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Promoting Higher Levels of Learner Autonomy in Blended Learning Academic English Programmes

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ABSTRACT

The paper systematically reviews the impact of blended learning (BL) on learner autonomy (LA), with particular emphasis on learners from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds. The study focuses on academic English and courses designed for international students enrolled in pre-university and transitional programmes, which serve as prerequisites for undergraduate or postgraduate studies in the United Kingdom. International students bring substantial value in terms of soft power, global influence, and financial benefit. Their presence is also reported to enrich the educational experience by introducing diverse perspectives and encouraging a more stimulating, inclusive, and dynamic learning environment. This study compares, analyses and synthesises the findings of 17 scholarly research papers published between 2015 and 2025 to examine autonomous learning. It outlines the characteristics of autonomous learners and aims to develop a profile of these learners within BL contexts. This profile helps educators tailor instructional approaches to better support learners from diverse backgrounds. The indispensable role of instructional technology—and technology more broadly—within BL environments influences both the level and sustainability of autonomous learning. Accordingly, the article explores the development of LA through both embedding /integrating technology in BL and the availability of learning resources. Finally, the study examines the role of cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social language learning strategies in cultivating LA among this category of international students, emphasising their long-term academic success.

Keywords: Learner Autonomy (LA); Blended Learning (BL); English for Academic Purposes (EAP); International Students; Language Learning Strategies (LLS)

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1. Introduction

Blended learning (BL), the integration of face-to-face and online learning, has significantly affected the dynamic teaching and learning environment in higher education [1], and its use continues to expand. BL is characterised by the accessibility and flexibility of learning resources, which can help students to minimize or possibly eliminate passive learning habits [2,3]. BL courses require active participation in both online and offline interactive learning processes. For example, in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programmes, students prepare for their classes and gain exposure to academic English skills. They then attend online classes or face-to-face seminars to practise and engage in discussions, thereby enriching their learning experiences and addressing their doubts [1]. These activities can extend to after-class reflections and other collaborative tasks. BL also enhances self-directed asynchronous learning, enabling participants to scaffold their learning on their own [4].

BL is characterised by utilising an extensive range of technological tools to engage students in learning. Learning takes place within a sociocultural context when a student interacts with a more knowledgeable other who 'mediates' learning [5]. These mediating agents are not limited to the tutors or more capable peers but can be extended to include online learning platforms that have reshaped the way learners interact with one another to develop their language learning process. Self-regulation can be enhanced and accomplished through social interaction on BL technologies such as Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) and online platforms, which model higher-order cognitive abilities [6]. This process then moves to egocentric speech, which openly instructs the person to utilise these skills, before the inner speech, or mental self-direction, that ensures the student has fully internalised these abilities [7]. The technology used in BL can facilitate the development of autonomous learning by providing increased opportunities for individuals to exercise agency, make decisions, and take charge of their own learning.

Learner autonomy (LA) — defined as students' ability to take control of their learning [8] — involves characteristics such as identifying effective learning strategies, being proactive, and maintaining self-motivation. Autonomy is closely intertwined with students' beliefs, motivation, agency, and learning setting, and it interacts with these intrinsic factors to shape the process of learning [9,10]. Developing LA involves the acquisition of enhanced metacognitive awareness and knowledge/ understanding of the cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of the learning process [6,11]. Moreover, the cultivation of autonomy involves self-regulation, which BL can enhance through engagement both inside and outside the classroom [12,13]. This process is influenced by learners' interactions and collaboration and is closely linked to the formation of student identity and agency [14,15].

This study is guided by two research questions and employs a structured review of prior empirical studies to examine the relationship between BL and LA. In particular, it examines how LA may be fostered through the cultivation of metacognitive, cognitive, and social strategies in language learning. The analysis draws on data from academic English programmes and courses of a similar nature, including transitional or pre-sessional provision prior to undergraduate or postgraduate study, as well as elective in-sessional courses. While these programmes are essential pathways that facilitate students' entry into higher education and their subsequent academic progression, published research on these cohorts in the UK remains limited [16,17]. These programmes equip students from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in their academic studies at British higher education institutions [18].

The significance of this paper also lies in the growing integration of BL in higher education [19,20] and the pivotal role of LA in language learning [13,21]. Research indicates that LA not only contributes to improved academic performance and a deeper understanding of the subject matter [10,22], but it also supports the development of essential lifelong learning competencies [23,24]. International students are often stereotyped as rote learners lacking critical thinking and independence [25]. Therefore, this study aims to inform both educators and educational institutions on how to support these students in developing higher levels of autonomy and effective language learning strategies (LLS) in academic English so that they can excel in their undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

This paper aims to achieve the following:

a. Examine the extent BL can influence students' autonomy in Academic English programmes.
b. Explore the development of higher-level autonomy through the cultivation of LLS.

2. Methodology

This article draws on secondary research data collected through a systematic review of previously published scholarly studies. The rationale for adopting this research approach lies in its capacity to meet the study objectives by comparing, analyzing, and synthesizing robust evidence from multiple empirical sources [26]. Specifically, it investigates the extent to which BL can influence autonomous learning in academic English programmes, and how higher-level autonomy can be developed through the cultivation of LLS.

2.1. Search Strategy

Aligned with the principles of systematic review, this study followed an interpretivist paradigm, which is commonly—but not exclusively—associated with qualitative research. This paradigm emphasizes the collection of data rich in detail and description [27,28]. A structured literature search was conducted across three databases: University of Huddersfield, University of Manchester, and Semantic Scholar. These databases were selected for their rigorous indexing of peer-reviewed articles in the fields of technology-enhanced learning and educational linguistics. Additionally, the authors have access to these universities' libraries, which facilitated the retrieval of sources from Scopus, ProQuest, Open Access Digital Library, ERIC, and DOAJ [29].

The search was limited to empirical studies published between January 2015 and July 2025, focusing exclusively on undergraduate students. Studies were selected based on their relevance to BL and LA. The PRISMA framework (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) was employed to assess sample size and data collection methods [30]. The initial search was conducted using the University of Huddersfield library database, with the following search terms: "blended learning" OR "hybrid learning" AND "learner autonomy" OR "autonomous learning" AND "academic English". Similar search strategies were applied to the other two databases. The results were then manually screened to identify additional relevant literature.

2.2. Study Screening and Selection

The screening process followed two sequential stages in accordance with systematic review guidelines:

Stage 1: Titles and abstracts retrieved from the database searches were independently screened for relevance. Studies were retained if they explicitly referenced LA, BL, and university-level language programmes. Records lacking these core conceptual criteria were excluded.

Stage 2: Full texts of potentially eligible studies were retrieved and systematically assessed against predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure both conceptual relevance and methodological rigor. This step helped eliminate studies that appeared relevant at the abstract level but did not meet the standards required for inclusion in the final synthesis.

Table 1 presents a checklist of the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied during the systematic review process to ensure the rigorous selection of studies relevant to the research questions.

Table 1. Checklist for exclusion and inclusion criteria.

Item	Inclusion	Exclusion
Theme	BL – LA– academic English	Conventional/ face-to-face
Date	2015–2025	Before 2015
Study context	Undergraduate – pre-sessional programmes	Primary and secondary schools & language centres
Field	Empirical studies	Literature reviews – article reviews – Dissertations – Theses – Reports
Publication language	English	All other language studies and publications
Databases	University of Huddersfield and Manchester, UK & Semantic Scholar	Other libraries

A total of 118 records were identified through systematic searches across three databases: University of Huddersfield (n = 44), University of Manchester (n = 51), and Semantic Scholar (n = 23). After removing duplicates, 109 unique records remained for initial screening.

During the first stage of title and abstract screening, studies were excluded if they were conducted in school settings or did not focus on an English language context, as these

fell outside the predefined inclusion criteria. This phase resulted in the exclusion of 52 articles due to irrelevance or failure to meet the criteria.

Subsequently, 57 full-text articles were retrieved and assessed in detail for eligibility. Only studies that directly addressed the research topics and met all inclusion requirements were retained for the final synthesis. The full identification, screening, and inclusion process is summarised in the PRISMA flow diagram (**Figure 1**).

A total of 17 articles were selected and synthesised using thematic analysis. The data collected guided the research analysis, which followed an inductive approach involving the steps of familiarisation with data, generation of initial codes, development of themes, and production of the final report[31]. Thematic analysis enabled the identification of both manifest (explicit) and latent (underlying) meanings in the data[27]. A complete list of the 17 reviewed articles is provided in **Appendix A**, **Table A1**.

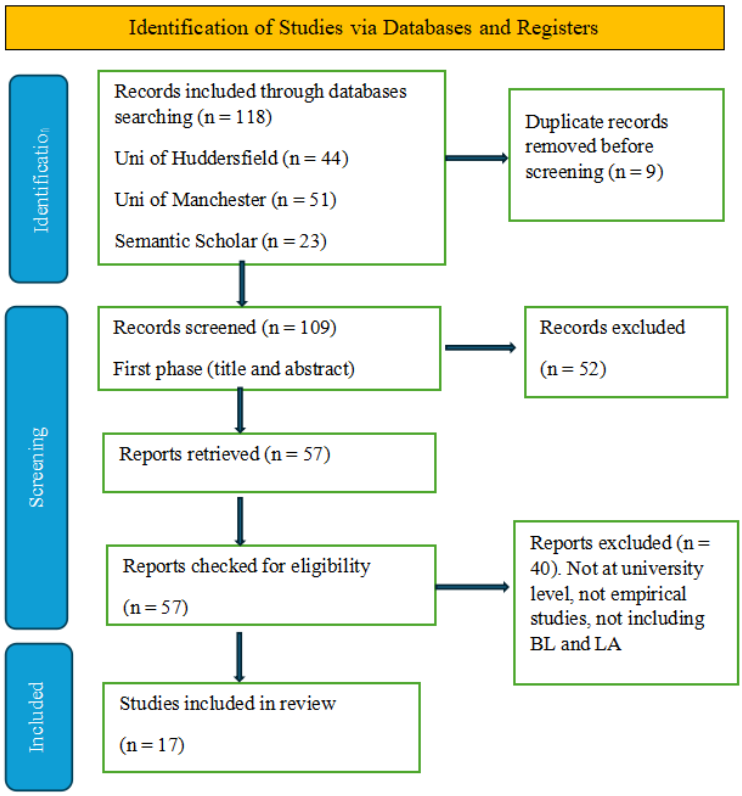

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram.

This study did not involve direct participation of human subjects. All reviewed articles were publicly accessible via the selected databases. The identities of participants in the original studies remain undisclosed, and this article presents aggregated findings without referencing individual respondents. These procedures were followed to ensure the ethical integrity of the research.

3. Findings

This section synthesises evidence from 17 peer-reviewed articles published between 2015 and 2025 to explore the relationship between BL and LA. The synthesis is guided by two research questions and underpinned by sociocultural theory[5]. It reconceptualises LA in BL environments and outlines the characteristics autonomous learners should possess to succeed in such contexts.

3.1. Reconceptualising LA in BL Programmes

Findings from the literature indicate that a student's ability to take charge of their learning is not innate but can be developed through formal education. Learners require opportunities to apply their knowledge, which can be facilitated

through structured classroom instruction and training [12,17]. Holec [8] emphasises that autonomy involves learners' behaviours and the mechanics of managing learning on a daily basis. This includes the use of metacognitive strategies such as selecting resources, monitoring progress, planning, and self-assessment. Moreover, LA is influenced by the quality of pedagogical dialogue between tutors and learners. Social interaction and critical reflection are essential components of autonomy [32,33]. While social interaction is a key element in learning academic English as it enables students to extend learning beyond the classroom, critical reflection allows them to analyse and synthesise information collaboratively, fostering new perspectives [34]. These concepts are grounded in sociocultural theory, which highlights the importance of social and cognitive dimensions in learning [5].

In light of synthesised evidence, 'control over learning' and 'interdependence and collaboration' are perceived as central to the convention of LA in BL context. To begin with, 'Control over learning' involves students' ability to manage programme requirements, including planning, goal-setting, resource selection, and self-evaluation [35,36]. Autonomy encompasses taking responsibility for learning and making informed decisions throughout the learning process [37]. Students who perceive that they have control over their education are more likely to engage deeply and achieve learning outcomes [6], whereas those lacking control may struggle to meet objectives [13].

Interdependence and collaboration in BL contexts involve students' ability to balance individual and group responsibilities within and beyond formal learning environments. It includes shared decision-making and mutual accountability among learners [37–39]. Interdependence enables learners to collaborate for collective benefit and take shared responsibilities for achieving learning objectives [38,40]. While an individual possesses complete control over the task, the group exercises control over the task. It, therefore, results in shared authority. Students can typically share control by working together to achieve a common goal or pursue a single aim as a single agent.

Collaborative language learning and interaction with a more knowledgeable other have been central to constructivist theory for decades. Autonomous learning is a collaborative and acquired capacity, allowing learners to engage with more capable individuals until they reach higher levels of autonomy [12,15,36]. Tutors play a key role in facilitating activities that promote language use within a learning community, rather than in isolation [34].

According to Erkir and Alkhaldi [41], materials that support diverse learner responses and cultural relevance are more likely to foster collaborative and contextualised learning, both of which are essential to LA. Humans are inherently social beings [38], and autonomy should not be equated with self-instruction or isolation. Instead, the shift from autonomy as independence to a model of interdependence and collaboration reflects current pedagogical thinking, especially in formal and asynchronous BL settings.

3.2. Profiling Autonomous Learners in BL Context

Autonomous learners endeavour to collaborate with fellow students in formal instruction settings, outside the classroom, and during independent study. These learners utilise the available resources on VLEs such as Blackboard, Brightspace, and Insendi, and participate in social interaction situations to reflect on learning and develop new understandings. Based on the synthesis of the reviewed articles, autonomous learners in BL academic English programmes are characterised by their willingness and ability to:

- Act independently and collaboratively as socially responsible individuals [36,42].
- Take charge of their own learning, including planning, goal-setting, monitoring, and evaluating progress [6,37,43,44].
- Navigate flexibly between individually driven and group-driven behaviours to achieve learning outcomes [11,36,39].
- Overcome environmental constraints and transform them into opportunities for autonomous actions [6,39].
- Direct the course by deciding on the significant issues pertaining to its management and organisation [11,37,45],
- Develop self-determination (individual dimension: self-agency, self-regulation and self-direction) [39,46].
- Develop social responsibility (interdependence, respect for others, and cooperation and negotiation) [36,39].
- Assume proactive and active roles in synchronous and asynchronous learning [6,44,46].

4. Discussion

This section critically reflects on how higher levels of LA can be cultivated through engagement in BL environments and the development of language learning strategies (LLS). As discussed in Sections 3.1 and 3.2, autonomous learners are capable of controlling their learning and applying LLS both independently and collaboratively. Learner development involves both cognitive and affective growth, including increased self-awareness and a greater willingness and ability to manage one's own learning[47]. It is rare to find learners who genuinely control their learning processes beyond simply being effective learners[37]. Therefore, training students is essential to help them attain partial or full autonomy.

4.1. Cultivating LA through BL Resources

BL can foster autonomy through technology-based, resource-based, and learner-based approaches[12,37]. These approaches offer learners opportunities to self-direct their learning and develop autonomy-related skills and attitudes through experimentation and exploration.

To begin with, resource-based language learning cultivates autonomy by providing students with access to learning materials anytime, independent of teacher presence[1]. It is particularly effective for students who already possess high levels of autonomy and self-directed learning skills. However, its effectiveness may be limited for learners who lack these competencies. Autonomy in BL environments can be constrained by technological limitations, pedagogical design flaws, cultural norms, and institutional barriers—highlighting the need for systemic interventions[48]. VLEs that support interactive activities help reduce isolation and promote engagement, aligning with socio-constructivist theory, which emphasises social interaction in developing higher-order thinking and autonomy[49,50].

Unlike resource-based approaches, learner-based approaches focus directly on the development of the learner, including behavioural and psychological changes[13,46]. Learner-based approaches aim to empower learners and equip them directly with the essential skills for managing their learning. This can be direct advice on language learning strategies and techniques, training learners to exercise these strategies to explore what works well for them, and reflection on self-directed learning approaches[10]. Activities such as reflective discussions and learner journals can raise awareness of the learning process and equip students with elaborate language learning beliefs[51]. That is, ongoing and structured learner introspection can enhance reflection and autonomous learning.

Technology-based approaches in the BL context for developing LA emphasise independent interaction with educational digital applications. It is widely acknowledged that technological advancements have created new opportunities for promoting autonomy by facilitating learners' access to VLEs, digital tools, and learning resources; thus reducing obstacles to independent learning and language acquisition[6,52]. The findings from the reviewed articles have identified that a balanced approach to research has demonstrated the advantages and limitations of these resources, instruments, and online platforms for fostering autonomy. Several limitations and issues have been identified, including learners' inability to utilise learning resources efficiently, the quality and availability of resources, learners' degree of technological proficiency, patterns of interaction, learners' capacity for self-directed learning, and the need for teacher support[46,53].

4.2. From Strategy Training to Autonomy

The role of LLS in fostering learner autonomy (LA)[45,54], and consequently, enhancing English language competency[55,56], is well established. LLS help learners engage with, interact within, and benefit from learning environments[54]. In the context of this literature review, the BL environment is not always directly mediated by a tutor, and learners often participate in both individual and collaborative learning outside the classroom. LLS are viewed as behaviours that promote self-directed learning, enhance the language acquisition process[45], and build confidence in practising academic English skills[42] in both synchronous and asynchronous settings. LLS can be categorised into three levels of language processing: cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies[45].

First, cognitive or direct[57] strategies "orchestrate the mental processing of a target language"[58]. According to Gabriel[59], an individual's distinct cognitive learning preferences influence the learning strategies used to acquire specific linguistic features. In academic English programmes, cognitive strategies include paraphrasing and summarising,

referencing, making notes, and developing academic essays and presentations. The strategies employed vary based on task requirements, learner characteristics, and sociocultural backgrounds[60]. International students differ in their language proficiency due to their diverse cultural and educational backgrounds[53]. As a result, cognitive strategies vary in complexity, making differentiated instruction essential for effective learning[6,60]. For example, while some students can infer vocabulary meaning from context, others may require explicit instruction. In BL environments, students can use online materials to scaffold learning, prepare independently, and control the pace and timing of their study. Effective learners adapt their strategies to meet the demands of each task[60].

In terms of metacognitive strategies, they involve analysing, planning, monitoring, and evaluating the learning process. These strategies support self-management and self-evaluation of learning throughout the programme[6,56]. Metacognitive strategies are considered deep-processing and higher-order strategies since they monitor and control function in cognition[1]. These strategies can be categorised into cyclical self-regulatory phases: forethought, performance and self-reflection[61]. In the forethought phase, strategies can begin with managing and selecting appropriate learning resources, then generating plans for learning tasks related to the learning objectives, and finally managing the environment to facilitate learning[6,44]. The performance phase of the cyclical self-regulatory phases includes various strategies, including managing time properly, monitoring comprehension, and identifying learning challenges. Self-reflection, however, implies only one strategy — self-evaluation — which refers to assessing the learning outcomes against a rubric or a set of standards[6,49]. In their study on metacognitive strategies in self-directed language learning, Lai et al.[56] concluded that the forethought phase was the most used among learners, followed by strategies associated with the performance and self-reflection phases. However, few studies reported consistent use of metacognitive strategies across all three phases.

Finally, affective strategies help learners manage emotions through techniques such as self-encouragement, self-reinforcement and self-talk[44,50,62]. Like cognitive and metacognitive strategies, affective strategies are essential in language education, particularly in independent learning contexts, as they regulate emotional states that influence learner engagement[13,50]. Therefore, it is as important as cognitive and metacognitive strategies since negative feelings hinder the effectiveness of educational tasks. Conversely, positive affective states, such as motivation, enhance language learning. Motivation, or "the combination of effort plus the desire to achieve the goal of learning the language"[63], influences learners' attitudes toward BL learning communities. It fosters socially motivated engagement, increasing interaction and communication in synchronous and asynchronous learning to achieve the learning objectives[10,42]. Students utilise digital devices in BL programmes to reduce boredom and engage in interactive activities individually and in groups to maximise the enjoyment of learning. This, in turn, maintains students' interest and dedication to completing learning tasks.

Research demonstrated that learners use cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies in self-directed learning environments[56]. However, when instructional materials focus on low-level retrieval or sentence-level writing[64], students receive fewer scaffolded opportunities to develop and apply metacognitive, social, and higher-order cognitive strategies, which are central to autonomy. Moreover, other studies reported that students are not well-informed about strategy use[65,66], and tutors usually overestimate students' abilities in using digital devices in technology-enhanced learning programmes. It has been reported that students experience difficulty in locating appropriate learning resources and employing them effectively to improve their academic English skills[64,66]. In addition, students lack the required knowledge to use digital devices and engage in meaningful social interaction. Hence, tutors have a significant role in maximising learning potential in BL environments. They can provide affective, capacity, and behavioural support[67] to help learners understand the benefits of the online learning platforms, access learning resources, and develop research skills.

5. Pedagogical Implications

Literature frequently highlights pedagogical choices and their varied impacts—both positive and negative—on learners. These choices, often described as 'progressive,' promote self-directed, student-led, project-based, and research-oriented learning. Such approaches may involve interaction with dig-

ital content, asynchronous learning tasks, and conventional classroom activities. Within a BL framework, students are expected to take an active role and use technological tools to extend learning beyond the physical classroom. Consequently, teaching practices should be developed to restructure the academic English curriculum, placing international students at the center of the educational process. This suggested shift enables learners to participate in creating knowledge and contribute to the development of learning materials [17].

Effective BL courses that develop autonomous learning skills require the thoughtful integration of pedagogical tasks across digital and in-person modalities. Tutors play a critical role in ensuring coherence between synchronous and asynchronous components. As this role continues to evolve, it demands ongoing and sustained professional development [68], which requires both technical skills and pedagogical flexibility or the capacity to design activities within multifaceted digital settings. This involves more than mastering digital tools; it requires a nuanced understanding of how technology supports the negotiation of meaning and the cultivation of LA. Targeted training can empower tutors to use digital platforms to expand opportunities for learners to exercise agency, shape their identities, make informed decisions, and take ownership of their learning [11,42]. Specifically, tutors can nurture autonomy by motivating learners and encouraging regular reflection to develop metacognitive skills. They can guide students in setting learning goals, negotiating progress, and evaluating outcomes through individual and collaborative tasks. These competencies not only enhance performance in academic English courses but also prepare students for success in their subsequent disciplinary studies.

There are some implications for decision-makers at higher education institutions when creating BL programmes with a significant asynchronous online component. Institutional leaders must carefully assess students' readiness for autonomous learning and how familiar they are with online technologies [69]. Moreover, learners value the collaborative and social aspects of interaction. Therefore, effective online programmes can strive to enhance these features by either occasionally facilitating physical gatherings on campus, if feasible or utilising collaborative online technologies that foster teamwork and class collaboration [19,69]. Additionally, the curriculum design can incorporate sufficient individual and group tutorials to address the challenges posed by the absence of a physical tutor presence in BL environments. This approach can foster a sense of community between tutors and students, ultimately enhancing student engagement and interaction.

6. Conclusions

The findings from the reviewed studies demonstrated a correlation between the technology utilised in BL communities and students' development and exercise of autonomy. Learners tend to exhibit greater autonomy in technology-rich settings, as digital tools help strengthen their digital identities, allowing them to empower these identities in outside classroom activities [6,9,46]. BL offers unique opportunities for students to cultivate autonomy. The programme structure—combining individual and group tasks, both with and without teacher presence—encourages learners to take ownership of their learning. In academic English programmes, students engage with tutors both in person and online, extending learning beyond contact hours through asynchronous units and interactions on VLEs. This enables students to plan, reflect, and evaluate their progress regularly, with the tutor acting as a facilitator. Thus, autonomy is fostered through self-regulation, supported by both instructional design and teacher guidance.

A common misconception of autonomy is that students work in isolation from peers and instructors. Conversely, LA is reconceptualised in BL environments, especially related to social technology to, include interdependence and collaborative learning. Autonomy involves contributing to the learning of others and engaging meaningfully within learning communities. The development of autonomy in BL is closely tied to the role of tutors. Educators can support and motivate students to exercise proactive autonomy by consistently emphasising metacognitive and cognitive learning strategies in formal classroom settings. Regular recommendations of learning materials and the sharing of applicable metacognitive and cognitive strategies that students can use in technology-enhanced learning in formal settings can enhance their autonomous learning, both inside and outside the classroom.

Author Contributions

All researchers contributed to this research as follows: M.E.H.I. collected the data and analyzed it. He also wrote the

methodology, findings, and parts of the discussion section. R.G. wrote the abstract, the introduction, and the pedagogical implications and edited the article. A.A.A. completed and edited the discussion, reviewed the paper, came up with the conclusion part, and finalized the references.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement

Information about the data and materials used in the study is available.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A

Table A1. List of the Articles Reviewed.

Author(s) and Year	Sample	Research Design	Integration Model	Major Findings
Gunes & Alagozlu (2020)	144 students: State University, Turkey	Quantitative Study: Questionnaire & Two tests for academic success level	Blended learning	A statistically significant and positive correlation was found between motivation and autonomy in BL students. In terms of the link between academic success and learner autonomy, no significant relationship was found for BL groups.
Lomer and Palmer (2021)	227 students: University of Northampton, UK	Qualitative Case Study: focus groups, 48 semi-structured focus groups, and 4 individual interviews	Active blended learning	Students preferred face-to-face teaching and perceived an increase in expectations of independent learning. Despite lecturers' claims of active BL implementation, students reported it was often an add-on to traditional teaching.
Chen (2024)	30 university students,China	Mixed-methods study: questionnaire, interviews and observations.	Hybrid English language learning programmes	The programme enhanced learner engagement, academic achievement through a flexible, personalised learning environment. It also facilitated the autonomy to manage the learning pace.
Sato et al. (2024)	94 undergraduate students, Japan	experimental study and a questionnaire survey	MALL in blended learning setting	MALL brought about a significantly higher level of learner autonomy in the psychological dimension and also higher motivation towards L2 vocabulary learning, which would indicate the fostering of autonomy. Thus, it appears likely that MALL has advantages, to some degree, in the enhancement of learner autonomy in blended L2 learning settings.
Ardi (2017)	21 students enrolled in an EAP course, Indonesia	Qualitative case study	Blended learning	Schoology m-learning platform helped the students to exercise autonomy in EAP learning. Students exercised their control over learning management, cognitive process, and selection of learning materials. The exercise of autonomy is due to the affordance of Schoology.
Goto & du Toit (2025)	194 students University of Johannesburg, South Africa	Quantitative study: online survey	Hybrid learning	Student autonomy and lecturer support positively correlated with hybrid learning satisfaction, while student interaction and collaboration did not. Second-order structural modelling indicated that lecturer support was the most important predictor of the overall hybrid learning experience in diminishing order, followed by hybrid learning satisfaction, student autonomy and student interaction and collaboration.

Table A1. *Cont.*

Author(s) and Year	Sample	Research Design	Integration Model	Major Findings
Mohamed (2024)	65 College students, Saudi Arabia	Mixed-methods study: Questionnaire and interviews	Blended learning combining Blackboard and face-to-face learning	Participants exhibited a predominantly positive attitude towards blended learning. They demonstrated an awareness of the interconnectedness between engaging the Blackboard platform and face-to-face learning in writing instruction. The positive perspectives and receptiveness exhibited by the students towards blended learning underscore its potential to cultivate engagement, collaboration, and enhanced learning outcomes of writing instruction.
Rahman et al. (2024)	50 University students studying EAP in Indonesia	Quantitative study: Questionnaire	Asynchronous learning as part of BL	Asynchronous Learning improved student autonomy and learning abilities. It is also found that AL can be developed better to help students improve their critical thinking skills, communication skills, social interaction and collaboration skills.
Hill & Smith (2023)	Multiple universities in the UK	Qualitative study: Plans analysis & Interviews	Blended learning	BL was seen as a way of 'taking things out of the didactic classroom', and supporting students to be more independent learners.
Ayesha (2024)	150 students and 9 teachers, professional education university, Pakistan	Questionnaire and Semi-structured interviews	Blended learning	Teachers and learners of a BL English Language Communication course switched traditional roles within the class with a sense of shared responsibility and decision making. Learners engaged in a variety of meaningful activities while digital technology was welcomed as a new partner in the learning process and students exhibited increased awareness and evaluation of digital learning resources both inside and outside the class.
Owens & Burgess (2015)	28 undergraduate students from an international university in Thailand	Case Study: Pre- and post- observations & portfolio assessment	Blended learning	Students showed gains in academic English writing skills, particularly through the process approach. E-portfolios revealed active engagement in planning, drafting, revising, and presenting.
Chen (2022)	120 undergraduate students from a translation course in China	Mixed methods of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews	Blended learning	Most students viewed BL as effective for developing autonomy. High motivation, involvement, and responsibility were reported, though moderate independence indicated the continued importance of teacher support in BL environments.
Stewart (2025)	30 undergraduate students, Japan	two learner reports, an end of-course questionnaire, learner records from the tool's database, and the teacher researcher's research journal	Blended learning	The tools supported learners' metacognition by raising their awareness of gaps in their English-related linguistic knowledge, aiding their strategic planning for upcoming quizzes and exams, and providing opportunities for learners to explore new cognitive strategies. Many learners used their metacognitive skills to maximize their effort and select and use cognitive strategies with intentionality. These findings confirm the potential of blended learning tools for fostering out-of-class review behaviours and learners' metacognitive development.
Bu (2024)	4 teachers and 52 junior students from an English major college in Shanghai, China	A combination of action research, surveys, semi-structured interviews and mining of online data	Blended learning	Teachers exhibit autonomy and agency by employing various strategies, such as adding theme-based activities. Students highly value teachers' mediating role between teaching materials and learners, showing heavy dependence on teacher-guided activities in blended learning.
Banditvilai (2016)	60 undergraduate English major programme from a university in Thailand	Case Study: Pretest & achievement test & questionnaire & semi-structured interviews	Blended learning	Online practice is directly beneficial to enhance the four language learning skills as well as autonomous learning and learner motivation.

Table A1. *Cont.*

Author(s) and Year	Sample	Research Design	Integration Model	Major Findings
Wang & Zhang (2022)	500 undergraduate English language course, China	Case study: questionnaires	Blended learning	The optimized BL mode stimulated language learners' motivation, cultivated their autonomous learning ability and improved their autonomous learning behaviour.
Seppala (2018)	Two groups Language Centre, Aalto University, Espoo and Helsinki, Finland	Qualitative content analysis	Blended learning	The writing assignments discussed seemed to enable and encourage expressions of different types of agency ownership of learning and turning learning tasks into meaningful activities. Students could be better able to shape their learning paths also outside higher education contexts throughout their lives. Assignments requiring and enabling learners' initiative and accountability as experts were deemed valuable.

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