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Investigating EFL Teachers' Autonomy in Syllabus Design in the Bologna Process at Salahaddin University

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Abstract

The Bologna Process was approved in Europe to enhance and unify higher education at the end of the 1990s. Many European and non-European countries began implementing the Process in their universities. The Bologna reform has also established university rules and restrictions to improve comparability and transparency. The standards and guidelines of the Process have impacted educational processes and teachers' autonomy. Some Kurdish universities started to implement the Bologna Process in 2015. This case study aims to investigate teachers' autonomy in designing their syllabi at Salahaddin University amidst the implementation of the Bologna Process at the university. It emphasizes teachers' autonomy and contributions in developing their course plans. To achieve this aim, a 22-item questionnaire was distributed among 25 teachers in the College of Education and Basic Education/English Departments at Salahaddin University. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS Version 27. The results indicate that teachers view autonomy as essential for effective teaching and engagement, and the data reveal that they operate in a semi-autonomous manner due to certain administrative and guideline constraints.



1. Introduction

The roles and responsibilities of teachers have changed due to new reforms in higher education. Specifically, the Bologna Process has brought noticeable changes to European higher education, a reform that aims to create similar systems and marks a new era in Europe. Teachers play a crucial role not only in teaching their subjects but also in shaping their syllabi. Gupta (2023) emphasizes the importance of teachers' involvement in this process, as they interact directly with students and understand their learning needs. Teachers are rarely consulted about new educational processes before their implementation, although they serve as links between students and curriculum stakeholders who can benefit from teachers' experience and knowledge for curriculum development. This study aims to explore teachers' perspectives on their autonomy in designing their syllabi when implementing the new reform within the Bologna reform. The current study seeks to answer the following question:

- What are the EFL teachers' perceptions of their level of autonomy in designing syllabi?

Several studies in the Kurdistan Region have examined the Bologna Process, its implications, and the challenges faced during its implementation. However, there are no studies on teachers' autonomy and involvement in designing syllabi within the Bologna Process, which started to be implemented in the Kurdistan Region (KR) in 2015. For this reason, the current study has its importance in revealing teachers' autonomy in syllabus design within the Bologna framework.

2. Literature Review

This section consists of two main parts, which are the theoretical background and the previous studies. The first part gives a detailed overview of the theoretical background and information related to the study, and the second part, which chronologically orders some of the studies that are related to the concept to support or contrast the current study, literally assists in identifying the gap that the study aims to fill.

2.1 Theoretical Background

2.1.1 Teacher Autonomy

Teacher-centered learning dominated the traditional system, which does not necessarily indicate an effective approach and often limits students' active engagement in the classroom (Mascolo, 2009). However, rapid changes throughout history in this field have aimed to simplify the learning process and improve student outcomes. Recently, the focus has shifted toward empowering students to gain autonomy while learning a language or subject. To achieve this, teachers must assert their positions and ideas and identify what is relevant to their teaching practice. Swatevacharkul (2022) elaborates that student-centered learning supports teacher autonomy because it encourages teachers to connect what they teach with students' needs and enhance learning. Little (1995) formally introduced the concept of teacher autonomy; however, the idea existed earlier, as Melenzyer (1990) points to the significance of teacher autonomy for solving teachers' problems, noting that effective teachers are always autonomous. According to Prichard and Moore (2016), many Western countries employed top-down management systems for many years, in which teachers used to have passive roles and were treated as having little or no autonomy as implementers. Recently, there has been a shift toward more independence for all institutions and teachers.

There are different perspectives on the concept of teachers' autonomy. Bass and Riggio (2005) claim that administrators may give teachers freedom either not to take responsibility themselves or to empower teachers to improve the educational environment they are in and enhance students' learning as well. Autonomy is very essential for educators; it assists them in feeling more professional in their major (Pearson and Moomaw, 2005; Brunetti, 2001) and passionate about keeping themselves working on improvement (Brunetti, 2001). Besides the importance of being autonomous many teachers are limited and not allowed to make their choices in their classrooms regarding the content to teach, aids to use in their daily classes, and how to control their classrooms (Lepine, 2007;

McGrath, 2000), although an autonomous teacher can tailor the guidelines depending on their students' needs (Little, 1995).

Autonomy may refer to various aspects for an EFL teacher, but this study emphasizes their role and liberty in syllabus design. It is claimed that teachers who experience more freedom report greater satisfaction in teaching (Dilekçi, 2022), and autonomous teachers are motivated to teach, which helps them engage more with their classes (Zhang et al., 2021).

The concept of autonomy has been defined in various ways by researchers and educators, but it remains somewhat ambiguous, with definitions only capturing a partial perspective of the overall idea. While many researchers characterize autonomy as self-directed learning, interpretations vary among authors.

For instance, Little (1995) defines teacher autonomy as the capacity for self-driven teaching, emphasizing overall engagement in the teaching process. Aoki (2000), cited in Sehwat (2014), describes it as the ability and freedom to make independent decisions regarding one's teaching practice, highlighting the critical role and liberties of educators.

In a different approach, Smith (2000) defines teacher autonomy as the capability of teachers to develop the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes for effective teaching while collaborating with peers.

Furthermore, Varatharaj, Abdullah, and Aziah (2015) argue that autonomous teachers exert a positive influence on their students, aiding them in achieving autonomy and facilitating essential changes in the teaching and learning process. Their work emphasizes the significant link between teachers' autonomy and students' learning, shedding light on both the teaching and learning processes.

In summary, the concept revolves around the freedom teachers have in their learning, professional growth, and the teaching process as they engage with students. Autonomy extends beyond mere control over teaching and learning; it also encompasses the ability to design a syllabus that effectively meets the needs of students and their learning requirements. The role of teachers in this syllabus design process is highly significant, as it provides a structured framework for students.

2.1.2 Syllabus Design

Syllabi play a crucial role in teaching by illustrating how learning objectives are met, particularly in language instruction. The terms "syllabus" and "curriculum" are sometimes used interchangeably, although they do not have the same meaning. Educators refer to syllabus design as a part of curriculum development. The notion of curriculum was discussed formally in the early 20th century, while syllabus design issues emerged in the mid-20th century (Bobbitt, 2018). Curriculum is a broader concept; according to Allen (1984), it encompasses all details related to the educational plan of an institution and is referred to as the process of planning, implementation, and assessment, while Breen (1984) states that the syllabus mainly shows opinions on language, learning, and teaching. It is mainly the planning step of the curriculum, which is a small part of the curriculum.

Designing a syllabus refers to making decisions on what to include in the teaching course, the order of the contents, and the methodology. Throughout history, syllabi have gone through a series of changes. Syllabi have varied with changes in language teaching (Richards, 2001). According to Richards (2001), it is the medium that handles the teaching program or course. A well-designed syllabus makes the program or the course effective and strong. However, it is believed that the best syllabus is the one that works for the teacher. The subject teacher must know the reason for the designed syllabus; otherwise, it would not achieve its objectives.

Previously, in the traditional system, the focus of syllabi was on selecting the content only, which mainly referred to a set of vocabulary, grammatical points, and phonology. With the changes that happened in the educational field, the focus of syllabi has changed; they have become longer and more detailed. Robinson (2011) highlights that syllabus design involves the content and the order in which the content is taught. Sometimes, teachers utilize syllabi as checklists to manage their class time; however, a good syllabus must be more than a checklist. It should talk about teachers, their teaching, reflect educational objectives and students' learning needs, and the role of module teachers

is essential to be highlighted.

Brown (1995) highlights that syllabi are mainly divided into two types:

1. Product-Oriented Syllabus
2. Process-Oriented Syllabus

Both types of syllabi have sub-types that serve the same aim; a product-oriented syllabus refers to those types that are mainly focused on the results (Nunan, 1988). In contrast, a process-oriented syllabus emphasizes the process of learning rather than the result (Shabbah, 2018).

2.1.3 The Bologna Process

The European reform began in 1988 when Bologna University celebrated its 900th anniversary with the idea of universities' independent learning supporting the European community (Magna Charta Universitatum, 1988). After 10 years of educational reform, in 1998, the education ministries of Germany, France, Italy, and the UK signed the Sorbonne Declaration, which referred to a shared system allowing easy comparison of degrees, mobility, and job opportunities (Sorbonne, 1998). Only a year later, 29 countries signed the Bologna Declaration, marking the official start of the Bologna Process in Europe. Over two decades, it expanded to include 48 countries (Sorbonne, 1998; Bologna, 1999; Brogger, 2019). The Bologna Process was developed to unify European higher education and mark a new era (Bologna, 1999), aimed at improving the quality of education, comparability, quality assurance, and mobility for students and staff. The main goal of establishing the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was to connect European countries and ensure global standards. In 2005, at the Bergen conference, it was formally discussed and defined as an educational process that can be easily compared across different countries. Students are offered a diploma supplement that highlights pedagogical and degree qualifications to increase transparency, openness, and attractiveness, which supports higher education mobility and internationalization for staff and students (Gayef and Hurdag, 2014).

The process shifted the focus of education from teachers to more student-centered learning. It is linked to students' learning (Torgal and Jalali, 2007). Brogger (2019) claims that, to meet the standards, quality assurance, study hours, qualifications, and qualification supplements must be based on learning outcomes. KRI universities began implementing the Bologna Process as a pilot project in their colleges in 2015 (Shahwan, 2021). Until that time, all universities in KRI followed the same traditional system.

2.2 Previous Studies

- Öztürk conducted a study entitled "Curriculum Reform and Teacher Autonomy in Turkey: The Case of History Teaching in Turkey" in 2011. The study focuses on the reforms that happened in the curriculum and their impact on teachers' autonomy. For achieving the aim, document analysis is utilized. The research analyzed the curriculum documents of previous academic years and the current one. The researcher compares the content of the curriculum, assessing teachers' autonomy by discussing their freedom in the goals, principles, selected topics about history, methodology, and prepared activities. The result of the analysis demonstrates that the new curriculum has introduced some new ideas, but there is no progress seen in the autonomy of teachers. Considering the classroom objectives, content, and methodology, teachers are still controlled by the education ministry, although the new reform aimed to make learning more flexible and student-centered. Öztürk (2011) sheds light on the impact of the curriculum reform on teacher autonomy, while this study tries to investigate autonomy in syllabus design when the Bologna reform is being implemented.
- A study done by Al-Kathiri in Saudi Arabia titled "The Voice of the Teacher in Syllabus Design" in 2016. The study aimed to show that teachers can actively contribute to curriculum design rather than just following the ones that are designed by others. The researcher also points to the skills and responsibilities that teachers need to acquire to design a curriculum. A semi-structured interview was conducted with ten English teachers to gather their insights

on their participation in the process of designing a curriculum. Interviews with the teachers support that teachers in Saudi Arabia are not involved in designing the curriculum. They are made to follow guidelines set by the ministry and are allowed to modify them a little. Although some teachers who participated in the interview stated that they prepare daily activities for their students, they are not allowed to change assessment criteria, and teachers are not familiar with syllabus elements and their types. Overall, teachers have a limited role in designing the curriculum and do not know the process. The researcher suggests that training is needed to familiarize them and enable them to fulfill the task effectively. To compare this research with the current one, the study by Al-Kathiri (2016) sheds light on the teachers' voice and role in curriculum design, while this study explores teacher autonomy in designing EFL syllabi within the Bologna Process.

- Matei and Iwinska (2018), researchers from Hungary, studied teacher autonomy after the implementation of the Bologna Process and its influence on the European higher education area. The study was entitled *Diverging Paths? Institutional Autonomy and Academic Freedom in the European Higher Education Area*. Qualitative data were collected through document analysis of official documents. The study indicates that, after the Bologna Process, universities became more independent; however, teachers did not have much freedom, and the focus of universities was on effectiveness, not academics. The study by Matei and Iwinska (2018) aligns with the current study, with their focus on teachers' autonomy after the Bologna Process, but their focus was on overall autonomy, whereas this study underlines the autonomy of teachers in syllabus design specifically.
- Another study, carried out in Norway by Dieudé and Prøitz in 2022, was entitled “Curriculum Policy and Instructional Planning: Teachers' Autonomy across Various School Contexts”. The researchers' purpose was to explore teacher autonomy and their control over curriculum in three different schools in Norway. The study is qualitative, in which two tools are utilized to collect data. Interviews with teachers and leaders in schools were carried out with document analysis of the formal school documents. The schools mainly focus on the outcome. The collected data present that teachers mainly have freedom in the methodology they prefer to teach, not in the content or the goals. Their autonomy varies from one school to another. Additionally, the results also represent that standardizing education may cause conflict for those who support diversity. The research sheds light on curriculum control in different schools in Norway, while the current study works on teachers' roles specifically in two colleges after adopting the Bologna Process, which aims to standardize education in various European and non-European countries.

3. Methodology and Data Collection

This section presents the data collection procedures, including the research design, participants, tools used, validity, and reliability, all aimed at fulfilling the research objective.

3.1 Sampling and Instrument

The quantitative multi-case study aims to examine the autonomy of EFL teachers in developing their syllabi at the Colleges of Education and Basic Education/ English Departments at Salahaddin University during the 2024-2025 academic year. Data were collected using a 22-item questionnaire, which employed a Likert scale to assess participants' levels of agreement with the items. In late January, an electronic Google Form was distributed to the teachers. The data were analyzed using SPSS Version 27. The study utilized purposive sampling to focus on first-year teachers at both colleges who are implementing the Bologna Process, allowing for an investigation of teachers' autonomy in syllabus design in this new reform. Table 1 presents the demographic information of the study participants.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Teachers at the College of Education/ Basic Education

No	Demographic Data		No. of teachers	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	14	56.0
		Female	11	44.0
		Total	25	100.0
2	Age	25-35	5	20.0
		35-45	16	64.0
		45-55	4	16.0
		Total	25	100.0
3	Educational Degree	MA	17	68.0
		PHD	8	32.0
		Total	25	100.0
4	Scientific Rank	Assistant Lecturer	13	52.0
		Lecturer	11	44.0
		Assistant Professor	1	4.0
		Total	25	100.0
5	Years Teaching Experience	0-5	4	16.0
		6-10	7	28.0
		11-15	9	36.0
		more than 15	5	20.0
		Total	25	100.0

6	College	College of Basic Education- Morning Classes	9	36.0
		College of Basic Education- Evening Classes	4	16.0
		College of Education- Morning Classes	8	32.0
		College of Education- Evening Classes	4	16.0
		Total	25	100.0
7	Current Module	Academic Skills	4	16.0
		Communication	2	8.0
		General English Literature	1	4.0
		Grammar	4	16.0
		Listening and speaking	2	8.0
		Literature, communication, viewing, and the modern novel	1	4.0
		Pronunciation	6	24.0
		Reading and writing	2	8.0
		Syntax and reading, and writing	1	4.0
		Tesol	1	4.0
		Testing	1	4.0
		Total	25	100.0

3.2 Validity and Reliability

Validity is one of the tools that checks research quality, referring to whether it measures what it tends to measure (Dörnyei,2007). For the face and content validity of the items, the questionnaire was sent to several experts in applied linguistics from Salahaddin, Newroz, and Dyala Universities. Based on the experts' recommendations, the questionnaire items have been improved.

On the other hand, reliability is also essential to be obtained in any research that refers to the constant results achieved on different occasions (Dörnyei, 2007). This study has undertaken procedures to gain reliability; the questionnaire was piloted on another group of teachers in the College of Education in Shaqlawa. Table 2 shows the reliability statistics of the piloting.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics of the Piloting

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items	Number of participants
0.872	22	5

A Cronbach's Alpha of 0.872 indicates acceptable internal consistency for the set of 22 items. This suggests that the items are reasonably reliable in measuring the same underlying construct or concept.

To sum up, both the reliability and validity of the questionnaire are obtained through experts' assessment and statistical analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the questionnaire results and discusses the responses. The questionnaire was distributed to 25 grade one teachers from English departments to gauge their opinions on their autonomy in syllabus design within the Bologna Process. Table 3 shows the results of the questionnaire items.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of the Questionnaire Items:

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	M	SD
1. Teacher autonomy in syllabus design is essential for enhancing teacher efficacy.	0.00%	4.00%	12.00%	64.00%	20.00%	4	0.707

2. Teachers are satisfied with the freedom they have to plan and design their courses within the Bologna framework.	8.00%	20.00%	28.00 %	40.00 %	4.00%	3.1 2	1.05 4
3. Teacher Autonomy affects students' engagement in the class.	0.00%	8.00%	4.00%	56.00 %	32.00%	4.1 2	0.83 3
4. Teachers discuss the subject content with their students before designing the syllabus.	24.00%	24.00%	28.00 %	24.00 %	0.00%	2.5 2	1.12 2
5. Teachers have the freedom to determine the order of the syllabus content and the time dedicated to each section in the Bologna Process.	8.00%	20.00%	24.00 %	40.00 %	8.00%	3.2	1.11 8

6. Teachers attend to the students' needs in their course plan according to the Bologna Process.	4.00%	36.00%	12.00 %	44.00 %	4.00%	3.08	1.077
7. Teachers are entitled to modify the syllabus activities or tasks if students find them too hard or too easy.	4.00%	32.00%	20.00 %	36.00 %	8.00%	3.12	1.092
8. Teacher autonomy allows the course syllabus to be tailored to the students' learning needs and preferences.	0.00%	8.00%	4.00%	64.00 %	24.00%	4.04	0.79
9. The lack of teacher autonomy in the course plan leads to a mismatch between the intended learning outcomes and students' actual learning needs.	0.00%	8.00%	36.00 %	36.00 %	20.00%	3.68	0.9

10. Teachers are free to adapt their syllabi to align with students' cultural environment in the Bologna Process.	0.00%	24.00%	32.00 %	40.00 %	4.00%	3.24	0.879
11. Teachers are required to follow a specific method of teaching the subject from the beginning of the academic year.	4.00%	36.00%	24.00 %	32.00 %	4.00%	2.96	1.02
12. Teachers are free to utilize diverse activities /tasks for assessing students' progress.	0.00%	16.00%	20.00 %	52.00 %	12.00%	3.6	0.913
13. Teachers have the flexibility to determine the frequency of assessing students' performance.	4.00%	24.00%	32.00 %	32.00 %	8.00%	3.16	1.028

14. Teachers have the freedom to adjust the grading scheme and scoring weight across various activities and assignments within the Bologna Process.	16.00%	36.00%	12.00 %	36.00 %	0.00%	2.68	1.145
15. Teachers are motivated to utilize new approaches to design their syllabi in the Bologna Process.	8.00%	8.00%	28.00 %	52.00 %	4.00%	3.36	0.995
16. The Department supports teachers to design their syllabi.	0.00%	16.00%	20.00 %	48.00 %	16.00%	3.64	0.952
17. Administrative regulations restrict teachers' autonomy in syllabus design.	0.00%	32.00%	24.00 %	28.00%	16.00%	3.28	1.1

<p>18. Collabora- tion with other teachers enhances personal skills and fosters autonom- y in designin- g their syllabi.</p>	<p>0.00%</p>	<p>0.00%</p>	<p>0.00%</p>	<p>60.00 %</p>	<p>40.00%</p>	<p>4.4</p>	<p>0.5</p>
<p>19. Professio- nal develop- ment events such as worksho- ps, seminars, training courses, etc., enhance teachers' skills in designin- g syllabus.</p>	<p>0.00%</p>	<p>0.00%</p>	<p>8.00%</p>	<p>40.00 %</p>	<p>52.00%</p>	<p>4.4 4</p>	<p>0.65 1</p>
<p>20. The higher education reform of Bologna allows teachers more flexibilit- y in course design.</p>	<p>0.00%</p>	<p>20.00%</p>	<p>52.00 %</p>	<p>28.00 %</p>	<p>0.00%</p>	<p>3.0 8</p>	<p>0.70 2</p>

21. Bologna guidelines and requirements restrict teachers' creativity in syllabi design.	8.00%	20.00%	40.00%	32.00%	0.00%	2.96	0.935
22. In the Bologna Process, teachers assign students with subject-related authentic materials that enrich the learning experience.	0.00%	12.00%	24.00%	60.00%	4.00%	3.56	0.768

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics for the questionnaire items. Regarding item No. 1, 64% of the participants stated 'Agree', indicating that the majority of participants believe in the significance of autonomy for enhancing their efficacy, thereby assisting them in designing the syllabus in a way that best suits their students. Additionally, 20% of teachers strongly agreed. In total, 84% of participants showed their willingness to become autonomous teachers.

The result supports Peng et al.'s (2022) claims that when teachers are autonomous, it positively enhances teacher efficacy, protects teacher well-being, and increases teachers' job satisfaction.

However, on the other hand, 12% of participants chose undecided. Only 4% disagreed with the item, and no one chose strongly disagree for item No.1.

According to item No. 2, responses indicated a positive attitude toward the item, which pertains to teachers' satisfaction with their freedom in designing and planning their courses, as 40% chose "agree" and 4% chose "strongly agree." This aligns with Rudolph (2006), who believes that teachers having autonomy in making decisions related to the curriculum show a high level of satisfaction.

However, 28% of participants remained undecided; on the other hand, 20% disagreed, and 8% strongly disagreed with item No. 2. The data for item No. 2 indicate that participants are mostly undecided. Additionally, a standard deviation of 1.054 illustrates variation in the responses, indicating that opinions are divided.

The third item has highlighted students' engagement in their classes while having an autonomous teacher. According to the results, the majority of participants, 56%, agreed with the item, followed by 32% who strongly agreed, showing participants' positive attitude towards teachers' autonomy and students' engagement. As Little (1995) claimed, teachers who have autonomy greatly impact

students' autonomy, leading to more engagement and motivation.

Moreover, 8% have selected “disagree”, while only 4% stayed undecided, with no response for “strongly disagree”.

Regarding item 4 rating whether teachers discuss content with their students before designing their syllabi, almost half of the responses showed disagreement with the item, with an average of 24% of strongly disagree and 24% for disagree, while 28% chose undecided.

In contrast, 24% of them agreed, indicating that they discuss the content with their students. At the same time, no one selected the “strongly agree” option, which means that they mainly decide on the content by themselves. As Graves (2000) suggests, teachers and students should collaboratively design the syllabus, taking into account students' learning needs.

Concerning item No.5, about 40% of the respondents agreed that teachers have the freedom to order the content and dedicate time, with 8% strongly agreeing. This aligns with Richards' (2001) and Nunan's (2000) statement that teachers are in charge of selecting the content, its order, and the time allocated for each part.

Simultaneously, 24% chose to stay undecided, showing that they sometimes are not allowed to sequence the content or allocate time for each section due to institutional restrictions or other issues. A group of participants disagreed with the item, with 20% agreeing and 8% strongly disagreeing about having freedom.

According to the data assigned for item 6 in the table, the majority of teachers agreed that they focus on students' needs in their coursebooks, with 44% rating as 'agree' and 4% rating as 'strongly agree'. However, 36% disagreed or 4% strongly disagreed that they focus on students' needs while implementing the Bologna Process. Twelve percent preferred to stay neutral regarding the statement. As Torgal and Jalali (2007) highlight in their study the Bologna reform must enhance the quality of the learning process by aligning education with students' needs and involving skills they need that meet the 21st century, like critical thinking, creativity, ...etc.

Item No. 7 referred to teachers' empowerment to modify their syllabi depending on the students' reactions. 36% of the responses selected “agree” and 8% strongly agreed, which equals 44% of the responses. This clarifies that the majority of teachers in the English department have the autonomy to change their plans if required. On the other hand, 32% disagreed and 4 % strongly disagreed with the item, which shows that teachers do not feel they have autonomy to modify due to institutional restrictions or teachers' inability to adapt the coursebook to students' learning needs. Only 20% selected “undecided”, indicating that they are not sure if they have freedom or not. This refers to the various autonomy levels.

Regarding item No.8, concerning tailoring course syllabi to students' needs and preferences, about 64% of teachers selected “agree” with 24% selecting strongly agree, showing that their autonomy would help them tailor the course to fit their students and enhance students' learning, as Li (2010) mentions in his study that teachers adapt the syllabus to fit students' needs.

The minority of the responses, about 8%, elaborated that teachers do not believe that autonomy would assist them in adapting the course to fit students' needs. However, no one chose “strongly disagree,” and only 4 % remained uncertain.

According to the data, it can be observed that only 8% of the responses disagree with item No. 9, and no one has selected “strongly disagree”, while the majority choose to agree,36%, and 20% strongly agree that lack of autonomy negatively affects the alignment between learning outcomes and students' needs. Also, 36% of the teachers were uncertain which is noticeably high. This may refer to a lack of experience, or they may weigh the merits and demerits of autonomy so they choose to stand in between.

Concerning item 10, most of the participants have a positive perspective on adapting syllabi to students' cultural environment, 40% agree and 4% strongly agree, which is 44% in total, showing that the current reform has helped teachers make the learning process more meaningful by aligning it with the local culture. 32% of teachers have selected undecided, which may result from several reasons, such as limited practice of autonomy or lack of understanding of item No.10. 24 % of participants disagreed that teachers have the opportunity to adapt their courses to the cultural context; their disagreement may refer to various factors, such as lack of training, not having support from the institutional administration, or finding it hard to integrate cultural materials into a class with diverse cultures. Also, Ordóñez Procel et al. (2023) highlight the importance of valuing cultural diversity in the class, which would impact learning outcomes and make teachers adapt the syllabus to their culture.

Item No.11 highlights whether teachers are forced to follow one method while teaching their modules; 36% disagree, and 4 % strongly disagree, while 32 % agree, and only 4% strongly agree, which shows that some of the teachers in English departments may have limited autonomy in practice. Meanwhile 24% of the teachers selected undecided, which may refer to teachers' uncertainty on the issue, or they randomly selected the option.

Regarding item No. 12, the data illustrate that 52% selected "agree" and 12% selected "strongly agree," indicating that they have the freedom to assess their students' performance through different tasks and activities. The average of teachers' uncertainty on this item is 20%. Additionally, 16% of the average selected "disagree," suggesting that they may be compelled to follow specific activities for assessment due to some administrative policy.

Table 3 analyzes the data presented in the 13th item, which shows mixed opinions on the frequency of assessing students. 32% chose "agree" and 8% chose "strongly agree," indicating that 40% of the teachers feel they have autonomy in assessing consistently, while 24% disagree and 4% "strongly disagree," meaning that 28% in total indicate they have limited autonomy in assessing performance, and 32% of participating teachers were uncertain. Although the majority of the responses reflect a positive attitude, the division of the responses represents various levels of autonomy or uncertainty regarding the assessment guidelines within the Bologna framework.

Regarding item No.14, 36% of the EFL teachers have selected disagree and 16% strongly disagree; almost half of the participants disagreed that they have the freedom to change the grading scheme which suggests that the grading scheme is not decided by the teachers.36% of them agreed with the item, which may result from institutional flexibility or the nature of the module, while 12 % were unsure.

Item No.15 emphasizes the motivation for using different approaches for syllabus design. The majority of the participants selected the positive scale; 52% agreed and 4% strongly agreed. As stated by Li (2010), teachers' selection of syllabus types may vary. There was a 28% average of uncertainty, while 16 % disagreed, with 8% disagreeing, and 8% strongly disagreeing, indicating that teachers are not well motivated to adopt different approaches to design their syllabi.

Concerning the 16th item, teachers rated the level of institutional support for designing syllabi. A significant number of the EFL teachers agreed that they are supported in designing their syllabi, with 48% of them agreeing and 16 % strongly agreeing. At the same time, 20% selected undecided, which may relate to different motivation expectations of teachers. 16% of responses selected disagree, which is the minority of those who participated. Graves (2000) states that teachers design their courses better when they know how much support and time they have.

Concerning responses to item No.17, the responses of agreement and disagreement are equal which indicates that colleges' autonomy may vary in response to institutional regulations, 28% of the

participants agreed and 16% strongly agreed that regulations limit autonomy in syllabus design when implementing the Bologna Process, while 32% of them disagreed that they have been affected, or in other words, that their autonomy is not affected while following department and college regulations. Only 24% chose to stay undecided.

Regarding item No. 18, all the participants selected positive scales; 60% agree and 40% strongly agree that collaborating with colleagues enhances their skills in designing syllabi and increases autonomy. The data for this item are supported by Dritis-Esser and Stark (2015), who claim that teachers learn practical skills for designing syllabi and promote autonomy through collaborative curriculum design.

The data shown in Table 3 for item No. 19 indicate high agreement among participants showing that professional development activities promote skills that assist them in designing syllabi 40% of the teachers agreed and 52 % selected strongly agree which is 92% in total. Their responses align with Rahimpour (2010), who asserts that training is necessary for teachers to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for effective involvement in syllabus design.

Only 8% selected undecided, which may refer to their training experience in the past, or they can't relate training and autonomy.

Concerning item No. 20, the data show that half of the responses, 52%, selected undecided. This high percentage shows that there is uncertainty. As the Bologna Process is in its first year of implementation in both colleges, teachers are not sure of the level of flexibility they have in the process, or it may refer to a lack of provided guidelines on the curriculum for the teachers. Only 28% of the responses agreed and 20% disagreed with the item, indicating that they have different views on the process.

The responses of the participants for item No. 21 show that the majority feel uncertainty, 40%, regarding the restrictions that affect EFL teachers' creativity. This may refer to the clarity of the guidelines and process requirements for the teachers. 32% of the teachers agree, which means they feel the Bologna guidelines restrict them. Additionally, 28% of the responses showed their disagreement, 20% selected disagree, and 8% selected strongly disagree, which means they still have the opportunity to design the syllabus creatively.

Finally, for item No.22, the majority of the participants, 60%, have chosen agree, indicating that teachers mainly provide their students with authentic material to help them learn better, 4 % strongly agree, which supports that students are provided with authentic materials, 24 % of the responses are undecided and 12% disagree. The disagreement and uncertainty percentages might be due to some factors or challenges in finding suitable real-world materials because of limited time and insufficient resources.

Based on Table 3, teachers generally view autonomy as important and beneficial for efficacy and engagement; however, they experience moderate freedom within the Bologna Process, facing some administrative and guideline constraints. Collaboration and professional development are considered key factors that enhance autonomy and skills in syllabus design.

In Table 4, the t-test of autonomy variables dependent on gender shows $p = 0.70$, indicating that the variances between the two groups are equal (no violation of homogeneity of variance).

The t-test results show a t-value of 0.23 with degrees of freedom of approximately 23. Both p-values are less than 0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference between the group means, suggesting a statistically significant difference between the male and female autonomy group means.

Table 4: t-test for all items dependent on the Gender variable

Independent Samples Test									
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	0.12	0.73	0.23	23	0.002	0.0342	0.148	-0.2718	0.3403
Equal variances not assumed			0.23	20.93	0.02	0.0342	0.1491	-0.276	0.3444

However, the mean difference (0.0342) is small, and the 95% confidence intervals for the difference include zero (from about -0.27 to 0.34), which usually suggests that the difference may not be practically significant. While the p-values indicate a statistically significant difference between groups, the very small mean difference and confidence intervals crossing zero suggest that this difference may not be meaningful in practice.

As the difference between the gender groups' means is very small and similar, it is suggested to consider conducting future work with larger number of participants in both groups.

Table 5: t-test for all items dependent on Educational Degree

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	0.307	0.585	1.374	23	0.003	0.20822	0.15153	-0.10523	0.52168
Equal variances not assumed			1.299	12.079	0.218	0.20822	0.16033	-0.14085	0.55730

Table 5 presents the results of an independent samples t-test comparing Educational Degree groups.

Independent Samples t-test (Equal Variances Assumed). If the value of $t = 1.374$, and Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.003, the p-value (0.003) < 0.05, so there is a statistically significant difference between the two group means.

The average difference between Group MA and Group PhD is 0.20822 (the direction depends on how the groups were coded).

There is a statistically significant difference ($p = 0.003$) between the two groups, with a mean difference of 0.20822.

The result between the two groups shows that there is a difference which is not random, and teachers with a PhD degree have more autonomy in designing syllabi when compared to MA holders.

Table 6: Correlation between Autonomy and Teaching Experience

Correlations			
		Teaching Experience	Autonomy
Teaching Experience	Pearson Correlation	1	0.740
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.046
	N	25	25
Autonomy	Pearson Correlation	0.740	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.046	
	N	25	25

A correlation coefficient quantifies the degree of relationship between variables. It measures linear association and is commonly referred to as Pearson's correlation coefficient after its creator. As Table 6 shows, there exists a significant positive association between Teaching Experience and Autonomy, as indicated by the value of 0.740. A matrix displaying the correlation coefficient of 0.735 and the significance value of 0.046 shows a strong positive association between Teaching Experience and Autonomy, assuming a curved line is needed to represent the relationship. This suggests that, depending on the following hypotheses, the data points are closely grouped around a line of best fit with a positive slope, indicating that when one variable increases, the other variable tends to increase as well.

H_0 : No Relationship between (Teaching Experience) and (Autonomy).

H_1 : Relationship between (Teaching Experience) and (Autonomy).

Since the significance value (0.046) is less than alpha (0.05), this indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between Teaching Experience and Autonomy.

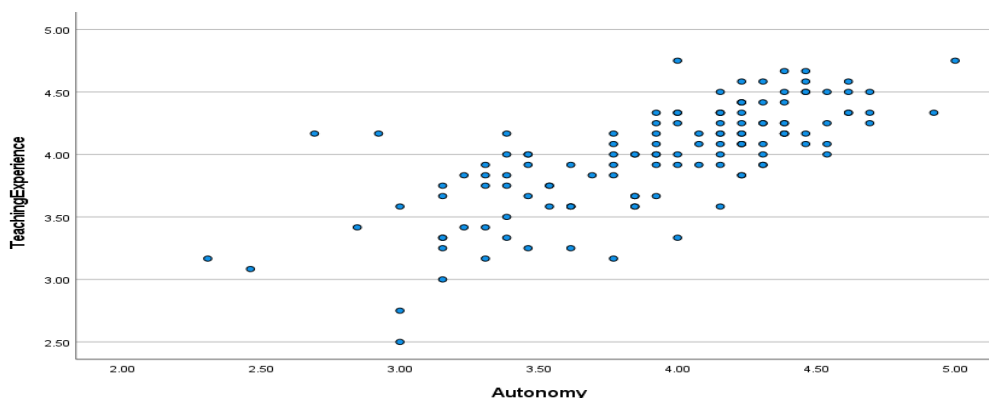


Figure 1: Correlation between Teaching Experience and Autonomy.

The figure illustrates the relationship between teachers' experience and autonomy.

If the chart shows a positive trend (an upward line or clustering), this suggests that as teachers gain more experience, their sense of autonomy increases. The chart visually demonstrates whether and how teaching experience is related to autonomy. If the correlation is positive and significant, it implies that supporting teachers as they gain experience may also enhance their professional autonomy.

A previous study by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2014) highlights that teachers who have more self-efficacy, which increases with experience, have greater autonomy and are more satisfied with their teaching, supporting the finding of the current study related to autonomy and experience.

Table 7: Correlation between Autonomy and Scientific Rank.

Correlations			
		Scientific Rank	Autonomy
Scientific Rank	Pearson Correlation	1	-.351
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.085
	N	25	25
Autonomy	Pearson Correlation	-.351	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.085	
	N	25	25

The provided correlation matrix illustrates the relationship between Scientific Rank and Autonomy. The Pearson correlation coefficient is -0.351, indicating a negative association between these two variables. The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.085, which exceeds the conventional threshold of 0.05 for statistical significance. This implies that, although the correlation is negative, it is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to examine teachers' roles in syllabus design in the Bologna framework through a questionnaire directed to EFL teachers. Depending on the results obtained from data analysis, the study has led to the following conclusions:

1. Teachers believe that the autonomy provided would improve their teaching and increase student engagement.
2. Teachers have a fair freedom in the new reform, while they face some administrative and guideline restrictions.
3. Teachers believe that they are restricted from changing the grading schemes.
4. Collaboration and professional development events are observed as important factors in enhancing autonomy and syllabus design skills
5. Teachers with PhD degrees who participated in the questionnaire have more autonomy in designing syllabi when compared to MA holders.

6. More experienced teachers tend to feel more independent and empowered in their professional roles.
7. Teachers' scientific rank shows a moderate negative correlation with autonomy, suggesting that higher ranks do not necessarily result in greater autonomy.

6. Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Studies

Based on the study's conclusions, several recommendations can be made to enhance teachers' autonomy in designing syllabi within the Bologna Process at Salahaddin University. These recommendations are intended for university teachers and stakeholders at Salahaddin University.

To better implement the Bologna Process and enhance syllabi, Salahaddin University should provide its academic staff with clearer and more detailed guidelines on the Bologna Process, including details on the curriculum criteria and teachers' roles. This would promote greater success and reduce failure rates in the process. Additionally, it would be beneficial for stakeholders to offer teachers training opportunities to keep them informed about updates and provide resources that enable their participation in curriculum design. The stakeholders need to consult teachers before implementing something new, especially decisions related to the curriculum. University teachers can create online communities to share their information, experience, and reflections on the autonomy they have.

Finally, the researchers suggest that future studies could address the same issue and title but at different universities and also involve students as samples in their studies.

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Appendices
Appendix (1): Jury members

Name	Specialization	University
Prof. Dr. Fatima Rashid Hasan Al-Bajalani	Applied Linguistics	Salahaddin University-Erbil
Prof. Dr. Hussein Ahmad Gargari	Applied Linguistics	Newroz University
Prof. Dr. Ayad Hamid	Applied Linguistics	Dyala University
Asst. Prof. Dr. Qismat Muhamed Hussen	Applied Linguistics	Salahaddin University-Erbil
Asst. Prof. Dr. Dlakshyan Yosef Othman	Applied Linguistics	Salahaddin University-Erbil
Asst. Prof. Dr. Hazha Salh Hassan	Applied Linguistics	Salahaddin University-Erbil
Asst. Prof. Dr. Tahseen Hussein Rasul	Applied Linguistics	Salahaddin University-Erbil
Dr. Heyder Sabir Hasan	Applied Linguistics	Salahaddin University-Erbil
Dr. Kawa Qader Muhammad	Applied Linguistics	Salahaddin University-Erbil

ليكوئينهوه له سه‌ربه‌خوي ماموستاياني زماني ئينگليزي وهك زماني بياني له دارشتني كورس له پرؤسه‌ي بؤلونيا له زانكوي سه‌لاحه‌ددين

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پوخته

پرؤسه‌ي بؤلونيا له كوتايي سالاني نه‌وه‌ده‌كاني سه‌ده‌ي رابردودا له ئه‌وروا په‌سه‌ندكرا به مه‌به‌ستي به‌هيزكردن و به‌كخستني خويندني بالا. زوريك له ولاتاني ئه‌وروي و ده‌روه‌ي ئه‌وروا ده‌ستيان كرد به جيبه‌جيكردني ئه‌م پرؤسه‌يه له زانكوكانياندا. هه‌روه‌ها، چاكسازي بؤلونيا كومه‌ليك ياسا و رينمايي زانكوي دارشتووه بؤ باشتركردني تواناي به‌راوردكردن و شه‌فافيته. ستاندارد و رينمايييه‌كاني ئه‌م پرؤسه‌يه كارگه‌رييان له‌سه‌ر پرؤسه‌كاني په‌روه‌ده و فيزكردن و هه‌روه‌ها رولي ماموستايان هه‌بووه. هه‌نديك له زانكوكاني كوردستان له سالي 2015 ده‌ستيان به جيبه‌جيكردني پرؤسه‌ي بؤلونيا كرد. ئه‌م تويزيئه‌ويه ئامانجي ليكوئينه‌ويه له ئاستي سه‌ربه‌خوي ماموستايان له دارشتني پرؤگرامه‌كاني خويندنياندا (سيله‌به‌س) له زانكوي سه‌لاحه‌دين، دواي جيبه‌جيكردني پرؤسه‌ي بؤلونيا له‌م زانكويه‌دا. تويزيئه‌وه‌كه جه‌خت له‌سه‌ر رول و به‌شداريي ماموستايان ده‌كاته‌وه له په‌ره‌پيداني پلانه‌كاني كورسه‌كانياندا. بؤ گه‌يشتن به‌م ئامانجه، پرسيارنامه‌يه‌كه كه له 22 برگه پينكها‌تبوو، له روانگه‌ي خودي ماموستايانه‌وه، دابه‌شكرا به‌سه‌ر 25 ماموستا له كوليژه‌كاني په‌روه‌ده و په‌روه‌ده‌ي بنه‌ره‌ت / به‌شه‌كاني زماني ئينگليزي له زانكوي سه‌لاحه‌دين. داتا كوكراوه‌كان به‌به‌كاره‌يتاني به‌نامه‌ي SPSS وه‌شاني 27 شيكاربييان بؤ كرا. ئه‌نجامه‌كان ئه‌وه ده‌رده‌خه‌ن كه ماموستايان سه‌ربه‌خوي به‌بنچينه‌يه‌كي گرنج ده‌زانن بؤ وانه‌وته‌وه‌ي كارگه‌ر و به‌شدارييكردني خويندكاران. هه‌روه‌ها داتاكان ئه‌وه ئاشكرا ده‌كه‌ن كه ماموستايان به‌هوي هه‌نديك كوتبه‌ندي كارگه‌ري و رينمايييه‌كانه‌وه، به شيويه‌يه‌كي نيمچه-سه‌ربه‌خو كارده‌كه‌ن.

وشه سه‌ره‌كويه‌كان: سه‌ربه‌خوي ماموستايان، ديزاييني كورس، پرؤسه‌ي بؤلونيا.

دراسة استقلالية معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية في تصميم المناهج الدراسية في عملية بولونيا بجامعة صلاح الدين

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الملخص

أقرت عملية بولونيا في أوروبا لتحسين التعليم العالي وتوجيهه في نهاية تسعينيات القرن الماضي وبدأت العديد من الدول الأوروبية وغير الأوروبية بتطبيق العملية في جامعاتها. كما أرسى إصلاح بولونيا قواعد وقبوضاً جامعة لتعزير إمكانية المقارنة والشفافية. وقد أثرت معايير العملية وإرشاداتها على العمليات التعليمية و أدوار المعلمين. وانضمت بعض الجامعات الكردية إلى هذه الدول في عام 2015. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة حرية المعلمين في تصميم مناهجهم في جامعة صلاح الدين بعد تطبيق عملية بولونيا فيها. وتؤكد على أدوار المعلمين ومساهماتهم في إعداد خططهم الدراسية. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف، تم توزيع استبيان مكون من 22 بنداً على 25 معلماً في كليتي التربية والتربية الأساسية / أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة صلاح الدين، ووجهة نظر المعلمين. تم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها باستخدام برنامج SPSS الإصدار 27. تشير النتائج إلى أن المعلمين يعتبرون الاستقلالية ضرورية للتدريس الفعال والمشاركة، وتكشف البيانات أنهم يعملون بطريقة شبه مستقلة بسبب بعض القيود الإدارية والإرشادية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التحقيق، استقلالية المعلمين، تصميم المنهج، عملية بولونيا