

SELF-REGULATED LEARNING STRATEGIES IN PRIMARY EFL: A QUALITATIVE
LITERATURE REVIEW IN THE COLOMBIAN CONTEXT

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DEDICATION

This study and the fruit it may yield are dedicated to my dear mother Cristina Martinez and my son Juan Andres who encouraged me at times when giving up was a possibility. It is also dedicated to my relatives and friends for the support they offered in different ways.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The importance of the English language is such that it has become the international language or lingua franca, per se. According to Statista (2024), “In 2023, there were around 1.5 billion people worldwide who spoke English either natively or as a second language”. Not only is English the language of science, business, and technology, but it is also the language of multicultural education through academic exchanges. Together with this, English has positioned itself as the vehicle that allows both well-educated and lay people from different parts of the world to meet and share their lives and views of the world through traveling, films, and television. Likewise, English is viewed as a path to professional success and individual social mobility. Therefore, educational institutions worldwide and particularly in Colombia are investing huge economic and human resources to create the conditions that would foster English language learning at the elementary, secondary, and tertiary levels to meet students’ as well as social needs.

One of the many efforts carried out by the Colombian government is the initiative put forward by its Ministry of Education through the Programa Nacional de Bilinguismo or National Bilingual Program (2014) purposed to offer all the student population ready access to EFL. This program was structured based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001), which considers the main aspects for teaching and learning languages together with six levels of competence in the use of the language, namely (A1-A2 OR basic domain, B1-B2 or independent domain, and C1-C2 or competent domain). Among its objectives, the National Bilingual Program seeks to provide teachers with the theoretical guidelines they need to design methodologies aimed at helping their students to learn EFL through student-centered communicative approaches and self-regulatory strategies, at primary, secondary, and tertiary educational levels. This research study focuses specifically on the primary school level.

1.1 Problem Statement

During my Teaching Practicum as a Foreign Language student, I found out that the school I worked for had a special teaching methodology expected to promote students' self-regulatory skills to enhance their autonomy, leading to directing their own learning processes. Here, as a Homeroom Teacher for Third Grade, I discovered that my students had different levels of knowledge of the English language, which were not due to their cognitive abilities, but rather to their distinct needs to effectively deal with their self-regulatory skills. Some of these students did not have clear learning habits, neither at school nor at home. They were not able to manage their time while working on in-class activities, and most of the time they showed a heavy dependence on their teacher to model the tasks or a need for her approval to complete work, which meant they lacked specific skills considered to be useful in attaining self-regulatory learning.

The classroom problem described in the previous paragraph leads to an academic problem. Although SRL has been widely discussed in educational research, studies specifically focused on primary EFL learners are still scattered. Even less is known about how SRL strategies have been used to promote learner autonomy and classroom participation in Latin American and Colombian contexts. As a result, teachers and teacher-researchers may lack a clear synthesis of which strategies have been most useful and how they can be adapted to local classrooms.

Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative literature review is to identify and synthesize self-regulated learning strategies reported in recent primary EFL research, with particular attention to their relationship to learner autonomy and classroom participation, and to explore their relevance for digital and non-digital Colombian classrooms.

1.2 Research approach

This is an exploratory study based on the selection of different sources consisting of articles dealing with the teaching of English as a Foreign Language at the primary school level in Colombia, more precisely with the teaching of EFL Self-regulatory strategies at this level of

education. In other words, this is a qualitative research synthesis (Chong & Plonsky, 2021), defined as a diverse set of methods for combining the data or the results of multiple studies on a topic to generate new knowledge, theory and applications. Drisko (2020). As posed by Patten and Newhart (2017), exploratory or interpretive research focuses on the collection of data with the purpose of understanding concepts, opinions, or experiences to further expand knowledge on a certain topic.

1.3 Justification

Students' abilities to learn English as a Foreign Language has been a long-term interest for this author, taking into account the difficulties that prevent meaningful interaction in a regular English classroom resulting, precisely, from learners' differences. Differentiated instruction, multiple intelligences, learning styles, and approaches to learning, according to the IB Organization —this related to students' personal and functional learning skills—, and student-centered methodologies are part of the many and constantly changing methods and approaches that allow teachers generate learning experiences which make successful, committed, and motivated students.

As a pre-service trainee, different situations related to how primary school students learn in the first years of schooling has been the core of my interest, so my research project is meant to document different strategies that will help not only students to improve their competencies, aptitudes, and skills, but also allow this author to compile a series of strategies, practices, and techniques that might prove helpful for other teachers in implementing them in their own context.

Having these ideas in mind, the holistic point of completing the teaching practicum was faced as a challenge to promote and enhance students' best opportunities to have a better understanding of their own learning experiences, so that they can profit from their active involvement in their English classroom.

Main Research Question

What self-regulated learning strategies have been identified in the current literature as promoting learner autonomy and classroom participation in primary EFL contexts, and how may these strategies be adapted to Colombian classrooms?

1.4 Objectives

1.4.1 General Objective

Systematically identify, analyze, and synthesize the existing academic knowledge on self-regulated learning strategies in recent literature as dealing with learner autonomy and classroom participation in primary EFL contexts, and propose how these strategies may be adapted to Colombian classrooms.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

- Identify the most frequently reported types of SRL strategies in primary EFL research in the Colombian context.
- Determine the outcomes associated with these strategies in terms of learner autonomy and classroom participation in the Colombian context.
- Identify evidence-informed SRL strategies that teachers can adapt to their primary EFL classrooms in the Colombian context.
- Pinpoint gaps existing in the Colombian scholarship on SRL in primary EFL.

II. Conceptual Framework

Associated with English teaching and learning are the concepts considered to be important for the understanding of the role of the new language when seeking successful learning outcomes. This section deals with some of these concepts.

2.1 Bilingualism

Bilingualism is a much-debated concept in the area of teaching and learning languages. For instant, Arboleda and Castro state that “Bilingualism, as a sociolinguistic phenomenon, is the co-existence or the use of two languages for communicative purposes” (2012:2). In the same light of thought, Byers. H. and Lew. W. argue that “Bilingualism refers to the ability to use two languages in everyday life.” (2013:1).

The bilingual individual

Arboleda and Castro warn that doubt is cast when attempting to provide a clear-cut definition of the term *bilingual*, since there are many definitions of it, depending on who and why offers a specific definition. For instance, they quote the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary which says that being bilingual is being “able to speak two languages equally well because you have used them since you were very young.” (200:109).

The above definition calls for careful consideration, however. First, it is necessary to specify the social context in which the two languages are used. For example, in the case of English and Spanish in Colombia, can it be said that the two languages co-exist for communicative purposes? Certainly not, because here, people do not use English as a vehicle for daily social communication. Second, can being bilingual be reduced to just being able to speak a language? Again, *no*, because knowing a language implies more than just being able to speak that language. In addition to speaking the language, knowing a language encompasses reading, writing, and listening in the language. In other words, being bilingual is equated with being fluent in two languages.

2.2 English as a Second Language and English as a Foreign Language

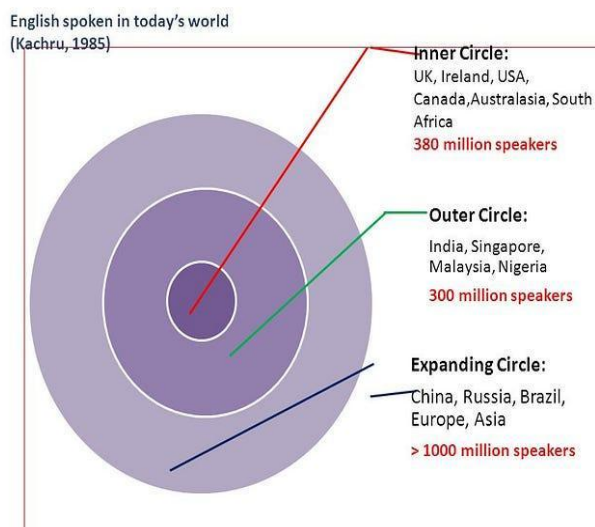
There is a tendency to think of *English as a Second Language* (ESL) and *English as a Foreign Language* (EFL) as being the same, but theorists and classroom practitioners think of the two concepts as being distinct. Guapacha and Chaves (2022) cite (Riazi et al. (2018) to point out that the two concepts differ, mainly because of the social context in which the language is used, the students' and the instructors' needs, and the purposes in using the language.

2.2.1 English as a Second Language

English as a Second Language is referred to as the use of this language in a context where English is the main or principal vehicle for communicative exchanges. That is, English is used in an English-speaking setting by non-native speakers of English. For example, the use of English in the United States, England or Australia by speakers whose first language is not English. Nordquist (2019) states that *English as a Second Language* also deals with specialized teaching programs aimed at non-native English speakers. This is the case of English in bilingual schools, as in Colombia and other parts of the world. Valpa (2020) illustrates the notion of English as a Second Language (below), noting that it corresponds to two of the three circles of Kachru's Model (1985), namely, the Inner Circle and the Outer Circle.

Figure 1.

Kachru's Model of English



2.2.2 English as Foreign Language: The Colombian Context

Contrary to the case of English as a Second Language, English as a Foreign Language refers to the use of English in a social environment where it is not the primary medium of communication—that is, English is not the language of the community, nor is it the language of instruction at school, but is taught as a school subject, which corresponds to the Expanding Circle in Kachru's Model (1985). Based on this, it is said that in Colombia English is used as a Foreign Language (EFL), not as a Second Language (ESL). The Colombian primary EFL context includes diverse school realities, such as digital and non-digital classrooms, differences in access to technology, and varying levels of teacher support and institutional resources. For this reason, it is necessary to examine not only which SRL strategies appear in the related literature, but also how feasible they are in local teaching conditions.

2.3 Learning to Learn

Much has been written about the capabilities students can develop in effecting their learning and how teachers can help them to attain their learning purposes. Main (2021:1) asserts that

the purpose in learning how to learn “is seeking and persisting in learning by organizing knowledge through effective time and information management, both at personal and group levels.” He further states that all learners are endowed with the ability to develop and use introspection or judgement to better approach learning. All in all, the ultimate purpose in learning how to learn is to become an independent learner by building competence in learning and managing time more effectively.

In his discussion of learning to learn, Main (2021) addresses the importance of Metacognitive Strategies. He states that Metacognition involves processes aimed at helping learners to think about how they think. He believes that Metacognition is instrumental in aiding the learners become conscious of their own learning experiences and the tasks they engage in to effect self- development. He further lists a series of metacognitive tasks to include planning how to carry out a learning task, using proper strategies and skills to solve a problem, self-assessment, and self-correction as a result of evaluating one’s own progress in completing a task. All this helps the students to think about what they know, who they are, what they want to know, and how they can attain their goals.

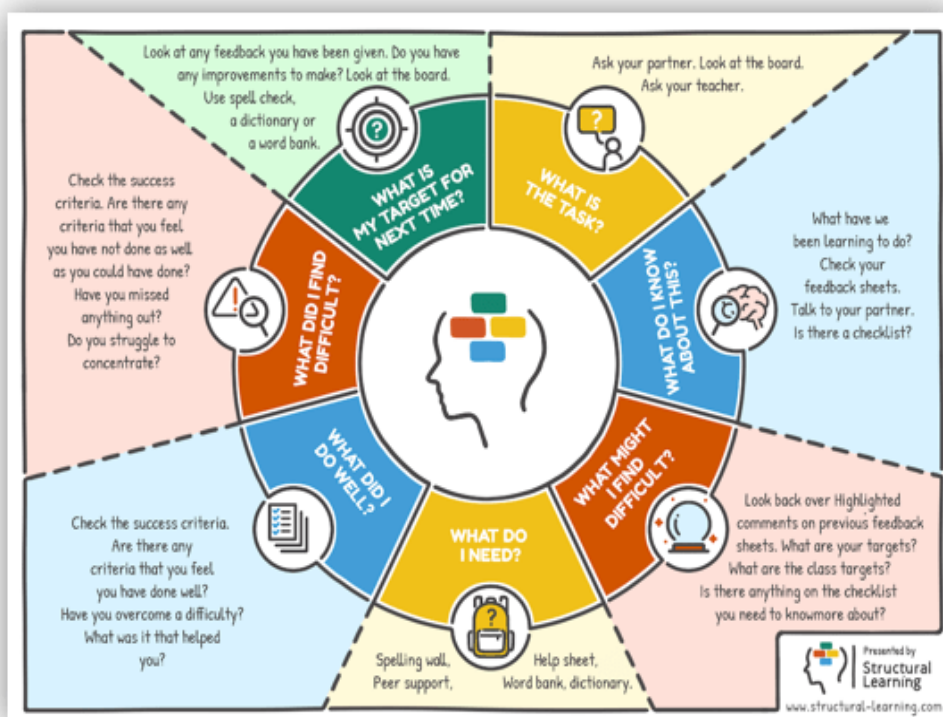
Main (2021) offers three roles the primary school teacher should play in helping the students turn into metacognitive, self-regulated learners:

1. Set clear objectives of learning;
2. Monitor and demonstrate students' **metacognitive skills**; and
3. Continually encourage and prompt students along the way.

Figure 2, below, depicts insightful instances primary school teachers can use to help their students address specific topics.

Figure 2.

Main (2021) Metacognition Strategies



The development of Metacognitive skills is especially important in elementary education, as they are instrumental in aiding young learners in planning, checking, assessing, and adapting their own learning (Norman, 2017).

All in all, Metacognitive strategies are the soft skills used to monitor and control learning and problem-solving processes, or thinking about thinking.

2.4 Self-Regulated Learning (SRL)

Self-regulated learning refers to the processes through which learners actively plan, monitor, control, and evaluate their own learning. In language learning, SRL includes cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral strategies that help students become more active and reflective learners. Zimmerman (2015) defines SRL as a form of learning through which "students become masters of their own learning process" (p. 541). According to the

classification of self-regulation strategies, modern research categorizes self-regulation into five distinct components: metacognition, cognition, motivation, emotions, and behavior and management (see Classification Document). Metacognition is considered the core of SRL and includes skills like task-orientation, goal-setting, planning, self-evaluating, and monitoring. Cognition involves the actual processing of information through rehearsal, elaboration, and organization.

2.4.1 Self-Regulatory Learning Strategies

Different definitions of *Self-regulatory learning Strategies* have been offered. Weinstein and Mayer (1986) define this concept as the adoption of behaviors or thoughts that facilitate a student's learning. In the same line of ideas, for researchers in *Greater Good in Education*, "*Self-regulation* is the ability to healthily manage and shift one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in order to make decisions and reach goals that benefit oneself and others."

In general, SRL is defined as a form of learning through which "students become masters of their own learning process" (Zimmerman 2015, p. 541), as well as being "metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants in their own learning process" (Zimmerman, 1986, cited in Dignath and Büttner 2008, p. 233).

From the aforementioned, it can be said that SRL allows a student who finds it difficult to finish work on time to turn himself into someone who is capable of controlling his behavior to appropriately express himself and complete work. This means being able to conduct oneself in different contexts, in order to engage completely and appropriately.

In addition to addressing behavior change through learning self-regulatory strategies, children can learn to establish objectives, have inspiration and creativity, de-stress, and exercise self-control. Following is a list of some Self-regulatory skills:

- Regulating and expressing one's emotions thoughtfully

- Demonstrating perseverance and resilience to overcome obstacles
- Sustaining healthy boundaries
- Identifying and using stress management strategies
- Setting personal and collective goals
- Using planning and organizational skills
- Showing courage to take initiative

In *Helpfulprofessor.com*, Drew Ch., (2024) lists additional examples of self-regulatory skills or strategies to include the following:

- Time management, or “the ability to plan and prioritize tasks effectively to maximize productivity and meet deadlines”
- Personal development, or “achieving success, goal-setting, and achieving progress”.
- Decision-Making, or “the ability to make smart choices by identifying and choosing alternatives to make decisive choices that help in reaching long-term goals”
- Self-Motivation, or the drive to achieve, produce, and keep moving forward. This is instrumental in maintaining focus and persistence under difficult conditions.
- Active listening, or “fully concentrating to understanding message, responding thoughtfully and avoiding while distraction.
- Selective Attention, or “the ability to direct attention towards a specific task, excluding distractions”.
- Independence, or “the ability to complete tasks and make decisions without reliance on others”.

According to the above, teachers teach their students self-regulatory skills to create a positive classroom environment for them to attain successful learning.

For the purpose of this study, we will resort to Zimmerman’s (2002)-three phase Model of Self-Regulatory Strategies comprised of Forethought, Performance, and Self-reflection, as depicted in Zimmerman and Campillo (2003) (Figure 3):

1. The Forethought Step

This is a starting or beginning strategic step in which goals are set as preparation for the task at hand. Here, the learner should have self-motivation beliefs or pre-motivation concerning his abilities, together with his expected learning results.

2. The Performance Step

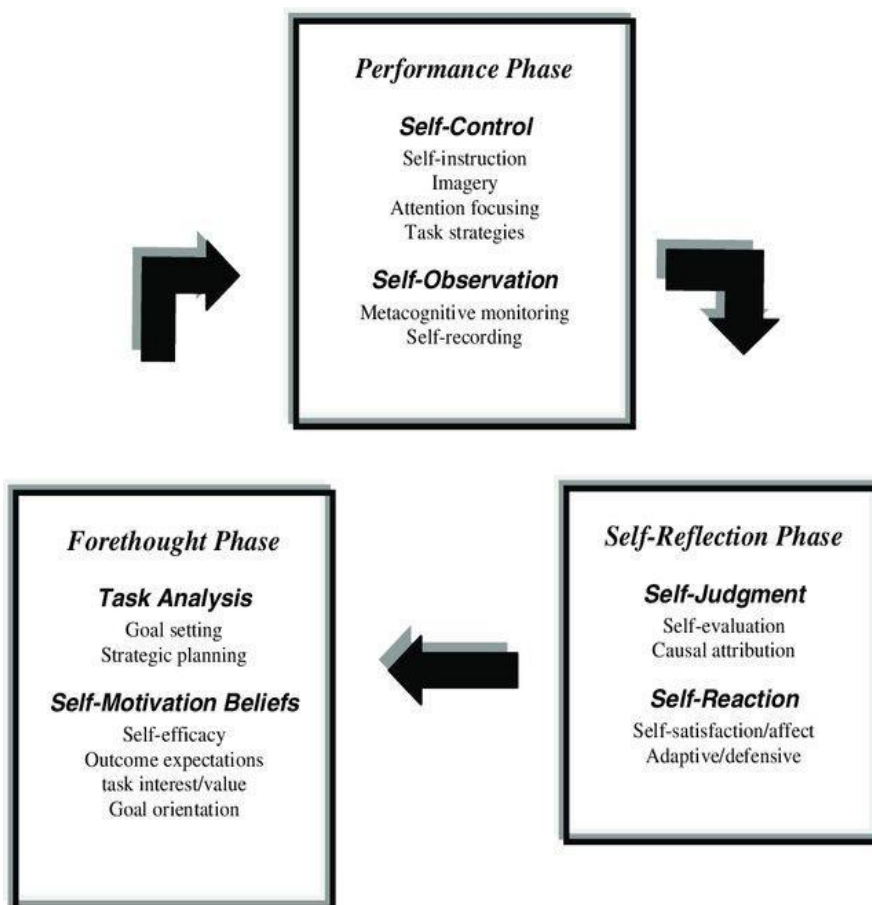
This is the key phase as this is when learning is believed to take place through the students' self-control. In other words, this is when strategies chosen in the Planning Step of the Forethought phase are actually developed, and self-monitoring or self-observation strategies are triggered. The purpose of executing this is to obtain feedback leading to modifying learning strategies.

3. The Self-reflection Step

As seen in Figure 1, this step is made up of two sub-phases, namely the Self-judgement sub-phase and the Self-Reflection sub-phase. The Self-judgement sub-phase is thought of as self-evaluation which is operationalized by comparing self-observed work against an existing standard, for example one's previous performance, somebody else's performance, or a full standard of acting in completing a task. Also in the self-reflection step is Self-Reaction or finding the reasons for failure or success in attaining the learning purposes.

Figure 3.

Phases and subprocesses of Self-regulation in "Motivating Self-Regulated Problem Solvers"
by Zimmerman and Campillo (2003)



2.4.2 SRL Strategies in EFL

In EFL contexts, SRL strategies may include goal setting, self-monitoring, planning, reflection journals, peer feedback, help-seeking, and the use of digital tools to track progress. These strategies are relevant because they help students manage their language learning more independently. Strategies can be classified using the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) framework, which identifies six categories: memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensatory strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. In primary EFL settings, the most frequently reported strategies include metacognitive strategies (planning, monitoring, and evaluating), socio-affective strategies (help-seeking, emotion regulation, and peer cooperation), and cognitive strategies (rehearsal, elaboration, and organization).

2.5 Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy refers to students' ability to take increasing responsibility for their own learning. While autonomy is a broader educational goal, SRL strategies can be understood as practical mechanisms that help learners develop that autonomy in classroom settings. Current conceptualizations see learner autonomy as both a personal capacity and a social process. Under a socio-constructivist point of view, individual cognitive development is necessarily linked to social interaction and support. Within this paradigm, self-directed learning (SDL) is considered as the main road to autonomy, empowering learners to control their educational process. Likewise, SRL helps develop and use the metacognitive skills required for the learners to critically evaluate information and manage their own learning.

2.6 Classroom Participation

Classroom participation refers to the ways the students become actively involved in classroom tasks, interaction, and learning routines. In primary EFL, participation is especially important because language learning depends on repeated opportunities to use, practice, and respond to English in meaningful ways. SRL strategies may support participation by helping the learners feel more prepared, focused, and confident. Thus, participation includes active involvement in tasks, interaction, and routines. Therefore, SRL strategies support participation through improved preparedness and confidence, oral interaction gains, affective support that reduces anxiety, and positive sociocultural influences.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a review of previous literature on self-regulated learning (SRL) and related constructs in educational contexts. The chapter is organized into two main sections. The first section examines five previous literature reviews that address different aspects of SRL, learner autonomy, and language learning strategies. These reviews were selected because they provide a foundation for understanding the theoretical and empirical landscape of SRL in relation to primary EFL education. The second section synthesizes sixteen empirical studies that investigate SRL strategies in primary EFL settings across various international contexts. Together, these reviews and studies inform the present investigation by identifying established findings, methodological approaches, and persistent gaps in the literature, particularly regarding the Colombian context.

3.1 Previous literature reviews

Huang's (2022) academic self-regulation and EFL learners' hope and joy literature review aimed at discussing current outcomes and sharing information with teachers and policy-makers on improving the state of education. The study seeks to investigate empirical literature addressing the hope and joy language students experience in the EFL context. The inclusion and exclusion criteria focus on language teaching and educational research that emphasized the connection between learners' emotions and their self-regulatory processes.

The criteria for data collection were based on looking for pertinent works using keywords such as "self-regulation, positive psychology, motivation, joy, hope, and emotional self-regulation".

Then, he summarized and critiqued the empirical literature related to how these emotional factors influence academic self-regulation. An analysis of the different ways hope and joy affect the self-regulation of learning was made.

The review considered research studies focusing on biological, psychological, and social resources that help trigger learners' purposes. The results were ordered into three principal themes: the theory of hope as a dynamic cognitive-motivational system, joy and happiness as learnable components of positive psychology, and academic self-regulation as a process of controlling behavior, emotions, and thoughts. They emphasize how positive emotions act as triggering factors linked to academic performance and mental health.

The synthesis of findings shows that hope and joy influence language learners' self-regulation to a major extent, stimulating genuine desire for learning and pleasure. Despite these contributions, the review acknowledges gaps and limitations, such as the absence of direct research focusing on the relationship between joy and hope in self-regulation. Based on this, the author argues for the need for classroom teachers to instill interactive settings and for curriculum makers to prioritize efficient language teaching environments.

All in all, the review argues that hope and joy play mediating roles in self-regulation and that the higher they are, the greater the motivation and desire to learn. Likewise, the review points out that new research foci are necessary to include the influence of variables such as boredom and fatigue. In short, the importance of this study lies in its contribution to the literature on language learning strategies, as it sheds additional light on positive ideas in this area.

Building on the role of positive emotions in self-regulation, the next review shifts focus to the broader construct of learner autonomy and its relationship with self-directed and self-regulated learning.

Kharroubi and ElMediouni (2024) carried out a conceptual review of literature on learner autonomy (LA) with the aim of outlining emergent theories and establishing a framework for enhancing autonomy in learning. This review studied socio-constructivist, Piagetian, and Vygotskian principles in the view of the contemporary "post-truth" classroom environment. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were based on the epistemological understanding of learner autonomy, self-directed learning (SDL), and self-regulated learning (SRL).

The strategy for data collection included the evaluation of definitions and theoretical models within SDL and SRL concerning learner agency and metacognition. The study selection process was based on a well-informed analysis that distinguishes these concepts while incorporating them into a cohesive framework. The analysis of the information was made by following an inductive theoretical approach, which goes from individual metacognitive conceptions to a multifaceted conception of social learning.

The review included research based on philosophical and educational theories stressing learner needs and involvement. The findings were classified into three central themes: socio-constructivism as the link of social and cognitive development, SDL as the main pathway to learner autonomy, and SRL as the metacognitive integration for metaliterate learners. These themes highlight how learners actively build knowledge within a social context instead of just getting it effortlessly.

The findings show that LA is at the same time a personal capacity and a learning process required to meet the needs of the modern information society. Despite these contributions, the review found limited theoretical syntheses that interconnect LA, SDL, and SRL into a single framework. In light of these findings, this review discusses several implications, such as the shift of the teacher's role to guide and engage learners in a language-rich environment.

The study looks at metacognition as the main connection between self-direction and self-regulation, leading to autonomy. Additionally, it recommends future research aims, especially in developing new methodologies to assess LA and metaliteracy skills. Overall, this study contributes to the field of language teaching and learning by proposing a holistic framework for active learners in today's society.

While Kharroubi and ElMediouni focused on theoretical frameworks for autonomy, the following review examines a more practical concern: the specific role that teachers play in implementing SRL in classroom settings.

Moos and Ringdal (2012) made a literature review of the literature on self-regulated learning (SRL) in the classroom to examine how teachers can help students' development in their learning processes. This review looked at empirical research emphasizing the teacher's role in self-regulation. Studies guided by SRL theory involved pre-service or in-service teachers, and maintaining methodological clarity were included.

The PsycInfo database was used to collect information, using keywords such as "self-regulated learning", "SRL", "teacher", and "pre-service teacher". Thirty-eight articles were chosen. The information collected was analyzed using a bottom-up approach.

The review selected studies that used different methodologies, such as think-aloud protocols, observations, and self-report questionnaires. The findings were classified into three main categories: implications for teacher education programs, supporting SRL with different kinds of teachers, and measurement techniques for SRL in the classroom. These categories stress the relationship between teacher traits and teaching pedagogy.

The synthesis of the results exposes that teachers' personal beliefs and epistemologies are important predictors of their instructional support for SRL. In spite of these contributions, the review found important breaches and limitations, including little research oriented by the Information Processing Theory (IPT) model of SRL. Based on this, the study poses several implications, highlighting the usefulness of incorporating personal epistemology into teacher education and professional development.

The review summarizes that while explicit SRL instruction is effective, it is still insufficient and often mediated by a teacher's decisions to experiment with new methods. Moreover, it calls for future research directions, for example, in studying the dynamic nature of SRL as an event through real-time process data. In short, this review sheds new lights to the area by summing up how teachers of different age groups support SRL and how this influences student performance.

The next review addresses a long-standing debate in the field: whether the traditional concept of language learner strategies (LLS) should be replaced by self-regulation theory.

Rose et al. (2018) carried out a semi-systematic review of literature on language learner strategies (LLS) aimed at evaluating the field's response to calls for its replacement by the theory of self-regulation. This review studied empirical, field-aware studies published in academic journals. After a data search, only articles dealing with language learning, published between 2010 and 2017, and focusing on both LLS and SRL constructs were chosen.

Data collection search involved Scopus, ERIC, LLBA, WoS, and PsycINFO databases, using keywords like "language learner strategies" and "self-regulation". More than 1000 articles were scanned, of which 24 out of 46 were considered for analysis. A systematic map (table) analysis was conducted, and an in-depth written critique of the 15 most relevant articles was made.

The review chose studies depicting a preference for quantitative approaches, but some mixed-methods and qualitative designs were also used. The findings were organized into three main types of research: studies that focus on self-regulation theory, studies using traditional strategy constructs, and studies that revealed new avenues for strategic learning. These categories stress the current state of research in the field's conceptualizations.

The synthesis of the results points at three main paths for future research: abandoning strategy research, acknowledging self-regulation within current paradigms, or re-conceptualizing the field completely. Important gaps and limitations were found, such as a limited use of qualitative, in-depth measures, such as stimulated recall. Based on this, the study signals at several implications, including the need to validate new instruments like the Writing Strategies for Self-Regulated Learning Questionnaire.

The review concludes that strategy research has become more salient by looking at past criticisms, while being different from a pure self-regulation framework. It additionally shows

future research directions, especially in exploring different theories of self-regulation (e.g., Vygotskian or operant) in language learning. Overall, this review sheds new lights on the field as it provides ways for researchers to address strategic learning from various epistemological perspectives.

Finally, the last review in this section narrows the focus specifically to elementary school students and the role of teacher-student interactions in stimulating SRL.

De Ruig et al. (2023) carried out a narrative review of literature on stimulating elementary school students' self-regulated learning to describe the links between teacher-student interactions and SRL components. The study was based on a sample of peer-reviewed English articles, comprising empirical quantitative, observational, and mixed-method studies. Only those studies that measured at least one SRL subcomponent and were conducted in regular elementary classroom settings were selected.

The data collection was done through ERIC, PsycInfo, and Web of Science databases, using keywords that combine SRL components, interaction domains, and elementary school terms. The selection process consisted of a systematic screening and labeling procedure resulting in 30 eligible articles. The data were analyzed by summarizing findings in an overview table and examining how relations varied by measure (instruments used), sample size, and grade level.

The population in the studies selected was made up of a total of 31,628 sixth-grade students. The results were classified into four main components: metacognition and cognition, motivation, behavior, and emotions. These themes highlight that high-quality interactions correlate with different regulatory capacities, depending on the level of interaction (classroom vs. dyad).

The findings show that instructional support is strongly linked to metacognition, while dyad-level warmth consistently relates to motivation. Important gaps and limitations, such as strong reliance on self-report measures and scarcity of research on the regulation of emotions,

were identified. A call for using combination measurement methods and cross-cultural research is emphasized for future studies.

The findings reveal that one-to-one interactions are effective for behavior and motivation, while classroom-level support mainly helps metacognition. The review suggestions, including research in lower grades of elementary school and the inclusion of student-teacher dependency as a predictor, are made. This review adds to existing literature addressing research with a focus on elementary students.

The combined examination of the previous literature reviews reveals the change of the field area toward seeing learner autonomy (LA) through the interconnected paradigms of self-regulated learning (SRL) and self-directed learning (SDL). This shift stresses the important influence of teacher beliefs, positive emotions, and high-quality classroom interactions in having students who are capable of succeeding in the information era.

3.1.1 Theoretical Frameworks: The Path to Autonomy

Current conceptualizations see learner autonomy as both a personal capacity and a social process. Under a socio-constructivist point of view, individual cognitive development is necessarily linked to social interaction and support. Within this paradigm, self-directed learning (SDL) is considered as the main road to autonomy, empowering learners to control their educational process. Likewise, self-regulated learning (SRL) helps develop and use the metacognitive skills—including planning, monitoring, and evaluating—required for "metaliterate" learners to critically evaluate information and manage their own prejudices.

3.1.2 Conceptual Evolution: LLS vs. Self-Regulation

The area of language learner strategies (LLS) has been widely studied, with debates addressing whether there is a need to shift this paradigm to self-regulation. Systematic reviews reveal that instead of being abandoned, the field is moving toward hybrid models where LLS and SRL are seen as complementary. This, because self-regulation serves as the

triggering force of learning while LLS help teachers study the practices students use when dealing with specific tasks.

3.1.3 The Role of Emotions and Positive Psychology

An increasing area of research sees positive emotions as essential factors in the self-regulatory process. Emotions like hope and joy act as stimuli that increase language students' motivation, vitality, and academic performance. These emotional states are positively correlated with mental health and problem-solving skills, suggesting that a learner's ability to self-regulate is deeply tied to their psychological well-being. Thus, teachers are encouraged to create interactive and supportive atmospheres to maintain these emotions.

3.1.4 The Teacher's Role: Beliefs and Instructional Support

The successful implementation of SRL in the classroom depends on teachers' personal epistemologies (beliefs about knowledge). Teachers who believe that knowledge is absolute or that students do not possess the capacity for independence are less likely to support student-centered, self-regulated practices. While explicit instruction of SRL strategies is proven effective across all age groups, it is still rarely integrated into standard classroom routines. Research reveals that teachers of different age groups support SRL differently:

- Elementary teachers often focus on providing autonomy and non-threatening evaluations to promote behavioral regulation.
- Secondary teachers tend to focus more on student variety and implicit strategy support.
- University educators often prioritize content delivery over explicit self-regulatory support.

3.1.5 Classroom Dynamics and Dyadic Relationships

At the classroom level, high-quality instructional support (e.g., support and formative feedback) is the main predictor of metacognitive development. However, the regulation of

motivation and behavior is more consistently influenced by the teacher- student relationship. Close, warm relationships consistently correlate with positive motivational attitudes and resilience, whereas conflictual relationships hurt students' ability to engage independently and regulate their emotions.

3.1.6 Future Directions and Methodological Gaps

When combined, these reviews find a need to go beyond an overreliance on student self-reports, which may not exactly picture the dynamic nature of learning in real-time. Therefore, suggestions for future research include:

- Using qualitative, in-depth measures such as stimulated recall/memories and direct observation to capture SRL as it occurs.
- Exploring the regulation of emotions more deeply, as this remains a less-researched component of SRL.
- Conducting cross-cultural studies to validate these frameworks across diverse educational contexts.
- Developing robust methods for assessing metaliteracy and learner agency to prepare students for the complexities of the information age.

3.2 Empirical studies

3.2.1 The International Context

Self-regulated learning continues to heighten interest in classroom practitioners as well as in educational researchers, including educational psychologists (Panadero, 2017). Olid-Luque et al. (2024) state that the reason for this increasing interest is mainly due to evidence gathered from research that attests to the benefits students get from being trained in the postulates and methodologies of SRL at different levels of instruction. The following section presents empirical studies on SRL strategies in primary EFL settings, organized chronologically from the earliest to the most recent.

Weinstein and Mayer (1986) studied the teaching of learning strategies in the general educational setting to define and categorize the behaviors and thoughts in which learners involve themselves to influence their own learning processes. A synthesis of research findings on learning processes and instructional goals was made to collect information. The results indicate that learning strategies can be organized into five major categories—rehearsal, elaboration, organizational, monitoring, and affective—and that these strategies can be successfully taught. Thus, it is concluded that teachers must balance goals regarding "what" students learn with goals regarding "how" they learn to ensure students are active participants in their education. This review contributes to the existing literature because it offers the key taxonomy for the classification of the strategies that enable self-regulated learning.

Building on this foundational taxonomy, subsequent research began to investigate how these strategies manifest in specific educational contexts and age groups.

Sugeng (1997) conducted a study on learning strategy profiles in Indonesian elementary schools with 240 students in grades four, five, and six to test the influence of language subject, gender, and grade level on children's learning strategies. Data was gathered employing a 30-item observation guide in classroom interaction. It was found that grade level significantly affects strategy use, with older children using more cognitive strategies. The author recommends that teachers explicitly motivate students to use social and metacognitive strategies in the classroom setting. This study is relevant to the present review of literature because it offers an observation-based view on the behavior of children learning strategies in the elementary school setting.

Although carried out with students in a different grade level and context, Lan and Oxford (2003) study adds to Sugeng's (1997) findings when examining strategy profiles among Taiwanese students. They investigated language learning strategy profiles in public elementary schools in northern Taiwan with 379 6th grade students to create a broad profile of strategy use and examine differences based on gender, proficiency level, and liking of English. Data was gathered through the Taiwanese Children's SILL. They found that students

used compensation and affective strategies most frequently, and that girls and high-proficiency students reported significantly higher strategy use. These researchers claim that sociocultural factors, such as parents' attitudes and investment in private English institutes, greatly influence children's strategic choices. Thus, the study provides quantitative evidence for strategy use among EFL learners in an Asian setting.

In an effort to expand his former study to a larger sample across multiple regions of Taiwan to provide a more comprehensive picture of strategy predictors, Lan (2005) inquired language learning strategy profiles and their predictors in primary schools across four major regions of Taiwan with a population of 1,191 of 5th and 6th grade students to identify links between strategy use and variables such as parents' education, prior English learning, and self-rated proficiency. The Taiwanese Children's SILL, vocabulary performance tasks, and interviews were used to collect the data. It was found that liking English was the most influential variable and that the high-proficiency students used different strategies more appropriately. The author asserts that additional research on standardized proficiency measurements and teachers' beliefs about strategy instruction is needed to provide further information on how and why children use learning strategies.

Keeping up with the interest on the effect on teaching SRL to EFL students, Dignath, Büttner, and Langfeldt (2008) conducted a systematic review of 49 international studies on SRL at the data search phase. However, after finding that a high number of these studies addressed secondary and tertiary levels of education, they discarded most of these studies to include just 10 of them, focused on teaching SRL strategies with primary school students in an 8-12 age range. The authors characterized their study in terms of subjects, methodology, context, and data collection. Thus, they reported that the subjects were primary school students, the methodology was student-oriented, the context was EFL, and the data was collected from primary and secondary sources. These authors state that their review shows that most of the strategies reported had a positive impact on the students to enhance their own learning.

While the Taiwanese studies focused on strategy profiles, the next study investigated the effectiveness of explicit strategy instruction in a Canadian ESL context.

Gunning (2011) investigated children's learning strategy use and the effects of strategy instruction (SI) in elementary ESL classrooms in Québec with 138 sixth graders to look for the impact of SI on success in oral interaction tasks. A mixed-methods approach using the Children's SILL, strategy logs, task-based questionnaires, video recordings, and oral interaction rubrics served to collect data. It was found that students exposed to SI had significantly higher performance in oral interaction proficiency than those who were not, thus becoming more autonomous in linking strategies to task demands. Therefore, it is claimed that teaching children "how to learn" through explicit strategy instruction helps them improve their language competency. Thus, the relevance of this study lies in that it yields an empirical causal link between strategy instruction, strategy use, and academic performance in young learners.

Contrary to the focus of the preceding study, the next study explored how children develop strategies without explicit instruction, focusing on the role of classroom culture.

Kirsch (2012) conducted a study on the development of children's language learning strategies in primary school and home settings with a small group of fifth grade children and their teachers to examine how participation in language learning activities in different settings contributes to strategy development. Observation and sociocultural conversation analysis were used to collect data. It was found that children can develop many strategies without explicit instruction if they are exposed to a "strategic" classroom culture that encourages autonomy and reflection. The role of teachers as facilitators helping children take control of their own learning is advocated and the positive impact of the learning environment and sociocultural interactions on the development of metacognitive skills is emphasized.

A meta-analysis by De Boer et al. (2012) provides a quantitative synthesis of effective SRL strategies across primary and secondary education by reviewing 55 peer-reviewed studies to identify which combinations of learning strategies most effectively increase academic performance. The information was collected and analyzed using Comprehensive Meta-Analysis (CMA) and Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) of research published between

2000 and 2011. Strategy instructions combining general metacognitive knowledge, planning/prediction, and task value played a more significant role on academic achievement. Teaching students how, when, and why to use strategies while emphasizing the relevance of the task is posed as the key to learning, thus adding information on the main components of strategy training for student success.

Returning to the theme of individual differences, the following study examined the relationship between self-efficacy and strategy use among Indonesian primary students.

Anam and Stracke (2017) inquired about the connection between the language learning strategies used by 522 Indonesian elementary school students and their self-efficacy to find out how the former are affected by the latter. Two main tools, namely, the Indonesian Children's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and the Children's Self-efficacy in Learning English Questionnaire (C-SELEQ), were used to gather information. Socio-affective and metacognitive strategies were shown to be mostly used by learners with high self-efficacy. Based on this finding, classroom teachers are suggested to encourage their students' persistence. The authors highlight the importance of self-efficacy in SRL at the primary school level and call for the need to conduct additional studies within this same educational context.

The next study, while conducted with secondary students, provides important evidence for the effectiveness of SRL interventions that can inform primary practice.

Habiba, Akhter, and Batool (2019) delved into the effects of SRL strategies of 62 eighth-grade public school students in Lahore, Pakistan, to find out if teaching students SRL strategies significantly improved their performance in English writing. The data was gathered by using a subjective achievement test (essay writing). The results suggest that students taught through SRL strategies achieved significantly higher scores than those taught through traditional methods. Based on their findings, these authors claim that SRL techniques should be integrated into in-service teacher training to improve student performance to foster independent learning and academic development.

Main (2021) offered a bridge between cognitive science and classroom practice by providing practical strategies for promoting independent learning. The purpose of the study was to explain how schools can use the science of learning to help students "think for themselves." The information was obtained through a review of evidence-based techniques, including metacognition, retrieval practice, and growth mindset. The results indicate that explicitly teaching students to understand and regulate their thinking processes greatly improves their ability to learn autonomously. In addition, the results imply that teachers should integrate specific strategies like chunking, spaced repetition, and oracy into daily lessons to teach students how to learn.

The following study focused specifically on metacognitive awareness among Japanese elementary EFL learners, addressing both benefits and challenges.

Vargas (2022) conducted a study on the metacognitive awareness of Japanese elementary school EFL learners to find out why developing metacognitive awareness is useful for young students' academic performance. A review of empirical studies and pedagogical frameworks was conducted to obtain data. The results show that "metacognitive training improves learner motivation, confidence, and proficiency, although young children often struggle with inaccurate self-performance judgments that require the teacher intervention. Therefore, teachers should use metacognitive language and 'plan-do-review' routines into lessons to make thinking visible.

Still another study conducted by Zorlu and Ünver (2022) examined the predictive roles of self-regulatory strategies and self-efficacy in a Turkish vocational high school context, providing insights into how these two constructs interact in significantly influencing students' English learning. The study population was made up of 542 ninth-grade students. The information was collected through the Self-Regulatory Learning Strategies Scale, the English Self-Efficacy Beliefs Scale, and a ninth-grade English Achievement Test. The results show that English self-efficacy beliefs influence learning more than self-regulatory

strategies. The study adds to the existing literature and suggests that both students' self-regulatory strategies and self-efficacy should be promoted in similar contexts.

The remaining studies focus on specific pedagogical approaches, including differentiation, metacognitive frameworks for young learners, and bilingual development.

Byers-Heinlein and Lew-Williams (2013) studied the phenomenon of bilingualism in the early years and its role in childhood development. Information was collected through the review of research findings, including developmental and cognitive psychology, directed to offer guidelines on supporting early language acquisition. It was found that bilingual children feel at ease when exposed to two languages and that earlier exposure is generally better for long-term language learning abilities, as they are capable of acquiring different languages at the same time. Thus, need to be updated on current scientific knowledge on the role of socio-cognitive benefits in helping young children's bilingual development is stressed.

Ellis and Ibrahim (2015) studied metacognition and learning strategies in language instruction for young learners with language instructors and their students to provide a practical guide for teaching metacognitive knowledge and learning strategies through a "plan-do-review" learning cycle. A synthesis of ten pedagogical principles designed to help children understand the learning process was used to collect information. The findings show that by using these principles, students gain the skills to understand how they learn and acquire tools for more effective future scholarship. Thus, professional development should emphasize teacher self-reflection and collaboration, using an expanded "plan-do-review-share" format. Therefore, the usefulness of this study lies in its offering a pedagogical framework for integrating strategy instruction into the elementary school language classroom.

In a different context, Drew (2024) investigated self-management and self-regulatory skills within personal and professional development to define and provide practical examples of skills that allow individuals to regulate their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to achieve goals. The information was collected by reviewing and categorizing fifty specific self-

management examples. The results show that promoting these skills is very important in overcoming personal obstacles and fostering professional growth. The implications are that future success is the result of continuous use of self-regulatory skills. This study is relevant because it provides a holistic set of the behavioral and cognitive components of self-regulation necessary for learner independence.

Albrecht (2025) conducted a study on differentiation strategies in writing activities with 22 4th-grade primary EFL students near Lisbon. The study sought to find out how differentiation strategies, adapted to different levels of difficulties can help the development of learner self-awareness. The data was gathered through learning journals, self-assessment tools (traffic lights), a Blob Tree, focus group discussions, and a teacher's teaching journal. Work oriented to individual student skills showed increased student confidence and involvement and helped metacognitive and emotional self-awareness. It is claimed that teachers must exercise trusting relationships in students' experiences and needs for them to become responsible for their own learning. This study is relevant because it explores the connection between differentiated instruction and the development of self-concept in young language learners.

3.2.2 The Colombian context

Although an exhaustive search was made in different journals, including PROFILE, HOW, IKALA, Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal, GIST, and others, on self-regulated strategies, autonomy, and participation in primary school studies, in Colombia no study focused directly on these issues.

Arboleda and Castro (2012) studied the significance of having a foreign accent in the context of university-level EFL teaching and learning with 32 participants, including Colombian and foreign teachers and students, to analyze beliefs and preferences regarding teachers' accents and how their views could influence the English learning process. The data was gathered through a semi-structured five-scale questionnaire. The results indicate that while participants value native-like accents, they do not see it as the most relevant qualification for teaching nor as the sole criterion for learning success. Thus, educational authorities should offer non-native teachers support for further language qualification, instead of focusing

strictly on accent. This study is relevant to the present review since it explores the role of the non-native English speaker as a language model and emphasizes communication goals over prescriptive pronunciation.

To close, the following is a synthesis of the studies reviewed herein which explore the multifaceted relationship between SRL, self-efficacy, and academic performance across various developmental stages and educational contexts.

First, Self-regulation, or self-management, is defined as an individual's ability to effectively deal with emotions, thoughts, and behaviors to achieve personal and professional goals. Weinstein and Mayer (1986) categorized these behaviors into five major types of learning strategies: rehearsal, elaboration, organization, comprehension monitoring, and affective strategies. Expansions on this framework identify up to 50 specific self-management skills, from time management and selective attention to "metaliterate" skills like personal branding and networking. These skills are believed to be absolutely necessary for the students to overcome learning obstacles and are viewed as a lasting investment for future success.

Second, Learners' belief in their own ability—self-efficacy—is central to strategic behavior. Research shows a link between these constructs: students with high self-efficacy in learning English use cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies significantly more often than less confident students. While both strategies and efficacy predict academic success, Zorlu and Ünver (2022) found that English self-efficacy is a more powerful predictor of achievement than the use of self-regulatory strategies alone. This suggests that "staying power"—the persistence to face obstacles—is very important in the learners' belief on their own competence.

Third, the capacity for self-regulation and language acquisition changes significantly across developmental stages. In early childhood, bilingual infants show no evidence of language confusion; instead, they demonstrate cognitive advantages in memory generalization and perceptual sensitivity to different languages. In elementary education, young learners (grades 4–6) report high use of socio-affective and metacognitive strategies, though they often

struggle with inaccurate self-performance judgments. Therefore, training these students in metacognitive awareness improves their motivation, confidence, and pronunciation accuracy. In secondary and vocational education, explicit instruction on SRL strategies has been shown to significantly improve English writing scores compared to traditional methods.

Fourth, effective classroom strategies include explicit instruction (directly teaching techniques such as retrieval practice, spaced repetition, and "chunking" complex information), metacognitive routines (embedding "plan-do-review" cycles and oracy into daily lessons), and affective support (recognizing that positive emotions like hope and joy act as activating forces for self-regulation). Thus, promoting learner autonomy calls for a holistic approach that balances cognitive strategy training with the development of self-efficacy. Therefore, by integrating the science of learning into the curriculum, educators can empower students at all levels to become resilient, independent thinkers.

IV. Methodology

This chapter presents the methodological framework adopted for the present literature review: the research design is presented, followed by the delimitation of the scope of the study, the search strategy, the inclusion-exclusion criteria, and the data analysis procedures.

4.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative literature review design aimed at synthesizing empirical and theoretical research on SRL strategies in primary EFL education. The review focuses on identifying SRL strategies associated with enhanced learner autonomy and classroom participation and examining how these strategies can inform pedagogical practices in both digital and non-digital Colombian contexts. Rather than conducting primary empirical research, this study follows a qualitative research synthesis approach (Chong & Plonsky, 2021; Drisko, 2020). This approach systematically collects, classifies, and analyzes published research to identify patterns, trends, gaps, and pedagogical implications.

The methodological approach is based on the qualitative research synthesis (QRS) model proposed by Guapacha Chamorro and Chaves Varón (2023) who adapted their framework from Chong and Plonsky's (2021) work on qualitative research synthesis in applied linguistics.

4.2 Scope and Delimitation

To ensure focus and manageability, the review is delimited according to the following criteria: time frame of 1986–2025 (including foundational works and recent research), educational level of primary education (approximately ages 6–12), field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), core constructs of SRL strategies, learner autonomy, and classroom participation/engagement, and geographical scope including international research (with attention to applicability to Colombia). This delimitation allows for a comparative and contextualized understanding of how SRL strategies have been conceptualized and implemented across different educational realities.

The chapter also describes the systematic steps followed to identify, select, analyze, and synthesize the relevant literature for this study.

The steps are illustrated in Figure 4 described in detail below.

Figure 4.

Methodological steps followed in the present study

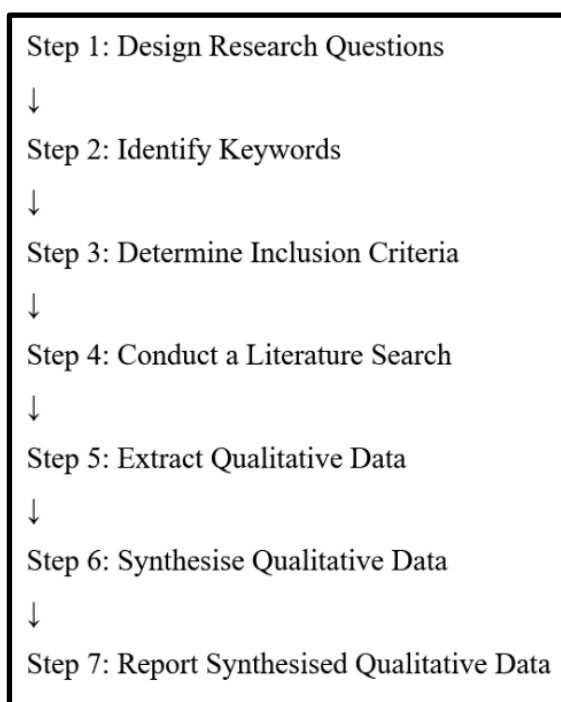


Figure 3. Methodological Framework for Qualitative Research Synthesis

Step 1: Design Research Questions

Following Guapacha Chamorro and Chaves Varón (2023), the first step involved establishing clear research questions to guide the synthesis. The research questions were developed based on the researcher's interests and the identified gap in the literature regarding EFL writing studies in Colombia. These questions focused on authorship, publication trends, research foci, methodological approaches, findings, limitations, and suggestions for further research.

The present literature review is guided by the following research questions, which were established at the outset of the research process:

Main Research Question

What self-regulated learning strategies have been identified in the current literature as promoting learner autonomy and classroom participation in primary EFL contexts, and how may these strategies be adapted to Colombian classrooms?

Subsidiary questions

- What types of SRL strategies are most frequently reported in primary EFL research in the Colombian Context?
- What outcomes are associated with these strategies in terms of learner autonomy and classroom participation in the Colombian Context?
- What evidence-informed SRL strategies may teachers adapt to their primary EFL classrooms in the Colombian context?
- What gaps exist in the Colombian context on SRL in primary EFL?

Step 2: Identify Keywords

The second step consisted in identifying the keywords or search terms to be used in the literature search. The following keywords were employed to search for relevant publications:

1. “self-regulated learning” AND “EFL” AND primary
2. “SRL strategies” AND “learner autonomy”
3. “classroom participation” AND “English language learning”
4. “metacognitive strategies” AND “primary education”
5. “self-regulated learning” AND “digital learning”
6. “SRL” AND “Latin America”
7. “SRL” AND “Colombia”

8. “SRL” AND “Colombia” OR “Latin America”

Boolean operators (AND/OR) and filters (publication year –from 2014–, peer-reviewed articles, educational level –primary education–) were applied to refine the results.

These keywords were used to search titles, abstracts, keywords, introductions, and methodology sections of potential sources.

Step 3: Determine Inclusion Criteria

Before conducting the literature search, predetermined inclusion criteria were established to ensure the selection of relevant publications. Both previous literature reviews and empirical studies (research reports) were included. Research reports were defined as publications that draw on primary data sources and present theoretical and methodological perspectives (Phakiti & Paltridge, 2015).

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria were:

- Studies focusing on self-regulatory learning (SRL), participation, and autonomy
- Peer-reviewed journal articles or academic theses with a focus on SRL in EFL or closely related constructs
- Articles published in national and international academic journals written in English or Spanish
- Studies involving primary school learners, and empirical (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods) and theoretical studies. Exclusion criteria were: studies not related to language learning, research conducted exclusively in higher education, and articles not accessible in full text.

Unpublished studies, such as theses and conference papers, were not included.

Step 4: Conduct a Literature Search

The literature search was conducted using the keywords and inclusion criteria identified in Steps 2 and 3. The search was carried out in academic databases including Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, ProQuest, and institutional repositories.

The search was conducted independently by the researcher to ensure consistency. Additionally, the references of each selected article were reviewed to identify any additional relevant publications.

Twenty-two sources meeting the inclusion criteria were identified (5 previous reviews of literature and 17 empirical studies). These reports made up the corpus for the present qualitative research synthesis.

Step 5: Extract Qualitative Data

Once the literature search was completed, qualitative data was extracted from each research report.

Following Guapacha Chamorro and Chaves Varón (2023), a predetermined coding scheme was used to extract data systematically. The coding scheme was developed deductively from the second language writing literature and inductively from the data.

The data was extracted for the following categories or themes:

- Cognitive abilities
- Metacognitive abilities
- Socio-affective abilities
- Research focus: self-regulatory learning, autonomy, and participation.

Following Guapacha Chamorro and Chaves Varón (2023), the researcher extracted data without interpreting the information from her own perspective. Instead, the descriptions provided by the original authors were recorded as they appeared in the reports.

Data extraction was initially conducted using Excel spreadsheets. After an exploratory analysis, the data was analyzed manually for a second round of analysis.

Step 6: Synthesize Qualitative Data

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was employed to synthesize the extracted qualitative data. Content analysis was selected because it allows for the systematic coding of data to identify patterns and develop well-grounded interpretations (Friedman, 2012). The categories and subcategories used in the analysis were developed both deductively from the existing literature and inductively from the data.

Data Analysis Procedure

The analysis followed a thematic approach. After reviewing and coding the selected studies, patterns were identified across the following dimensions: types of SRL strategies implemented (e.g., goal setting, self-monitoring, metacognitive journals, peer feedback), relationship between SRL and learner autonomy, relationship between SRL and classroom participation/engagement, methodological tendencies, and contextual constraints. Particular attention was given to identifying recurring findings and inconsistencies across global and local contexts.

The synthesis process involved identifying frequencies and patterns across the 17 research reports. The goal was to identify the SRL strategies most frequently reported in primary EFL research and the outcomes associated with these strategies in terms of learner autonomy and classroom participation. The synthesis allows us to uncover gaps existing in research on SRL in primary EFL and proposes evidence-informed SRL strategies that teachers may adapt to their primary EFL classrooms in the Colombian context.

Step 7: Report Synthesized Qualitative Data

The final step involved reporting the synthesized findings. These results are presented in tables and figures throughout the findings chapter.

4.3 Ethical Considerations

Although this study is a literature review and did not involve direct contact with human participants, ethical considerations were maintained throughout the research process. All sources were properly cited, and the findings were presented accurately and without misrepresentation of the original authors' work. The researcher maintained objectivity and transparency throughout the data extraction and synthesis processes.

4.4 AI Tools Disclosure Statement

In accordance with emerging academic guidelines on transparency in research, the author herein discloses the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools during the development of this qualitative literature review. These tools were employed exclusively as assistive technologies to support, not replace, the intellectual work of the researcher.

The initial identification of relevant academic sources was facilitated using *Google Scholar* and *Elicit*. Elicit was used to assist in the preliminary screening of article abstracts based on the predefined inclusion criteria (e.g., relevance to SRL, primary EFL context). The final selection of all 22 sources (five literature reviews and 17 empirical studies) was conducted manually by the author to ensure alignment with the research objectives.

DeepSeek (a large language model) was used for two specific non-generative purposes:

- Synthesis of retrieved documents: To assist in the initial organization and summarization of key information from selected sources, which the author then verified, critiqued, and integrated into the thematic analysis.

- **Writing refinement:** To improve the clarity, coherence, and academic formality of the manuscript by minimizing informal expressions and suggesting syntactic revisions. All suggestions were critically reviewed, edited, and approved by the author.

No AI tool was used to generate original content, research claims, interpretations, or conclusions. The identification of themes, the critical synthesis of findings, the coding of qualitative data, the construction of arguments, and the articulation of gaps and implications for the Colombian context are entirely the original intellectual work of the author. The analysis is fully credited to this author.

The author assumes full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the content presented in this study, including any limitations inherent in the use of these assistive technologies.

4.5 Limitations of the Methodology

The methodological approach adopted in this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the exclusion of unpublished studies such as theses and conference papers may limit the comprehensiveness of the synthesis. Second, the analysis focused on SRL strategies with primary learners specifically and did not include studies on SRL strategies of learners in other educational levels/age groups. Despite these limitations, the methodological framework provided a systematic and transparent approach to synthesize the literature on self-regulated learning of primary school learners.

The next chapter presents the findings of the review of the studies.

V. Findings

This integrated report puts together the findings from 17 important sources. These sources include empirical studies, meta-analyses, and pedagogical frameworks. The main objective is to answer the central question of this literature review: What self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies have been identified as promoting learner autonomy and classroom participation in primary EFL contexts, and how may these strategies be adapted to Colombian classrooms? The evidence comes from diverse settings such as Indonesia, Taiwan, Japan, Turkey, Pakistan, Canada, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These findings offer transferable insights for Colombia's mixed-resource reality, where schools are very different in terms of digital access, teacher training, and materials.

The report is organized around four subsidiary questions: (1) types of SRL strategies most frequently reported; (2) outcomes for learner autonomy and classroom participation; (3) evidence-informed strategies adaptable to Colombian classrooms; and (4) gaps in the literature specific to the Colombian context.

5.1 Types of SRL Strategies Most Frequently Reported in Primary EFL Research

Across the 17 studies, five categories of SRL strategies appear consistently in primary EFL settings.

First, **metacognitive strategies** (planning, monitoring, evaluating) are the most frequently cited. Ellis and Ibrahim (2015) and Vargas (2022) advocate for explicit “plan-do-review” cycles. Gunning (2011) found that sixth graders successfully used self-monitoring checklists and task-evaluation logs. De Boer et al. (2012), in their meta-analysis of 55 studies, concluded that combining general metacognitive knowledge with planning and prediction strategies produces the strongest academic gains.

Second, **socio-affective strategies** (help-seeking, emotion regulation, peer cooperation) are also prominent in primary contexts. Anam and Stracke (2017) reported that young Indonesian learners with high self-efficacy predominantly used socio-affective strategies. Sugeng (1997) recommended that teachers explicitly motivate social and metacognitive strategy use in

elementary classrooms. Kirsch (2012) observed that children naturally develop help-seeking and reflection strategies when they are immersed in a “strategic classroom culture.”

Third, **cognitive strategies** (rehearsal, elaboration, organization) form the foundational taxonomy of Weinstein and Mayer (1986). Sugeng (1997) found that grade level significantly affects cognitive strategy use, with older primary children (grade 6) employing more rehearsal and organization than younger peers. Main (2021) adds specific cognitive techniques such as chunking, retrieval practice, and spaced repetition.

Fourth, **differentiation and self-assessment strategies** (learning journals, traffic lights, Blob Tree, goal-setting cards) are highlighted by Albrecht (2025). These tools help young learners develop metacognitive and emotional self-awareness without needing digital technology.

Fifth, **compensation and affective strategies** (guessing meaning, using gestures, managing anxiety) were most frequently reported by Taiwanese sixth graders in Lan and Oxford (2003). These authors also found that girls and high-proficiency students used a wider range of strategies. Lan (2005) confirmed that “liking English” was the strongest predictor of strategy use, even more than parental education or prior learning.

In summary, primary EFL research consistently reports metacognitive and socio-affective strategies as the most accessible and beneficial for young learners. Cognitive and self-assessment strategies become more prevalent as grade level increases. This pattern is directly relevant to Colombia, because primary teachers can prioritize low-cost, socially interactive strategies over those that depend on technology.

5.2 Findings Associated with SRL Strategies: Learner Autonomy and Classroom Participation

5.2.1 Learner Autonomy

Autonomy means the ability of students to take responsibility for their own learning. This is a recurring outcome across many studies.

First, explicit strategy instruction builds autonomy. Gunning (2011) demonstrated a causal link: sixth-grade ESL students who received explicit strategy instruction became more

autonomous in selecting and adapting strategies for oral interaction tasks. Habiba, Akhter, and Batool (2019) found that eighth graders taught through SRL strategies significantly outperformed the control group in English writing, which shows independent task management.

Second, classroom culture fosters autonomy without direct teaching. Kirsch (2012) showed that children in a “strategic” classroom environment—where teachers model reflection and encourage peer help—develop autonomy spontaneously. Similarly, Ellis and Ibrahim (2015) argue that the “plan-do-review-share” cycle embeds autonomy into daily routines.

Third, self-awareness is a foundation for autonomy. Albrecht (2025) found that differentiated writing activities using self-assessment tools (traffic lights, learning journals) increased fourth graders’ metacognitive and emotional self-awareness. This enabled them to make more independent learning choices. Main (2021) adds that explicitly teaching “learning to learn” skills—such as growth mindset and retrieval practice—transfers autonomy across different subjects.

Fourth, self-efficacy acts as a mediator of autonomy. Anam and Stracke (2017) and Zorlu and Ünver (2022) agree that self-efficacy beliefs are powerful predictors of strategic behavior. Zorlu and Ünver (2022) found that English self-efficacy influences achievement more than self-regulatory strategies alone. This suggests that autonomy requires both skill and confidence.

5.2.2 Classroom Participation / Engagement

Participation means active involvement in tasks, interaction, and routines. SRL strategies support participation in several ways.

First, preparedness and confidence are improved. Vargas (2022) reported that metacognitive training improved Japanese elementary students’ motivation, confidence, and pronunciation accuracy, leading to more voluntary speaking. Albrecht (2025) noted that when writing tasks were differentiated to individual levels, students showed increased involvement and willingness to share their work.

Second, there are clear oral interaction gains. Gunning (2011) provided direct evidence: students in the strategy instruction group scored significantly higher on oral interaction rubrics (for example, initiating talk, asking for clarification, and self-correcting) than their peers in traditional instruction.

Third, affective support reduces anxiety. Drew (2024) and Weinstein and Mayer (1986) emphasize that affective strategies (such as positive self-talk and emotion regulation) help learners feel more prepared and focused. This directly increases classroom participation. Byers-Heinlein and Lew-Williams (2013) add that early bilingual exposure reduces language anxiety, although this finding is more developmental than pedagogical.

Fourth, sociocultural influences affect participation. Lan and Oxford (2003) and Lan (2005) found that Taiwanese students' participation was shaped by family attitudes and private English institutes. This is a reminder that in Colombia, out-of-school factors such as access to English media and parental support also affect how SRL strategies translate into classroom engagement.

Thus, the literature consistently shows that SRL strategies—especially metacognitive planning, self-assessment, and socio-affective support—enhance both autonomy (taking responsibility) and participation (active involvement). These two outcomes are mutually reinforcing: more autonomous learners participate more, and participation builds further autonomy.

5.3 Evidence-Informed SRL Strategies Adaptable to Colombian Primary EFL Classrooms

Based on the synthesis, the following strategies are the most adaptable to both digital and non-digital Colombian classrooms. Each strategy comes from at least one empirical study and includes a low-tech adaptation suitable for rural or under-resourced schools, as well as a digital enhancement for urban or better-equipped contexts.

Table 1.*Evidence-Informed SRL Strategies Adaptable to Colombian Primary EFL Classrooms*

SRL Strategy Category	Specific Technique	Evidence Source	Non-Digital Adaptation	Digital Enhancement
Metacognitive routines	"Plan-Do-Review-Share" cycles	Ellis & Ibrahim (2015); Vargas (2022); Gunning (2011)	Oral planning (pair talk), drawing "my plan," whole-class review with hand signals	Simple slides with icons; audio recordings of self-reviews
Self-assessment	Traffic lights, Blob Tree, learning journals	Albrecht (2025); Main (2021)	Colored cards or hand gestures; notebooks with emojis; group reflection	Class polling apps; digital journal (Google Docs)
Goal setting	Weekly "my goal" cards, task-specific checklists	De Boer et al. (2012); Lan (2005)	Paper strips with one goal; peer check-in pairs	Shared class spreadsheet; simple class blog
Socio-affective strategies	Help-seeking routines ("ask three before me"), emotion check-ins	Anam & Stracke (2017); Kirsch (2012); Sugeng (1997)	Strategy cards on wall; daily "how do you feel?" chart	Anonymous digital check-in; class WhatsApp group
Cognitive strategies	Chunking, retrieval practice, spaced repetition	Main (2021); Weinstein & Mayer (1986)	Songs, chants, flashcards, "brain dump" on scrap paper	Quizlet, Kahoot! (if internet available); offline apps
Peer feedback	Structured pair work: "two stars and a wish"	Gunning (2011); Kirsch (2012)	Sentence starters on board; face-to-face feedback	Padlet (if internet); shared document comments

There are some additional considerations for the Colombian classrooms. First, large class sizes are common. Therefore, teachers should prioritize pair and group strategies such as peer feedback and help-seeking to maximize participation without needing extra materials. Second, mixed proficiency levels are typical. Teachers can use differentiation strategies as suggested by Albrecht (2025), for example tiered writing prompts or choice boards. These are easy to do with just paper. Third, there is limited English exposure outside school in many Colombian contexts. For this reason, teachers should emphasize retrieval practice and spaced repetition (Main, 2021) within class time. Using songs and chants that children can repeat at home without digital support is a good idea. Fourth, there are teacher training gaps. The studies by Habiba et al. (2019) and De Boer et al. (2012) strongly recommend integrating SRL into in-service teacher professional development. In Colombia, this could be done through low-cost peer coaching or teacher learning circles using the “plan-do-review-share” framework for teachers themselves.

5.4 Pedagogical Suggestions for Teaching SRL Strategies in Colombian Primary EFL

The following suggestions are organized according to the four main findings in the present review. Each suggestion includes a brief theoretical rationale, a practical classroom implementation, and an explicit connection to the Colombian policy (*Estándares Básicos*).

5.4.1. Metacognitive and Socio-Affective Strategies

The international literature consistently reports that metacognitive strategies—particularly “plan-do-review” cycles—and socio-affective strategies—such as help-seeking routines and emotion regulation—are the most accessible and beneficial for young EFL learners. For Colombian primary teachers, these strategies offer a practical entry point into SRL instruction.

To implement “plan-do-review” cycles, a teacher can begin by giving students one minute to whisper their plan to a partner before any task is attempted, whether drawing, writing, or role-playing. After completing the task, students show a hand signal—thumbs up, middle, or down—to self-evaluate their performance. This simple routine directly supports the *Estándar*

for recognizing the purpose of a task, which is foundational for level A1 listening comprehension. The teacher might say, *"What is your plan? ¿Cuál es tu plan?"* followed by, *"Show me: how did it go? Enséñame: ¿cómo te fue?"*

Help-seeking routines are equally important, particularly in large Colombian classrooms where teachers cannot attend to every student individually. The strategy known as "Ask Three Before Me" requires students to consult three classmates before approaching the teacher. A "Help Wall" displaying strategy cards—such as "look at the picture," "use a word you know," or "ask a friend"—can further support this routine. These practices directly support the socio-affective dimension of learning and enable students to meet the *Estándares* for interactive communication. The teacher might say, *"Who can help? ¿Quién puede ayudar?"* followed by, *"You tried three friends. Now tell me what they said."*

Emotion check-ins, while often overlooked, are essential for creating the supportive classroom environment that the *Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo* emphasizes. Using colored cards or simple hand gestures—green for ready or happy, yellow for worried or tired, red for frustrated—a teacher can quickly gauge the affective state of the class at the beginning of each lesson. Acknowledging emotions without judgment reduces the affective filter that often prevents young learners from participating. The teacher might say, *"Show me your color. Enséñame tu color. It's OK to be yellow. Let's breathe together."*

5.4.2 Learner Autonomy Strategies

The literature demonstrates that explicit SRL instruction builds autonomy, that a strategic classroom culture fosters autonomy without direct teaching, and that self-awareness and self-efficacy are the foundations of autonomy. These findings have direct implications for the Colombian classrooms, where learner autonomy is an implicit but essential goal of the *Estándares*. The standards are designed to help students become *comunicadores eficientes* (efficient communicators) who can use English in real situations, which requires moving beyond teacher dependence.

Creating a "strategic classroom culture" involves modelling learning strategies aloud. A teacher might say, *"I don't remember this word. Let me look at the picture... Ah, now I remember."* Displaying student-drawn strategy posters that classmates can point to when stuck further reinforces this culture. This approach operationalizes the *Estándar* for comprehension of narrative and descriptive texts by giving students metacognitive tools to decode meaning independently.

Building self-efficacy through success tracking is another practical strategy. Using a simple "I CAN" chart, each student writes or draws one thing they learned to do in English each week. The teacher might say, *"Last week you couldn't say your age. This week you can. Mira tu progreso."* Self-efficacy—the belief that "I can do this"—is essential for achieving the level A2.1, where students must demonstrate the ability to interact in simple everyday situations.

5.4.3 Classroom Participation Strategies

The literature shows that SRL strategies improve participation through increased preparation, confidence, oral interaction gains, and reduced anxiety. These findings are particularly relevant to the Colombian primary EFL context because the *Estándares* explicitly target speaking and listening competencies from early grades. For grades 1 through 3, students are expected to respond to questions about themselves and their environment. For grades 4 through 5, the expectation expands to participating in short conversations using basic vocabulary.

Pre-task planning time addresses the common challenge of student shyness and fear of making mistakes. By providing one to two minutes of silent "thinking time" or pair planning before any oral task, the teacher reduces the affective filter that inhibits participation. This practice directly supports the *Estándar* for oral production.

Participation cards offer a concrete solution to the problem of only a few students volunteering to speak. Each student receives three cards at the beginning of the class. Each time they volunteer, they give one card to the teacher. The goal is to use all three cards by

the end of class. This simple system ensures more equitable participation and aligns with the communicative competence goals of the *Estándares*.

Sentence starters on the board address the tendency of young learners to give one-word answers. By writing structures such as "*I like _____ because _____*" and repeating the same structure for an entire week, teachers implement the *Estándar* for expressing ideas, opinions, and feelings about everyday topics (*expresar ideas, opiniones y sentimientos sobre temas cotidianos*).

5.4.4 Adapting Evidence-Informed Strategies to Colombian Realities

The literature identifies specific strategies—traffic lights self-assessment, weekly goal-setting cards, chunking and retrieval practice, and structured peer feedback—as highly adaptable to both digital and non-digital classrooms. These strategies are particularly valuable in the Colombian context because they address the documented gap between policy aspirations and classroom realities. Non-bilingual primary teachers often focus on formal grammar instruction due to limited training in communicative and self-regulatory methodologies. Rural schools face additional challenges regarding resources and access to technology. The strategies below are specifically designed to bridge this policy-practice gap.

Traffic lights self-assessment, drawn from Albrecht (2025), involves each student using three colored cards or hand gestures: green for understanding, yellow for needing help, and red for lack of understanding. In a large Colombian class of thirty to forty students, after teaching new vocabulary aligned with *Estándares* themes—such as family, school, or daily routines—the teacher says, "*Show me your color in three, two, one... now!*" A quick scan reveals how many students need additional support. If many show yellow or red, the teacher re-teaches using a different method. If only a few show red, the teacher tells them, "*In one minute, I will come to help you. First, ask your neighbor.*" This strategy operationalizes the *Estándar* for evaluating completion of simple tasks (*evaluar el cumplimiento de tareas sencillas*), a metacognitive skill that supports autonomous learning.

Weekly goal-setting cards, supported by De Boer et al. (2012) and Lan (2005), involve each student writing or drawing one small, achievable goal each week. These goals can be explicitly linked to *Estándares* competencies. For A1 learners in grades 1 through 3, a goal might be, *"This week, I will say 'good morning' to the teacher in English."* For A2.1 learners in grades 4 through 5, a goal might be, *"This week, I will ask a classmate 'How are you?' and answer."* On Monday, students set their goal. On Friday, they check whether they achieved it, celebrating small wins. Goal-setting directly supports the progressive achievement of *Estándares* by breaking down end-of-grade expectations into manageable weekly actions.

Structured peer feedback using the "Two Stars and a Wish" format, as demonstrated by Gunning (2011) and Kirsch (2012), teaches students to give each other simple, kind, and specific feedback. The two stars are things the partner did well—for example, "You spoke loudly" or "You used the new word." The wish is one thing to try next time—for instance, "Next time, look at me when you speak." The teacher introduces this format by modeling with a volunteer before pair work, using sentence starters displayed on the board. Peer feedback develops the social strategies dimension of language learning, supporting the *Estándares* expectation that students will interact meaningfully with peers in English.

Chunking and retrieval practice, based on Main (2021) and Weinstein and Mayer (1986), involves breaking new information into small "chunks" and practicing remembering it without looking. This technique specifically addresses the challenge, noted in Colombian policy research, where students have limited exposure to English outside school. By teaching only three to five new words per class rather than ten to fifteen, the teacher respects the cognitive limitations of young learners. Starting each class with a "Brain Dump"—two minutes to write or draw all the English words remembered from the previous class—activates prior knowledge and strengthens memory. Using songs, chants, and call-and-response makes retrieval practice fun and memorable. These techniques maximize learning within class time, compensating for the absence of an English-rich environment outside school.

5.5 Gaps in the Literature on SRL in Primary EFL – Focus on the Colombian Context

Despite the richness of the 17 studies, several critical gaps remain (specifically when addressing the scarcity or lack of research in the Colombian context). These gaps directly inform the research questions and justify this qualitative literature review.

Table 2.

Gaps in the Literature on SRL in Primary EFL

Gap	Explanation	Evidence from Reviewed Studies	Relevance to Colombia
Geographical gap	No study was conducted in Latin America, and specifically none in Colombia.	All primary EFL studies come from Asia (Indonesia, Taiwan, Japan, Pakistan), Europe (Portugal, Turkey, UK), or North America (Canada).	Colombian sociocultural factors (e.g., post-conflict rural schools, variability in teacher English proficiency, limited exposure to English outside school) are unexamined.
Age-specific gap	Most primary studies focus on grades 5–6 (ages 10–12). Fewer address grades 1–4 (ages 6–9).	Sugeng (1997) and Lan & Oxford (2003) studied grades 4–6; Albrecht (2025) studied grade 4. Vargas (2022) includes younger but relies on teacher calibration.	Colombian primary EFL often starts in grade 1 or 3. Strategies for very young learners (e.g., SRL through drawing, movement, oral routines) are under-researched.
Digital vs. non-digital adaptation gap	No study systematically compares how SRL strategies function in digital vs. non-digital classrooms.	Several studies mention digital tools (e.g., Lan & Oxford, 2003, reference private institutes with computers), but none focus on adaptation for low-resource settings.	Colombia’s “digital divide” means many rural schools have no internet or devices. Teachers need evidence on how to adapt SRL strategies without technology.

Classroom participation as a primary outcome	Most studies measure academic achievement (test scores, writing quality) or self-reported strategy use. Few directly measure classroom participation (e.g., voluntary speaking, task engagement).	Gunning (2011) is an exception, using oral interaction rubrics. Kirsch (2012) uses observation but not quantified participation.	Colombian teachers often report low student participation due to shyness or fear of mistakes. Studies linking SRL strategies to measured participation are needed.
Teacher training and beliefs	Many studies recommend integrating SRL into teacher training, but none provide longitudinal, context-specific training models.	Habiba et al. (2019), De Boer et al. (2012), and Ellis & Ibrahim (2015) all call for professional development, but no implementation data from Latin America exist.	Colombian teacher training programs may not include SRL for primary EFL. Research is needed on how to train teachers in low-resource, large-class settings.
Long-term sustainability	Studies are short-term interventions (weeks to a few months). No study followed learners over multiple years.	Most studies report immediate post-test gains. De Boer et al. (2012) meta-analysis only includes short-term effects.	Colombian teachers need to know if SRL strategies continue to support autonomy and participation after the intervention ends.

Sociocultural influences on strategy choice	Some studies (Lan & Oxford, 2003; Lan, 2005) note family and private institute effects, but none examine how indigenous or rural community values shape strategy use.	Kirsch (2012) looks at home-school connections but in a European context.	Colombia's diverse ethnic and rural communities may have different norms about autonomy and help-seeking. This remains unexplored.
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To conclude, this integrated report demonstrates that SRL strategies—particularly metacognitive routines, self-assessment, socio-affective support, and cognitive techniques—are effective in promoting learner autonomy and classroom participation among primary EFL learners. The evidence from 17 studies provides a solid foundation for answering the research questions. However, the gaps are equally significant: no research exists in the Colombian context, few studies address non-digital adaptations, and classroom participation is rarely measured directly.

In this undergraduate literature review, these findings suggest that it is possible to confidently identify a set of evidence-informed SRL strategies (for example, plan-do-review, traffic lights, peer feedback, and goal setting) that may be adapted to Colombian classrooms. At the same time, it is possible to argue that local, context-sensitive research is urgently needed. This review therefore serves as both a synthesis of global evidence and a call for Colombian-specific inquiry, which is a valuable contribution to the field.

VI. Conclusion

This undergraduate literature review has set out to identify and synthesize self-regulated learning strategies reported in recent primary EFL research, with particular attention to their relationship to learner autonomy and classroom participation, and to explore their relevance for digital and non-digital Colombian classrooms. The review examined five previous literature reviews and sixteen empirical studies spanning from 1986 to 2025, covering diverse international contexts including Indonesia, Taiwan, Japan, Turkey, Pakistan, Canada, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

6.1 Summary of Findings

The findings demonstrate that SRL strategies—particularly metacognitive routines, self-assessment, socio-affective support, and cognitive techniques—are effective in promoting learner autonomy and classroom participation among primary EFL learners. The most frequently reported strategies include metacognitive strategies (planning, monitoring, evaluating), socio-affective strategies (help-seeking, emotion regulation, peer cooperation), cognitive strategies (rehearsal, elaboration, organization), differentiation and self-assessment strategies (learning journals, traffic lights, goal-setting cards), and compensation strategies (guessing meaning, using gestures).

The review found that explicit strategy instruction, strategic classroom cultures, self-awareness development, and self-efficacy beliefs significantly enhance learner autonomy and classroom participation. Specifically, studies showed that students who receive explicit SRL instruction become more autonomous in selecting and adapting strategies for learning tasks, demonstrate improved writing performance, show increased metacognitive and emotional self-awareness, and participate more actively in oral interaction tasks.

6.2 Answering the Research Questions

Regarding the main research question—what SRL strategies have been identified as promoting learner autonomy and classroom participation in primary EFL contexts, and how

may these strategies be adapted to Colombian classrooms—the review identified a clear set of evidence-informed strategies including plan-do-review cycles, traffic lights self-assessment, weekly goal-setting cards, help-seeking routines, chunking and retrieval practice, and structured peer feedback. These strategies can be adapted to Colombian classrooms through low-tech options such as oral planning, hand gestures, paper strips, strategy cards on walls, songs and chants, and sentence starters on boards, as well as digital enhancements when available.

Regarding the subsidiary questions, the review found that metacognitive and socio-affective strategies are most frequently reported; outcomes associated with these strategies include increased independence, responsibility, reflection, confidence, voluntary speaking, and oral interaction gains; evidence-informed strategies adaptable to Colombian classrooms include those listed above; and critical gaps exist in geographical coverage (no Latin American studies), age range (few studies on grades 1–4), digital adaptation, and measurement of classroom participation.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

This review has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the exclusion of unpublished studies such as theses and conference papers may limit the comprehensiveness of the synthesis. Second, the analysis focused on SRL strategies with primary school learners specifically and did not include studies on SRL strategies of learners in other educational levels or age groups. Third, the review relied on the studies' own reporting of outcomes and may reflect publication bias toward positive results. Fourth, the absence of Colombian and Latin American studies means that the applicability of findings to the Colombian context remains theoretical rather than empirically validated.

6.4 Implications for Practice

Based on the findings of the present study, some practical SRL strategies have been offered in Section 5.4 for Colombian primary EFL teachers. First, Colombian primary EFL teachers should prioritize the integration of simple metacognitive and socio-affective routines into

daily lessons. Second, teachers can foster learner autonomy by cultivating a "strategic classroom culture" where self-regulation is modeled, expected, and celebrated. Third, classroom participation can be fostered through structured, low-anxiety strategies that prepare students for oral interaction.

Teachers should begin with small, manageable changes: introducing a "plan-do-review" cycle in one lesson per week, implementing "Ask Three Before Me" as a classroom routine, or using emotion check-ins at the start of each day. These strategies require no additional resources, only a willingness to shift from teacher-centered instruction toward a classroom culture where students are gradually entrusted with greater responsibility for their own learning. For teacher trainers and school administrators, the implication is equally clear: professional development programs should provide hands-on practice with these low-tech, high-impact SRL strategies, explicitly connecting each strategy to the *Estándares* so that teachers understand the policy rationale for incorporating self-regulation into their daily practice. By embedding SRL strategy instruction within the existing Colombian policy framework, primary EFL teachers can work toward national competency goals while simultaneously fostering the learner autonomy that the *Estándares* implicitly value.

From a wider perspective, teacher trainers and curriculum developers, the review suggests that SRL strategy instruction should be integrated into in-service professional development programs. Low-cost peer coaching or teacher learning circles using the "plan-do-review-share" framework for teachers themselves could be effective.

6.5 Implications for Future Research

The gaps identified in this review point to several directions for future research. Most urgently, there is a need for empirical studies on SRL strategies in primary EFL in Colombian and Latin American contexts. Such studies should examine how SRL strategies function in both digital and non-digital classrooms, addressing Colombia's digital divide. Research should also focus on younger learners (grades 1–4) and should measure classroom participation directly, using observation protocols or oral interaction rubrics rather than relying solely on self-report or achievement tests. Longitudinal studies are needed to examine

whether SRL strategies continue to support autonomy and participation after interventions end. Finally, research should explore how sociocultural factors—including indigenous and rural community values, family attitudes, and access to English outside school—influence strategy uses in Colombian settings.

6.6 Final Reflections

This review was motivated by a classroom observation: third-grade students who lacked self-regulatory skills showed dependence on their teacher and limited participation. The evidence synthesized here confirms that SRL strategies can address these challenges. However, the absence of local research means that Colombian teachers currently lack context-specific guidance. This review therefore serves as both a synthesis of global evidence and a call for Colombian-specific inquiry. It is hoped that this work contributes to the field by organizing dispersed knowledge, identifying practical strategies, and encouraging further research in Colombian primary EFL classrooms.

Table 3. Synthesis of the corpus

Autor and year	Context	Methodology	Main findings
Ellis and Ibrahim (2015)	Work with 4 th grade primary school teachers teaching EFL to young learners	A synthesis of ten pedagogical principles designed to help children understand the learning process was used to collect information. Instructing teachers on three distinctive parts which take them through a step-by-step approach to understanding, implementing and reflecting on learning to learn.	Emphasis on teacher self-reflection and collaboration, using an expanded "plan-do-review-share" format. Differentiated writing activities using self-assessment tools increased fourth graders' metacognitive and emotional self-awareness.
Vargas (2022)	Fifth and sixth grade Japanese students	Teachers were instructed on the definition and use of metacognition in the context of foreign language learning and its Dimensions for later classroom applications	Metacognitive training improved Japanese elementary students' motivation, confidence, and pronunciation accuracy, leading to more voluntary speaking.
Gunning (2011)	6th grade elementary ESL students in Quebec	The study is comprised of two parts; a) a general survey study and b) a case study. The survey study was carried out among participants from 6 different classes of Québécois 6th graders	Sixth-grade ESL students who received explicit strategy instruction became more autonomous in selecting and adapting strategies for oral interaction tasks. They successfully used self-monitoring checklists and task-evaluation logs.
De Boer (2012)	Canadian primary school or secondary school students up to and including the twelfth grade	Empirical studies focused on the instruction of self-regulated learning (or metacognition) to improve academic achievement.	Combining general metacognitive knowledge with planning and prediction strategies produces the strongest academic gains.
Anam and Stracke (2017)	6th grade Indonesian primary school children	A mixed-methods research design that involved the	Relationship between self-efficacy and language ability, which the interview

		administration of a questionnaire, an English proficiency test, and a semistructured interview.	findings support by pointing to the different cognitive and motivational engagement of the students who held different self-efficacy levels. These findings provide empirical evidence for the motivational role of self-efficacy beliefs in language learning.
Kirsh (2012)	English Primary language learning students	Strategy repertoires and strategy development	Children naturally develop help-seeking and reflection strategies when they are immersed in a “strategic classroom culture.
Weinstein and Mayer (1986)	Primary school students	Review of selected research studies in the educational setting	Rehearsal, elaboration, and organization are the basis of language learning
Sugeng (1997)	6th grade Indonesian primary school children	The Indonesian Children's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and the Children's Self-efficacy in Learning English Questionnaire (C-SELEQ) were administered	The students reported high use of socio-affective and metacognitive strategies and moderate use of cognitive strategies. The preferred strategies involved learning with/from others and regulating one's own learning, while the less preferred strategies mainly dealt with memorizing words and practicing outside the classroom. There were significant differences in strategy use between students who perceived themselves capable of performing English tasks and self-regulating their learning and students who did not.
Main (2021)	Canada, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, India, South Africa	Work with elementary school teachers and students on the teaching and learning of language strategies.	Using chunking, retrieval practice, and spaced repetition greatly helps children's language performance. Explicitly teaching “learning to learn” skills—such as growth mindset and retrieval practice—transfers autonomy across different subjects.
Albrecht (2025)	4th grade primary EFL students near Lisbon	Data was collected through learner self-assessment tools, learning journals, a teacher journal, and focus group discussions.	Using Learning journals, traffic lights, Blob Tree, goal-setting cards help young learners develop metacognitive and emotional self-awareness without needing digital technology.
Lan and Oxford (2003)	6th grade Taiwanese students	Data was gathered through the Taiwanese Children's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)	Strong relationships between strategy use and proficiency and significant gender and motivational differences in strategy use among young Taiwanese learners of English were found. Guessing meaning, gestures, and managing anxiety were used more frequently. Girls and high-proficiency students used a wider range of strategies.
Lan (2005)	5th and 6th Taiwanese primary school grade students	The Taiwanese Children's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), vocabulary performance tasks, and interviews were used to collect the data.	Liking English was the strongest predictor of strategy use, even more than parental education or prior learning.
Habiba, Akhter, and Batool (2019)	Eighth grade public school students in Lahore	The experimental group was taught with SRL strategies and the control group was taught with traditional strategy.	Students taught through SRL strategies significantly outperformed the control group in English writing, which shows independent task management.
Zorlu and Ünver (2022)	Anatolian 9th grade students	Application of the Self-Regulatory Learning Strategies Scale, the English Self-Efficacy Beliefs Scale and the ninth grade English Achievement Test.	Self-efficacy beliefs are powerful predictors of strategic behavior. English self-efficacy influences achievement more than self-regulatory strategies alone
Weinstein and Mayer (1986)	General educational settings	A synthesis of research findings on learning processes and instructional goals was made to collect information.	Affective strategies, such as positive self-talk and emotion regulation, and helping learners feel more prepared and focused directly increase classroom participation.
Byers-Heinlein and Lew-Williams (2013)	General educational settings	Information was collected through the review of research findings, including developmental and cognitive psychology, directed to offer guidelines on supporting early language acquisition.	Early bilingual exposure reduces language anxiety, although this finding is more developmental than pedagogical.

Drew (2024)	Self-management and self-regulatory skills within personal and professional development and school setting	The information was collected by reviewing and categorizing fifty specific self-management examples.	Teaching self-regulatory skills creates a positive classroom environment for students to attain successful learning.
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