Students Perspectives Towards Self-Directed Learning

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ABSTRACT

Student-centered approaches in education recognize that students have different learning styles and preferences. These approaches emphasize the importance of individualized learning tasks that are tailored to the student's needs and interests. Self-directed learning is a popular approach within student-centered learning, particularly in language learning contexts. This study aims at finding out Iraqi EFL university students' perspectives on self-directed learning. To this end, the sample of this study consists of 100 students randomly selected fourth-year students from the English Department in the College of Education/ Ibn Rushed at Baghdad University for the academic year 2023-2024. To measure their perspectives toward self-directed learning, a questionnaire is adapted from Shen et al. (2014). The results reveal that Iraqi EFL university students are highly motivated and resilient, demonstrating a strong desire for knowledge acquisition. They connect new knowledge with personal experiences, evaluate learning outcomes, and identify learning needs. They understand their strengths and weaknesses, use appropriate strategies, and monitor progress. They are resourceful in finding and accessing learning resources, highlighting the importance of self-directed learning in language learning and the potential of these students to become effective learners.

Keywords: Student-centered approaches, individualized learning, self-directed learning,

وجهات نظر الطلاب تجاه التعلم الذاتي الموجه

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الملخص

تدرك الأساليب التي تركز على الطالب في التعليم أن الطلاب لديهم أنماط وتفضيلات تعلم مختلفة. تؤكد هذه الأساليب على أهمية مهام التعلم الفردية التي تم تصميمها وفقًا لاحتياجات الطالب واهتماماته. يعد التعلم الموجه ذاتيًا أسلوبًا شائعًا في التعلم الذي يركز على الطالب، خاصة في سياقات تعلم اللغة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة وجهات نظر طلاب جامعة اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق حول التعلم الموجه ذاتيا. وتحقيقا لهذه الغاية تكونت عينة هذه الدراسة من **(100)** طالبا تم اختيارهم عشوائيا من طلاب السنة الرابعة من قسم اللغة الانجليزية في كلية التربية / ابن رشد في جامعة بغداد للعام الدراسي ٢٠٢٣-٢٠٢٤. لقياس وجهات نظرهم تجاه التعلم الموجه ذاتيًا، تم تعديل استبانة من **Shen et al**. (٢٠١٤). تكشف النتائج أن طلاب الجامعات العراقية في مجال اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لديهم دافعية عالية ومرونة، مما يدل على رغبة قوية في اكتساب المعرفة. وهم يربطون المعرفة الجديدة بالتجارب الشخصية، ويقيمون نتائج التعلم، ويحددون احتياجات التعلم. إنهم يفهمون نقاط القوة والضعف لديهم، ويستخدمون الاستراتيجيات المناسبة، ويراقبون التقدم. إنهم واسعو الحيلة في العثور على موارد التعلم والوصول إليها، مما يسلط الضوء على أهمية التعلم الموجه ذاتيًا في تعلم اللغة وإمكانات هؤلاء الطلاب ليصبحوا متعلمين فعالين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأساليب المتمركزة حول الطالب، التعلم الفردي، التعلم الموجه ذاتيا.

1. Introduction

The methods of acquiring and utilizing information have undergone significant changes in recent years due to its widespread availability from various sources. This has also led to questioning the notion that information is fixed and unalterable, as well as challenging the idea that authorities possess exclusive access to absolute and accurate information. Moreover, the traditional perspective of learning, which involved memorizing information in isolated compartments, has been replaced by a problem-focused approach that emphasizes conceptualization, knowledge acquisition, and comprehension (Aspin & Chapman, 2001)

As our understanding of knowledge and learning has evolved, the emphasis on memorization has diminished, and the focus on learning how to learn has become more prominent. Individuals who have developed this skill are able to effectively manage their own learning, apply new information to broader contexts, overcome challenges, and exhibit qualities such as adaptability, self-confidence, and a willingness to learn. They are also capable of employing various learning strategies and are aware of their own learning styles, interests, and talents (Hofmann, 2008).

In order to remain competitive, the education system today must encourage individuals to enhance their own knowledge. The goal is to foster individuals who take responsibility for their own learning and engage in lifelong learning that is continuous and ongoing. Self-learning refers to individuals' ability to take control of their time and knowledge management, and it involves being mindful of their learning needs and overcoming obstacles to achieve successful learning by making informed decisions about opportunities. One approach that can be utilized for this purpose is self-directed learning (Alfian, 2019) .

Hiemstra (1994) states that self-directed learning has also been implemented with learners in elementary and secondary schools. There are several notable aspects associated with self-directed learning. Firstly, learners are given increasing autonomy and responsibility in making decisions related to their learning journey. Secondly, self-directed learning is recognized as a continuous characteristic that exists to some extent in every learning situation and individual. Lastly, self-direction does not necessarily imply learning in isolation from others.

1.1 The Statement of the Problem

According to the literature that have been surveyed, most of students tend to be dependent on the teacher or instructors, some researchers relate this to the teacher-centered approaches of teaching where the

students are almost passive and the opportunities for their contribution in their own learning is limited, others state that students themselves have limited awareness of their abilities to be self-directed learners. The problem addressed in this study is the limited understanding of university students' perspectives on self-directed learning and its implications for their academic and personal development. While self-directed learning is increasingly recognized as an essential skill for lifelong learning and success in the academic context, there is a lack of comprehensive research exploring how university students perceive and experience self-directed learning. Understanding college students' perspectives on self-directed learning is crucial for designing effective educational interventions and strategies that cater to their needs and preferences.

1.2 Aim

This study aims at finding out Iraqi EFL university students' perspectives on self-directed learning.

1.3 The Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the perspectives towards self-directed learning

1.4 Limits

This study is limited to Iraqi EFL fourth year university students in English Department in the College of Education /Ibn Rushd at Baghdad University for the academic year 2023-2024.

1.5. Definition of Basic Terms

The following terms are defined theoretically and operationally:

1.5.1. Self-Directed Learning

Self-directed learning is an approach to education where learners take responsibility for their own learning; as such, students who are actively involved in and take control of their own learning process can be referred to as self-directed students. These students have the ability to

choose their own learning strategies, resources, and outcomes in order to reach their desired goals. (Bosch, 2017, P. 46).

1.5.2. Students' Perspective

Students' perspective refers to their individual beliefs, attitudes, experiences, and values that shape their understanding and perception of certain concepts. It encompasses their unique points of view and judgments towards these concepts (Zulfikar, 2009)

1. Theoretical background

2.1 Definition of Self-directed learning

Self-directed learning (SDL), as described by Knowles(1975) , is a process in which individuals take responsibility for analyzing their learning goals, formulating those goals, identifying the necessary resources and materials, selecting appropriate materials, utilizing effective learning methods, and assessing their learning outcomes. According to Gibbons (2003), SDL refers to any improvement in knowledge, skills, achievements, or personal development that learners choose and pursue on their own, using various methods in any situation and at any time. From this perspective, SDL involves initiating challenging activities and developing personal knowledge and skills to successfully tackle those challenges.

Van Gelderen (2010), defines self-directed learning as a process that involves self-motivation through the introduction and combination of various elements. In this perspective, self-directed learning starts with self-motivation. It emphasizes that learners have the autonomy to set their learning objectives and evaluate their learning outcomes. Learners are capable of formulating their learning goals, maintaining their enthusiasm for learning, and assessing their learning achievements. They have the ability to choose, organize, and prioritize their learning activities, which can be pursued at any time, in any place, and at any age.

Self-directed learning can be understood as a learning process that encompasses both the physical and psychological readiness of individuals to take the initiative in their own learning. It involves students actively controlling and managing their academic lives and finding the most suitable learning approaches for themselves. This process is based on the belief that learners bear the primary responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating their learning experiences (Alfian, 2019).

2.2 Self-directed learning as a Process

According to Merriam (2001) , SDL is a process that involves helping learners develop the necessary skills to take responsibility for their own learning. It is said that learners should be guided in setting learning goals, identifying learning resources, employing effective learning strategies, and evaluating their learning outcomes. Sefton-Green (2004), defines SDL as autodidactism, which involves self-teaching and self-motivated learning. Song and Hill (2007) explain that SDL, when viewed as a process, focuses on the processes undertaken by learners to control their own learning, rather than following stepwise actions to achieve a goal. Candy (1991), Brockett and Hiemstra (2018), and Garrison (1997) also emphasize the ownership of learning and self-monitoring in process-oriented notions of SDL. They highlight the following characteristics of SDL as a process:

a) It exists as a continuum that varies in degree among learners.

b) Learners have the responsibility of making decisions related to their learning.

c) SDL involves the thinking and behaviors that learners choose to direct and manage their activities.

d) Learner control does not mean learning in isolation; it can involve collaboration with peers.

e) Learners need to self-monitor their learning process to ensure alignment with their identified learning goals.

Mezirow's (1981) theoretical framework of transformative learning includes self-directedness as part of the emancipatory process of perspective transformation. SDL is incorporated in Mezirow's definition of andragogy, which is described as an organized and sustained effort to assist adults in learning in a way that enhances their ability to function as self-directed learners.

A second group of researchers, including Brockett and Hiemstra (2018), Knowles (1975), Tough (1979), and Brookfield (1995), SDL as a process or skill that can be developed and improved through experience or training. They believed that learners should be guided to increase their ability to be more self-directed and take personal responsibility for their own learning. Merriam and Caffarella (1993) further advocated for the use of SDL as a framework for designing instructional models that shift learning control to students while guiding them towards greater self-direction.

It is important to support students in becoming more self-directed and accepting personal accountability for their education. According to Brookfield, adults can employ SDL to set objectives, consider possibilities, select a strategy, and critically analyze their progress to track their progress (Brookfield, 1995, p. 3).

As to Hammond and Collins (2013, p. 7), the idea of SDL as a character property is excessively restrictive, and a comprehensive model encompasses nine phases of the SDL procedure:

1- Creating a cooperative learning environment.

2- Analyzing scenarios.

3- Developing a competency outline.

4- Evaluating oneself the requirements for learning.

5- Developing learning contracts.

6- Managing one's own education.

7- Reflection and learning.

8- Verification of learning.

9- Assembling essential SDL.

2.3 Self-directed learning as a characteristic of personality.

Scholars have approached SDL from a psychological perspective (e.g., Oddi, 1986; Long, 1990; Brockett & Hiemstra, 2018). The psychological perspective on SDL research underpins the concept that SDL works with individuals who have a variety of challenges and personalities. Personality traits and other psychological characteristics often transfer from one learning setting to another (Oddi, 1986). It is important to realize that the concept of personality trait appears to be crucial to the study of SDL as personal attributes. In order to be self-directed, a learner must possess a high level of initiative, self-efficacy, and intrinsic motivation; identify their own unique learning needs; set learning objectives; create effective learning strategies to meet those objectives; assess the entire process; and be ready to take on new challenges (Skager, 1979). Additionally, a student must be able to discriminate between main ideas and ancillary notions. Therefore, according to Garrison (1997, p. 18), SDL is "an approach where learners are motivated to assume personal responsibility and collaborative control of the cognitive (self-monitoring) and contextual (self-management) processes in constructing and confirming meaningful and worthwhile learning outcomes".

It is possible for any adult to be self-directed (Knowles, 1975). This indicates that humans also have a range of personality characteristics, including the predisposition to be self-directed learners ranging from a minimum to a maximum attribute (Brockett & Hiemstra, 2018). However, personality traits emerge later in life and become more apparent in late adolescence (e.g., Arnett, 1999; McCrae et al., 2002).

2.4 Factors affecting self-directed learning

According to Aruan(2013), a variety of internal and environmental factors might have an impact on self-directed learning.18

a. Internal factors

All internal factors, including heredity, originate from within the individual. Everything an individual inherits at birth serves as the foundation for their subsequent growth and development. talent, intelligence potential, gender, mood, health, learning strategies, intelligence, and education are among the factors that might impact self-directed learning (Aruan, 2013).

1- **Gender**: The following distinctions between males and females are the result of these differences:

- Academic success. It is well known that women are more consistent than men. The fact that women consistently perform verbal tasks very well makes female have the best performance in school.
- Among other things, the talents or abilities examined demonstrate that women routinely score higher than males on intellectual tests.

2- **Ways of Learning**: For students to succeed in their education, they need to know how to study in a method that works for them. Students that engage in self-directed learning will be able to comprehend concepts, identify areas where they need improvement, and come up with ideas for effective teaching strategies (Aruan, 2013).

3- **Health and mood**: they are thought to have an impact on pupils' preparation for self-direction. Students' motivation to learn on their own will be influenced by their emotional state (Aruan, 2013).

4- Intelligence: Independent students are better able to manage their actions, particularly when it comes to the cognitive (knowing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating) and emotive (accepting,

reacting, respecting, molding, and having a personal role) aspects of behavior. It is also said that autonomous behavior has the capacity to cultivate a critical mindset toward external authority. Students who exhibit autonomous behavior are free to participate and make decisions without external influence. Thus, learning independence is formed in part by intelligence (Aruan, 2013).

5- **Education:** Education must enable students to realize their own potential and enable them to act independently. To do this, students must be exposed to a range of experiences that foster the development of ideas, principles, generalization, intelligence, initiative, creativity, emotions, and other qualities. People with more education will have a greater understanding of who they are, including their talents and shortcomings, which will give them confidence (Aruan, 2013).

b. External Factors

Anything that comes from outside of each student is considered an external component. Environmental factors are another name for it. Both positively and negatively, an individual's environment has a significant impact on how their personality develops. Good family and community environments, particularly with regard to beliefs and lifestyle choices, have a significant impact on personality development, including the ability to become independent (Aruan, 2013).

1) **Study time:** Setting aside time for personal study is part of the planning that goes into the implementation of independent learning. Students setting their own learning requirements is one method of implementing autonomous learning. Independent learning will occur if students can manage their time properly.

2) **A place to learn:** Learning places might include lecture halls, classrooms, discussion rooms, and the region around campus. A comfortable study environment is a facility that can be provided; of

course, it may raise students' awareness and willingness to study independently.

3) **Learning Motivation**: It is a skill that encourages learners to participate in the learning process, focus on learning objectives, and work on study assignments. There are two types of performance learning motivation: internal motivation and extrinsic incentive. To learn and see the necessity of autonomous learning is an example of intrinsic motivation. Tests, grades, and prizes from others are instances of extrinsic motivation.

4) **Parenting Style**: The family is the first and most important site for children's education, therefore parents are the first individuals to influence, direct, and teach their children. The parenting practices used in the family influence the child's growth and development. As a representation of their feeling of duty to children, the best methods of parenting could be utilized for teaching children.

2.5 Components of self-directed learning

Benson and White (2016) have identified several components of self-directed learning, as described below:

a. **Needs Analysis**: Students are encouraged to assess their own needs and priorities through self-report analysis. This helps them identify the language topics they should focus on.

b. **Goals and Objectives**: Students set general goals that encompass their purposes for studying, and they break down these goals into specific objectives that outline the steps needed to achieve them.

c. **Materials Selection**: Students take the initiative to choose materials that are suitable for their needs and can be accessed at any time and from anywhere.

d. **Learner Strategies**: Students are responsible for finding and employing appropriate strategies for studying and practicing their skills, in order to meet their individual learning needs.

e. **Self-Assessment:** Self-assessment involves students evaluating their own learning progress, identifying areas of improvement, and determining what needs to be prepared for the next steps in their learning journey.

f. **Self-Reflection:** Self-reflection is a crucial step in the self-directed learning process. Students are encouraged to reflect on their learning experiences, considering what aspects worked well and what areas need further improvement. This introspective practice helps students gain insights into their learning strategies, identify strengths and weaknesses, and make necessary adjustments to enhance their learning outcomes.

2.6 Aspects of self-directed learning

According to Tan et al (2011), SDL can be categorized into three aspects: ownership of learning, self-management and self-monitoring, and extension of learning. These aspects are important in identifying students with SDL abilities.

1. **Ownership of Learning:** Students with ownership of learning are able to identify, determine, and articulate their learning objectives. They take responsibility for their assignments and actively chart their learning process. They challenge themselves and set high standards for achieving their learning goals.

2. **Self-management and Self-monitoring:** Students who exhibit self-management and self-monitoring skills formulate questions and generate relevant inquiries. They explore various possibilities and make informed decisions. They effectively plan and manage their time to achieve their learning goals. They engage in critical reflection on their learning and actively seek feedback from teachers and peers.

3. **Extension of Own Learning:** Students who extend their own learning apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired to new contexts. They go beyond the boundaries of the curriculum and utilize

their acquired skills to continue learning outside of the prescribed content.

These indicators highlight the proactive and independent nature of self-directed learners, who take ownership of their learning, effectively manage, and monitor their progress, and extend their learning beyond the classroom.(Tan et al., 2011)

2.7 Self-Regulation and Self-Directed Learning

At SDL and self-regulated learning (SRL) may appear similar (Jossberge et al., 2010). However, there are important distinctions between the two concepts.

1 **SDL and SRL**: SDL is characterized by private, purposeful mental processes of identifying and seeking information, often followed by behavioral practices (Long, 1990). On the other hand, SRL is rooted in cognitive psychology and emphasizes metacognition and cognitive strategies (Winne, 1996). SRL involves self-regulation in terms of metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral aspects (Zimmerman, 1989).

2 **Control and Learning Process**: In both SDL and SRL, active participation and goal-directed actions are required (Loyens et al., 2008). However, the control level of the learner differs. In SDL, the learner defines the learning mission and determines what needs to be learned. In SRL, the instructor creates the learning challenge, and the learner focuses on self-regulating their learning process. SDL may include elements of SRL, but not vice versa.

3 **Phases of Self-Regulation**: Zimmerman (2002) outlines three cyclical phases in self-regulation: forethought, performance, and self-reflection.

- **Forethought Phase**: This phase involves task analysis, goal setting, strategic planning, and self-motivation processes such as self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations.

- **Performance Phase**: In this phase, learners implement learning strategies, exercise self-control, and apply the methods and strategies selected during the forethought phase. Metacognitive knowledge plays a role here, as it can either enhance or hinder learning.
- **Self-Reflection Phase**: After each learning act, the self-reflection phase takes place. Learners engage in self-judgment and evaluation, including self-evaluation and self-reaction. Self-evaluation involves comparing one's performance against prior performance or standards, while self-reaction involves beliefs about the causes of errors and can lead to defensive or adaptive responses.

2.8 Self -Directed Learning Models

There are different models of self-directed learning that can be categorized into three main types: linear models, interactive models, and instructional models.

1. **Linear models**: These models propose a step-by-step progression towards self-directed learning. Learners move through stages or steps to achieve their learning goals. Knowles (1975) and Tough (1979) suggested six steps in this model, including identifying resources for learning, choosing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. The linear model emphasizes that learners can develop self-directed abilities over time.
2. **Interactive models**: These models focus on the interaction that occurs during the learning process. Writers such as Brockett & Hiemstra (2018), Garrison (1997), and Grow (1991) argue that understanding the interaction in self-directed learning is crucial. Examples of interactive models include the Personal Responsibility Orientation (PRO) model and Garrison's model. These models examine learner characteristics and the instructional process to enhance self-directed learning.
3. **Instructional models**: This type of model considers the teacher-student dimension of self-directed learning as a teaching or instructional

method. It provides guidance on how to accompany learners towards becoming self-directed by understanding how to instruct them effectively. Examples of instructional models include Grow's model (1991) and Hammond and Collins' model. Grow's model suggests that learners progress through four stages of learning: dependent, interested, involved, and self-directed. Instruction is designed to help learners become self-directed, and the independence of learners does not mean isolation as they can still seek help from teachers or peers.

3. Methodology and Results

3.1 participants

The sample for this study consists of ١٠٠ students randomly selected fourth-year students from the English Department in the Colleges of Education/ Ibn Rushed at Baghdad University for the academic year 2023-2024. These 20 students represent a subset of the total population, which consists of 100 fourth-year female students.

3.2 Data Collection (Questionnaire)

To measure students' perspectives toward SDL, a questionnaire is adapted from Shen et al. (2014) which consists of ten items and a five-point Likert scale ranging from (never = 1) to (always = 5). The time allotted to respond to the questionnaire is (10) minutes.

3.3 Results

The results of the study are obtained by analyzing the students' responses to the questionnaire. The responses are calculated based on the chosen alternatives, and the main statistical measures used are the arithmetic mean and standard deviation. The average indicator of (3) is used as a criterion to determine students' awareness, motivation, and understanding of self-directed learning. Indicators with a mean score of (3) and above are considered positively perceived by the sample, while indicators with a mean score below (3) are seen as negatively perceived. The indicators in the questionnaire are then arranged in

descending order from the highest to the lowest mean. This approach allowed for a clear understanding of the students' perspectives on self-directed learning, highlighting the areas where they showed the strongest and weakest awareness. The results revel that students display a great deal of awareness, motivation, and understanding towards self-directed learning as shown in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1

Mean Scores, Standard Deviations and Ranks of the Students' Responses for SDL Questionnaire Items

No. of items	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
3	I enjoy finding answers to questions.	100	4.20	1.005
4	I will not give up learning because I face some difficulties.		4.00	1.124
2	My successes and failures inspire me to continue learning.		3.95	0.945
7	I can connect new knowledge with my own personal experiences.		3.95	0.826
10	I can evaluate my own learning outcomes		3.65	0.988
1	I know what I need to learn.		3.60	0.940
8	I understand the strengths and weaknesses of my learning.		3.55	1.276
5	I know what learning strategies are appropriate for me in reaching my learning goals.		3.50	1.100
9	I can monitor my learning progress.		3.45	1.234
6	I know how to find resources for my learning.		3.20	1.196

To verify the hypothesis, A one-sample t-test was conducted to compare the sample mean of 3.7050 to a theoretical mean of ٣٠ with a standard deviation of 0.30772. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in the perspectives towards self-directed

learning, while the alternative hypothesis states that the population mean is significantly different. The t-value calculated was 12.033, with 19 degrees of freedom. The resulting p-value was less than 0.001, indicating a significant difference between the sample mean and the hypothesized mean. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, suggesting that there is a significant difference in the perspectives towards self-directed learning . The results are shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Means Scores, Standard Deviations, T-Values and p-value for the sample of study

Sample Mean	Theoretical Mean	Std. Deviation	n	DF	t-value	p-value
3.705	٣٠	0.30772	100	19	12.033	< 0.001

3.4 Discussion of Results

The purpose of this study is to explore the perspective of Iraqi EFL university students towards self-directed learning, which is considered an essential aspect of language learning. The study aims to investigate students' awareness, motivation, and understanding of self-directed learning, specifically how they recognize and comprehend this approach. The findings of the study indicate that:

1. The majority of students expressed a positive attitude towards seeking answers to questions, indicating a strong sense of curiosity and enjoyment in the process of acquiring knowledge.

2. It is evident from the responses that students possess a resilient mindset and demonstrate a commitment to continue learning despite encountering obstacles or challenges along the way.

3. The students' responses indicate that both their achievements and failures serve as sources of inspiration, motivating them to persist in their learning journey and strive for further improvement.

4. Students demonstrated a strong ability to relate new knowledge to their personal experiences, highlighting their capacity to make meaningful connections and enhance their understanding of the subject matter.

5. The students' responses reveal their capability to assess and evaluate their own learning outcomes, indicating a sense of self-awareness and the ability to reflect on their progress and achievements.

6. The majority of students displayed a clear understanding of their learning needs, suggesting a high level of self-awareness and the ability to identify areas for improvement and further knowledge acquisition.

7. Students demonstrated an understanding of their learning strengths and weaknesses, indicating an awareness of their own learning style and preferences, which can guide their approach to learning and help optimize their learning experience.

8. The students' responses indicate a good understanding of the learning strategies that are suitable for their individual learning goals, highlighting their ability to align their learning approach with their desired outcomes.

9. Students demonstrated the ability to effectively monitor their learning progress, suggesting a proactive approach to self-assessment and self-regulation, which can contribute to their overall learning success.

10. The majority of students displayed competence in locating and accessing learning resources, indicating their resourcefulness and ability to seek out materials that support their learning needs and goals.

3.5 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that Iraqi EFL university students have a positive perspective towards self-directed learning. The majority of students exhibited a strong desire for knowledge acquisition, displayed resilience in the face of challenges, and were motivated by both successes and failures. They demonstrated

the ability to connect new knowledge with personal experiences, evaluate their own learning outcomes, and identify their learning needs. Additionally, the students showed an understanding of their learning strengths and weaknesses, were knowledgeable about appropriate learning strategies, and were proficient in monitoring their learning progress. Moreover, they exhibited resourcefulness in finding and accessing learning resources. These findings highlight the importance of self-directed learning in the context of language learning and emphasize the potential of Iraqi EFL university students to become effective self-directed learners.

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