

# Assessment Reflection: Push toward Autonomous Learning in Role Play Oral English Course

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## Abstract

Autonomous learning refers to the ability to self-direct the learning process through planning, choosing goals, materials, and assessment strategies in line with one's motivation and contextual affordances (Henri, 1979). This research sheds light on how assessment reflection in the Role Play Oral English Course (RPOEC) helps primary students develop autonomous learning in oral English. The findings are presented from three perspectives, namely, learners' agency, learners' attitudes, and learners' behaviours, to address the following questions: (1) How is assessment reflection demonstrated by learners and teachers in the RPOEC? (2) How does assessment reflection foster students' autonomous learning agency? (3) How does assessment reflection shape students' autonomous learning behaviours? (4) How does assessment reflection influence students' autonomous learning attitudes? This is a qualitative case study aligned with curriculum-based practical research, aiming to explore autonomous learning through reflective assessment among primary students in China. The findings indicate that assessment reflection in the RPOEC plays a crucial role in establishing autonomous learning agency. This process begins with taking one's own role (target language preparation), followed by self-assessment, peer assessment, and teachers' constructive comments. Together, these practices push students toward self-regulation and self-direction in the learning process. The reflective cycle combines self-learning, problem-finding, problem-analysis, problem-solving, and goal-setting, and finally transforms into a renewed strategic cycle that sustains further learning.

**Keywords:** Assessment reflection, Autonomous Learning, Role Play Oral English Course (RPOEC)

**Introduction**

Autonomous learning refers to the ability to self-direct the learning process through planning, setting goals, selecting materials, and choosing assessment strategies according to individual motivation and contextual affordances (Henri, 1979). The core aspect of this work is to encourage learners to take charge of their own learning. This is translated into a cyclical practice in which learners assume responsibility throughout the process, from goal setting and process management to assessment, before moving into an updated learning cycle. The model of autonomous learning proposed by Holec has served as the foundation for self-directed learning courses and programs in self-access centers (Şenbayrak et al., 2019). Over the past decade, practice and research interests have shifted from focusing solely on the individual learner working independently to emphasizing learners working collaboratively, learning both with and from each other (Aminatun, 2019; Anca, 2023). This research seeks to explore the development of autonomous learning triggered by assessment reflection in the context of an oral English course based on role play, where individual learners work collaboratively.

The Role Play Oral English Course (RPOEC) makes use of English cartoon film clips to cultivate primary students' oral English skills by simulating and enacting scenarios rich in meaningful language input and output within a learning community. The assessment model in the RPOEC consists of rehearsals and performances, which must be completed through cooperation and mutual effort, requiring team members to achieve common goals. Whether during rehearsals or after performances, discussions take place involving both participants and teachers, providing opportunities for reflection on students' learning products. These discussions serve not only as course evaluation but also as a basis for improving learning through reflection.

This research focuses on how assessment reflection enables students to evaluate their learning outcomes and how such reflection further fosters self-regulation within the cyclical process of language learning in the RPOEC. To address this, the following research questions are explored:

1. How is assessment reflection manifested by learners and teachers in the RPOEC?
2. How does assessment reflection develop students' autonomous learning agency?
3. How does assessment reflection develop students' autonomous learning behaviours?
4. How does assessment reflection develop students' autonomous learning attitudes?

This case study employs a qualitative method and is situated within curriculum-based practical research, aiming to investigate autonomous learning through reflective assessment among primary students in China. The findings highlight four key elements: taking one's own role (target language preparation), self-assessment, peer assessment, and teachers' constructive comments. Together, these elements guide students towards developing autonomous learning agency, behaviours, and attitudes. The process is characterized as a cyclical, reflective developmental model that provides primary learners with greater opportunities to strengthen their autonomous learning ability in oral English. The significance of this research lies in helping researchers and teachers understand why and how assessment reflection contributes to cultivating autonomy in the RPOEC, while also offering practical evidence to support teachers in implementing reflective assessment to enhance students' autonomous learning.

**Literature Review***Autonomous Learning*

Autonomous learning is a move from “directed teaching” to “self-directed learning” (Holec, 1979). Perspectives on learner autonomy interpret it as the capacity to control and take responsibility for the learning process by managing one’s own learning: setting targets, making choices, taking decisions, monitoring progress, and evaluating outcomes. Autonomous learning plays a significant role in determining students’ performance, as it is closely linked with higher intrinsic motivation, metacognitive skills, and subject awareness (Lewis & Reinders, 2008). Benson (2001) identified six different areas of learner autonomy: resource-based, technology-based, learner-based, classroom-based, curriculum-based, and teacher-based. Building on these manifold theories of autonomy, many researchers have been inspired to apply them in empirical studies of language learning. This review draws on key words such as “Autonomous Learning,” “Autonomous Learner,” “Self-Regulation,” and “Self-Directed Learning,” which researchers have used in relation to autonomy. First, research on autonomous learning has increasingly focused on online language learning and the use of digital tools, which have become a strong trend in recent years. For instance, studies have examined the use of digital technologies in English learning (Alzubi, 2021; Pratiwi & Waluyo, 2023), the development of self-regulated online learning skills (Kulusaklı, 2022), and self-regulation in online learning environments (Viberg & Baars, 2020). Other areas of interest include autonomous learning in writing skills (Csizér & Tankó, 2017), language learning strategies (Mashrabovna & Kizi, 2023), the role of teachers in promoting learner autonomy (Alonazi, 2017), and factors influencing the development of learner autonomy (Tran & Duong, 2023). Creative outcomes of autonomous learning have also been explored, especially in relation to problem-solving ability, which has a significant impact on students’ learning processes and production (Puchongprawet & Chantraukrit, 2022). Through this review, however, it is clear that there is limited curriculum-based research examining how reflective assessment can be used to foster primary students’ autonomous learning in oral English.

*Assessment Reflection*

Assessment determines the value of teaching activities or programs, the extent to which they help students meet standards, and their overall importance (Bachman & Dambök, 2018). The concept of assessment reflection in this paper is derived from Eisner’s connoisseurship and criticism models, which were designed to generate rich descriptions of educational activities as outcomes of new programs. Eisner describes connoisseurship as the appreciation for the qualities and constitution of certain objects, situations, or events (Eisner, 1998). Tai (2018) defines assessment reflection judgment as the ability to critically evaluate a performance in relation to a predefined, though not necessarily explicit standard, which involves a complex process of reflection. It has both internal applications, in the form of self-evaluation, and external applications, in making judgments about the quality of others’ work. The significance of assessment reflection in the RPOEC lies in enabling students to build self-identification as active learners, thereby moving toward autonomous learning. This refers to the need for all students to navigate the transition from viewing themselves as consumers of courses, where responsibility lies with others, to recognizing themselves as the principal agents of their own learning, with the understanding that only through their own initiative can they fully benefit from the opportunities available (Carless et al., 2018). In this course evaluation, achievement is assessed through performance, with equal attention paid to both teachers’ and students’ comments on the learning process (rehearsals) and the final products

(performances). These reflections are intended to stimulate students' autonomous learning and their further exploration of knowledge. Within the RPOEC, assessment reflection allows students to identify learning problems and achievements during rehearsals and performances, framed as: Advantages/Disadvantages, Change/Development, and New Initiatives. Assessment reflection thus emerges both during rehearsals and after performances, expressed through constructive descriptions and discussions rather than typical examinations or tests. The reflection generates data that provides insights into both student achievement and the instructional program. Its purpose is to inform subsequent instructional decisions for both learners and educators by drawing on assessment evidence (Eisner, 1998). The results of such an assessment provide a basis for modifying instructional processes as needed. In recent years, research on reflective learning has increasingly focused on evaluation using specific scales, such as student feedback and teacher feedback. Carless (2020) suggests that reflective assessment activates the learner's role by transforming teacher-provided information into student feedback. Carless and Winstone (2020) highlight the interplay between teacher and student feedback in the evaluation process. Dawson et al. (2020) employed feedback evaluation to support learner engagement in practice. Loizou and Natalia (2024) examined evaluation and critical reflection in listening and speaking activities taught in English. Inaayah and Fithriani (2024) argue that reflection during the learning process encourages students to think critically about their studies, helping them analyze information thoroughly and identify relevant insights for themselves.

Turning into new identities and entering a new world is an alternative process known as Identity Alteration (Mead & Herbert, 1934). Identity alteration is the core component of role-play, and the degree of role change directly determines the final outcome of the activity. Since the mid-1950s, Western psychologists have introduced role-play into the field of psychological education, where it has been studied as an instructional method. In teaching, Richards (1998) defines role-play as a classroom activity similar to a drama performance, in which students assume different roles within a given situation. In this research, the RPOEC is understood as an audiolingual English learning course that uses English cartoon film clips as materials to help primary students develop oral English skills. Students simulate and enact roles collaboratively, much like a drama. The course includes three stages: Access Learning, Rehearsals, and Performance with Discussion. Assessment is embedded in both rehearsals and performances through discussion. This not only reflects the outcomes of students' oral English learning but also provides feedback and value judgments that guide further learning behaviors and attitudes.

## **Methodology**

### *Research Design*

This qualitative case study selected a Grade Six class in a primary school in northern China, consisting of 30 students aged 11–12 years (5 boys and 25 girls) who, along with their parents, agreed to participate in the research. First, students at levels 5 and 6 had already accumulated a substantial vocabulary in English, which equipped them with the ability to engage in role-play drama enactment. In addition, in order to ensure that data collection would be more accessible and detailed, students in the senior grade were chosen because they demonstrated stronger articulation skills when engaging in discussions with peers or with the researcher.

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

Data collection employed observation, interviews (focus group discussions), and documents. A phone camera was used to film students' learning experiences in class and to record the interviews. The advantage of filming observations was that the researcher could review the data repeatedly to ensure that important aspects were recognized. In addition, careful preparation was carried out to ensure the trustworthiness of the data, including developing an observation protocol and establishing strategies for placing the video instruments. The interviews used semi-structured questions and group focus discussions, with six students in each group and a total of five groups. Data were analyzed through inductive thematic analysis (Frith & Gleeson, 2004). Data sources for connoisseurship evaluation included the researcher's classroom observations, focusing on how teachers interacted with students during the evaluation of their learning. Additional data were collected from students' reflections and discussions about their feelings toward the evaluation of their learning. This cyclical learning journey particularly emphasized group rehearsals, where students collaborated to enact scripted scenarios. Data emerged from the evaluation process, including rehearsals and performances with discussions, through which students' learning products and new initiatives were reflected in their practice and collaboration. The primary data source for evaluation was the students' product, namely the role-play performance, complemented by student feedback on their learning and discussions that combined elements of connoisseurship and criticism (evaluation). Ultimately, this process led to the emergence of new initiatives. Criticism evaluators sought to extrapolate general themes about learning and meaningful knowledge that could guide students' autonomous learning development and practice (Allan & Francis, 2018).

### **Findings**

As shown in Table 1, assessment reflection was presented through self-assessment, peer assessment, and teachers' constructive comments during rehearsals, performances, and discussions. Because role-play requires cooperation with partners or interlocutors to complete the target language performance, signs of difficulty, such as non-fluent English expression, weak performance transitions, or failure to understand a partner's English, leading to incorrect enactment, could be easily observed by the participants themselves. Likewise, peers could identify issues such as mispronunciation, lack of meaningful intonation, or absence of non-verbal expression. At the same time, the teacher, serving as both instructor and observer, was able to detect problems and provide reflective feedback. The autonomous learning cycle in RPOEC is presented in Figure 1, and the thematic analysis results are shown in Table 2.

Table 1  
Assessment Reflection Route in ROPEC

Assessment model	Assessment reflection	Assessment content
Rehearsals (repeated)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-assessment</li> <li>Peer-assessment</li> <li>Teachers' constructive comments</li> </ul>	Language expression ability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluency</li> <li>Pronunciation</li> <li>Accent</li> </ul>
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Production Presentation</li> </ul>	Output with meaning and intonation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expression</li> <li>Non-verbal expression</li> </ul>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-assessment</li> <li>Peer-assessment</li> <li>Teachers' constructive comments</li> </ul>	Performance Transition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linking in dialogue</li> <li>Linking in Actions</li> <li>Role alternation</li> </ul>

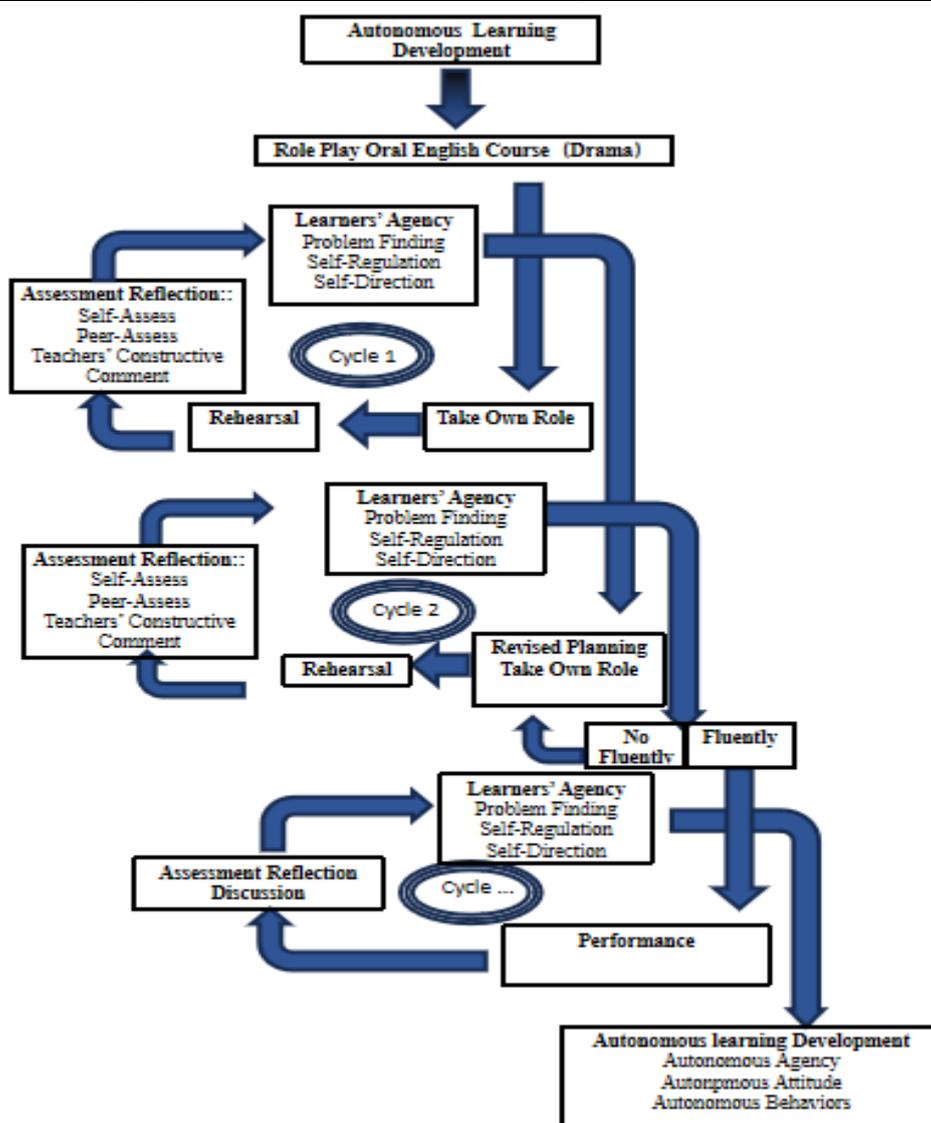


Figure 1. Autonomous Learning Cycle in RPOEC

Table 2

*Assessment Reflection on Autonomous Learning*

Theme	Category	Details
Learners' agency	Take own role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Learner preparation</li> <li>▪ Target language practice</li> <li>▪ Self-learning</li> </ul>
	Self-assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Problem-finding</li> </ul>
	Self-regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Problem-analysis</li> <li>▪ Problem-solving</li> </ul>
	Self-direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Goal-setting</li> <li>▪ Learning attitude</li> <li>▪ learning strategy</li> <li>▪ Learning behaviors</li> </ul>
Learners' attitude	Self-assessment Peer-assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relaxed</li> <li>▪ Active (reduced pressure)</li> <li>▪ Positive (decreased anxiety)</li> </ul>
	Teachers' Constructive Comments	<p>Encouraged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Learner's critical thinking Problem-finding Problem-analysis</li> <li>▪ Learner's reflective thinking Problem-finding Problem-solving</li> <li>▪ Learners' decision making Goal-setting Learning attitude learning strategy Learning behaviors</li> </ul>
Learners' behaviors	Self-learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Learner preparation</li> <li>▪ Target language practice</li> </ul>
	Self-assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Problem-finding</li> </ul>
	Self-regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Problem-analysis</li> <li>▪ Problem-solving</li> </ul>
	Self-direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Goal-setting</li> <li>▪ Learning attitude</li> <li>▪ Learning strategy</li> <li>▪ Learning behaviors</li> </ul>
	Society/participation (peer-assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communities of practice</li> <li>▪ Involvement in one's own learning</li> </ul>

*Learners' Autonomous Agency*

The identity of learning influences how learners perceive themselves and how they manage their own learning. In the RPOEC, self-assessment encourages students to find their voice as learners. In role-play, every student must enact a role to achieve a complete performance. It is like a jigsaw puzzle: each student's effort is a small piece, and only when every actor completes his or her part can the whole performance be realized. In this sense, each student is empowered as the agent of his or her own learning, regulating their effort to meet the performance requirements. Each learner must enact the play in line with the script,

contributing individual effort and cooperating with all other actors to complete the full performance. Observations from the RPOEC suggest that assessment reflection develops students' autonomous learning not only in terms of self-learning ability (learner preparation) but also through self-assessment, self-regulation, and self-direction. These processes trigger the ability to find, analyze, and solve problems. At the first rehearsal, students relied on their old study strategies, which focused solely on memorizing the scripts. They paid attention only to their own roles without fully comprehending the nuances of English speech. By disregarding their interlocutor's message, mistakes occurred repeatedly. This resulted in poor production, including the inability to respond appropriately, failure to take turns, and breakdowns in sequencing actions. Many students prioritized memorizing their own lines while neglecting the importance of mastering their partner's dialogue. Consequently, performances lacked cohesion and fluency in transitions between scenes. Wrong performances, pauses, hesitations, or breakdowns in rehearsal often led to what could be considered total failure in terms of learning outcomes. Interestingly, these chaotic performances sometimes produced humorous, comedic effects that entertained the audience. After these initial struggles, self-assessment and peer assessment were triggered for the first time. Once problems were identified, learners had to figure out why they occurred, how to address them, and who could support them in solving the issues. This process naturally evolved into problem-finding, problem-analysis, and problem-solving, which ultimately led to decision-making and new strategies for success through critical and reflective thinking. Typically, the process began with questions such as: What are my problems? How can I solve them? Who can help me: my teacher, my peers, or myself?

Si: *"I want to ask the teacher how to pronounce this word. It's more standard that way."*

Sii: *"What's the meaning of this sentence? I'd rather ask my good friend to help me. If she doesn't know, she can ask the teacher, then she'll know and can teach me. (Because I'm very shy, and I'm not a good student academically, I don't dare to ask the teacher directly.)"*

Siii: *"I know how to pronounce this word. I just forgot it. If I practice more, I'll get better."*

Siv: *"I can't remember the pronunciation of this sentence. It's too long. I decide to ask my friend what to do. She tells me I can write similar Chinese words for the pronunciation below it. Then I ask the teacher if that's OK. The teacher says it's fine at first. Even though it's not very standard, it's better than nothing, and I'll get better after a few rehearsals."*

#### *Learners' Autonomous Attitude and Behaviors*

Numerous negative reflections and feedback were generated through self-assessment, peer assessment, teachers' constructive comments, and group discussion. However, unlike traditional criticism from teachers, this form of reflection created a more relaxed atmosphere in which students were willing to change their learning behaviors positively. During feedback sessions, the classroom was often filled with laughter and humor, which helped reduce pressure. When asked about their feelings regarding failure and their proposals for the next step, students expressed that they wanted to work harder and cooperate better with their partners in order to achieve final success. The evaluation atmosphere encouraged learners' critical and reflective thinking, leading to self-realization and self-direction in setting new learning goals, strategies, and behaviors. Peer assessment, in particular, fostered a sense of mutual support and reduced frustration in future learning. At the same time, peers encouraged one another to recognize the importance of adapting and improving their learning strategies and behaviors for the next lesson. As learning progressed, students

reorganized their understanding of the significance of attentive listening and updated their goal-setting accordingly. They recognized that if they could not comprehend their partners' English utterances, they would lack the motivation to respond appropriately, which would negatively affect the overall fluency of the performance. They also realized that focusing solely on memorizing their scripts would lead to the same kind of embarrassment as before. Furthermore, enactment required students to undergo a kind of identity transformation to effectively portray their roles with the proper tone and expression, similar to the characters in a cartoon film. They came to understand that simply reciting lines mechanically would not meet the performance requirements. By engaging in reflective evaluation through effective collaboration with peers during rehearsals and performances, students began to achieve noticeable improvements and smoother performance outcomes. In subsequent learning cycles, they applied these reflections, gained from self-assessment, peer assessment, teachers' constructive comments, and discussions, to refine their approaches, subjects, and goals.

During peer assessment, the theme of Participation emerges. It is also closely connected to the theme of Society, which provides additional support and multiple avenues for less proficient students to overcome obstacles with greater confidence. The decreased anxiety and reduced pressure that come from consulting within the learning community further contribute to students' active participation. In comparison with traditional classrooms, where the teacher retains full control over learning evaluation, leaving learners anxious and fearful, role-play rehearsals offer primary students more opportunities to recognize their self-identity and regulate their learning. In rehearsals, students must practice with their partners in order to achieve high-quality performances. Whenever linguistic errors or a lack of fluency occur, the conversation practice is restarted and replayed continuously. This process helps release students' anxiety and negative emotions, while also strengthening their English expression skills. Moreover, the cooperative team model of the RPOEC provides a platform for students to engage in mutual assistance, shared oversight, and collective advancement. Peer assessment within this cooperative learning framework enhances outcomes by facilitating reciprocal support and collaborative problem-solving among team members, all aimed at improving performance. It also reduces passivity among individuals with weaker motivation. Ultimately, the quality of the learning output depends on the diligent effort and active contribution of every participant.

The teacher's evaluative role is primarily that of a supporter, helper, and guide, offering constructive comments to assist students in their process of self-discovery and to foster the development of critical and reflective thinking. Teachers need to shift their mindset and recognize that there is no such thing as "incorrect feedback" or "inaccurate ratings," since these can reveal areas for improvement in students' cognition and language skills, allowing guidance to be more effectively targeted.

The purpose of evaluation is to gradually increase learner participation and self-direction, positioning students as decision-makers who engage in problem-finding and problem-solving based on their own willingness, rather than relying solely on the teacher's decisions about learning objectives, methods, and outcomes.

When the teacher invited students to interpret the reasons behind both the strengths and weaknesses of their performances, they said:

T: *"Why did Actor (George) get stuck in the performance?"*

S: *"Because Actor (George) didn't understand what Actor (Peppa) said, so he didn't react immediately."*

T: *"Why didn't he understand what Actor (Peppa) was saying?"*

S: *"Because he didn't review Peppa's script lines. He only focused on his own script, so he couldn't understand what Peppa said."*

S: *"He didn't learn the English words and sentences in Peppa's script lines, so he didn't understand their meaning."*

T: *"What should you do to improve this?"*

S: *"We should listen to and understand what others are saying. Not only focus on our own script, but also learn and remember our partners' lines."*

S: *"We should practice more times and memorize the lines better, so we can recite them more fluently. And we should practice together more often to reach a good condition."*

S: *"We should watch the cartoon film more times and understand the meaning of every sentence, not only our own lines, but also our partners'. That way, we can understand what others are saying and keep the performance going smoothly."*

At first, the teacher used the comment "stuck," but instead of giving the answer directly, the teacher connected it with "why." This prompted students' self-discovery: they realized that they could not respond to the dialogue or performance because they did not understand the English meaning. The teacher then guided them further by asking "why" to help them analyze the problem, and continued with "what should you do" to direct them toward taking action. This experience reflects the dynamics of advisee–advisor interaction described in the discourse analysis of advising sessions. Ciekanski (2021) identifies conversational sequences, which focus on establishing relationships and a supportive communication atmosphere between advisee and advisor, and pedagogical sequences, in which the advisee reports and reflects on learning activities and language progress while the advisor provides feedback, supports needs analysis, and guides reflection and decisions about future work. Such constructive teacher comments help students develop critical thinking skills and the ability to provide constructive criticism, while also maintaining a positive and encouraging attitude toward the work of others.

## Discussion

A key theme related to autonomous learning is Power/Agency, which refers to the learner's ability to take charge of self-learning and manage the learning steps, with the freedom to modify or adjust them at any time (Holec, 1979). Closely connected to this is the theme of Deciding, which emphasizes that learners should be enabled to make decisions about their own learning rather than having all decisions made by teachers or educational institutions. Among the individual factors that may influence learners' behavior and learning processes, identity, personal biographies, and social class also play important roles (Castillo, 2023). Reflective assessment in the RPOEC fosters students' awareness of autonomous learning by addressing these requirements. Through self-assessment, students reorganize and restructure their learning strategies to meet the performance demands of the course. This process involves self-learning, self-assessment, self-regulation, and self-direction during rehearsals and performances. Students evaluate their learning outcomes through interactive communication and independently identify and address further learning challenges. Central to this process is the theme of Agency, where the learner assumes responsibility for the target

language task (learner preparation) in order to accomplish rehearsals and performances with partners. Learner preparation also involves access to information, which increases awareness of how learning occurs and supports decision-making (Tran & Duong, 2020).

Self-assessment has long been recognized as an integral part of learner autonomy, supporting a more cognitive approach to language learning that places the learner, along with their beliefs and experiences, at the core of the learning process (Butler, 2024; Noels, 2018). Although some scholars caution that self-assessment in language learning alone does not fully foster autonomy, Self-Access Language Centers (SALCs) are largely dedicated to creating conditions that facilitate learners' pathways toward autonomous learning behaviors (Mynard, 2024). In the RPOEC, assessment reflection incorporates several elements that trigger students' awareness of autonomous learning. First, Target Language Learning serves as a starting point for self-assessment, acting as a driving factor in the establishment of self-assessment practices. The target involves not only the knowledge input by learners but also their performances with partners in front of an audience. This dual focus creates opportunities for students to interact and reflect in the target language. In such contexts, the provision of opportunities for target language practice becomes a powerful driving force in the development of autonomous learning (Dawson et al., 2020).

Collins (2008) argues that the social nature of autonomy means that the development of autonomous behaviors in specific areas is closely tied to defined social tasks with specific purposes in mind. The concept of Society is connected to "social structure," "social situation," and "psychological and social dimensions," highlighting the learner's micro- and macro-social contexts. Constructivist theory and sociocultural theory both emphasize the importance of social interaction in the learning process. This perspective has led to a shift in self-access language learning toward what are now called social learning spaces (Jakkrit & Pornthep, 2022). Peer assessment in the RPOEC aligns with these requirements by facilitating opportunities for students to engage in meaningful language conversations with their peers. Collins suggests that collaborative work and meaningful interaction play a key role in developing autonomy. In this study, one participant's autonomy led him to take on the role of a leader, urging peers in his group to contribute to their shared goal: the performance (evaluation). From this perspective, the development of learner autonomy relies heavily on listening to peer assessment feedback and encouraging learners to incorporate their own identities and experiences into their planning of learning strategies and behaviors, thereby reaching a state of further improvement (Loizou, 2024). At the same time, as part of formative training in peer feedback and peer assessment, teachers need to encourage students to participate actively in order to deepen their understanding of dimensions related to English learning. This also allows them to develop their evaluative judgment through seeking specific feedback and making more reflective assessments (Carless & Winstone, 2020).

Teachers' constructive comments significantly contribute to the development of students' autonomous learning in oral English within the RPOEC. This aligns with Tai et al.'s (2018) definition of reflective assessment judgment as "the ability to critically assess a performance in relation to a predefined, though not necessarily explicit, standard, which entails a complex process of reflection." Reflective assessment has both internal applications, in the form of self-assessment, and external applications, in making judgments about the quality of others' work. Hennebry and Lamb (2024) noted that learners are highly sensitive to

the learning environment in shaping their perceptions of autonomy, while Carless (2020) emphasized that changes in teacher behavior and classroom control can significantly affect students' perceptions and motivation. In the RPOEC, the teacher's evaluative role is primarily that of a supporter, helper, and guide who provides constructive comments to assist students in self-discovery, fostering both critical and reflective thinking. Positive teacher attributes, such as encouragement, kindness, understanding, and supportiveness, play a crucial role in promoting effective and confident learning (Bachman & Damböck, 2018). Research on individual and affective factors in language learning further suggests that learners experience a wide range of emotions, both positive and negative, which may either enhance or hinder cognitive processes. The significance of constructive teacher comments lies in their ability to stimulate positive cognitive processes, which in turn foster reflection on autonomous learning behaviors, attitudes, strategies, goal-setting, and time management. Ultimately, constructive feedback helps immerse learners in an intelligent learning process while equipping them with strategies to identify, process, and regulate emotions. This emotional regulation enables learners to better manage their own learning and move further toward autonomy (Inaayah & Fithriani, 2024).

### **Conclusion**

This research examines how assessment reflection fosters students' autonomous learning in the RPOEC at a Chinese primary school. Reflective assessment in the RPOEC is designed to enhance students' autonomous awareness by empowering their agency and developing their attitudes and behaviors toward learning through self-assessment, peer assessment, and teachers' constructive comments. To meet the requirements of role-play performance (evaluation), assessment reflection engages students in a cyclical learning process: Take Own Role → Rehearsal → Assessment Reflection → Learners' Agency. This process then evolves into a revised second cycle, characterized by problem-finding, problem-analysis, and problem-solving. Through this cycle, learners are immersed in self-learning, self-assessment, self-regulation, and self-direction, thereby achieving the development of autonomous learning.

This study enriches and expands autonomous learning theory from a curricular perspective, showing that assessment reflection in the RPOEC cultivates students' autonomous learning ability and oral English development within a situated, interactive, and collaborative learning environment. Practically, the RPOEC provides a course model that develops students' autonomy by integrating self-learning, problem-finding, problem-analysis, problem-solving, and goal-setting, thereby broadening learning resources and channels. It also demonstrates that autonomous learning supports students in sustaining long-term language development, particularly in oral English, where rich and diverse input is essential. By employing materials connected to students' daily lives and making active use of audiovisual, television, and online resources, teachers effectively expand opportunities for learners to apply English in authentic contexts. Moreover, the RPOEC transforms the traditional, static model of language learning into a dynamic, practical, interactive, communicative, and cooperative process, strengthening students' self-regulation, self-direction, and overall learning agency.

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