

Investigating the relationship among Algerian students readiness for autonomy, metacognitive knowledge, and proficiency level

Hind Bellimane^{1*}/ Zoulikha Bensafi²

¹ ENSB Bouzareah, Algiers/ bellimane_h@yahoo.fr

² University of Algiers 2/ chorafa@hotmail.fr

Date de soumission 22-8-2021 date d'acceptation 22-9-2021 date de publication 23-10-2021

ABSTRACT

Prior researches have established the significant importance of metacognitive knowledge in enhancing learner autonomy and empowering him to achieve optimal success in EFL learning in general and in EFL writing in particular. Using a correlation analysis, this study sought to investigate the relationship between readiness for autonomy, metacognitive knowledge, and proficiency level of Algerian ENSB students (N=125) in EFL writing. To estimate the relationship between readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge, a regression analysis is conducted. The results of the correlation analysis demonstrated a weak and significant correlation between metacognitive knowledge and proficiency level and a very weak and significant correlation

* - Corresponding author.

Investigating the relationship among Algerian students readiness for autonomy, metacognitive knowledge, and proficiency level *revue Socles*

between readiness for autonomy and proficiency level. However, a strong and significant correlation was revealed between readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge. Additionally, the regression analysis indicated that ENSB students' metacognitive knowledge contributes significantly in predicting their readiness for autonomy variable. Based on these findings, it is suggested that ENSB students' metacognitive knowledge is strongly related to their readiness for autonomous learning. Thus, it is recommended that EFL writing teachers should raise their students' metacognitive knowledge base to enhance their readiness for autonomous learning.

Keywords: metacognitive knowledge, readiness for autonomy, proficiency level, EFL writing, ENSB students

Investiguer la relation entre l'aptitude à l'autonomie, les connaissances métacognitives et le niveau de compétence d'un groupe d'étudiants algériens

Plusieurs recherches ont montré le rôle primordial joué par les connaissances métacognitives dans le développement de l'autonomie de l'apprenant en lui permettant d'atteindre un succès optimal dans l'apprentissage de la langue anglaise en général et dans l'apprentissage de l'écriture en anglais en particulier. À l'aide d'une analyse de corrélation, cette étude tente d'examiner la relation entre l'aptitude à l'autonomie, les connaissances métacognitives, et le niveau de compétence à l'écrit en anglais d'étudiants algériens de l'ENSB (N=125). Pour estimer la relation entre l'aptitude à l'autonomie et les connaissances métacognitives, une analyse de régression a été effectuée. Les résultats de l'analyse de corrélation ont révélé une corrélation faible et significative entre les connaissances métacognitives des étudiants algériens de L'ENSB et leurs niveaux de compétence. D'autre part, une corrélation très faible et significative a été démontrée entre l'aptitude à l'autonomie des ces étudiants et leurs niveaux de compétence à l'écrit. Cependant, une corrélation forte et significative a été révélée entre leur aptitude à l'autonomie et leurs connaissances métacognitives. De plus, l'analyse de régression a indiqué que

Investigating the relationship among Algerian students readiness for autonomy, metacognitive knowledge, and proficiency level *revue Socles*

les connaissances métacognitives des étudiants de l'ENSB contribuent de manière significative à la prédiction de leur aptitude à l'autonomie. Sur la base de ces résultats, il est suggéré que les connaissances métacognitives des élèves de l'ENSB soient fortement liées à leur aptitude à l'apprentissage autonome. Ainsi, il est recommandé que les enseignants d'écriture de langue anglaise renforcent les connaissances métacognitives de leurs étudiants afin de développer leur apprentissage autonome.

Mots-clés: connaissances métacognitives, aptitude à l'autonomie, niveau de compétence, écriture en anglais, étudiants d'ENSB

Introduction

As EFL writing has become a demanding task for academic success, learners are appealed to have a good mastery of linguistic knowledge of EFL. However, according to Raimes (1983) and Kroll (2003), writing is far from being an automatic use of linguistic knowledge. It rather involves as posited by (Bereiter, Scardamalia 1987, Flower, Hayes 1980, Flower 1990, and Kellogg 1996) an ability to monitor one's own writing autonomously.

Learner autonomy requires more than a capacity of control over one's own learning as posited by Little (1991). It implies a conscious control of the learning situation and a "purposive use of language learning strategies" according to (Zimmerman, Schunk 1989: 4). Thus, learners can be defined as autonomous to the degree that they are metacognitively active participants in their own learning process (Zimmerman, Schunk 1989).

However, the use of metacognitive strategies, namely planning, monitoring, and evaluation are not enough to define autonomous learners (Benson, 2011). This is mainly because if the learners "fail to contact with a rich knowledge base, these three strategies are weak" according to Wenden (1995: 188). Not surprisingly then, learners can enhance their self-reliance once they gain an awareness of their metacognitive strategy use and knowledge. Thus, as a cognitive and complex process, learner autonomy implies a possession of metacognitive

knowledge base, encompassing three primary variables: person knowledge, task knowledge, and strategy knowledge (Flavell, 1979).

In the present study, the first objective is to unravel the relationship between readiness for autonomy, metacognitive knowledge, and proficiency level of EFL third year students in ENSB School in Algeria. Hence, a correlation analysis was conducted to investigate the strength of the relationship between the three variables. The second objective sought to investigate if ENSB students' metacognitive knowledge influences the level of their readiness for autonomy in EFL writing. Thus, this study has been guided by two primary research questions:

1. What is the relationship between readiness for autonomy, metacognitive knowledge, and students' proficiency level?

For the first research question, the major assumption is that ENSB students' readiness for autonomy is closely related to their metacognitive knowledge in EFL writing.

2. Can students' metacognitive knowledge affect their readiness for autonomy?

Regarding the second research question, it is assumed that ENSB students' metacognitive knowledge has an influence on their readiness for autonomous learning.

1. Learner Autonomy in EFL Learning

The examination of the definition of autonomy in EFL learning context has revealed three major dimensional degrees, namely methodological, psychological, and content (socio-political). These have been highlighted by three primary first advocates of learner autonomy in this sphere: Holec , Little, and Benson.

According to Schwartz (1977), autonomy in education refers to “The ability to assume responsibility for ones’ own affaires” (Cited in Holec, 1981: 3). In this respect, learner autonomy in EFL is described as “A power or a capacity to do something” (Holec, 1981: 1). Given such an assumption, the ability to act autonomously for Holec (1981) is not an innate disposition. It is rather a potential agency, which should be cultivated with the aid of ‘expert’ by means of an intellectual activity such as a systematic formal learning. Autonomous EFL learners are, therefore, involved in taking control of their own learning through being capable of assuming practical decisions that are relevant to their foreign language learning process. In summing up such decisions, Holec asserts:

To take charge of one’s learning is to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, ie: determining the objectives; defining content and progressions; selecting methods and techniques [...] evaluating what has been acquired (Holec, 1981: 3).

Within this outlook, it is evident that by the capacity of control, Holec (1981) intends those significant decisions that EFL learners can take in relation to the organization, management, and control of their EFL learning process major aspects. Viewed as the most widely cited in the literature, this seminal definition advanced by Holec (1981) has constituted the platform to further efforts and descriptions of learner autonomy in EFL learning field.

Closely related to Holec's conception, Little (1991) is another pioneer and practitioner of learner autonomy, who has explicitly defined the way EFL learners can monitor their learning. According to him, learner autonomy consists of "A capacity - for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action". It requires from the learner to enhance "A particular kind of psychological relation to the content of his learning" (1991: 4).

Looked at in this way, learner autonomy implies the provision of maximum language learning opportunities in which EFL Learners are enabled to exploit their language use potentials to the full. Little's (1991) definition focuses attention on the cognitive dimension of learner autonomy since this control is explained in terms of the self-management and the organization of the cognitive processes that EFL learners are appealed to master (Benson, 2001).

In considering Little's definition concerning learner autonomy, three significant principles can be deduced according to Carson (2010). The first principle relates essentially to EFL learners' capacities for independence, involvement, and active participation in their own EFL learning process. The second is much concerned with their reflection and capacity for using their mind critically. The last principle is more about EFL learners' capacity to act, decide, and use the target language in an independent way.

Benson (2001) has added a content dimension to the description of learner autonomy in EFL learning. This conviction has been reflected in his words: "The content of learning should be freely determined by learners," (p. 49). For Benson (2001), EFL learners are expected to exhibit further control over EFL learning content. This 'learning content' level of autonomy (Griffiths, 2008) involves EFL learners' right to select autonomously and collectively with teachers and peers programs they judge relevant to their personal needs and priorities. Putting it as follows, Benson assumes that "Learner control over the learning process, resources and language cannot be achieved by each individual acting alone according to his or her own preferences" (1996: 33).

2. Metacognitive knowledge

As a complex construct, metacognitive knowledge is defined by Wenden (1995) as "The stable, stable and sometimes fallible knowledge learners acquire about themselves as learners and the learning process" (p. 185). It is, then a specialized knowledge

base that can be acquired by EFL learners with respect to their own learning process. Thus, it is stable as it develops early in EFL learners' memory and state able, for it consists of a system of related ideas (Cotterall, 2009).

As the first researcher who provides a detailed account of metacognitive knowledge, John Hurley Flavell (1979) advances that metacognitive knowledge comprises one's beliefs about one's own knowledge. Given such a definition, metacognitive knowledge is conceptualized as consisting of three distinct but closely related variables: person, task, and strategy knowledge. Thus, EFL learners can begin to be successful and autonomous once they gain an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses in relation to the tasks they study; a consciousness of the tasks they are involved in; and an awareness of strategies which can help them perform such tasks effectively (Cotterall, 2009).

Subsequent to Flavell's work, Ann Leslie Brown (1987) is another educational psychologist, who claimed that metacognitive knowledge can be identified into two types of information. Such information are knowledge EFL learners acquire concerning their persons' capacities and needs, and knowledge they possess regarding the learning context they study in (Velzen, 2016).

Being considered as crucial for selecting, evaluating, and revising cognitive tasks, goals, and strategies, metacognitive

knowledge is considered as prerequisite for enhancing writing for EFL learners. This is mainly because writing is viewed as one of the most important academic skills since academic success in most learning at universities is assessed through essays and other written tasks. Thus, it is evident that EFL learners' strength as well as weakness are likely to be determined according to their writing skill performance (Cotterall, 2009).

In the literature on EFL writing, recent researches and studies show that successful EFL learners writers are by consequence autonomous learners. Compared to their classmates struggling counterparts, successful EFL learners writers are more capable of possessing metacognitive knowledge regarding their person, their writing task, and the strategies to be used. In other words, having a conscious knowledge about "Who they are as writers, features of the writing task, and the appropriate strategies for achieving their writing purpose" (Oxford, 2011: 248) can determine the extent to which they are autonomous writers.

2.1. Person Knowledge

Person knowledge is defined as knowledge concerning one's personal characteristics and that of other people (Cotterall, 2009). Put more simply, it is what Flavell (1979) has conceptualized as "Everything that you could come to believe about the nature of yourself and other people as cognitive processors" (p. 907). Clarifying his definition, Flavell (1979) has posited that person knowledge implies the belief about intra individual differences.

First, what Flavell (1979), has termed as intra individual differences refers essentially to the awareness of EFL learners regarding the differences that exist between them and a group or classmates. A good example of this consists of one's knowledge that writing slowly is likely to prevent him/her from taking benefit of peer feedback opportunity, or that feelings of stress are likely to hinder one's school test performance. In fact, this awareness of one's personal approach, encompassing both his/her strength and limitation is of a significant value, for it may help reinforce or improve some aspects of this person's learning behavior in the future (Cotterall, 2009).

2.2 Task Knowledge

Of all the three metacognitive variables, task knowledge is viewed by Benson (2001) as the most relevant to the idea of learner autonomy and control over ones' own learning processes. Similarly, Wenden (1959) argues that completing specific language learning tasks successfully requires an insight into the necessary task knowledge. He refers to it as "What learners need to know about the purpose of a task, the task's demands, and implicit in these considerations, a determination of the kind of task it is" (p. 185).

Given such a definition, task knowledge can be understood as any type of information EFL learners need to acquire concerning the purpose and the nature of the task itself (Wenden, 1995).

Applied to EFL writing, task knowledge stands for an understanding of a set of important information that are closely related to the purpose for writing a particular topic, the genre constraints, and the linguistic structure such knowledge regarding the structure of an argumentative essay. Considering the needs of an intended audience is also highly recommended for EFL learners to know when producing a written work (Waters and Schneider, 2010). This is mainly because this can determine not only the content to be involved in the written assignment but also the structures to be used as well as the way the information need to be arranged. Not surprisingly then, writers who address an intended audience are more likely to offer better explanations and further details. This can result in good and strong written products. As noted by Wenden (1959):

Expert learners construct mental representations of task demands in order to determine how best to go about completing them. These representations include task goals and sub goals, possible states through which the task will pass on its way to completion and the constraints under which the task is to be done (p. 189).

The underlying assumption behind Wenden's idea is that task knowledge may affect the use and decisions of planning, drafting, and revising, which are categorized among the fundamental higher processors that characterize skilful composing. The more EFL learners have metacognitive task knowledge in writing, the more they are capable of self-

monitoring their writing process. This can be manifested through their successful selection of the appropriate cognitive strategies and the criteria of evaluation (Benson, 2001).

2.3 Strategy Knowledge

Strategy knowledge relates mainly to the stored knowledge in EFL learners' memories. These involve the types of language learning strategies that are available, and which can assist them in performing cognitive tasks effectively (Goh, Lin, 1999: 42-43). In this context, focus is put on "Knowing how" (Waters , Schneider, 2010: 228). In other words, strategy knowledge encompasses information related to the way EFL learners can successfully apply the different accessible learning strategies. It is identified by Raphael (1989) as "The repertoire of behavior available from which the learner selects the one(s) best able to help reach a particular goal" (p. 347).

With regard to EFL writing, strategy knowledge may be interpreted as an understanding of what kind of writing strategies to use in a particular writing situation. This understanding may involve strategies that assist EFL learners in fostering the higher order processes like planning and revising, which are fundamental not only for effective productions of written texts but also for clear readability of these works. Such strategies can include the creation of well-structured outline, the correct usage of transitional phrases, and the employment of supporting details, namely with some particular genres like

persuasive writing. In fact, it should be noted that the selection of writing strategies may vary from one EFL learner to another depending on a cluster of factors such as preferred learning styles, writing performance, level of autonomy, and EFL language repertoire.

3. Methodology

This study employed an exploratory mixed method design, encompassing two sequential phases (qualitative and quantitative). In a sequential exploratory model “The substantial qualitative data collection becomes a means for developing or locating quantitative instruments” (Creswell, J. W. 1 al 2003: 552).

3.1 Participants

Participants in this study were EFL third year students at Algerian ENSB School. Out of a population of 279 EFL third year students in Algerian ENSB School, a total of 125 students were selected using purposeful sampling. The justification for selecting third year students as a population in this study is twofold. First, EFL writing is studied at ENSB for three years only. Hence, unlike their counterparts (the first and second year students), third year students are more likely to report their metacognitive knowledge regarding EFL writing module due to their learning experience. Additionally, since this study aims at collecting information about actual rather than past understanding of metacognitive knowledge in EFL writing, third year students are in a better position to report this knowledge

Investigating the relationship among Algerian students readiness for autonomy, metacognitive knowledge, and proficiency level *revue Socles*

than fourth and fifth year students. Second, third year students are assumed to achieve more autonomy in learning EFL writing than the first and second year students. They are, therefore, more likely to verbalize their perceptions towards their readiness for autonomous learning in EFL writing skill.

This sample of participants were selected for this study by identifying high, average, and low achieving students using final exam scores and analytical rubric. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 23.

3.2 Research Instruments

Both The Readiness for Autonomy Learning Questionnaire (RALQ) and The Learner Metacognitive Knowledge Questionnaire (LMKQ) were developed and located based on the qualitative data analysis (qualitative phase). The instrument (RALQ) measures learners' perception to their readiness for autonomous learning in EFL writing. It encompasses 26-item questionnaire and consists of three dimensions; learners' perception to their role, learners' perception to teacher's role, and learners' perception to EFL writing. On the other hand, the instrument (LMKQ) includes 38-item questionnaire that is used to investigate the respondents' perception to their metacognitive knowledge in EFL writing. It involves three dimensions; person knowledge, task knowledge, and strategy knowledge.

In this survey questionnaire, a 5-point Likert- measurement scale was used to determine the degree of the participants'

agreement with each item. The measurement scale was employed ranging from strongly disagree “1” to strongly agree “5”. Number 1 means that learners’ readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge were very low, and number 5 means that they were very high. Furthermore, the positive worded items (high readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge) were given weight of (5,4,3,2,1) for scoring purposes; while the negatively (reversed) worded items were attributed the weight of (1,2,3,4,5). The level of metacognitive awareness in EFL writing had been determined using the following ratings or evaluation criteria: very high (4.51-5.00), high (3.51-4.00), average (2.51-3.00), low (1.51-2.50), very low (0.00-1.50). Based on test scores in academic writing achievement, 125 participants were divided into three levels rating: Level 1 (high achieving, n=11, max score 17 - minimum score 14), Level 2 (average, n=80, max score 13, 75 - minimum score 10), and Level 3 (low, n=34, max score 9 - minimum score 4).

3.3 Validity and Reliability

In this study, the content validity of the questionnaire was established following the review of related literature and the comments provided by five academic ENSB teachers. They were requested to evaluate the consistent themes in the likert scale in relation to the description of the instrument, comment on the wording of the items, suggest the missing items, and omit ambiguous items. All the comments were subsequently reviewed, and the necessary changes were made. Additionally, a

Investigating the relationship among Algerian students readiness for autonomy, metacognitive knowledge, and proficiency level *revue Socles*

sample of 10 ENSB students were administered the questionnaire for a pilot study. The respondents were required to comment on the clarity of the items. Within the context, the instrument was also found to be valid as it has assumed internal consistency, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.84$ using Statistical Package of the Social Science (SPSS) Statistics 26. The value was found excellent as it exceeded the minimum required threshold of 0,70.

3.4 Data Analysis

To answer the first research question, the correlation analysis was carried out. The strength of the correlation is very weak at the level of (00-0.20), weak at the level of (0, 20-0, 40), moderate at the level of (0, 40-0, 60), strong at the level of (0, 60-0, 80), and very strong at level of (0, 80-1). The correlation is statistically significant if Sig. (2-tailed) < 0,05. In answering the second research question, a regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of metacognitive knowledge as the independent variable on readiness for autonomy as the dependent variable. The model is globally significant if Sig of F Test < 0,05.

3.5 Results

3.5.1 Correlation Analysis:

The first research question aimed to find out the relationship between the three variables: readiness for autonomy, metacognitive knowledge, and proficiency level. In order to

investigate a response to this question, a correlation analysis was conducted. The objective is to evaluate the strength of the relationship between the variables. The result is demonstrated in table 1.

Table 1: Correlation Analysis between Readiness for Autonomy, Metacognitive Knowledge, and Proficiency level

		Read	Meta	Prof
Read	Correlation Coeff	1,000	,652**	,149
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000	,098
	N	125	125	125
Meta	Correlation Coeff	,652**	1,000	,294**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.	,001
	N	125	125	125
Prof	Correlation Coeff	,149	,294**	1,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,098	,001	.
	N	125	125	125

****. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

From the above table, it is found that the participants' readiness for autonomy positively correlates with their metacognitive knowledge ($r = ,652$, $p < 0.01$). The correlation for these two variables is statistically significant and can be described as strong. Also, a positive correlation is found between the participants' metacognitive knowledge and their proficiency level. As indicated in the correlation coefficient ($r = 0,294$, $p < 0.01$), this correlation is statistically significant, so it can be described as weak. Furthermore, a positive correlation is found between the participants' readiness for autonomy and their proficiency level. Given that the correlation coefficient is ($r = 0,149$, $p > 0.05$), the correlation between these two variables is

Investigating the relationship among Algerian students readiness for autonomy, metacognitive knowledge, and proficiency level *revue Socles*

statistically not significant, hence it can be described as very weak. Thus, the hypothesis (ENSB students' readiness for autonomy is closely related to their metacognitive knowledge in EFL writing) is accepted.

3.5.2 Regression Analysis

To answer the second research question, a regression analysis is carried out to examine the relationship between the two variables (readiness for autonomy and metacognitive knowledge level). This analysis was conducted by taking readiness for autonomy as the dependent variable (explained variable) and metacognitive knowledge as the independent one (explanatory variable).

The magnitude of the correlation between the two variables is provided by the value of **R** as indicated in the model summary output of the SPSS in table 2.

Table 2: Model Summary Produced by SPSS

Regression

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,651^a	,423	,419	,22461

a. Predictors: (Constant), metacognitive knowledge

As shown in table 2, the **R** value represents the sample correlation and is 0, 651, which indicates a strong degree of

correlation. The **R Square** value shows that the independent variable (metacognitive knowledge) explains 42, 3% readiness for autonomy.

Table 3: ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	4,553	1	4,553	90,257	,000^b
Residual	6,205	123	,050		
Total	10,758	124			

a. Dependent Variable: Readiness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Megtacognitive Knowledge

The fisher test shown in table 3 indicates that the model is globally significant ($F = 90,257$; $p < 0.01$).

So, a regression analysis will be carried out by taking readiness for autonomy as the dependent variable and metacognitive knowledge as the independent one. The results are detailed in table 4.

Investigating the relationship among Algerian students readiness for autonomy, metacognitive knowledge, and proficiency level *revue Socles*

Table 4: Regression Coefficients^a between Readiness for Autonomy and Metacognitive Knowledge

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1(Constant)	1,783	,200		8,929	,000
Metacognitive	,575	,061	,651	9,500	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Readiness

Based on the finding in table 4, a standard regression equation can be drawn as follows: readiness for autonomy = 0,575* metacognitive Knowledge + A (statistical errors). The equation demonstrates that metacognitive knowledge variable contributes significantly ($p=0,000 < 0.01$) to predicting the dependent variable (readiness for autonomy). So, since the regression analysis model is significant, it can be summarised that metacognitive knowledge variable exerts an influence on readiness for autonomy variable. This means that Algerian ENSB students with higher metacognitive knowledge base are more likely to have high readiness for autonomy. Thus, the hypothesis (Algerian ENSB students' readiness for autonomy depends on their metacognitive knowledge) is accepted.

4. Discussion of the Results

4.1 Correlation between Readiness for Autonomy, Metacognitive Knowledge, and Proficiency Level

By addressing the first research question, the finding in table 1 revealed a non-significant and very weak correlation between readiness for autonomy and proficiency level ($r= 0,149$, $p>0.05$). This result demonstrates that proficiency level of Algerian ENSB students in Bouzareah University is not significantly related to their readiness for autonomous learning of EFL writing. Given the fact that the relationship between the two constructs is very weak, the finding may hint that both autonomous and dependent ENSB students can be academically successful. The finding corroborates the research conducted by (FreaMea G. & *al.*, 2019), positing that Philippian students' achievements were not significantly correlated with their autonomy. However, it contradicts the common belief held by advocates of learner autonomy such as Little (1991), who capitalizes that autonomous learners are more likely to be the most academically successful than their counterparts the dependent ones, which is not the case in Algerian ENSB university.

This very weak correlation between Algerian students' readiness for autonomy and their proficiency level may also suggest that all ENSB students regardless their proficiency level are prone to traditional learning and spoon-feeding approach in

Algerian educational context. This result can raise the question whether autonomy is a reliable indicator of the good academic performance in EFL writing in the Algerian educational context? Therefore, further examinations need to be sought to investigate the other contextual factors that may affect the academic success of Algerian students like culture and past learning experiences.

The findings also revealed that there is a significant and weak correlation ($r= 0,294$, $p<0.01$) between ENSB EFL students' metacognitive knowledge and their proficiency level. This result contradicts previous investigation studies (FreaMea G & *al.*, 2019) on Philippian students, which illustrated a significant and moderate correlation between metacognitive knowledge and academic achievement. Also, the finding didn't draw a parallel with previous studies of (Zhang ,2010; Baker, Brown, 1984; Flavell, 1979; Vandergrift, 2002), foregrounding that the possession of a strong metacognitive knowledge base is critical to academic successful learning.

Being inconsistent with previous research study (e.g. Zhang, 2010), the weak correlation between the two constructs (metacognitive knowledge and proficiency level) reveals that no significant relationship exists between the Algerian students' metacognitive knowledge and their performance and grades in EFL writing. Thus, ENSB students are likely to

succeed academically in EFL writing without having enough metacognitive awareness regarding this skill.

It can also be observed from table 1 that the finding revealed a positive correlation ($r=, 652, p<0.01$) between Algerian ENSB participants' readiness for autonomy and their metacognitive knowledge. Given that the correlation is statistically significant and strong, it can be suggested that ENSB participants with higher metacognitive knowledge can have more readiness for autonomous learning of EFL writing. This indicates a strong and significant relationship between the two constructs where the raise in metacognitive knowledge is accompanied by a linear raise in readiness for autonomy. The finding is congruent with past research study (Latief, & *al*, 2013) on Indonesian students, illustrating that the higher the participants' metacognitive knowledge was, the higher their autonomy level was. This was also in agreement with researches of (Alvarez, 2010; Benson, 2007; Little, 2010), who posited that metacognition plays a significant role in enhancing learner autonomy. The result of the present study was also congruent with a past research study on Turkish students' writers (Yaylı, 2010), emphasising metacognitive knowledge as the main foundation of learner autonomy.

4.2 Regression between Metacognitive Knowledge on Readiness for Autonomy

By addressing the second research question, a regression analysis was conducted. From the analysis of the result (See

table 4), it was found that metacognitive knowledge is a predictor ($p=0,000 < 0.01$) of readiness for autonomous learning of EFL writing. As it predicted 42, 3% of the variance of readiness for autonomy (See table 2), metacognitive knowledge is suggested to play a significant role in determining ENSB third year students' readiness towards autonomous learning. In line with the previous research studies (A. A. Zarei, 2010; Ismael, 2015) conducted with Iranian students, their finding denoted that enhancing autonomy in learners depends on activating their metacognitive knowledge about their EFL writing learning. The finding of the present study is also consistent in the literature (Zimmerman, Schunk 1989; Little, 1991; Dickinson, 1992; Oxford, 1990, 2003; Wenden, 1991), stressing that the control over ones' own learning highly depends on the awareness about the important aspects of this learning process. As posited by Wenden (2001: 62), metacognitive knowledge is prerequisite to the deployment of "self-regulatory processes». Thus, fostering metacognitive knowledge base in learners of EFL writing is a needed step for those teachers who aim at sustaining autonomous behavior in their learners.

Thus, for EFL writing teachers at ENSB University to help students learn purposefully and direct autonomously their EFL writing learning, they are highly appealed to foster their metacognitive knowledge base. This can be achieved as articulated by Cotterall (2009), through raising their awareness

on their strength and weaknesses in EFL writing, through enhancing their understanding of their constraints as well as demand and purpose of the EFL writing task, and through sustaining their consciousness in relation to strategy use of this task.

Based on the quantitative findings, it is worth noting that Algerian education context in general and ENSB teaching and learning context in particular is particularly based on spoon-feeding approach, where the majority of students are not equipped with the needed tools to become autonomous. Also, a considerable number of EFL writing teachers are still using traditional and content-based teaching methods. The same result was articulated in the findings of previous studies conducted in Algeria by (L. Benadla ,2013; Z. Kadi 2018), capitalizing that teacher behaviour underlying traditional and authoritative figure is rooted in Algerian social society. Furthermore, it is part of the Algerian teacher character, who feels more secure using teacher-centred approach than adopting autonomy-based approach. This was also related to statements of (A. Semmouk , 2005. In L. Benadla ,2013), positing that the absence of critical thinking and negotiation are the major features of the Algerian individual's character and psyche because he/she has been instructed to accept family orders and norms. Thus, being accustomed to such practices from primary schools, the Algerian learner finds it difficult to move towards being autonomous at university level. This is mainly because his/her past learning experience didn't

Investigating the relationship among Algerian students readiness for autonomy, metacognitive knowledge, and proficiency level *revue Socles*

involve any training on learning how to be autonomous, nor did it equip him/her with the needed learning strategies to enhance his/her metacognitive awareness.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Weak correlation exists between Algerian ENSB students' metacognitive knowledge and their proficiency level. On the other hand, a very weak correlation is noticed between their proficiency level and readiness for autonomy. This means that Algerian ENSB students' academic success doesn't necessarily depend on their autonomy and metacognitive knowledge level.

The results positing that a strong and significant correlation between ENSB participants' metacognitive knowledge and readiness for autonomy confirm the hypothesis (ENSB students' readiness for autonomy is closely related to their metacognitive knowledge in EFL writing). Hence, teachers are recommended to focus more attention on enhancing ENSB students' metacognitive knowledge in EFL writing to foster their autonomy.

The finding in regression analysis indicates that Algerian ENSB participants' metacognitive knowledge contributes significantly in predicting their readiness for autonomous learning in EFL writing skill. Hence, the hypothesis (Algerian ENSB students' readiness for autonomy depends on their metacognitive knowledge) is confirmed.

On the other hand, the findings imply that Algerian ENSB students' metacognitive knowledge is not associated with their proficiency level. Since, higher metacognitive knowledge in EFL writing is unlikely to breed higher academic success, Algerian ENSB students' academic success is due to other factors. Further research studies, therefore, need to be conducted to explore the other possible factors that can predict Algerian EFL students' academic success such as culture and teaching practices in Algerian education context.

References

- ALVAREZ, A- O., 2010. "Reflecting on Metacognitive Strategies in FL Teaching and Learning", *Cuadernos de Linguística*, n°16, p.69-82.
- BAKER, L., & BROWN, A- L., 1984, "Metacognitive Skills and Reading", In P-D., PEARSON, R., BARR, M-L., KAMIL and P., MOSENTHAL (Eds.), *Handbook of Reading Research*, n°1(188), New York: Longman, p. 353-394.
- BENADLA, L. 2013, "The Competency Based Language Teaching in the Algerian Middle School: from EFL Acquisition Planning to its Practical Teaching/Learning", *Arab World English Journal*, 4(1), p. 144-151.
- BENSON, P., 2001, *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning*, Harlow: Pearson.
- BENSON, P., 2006, *Autonomy in Language Teaching and Learning*. Cambridge University Press.

Investigating the relationship among Algerian students readiness for autonomy, metacognitive knowledge, and proficiency level *revue Socles*

BEREITER, C., & SCARDAMALIA, M., 1987, *The psychology of written composition*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

COTTERALL, S., 2009, "Student Autonomy in a Mainstream Writing Course: Articulating Learning Gains", In: R., PEMBERTON, S., TOOGOOD, A., BARFIELD, (Eds.), *Maintaining Control: Autonomy and Language Learning*, Hong Kong University, Press, p.87-107.

CRESWELL, J. W., PLANO-CLARK, V. L., GUTMANN, M., & HANSON, W. E., 2003, "Advanced Mixed Methods Research Designs", In A. TASHAKKORI, & C. TEDDLIE (Eds.), *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

DICKINSON, L., 1992, *Learner training for language learning*. Dublin: Authentik Language Learning Resources.

FLAVELL, J-H., 1979, "Metacognition and Cognitive Monitoring: A New Area of Cognitive Developmental Inquiry". *American Psychologist*, n°34, p. 906-911.

FREA MEA G. PUDIQUET, MELODY C. BALUALUA, C, G. TUMACDER, L, T. MATULAY, REYMUND C., 2019, "Autonomous Learning, Metacognitive Awareness and Science Academic Achievement of Pre-Service Teachers College of Teacher Education", *International Journal of Research & Review*, n° 6 (5), p. 25-31.

GASSNER, L., 2012, *Developing Metacognitive Awareness -a Modified Model of a PBL- Tutorial*. Academia Regia Odontologia.

GRIFFITHS, C., 2008, *Lessons from Good Language Learners*. Cambridge University Press.

GOH C-C, M., and LIN, L-X., 1999, "Learning Environments and Metacognitive Knowledge about Language Learning" *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 4 (2), p. 41-56.

HOLEC, H., 1981, *Autonomy and foreign language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon. (First published 1979, Strasbourg: Council of Europe).

ISMAEL, H- A., 2015, "The Role of Metacognition in Enhancing Learners' Autonomy", *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 2 (4), p. 95–102.

KADI, Z., 2018. *The Notion of Learner Autonomy in the Algerian EFL Classrooms: The Case of 4th Year Pupils in Guettaf Mansour Middle School (El-Bayadh)*. Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English as a Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of "Magister" in Psychopedagogy. Djillali Liabes University Sidi Bel Abbes.

KAMIL, M. L, PEARSON , P. D, Barr, R, & Mosenthal, P , 1984, "Handbook of Research in Reading (Vol.1)", *New York: Longman*.

LATIEF, M, A, MYARTAWAN, P. N. W., & SUHARMANTO , S. 2013, "The correlation between learner autonomy and English

Investigating the relationship among Algerian students readiness for autonomy, metacognitive knowledge, and proficiency level *revue Socles*

Proficiency of Indonesian EFL College”. *TEFL Journal*, n°24(1), p. 63-80.

LITTLE D., 1991, *Learner Autonomy: Definitions, Issues and Problems*. Dublin Authentik.

OXFORD, R. L., 2003, *Toward a more systematic: Model of L2 learner autonomy*. In D., PALFREYMAN & R. C. SMITH (Eds.), *Learner autonomy across cultures: Language education perspectives*. Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

OXFORD, R, L., 2011, *Teaching and Researching Language Learning Strategies*, Pearson Education Great Britain, Pemberton.

RAIMES, A., 1983, *Techniques in Teaching Writing*. Oxford University Press, New York.

RAPHAEL, T. E., ENGLERT, C. S., & KIRSCHNER, B. W., 1989, “Students’ Metacognitive Knowledge and writing. Research in the Teaching of English”, *National Council of Teachers of English*, n°23(4), p. 343-379. In: <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40171153>>.

SHWARTZ, B., 1977, “L’education demain” *Aubier Montaigne*, Paris, n°27, p. 84-87.

SEMMOUK, A., 2005, “المشروع التربوي الجزائري و واقع العولمة مقارنة”، *مجلة العلوم الإنسانية ’سسيولوجية*, بين ومعوقات الأزمة، n°5(7), p.119-132.

VANDERGRIFT, L., 2002, "It Was Nice to See that Our Predictions Were Right": Developing Metacognition in L2 Listening Comprehension", *Canadian Modern Language Review*. 58(4), p. 555-575.

VELZEN, V., 2016, *Metacognitive Learning* (Chapter 2), *Metacognitive Knowledge in Theory*, Springer International Publishing Switzerland.

WATERS, H., S and SCHNEIDER, W., 2010, *Metacognition, Strategy Use, and Instruction*. The Guilford Press.

WENDEN, A., 1991, *Learner Strategies for Learner Autonomy: Planning and Implementing Learner Training for Language Learners*. New York: Prentice Hall.

WENDEN, A., 1995, "Learner Training in Context: A Knowledge-based Approach", *Elsevier System*, n°23(2), 183-94.

WENDEN, A., 1998, "Metacognitive Knowledge and Language Learning", *Applied Linguistics*. n°19(4), p. 515-537, in < <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/19.4.515>>.

YAYLI, D., 2010, "A Think-aloud Study: Cognitive and Metacognitive Reading Strategies of ELT Department Students", *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research.(EJER)*, n°10(38), p. 234-251.

ZAREI, A-A., 2010, "On the Relationship between Learner Autonomy and Reading Comprehension TELL", *Islamic Azad University, Takestan*, n°3(10), p. 81-99.

Investigating the relationship among Algerian students readiness for autonomy, metacognitive knowledge, and proficiency level revue *Socles*

ZHANG, Y., 2010, "Investigating the Role of Metacognitive Knowledge in English Writing¹", *Wuhan University, HKBU Papers in Applied Language Studies*, n°14, p. 25-46.

ZIMMERMAN, B., and SCHUNK, D., H, 1989, *Self-Regulated Learning and Academic Achievement Theory, Research, and Practice* . Springer-Verlag, New York, Inc.