11. Participants 4 and 7 further show that modeling involved demonstrating how experienced readers respond to difficulty rather than simply showing successful comprehension. By showing uncertainty, questioning, prediction, and persistence, teachers presented reading as a process students could observe and practice. This form of modeling was gradually complemented by peer interaction. Participant 11's account shows that reading circles allowed students to rely on one another rather than immediately returning to the teacher for explanations. Collaboration therefore functioned as an intermediate form of support between direct teacher assistance and individual independence.

The classroom documents supported these interview accounts. Lesson plans included structured peer review activities, while reflection logs required students to record insights developed through group work. These materials showed that teachers incorporated collaboration into planned reading activities rather than letting it happen only informally. Together, the interview and document data indicate a progression from teacher demonstration to shared peer responsibility and, ultimately, greater student control over reading.

Discussion

This study examined how thirteen teachers in Jakarta support students' transition toward autonomous reading and found four interconnected approaches: gradual scaffolding from guided work to self-direction, explicit strategy teaching that builds metacognitive control, motivational and supportive classroom climates that encourage choice and persistence, and teacher modeling combined with collaborative routines such as reading circles and peer discussion. Together, these findings answer the research question by showing that autonomy develops when teachers intentionally shift responsibility while keeping strategy instruction and affective support in view across a sustained sequence of lessons. The findings also show that the transition toward autonomy did not involve completely withdrawing teacher support. Instead, teachers reduced direct assistance gradually while remaining available when students encountered difficulty. This pattern suggests that autonomous reading developed through changing teacher involvement rather than an abrupt shift from dependence to complete independence.

This study examined how thirteen teachers in Jakarta support students' transition toward autonomous reading. It identified four interconnected approaches: gradual scaffolding from guided work to self-direction, explicit strategy instruction that builds metacognitive control, motivating and supportive classroom climates that encourage choice and persistence, and teacher modeling combined with collaborative routines such as reading circles and peer discussion. Together, these findings answer the research question. They show that autonomy develops when teachers intentionally shift responsibility to students while keeping

strategy instruction and affective support in view across a sustained sequence of lessons. The transition toward autonomy did not involve a complete withdrawal of teacher support. Teachers reduced direct assistance gradually and remained available when students encountered difficulty. Autonomous reading therefore developed through changing teacher involvement rather than through an abrupt shift from dependence to complete independence.

These findings align with a wide body of scholarship linking strategic instruction and opportunities for choice to greater reading independence. Reviews and intervention studies report that extensive reading and strategy training strengthen both autonomy and achievement, which is consistent with this study's integration of prediction, self-questioning, and reflection (Alemu et al., 2023; Ali et al., 2022; Aydawati et al., 2025). Adaptive assessment that provides contingent support has outperformed conventional formats on autonomy outcomes, a pattern that parallels the staged release of responsibility observed here (Estrada-Araoz et al., 2023). Positive classroom climates and encouraging teacher–student relationships are associated with resilience and autonomous learning, consistent with the teachers' emphasis on safety, affirmation, and meaningful choice (Cui et al., 2023). Literature-based courses, reader response work, and book clubs likewise resonate with the present use of discussion, interpretation, and student-selected texts to build ownership (Bist & Kandel, 2024; Isozaki, 2022; Sevy Biloon et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2024).

However, the present findings differ from several earlier studies in the weight they give to the teacher's continuing role as autonomy

develops. Studies of extensive reading, autonomous online learning, and out-of-class learning often focus on what learners do when they are given greater freedom over materials, strategies, or learning activities (Al Shlowiy & Raj, 2024; Isozaki, 2022; Tajeddin et al., 2023). In contrast, teachers in this study described autonomy as something that requires ongoing pedagogical preparation. They first showed students how to approach texts, then encouraged them to reflect on their comprehension, and only afterwards gave them increasing responsibility. This indicates that learner choice alone was not considered sufficient. Choice was accompanied by modeling, strategic guidance, reflection, and selective teacher assistance.

A further difference concerns the instructional form through which autonomy was developed. Ali et al. (2022) identify intensive reading as a possible constraint on learner independence and highlight the value of extensive reading. The present findings do not suggest that teachers replaced structured reading instruction with extensive reading. Instead, participants combined explicit instruction with progressively greater student choice and responsibility. Their practices suggest that structured teacher guidance and autonomous reading can operate together when the amount and purpose of support change over time. This position differs from approaches that treat intensive and extensive reading primarily as contrasting instructional options.

The findings also differ from technology-focused research. Studies involving digital applications, technology workshops, online autonomous activities, and artificial intelligence

reading support place digital resources at the center of the intervention or learning design (Chikovani & Pipia, 2022; Ibrahim & Hashemifardnia, 2024; Pan et al., 2024). In the present study, technology did not emerge among the four principal approaches. Teachers instead foregrounded scaffolding, metacognitive strategy instruction, motivational support, and modeling combined with collaboration. This suggests that, in the participating Jakarta schools, teachers understood the development of reading autonomy primarily as a pedagogical and relational process rather than a technology-dependent one. Digital resources may support autonomy, but the teachers' accounts indicate that the central issue was how responsibility for reading was gradually transferred to students.

Differences are also evident in the role assigned to collaboration. Previous research on book clubs, reading circles, and literature-based instruction often presents peer interaction as a way to improve engagement, interpretation, or comprehension (Isozaki, 2022; Sevy Biloon et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2024). In this study, collaboration served an additional purpose. Teachers used peer discussion and student-led reading groups as a transitional source of support once direct teacher guidance had been reduced. Students could ask questions, compare interpretations, and solve comprehension problems with classmates rather than turning immediately to the teacher. Collaboration therefore bridged the gap between dependence on the teacher and individual responsibility.

A similar distinction emerges in relation to reader response research. Bist and Kandel (2024) foreground personal interpretation and active participation. The present findings show

that teachers combined interpretation with explicit demonstrations of how experienced readers think through a text. Think-aloud activities, teacher demonstrations of prediction, and discussions of reading difficulties made the reading process visible before students were expected to carry out similar processes independently. The difference lies in the sequence. Participation and interpretation were not treated as sufficient indicators of autonomy; rather, they were preceded and supported by explicit preparation in the use of independent strategies.

Viewed through the lens of established autonomy theory, the findings both support and enrich existing accounts. Holec's (1981) view of autonomy as responsibility for learning decisions is reflected in the growing control students exercised over text selection, strategy choice, and self-evaluation. Little's (1991) account of autonomy as a relational condition fostered by teachers is reflected in the combination of explicit modeling, dialogic reflection, and a classroom climate that invites risk-taking and choice. Benson's (2013) view of autonomy as a developing capacity shaped by experience and context is evident in the instructional progression the teachers described, which began with visible guidance and moved toward greater student responsibility for planning, monitoring, and evaluating reading. The affective gains the teachers noted align with research linking autonomy to enjoyment and resilience, suggesting that autonomy is both cognitive and emotional and that classroom relationships matter for its growth (Cui et al., 2023; Resnik & Dewaele, 2021).

At the same time, the findings qualify any interpretation of autonomy as complete independence from external support. Teachers continued to provide assistance when students needed clarification, even after responsibility had shifted considerably toward the learners. Autonomy in these classrooms was therefore characterized by greater learner control over reading rather than by the absence of teacher involvement.

This study contributes to knowledge by showing that reading autonomy can develop through the interaction of several pedagogical approaches rather than through a single intervention. Participants described scaffolding, metacognitive instruction, motivational support, and modeling combined with collaboration as connected elements of the movement toward greater learner responsibility. This differs from studies that examine a particular strategy, technology, assessment format, or reading program in isolation. The findings therefore shift attention from whether a given intervention promotes autonomy to how teachers combine different forms of support while gradually reducing students' dependence on them.

The study further provides evidence from senior secondary education in Indonesia, whereas much of the cited literature focuses on university students, adult learners, specific courses, or intervention-based settings. The Jakarta context is significant because previous Indonesian research has reported that learners continue to depend on teacher guidance (Khulaifiyah et al., 2022). The present findings add to that evidence by identifying the instructional responses teachers use to reduce such dependence.

In terms of practice, the study translates autonomy principles into concrete classroom moves that teachers and schools can adopt. Teachers can begin units with brief, explicit instruction; build routine reflection through journals and goal sheets; expand text choice in line with students' interests and community issues; and embed collaboration through reading circles and student-led questioning. Assessment tasks can include dynamic supports early in the term and reduce them as learners demonstrate control, mirroring findings on adaptive assessment and strategy training (Alemu et al., 2023; Estrada-Araoz et al., 2023). Schools can foster a supportive climate that recognizes progress, in line with evidence linking encouragement and relationship quality to autonomous learning (Cui et al., 2023; Resnik & Dewaele, 2021). Professional learning, in turn, can move from abstract advocacy toward careful planning of instructional sequences and materials that make the transfer of responsibility visible and sustainable (Alshraah et al., 2023).

More importantly, the comparisons with previous studies suggest that schools should not equate autonomy with simply giving students more freedom, providing digital resources, or assigning independent reading. Freedom becomes more productive when students have first developed strategies, experienced appropriate modeling, had opportunities for reflection, and learned to use peers as sources of support. The practical challenge, therefore, is not merely to reduce teacher control but to determine what support students need before greater responsibility is transferred to them.

These considerations point to more specific implications for teachers, schools, and other

stakeholders. Teachers should plan a term-long pathway that begins with explicit modeling and guided practice and gradually transfers responsibility to students, with short routine reflections after reading so that planning, monitoring, and evaluation become habitual rather than occasional. Choice should be structured through curated text menus matched to students' proficiency and interests and supported by teacher conferences. Feedback should recognize effort and growth in strategy use to reinforce resilience and enjoyment. At the school or department level, regular time for extensive reading can balance intensive tasks and support independent engagement, and digital tools can extend reading beyond the classroom when they are paired with clear strategy prompts and follow-up reflection rather than introduced as standalone novelties. School leaders can give teachers time to design materials, compare student work, and share practice within professional communities, while families can be invited to encourage reading at home by discussing texts and providing access to materials. Beyond schools, researchers can examine how these approaches play out across different settings and over multiple terms, and policymakers can align curriculum guidance and assessment with autonomy goals so that independent reading becomes a central, assessable outcome.

Teachers should plan a term-long pathway that begins with explicit modeling and guided practice and then gradually transfers responsibility to students. Short routine reflections after reading can make planning, monitoring, and evaluation habitual rather than occasional. Schools or departments should schedule regular times for extensive reading to

balance intensive tasks and support independent engagement. Choice should be structured through curated menus that match proficiency and interest, supported by teacher conferences. Assessment can use dynamic supports early in the term and taper them as students demonstrate control. Peer routines such as reading circles and student-led questioning can distribute responsibility and reduce reliance on the teacher. Digital tools can extend reading beyond class when paired with clear strategy prompts and follow-up reflection rather than as standalone novelties. Feedback should recognize effort and growth in strategy to reinforce resilience and enjoyment. School leaders can give teachers time to design materials, compare student work, and share practice within professional communities. Families can be invited to encourage reading at home by discussing texts and providing access to materials. Researchers can examine how these approaches play out across different schools and over multiple terms. Policymakers can align curriculum guidance and assessment with autonomy goals so independent reading is a central, assessable outcome.

Conclusion

This study found that EFL teachers in Jakarta promote reading autonomy through four complementary approaches: gradual scaffolding from teacher guidance to self-directed reading; explicit instruction in metacognitive strategies; motivational classroom environments that support choice and confidence; and teacher modeling combined with collaborative peer learning. Theoretically, these findings reinforce Holec's (1981) conception of autonomy as learner responsibility, extend Little's (1991) view

of autonomy as socially mediated within the teacher-learner relationship, and substantiate Benson's (2013) argument that autonomy develops contextually through sustained practice and reflection. Empirically, the study offers new insights from a rarely explored context, Indonesian senior secondary EFL classrooms, by showing how autonomy-oriented pedagogy operates in daily teaching rather than in short interventions or higher education settings. Practically, it offers a clear framework that teachers and curriculum designers can apply to support students' gradual transition into independent readers through scaffolding, reflection, and meaningful choice.

Despite its strengths, the study has limitations: it focused on a single urban region, relied on self-reported practices supplemented by documents, and did not include classroom observations or student perspectives. Future researchers should examine reading autonomy across different regions, school types, and educational settings to determine whether similar pedagogical patterns occur in other contexts. Classroom observations should also be included to compare teachers' reported practices with their actual instructional practices. In addition, future studies should incorporate students' perspectives to examine how learners experience teacher guidance, strategy instruction, choice, and collaboration during the development of reading autonomy. Longitudinal research is also needed to investigate whether these approaches lead to sustained independent reading practices over time. Comparative studies could further examine how differences in school resources, curriculum demands, assessment practices, and

student proficiency influence teachers' efforts to transfer greater responsibility to learners.

The findings suggest that fostering reading autonomy requires both sustained pedagogical commitment and institutional support. Future research can build on these findings by examining not only which practices promote autonomy, but also how, under what conditions, and for which learners these practices are most effective in supporting long-term independent reading.

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