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A Path to Self-Discovery: Inspiring Learners through a Language Advising Program

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of a language advising program (LAP) designed to enhance self-directed learning in foreign language acquisition at a state university in Central Anatolia, Türkiye. The research explores two main questions: (1) whether participants demonstrate a growing sense of awareness and control over their self-directed learning, and (2) their perceptions of the program's effectiveness. A qualitative-dominant case study design was employed, incorporating eight weeks of individual Zoom advising consultations. Participants engaged in various activities to foster self-directed learning, including a goal-setting pyramid, confidence-building diary, vision board, the wheel of language learning and so on, while quantitative measures were used to support the findings. Data were collected through thematic analysis of weekly advising consultations, motivation graphics and semi-structured interviews conducted at the end of the program. Findings indicate that participants showed a significant growth in their self-awareness and control over learning, with structured activities playing a central role in this development. Additionally, participants reported several positive perceptions of the program's effectiveness, highlighting improvements in their motivation, learning strategies, and self-confidence. The results suggest that the program effectively supported participants' self-directed learning and could serve as a model for similar educational initiatives. This study hopes to contribute to the body of research on self-directed learning in language education and aims at emphasizing the potential of advising programs to enhance learner autonomy.

Keywords: Self-directed learning; language advising; learner autonomy; motivation; program effectiveness

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1. Introduction

1.1. *The problem*

In the context of the global pandemic that began in early 2020 and continued nearly the end of 2022, distance education became the predominant mode of teaching and learning. Both educators and learners encountered considerable difficulties in adapting to the unusual circumstances of online education, primarily due to the lack of familiarity with socially distanced classrooms among both groups. In English language instruction at the tertiary level, the emphasis shifted towards identifying strategies to establish connections with students on both psychological and linguistic levels, with the aim of relieving the increased stress levels.

The present study adopts a case study approach to explore the potential of innovative strategies to address disengagement in tertiary-level English language. A case study is a qualitative research strategy that focuses on the in-depth exploration of a specific phenomenon within its real-life context. This approach often utilizes multiple data sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of complex issues. It is exceptionally valuable in educational research because it enables researchers to examine distinctive teaching and learning contexts; thereby, providing them with insights that may not be obtained through other methods (Stake, 1995; Baxter & Jack, 2008). The complex nature of educational challenges can be more readily understood through the case study methodology, making it an effective approach for investigating the impact of specific interventions on key outcomes, such as student engagement, learning outcomes, and overall classroom dynamics.

This work also draws the attention to the challenges inherent to virtual classrooms. To address this issue, a language advising program was implemented with four volunteer learners over eight weeks. The program incorporated reflective dialogue and self-directed learning strategies. The objective of these strategies was to facilitate psychological and linguistic connections while simultaneously enhancing learner autonomy and motivation in an online environment. Eight advising session recordings, the participants' products, semi-structured interviews and motivation graphics were utilized in the current study to research the potential of language for boosting learners' engagement into language learning processes. The present study aims at providing practical insights into how to overcome the distinctive challenges of virtual education, and stipulating valuable implications for English language instruction in similar contexts. It also hope to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the importance of supporting language learners through language advising programs (Loingsigh & Mozzon, 2020; Kato & Mynard, 2015; Mynard & Kato, 2022; Shelton-Strong, 2022).

The present study builds upon existing research by situating language advising within a sociocultural theory of learning, which views learning as a fundamentally social process

(Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Poehner, 2008; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). In this framework, individuals acquire knowledge and develop skills through their interactions with others and the world around them, often using "psychological tools" like language and meaningful language learning activities to mediate these experiences (Kozulin, 1998). The sociocultural theory of learning posits that learning is not merely the internalization of information; rather, it is a process that involves social interaction and reflection, which are essential for fostering deeper cognitive and emotional engagement (Vygotsky, 1978; 1981). This concept of mediation aligns with the idea that learners' thinking is transformed through these interactions, ultimately shaping their understanding (Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Poehner, 2008). By focusing on how reflection and interaction facilitate learning, the present case study seeks to contribute to the growing body of work that emphasizes the importance of these processes in language learning in similar contexts.

Moreover, the incorporation of language advising programs and reflective dialogue represents a central element of this study. Language advising, defined as a process designed to assist learners in monitoring and regulating their behavior in pursuit of their learning objectives, plays a pivotal role in fostering autonomy and facilitating improvements in language proficiency (Mynard, 2019). Mynard and Carson (2012) suggest that language advising encompasses guiding learners to direct their own learning paths in a manner that increases their effectiveness and autonomy as language learners. It focuses on the learners' capacity to reflect on their language learning process and become more aware of the factors influencing their development. Hiemstra (2013) also emphasizes the idea that language advising helps adults make decisions about their learning goals, thereby empowering them to assume ownership of their language learning journey.

While prior studies have explored language advising in face-to-face contexts (Horai & Wright, 2016; Loingsigh & Mozzon-McPherson, 2020; Mynard, 2017; Yasuda, 2023), this study explores its application in virtual classrooms, where the challenges of disengagement and disconnection are particularly pronounced during the Covid-19 pandemic in Türkiye. Students often remain silent, with their cameras off and voices muted, creating a sense of isolation during that time. Reflective dialogue and the use of various psychological tools in the form of language tasks, as emphasized by Kato and Mynard (2015), are employed here to bridge this gap and encourage deeper engagement in online environments. The focus on self-directed learning strategies reinforces previous research in the field that reveals the importance of learner autonomy, particularly in remote learning contexts (Mynard, 2020).

In addition, this study gets its roots from the existing work (Horai & Wright, 2016; Loingsigh & Mozzon-McPherson, 2020; Mynard, 2017; Yasuda, 2023) by applying sociocultural principles to online education. Online education is a field that has been less explored compared to traditional classroom settings. It is an attempt to understand how virtual classrooms can be transformed into more engaging learning environments through the use of language advising and reflective dialogue. By applying these tools, the study

aims at addressing the unique challenges of online education during the pandemic, particularly emotional and psychological disengagement. This research has both theoretical and practical implications, demonstrating how sociocultural theory can be adapted to modern educational settings and offering valuable insights for educators seeking to enhance engagement and support learner autonomy in digital environments.

By embedding sociocultural theory into language advising practices, the study aspires to make a meaningful contribution to English language instruction. It offers a theoretical framework that highlights mediated learning through reflective dialogue and the use of psychological tools. This integration supports the idea that language learning is not solely about acquiring linguistic knowledge, but also about developing metacognitive and self-regulatory abilities. The findings bring into line the principles of sociocultural theory, mainly Vygotsky's concept of mediation (1978), which stresses the role of tools and social interaction in shaping learners' cognitive and emotional development. By underlining how psychological instruments like self-assessment tools and reflective practices can enhance autonomy and motivation, the study expands the theoretical application of sociocultural principles beyond traditional classroom settings into advising contexts and online environments.

In sum, the theoretical and practical implications of the current study converge to underscore the prominence of reflective, mediated, and learner-centered practices in advancing both language proficiency and self-directed learning capabilities.

1.2. Literature review

The integration of language advising programs (LAPs) within the framework of sociocultural theory constitutes the focal point of this study. The sociocultural theory emphasizes the pivotal role of social interactions and external tools in shaping cognitive development. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning is inherently a socially mediated activity that involves the interaction between learners and their environment, where external tools and support systems help learners navigate through the learning process. In the context of language advising, reflective dialogues and psychological tools such as self-assessment and goal-setting frameworks serve as the primary tools of mediation, aiding learners in improving their cognitive and metacognitive awareness.

Early works on language advising emphasize its potential to promote learner autonomy, where learners take ownership of their educational trajectories. Mynard and Carson (2012) placed emphasis on language advising as being a learner-centered process that involves deep reflection. By engaging in reflective dialogue, learners gain greater awareness of their learning styles and needs, ultimately fostering a sense of agency in their language learning process. This supports Vygotsky's (1978) concept of scaffolding, wherein guidance is

provided to learners just beyond their current capabilities, enabling them to reach a higher level of understanding and skill.

Similarly, Little (2004) suggested that advising helps to nurture learner autonomy by allowing students to self-regulate their learning. Through this process, learners identify their own strengths, weaknesses, and preferred learning strategies, ultimately taking responsibility for their progress. This move towards autonomy is also deeply intertwined with sociocultural principles, as learning is mediated through the interactions learners have with their advisors and the tools they use in the process. Kato and Mynard (2015) expanded these ideas by investigating the role of reflective practices, including learner narratives and self-assessment tools, in advising. These reflective tools, which are essential in fostering metacognitive awareness, help learners gain insight into their learning behaviors, allowing them to adjust strategies and set more effective goals. This practice of reflection is supported by Vygotsky's (1978) notion of mediation, where external tools facilitate cognitive development, providing a socially mediated process that leads to deeper learning outcomes.

Despite the foundational work on language advising, some of the research has been conducted in traditional in-person settings (Horai & Wright, 2016; Loingsigh & Mozzon-McPherson, 2020; Mynard, 2017; Yasuda, 2023). With the rapid growth of online education, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to adapt advising practices to digital environments has become more urgent.

Recent studies have explored how online environments can support learner autonomy. For instance, Peeters and Mynard (2021) focused on how learners managed their plans and progress with peers online, but the study did not explore structured advising models. Guban-Casido (2020), on the other hand, examined how online advising supported metacognitive reflection and emotional expression, yet she did not explore the impact of structured advising programs on learners' autonomy or self-directed learning. Similarly, Mynard, Kato, and Shelton-Strong (2023) explored learner and advisor perceptions of online advising during the pandemic, focusing on creating an autonomy-supportive environment in synchronous online settings, but their study did not address the use of structured advising models or specific frameworks to enhance self-directed learning.

The present research seeks to fill these gaps by investigating how a structured language advising program in Türkiye, through meaningful learning activities that served as psychological tools, may foster self-awareness, control, and autonomy in language learning with the help of online advising sessions. In conclusion, this study attempts to contribute to the field of language advising by applying sociocultural theory to online language learning. It also aims to demonstrate how reflective dialogue and psychological tools can

be integrated into digital advising programs, providing learners with the scaffolding necessary to achieve autonomy and motivation in their learning.

1.3. Hypotheses and their correspondence to research design

The impact of a language advising program on learner empowerment in additional language acquisition and the enhancement of self-directed learning practices is the focus of this research. The research focuses on two primary questions:

1. Do the participants demonstrate a growing sense of awareness and control over their self-directed learning? If so, what are the contributing factors?
2. What are the perceptions of the participants regarding the effectiveness of the language advising program?

1.3.1. Hypothesis I

It is hypothesized that participants will demonstrate a significant increase in their sense of awareness and control over their self-directed learning by the end of the program, attributed to the activities and strategies introduced throughout the course.

1.3.2. Research design for hypothesis I

To test this hypothesis, a qualitative research design was employed. The program's relatively longitudinal nature allows for the collection of data at multiple stages throughout the eight-week duration. Weekly individual Zoom consultations with participants served as the primary method for gathering qualitative data on their self-reported sense of awareness and control. During these consultations, participants engaged in various psychological tools in a format of various language tasks. These tools were designed to promote self-directed learning, including goal-setting, action planning, the creation of motivation graphics, and self-reflection exercises like confidence-building diaries, action plans and so on.

The data collected from these activities were analyzed using thematic analysis to examine shifts in the participants' learning behaviors, attitudes, and levels of self-direction. By exploring the content of the weekly reflections and discussions, this study identifies the specific factors within the program that contributed to participants' development of self-directed learning skills. Themes such as increased confidence, better

time management, and clearer goal-setting emerged as central to the participants' evolving sense of control over their learning.

In addition, the study examined how participants interacted with various program elements such as the goal-setting pyramid and the action plan, and how these activities might influence their self-perception as learners. The thematic analysis also focused on identifying recurring themes across the participants' experiences, helping to draw conclusions about how these activities fostered greater self-awareness and autonomy in their learning processes.

1.3.3. Hypothesis II

It is hypothesized that participants will report their perceptions regarding the overall effectiveness of the language advising program, particularly in terms of boosting their self-directed learning capabilities.

1.3.4. Research design for hypothesis II

This hypothesis was explored using a qualitative research design, supplemented by semi-structured interviews conducted at the end of the program. These interviews provided a detailed insight into the participants' perceptions of the program's effectiveness. In addition to the interviews, participants were asked to draw a motivation graphic, which visually represented their motivation levels throughout the program. This graphic allowed participants to track their own progress and provided additional data for the analysis.

The semi-structured interviews focused on participants' overall experiences with the program, as well as their specific views on the activities that were most impactful in improving their self-directed learning. Thematic analysis was applied to the interview data, allowing for the identification of key themes regarding the participants' reflections on the program's effectiveness. The study explored which aspects of the program, such as time management activities, self-reflection exercises, and goal-setting strategies, participants found most useful.

The interviews also provided an opportunity to understand participants' opinions on how the program impacted their motivation and learning strategies. The responses indicated that participants perceived the program as not only improving their language learning skills but also helping them develop a more proactive approach to their own learning outside the classroom. Themes such as increased self-confidence, enhanced intrinsic motivation, and a deeper understanding of personal learning strategies emerged strongly in the findings.

2. Methodology

Investigating the impact of a language advising program, this research explores how self-directed learning is enhanced and learners are empowered while acquiring an additional language at a state university in Central Anatolia, Türkiye. A qualitative research design was employed, using a case study approach to gain in-depth insights into individual experiences. The study aimed to explore participants' growing awareness and control over their learning processes and their perceptions of the program's effectiveness. The following sections detail the participants, instruments, procedures, and data analysis methods to ensure replicability and rigor.

2.1. Participant characteristics

Four undergraduate students (two male, two female) from different academic disciplines were the participants of the current research. All of these participants voluntarily enrolled in an eight-week language advising program. They aged around 19.5 and they were from engineering (Electrical-Electronics and Computer Engineering) and non-engineering disciplines (Psychology and Molecular Biology). This diversity provided insights into how students from different fields approached self-directed learning.

Participants were required to have a B1 level of English proficiency, verified through standardized internal assessments at the university's English Preparatory School. This level ensured they were at a transitional stage in language learning, making them ideal candidates for an intervention focused on fostering autonomy. Selection criteria included academic background, proficiency level, and commitment to attending weekly one-hour Zoom sessions over eight weeks.

Exclusion criteria included:

- English proficiency below B1.
- Inability to commit to the study's schedule.
- Lack of voluntary participation.

2.2. Ethical considerations

Strict ethical guidelines were meticulously followed throughout the research. Informed consent was obtained from all participants through informed consent forms, ensuring that they understood the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any time without

consequence. Participants' confidentiality was maintained throughout the study, and all data were anonymized.

2.4. Sampling procedures

The participants for this study were selected using a voluntary sampling method. This non-probability sampling technique was chosen due to its practical nature and the specific focus on engaging students who were both willing and able to participate in the language advising program. Rather than following a systematic or random sampling plan, the study relied on open calls for participation through the university's Learning Management System (LMS), allowing students who met the eligibility criteria to self-select into the study.

2.4.1. Sample size, power, and precision

A case study design was employed, involving four participants. The aim was to gain in-depth insights into the experiences of a small group of learners who participated in the language advising program for enhancing self-directed learning. As a case study, the focus was on exploring the individual progress and perceptions of participants rather than achieving statistical generalizability or precision. The final sample consisted of four participants, all of whom self-selected into the study. The participants were from diverse academic backgrounds: two male students from engineering disciplines (Electrical-Electronics Engineering and Computer Engineering) and two female students from non-engineering disciplines (Psychology and Molecular Biology and Genetics). Each participant had a B1 level of English proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), and they had been attending an intensive English language preparation program for nine months prior to the study.

The sample size of four was deliberately chosen based on the case study methodology, which is designed to explore complex issues in depth with a small number of participants (Yin, 2014). This sample size is typical for case study research, where the focus is on gathering detailed qualitative data rather than achieving statistical power. The small group size allowed for intensive, individualized data collection and analysis, enabling a deeper understanding of the participants' learning experiences, challenges, and progress.

In qualitative research, the concepts of statistical power and precision, as used in quantitative research, do not directly apply (Merriam, 2015). The power of this case study lies in its ability to generate rich, detailed data from a small group of participants, rather than making broad, generalizable conclusions. The focus was on capturing the unique

perspectives and learning trajectories of the individual participants within the context of the language advising program.

As the research did not aim to detect broad, generalizable effects across a large population, statistical power was not a key concern. Instead, the emphasis was on achieving data saturation—the point at which no new themes or insights emerged from the data—within the context of this case study. The small sample size of four participants is a limitation in terms of generalizability. Because the participants were selected based on their voluntary participation and specific inclusion criteria (e.g., B1 English level, enrollment in the prep school, etc.), the findings are specific to this small, non-random sample and cannot be generalized to the larger population of language learners at the university or beyond. The diversity of academic disciplines represented by the participants is an asset in terms of gaining different perspectives on the program, but it also limits the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts or groups. Further research with larger, more diverse samples would be necessary to draw broader conclusions about the effectiveness of the Language Advising Program for enhancing self-directed learning.

2.4.2 Measures and covariates

Several primary outcome measures were used to assess the effectiveness of the language advising program and its impact on participants' self-directed learning in the present work. The following sections describe these measures, their definitions, data collection methods, and efforts to ensure the quality and reliability of the measurements. The primary outcome measures for this study focused on participants' development of self-directed learning skills and their perceptions of the effectiveness of the program.

The first measure was self-directed learning reflection form. This form was provided to each participant before the program commenced. It was designed to consider participants' self-reported strengths and weaknesses in language learning, their attitudes toward self-directed learning, and their initial perceptions of their learning capabilities. The responses helped the research team to gain insights into individual learning profiles and to tailor the advising sessions. It had some psychometric properties. While this form was developed specifically for this study, it was based on established concepts of self-directed learning and learning autonomy. The reflection form was designed to be simple, open-ended, and non-intrusive, allowing participants to express their views freely.

The second measurement tool was the motivation graphic. At the end of the program, participants were asked to draw a motivational progress chart, visually mapping their levels of motivation throughout the 8-week period. This tool helped track participants' self-reported motivational changes over time. In terms of this tool's psychometric properties, it should be stressed that this chart was a visual tool to help participants track their feelings

of motivation, with no formal validity measures. However, its subjective nature provided valuable insights into participants' perceived motivation levels.

Semi-structured interviews were another measure employed by the researcher. In the final week of the program, participants participated in semi-structured interviews. Each participant was individually interviewed. The interviews aimed to explore the participants' experiences, including the perceived impact of the advising sessions on their learning autonomy, their goal-setting processes, and the specific elements of the program that they found beneficial. With regard to their psychometric properties, it can be argued that semi-structured interviews are a widely used qualitative method in the case study research. The flexibility of the semi-structured format allowed for in-depth exploration of participant experiences while ensuring that specific research questions were addressed.

Covariates, on the other hand, refer to variables that may influence the primary outcome measures. In this study, the following covariates were considered: prior English proficiency, previous language learning experience, and motivational factors (intrinsic vs. extrinsic). The participants' level of English proficiency was recorded using their placement test scores, which were all in the B1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The baseline proficiency was taken into account when considering changes in motivation, engagement, and learning autonomy during the program. Previous language learning experience included data on how long the participants had been studying English prior to enrolling in the prep school. Although all participants had been attending intensive English courses for 9 months, variations in prior language learning experiences could have an impact on their ability to self-direct their learning and their response to the advising program. At the start of the program, participants completed a short form to assess their intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. These factors were used as covariates when analyzing how different types of motivation might influence learning outcomes during the program.

2.4.3. Research Design

The current research employed a within-subjects design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Field, 2013), a methodological approach that is particularly useful for case studies because it allows for detailed longitudinal data collection and individual analysis over time. The within-subjects design is frequently chosen in studies to detect personal learning trajectories rather than compare between distinct groups, making it appropriate for exploring individual change over time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Field, 2013). Thus, the

researcher was able to observe the specific impact of the program on each participant's motivation and self-directed learning practices.

Since the goal was to observe each participant's engagement with the program over time, there were no experimental groups or manipulated conditions. The study did not involve the creation of distinct experimental groups or conditions, as all participants followed the same program. Instead of manipulating external variables, the researcher relied on naturalistic observation, where participants were observed in their authentic learning environments so that the researcher was able to gain a rich understanding of how each participant interacted with the language tasks and psychological tools (Charmaz, 2024; Patton, 2002). The absence of experimental manipulation provided a more genuine portrayal of how personal factors, such as motivation and prior knowledge, influenced the participants' approach to the program.

The study's design was intentional, using a within-subjects design, which emphasizes individual development and change over time, thus avoiding the variability that may arise from multiple treatment conditions (Creswell & Plano, 2018). Participants engaged in self-reflections, structured interviews, and created motivational graphs to illustrate their engagement and personal progress throughout the study. This allowed for a comprehensive analysis of how their motivation and language proficiency evolved during the program.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring they met specific inclusion criteria—being at a B1 level of English proficiency (CEFR) and volunteering to participate in the study. Purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research when the goal is to gather rich, in-depth insights from individuals who can contribute valuable data related to the study's focus (Patton, 2002; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). The four participants were drawn from different academic departments, which helped provide a diverse set of perspectives. However, they were not randomly assigned to any conditions, as the study did not involve multiple treatment groups. Overall, the within-subjects design allowed for a deep, individualized analysis of the effects of the program on each participant's motivation, self-directed learning, and language proficiency.

2.4.4. Interventions

The primary intervention aimed at fostering self-directed language learning and enhancing intrinsic motivation was based on a series of psychological tools used within the framework of the language advising program in this research. These interventions focused

on providing individualized support to the participants, specifically targeting their metacognitive skills, motivation, and self-regulation.

The first intervention was encouraging learners to carry out a self-assessment and goal-setting activity. Participants identified their strengths and weaknesses in language learning in a form. Similarly, goal-setting activity allowed participants to tailor their learning goals and strategies. Based on Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), participants were guided to set specific and measurable goals, which helped structure their learning experiences and promote autonomy (Vygotsky, 1978). The goal-setting process was also informed by Locke and Latham's (2002) goal-setting theory, which highlights the importance of clear, achievable targets in increasing motivation and performance. Participants were then tasked with creating action plans and a goal-setting pyramid, structuring their goals into long-term and short-term objectives.

Following each intervention, participants engaged in reflective journaling where they documented their emotional and cognitive responses to the language tasks. This reflective process, as emphasized by Boud et al. (2013), was intended to build self-awareness, increase motivation, and enhance learner autonomy. The participants engaged in intentional reflective dialogue with the advisor, where both the advisor and the learner participated in reflective dialogues that were structured by the advisor's questioning techniques. The advisor employed strategies such as asking powerful questions, repeating, mirroring, restating, and summarizing to help the learners articulate their thoughts and reflect on their learning process. These strategies, as described by Mynard (2020), are aligned with reflective practices that encourage deeper understanding and self-regulation. Both internal dialogues (the thoughts participants had about their learning) and external dialogues (with the advisor) played key roles in this process.

Another key intervention involved the use of motivational graphics, a tool to help participants visually track fluctuations in their motivation levels over time. This tool allowed participants to chart their motivation at various stages of the program, fostering self-regulation and providing insights into the participants' engagement with the program. The use of motivational graphics aligns with Mynard's (2020) emphasis on the role of psychological tools in advising practices, where tools like visual representations support reflective dialogue and deepen the learner's understanding of their own cognitive and emotional patterns. By using these graphics, participants engaged in an intentional reflective process, enhancing their awareness and fostering a sense of control over their learning trajectory.

The entire intervention package was based on psychological tools that were designed to promote self-regulation and autonomy. These tools included asking reflective questions, setting clear goals, using feedback loops, and engaging in dialogue to build critical thinking. In line with Vygotsky's theory, these tools functioned as mediators in the learning process, enabling participants to scaffold their learning independently over time.

(Vygotsky, 1978). Additionally, goal setting and motivational tracking played significant roles in the participants' self-regulated learning, providing structure and focus to their efforts (Locke & Latham, 2002; Schunk, 2013). The interventions were delivered in a series of eight weekly sessions, each lasting approximately one hour. During each session, the researcher employed intentional reflective dialogue, using the strategies of asking powerful questions, restating, and summarizing, as described in Mynard (2020). After each session, participants were encouraged to engage in self-reflection and complete a self-evaluation. These self-evaluations were discussed one-on-one with the researcher in follow-up Zoom consultations.

At the end of the program, participants completed structured interviews where they reflected on their experience with the LAP. The feedback from these interviews, along with the participants' motivational graphs and reflective journals, were analyzed to assess the effectiveness of the interventions and to identify recurrent themes in the learning process. This study's approach aligns with the socio-cultural theory principles of scaffolding and mediation, which emphasize the role of social interaction, feedback, and psychological tools in promoting learning. The interventions were specifically designed to enhance participants' metacognitive awareness and self-regulatory skills, contributing to the overall goal of fostering language learning autonomy.

3. Results

3.1. Recruitment

The study commenced on November 29, 2021 and concluded on January 21, 2022. Participants were invited to participate via the Schoology system, a Learning Management System (LMS) used by the institution. The invitations were sent to students enrolled in foreign language courses who expressed an interest in improving their self-directed learning strategies and motivation. The recruitment process utilized the Schoology system to post announcements and distribute invitations, ensuring that the targeted students were notified in an accessible and centralized manner.

The follow-up period lasted throughout the study, with participants engaging in regular Zoom sessions and completing reflective self-assessments. This follow-up period allowed for monitoring the participants' progress and the impact of the language advising program (LAP) on their learning behaviors and motivation. By utilizing the Schoology system for initial contact, the study was able to efficiently gather participants and communicate throughout the study period, ensuring the smooth administration of the study.

The primary source of participants came from the university's foreign language courses, where students who were already enrolled and actively participating in language learning

were invited to take part in the study. This recruitment process ensured that participants were motivated and had the necessary background for engaging with the LAP and related tasks.

3.2. Statistics and data analysis

A mixed-methods approach combined qualitative and quantitative analyses to provide a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences within the program. The aim was to explore the dynamic relationship between the participants' self-directed learning, motivation, and perceptions of the program. The semi-structured interviews provided rich, qualitative data about the participants' perceptions, experiences, and challenges throughout the program. These insights were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns and themes that emerged across all participants. This method was chosen for its flexibility and depth, allowing for an in-depth understanding of the participants' personal reflections and evaluations.

In addition to the qualitative analysis, the motivation graphics drawn by the participants offered a quantitative measure of their motivation levels throughout the program. These graphs were analyzed to track shifts in motivation over time, enabling a comparative analysis of each participant's progress. They were employed to summarize the trends and identify significant fluctuations in motivation across the duration of the program. These graphs were analyzed to track shifts in motivation over time, enabling a comparative analysis of each participant's progress. They were employed to summarize the trends and identify significant fluctuations in motivation across the duration of the program. This section outlines the procedures used for data analysis, including the treatment of missing data and the choice of statistical methods. The goal was to ensure that the findings were both robust and insightful, offering meaningful interpretations of how the LAP affected the participants' learning trajectories and motivation.

3.2.1. Data analysis for semi-structured interviews

The researcher transcribed all Zoom session recordings (32 sessions in total) and collated data from four semi-structured interviews at the beginning of the data analysis process. Using MS Word, two separate tables were created to organize the transcription data: one for the session recordings and another for the interview responses. For validation and reliability, 10% of the qualitative data from each instrument was independently coded by a second researcher holding a Ph.D. in English Language Teaching. This researcher was tasked with coding the data without referencing the original codes. The inter-coder reliability for the semi-structured interviews was calculated as 0.79, falling within the

“substantial” range, as outlined by Stemler (2001). Afterward, the researcher and the inter-coder reviewed the sample data together to ensure consistency and discuss any discrepancies. Additionally, intra-rater reliability was assessed by re-analyzing 10% of the data at two different time points, yielding a 90% agreement between the researcher’s initial and subsequent analyses. Following these steps, the researcher conducted multiple readings of the transcripts to familiarize herself with the content. During the second reading, recurring comments were highlighted with color coding, and during the third reading, detailed notes were made in the margins to identify initial codes.

The constant comparative method was employed to refine these codes and identify consistent themes across both data sets. Categories were grouped under broader “umbrella” themes, with grounded theory principles (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) guiding the process. Representative quotes were then selected to illustrate each theme, allowing for the identification of recurring patterns applicable to all participants’ comments. This systematic approach ensured both the reliability and validity of the qualitative analysis. Given the nature of the interviews, an inductive approach was used, allowing the themes to emerge from the data without pre-imposed categories. This comprehensive approach to transcription, coding, and reliability testing ensured the accuracy and trustworthiness of the data analysis.

3.2.2. The results from semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interviews, analyzed through the process of color coding and identifying recurrent themes, reveal significant insights into the impact of the program on participants' English learning experiences. By comparing the findings with a peer—a Ph.D. holder in the field of English as a Foreign Language Teaching who has been serving as an assistant professor since 2017—there is a remarkable overlap of 86% similarity in themes, which highlights the consistency of the program's impact. The semi-structured interviews conducted with four participants revealed significant insights into their experiences with the program. Data analysis identified four major themes: Shifting Motivation and Goal-Oriented Learning, Increased Self-Awareness and Control Over Learning, Perceptions of the Program's Value, and Challenges and Obstacles as can be seen in Table 1 below. These themes were derived from iterative coding and thematic analysis, which aimed to capture the nuanced experiences and reflections of participants.

Table 1. Summary of thematic analysis from semi-structured interviews

Theme	Frequency of Mention	Key Findings	Example Quotes
Shifting motivation and goal-oriented learning	4 participants	Motivation increased with goal-setting activities; peaks were generally around mid-program	“At first, I wasn’t sure about my learning goals, but by Week 4, I saw myself improving, and it kept me going.” (Participant A)
Increased self-awareness and control over learning”	3 participants	Participants gained better control over their learning and were more self-aware due to reflective activities	“I started understanding what works best for me. I felt like I was in control.” (Participant B)
Perceptions of program’s value	4 participants	All participants viewed the program positively, valuing personalized feedback and flexible structure	“The one-on-one sessions really helped me understand where I was going wrong and how to fix it.” (Participant C)
Challenges and obstacles	2 participants	Some participants struggled with fluctuating motivation and time management, leading to inconsistent engagement.	“It was tough at first to set goals. It wasn’t until the middle that I truly understood how to plan better.” (Participant D)

Note. N=4

In order to provide a clear view of the distribution of themes across participants, Table 2 was created. It summarizes the frequency with which each theme was mentioned.

Table 2. Thematic frequencies in semi-structured interviews

Theme	Frequency mentioned across participants
Shifting motivation and goal-oriented learning	18
Increased self-awareness and control over learning	14
Perceptions of the program’s value	15
Challenges and obstacles	8

Below is a comprehensive analysis of the themes that emerged from the interviews and the cross-comparison of the findings.

3.2.3. Shifting motivation and goal-oriented learning

A dominant theme that emerged across all participants was a shift in their motivation for learning English. Before the LAP, many participants focused on achieving specific outcomes, such as passing exams (e.g., IELTS, TOEFL) or fulfilling external expectations (e.g., academic requirements). However, following the program, they began to focus on more intrinsic goals, such as using English for personal development, career advancement, and life satisfaction. The transformation in participants' motivational orientation and their ability to articulate concrete goals was very prevalent in all participants' comments.

Prior to the program, participants often framed their motivations in terms of external pressures, such as passing exams or meeting institutional requirements. For instance, Participant A stated, “My goal was only to pass the preparatory program and move on. I never thought beyond that.” However, engagement with structured activities such as the Goal-setting Pyramid and Timeline exercises led to a paradigm shift (see Appendix A). Participants began to reframe their motivations, aligning them with long-term aspirations and intrinsic values. Participant C explained, “When I saw my dreams mapped out for 5, 10, and 15 years, I realized how each small step today connects to the bigger picture. It's not just about exams anymore.” Similarly, Participant C highlighted the impact of visualization activities, such as creating a vision board: “Imagining myself succeeding in the future kept me motivated throughout the process.” These findings indicate that the LAP successfully encouraged participants to adopt a more proactive and self-determined approach to learning.

3.2.4. Increased self-awareness and control over learning

The program fostered significant growth in participants' self-awareness and their perceived control over the learning process. Many participants noted that they gained insights into their own strengths, weaknesses, and learning habits through reflective activities like the Confidence-Building Diary and The Wheel of Language Learning. These tools were instrumental in helping participants identify barriers to progress and develop strategies for overcoming them. For example, Participant D shared, “I used to procrastinate and blame it on a lack of time, but now I see it was more about not knowing where to start. The program taught me how to plan effectively.” Participant B emphasized the role of reflective dialogue in deepening their understanding of their learning behaviors: “Talking through my challenges with the advisor helped me see patterns I hadn't noticed before.” The theme of self-regulation emerged strongly in the data. Participants frequently

mentioned that the LAP provided them with tools to track their progress, such as motivational graphs, which served as both a diagnostic and motivational resource.

The program also instilled a sense of agency, with participants reporting that they felt more in control of their learning outcomes. Participants noted an improvement in their ability to control their English learning process. One recurring theme was the realization that learning English was not just about mastering grammar or passing exams, but about engaging in activities that suited their personal learning styles. For instance, several participants started incorporating new strategies into their learning routine, such as listening to English music, watching movies with subtitles, and reading English literature. The use of visualization and goal-setting techniques also played a significant role in helping participants feel more confident and organized in their learning journey.

The findings indicate a dynamic interaction between motivation and self-awareness, demonstrating how these themes mutually influence one another throughout the learning process. Initially, participants' motivation was predominantly extrinsically driven, centered on fulfilling institutional requirements or achieving specific academic outcomes. However, following their engagement in structured reflection activities such as the Goal-setting Pyramid, Timeline exercises, and Vision Board, participants began to shift toward intrinsic motivation, aligning their learning goals with personal aspirations and long-term development. This transition suggests that as learners cultivate a clearer sense of purpose, their motivation becomes more sustainable and self-regulated.

Simultaneously, the enhancement of self-awareness emerged as a key driver of this motivational shift. Through reflective exercises like the Confidence-Building Diary and The Wheel of Language Learning, participants gained a deeper understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, and learning behaviors. This increased self-awareness enabled them to identify obstacles, adjust their strategies, and take greater ownership of their learning journey. Notably, those who engaged in systematic self-reflection reported a heightened sense of control over their learning process, which, in turn, reinforced their motivation.

Moreover, the findings highlight that self-awareness fosters motivation through self-regulation. As learners became more cognizant of their learning patterns and challenges, they adapted their approaches accordingly, incorporating new strategies such as utilizing authentic English-language materials and engaging in self-directed learning activities. This cyclical process suggests that:

1. Developing self-awareness allows learners to identify their needs and refine their learning strategies.

2. This refinement strengthens motivation by making learning more purposeful and goal-oriented.
3. Enhanced motivation, in turn, leads to greater engagement in self-awareness practices, further reinforcing the cycle.

Overall, the interplay between motivation and self-awareness underscores the importance of structured reflection in fostering long-term learner autonomy. The LAP effectively facilitated this process by providing tools that encouraged both goal-setting and metacognitive awareness. These findings suggest that an integrated approach that simultaneously enhances motivation and self-awareness is essential for developing self-directed and self-regulated learners.

3.2.5. Perceptions of the program's value

A clear theme that emerged was the participants' perception of the program as valuable, with many acknowledging that it helped them plan their futures more effectively. Participants expressed appreciation for activities like creating timelines and self-reflection exercises, which helped them see their language learning as part of a broader, long-term goal. This finding is consistent with Kato and Mynard's research on self-reflection and goal-setting in language learning emphasizes the importance of intentional reflective dialogue (IRD) and its role in enhancing learners' motivation and self-awareness. They advocate that structured reflection, such as using tools like motivation graphs, helps learners identify their learning trajectories and obstacles while clarifying their future goals (Kato & Mynard, 2015). They state that reflection fosters a deeper understanding of how to achieve language learning objectives. Reflective practices, especially in one-on-one advising or written dialogue, support transformational learning and help learners manage their progress effectively as it happened in the present study. Participants universally praised the LAP for its innovative and supportive approach. The combination of personalized advising sessions and engaging activities was noted as a key strength. Participants highlighted how the program's emphasis on reflective and goal-oriented practices distinguished it from traditional language learning programs. Participant C remarked, "The activities were not only practical but also meaningful. They made me think about learning English as a life skill, not just an academic requirement." Participant B expressed appreciation for the advisor's supportive role: "The advisor didn't just tell me what to do; she guided me to discover what works best for me." The program's structure was another point of positive feedback. Participants appreciated the sequential design, which allowed them to build on prior activities and experiences. Several participants

mentioned that the motivational graphs and personalized feedback loops were particularly impactful in maintaining their engagement and focus.

3.2.6. Challenges and obstacles

Despite the positive feedback, some participants noted that certain aspects of the program were initially challenging. For instance, exercises like setting long-term goals or imagining future scenarios were met with skepticism by some, but they later recognized their value. Additionally, a common challenge reported was the difficulty in rewarding oneself after completing tasks, an aspect that some participants struggled with but continued to work on as part of their self-regulation process. While the overall feedback was positive, participants did identify some challenges. A recurring issue was the emotional effort required for introspective activities, such as reflecting on past failures or imagining future successes. Participant D noted, “It was hard to confront my weaknesses, but I knew it was necessary to move forward.” Another challenge was the concept of self-reward, which some participants found difficult to integrate into their routines. As Participant A explained, “I understood the importance of celebrating small victories, but I often felt awkward doing it.” Despite these obstacles, participants generally agreed that these challenges contributed to their growth and development.

3.2.7. Data analysis for motivation graphics

The motivation graphics were analyzed to explore participants' self-reported motivational trends during the study. Each participant created a personal motivation graph, visually representing their motivation levels over time. These graphs were examined to identify patterns, fluctuations, and significant shifts in motivation, with a focus on determining potential links between external factors and internal psychological states. The researcher compared participants' visual representations with their verbal reflections during semi-structured interviews to triangulate the data and enhance its reliability. By identifying recurring patterns and unique insights, the analysis aimed to provide a deeper understanding of how the participants' motivation evolved throughout

the program. This approach ensured a comprehensive examination of the interplay between participants' perceptions and their reported motivation levels.

3.2.8. *The results from the motivation graphics*

The motivation graphics provided a visual representation of participants' fluctuating motivation levels throughout the course of the program. Each participant's graphic revealed unique patterns, demonstrating both individual variations and common trends across the group. Table 3 illustrates the motivation trends for each participant.

Table 3. The motivation trends for each participant

Participants	Week 1 Motivation	Week 4 Motivation	Week 8 Motivation	Trend
A	Low	High	Stable High	Steady increase in motivation with a peak at Week 5, remaining stable thereafter.
B	Moderate	High	Stable High	Gradual increase, with a notable peak at Week 6, stabilizing afterward.
C	Very low	High	Stable High	Rapid increase after Week 2, maintaining high motivation through the program.
D	Low	Moderate	High	Fluctuations in motivation, with a final increase toward the end, but no sustained peak.

Participant A's motivation began at a low point in Week 1, but showed a significant increase from Week 2 to Week 4. Motivation peaked in Week 5 and remained stable through Week 6 to Week 8. This stable high point in motivation indicates that the participant maintained their progress and motivation, suggesting the successful implementation of self-regulation and goal-setting strategies. The steep increase and stabilization at a high level align with the qualitative feedback from the semi-structured interview, where the participant mentioned feeling empowered by the reflective practices and goal-setting activities.

Participant B started with motivation slightly below average, and throughout the program, showed a gradual increase in motivation. A steep rise was observed between Week 3 and Week 5, and motivation peaked in Week 6. Like Participant A, motivation

remained stable at its peak in Weeks 7 and 8. This trajectory suggests that the participant responded well to the ongoing encouragement and reflection-based activities in the program. The visual data from the graph was consistent with their interview responses, where they noted that the goal-setting strategies were pivotal in maintaining momentum.

Participant C's motivation started very low in Week 1, but there was a rapid increase from Week 2 through Week 5, with motivation reaching its highest point by Week 5. The participant maintained this high level of motivation through Week 8. This consistent high level suggests that the intervention had a strong and lasting impact, and the participant benefitted significantly from the structured approach of the program. In their interview, Participant C stated that the continuous self-assessment and feedback during the consultations contributed to maintaining their motivation at such a high level.

Participant D's motivation showed a more fluctuating pattern. Motivation started low, increased steadily during the first two weeks, then dropped slightly in Week 3, and showed another increase in Week 4. In Week 5, the motivation dropped again but rose once more in the final weeks, although not stabilizing at the same high levels as the other participants. This fluctuation could indicate varying external factors or individual challenges, which were also reflected in the interview, where Participant D expressed feelings of occasional discouragement despite the program's support. The final rise in motivation at the end of the program aligns with their feedback on the motivational activities and their final reflection, which expressed a sense of accomplishment despite the ups and downs. Table 4 summarizes the motivation trends over the eight-week period, as visualized in the motivation graphs completed by four participants.

Table 4. The visual representation of each participant's motivation graphics

Participants	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation	Motivation
A	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Peak	Stable	Stable	Stable
B	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High	High	Peak	Stable	Stable
C	Very low	Moderate	High	Very high	Peak	Peak	Peak	Peak
D	Low	Moderate	Low	Moderate	High	High	Stable	Stable

For most participants, motivation started low, but increased gradually as they progressed through the program. The highest points in motivation often aligned with weeks in which participants reported achieving specific goals or receiving feedback that affirmed their progress. Motivation tended to stabilize toward the end of the program, with participants feeling more confident in their ability to manage their learning independently. One participant's motivation graph stood out due to more pronounced fluctuations. This individual reported higher peaks and deeper troughs in motivation, which were linked to

personal challenges, such as balancing academic obligations and program requirements. Despite these fluctuations, this participant expressed a sense of growth by the end of the program.

To further explore the underlying patterns of these motivational trends, a quantitative analysis was also conducted to complement the qualitative insights derived from participants' reflections and motivation graphics. While self-reported experiences provided valuable perspectives on individual learning journeys, numerical data offered an objective measure of progress, stability, and variability in motivation levels. By examining key metrics such as means, standard deviations, and growth rates, it became possible to identify overarching patterns and differences in motivation trajectories among participants. This structured analysis enhanced the understanding of how motivation evolved throughout the program, highlighting both consistent improvements and instances of fluctuation. Table 5 below presents a detailed breakdown of these motivational trends over the eight-week period.

Table 5. Participants' motivational trends

Participants	Week 1 Motivation Level	Week 4 Motivation Level	Week 8 Motivation Level	Mean (Out of 5)	Standard Deviations	Growth Rates (%)
A	2	4	5	3.67	1.53	150.0
B	3	5	5	4.33	1.15	66.67
C	1	4	5	3.33	2.08	400.0
D	2	3	4	3.0	1.0	100.0

Table 5 provides a numerical breakdown of participants' motivational trends, highlighting both individual and overall patterns of change. The mean motivation scores indicate that all participants experienced an upward trajectory, with Participant B demonstrating the highest average motivation level (4.33) and Participant D the lowest (3.0). The growth rates further illustrate these trends, with Participant C showing the most significant increase (400%), suggesting that this participant experienced the most dramatic transformation in motivation. In contrast, Participant B, who started with a relatively higher motivation level, displayed a more stable trajectory with a growth rate of 66.67%, indicating steady rather than substantial change.

The standard deviations reveal notable variations in motivation stability. Participant C exhibited the highest standard deviation (2.08), suggesting greater fluctuations throughout the program, likely reflecting external challenges or shifts in engagement levels. Conversely, Participant D, with the lowest standard deviation (1.0), displayed a more consistent motivational pattern, indicating a gradual yet steady increase. These findings suggest that while structured advising generally leads to motivation

enhancement, the degree of improvement varies based on individual learning styles, prior engagement with self-directed learning, and external academic pressures. The combination of qualitative reflections and quantitative trends underscores the importance of tailored advising strategies that address learners' specific needs, ensuring both motivational growth and long-term self-regulation. In conclusion, the use of motivation graphics in this study helped participants gain a clearer understanding of their progress and challenges, reinforcing the value of self-reflection and goal-setting. This process not only enhanced their motivation but also provided valuable insights into their learning journeys.

There were no significant issues with missing data, as participants completed most of the required measures. However, in instances where some missing data occurred, they were handled using the principle of "missing at random". This was determined by examining the patterns of missingness in relation to other variables, and no systematic pattern was found. As the sample was small and the data collected primarily through direct input (motivational charts, reflections, etc.), no imputation methods were applied, and the missing data were either excluded from specific analyses or considered negligible in their impact on the overall conclusions.

Although the study shows positive changes in motivation, there are some potential alternative explanations. For example, the short duration of the program and the small sample size could have influenced the generalizability of these results. Additionally, external factors such as participants' personal circumstances, personal or academic events or other unmeasured interventions could have contributed to the observed changes in motivation. Moreover, the self-report nature of the data introduces the possibility of social desirability bias, where participants may have overestimated their motivation levels. However, given the nature of the LAP and its focus on self-directed learning, it is plausible that the observed effects are at least partially attributable to the psychological tools and strategies provided through the program.

Overall, the study demonstrated promising results regarding the impact of a structured language advising program on students' motivation and self-directed learning strategies. Despite the small sample size and the lack of formal inferential statistical analysis, the observed trends suggest that the program was effective in supporting students' self-directed language learning. The results of this study indicate that the LAP positively influenced the motivation of the participants, as reflected in the changes in their self-reported motivation levels the program was effective in supporting students' self-directed language learning. Further research with a larger sample is needed to confirm these

findings and to explore the long-term effects of such programs on language learning motivation.

3.3. Intervention or manipulation fidelity

The intervention involved providing participants with a series of language advising sessions and self-directed learning tasks in this investigation. The researcher ensured fidelity to the intervention by following a structured approach for each session, which included individualized guidance, self-reflection exercises, and motivational strategies. Attendance and all sessions were recorded for each participant, and session content was carefully monitored to ensure consistency with the planned intervention. Additionally, any deviations from the planned structure were noted and addressed to maintain the integrity of the intervention.

3.4. Baseline data

At the start of the study, demographic and baseline language learning characteristics were collected for each participant. This included data on participants' age, gender, academic background, and their self-reported strengths and weaknesses in language learning. These baseline characteristics provided a framework for understanding the context of each participant's language learning journey and allowed for comparisons throughout the study.

3.4.1. Statistics and data analysis

Data analysis followed an intent-to-treat (ITT) approach in the present study. ITT means that all participants who were initially assigned to the intervention group were included in the analysis, regardless of whether they completed the program satisfactorily. This approach was chosen to ensure that the analysis reflected the real-world application of the intervention, accounting for all participants in the original sample. By including all

participants, regardless of their level of participation, the study aimed to provide a more accurate measure of the intervention's effectiveness in a broader context.

3.5. Adverse events

No significant adverse events or side effects were reported during the implementation of the LAP in the present research. The intervention was designed to support participants in enhancing self-directed learning, and no negative consequences, such as psychological distress or physical health issues, were associated with participation. Participants were encouraged to express any concerns, but the feedback received was overwhelmingly positive, indicating that the intervention was well-received without causing harm or discomfort.

4. Discussion

The effectiveness of an LAP in enhancing self-directed learning and learner autonomy was evaluated in this research. The findings largely support the hypotheses, demonstrating that the program facilitated improvements in motivation, self-awareness, and control over learning among participants. However, the study also reveals some nuances that highlight the individual variations in the effectiveness of the intervention.

The first hypothesis predicted a significant improvement in the participants' sense of self-awareness and control over their learning. This was consistently supported by the results. Most participants reported increased motivation and a more structured approach to language learning, both in their motivation graphs and in their reflections during the semi-structured interviews. The themes of "Shifting motivation and goal-oriented learning" and "Increased self-awareness and control over learning" strongly emerged in the participants' responses, indicating that the LAP was effective in helping them to set clearer goals and take charge of their own learning processes. The findings align well with previous research, including Mynard and Carson (2012), who emphasize the importance of reflective dialogue and goal-setting in promoting learner autonomy. In particular, the participants' ability to break down learning objectives into smaller, manageable tasks (as encouraged by the Goal-setting Pyramid activity) is in line with the concept of scaffolding, as discussed by Vygotsky (1978). By creating achievable goals and reflecting on their learning strategies, participants were able to develop a sense of mastery and a clearer vision of their path forward. As noted by Mynard and Carson (2012), reflective practices and goal-setting are central to fostering learner autonomy, which was evident in participants' increased confidence and improved learning behaviors. Additionally, the findings align with Kato and Mynard (2015), who emphasize that self-assessment and

reflective dialogues are key tools in promoting metacognitive awareness and learner engagement. The positive outcomes from the program also support Vygotsky's (1978) scaffolding theory, where guided reflection and structured support help learners internalize new strategies for independent learning.

The findings underscore the LAP as a mediational framework that fosters self-regulation in learners. This process is strongly supported by Mynard and Carson (2012), who emphasize the role of reflective dialogue and goal-setting in shifting learners from external to internal regulation. Additionally, Kato and Mynard (2015) highlight that structured advising interventions provide essential scaffolding, a concept aligned with Vygotsky's (1978) mediation theory, helping learners develop independent learning strategies over time. By engaging in reflective dialogue, participants were able to develop metacognitive awareness, a key component in fostering autonomy and self-regulated learning. Through structured reflection and goal-setting activities, participants engaged in internalization processes, aligning with Vygotsky's premise that learning is mediated by cultural tools and social interactions. The reflective dialogue facilitated by advisors functioned as a scaffolding mechanism, gradually transitioning the responsibility of learning strategies from the advisor to the learner. This transition is particularly significant in the context of self-directed learning, as it demonstrates how structured interventions help learners develop autonomy by first providing external support and then gradually fostering internalized regulation of learning behaviors. The progression observed in participants supports the notion that mediation is not merely an instructional tool but a transformative process that enables learners to construct meaning, regulate their learning, and sustain motivation over time.

The shift from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation observed in participants aligns with the principles of autonomy and self-regulation as discussed in the literature. Little (2004) argues that autonomy is not an inherent trait but rather a skill cultivated through structured reflection and systematic goal-setting. This perspective is further supported by Boud et al. (2013), who stress the importance of self-reflection in fostering long-term motivation. The LAP's use of structured exercises, such as the Goal-Setting Pyramid, reinforces these principles, providing learners with concrete strategies to enhance engagement and autonomy. A transition like this supports the argument that structured advising programs serve as catalysts for fostering long-term motivation by guiding learners in goal-setting and self-reflection. The development of personal learning strategies contributed to greater learner independence, reinforcing the idea that motivation and self-awareness are intertwined in self-directed learning. Initially, participants viewed learning as an obligation tied to external pressures, yet engagement in structured advising activities led them to redefine their motivations in terms of personal growth and long-term aspirations. This transformation highlights the crucial role of structured support in fostering goal-oriented behavior, reinforcing the argument that autonomy is not an innate trait but rather a skill that develops through guided reflection

and systematic goal-setting. The findings also reinforce Little's (2004) perspective that advising programs can nurture learner autonomy by promoting self-regulation and goal clarity. The use of structured exercises such as the Goal-Setting Pyramid played a pivotal role in this process, as it provided a tangible framework for learners to articulate and track their progress, aligning with existing research that emphasizes the role of structured reflection in promoting sustained engagement.

The reported increase in self-awareness among participants reflects key aspects of metacognitive development. Kato and Mynard (2015) emphasize that self-assessment and reflective dialogues are crucial tools for promoting metacognitive awareness and learner engagement. This is further corroborated by Boud et al. (2013), who highlight that self-awareness evolves through deliberate practice and structured reflection. The LAP framework provided the necessary structure for learners to track their progress and refine their learning strategies, supporting previous research on the role of advising programs in facilitating self-directed learning. As learners engaged in structured advising sessions, they not only became more conscious of their strengths and weaknesses but also learned to strategically address their learning barriers. This is in line with prior studies highlighting the importance of reflective tools in helping learners internalize self-regulatory strategies and sustaining long-term engagement in language learning. LAP interventions enabled learners to monitor their cognitive processes, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and refine their strategic approaches. This finding supports previous discussions on the importance of metacognitive awareness in self-directed learning, where the ability to reflect on one's learning trajectory is a fundamental component of successful self-regulation. By providing learners with the necessary tools to assess their progress, LAP fostered a more strategic and intentional approach to language learning. This aligns with previous research indicating that self-awareness is a dynamic process that evolves as learners engage in deliberate practice and structured reflection. The structured advising framework facilitated this process by making abstract learning goals more concrete, helping learners to establish meaningful connections between their short-term progress and long-term objectives.

Furthermore, the results highlight the reciprocal relationship between motivation and self-awareness. Mynard and Carson (2012) argue that motivation drives learners to engage in reflective practices, while self-awareness, in turn, reinforces motivation by enabling learners to set meaningful and achievable goals. This cyclical relationship is also emphasized by Kato and Mynard (2015), who suggest that structured reflection activities play a critical role in enhancing both motivational persistence and metacognitive development. The LAP effectively operationalized these theories by providing learners with structured tools to reflect, evaluate, and refine their learning processes. This interdependence suggests that motivation fuels learners' willingness to engage in reflective practices, while self-awareness enhances their ability to set meaningful goals and maintain motivation over time. The structured nature of the advising program played a crucial role

in strengthening this interplay by providing learners with the necessary tools to reflect, evaluate, and refine their learning processes. Participants who engaged in structured reflection activities, such as the Confidence-Building Diary and the Wheel of Language Learning, developed a deeper understanding of their learning behaviors, which in turn enhanced their motivation. This cycle suggests that structured advising programs contribute to long-term learner autonomy by simultaneously fostering self-awareness and motivation. The interplay between these factors emphasizes the need for an integrated approach that simultaneously enhances motivation and metacognitive awareness, allowing learners to take a more proactive role in their educational development.

While the majority of participants showed a steady increase in motivation, one participant (Participant D) exhibited fluctuating motivation levels, which were not as consistent as those of the other participants. The variability in motivation observed in Participant D indicates that individual differences, including prior experiences, individual learning styles, external circumstances or personal learning preferences, can influence how participants respond to such programs and the degree of effectiveness of the program. The challenges experienced by Participant D may also point to the necessity of tailoring interventions to the individual needs and preferences of learners, an area that future research should explore more deeply. Such a variability highlights the need for further research to explore how individual factors may interact with the structure of advising programs to yield different learning outcomes. Moreover, while the present work focused primarily on motivation and self-awareness, future research could investigate the broader impact of such interventions on language proficiency and other long-term academic outcomes.

The findings suggest that structured advising programs can significantly contribute to learners' autonomy by providing them with the tools to manage their learning effectively. The success of the LAP in fostering goal-setting skills and self-reflection aligns with the findings of Kato and Mynard (2015), who argue that reflective practices are essential for developing metacognitive awareness in learners. Additionally, the improvement in participants' self-confidence, as indicated by their increased motivation and goal achievement, supports the work of Boud et al. (2013), who highlight the importance of self-reflection in building intrinsic motivation and learner autonomy. These results are significant not only in the context of language learning but also for the broader field of education. The successful implementation of a structured advising program demonstrates the potential of such programs to enhance learners' self-directed learning capabilities, a critical skill in today's increasingly autonomous educational environments. This supports the growing emphasis on learner autonomy as a central tenet of modern educational theory (Little, 2004).

All in all, the discussion provides a more comprehensive analysis of how LAP facilitated both motivational and self-regulatory development. These findings contribute to the

broader discourse on self-directed learning and learner autonomy, underscoring the critical role of structured reflection and goal-setting in fostering sustainable learning behaviors. The successful implementation of a structured advising program demonstrates the potential of such programs to enhance learners' self-directed learning capabilities, a critical skill in today's increasingly autonomous educational environments. These results further reinforce the growing emphasis on learner autonomy as a central tenet of modern educational theory, demonstrating that structured interventions play a key role in fostering both motivation and self-awareness in long-term learning trajectories.

5. Limitations

Despite the promising results, the current study's small sample size limits the generalizability of the findings. The results suggest that advising programs like LAP can support learners' self-directed learning, but replication with larger and more diverse samples is needed to confirm the findings. Although the results are promising, further research with a larger and more diverse group of participants is necessary to confirm these findings and explore whether the positive effects of the LAP can be replicated in different contexts.

Additionally, the present research relied heavily on qualitative data, and future research could incorporate more objective measures, like language proficiency assessments, to complement the findings. Furthermore, while it focused on the improvement of motivation and self-awareness, future studies could examine how the program impacts other aspects of learning like long-term retention.

Another limitation is the potential bias introduced by the subjective nature of the data, particularly in the semi-structured interviews. Although the use of intra-rater and inter-rater reliability testing helped mitigate some of these concerns, future studies could benefit from including more objective measures of learner progress, such as language proficiency tests, to complement the qualitative findings.

6. Suggestions for further research

Contributing to the growing body of literature on learner autonomy and self-regulated learning, this work supports the idea that reflective dialogue and structured advising play a crucial role in empowering learners. It also underscores the importance of ongoing professional development for educators to implement such programs effectively. Future research could further investigate the long-term impact of LAPs on language learners'

academic success and personal growth, as well as explore ways to integrate these programs into broader educational contexts.

From a practical perspective, the current research demonstrates the value of incorporating structured advising and reflective exercises into language programs. The positive impact of the intervention on motivation and self-awareness is a testament to the role of advising in addressing the challenges faced by language learners. However, the results also point to the need for further research into the individual differences that influence the success of such programs. Exploring the role of personality, learning styles, and prior experiences could help tailor LAPs to diverse learner needs, ultimately enhancing their effectiveness.

Further research should investigate the sustained impact of LAPs on learners' academic journeys and explore how personalized advising approaches can be tailored to individual needs. Additionally, the integration of such programs into broader educational frameworks could enhance both language learning outcomes and overall student well-being, paving the way for more effective and engaging learning environments.

6. Practical Implications

The findings of the present study hold noteworthy implications for language program design and teacher training. By integrating structured advising programs such as the LAP, language learning institutions can foster learner autonomy, motivation, and self-regulation more effectively. Language programs should incorporate structured advising sessions that prioritize goal-setting, reflective dialogue, and metacognitive awareness. The LAP model demonstrates that learners benefit from structured support in developing self-regulation and motivation, reinforcing the need for embedding reflective practices into language curricula.

One of the key takeaways from this study is the importance of goal-setting frameworks, such as the Goal-Setting Pyramid, in helping learners track their progress and maintain long-term engagement. Programs should integrate such frameworks within their curricula to encourage students to break down language learning into manageable steps. Additionally, scaffolding strategies aligned with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory should be embedded into program curricula, ensuring that learners receive external guidance that gradually transitions into self-regulated learning over time.

Furthermore, institutions should consider incorporating digital tools that facilitate self-reflection and motivation tracking, such as e-portfolios, learning diaries, and self-

assessment applications. These tools can help learners engage in continuous self-monitoring, which has been shown to reinforce motivation and self-directed learning.

Teacher training programs, on the other hand, are highly suggested to equip educators with the necessary skills to facilitate reflective dialogue and promote learner autonomy. Instructors should be trained in advising techniques that foster self-regulated learning and motivation, ensuring they can guide students through structured goal-setting and reflection-based activities. Professional development programs should incorporate training on how to implement reflective tools, such as the Confidence-Building Diary and the Wheel of Language Learning, which help learners become more aware of their cognitive processes and learning strategies.

Additionally, training should emphasize the role of structured feedback in fostering motivation and self-awareness, ensuring that educators are prepared to guide students through self-reflective practices effectively. Moreover, educators should be trained in motivational scaffolding techniques, enabling them to support learners in transitioning from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation. Training modules should focus on helping teachers create autonomy-supportive learning environments, where learners feel empowered to take control of their educational journey.

By integrating advising competencies into teacher education, institutions can foster a more learner-centered approach that aligns with contemporary theories of language acquisition and learner autonomy. These insights emphasize the need for ongoing professional development in advising methodologies, ensuring that educators are well-equipped to support students in developing self-regulated learning strategies. By implementing these recommendations, language programs and teacher training initiatives can enhance the effectiveness of language advising, promoting sustained learner engagement, motivation, and autonomy.

7. Conclusion

The effectiveness of structured advising programs in fostering learner autonomy, self-regulation, and motivation is underscored in this research. The results demonstrate that targeted interventions, such as reflective dialogue and goal-setting activities, support learners in taking ownership of their learning processes. The findings also emphasize the interconnected nature of motivation and self-awareness, reinforcing the need for integrated advising frameworks in language education. While the study provides valuable insights, its scope is limited by sample size and methodological constraints. Future research should explore the long-term impact of advising programs on language proficiency and learner independence across diverse contexts. Expanding the integration of advising methodologies into formal curricula and teacher training programs can further enhance

learner outcomes and contribute to a more sustainable approach to self-directed learning. By addressing these considerations, language education can continue evolving toward a more learner-centered paradigm, equipping students with the tools necessary for lifelong learning and academic success.

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Declaration of conflicting interests and ethics

The author declares no conflict of interest.

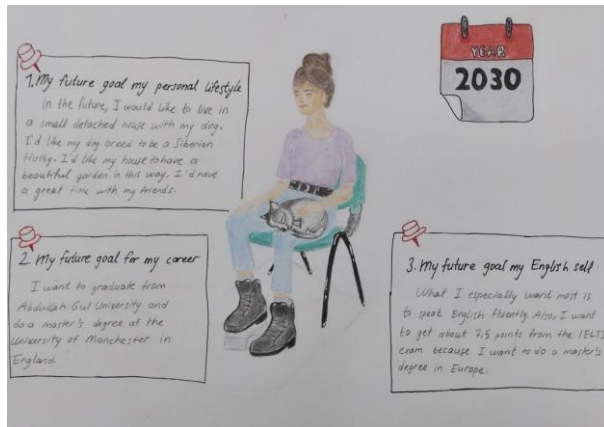
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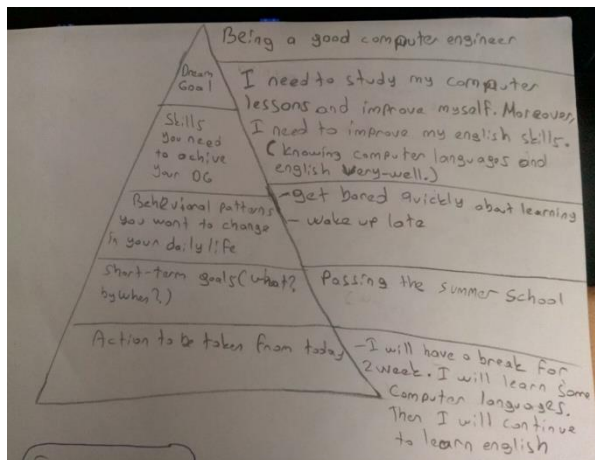
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Appendix A. Some examples of participants' psychological tools

A.1. Participant C's future vision task



A.2. Participant B's goal-setting pyramid task



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