

# Effect of Student-Generated Vocabulary Factors on EFL Learners' Autonomy

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## Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate student-generated vocabulary testing factors fostering autonomy among Iranian EFL learners. The changing needs of today's society have redefined education goals in general and teacher and learner roles in particular. Learners are no longer viewed as individuals who passively receive knowledge from teachers. Instead, modern society has necessitated lifelong learning, that is, training learners by giving them the power to take responsibility for their learning. The exploratory method of research was used in this study. The participants were 30 purposive samples of EFL learners (15 males and 15 females) studying or finished teaching English. For this study, semi-structured interviews were designed and conducted. The researcher used MAXQDA to analyze the data. After analyzing the data and finding the themes, the researcher tried to prepare a questionnaire based on the findings to check the factors that affect SGVT. For piloting, the researcher used 225 convinced participants. After collecting the data, measuring the reliability and validity of the questions, and making it standard, the researcher published the final version of the questionnaire among the 320 convinced participants. The researcher used SPSS to analyze the data and investigated the factors that can affect SGVT. Based on the findings, factors such as 1- Personality characteristics, 2- Positive points of student-generated vocabulary testing, 3- Negative points of student-generated vocabulary testing, and 4- Teacher's role can affect the SGVT.

Keywords: autonomy, student-generated vocabulary, autonomous learner, testing

## INTRODUCTION

The changing needs of today's society have redefined education goals in general and teacher and learner roles in particular. Learners are no longer viewed as individuals who passively receive knowledge from teachers. Instead, modern society has necessitated lifelong learning, that is, training learners by giving them the power to take responsibility for their learning. As the authority of the traditional classroom, the teacher is the source of knowledge and decides on the learning materials and the teaching method. They choose the activities the students will do and give feedback on how well they did. Tudor (1993) believed that the teacher should not be the one doing the activities with the students but should be the one giving the students feedback on how well they did.

Holec (1981) recognized that learning a second language is about having the ability to learn on your own without needing to be told what to do. He was the first to take the notion and idea of language learning into second and foreign language teaching and learning. From the late 1980s to the early 2000s, people started talking about learner autonomy more and more. The first one was "learner centeredness," which means that learners should be the ones who make the decisions about their education (Candy, 1991), "intrinsic motivation" (Ushioda, 1996), and "self-directed learner" (Winnie & Perry, 2000). The term learner autonomy is a way of describing the way that people learn. It is different from the way it was described in 1981 by Holec (who said that learners should take responsibility for all their decisions). Now, teachers have to learn how to work with their students and help them make their own decisions because teachers play a scaffolding role (Dickson, 1995; Little, 1991; Nunan, 1996).

Benson (1996, 2001, 2006) found that when learners are encouraged to develop their strategies for learning a new language, they can learn it faster. He also called for a change in how we teach and learn, saying that the learner should be in charge of how they learn the language and should be able to choose the resources they use (like books). To put it in other words, If you are learning a new language, you should figure out what you want to learn (responsible for determining the objectives), what you want to do (contents), how you will learn (methodologies), and how you will evaluate your progress (monitoring the process of acquisition, and evaluating what has been acquired).

As one of the basic knowledge in learning English as a foreign language, vocabulary plays a vital role in mastering four skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, without which learners cannot convey their messages either orally or verbally. Hence, the importance of vocabulary learning is known to teachers and students. As Wilkins (1972) famously stated, "While without grammar little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed." Furthermore, Nan (2004) argued that Learning new words is a lot of work. It happens in 2 stages. The first stage is when you learn the meaning of a word. The second stage is storing the word in your brain and using it when you want to talk, which many EFL tertiary-level learners lack. In other words, If you have a small vocabulary, it is hard to learn a lot of new words in a short amount of time. That is why people need a way to increase their vocabulary size.

Students learning a foreign language often find it difficult to get motivated to work on their vocabulary development because they believe that the knowledge of lexis they have at this stage makes it possible for them to express most meanings. They do not know many commonly used words, so they should concentrate on learning the less common words. Such vocabulary is harder to learn because it is rarely used in the kind of everyday conversations that students are exposed to. It is important to teach students how to learn new words because they will need to use them in the future. If you want your students to learn new words, you need to give them some way to test their knowledge. In addition, it takes a lot of time and energy for language teachers to develop classroom vocabulary tests, but having learners create their tests may give them and the teacher a better idea of how well they know the vocabulary of the target language, how well they can use them and in which areas they have problems.

One of the critical words that most experts use nowadays is student-generated content. The term “student-generated content” means materials or content created by a student during and for education, including, but not limited to, essays, research reports, portfolios, creative writing, music or other audio files, photographs, videos, and account information. Wang et al. (2009) assert that content produced by students, often for sharing with peers and/or a wider audience on the internet, is distinct from instructor-supplied content such as course notes and textbooks. Arguably, the main benefits gained from student-generated content lie in the processes of content creation and knowledge construction, as opposed to the end products themselves. Zou and Xie(2018) claimed that when students themselves prepared content, they could use the knowledge they had previously learned. In this kind of teaching and learning, the students can choose the content and try to show it off in class. They want to show the other students and teachers they are good. Teachers can use this technique to teach them better, increase their self-esteem, and change the class atmosphere. Hu et al. (2018) believed that when the teacher wanted the students to prepare the content for learning new vocabulary for the class, they used their last learning and knowledge and tried to use the texts that were not so hard or easy for their classmates. Bueno-Alastuey and Nemeth (2022) had a study about preparing a podcast to learn new vocabulary by the students. They claimed that students could learn better and enjoy the new atmosphere in class; when they learn better, their self-esteem increases.

Another critical word in teaching and learning is autonomy. Nation(2022) asserts that vocabulary-learning strategies are not only a means to improve the quality of vocabulary learning but are a part of encouraging learners to take control of their learning. That is, to become autonomous learners. It is useful to distinguish between knowledge of vocabulary strategies and the ability to use strategies. A strategy must be practiced to be truly useful until it is very easy to use. However, knowledge of the principles of learning behind strategies is also important because it allows learners to look critically at their learning and reflect on ways to improve it. A good language course should introduce learners to the most important learning principles and inform them of ways to improve their language learning inside and outside the classroom.

So far, many studies have investigated learner autonomy or teacher autonomy and its relationship among language learning motivation, strategy, belief, anxiety, and teachers' role in EFL and ESL contexts. In the case of vocabulary learning, many studies have been carried out, but

not specifically on student-generated testing (SGVT). Therefore, this study investigates student-generated testing as a way to foster learner autonomy and is designed to investigate the following research question:

What are student-generated vocabulary testing factors fostering autonomy among Iranian EFL learners?

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Since the introduction of the term autonomy into linguistics study, there has been a growing interest in language learning, especially learner autonomy. Hence, many researchers have widely acknowledged and opined on the concept of learner autonomy in English language teaching. Holec (1981) was the first to introduce the concept of learner autonomy in the field of foreign and second language learning and teaching. In other words, he pioneered the idea of LA into language learning, either foreign or second.

Little (1991) further expanded Holec's definition of LA, emphasizing the learners' psychology and capacity for learning. Little (1991) stated, "learner autonomy is essentially a matter of learner psychological relation to the process and content of learning ... a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action". Emphasizing the learning environment, Xu (2014) defined LA as "learner's readiness to take charge of their learning in terms of setting up learning objectives, making study plans, monitoring learning process, and evaluating learning outcomes in a suitable learning environment."

Chen, Grangier, and Auli (2015) focused on the learners' dependence on teachers' support and assistance when shifting from dependence to independence. Moore, D'Mello, McGrath, and Stoodley (2017) stated that conscious could recognize their learning needs; that is, they can determine their learning goals and how to learn, evaluate and put what they have learned into practice. They are also willing to know which learning skills suit them best and how to use and organize them. In conclusion, autonomous learners must have the ability to be responsible for the learning process by recognizing and putting into practice their learning skills and also being active in learning.

Bilová(2018) tried to investigate the results of collaboration in learning vocabulary. The researcher wanted the students to prepare a text in groups in this study. The results showed that the students could learn better when they do it in a group and with the help of their classmates. They also experienced a new atmosphere and enjoyed the class. They also could get good marks at the end of the term.

Smith(2020) tried to teach EAP vocabulary using student-generated vocabulary. This study's results also showed that the experimental group students could get better scores than the control group. They claimed that we enjoyed the atmosphere in class. We also could help our classmates to learn better. We did not use hard or easy texts.

Yawiloeng(2020) used videos in class to teach new vocabulary. The researcher wanted the students to bring some clips and videos about some topics, and based on the videos, the other students could learn new vocabulary. The study's results showed that students could learn better and experience a new way of teaching and learning. The students claimed they could decrease their nervousness, answer the questions better, and get better scores.

Tseng, Liou, and Chu (2020) tried to find the effect of virtual environments on learner autonomy and collaboration. They used different contexts for the learners. The findings supported the positive effect of virtual environments in facilitating vocabulary learning. In addition, individual use and paired autonomous use, which dovetail with the design nature of the program, instigated a more profound retention of vocabulary than teacher-directed use. Importantly, pair work was found to enhance longer retention than individual practice. It is suggested that successful vocabulary learning in a 3D program lies not only in the autonomous control of the learners per se but also in their active engagement with the artifacts and their close collaboration with partners.

Ghobain(2020) seeks to determine learner autonomy level in relation to incidental vocabulary acquisition (IVA) out of the realization of both concepts as prominent factors in language learning in general and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in particular. The paper particularly aims to examine the influence of participants' medical and applied medical sciences students, self-learning for specialized vocabulary on their autonomy levels. It assumes that leaving the task of acquiring specialized vocabulary to learners' endeavors completely positively affects their autonomy levels. Participant autonomy levels were self-assessed through pretest and posttest quantitative surveys. The survey items assessed the participants' learning levels according to two categories of dependency and independency. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS to generate descriptive data. The overall results were generated by mean computing scores for each category of items at both phases, i.e., pretest and posttest. No significant differences between the two categories' data were indicated. Yet, a positive change occurred in the independency category compared to that of dependency, which remained somehow static through the period of the study. Although the results of this latter category indicated the learners' need for teacher guidance regarding the specialized vocabulary, the change in the first category should not be ignored. IVA can be a positive agent in fostering learners' control of their learning, namely, autonomy. Simultaneously, since the results of both categories are somehow convergent, both approaches of explicit and implicit instructions should be considered in IVS approaches in the realm of ESP.

## **METHODOLOGY**

An exploratory method is adopted to study the objective of this research which aims to determine the student-generated vocabulary testing factors fostering autonomy among Iranian EFL learners. This study consisted of three different parts. In the first part, the researcher tried to find the factors of SGVT by interview. In the second part, the researcher prepared a questionnaire and made it standard. In the last part, the researcher found the factors affecting the SGVT using the standard questionnaire.

### **Participants**

The participants consisted of 30 EFL learners (15 males and 15 females) studying or finishing teaching English at Qeshm Azad University in Hormozgan province, Shiraz Azad University in Fars province, and Bushehr Azad University in Bushehr province since 2020. They were studying or finished a Ph.D. program and thus considered to be at an advanced level. All of them had been learning English for at least ten years. The age range of the participants was 29 to 46. They had all experience teaching in different age ranges, including children, teenagers, and adults, and also in different educational places such as language institutes, schools, and universities. The sampling method is considered purposive sampling. Therefore, 30 participants were selected because no new theme would likely to obtain from more participants due to data saturation.

To check the questionnaire, the researcher used 225 EFL learners studying or finishing the Ph.D. program in TEFL at Qeshm Azad University, Shiraz Azad University, and Bushehr Azad University. The researcher chose them as convenience sampling. This sample comprised 162 males and 63 females, ranging from 29 to 46.

The participants for the main phase were 320 EFL learners studying or finishing the Ph.D. program in TEFL at Qeshm Azad University, Shiraz Azad University, and Bushehr Azad University. The researcher chose them as convenience sampling. This sample comprised 150 males and 170 females, ranging from 29 to 46.

## **Instruments**

Concerning the study's exploratory nature, semi-structured interviews covering autonomy and student-generated testing issues based on the studies that have been done before, and they could find some of the factors were designed and conducted with the participants in a comfortable environment. The interview included some open-ended questions related to the objectives of the interview. In order to ensure the final interview, some interviewees and colleagues who were familiar with the topic were asked to pilot the interview and scrutinize the content of the interview guide and questions. As a result, it led to some modifications in the interview guide; some questions were added, and some were omitted.

After analyzing and coding the scripts of the interviews, four main themes were identified with 23 sub-categories. These sub-categories contained 23 questions in the first draft of the questionnaire. After reviewing and scrutinizing the questionnaire and consulting some colleagues and the participants in the first phase of the research, eight questionnaire items were removed because some items overlapped or were irrelevant. The final version of the questionnaire consisted of 15 qualified items. The main extracted themes consisted of 1- Personality characteristics(4 items), 2- Positive points of student-generated vocabulary testing(4 items), 3- Negative points of student-generated vocabulary testing(3 items), and 4- Teacher's role(4 items). It was a five-point Likert scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree, with the neutral point being neither disagree nor agree. The second section includes information about participants' age and gender. In order to understand the questions thoroughly, the items were provided in their mother tongue (Persian). The reliability of the questionnaire was estimated by SPSS 26, and it was .79.

**Table 1***Item-total statistics for total factors*

Items	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Personal Characteristics	4	.841
Positive points of student-generated vocabulary testing	4	.737
Negative points of student-generated vocabulary testing	3	.870
Teacher's role	4	.731
<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>	15	.798

In the main part of the study, the instrument was a self-constructed questionnaire based on the qualitative phase findings.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

None of the participants had the experience of using this way of teaching and learning. Then the researcher taught ESP vocabulary related to economics for four weeks in this way and prepared them to answer the interview and other parts of the study. After preparing the final version of the interview guide, the interview sessions were conducted. Due to the fact that the participants were in different cities and the coronavirus disease outbreak, online interviews were carried out to save money, time, and health. All participants were interviewed via Skype lasted about 30 to 60 minutes. The interviewer started each interview with an expression of her gratitude to the participants for being volunteered to participate in this research. Next, she clarified the goal and scope of the research to them. She also ensured that the confidentiality of their information would be maintained and asked some ice-breaking questions to make them feel more comfortable. The researcher transcribed the recorded interviews. To verify the dependability-reliability of the study, in addition to the researcher's coding, the raw data was given to a researcher's colleague to code it distinctly. The researcher and the colleague compared their distinctly found codes in order to reach a consensus.

For piloting the questionnaire, the purpose and the way of filling out the questionnaire were explained to the participants. The researcher also ensured them that their privacy would be maintained and respected and the research results would be only used in academic contexts. In order to provide genuine answers, the participants were given enough time.

For the main part of the study, first, enough questionnaires were printed and distributed. Each questionnaire took about 20 minutes to be completed. After responding to the questionnaires, the gathered data were coded into SPSS 26 software which then analyzed and interpreted the data.

### **Data analysis procedures**

First, the recorded interviews were exactly transcribed without any manipulation. Then, the transcripts were read and reread several times to comprehend and familiarize the researcher with them thoroughly. Next, the transcripts were transferred to the computer software MAXQDA (Kuckartz, 2007), by which qualitative researchers can analyze the data through a fast and manageable procedure. The next step after organizing the datasets was to code and modify the data, which consists of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In open coding, many codes were assigned for each dataset, labeling each important word or phrase.

Consequently, a significant number of codes were provided by the software. After the list of possible codes was made, the researcher compared them to each other, reducing the list until there were only 23 categories. Finally, the scientist found relationships between the categories and joined them into major themes by consulting theories and literature. It led to four themes, including the model of student-generated vocabulary testing factors to foster autonomy among Iranian EFL learners.

For piloting the questionnaire, data analysis consisted of validating the questionnaire, which involves gathering information that helps us confirm the test results. This process included measuring the internal consistency of the items, reliability, and construct-related validity of the instruments to find out whether these instruments measure the constructs they claim they are measuring. Then the reliability and construct validity of the questionnaire was measured through Cronbach's alpha and SPSS (version 26), respectively.

For the main part, the researcher tried to find the relationship between the factors and their effect on the SGVT; the researcher used the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the first part, the data was collected by analyzing the interviews. Personal characteristic is a factor that reflects an individual's patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Based on what *personality* they have, students react differently at exams. In the following, the researcher discussed the sub-categorizes of this factor.

**Anxiety.** Some emotional factors in foreign language learning affect students' learning abilities. Gumartifa and Saputri (2020) stated that low-achievement students' learning targets are becoming a crucial issue, and not giving much attention to learners' anxiety in a foreign language is the main reason that caused this problem. Some students have stress at the time of exams.

**Interest.** Interest is a desire to learn or know about curiosity that energizes learning. Hidi and Renninger (2006) defined interest as "heightened attention and emotional engagement that emerges when a person has a positive interaction with a content area or a task." Some students are inherently interested in learning and experiencing new things, and since they are bored with the repeated materials and procedures, they enthusiastically welcome undergoing new methods. Asghari et al. (2017) researched the effect of interest-based materials on EFL learners. They concluded that the use of interest-based language teaching significantly contributed to improving learners' performance. Below is an opinion of a participant in this case.



**Peers' effect.** Peers' comments on learners' performance can positively or negatively influence them. On the one hand, peers may welcome their performance, and others may criticize it. On the other hand, peers can collaborate in testing, increasing motivation and self-confidence in what they are to do. Smith (2017) researched collaborative peer feedback and then presented a model for enhancing the quality of peer feedback and suggested that receiving feedback significantly influences learner achievement. Tavares (2019), in his study on peer interaction and second language learning, found that academic language may help ELL students progress in higher education by allowing them to collaborate and interact with their peers and instructors successfully.

**Motivation.** Another factor in the personal characteristics theme is motivation. Undoubtedly, every teacher has asked themselves how to motivate their students. As motivation is a kind of desire to do something, to teach a foreign language, first, the learner should have the desire to learn that language. Hussein et al. (2020), in a study on students' motivation in English language learning, concluded that teachers must be trained to engage and involve the motivated students in challenging and encouraging activities. In their study, Niemiec & Ryan (2009) proved that classroom activities that support learners' realization of autonomy, relatedness, and competence are associated with intrinsic and autonomous extrinsic motivation types. Many learners are bored with the old and repetitive ways of learning a language, and new methods may motivate them to engage in learning.

After conducting interviews with the participants and coding them, they mentioned some *positive points*. In other words, they spoke of some factors towards which they had positive feelings. Moreover, after coding the data, this theme was further subcategorized into four factors: reducing anxiety, better learning, creating new content, and being updated.

**Reducing anxiety.** Feelings of anxiety and stress impede learning unless teaching techniques are a matter of interest for learners, especially in learning a foreign language. Other and Al-Otaibi (2019), in their systematic review of language anxiety, proved that when learners express anxiety levels, they tend to show low academic performance and show that learners with anxiety are less interested in interaction using the second language. Furthermore, learners motivated to do such a test are less anxious. Arif (2019), in a study on the correlation between anxiety and motivation and the speaking performance of English foreign learners, indicated that anxiety and motivation remarkably correlate with speaking performance. One important factor extracted from the interviews with the respondents is reducing anxiety which mostly comes from their interest and motivation towards doing this test. Moreover, when learners are to generate a test, first they should comprehensively study the material, understand it thoroughly, and then create a test. Therefore, when learners have a comprehensive knowledge of a material, they will have less anxiety.

**Better learning.** One positive point of student-generated testing is that it improves learning. Since learners act as test designers, they should know all the content elements and aspects. While studying the content, they try to learn it inside out and then create a test. Like the learning pyramid model (Dale, 1946), the highest method of learning retention is to teach others. In other words, to learn content from others, an individual must have a comprehensive knowledge of the contents

and details around a subject; therefore, it is easy to recall. It can be true in student-generated testing that first, learners must understand the contents and then generate a test upon it.

**Producing new content.** Another positive factor is this kind of testing produces new content. Generally, foreign language learners spend more time on understanding than producing content and materials. In this respect, Swain (2013), in research on comprehensible output and input, said that the output is important so that learners can express their ideas, practice language academically, get feedback and develop automaticity. In student-generated testing, learners try to prepare the contents; therefore, they try to find recently created and/or less-addressed materials. Likewise, content-based instruction (Brinton et al. 1989), which is organized upon the content, encompasses the active participation of students in the exchange of content. Moreover, Villalobos (2014), in a study on content-based instruction, states that CBI comprises one of the most important language teachings because it presents significant opportunities to adjust the learners' needs with meaningful content to upgrade language learning.

**Being updated.** The last factor in positive student-generated testing is that learners will be updated. In other words, while learners provide sufficient background knowledge of the material, they should know the latest information and modification, study the recent research on it, and then start to generate a test. Moreover, they also try to find and include new vocabulary added to the related context, not necessarily relying on old materials.

Some Participants in the interviews aired some *negative points* of view on the student-generated vocabulary testing. After conducting the interviews and then doing the coding procedures, three factors were found reflecting this test's negative aspects.

**Inability to produce content.** The first parameter in negative points is that learners may not be able to produce related content; some learners do not know how to prepare the related materials or how to make a test. Because learners have always undergone testing and are not experienced in designing and making tests, they may not be sure if the test they generate is valid. Moreover, they are not sufficiently trained as test makers but test takers.

**Inability to use a computer.** Modern technological tools have changed the methods and tools of teaching and learning the language. Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has dramatically altered the structure of education in language learning. Hence, using computer equipment, the internet, and other computer-related equipment in education would be an undeniable part of language learning. The inability to use a computer causes problems in teaching or learning a foreign language.

Furthermore, in today's technological education system, there is a variety of educational software by which learners and teachers can have creativity. DelliCarpini, in her study on computer technology skills in teacher training, found that using CALL can improve language proficiency, and developing these skills in a highly contextualized setting upgrade ESL teachers' knowledge and beliefs in using technology in the classroom. Some learners may have difficulty using the computer while generating a test alone. This may result in using the previous repetitive ways of testing and not following new computer-based testing methods.

**Lack of responsibility.** Lack of responsibility as a weak point of student-generated testing may affect negatively in different ways. Cannon and Newble (2000) stated that a good approach should "emphasize student responsibility and activity in learning rather than what the teachers are doing." The first point is that learners do not make a well-designed test. As Rajhy (2014) in his study enumerated and went into detail about the five characteristics of a good language test (reliability, validity, practicality, discrimination, and authenticity), the same token, learners must consider all aspects of a good test while creating a test on their own. Another point is the matter of time, in that learners do not deliver the text on time for any excuses, or they may make the tests carelessly not being scientifically authentic.

One important theme from the interviews is the *teachers' role* in student-generated testing. Teachers play a significant role in a second or foreign language. Their teaching methodologies, strategies, characteristics, and behaviors demonstrate their effectiveness in class, and Teachers act as observers and guides in language learning and teaching milieu. They guide both the class topic in the students in the learning process.

**Motivation.** Many studies have agreed on a common result that one of the key factors for learners to be successful in learning a language is motivation, and the teacher's role in motivating them is of significant importance. Johnson (2017) carried out a study discussing the role of teachers in students' motivation to learn. In summary, he stated that although learners have natural learning abilities, much depends on teachers' involvement. He also mentioned that teachers motivate learners by supporting them in developing their autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In another study on motivation in language learning and teaching, Seven (2020) discusses that learners do not learn only with their brains; other factors are also included; motivation is important because motivational factors make the students more receptive to new information and to keep learners interested in learning, they must be motivated by teachers.

**Feedback.** Another factor extracted from the interviews is feedback. Generally, feedback refers to an assessment provided by teachers to their students. The importance of providing feedback is to give opportunities for learners to correct their errors. Ur (1996) defines feedback as "information given to the learners his or her performance of a learning task, usually intending to improve their performance." There are different categories of feedback; however, two general types of feedback are positive and negative. Freeman et al. (2015) stated that teacher feedback is more effective when given in the form of positive feedback instead of negative feedback. In related research, Herra and Kulinski (2019) investigated feedback's role in learning English as a foreign language.

In conclusion, they stated that learners accept and welcome feedback; they are also expected to be explicitly told. Finally, they are advised to develop students' autonomous learning by providing opportunities to self-repair. In the other research on the effect of teacher feedback on student's language skills, Ahmed and Shakir (2019) concluded that depending on the circumstances, it is effective and important for teachers to use both oral and written feedback. One important result achieved from positive feedback is learners' encouragement. Ahmed and Shakir (2019) proved that positive feedback is preferred over negative feedback. The reason is that negative feedback can discourage and demotivate learners from going forward in learning. On the other side, positive feedback causes learners to be encouraged in learning and develop their level of proficiency.

**Facilitator.** As the meaning suggests, a facilitator is a person who assists a group of people in reaching their goals, however, without their intervention. Littlewood (1981) pointed out that a language teacher's significant role in communicative language teaching is "a facilitator of learning" who should empower the learners to become more autonomous. Regarding teaching philosophy, Chong (2014) argued that the main goal of teachers is to facilitate learning, and thus, they should provide a non-threatening learning milieu so that learners feel comfortable doing their tasks.

**Fostering creativity.** Another factor in which the teacher has an important role is fostering learners' creativity. Runco and Jaeger (2012) discussed that the definition of creativity should have two necessary notions of "originality" and "effectiveness" in that originality refers to the novelty in objects and ideas, and effectiveness regards the notion that this novelty should be effective and has values. Accordingly, teachers should let the students be flexible and have their ideas to be away from mundane routine pedagogy and develop their ideas. In other words, they will have creativity, and this novelty positively affects their learning.

According to the interview results, the researcher prepared a questionnaire and made it pilot to ensure its factor structure. The following are the results of the quantitative section and piloting the questionnaire.

For construct validity and based on the results, the KMO measure and Bartlett's Test significance for the instrument of this study are acceptable. KMO was 0.772, which is greater than 0.6; the significance of the was 0.7702, which is greater than 0.6 and Bartlett's Test significance was less than 0.5 (Sig = .000). Therefore, the results agree upon the suitability of the data in the questionnaire. Moreover, the correlation is statistically significant and supports the matrix's factorability. The Total Variance Explained where items loading results reflect the correlation of all items (both positively and negatively worded items) and confirm significant correlation among factors. The results generally reflect a sort of certainty among elicited responses that represents a common perception among the respondents concerning the student-generated testing questionnaire that displays a descending loading trajectory moving from the high end (6.810) to the low end (.047).

Table 2

*Total Variance Explained*

Component	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.781	51.872	51.872
2	1.507	10.047	61.919
3	1.228	8.189	70.108
4	1.119	7.458	77.566

5	.734	4.893	82.459
6	.566	3.772	86.231
7	.435	2.898	89.130
8	.375	2.503	91.633
9	.333	2.223	93.856
10	.272	1.813	95.669
11	.250	1.668	97.337
12	.131	.873	98.210
13	.117	.777	98.987
14	.089	.595	99.582
15	.063	.418	100.000

Another way that assists in retaining the number of factors is Horn’s parallel analysis (Horn, 1998). In this study, a software program called Monte Carlo was used to “compare the size of the eigenvalues with those obtained from a randomly generated data set of the sample size” (Pallant, 2016). The eigenvalues greater than those obtained from the random data set are retained. The results obtained from the Monte Carlo program are presented below.

**Table 3**

*Actual eigenvalues and their corresponding values from parallel analysis*

<b>Component number</b>	<b>Eigenvalue from PCA</b>	<b>Criterion value from parallel analysis</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>1</b>	7.781	1.4668	Accept
<b>2</b>	1.507	1.3584	Accept

As evident, the results agreed with the findings in the first move regarding retaining **two** factors because, based on Table 3, the actual eigenvalues of these four factors were greater than the criterion value from the parallel analysis.

The third move in factor analysis is factor rotation and interpretation, where the loading patterns are presented. In other words, it reveals which items have high loadings on which factors. The results of the factor rotation and its loadings are presented in Table 4 as follows.

**Table 4**

*Rotated component matrix*

Component	1	2
Q1	.795	.128
Q2	.817	.184
Q3	.736	-.105
Q4	.808	.032
Q5	.624	.235
Q6	.509	.529
Q7	.802	.058
Q8	.805	-.050
Q9	.666	-.472
Q10	.665	-.340
Q11	.703	-.516
Q12	.801	.016
Q13	.732	-.040
Q14	.385	.704
Q15	.801	.033

According to Table 4, all items had significant loadings only on one factor. Therefore, it approves that the research questionnaire and its scales and items accurately measured what they aimed to measure. The findings of this research phase support the validity and reliability of the instrument of the study.

**Table 5**

*Descriptive Statistics of the Study*

variables	N	min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Personal Characteristics</b>	320	1	5	4.7742	0.89853

<b>Positive points of SGVT</b>	320	1	5	4.6383	0.96100
<b>Negative points of SGVT</b>	320	1	5	2.5938	0.99280
<b>Teacher's role</b>	320	1	5	3.6828	1.00471

According to the 320 participants who answered the questionnaire and determined their viewpoints, the mean value of these variables shows which factors have the most and which have the least impact on SGVT. Table 5 illustrates that 'personal characteristics' with a mean value of 4.77 can stand in the first place. In other words, the personal characteristic of the learners is the most effective among all. They believe that an individual's characteristics, patterns of thoughts, and behaviors can affect the SGVT more effectively.

*Well, we are somehow bored with the repeated teaching method, and before the teachers say what to do, we know it. We want something new. I am interested in new ways of learning vocabulary and am eager to be in a different situation in learning other than the repetitive ones.*

The second variable is 'Positive points of SGVT,' with a mean value of 4.63. After conducting interviews with the participants and coding them, they mentioned some positive points. In other words, they spoke of some factors towards which they had positive feelings. They said that they could generate new content and keep themselves updated. In addition, they could have better learning and less anxiety.

*Sometimes we don't understand the content or subject 100 %. But I think in this kind of testing, Iit.*

The 'Teacher's role' factor has the third place with a mean value of 3.68. In student-generated testing learners, teachers play a vital role. Their thing methodologies, behaviors, and guidance demonstrate their effectiveness in the goals of teaching as well as their influence on the learners' achievements and attitudes. Moreover, they direct students concerning both the topic and the learning process.

*When I feel that the teacher verbally or non-verbally stimulates us to accomplish testing and correct our mistakes in the testing process, it drives me to do a task that I like.*

Negative points of SGVT are placed in the lowest place among the variables, with a mean value of 2.593. However, some participants stated negative points of view on the student-generated vocabulary testing. Because learners have always undergone testing and are not experienced in

designing and making tests, they think that they may not be sure if the test they generate is valid. Furthermore, they have this idea that they are not sufficiently trained as test makers but as test takers.

*I do not see myself as qualified to use computer knowledge in testing. I do not have enough skills to use new computer programs and software. I only use my system regularly, and I know the computer basics. And I think mastering these skills needs going to different classes. So, I cannot use the new software to make such tests.*

According to the results of this study, the researcher could find the factors that can affect the learners by SGVT. Last, experts could also find factors such as motivation, anxiety, interest, better learning, good atmosphere, and so on( Yu & Shiu,2022; Bueno-Alastuey& Nemeth, 2022; Maplethorpe et al., 2022; Mays&Chen,2020; Indah&Rohmah&Afifuddin,2020). Most students believe this new way of learning is enjoyable and encourages them to learn more and prepare a good context when they want to go to class. This study's results are the same as other studies that have been done before.

## **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

Student-Generated vocabulary is completely based on Holec's theory (learning autonomy). Regarding the effect of Student-Generated Vocabulary on the learning autonomy of Iranian English language learners, four main factors, each representing some sub-categories, contribute to this aspect of language learning. These factors were extracted from a sample of EFL learners who had interviews. Overall, the Student-Generated Vocabulary factors impacting the learning of these participants were identified as 1. Personal characteristics 2. Positive points of student-generated vocabulary testing 3. Negative points of student-generated vocabulary testing 4. Teacher's role. These four themes significantly contribute to learning English, revealing the value of considering Student-Generated Vocabulary in Iran when carrying out learning research in this context. The results were in many ways in accordance with that of Stoodley(2017), which found that people can determine what they want to learn, how to learn it, how to evaluate what they have learned, and how to put what they have learned into practice.

To the author's knowledge, no qualitative studies have been conducted in Iran on the Student-Generated Vocabulary Factors Affecting EFL Learners' Autonomy. The results of this study may shed light on the question of how learning in a foreign context can differ from the second language of English. There are many subjects in the learning vocabulary and a new way of learning it that other countries are using, but in Iran, teachers are not using them and are not familiar with these new forms of teaching and learning. Education System " Universities and Schools" may also benefit directly from the results of this study and indirectly, as students' scores can show them how much they can learn in high school or college and help them make decisions for the future. Further research can be conducted to determine whether the proposed model can predict the effectiveness of students' English uses at different levels. It should also be noted that the participants were younger than those in this study that needed further testing to verify any differences.



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## **Biodata**