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## IMPROVING EFL BEGINNERS' VOCABULARY AND ICC TEACHING VIA AN INSTAGRAM APP

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### 1. Introduction

Online applications in pandemic situations provide a huge number of tools for effectively learning English in learning foreign languages. Nowadays, social networks are beginning to share not only by the type of users, for example, the social network for LinkedIn professionals, but also by the type of content. To promote goods and services, social networks that were not originally intended for these purposes began to be used. Instagram can serve as an example. In just a couple of years, a regular application for sharing photos between users has become a full-fledged advertising platform, which is gaining popularity all over the world. For business owners, these are millions of subscribers who are ready to accept any information about the company, products, and services.

Instagram is a relatively young social network, so as a form of microblogging and as a promotion tool, it has not yet been studied in Russia, and studying abroad is just beginning. There are already recommendations for promoting goods and services on Twitter and Facebook, which J. Gitomer writes about], but Instagram promotion has not been the subject of research so far." Instagram is a free application designed for posting, sharing and processing photos, as well as for publishing videos". The peculiarity of this social network is that users post their own photos using smartphones. By posting photos, Instagram users can apply one of 23 filters, write a comment on the photo and add a hashtag.

### 2. Literature review

#### 2.1 EFL Beginner Vocabulary

All around the world students of all ages are learning to talk English, but their reasons for needing to ponder English can contrast incredibly. A few students, of course, were learning English because it is on the educational programs at an essential or auxiliary level, but for others, considering the language reflects a few kinds of choice. Many individuals learn English since they have moved into a target-language community and they ought to be able to function effectively inside that community. A target-language community may be a place where English is the national language – e.g. Britain, Canada, New Zealand, etc [2; 11]. Learning a language and getting to be familiar with that language could be a long and complicated handle. Much of it revolves around grammar rules and their special cases in conjunction with discourse rules and how local speakers

utilize language to communicate with one another. Nevertheless, knowing all these things won't get your students exceptionally far if they do not know vocabulary – individual words within the English language and what they allude to within the genuine world, be it the things we see around us or even things we can't see.

**Vocabulary** (lexicon) – is a set of words that a person understands and uses in his speech. Understanding the meaning of each word in the text contributes to understanding the meaning of the sentence, paragraph, and entire text. There are two types of vocabulary:

*Active vocabulary* includes words that are actively used in oral speech and writing.

*Passive vocabulary* is those words that a person learns by reading or by ear, but does not use in oral speech and writing. Passive vocabulary is usually several times larger than active vocabulary.

In the Kazakhstani learning process, special efforts are needed to enrich both the active and passive vocabulary of students. This happens in the process of explaining the meaning of a word and using new words in oral speech and writing. In this standard, the nature of word learning and on how to encourage successful word utilization, start with a few fundamental backgrounds. The part of the vocabulary in learning second language instruction has changed over time; it has been seen and prioritized in an unexpected way highlighting six of the generally later approaches here, centering on how they see and displayed lexicon.

Jeremy Harmer has made three essential refinements to the language knowledge of their understudies: beginner, intermediate and advanced. A distinction is made between beginners (students who start a beginners' course having listened to virtually no English) and false beginners to reflect the reality that the last mentioned can't truly utilize any English but really know very a part which can be rapidly actuated; they're not genuine beginners. Elementary students are no longer beginners and are able to communicate in an essential way. They can string a few sentences together, develop a simple story, or take part in simple spoken interactions.

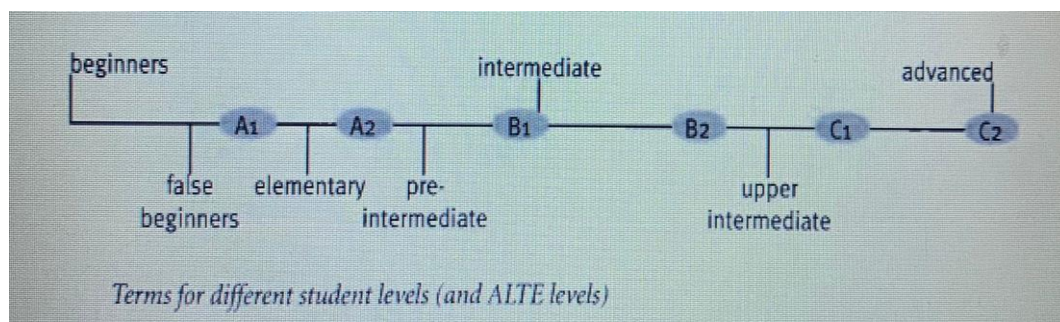


Fig. 1. Language Levels proficiency

The globally integrated world has been rapidly changing and has been requiring various skills and abilities that cause to reconsider the concept of foreign language education.

Owing to the changing demands in the modern labour market, foreign language education has received growing attention today. Educators of foreign languages have increasingly understood that teaching languages is not only about language proficiency but also about how socio and linguistic dimensions are fundamental. In recent years, with the accelerated internationalization and globalization there has been an increased recognition in need for the significance of ICC development in foreign language education. [1; 103]

## 2.2. ICC Teaching

In later years, the intercultural communicative competence (ICC) development has been broadly perceived in foreign language instruction, with language teachers anticipated to energize the advancement of ICC in their learners. Teachers in English as a foreign language (EFL) have progressively caught on that teaching languages isn't as it were almost language capability, as social measurements are key as well. The importance of intercultural communication and the integration of cultural dimensions into language instruction are hence broadly perceived and have

prompted influential changes in remote language education. [4; 76] This is often certainly the case in Kazakhstan, where intrigue in intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has increased quickly, coming about in a considerable movement of the objectives in remote language education, including English. Whereas the objectives once centered on getting to be a native-like English speaker, the point presently incorporates getting to be an intercultural speaker who can be connected across cultural boundaries successfully and suitably, hence accomplishing successful communication in an intercultural setting. [4; 80]

Kazakhstan is not an exception as it also has been developing its policies and institutions in education with the aim of complying with international standards. Due to the latest reforms in Kazakhstani educational system, particularly regarding the multilingualism and the cultural project “Trinity of Languages”, which was initially introduced by the first president Nazarbayev in 2007, the English language has received a significant role in the implementation of the State Language Policy in Kazakhstan. The strategic goals established in the cultural project “Trinity of Languages” and in the State Program on Education Development of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020 years were aimed at mastering language proficiencies of 95% Kazakh language, 25% Russian language and 25% English language by all Kazakhstani citizens till 2020).

Thus, the State Program and the project triggered the necessity to promote the development of intercultural competence in not only higher education but in secondary education as well. The state curriculum of English Foreign Language (hereafter EFL) lessons in Kazakhstani secondary education emphasizes the development of multilingual and multicultural citizens and contains culture-oriented topics with the focus on the foundation of the positive attitudes, openness to value own and other people’s culture.

Considering the problem of the ICC formation of pre-service teachers at university should be highlighted as a multistage activity that is carried out in the form of a series of successive stages. They are organized to develop future activities from a general idea to clearly programmed actions. A predictable result is the functioning of ICC skills in communicative sphere, in acts of intercultural communication.

S.S. Kunanbaeva [5; 52] determines that a person’s competence is formed in the process of education and is a characteristic of the intellectual and professional development of a person. Competences as systemic qualitative new formations are a characteristic of the teaching quality and good level of specialist training.

The national professional standard “Teacher”, intended for the development of educational programs, defines the requirements for skills and abilities, knowledge and competences required by the teacher. Knowing the linguistic mechanisms of intercultural interaction and the paradigm of co-learning of languages, co-learning of languages and cultures, students of language specialties develop cultural awareness, will be ready to meet students’ cultural and linguistic needs in their future profession, and form a tolerant attitude towards foreign culture and lifestyle.

The interest in ICC development has widely recognized, promoting a considerable shift of the goals in foreign language education, in which the focus is now on acquiring a complex of abilities needed to interact effectively and appropriately with people of other linguistic and cultural backgrounds. [1; 12] A new paradigm shift in foreign language education in Kazakhstan has been highly promoted entailing contemporary teaching approaches and acknowledging the importance of a student-centered and communication-oriented approach as the groundwork for the teaching process and students’ meaningful learning. It leads to the shift from teacher-centered classrooms where the teacher is believed to be an authority and a source of knowledge to highly encouraged learner-centeredness and facilitated methodology originated in constructivist developmental theory. The role of schooling has aimed at training learners who will be able to think beyond the limits and own intercultural communicative competencies as well as essential skills such as problem solving, synthesizing, creativity and critical thinking, collaboration and communication that will enable them to work with their peers and achieve productive team goals. The recent literature has acknowledged that educators and scholars have been searching for the educational approaches to effectively align enriching linguistic and communicative competencies with promoting the

appropriate interaction with people of cultural diversity.

A person achieves ICC when he understands how his cultural norms affect his self-awareness and the situation he faces. In fact, ICC is an integral part of communicative competence, defined as “the ability to act depending on the context, situation, and topic”. In accordance with this, ICC is knowledge about culture and the use of language in line with the inclusion of this knowledge in the meanings of linguistic units. S.S.Kunanbaeva [4; 85] noted that it is “a reflection of the national linguistic consciousness and mentality”. She proposes a framework of “intercultural communicative competence” containing subcompetencies that reflect the teaching system shaping an intercultural communicative level of language proficiency, sufficient for ordinary life and work in the modern interrelated world.

Finally, ICC can be defined as follows: the ability to define and challenge one’s cultural ideas, values, and beliefs. It is about developing empathy and related knowledge, the ability to see the world through the eyes of others, or at least understand that others can perceive the world through the different cultures.

Even though the significance of ICC is widely recognized around the world, the preliminary study in this research reveals that teaching and practicing ICC in EFL classes in Kazakhstani education encounter challenges despite any teaching experience. There were identified several important issues that create barriers to developing ICC.

EFL teachers recognize the lack of a real environment for learners to practice their ICC. Other warning aspects of promoting students’ ICC consider the teachers’ lack knowledge on how to promote students’ ICC, how to teach ICC, how to assess ICC aspects, and how to maintain the balance in teaching and integrating language and cultural objectives. It is important to note that the assessment of learners’ intercultural communicative competencies is one of the most challenging aspects in the research field of ICC and is still on the developmental stage. The methods of ICC assessment, how and what to assess are among the most challenging issues that educators experience.

### 2.3 Methodology

#### 2.3.1 Research Objectives

This study is aimed at proposing the ways to learn vocabulary for beginners via Instagram in the context of online learning for the ICC formation.

#### 2.3.2 Research Methods

As above-mentioned this study is the attempt to investigate in what way Instagram can be the constituent part of ICC teaching and how to manage learning cross-cultural vocabulary for beginners in distant teaching.

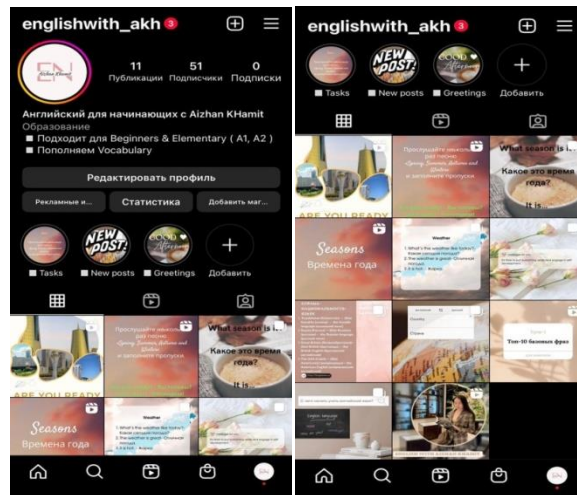
For this purpose, the following investigative techniques were used in this study, such as the study and analysis of scientific and methodological sources on the problem, analysis, and generalization of the accumulated domestic and foreign experience on the research topic, observation of the educational process, questionnaire, and the method of pre and post experiential teaching.

#### 2.3.3 Participant Profile and Research Design

The participants were the users of the Instagram blog. All followers were of different ages, with different experiences and from various parts of the world. Mostly, they study English as a second foreign language with a beginner level of English language proficiency.

The group was in number according to experimental teaching. In the case of practical approbation, we created and designed 11 posts during the summer term in 2022.

There were 51 participants.



Picture 1. Instagram account

### 3. Findings and Discussions

Learning vocabulary by utilizing an Instagram application allows learners to understand more new words in less time, because their attention is focused on various interesting photo and video tutorials, and they're not wasting time on boring and typical memorizing words (for example, from dictionaries).

Exciting learning also reduces stress and raises the mood of the student, because such a learning process brings them pleasure. It can also give a sense of achieving their goals. Moreover, it will help students stay involved in their studies and motivate them to learn English even more.

For a deeper investigation of the problem, we have conducted an online teaching experiment at Instagram account @englishwith\_akh among 51 followers different aged. Our experiment has been founded on several stages. Before we tried to investigate students' learning needs, we have to depict the initial data for a more profound comprehension of the students' uneasiness in learning vocabulary.

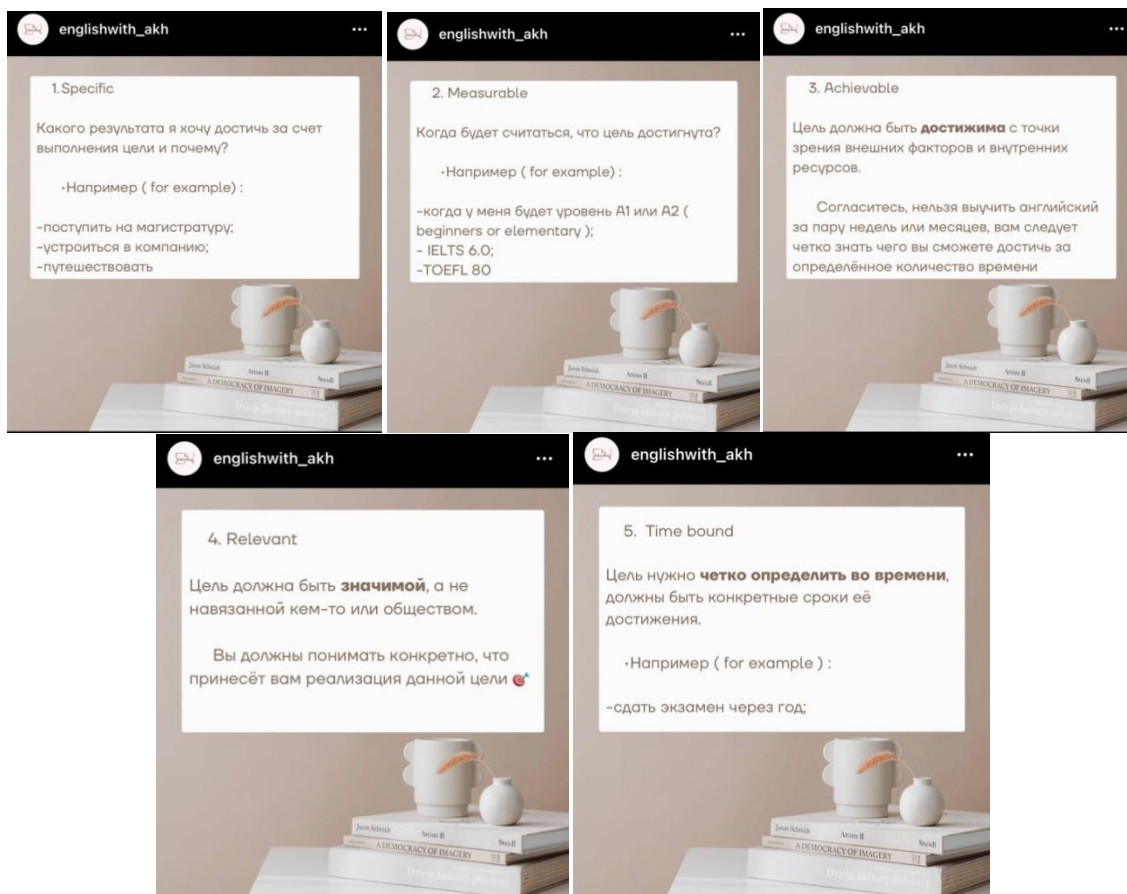
#### Stage 1: Identifying the purpose of students' learning English

This is necessary in order to summarize all available information, set clear deadlines, determine the sufficiency of resources and provide all participants in the process with clear, precise, specific tasks. We have determined this through the SMART system.

At the beginning of our experimental research, we have elicited the aim of students' learning English language based on the SMART model for goal setting that relay on the following criteria:

1. S-Specific: What will be accomplished?
2. M-Measurable: How will student know when he or she have accomplished this?
3. Achievable: Is the goal double? Do you have the necessary skillsand resources?
4. R-Relevant: How does the goal align with broader goals? Why isthe result important?
5. T-Time-Bound: What is the time frame for accomplishing the goal?We suggest teachers conduct the data analysis of students' SMART goals to make the lesson more effective students.





Picture 2. SMART system

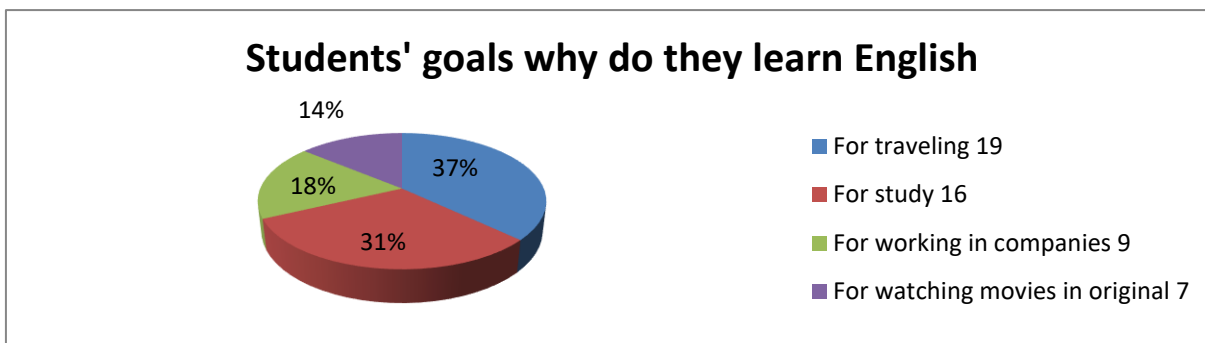


Diagram 1. Students' goals

According to the results of our survey presented in Diagram 1, the majority of surveyed students learn English for traveling and have a A2 level. 31% of students need English for study on the Beginning level, 18% have shown the A2 level and learn for working in companies in the future, and 14% can take part in the conversations on the Elementary level and want to understand movies. The advanced level has not been achieved by the 9-13 years students. It means that A1 and A2 (Beginner and Pre-Intermediate) levels are common among junior-school students in Kazakhstan.

The main problem of A1 and A2 levels of language proficiency is that students are not eager to learn new words and their ability to remember words limited to doing only home tasks and texts for home assignments.

We conducted the following methodological procedure:



1) Every week we posted a cognitive activity on lingua-cultural theme with the definite tasks. Participants answered in the commentary, chose the right answer, printed the correct word and etc.

2) In the stories we provided additional information and motivated them for discussion.

3) From time to time, we learnt songs, assessed the knowledge, that were aimed, on expanding ICC and its vocabulary.

After experimental teaching we designed a 15-item researcher-made questionnaire was employed to find an answer to the research question. The results obtained from the questionnaire are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of the Attitude Questionnaire

No.	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Instagram helps me understand the lexical points better.	23 45.0	21 41.17	5 9.80	1 1.96	1 1.96
2	Instagram offers opportunities for more effective vocabulary practice.	26 50.98	18 35.29	4 7.84	2 3.92	1 1.96
3	Instagram offers flexibility in vocabulary learning.	19 37.25	22 43.13	6 11.76	3 5.88	1 1.96
4	Instagram allows me to have control over my vocabulary learning.	16 31.37	18 35.29	11 21.56	4 7.84	2 3.92
5	Instagram motivates me to find out and discover more vocabulary.	14 27.45	19 37.25	12 23.52	5 9.80	1 1.96
6	Learning vocabulary via Instagram is a valuable extension of the classical learning methods.	13 25.49	24 47.05	9 17.64	3 5.88	2 3.92
7	Learning vocabulary in an Instagram environment is enjoyable and amusing.	19 37.25	23 45.09	7 13.72	2 3.92	0 0
8	Learning vocabulary in Instagram can be managed in a better way.	18 35.29	20 39.21	7 13.72	6 11.76	3 5.88
9	Learning vocabulary via	27 52.94	21 41.17	3 5.88	0 0	0 0

	Instagram is interesting.					
10	Learning vocabulary via Instagram motivating to discover more lexical points.	18 35.29	25 49.01	5 9.80	2 3.92	1 1.96
11	Learning vocabulary via Instagram makes me more proficient.	17 33.33	19 37.25	9 17.64	2 3.92	1 1.96
12	Learning vocabulary in a Instagram environment creates less anxiety for me.	15 29.41	26 50.98	8 15.68	1 1.96	1 1.96
13	In Instagram, I feel less inhibited when working on vocabulary.	18 35.29	22 43.13	7 13.72	3 5.88	1 1.96
14	I am satisfied with application of Instagram.	25 49.01	23 45.09	1 1.96	1 1.96	0 0
15	I recommend the use of Instagram in future vocabulary courses.	19 37.25	25 49.01	6 11.76	1 1.96	0 0

In this questionnaire, as it could be seen, all the mean scores of the questionnaire items were about 3.5 (which is the average value of the choices when strongly agree receives 6 and strongly disagree receives 1). This means that the beginners agreed with all the questionnaire items, which were about the positive attributes and effects of Instagram: a) learning vocabulary through Instagram motivated the learners to find out more lexical points, b) Instagram offered opportunities for more vocabulary practice, c) learning vocabulary in a Instagram environment could be managed in a better way, d) learning vocabulary in a Instagram was interesting, and e) the students were satisfied with the application of Instagram in vocabulary classes. In the same vein, all the other items received the students' agreement.

After that we compared the learners' traditionally-taught vocabulary scores and Instagram-taught vocabulary scores. The results of this test are presented in Diagram 2.

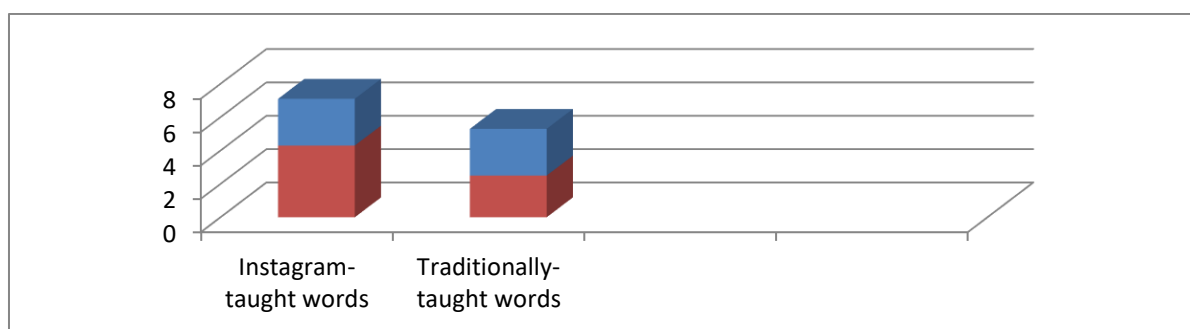


Diagram 2. Vocabulary scores

Accordingly, to our research, it could be concluded that the scores for the Instagram-taught words (M=17) were significantly higher than the scores for the traditionally-taught words (M=16). In other words, the Instagram application was shown to be a useful resource for enriching the vocabulary knowledge of the learners.

Diagram 2 also shows the superiority of the scores of the Instagram-taught word to those of the traditionally-taught words.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The study is a detailed intervention that examined the theoretical review and practical implementation of modern methods of teaching vocabulary for beginners by applying Instagram social network for different aged students during summer. Social networks play an essential role in our life. And vocabulary is a vital part of acquiring a second language. It is necessary for a second language student to learn vocabulary: thus, English teachers and researchers have been looking for a new educational method for teaching vocabulary to students. The results of this study in this field show that social networks such as Instagram, with many options, can be a sufficient tool to motivate students to learn English. Beginners improved their level of vocabulary via Instagram as an application and ICC teaching.

The impact of this experimental study is to provide learning activities that cater to all beginners level students' needs online and stimulate their vocabulary in foreign language learning. Based on a questionnaire, learners had positive attitudes to using social networks for learning second language out of the classroom and they believed that these useful tools facilitate learning process.

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### **THE ROLE OF A TEACHER IN THE FORMATION OF LEARNER AUTONOMY**

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