

**BAZI TÜRK ÜNİVERSİTELERİNDEKİ İNGİLİZCE
ÖĞRETİMİNİN ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN ÖZGÜNLÜĞÜNE YÖNELİK
DURUM VE UYGULAMALARI**

**EFL INSTRUCTORS' PERCEPTION AND PRACTICES ON
LEARNER AUTONOMY IN SOME TURKISH UNIVERSITIES**

Gizem DOĞAN

Prof. Dr. İsmail Hakkı MİRAL

Supervisor

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This work entitled "EFL Instructors' Perception and Practices on Learner Autonomy in Some Turkish Universities" by Gizem DOĞAN has been approved as a thesis for Master's Degree in the program of English Language Teaching by the below mentioned Examining Committee Members.

Head Assoc. Prof. Dr. İsmail Hakkı ERTEN 

Supervisor Prof. Dr. İsmail Hakkı MİRİCİ 

Member Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nuray ALAGÖZLÜ 

Member Assoc. Prof. Dr. İskender Hakkı SARIGÖZ 

Member Asst. Prof. Dr. Olcay SERT 

APPROVAL

This thesis has been approved as a thesis for Master's Degree in the department of English Language Teaching by board of directors of the Graduate School of Educational Sciences.

Prof. Dr. Berrin AKMAN
Director of Institute of Educational Sciences

EFL INSTRUCTORS' PERCEPTION AND PRACTICES ON LEARNER AUTONOMY IN SOME TURKISH UNIVERSITIES

Gizem DO AN

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate EFL Instructors' perception and practices on learner autonomy at the School of Foreign Languages at nine geographically diverse public Turkish universities.

In the study, mixed methods approach was adopted. The study was conducted with 96 EFL Instructors and the data were collected through a questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire in the study had five major sections the first of which consisted of 37 five point Likert-scale items underlying ten constructs in learner autonomy. The section 2 focused on teachers' views on the desirability and feasibility of student involvement in decision-making and students' learning to learn skills. The section 3 was based on teachers' beliefs about how autonomous they perceived their students were and to what extent they thought they promoted learner autonomy in their teaching practices. In the 4th section of the questionnaire, some information about the background of teachers was gathered. In the section 5 teachers were asked if they volunteered to take part in the second phase of the study. Finally, 17 interviews were conducted with the teachers who volunteered to participate in the study.

The findings of this study revealed that the instructors had highly positive views on different aspects of learner autonomy. They stated that learner autonomy should be developed in the learning process by involving learners in decisions taken and they were of the opinion that they developed learner autonomy in their learners. Although they were positive about the desirability of nearly all aspects of learner autonomy, it was found out that they did not perceive it as much feasible as they perceived it desirable.

Key Words: Learner autonomy, teacher perception, foreign language teaching

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. smail Hakkı M R C , Hacettepe University, Department of Foreign Language Education, Division of English Language Teaching

BAZI TÜRK ÜNİVERSİTELERİNDEKİ İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETİMİNİN ÖZGÜNLÜĞÜNE YÖNELİK ALGI VE UYGULAMALARI

Gizem DOĞAN

ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı coğrafik olarak farklı bölgelerdeki dokuz üniversitenin Yabancı Diller Yüksek Okulundaki İngilizce öğretmenlerinin özgünlüğe yönelik algı ve uygulamalarını araştırmaktır.

Bu çalışmada, karma yöntemli bir yaklaşım benimsenmiştir. Çalışmada, 96 İngilizce Öğretmeni ile gerçekleştirilmiş ve çalışmaya ait veriler anket ve röportajlar aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Çalışmadaki anket, ilk bölümü özgünlüğe ait 10 yapıyı kapsayan 37 maddelik beşli likert ölçeğinden oluşmaktadır. İkinci bölümde öğrencilerin karar alma amallarına katılmaları ve öğrenmeyi öğrenme becerileri konularını öğretmenlerin ne kadar arzu edilir ve gerçekleştirilebilir bulduklarına odaklanılmıştır. Üçüncü bölüm, öğretmenlerin öğrencilerini ne kadar özgün buldukları ve dil öğretiminde özgünlüğe ölçüde destekledikleri konularına ayrılmıştır. Anketin dördüncü bölümünde ise, öğretmenlerin demografik bilgileri toplanmıştır. Beşinci bölümde, öğretmenlere, çalışmanın ikinci aşamasında yer alıp almak istemedikleri sorulmuştur. Son olarak, katılmaya gönüllü olan 17 öğretmenle röportajlar gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Bu çalışmanın bulguları, öğretmenlerin, özgünlüğün farklı açılara yönelik oldukça olumlu görüşlere sahip olduklarını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Öğrencilerin alınan kararlara katılmaları aracılığıyla öğrenme süreci içerisinde özgünlüğün geliştirilmesi gerektiğini ve öğrencilerinde özgünlüğü geliştirdiklerine inandıklarını dile getirmişlerdir. Öğrencilerin özgünlüğün neredeyse bütün yönleriyle arzu edilebilir olduğu konusunda olumlu olmalarına karşın, onu arzu edilebilir buldukları kadar gerçekleştirilebilir bulmadıkları saptanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Özgünlük, öğretmen algısı, yabancı dil öğretimi

Danışman: Prof. Dr. İsmail Hakkı MURAT, Hacettepe Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Bilim Dalı

ETHICS

In this thesis study, prepared in accordance with the spelling rules of Graduate School of Educational Sciences of Hacettepe University;

I declare that

- all the information and documents were obtained in the base of the academic rules
- all audio-visual and written information and results were presented according to the rules of scientific standards
- in case of using other works, related studies were cited in accordance with the scientific standards
- all cited studies were fully referenced
- I did not do any distortion in the data set
- and any part of this thesis was not presented as any other thesis study at this or any other university.

28/05/2015

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AfL: Assessment for Learning

CALL: Computer Assisted Language Learning

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

CoE: Council of Europe

CRAPEL: Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELP: European Language Portfolio

EuroPAL: European Pedagogy for Autonomous Learning

LA: Learner Autonomy

LLS: Language Learner Strategies

SBI: Strategy-based Instruction

TA: Teacher Autonomy

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

Learner autonomy is defined as the ability to take charge of one's own learning (Holec, 1981). With the emergence of communicative methodologies, and with the need for learners who are capable of taking control of their own learning, autonomy has become a central skill to be adopted by both learners and teachers. Particularly, in a world of knowledge, and lots of resources to reach, autonomous and self-conscious learners who know how to learn has become increasingly important. Autonomous learners are accepted to be capable of putting realistic and reachable learning goals, selecting appropriate methods and techniques to be adopted, monitoring their own learning process, and assessing the progress of their own learning (Little, 1991; Holec, 1981; Benson, 2001; Scharle & Szabo, 2000; Wenden 1991) with the help of teachers to a certain degree.

Dam (1995) asserts that learner autonomy should be in an individualized yet socially responsible fashion. So, learner autonomy is not desocialization of learners at all. Learners are encouraged in an autonomy supportive classroom setting for taking responsibility over the process included in learning. For learners to be autonomous, they are included in various stages of learning from planning to assessment. It should be noted that students are more willing when they are given more responsibility on their language learning, so teachers need to share responsibility with their students without any fear of losing their discipline or authority in classrooms as students need to be put more on the stage for taking on the needed responsibility of language learning.

Madjar et al. (2013) have stated that an autonomy-supportive teaching environment provides students with adoption of a more adaptive goal orientation leading to more achievement in learning. That's why autonomy is desired in classrooms for both better development as individuals and more achievement in academic issues. They further indicate in their study that while autonomy support results in adaptive goal orientations, teachers' compelling practices result in

maladaptive goals. That's why autonomy supportive classrooms need to be designed with consideration of affective factors as well.

Little (1991) notes that a number of misconceptions about learner autonomy exist. Autonomy is not synonymous with self-access learning, self-instruction, distance learning, individualized instruction, flexible learning or self-directed learning even if it is related with these terms. Another misconception is that learner autonomy means absolute freedom of learners. Allwright (1984) states that when learner autonomy is considered and teaching is arranged accordingly, lessons turn out to be a joint endeavour, "a co-production of all participants" in a classroom. For this reason, autonomy is a social process and a mutual endeavour with all parties included.

In the literature, there are different approaches to the development of learner autonomy which are resource-based, technology-based, learner-based, classroom-based, curriculum-based, and teacher based approaches. Each of these approaches has been developed to promote learner autonomy with the adaptation of different methods, techniques and materials (Benson, 2001).

In developing learner autonomy, teachers carry utmost importance. Since autonomy is not innate but must be taught with formal education later on, learners need much guidance which will be enabled by teachers (Masouleh and Jooneghani, 2012). Little (1991) stresses that since learner autonomy and teacher autonomy are interdependent, teachers who want to promote learner autonomy are required to start with themselves and should reflect on their own beliefs, perceptions, practices, and perspectives on the issue. In promotion of learner autonomy, however, there are other things to be considered by teachers as well like the uniqueness of every individual. Since learners differ in their background, experiences and levels, teachers need to take every variable into account and develop autonomy accordingly.

Learner autonomy is not developed only with teachers though. As its name suggests, learners need to be very active in their development of autonomy. Little (1991) explains that autonomous learners can be identified by their behaviours, yet these behaviours can take a lot of different forms, he further states, depending on their ages, levels of readiness for learning settings, how far they have progressed

with their learning and what they perceive their immediate learning needs are. According to Carr (1999), independent and autonomous learners have an aptitude for learning, are curious for learning; they postpone their pleasure for intended studies, prefer learning when they have conflicting interests, focus on the benefits of learned things for the future, and they are good at problem-solving (as cited in Tok, 2011). Willis (2011) states that when learning is perceived as a shared responsibility of the teacher and students, autonomy is more likely to be achieved in that classroom setting. That's why it is crucial how teacher and learners approach learner autonomy and how willing they are to take responsibility in this process.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

According to Ho and Crookall (1995), due to highly complex nature of language and learning, developing autonomy in learners is not an easy task and a “doubly difficult objective” to achieve. However, this hardship of the situation is by no means a reason to hold back from promoting learner autonomy in classrooms. Nevertheless, as the writers claim, it may be a hard job and a long way to take. For teachers to develop learner autonomy in their students though, they need to be ready to take this responsibility and they need to have teacher autonomy themselves first to be able to model what autonomy is and how it can be practiced then.

Yumuk (2002) notes that Turkish educational system has some points which impede learner autonomy in education like recitation as a common mode of teaching and traditional education methods in which teacher dominates the classroom setting (as cited in Balçıkanlı, 2008). Balçıkanlı (2008) further claims that together with these hindrances, creativity and individuality are not encouraged in Turkish educational system either.

In order to study reasons of this, perception and practices of teachers carry profound importance as their teaching practices are underpinned by their perception and their practices resulting from these perceptions further nurture or hinder their perception on learner autonomy. This ongoing cycle is crucial in developing and fostering autonomy in learners and once formed by the teachers, they are hard to modify. According to Fleming and Walter (2004), the kind of

teaching teachers adopt depends on a variety of factors such as their personal philosophies of ELT, professional training, experience, how much control they have and are willing to give up in their classrooms, how much the risk of unknown they are capable to tolerate and lastly, how comfortable they are to test their teaching practices. Since a host of variables are included in teaching, it is central to learn what their perceptions and practices are on learner autonomy in order to define them and further help them to develop and promote autonomy in their classrooms. Without this insight, depending on the literature on learner autonomy but not teachers' thought on learner autonomy, it would be half and deficient to try to promote autonomy in classrooms.

The purpose of this study, for this reason was to define what learner autonomy meant to EFL Instructors working at School of Foreign Languages at Ankara University, Amasya University, Sakarya University, Uluda University, Erzincan University, Gaziantep University, Gazi University, Mehmet Akif Ersoy University and U ak University which are located in Ankara, Amasya, Sakarya, Bursa, Erzincan, Gaziantep, Ankara, Burdur and U ak respectively. Their practices as a result of their perception in the promotion of autonomy were also investigated. The reason why these nine universities were chosen was that, each of them is located in a different region of Turkey except Gazi and Ankara Universities which are in Ankara, in Central Anatolia; Uluda and Sakarya Universities which are in different cities but in the same region, Marmara; all are state universities with demographic similarities. With a study which would encompass all geographical regions in Turkey, it was aimed to acquire what kind of beliefs EFL Instructors throughout Turkey held on learner autonomy and what kind of practices they implemented to develop it.

1.3. Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of EFL Instructors on learner autonomy at Ankara, Amasya, Sakarya, Uluda , Erzincan, Gaziantep, Gazi, Mehmet Akif Ersoy and U ak Universities in Turkey?
2. To what extent, according to the EFL Instructors, does learner autonomy contribute to L2 learning?

3. How desirable and feasible do EFL Instructors feel it is to promote learner autonomy?
4. To what extent do EFL Instructors feel their students are autonomous?
5. To what extent do EFL Instructors say they actually promote learner autonomy?

1.4. Significance of the Study

Teachers' perception is crucial because their beliefs on learner autonomy either intentionally or unintentionally may impede the development of learner autonomy. It is important to define the perceptions of teachers to provide them an opportunity to reflect on various ways of enhancing and sustaining autonomy and potentially the motivation of learners.

Borg (2009) notes that teachers' cognition can be powerfully affected by their experiences when they were students, teacher cognition may outweigh the education they take in their classroom practices; they may be deep-rooted and may not be too easy to change. Teacher cognition and practice are related to each other which means that beliefs affect practices and practices can also cause changes in beliefs. Little (1995) states that if the promotion of learner autonomy is the aim, the concern needs to be teachers who will promote it. He (1995: 178) further notes that in her classroom practices and instruction, "the teacher cannot help but teach herself". Thus, it is crucial what every teacher brings classroom settings for developing skills and teaching the target language. It can also be inferred from here that teachers cannot be thought different from their perceptions, practices and beliefs in their teaching. This makes it very important in terms of the effectiveness of the instruction, what every teacher has and brings to educational settings and how they share these with their students in the development of autonomy.

Yıldırım (2012) suggests in his study that as well as studies on learner perceptions of learner autonomy, there should also be further studies which focus on teacher perceptions of learner autonomy because, he further goes on, cultural backgrounds of teachers are as crucial as learners' for comprehending and fostering learner autonomy. Lamb (2011) similarly asserts that changes in teacher identity requires changing pedagogy and this necessitates the study of how teachers perceive their identity, role and function in their profession.

A lot of researchers in the field (Palfreyman, 2003; Barillaro, 2011; Shahsavari, 2014; Al Asmari; 2013; Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Demirta & Sert, 2010, Benson, 2010) claim that little has been done in the field of teacher perception and beliefs on learner autonomy. Since teachers play a vital role in the development of learner autonomy and it is the only way to understand what kind of autonomy practices are implemented in classrooms, addressing their perception and practices is particularly crucial. They further claim that there is a gap existing between theoretical discussions of learner autonomy and perception and practices of teachers and further go on that although there is a large body of research carried out for learner beliefs on learner autonomy, little has been done so far to investigate what teachers' beliefs are. Without such insight of teachers' perception, the reasons for classroom practices may not be comprehended fully, and in this study it was aimed to contribute the literature for such an insight on teachers' perception and practices on learner autonomy.

1.5. Definitions of Terms

Learner Autonomy: The ability to take charge of one's own learning with reflection on every process included in learning (Holec, 1981).

Autonomous Learner: Learners who are capable of identifying what their learning objectives are, what they need to do to reach these objectives and how they need to do that in a collaborative way with their teachers and peers (Dickinson, 1995).

AfL: Evaluative practices of informing and developing student learning to promote learner autonomy (Willis, 2011).

Teacher Cognition: The research area where, what teachers think, know and believe and how these perceptions are reflected in their practices are studied (Borg, 2009).

1.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, the background to the study, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study have been discussed and definitions of some related terms have been provided. In the next chapter the relevant literature on learner autonomy and some aspects related to it will be presented.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Learner Autonomy in Language Education

Learner autonomy is a concept whose definition has been hard to enable. Because of the subjectivity of the term, it has been defined differently by different researchers, and at the end, although there is a general idea hold by people interested in the field, a clear definition has somewhat remained problematic. Zou (2011) supports this idea by asserting that a consensus on the meaning and implications of the concept has not been reached yet in the literature on learner autonomy. However, there are a lot of definitions in the literature to have a clear opinion about what autonomy is. Holec (1979), who is also accepted as the father of the field, defines learner autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s learning.” Dam (1995) asserts that this readiness to take charge of one’s learning should be in an individualized yet socially responsible fashion. According to Little (1991:4) autonomy is,

... a capacity— for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails, that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of learning. The capacity for learner autonomy will be displayed both in the way the learner learns and in the way he or she transfers what has been learned to wider contexts.

Benson (2001) similarly defines that autonomy in language learning is about people taking more control over the purposes for which they learn languages. He also describes it as a capacity to take charge of, to be responsible for and to control over somebody’s learning. Ho and Crookall (1995) claims that through certain actions of taking responsibility autonomy is learned and achieved. As cited in O’Donnell et al. (2013), Collins (1990) argues that autonomy is an ability to govern oneself, make decisions and set one’s own course, and think for one’s actions and oneself. According to the self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (2000), autonomy is one of the three principal needs along with competence and relatedness, and it is crucial for healthy psychological functioning. Like it is in psychology, it is a requirement for healthy functioning in educational settings, and

it is not just behaviour but a fundamental sense of freedom, thus the ownership of the responsibility in educational context.

Littlewood (1999) distinguishes between two kinds of autonomy which are proactive and reactive autonomy. Reactive autonomy is defined as the one which is triggered by external factors; however, once achieved, learners can be autonomously present in learning settings while proactive autonomy is defined as internal autonomy and usually the intended one. Proactive autonomy is the only kind of autonomy that counts for some researchers, and it is also the aim for reactively autonomous learners to reach.

A sense of being in control of one's own destiny (O'Donnell, 2013) is another explanation of autonomy. Little (1995) bases learner autonomy as the acceptance of responsibility for one's own learning and rests learner autonomy in the notion of "cognitive universal" (Little, 2012: 13). He further advocates that autonomy is the psychological relation of the learners to the process and learning. According to Littlewood (1999), responsibility is a major dimension of learner autonomy.

Candy (1991) has indicated in parallel with other researchers that autonomy is a process, not a product and one does not become fully autonomous, just works towards it. From this statement, it can be inferred that the life-long struggle for autonomy will never end and it is process-oriented in nature, not product-oriented. Zou (2011) further states that students will never reach the same of level autonomy; yet it is crucial to help them gain insight for learner autonomy, reflect on their learning experiences, share these experiences and reflections with others and lastly understand the factors influencing all these processes.

Kohonen (2012) defines autonomy development as a whole person approach in which learners are considered intentional people with individual identities. Autonomy and to be active in one's learning goes hand in hand, thus learner autonomy means active learners who feel themselves responsible, capable and in charge of their own learning. Consequently, this creates learners who share the responsibility of learning and who rejects being a passive learner waiting to be filled with knowledge by the teachers. Such a learner, as it is expected, learns not only in class but out of class as well with the awareness of the fact that learning happens everywhere, and it is just not subjected to classroom environment. From

this point of view, it can be concluded that people possess abilities and attitudes toward autonomy and can develop them to different degrees. However; what constitutes ability or attitude is also problematic in the field, which makes the situation even harder.

Ellis and Sinclair (1989) state that enhancing student responsibility in language learning is both important and beneficial because learning gets more effective when learners take control for and responsibility of their learning resulting in increased learning because they learn when they feel ready to learn. They further claim that those learners who feel responsibility for their learning also go on learning outside the classroom which further enhances language learning and maintains it. These learners, they go on, are more aware about how they learn, so they are possibly more capable of transferring their learning strategies to other subjects and contexts. According to Karababa et al. (2010) the development of this autonomy is achieved through some basic principles such as learner involvement, learner reflection and appropriate target language use.

Learner autonomy is not an all-or-nothing kind of concept which means that talking about completely autonomous or completely non-autonomous learners is somewhat impossible. Learners may be autonomous in many ways but there is also room for non-autonomous actions for all learners. That's why teachers need to keep this variable in mind and would not be discouraged if a full autonomous capacity could not be developed as this is not true but idealistic.

Feelings of autonomy result in many positive ways like decreased susceptibility to negative peer influences, increased popularity among peers and increased engagement with school and academics (O'Donnell et. al., 2013). It is important how learners construct the ideas on autonomy and learning as these ideas in turn influence the learning results. Here, attribution styles can be emphasized as attributions can be positive or negative, and the kind of attribution a learner has on his/her learning experience has a certain effect on the learning result. Negative attributions may lead to learned helplessness which leads to further failures while positive attributions result in increased success and autonomy of learners. So, unfortunately, a high sense of learner autonomy may not lead to success if the learner has a style of negative explanation for learning events in her life. The

opposite is also possible in that positive attributions without autonomy and personal effort do not result in success either.

From the education policies in many European countries, a shift towards the inclusion of the development of autonomous learner is observed, and is considered as one of the important educational principles (Lamb, 2011; Mirici, 2014). Projects such as European Pedagogy for Autonomous Learning (EuroPAL) funded by European Commission to explore a pedagogy in language learning for autonomy consists of three major themes which are education for democratic citizenship, education for life and education for life-long learning (Lamb, 2011). Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) also aims for the development of a language teaching methodology which creates an independence of thought, judgement and action together with other skills such as social skills and responsibility. CEFR further stresses self-directed learning which requires an increase in learner's self-awareness on his/ her present state of knowledge, setting feasible and worthwhile objectives by oneself, selecting materials accordingly and self-assessing at the end. When learners' identity includes a capacity to self-manage and self-regulate, there is more chance that these lead to autonomy meaning that they could act as the agents of their own learning experiences (Lamb, 2011).

According to Holec (1981), learner autonomy is not inborn but needs to be acquired by 'natural' means of formal education. To create this 'natural' learning environment so that learners become autonomous is not an easy to achieve target as can be predicted. Little (1991) improves this idea further and states that since language learning is defined as a social activity which requires interaction with others, autonomy has increasingly been defined in terms of interdependence rather than isolation. He further goes on his explanation that since people are social beings; their independence is always balanced with dependence. That's why a sound autonomy depends on the interaction with others rather than a total independence of them. White (2003) supports this idea by noting that learner autonomy is developed through collaborative control of learning experiences. Moreover, learners' responsibility for and control of the learning process needs to be promoted by sustained collaboration.

In Furnborough's study (2012) on distance learning and learner autonomy, it has been found out that lower confidence in language learners results in a greater dependence on teacher support which indicates that in order to feel autonomous and more in control of their learning, students need a certain level of success. She further claims that while learner autonomy depends on individual decision-making of learners, it is also crucial for these decisions to be taken in an informed basis, and feelings as well as reasons are taken into account. She states that when working with adult learners, it has to be recognized that, adult learners have a lot of responsibilities and pressures in their professional and daily lives, so they may have some problems for individual study, motivation maintenance and time-management.

When learner autonomy is considered and teaching is arranged accordingly, lessons turn out to be a joint endeavour, "a co-production of all participants" in a classroom (Allwright, 1984). According to Porto (2007: 677), "the basis for long-term autonomy lay in the positive spirit of curiosity about language and learning." Critical reflection is one of those key terms in learner autonomy as reflection is indispensable for learner autonomy. For students to gain individual control over what they learn and what is going on in classroom setting is very important for the sustainment of both autonomy and motivation. As stated by Erten and Burden (2014) academic self-concept and academic achievement are both linked to and influence each other which means that students who are autonomous and who have positive self-concept will probably be achievers when compared to those who are not and who do not have.

Borg (2009) defines that teacher cognition is the research of what teachers think, know and believe. With the developments in cognitive psychology, he maintains, the relationship between what people know and believe and what they do has been highlighted, and this has helped us to define the role teachers' mental and cognitive lives has played in their instruction. That's why it is crucial to understand how and in what way teachers' cognition and practices are related and reflected in their classrooms. Little (2004: 2) notes that learner autonomy is seriously important and closely related with teacher autonomy and sees it as "the mirror image" of learner autonomy. Although learner autonomy has 'learner' inside and it seems as if it is totally with the learner, learner autonomy cannot be thought separately from

teachers. The reason for this is that learner autonomy depends on teacher autonomy (Little, 1995). Little (1995) claims that teachers who are not autonomous themselves cannot promote the growth of autonomy in their learners. It is apparent from this statement that in order to provide a learning context which nurtures autonomy, teachers, first, need to know how to enable it referring back to their own experiences and training. Fleming and Walter (2004: 58) discuss that in recent years, teaching profession has been exposed to work intensification and accountability with “externally developed sets of behavioural objectives, assessment instruments, commercially produced classroom materials and externally controlled technologies”. They stress that when all these are taken together, teachers are losing professional autonomy. Teacher autonomy steps in at this point, and becomes more and more important as teachers who are autonomous and have the capacity to be flexible and responsive to students’ learning needs are central to an autonomy supportive classroom.

Developing learner autonomy is not an idealized aim of language teaching although it may be hard to enable the conditions needed for promoting it. Little (2004) states some of possible problems which may be confronted in developing autonomy are that teachers’ pre-service education may not be arranged in a way to provide them with necessary ways to develop autonomy in their learners, there may be few if any opportunities to enable in-service training for teachers, and what is more, teachers themselves may not be autonomous at all leading little success of developing autonomy in their learners as they will probably not be a good role model to their students in terms of autonomy. Ho and Crookall (1995) extends this idea by noting that learner autonomy often requires students to work independently of the teacher; however it is not claimed that learner autonomy is developed without the teacher. It is true that while developing learner autonomy, teacher help is indispensable, yet, as learners get more autonomous, less teacher support is needed. Shahsavari (2014) advocates that if teachers are not aware of the ways to develop autonomy in their students, the classroom will be just a place that students attend with the only aim of passing exams fixed in their curriculum. Therefore, he goes on, it is a moral duty for teachers to help their learners be more independent and autonomous. It is interesting that Shahsavari (2014) sees autonomy promotion as a ‘moral duty’.

Littlewood (1997) states that teachers' commitment to help students develop autonomy is not enough alone, students' willingness and their independence are also important to be able to develop and foster autonomy. Chwo (2011) explains that self-value, preference, personality, reflection and exploration are central parts of autonomy in learning. If students lack focus, cannot find any relevance of knowledge to real life, do not grasp knowledge as a resource or a use, as Fleming and Walter (2004) say, they are trapped in that knowledge and will not have any autonomy in their learning which will eventually cause lack of motivation to take further steps.

In his seminal article, Little (1995) states that there is nothing new or mysterious about learner autonomy, and further asserts that achievers have always been autonomous. Hence, it is not about new kind of learning, yet by having put a clear goal like learner autonomy, it is to help learners achieve (Little, 1995). He notes that the pedagogical dialogue between the teacher and students is the decisive factor in promotion of learner autonomy while learning strategies and learner training also support the development of autonomy in learners. Little (1995) further stresses that all users of language continue to learn that language as long as they are involved in it. In this involvement, communicative activity is seen to be the most influential achieved result of the projects to promote learner autonomy (Dam, 1990), and it constitutes the reason why learner autonomy should be developed in language learners. In similar to his observations on learner autonomy, Little (1995) states that there is also nothing new about teacher autonomy either, as autonomous teachers have always been in the strong sense of responsibility for their teaching, have been reflective of all process included in their teaching, have controlled of affective and cognitive processes of their teaching and have taken initiatives when needed to.

2.1.1. Origins of Learner Autonomy in EFL

As a result of changes and developments in politics and technology in Europe, how to reach information in the shortest and best way, learning to learn that is to say, has become more important than it has ever been before, and as claimed by some researchers, it has even been more important than learning the knowledge itself (Gremmo, 1995; as cited in Benson, 2001).

Learner autonomy has been one of the most researched areas in the field of language learning for last three decades. The concept of autonomy was first formulated in language learning and teaching in 1971 with the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project which led to the foundation of CRAPEL (Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues (in English, Center for Research and Applications in Language Teaching) at the University of Nancy, France (Altunay, 2013). Holec's report to the Council of Europe (CoE) which was based on providing life-long learning opportunities for adults is considered as an early key document on learner autonomy in language teaching (Egel, 2009). As a result of the studies, self-access centres were founded by CRAPEL and this was the beginning of providing learners with rich collections of materials to have them experience self-directed learning.

Benson (2001) notes that the theory of autonomy in language learning is a result of research on adult education. Self-directed learning which emerged as a term frequently used in adult learning, has been used for learners to agree and accept the responsibility of their learning and to act accordingly. The shifting focus from teacher-centred approaches to learner-centred approaches and the communicative language teaching have provided opportunities for the emergence of autonomy as a concept more referred in the field. Learner autonomy has been accepted as crucial in language education and has been studied substantially since then. Benson (2006) proves this by asserting that in the new millennium the interest in autonomy has such grown that the literature on autonomy which has been published since 2000 has exceeded the ones which were published for 25 years.

Gremmo and Riley (1995) have explained some thoughts and events leading the formation of autonomy which are the wave of minority rights movements, the reaction against behaviourism, developments in technology, the demand for foreign languages as a result of political developments and the rise of multinational corporations; the commercialization of language and the vast increase in school and university population.

2.1.2. Misconceptions related to Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy is generally confused with terms like 'self-instruction', 'self-access', 'self-study', 'self-education', 'out-of-class learning' or 'distance learning'; however, it is not synonymous with these terms. Learner autonomy and these terms can be counted related to each other; however, it would be wrong to say that they refer to the same thing. While they define different ways and degrees of learning by oneself, autonomy refers to attitudes and abilities in general (Benson, 2001). Little (1995) states that learner autonomy, in principle, can be developed in any organizational framework and learner autonomy does not necessarily have the same meaning as autonomous learning. Zou (2011) states the reason for misconceptions that a consensus on the meaning and implications of the concept has not been reached yet in the literature on learner autonomy as different researchers have tended to use the same term for different concepts.

Little (1995) stresses that learner autonomy is not total independence from the teacher, other learners or the formal curricula. Autonomous learners do not necessarily learn by themselves, yet they are supported when they demand, and mostly achieve as a result. Even if they do not, they have the capacity to assess themselves on that, and find a solution for the problem they face. Therefore it would be wrong to conclude that autonomy is something to be achieved alone without any help or intervention on the part of the teacher. If it is explained more, learners are desired to have more control over language learning processes; however it does not mean that they will learn in isolation. Autonomous learners are certainly in the direct control of their learning which makes learner autonomy a concept learners are active in, not just passive individuals to whom knowledge is transmitted.

Autonomous learners are active in the process, and they get help from both teachers and peers. If they develop a sense of interdependence and work cooperatively with teachers and their peers for their common goals, they raise the chance of achievement in both autonomy and in their learning goals (Üstüno lu, 2009; Benson, 2001).

Little (1991) notes that autonomy is not a synonym of self-instruction, it is not learning without a teacher; it is not handing responsibility to students totally on the

part of the teacher; on the contrary, teachers need to work a lot to develop autonomy in their learners; autonomy is not something done to learners, or another teaching methodology; it is not a single and easily described behaviour and it is not a steady concept and one-for-all notion. It is a continuum in which learners range from non-autonomous to autonomous.

2.1.3. Characteristics of an Autonomous Learner

Karababa et al. (2010) state that autonomous learners are conscious in their choice of strategies and they apply these strategies accordingly in learning context when needed. They further express that autonomous learners are also capable in transferring strategies and styles to their other learning experiences. In this way, a learned skill or subject can be made use of in other contexts which is especially desired in an interdisciplinary world. A flexible student in thought who synthesizes the language subject he/she learns and transmits it to other learning situations even to other disciplines is encouraged. As it is highlighted in Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (2001), the ability to learn, that is, the observation and participation in new experiences, integration of the previous knowledge and experiences into existing knowledge and modification of the latter one when and where necessary can be counted as important for an autonomous learner.

Autonomous learners are active in every part of their learning journey which may start with the planning of the priorities and needs in learning, go on monitoring it and end in assessing themselves and their needs with a holistic view to begin another journey of learning again with a new and better perspective. According to Little (1991), learners will have the motivation required to do all these as autonomy solves the problem of motivation. As a result of students' ownership of responsibility for their learning, they are accepted to be more intrinsically motivated. With such motivation, an autonomous learner not only carries on all the phases from beginning to the end, but also critically assesses all the procedure, and acts accordingly. Such kind of act in a learner certainly requires a certain level of consciousness. That's why, autonomous learners have self-awareness and they are self-conscious in their learning experiences which in turn help them to apply the situations and learned behaviours in the classroom to situations outside the classroom helping them to transfer their acquired knowledge.

Autonomous learners are positive in their meaning-making and how they comprehend success and failure (O'Donnell, 2013). They are not easily discouraged as they know and feel that they have control over their learning and success, and thus can act as needed. Autonomous learners are able to create good learning situations and studying methods, they can make their own choices, can discuss, monitor and assess their efforts to learn English. They know what their needs are, mostly define them explicitly and put learning targets for themselves accordingly. When they naturally face problems in language learning, they can choose from a broad range of aids to solve them. Autonomous learners continue their learning after formal education settings as well since they are accepted to be life-long learners.

Little (1991) explains that autonomous learners can be identified by their behaviours, yet these behaviours can take a lot of different forms, he further states, depending on their ages, levels of readiness for learning settings, how far they have progressed in their learning and what they perceive their immediate learning needs are. Holec (1981) further notes that learners need to move from the idea that 'they are the products of the society they live in' to 'they are the producers of the society they live in.' Thus, autonomous learners are expected to be conscious, democratic citizens who can think critically.

According to Carr (1999), independent and autonomous learners have an aptitude for learning, are curious for learning, postpone their pleasure for intended studies, prefer learning when they have conflicting interests, focus on the benefits of learned things for the future, and are good at problem-solving (as cited in Tok, 2011). It is suggested that autonomous learners have awareness in different areas like language awareness, self-awareness, awareness of learning goals and awareness of learning options (Porto, 2007). Victori (2000) states that one of the obstacles which should be overcome is lack of experience. According to her, more experienced language learners are less dependent on their teachers while learning a language. Another point made by Cotterall (1995) is that high-achievers are independent, autonomous learners and are characterized by their success in overcoming the obstacles which educational background, cultural norms or their prior experiences may have caused them. She further explains that the degree of

independence learners have is a good indicator that shows how ready they are for autonomy.

Making choices about whether one wants to learn and if yes, what one wants to learn is one of the first decisions autonomous learners need to make (Ho and Crookall, 1995). They go on that, time management skills and skills for working out sudden and unexpected problems arising are strong indicators of learner autonomy. According to Chwo (2011), autonomous learners are motivated and they monitor their own learning, and these lead to learning and sustainment of it for a life time. As cited in Thanasoulas (2000), Omaggio (1978) defines seven attributes which characterize autonomous learners. He claims that autonomous learners have insights for learning styles and strategies that they effectively use, they act actively for the learning tasks they have, they are willing to take risks, they are good-guessers, they place importance on both accuracy and fluency, they are willing to revise their learning and to modify what they have learned, they assess themselves regularly in order to test hypothesis and finally they are tolerant of unexpected learning problems and are positive for the target language.

Holec (1981) lastly defines some of the key skills of autonomous learners which are choosing instructional materials, setting learning objectives and putting them in an order of importance, deciding when and for how long each objective will be studied, evaluating the progress and achievements and evaluating the learning programme lastly. As learning goes on, these processes start all over again continuously.

2.2. Historical and Theoretical Background to Learner Autonomy

2.2.1. Philosophical Background to Learner Autonomy

Dewey (1916) suggests that in a democratic society, the primary purpose of education is to prepare learners to take an active part in both social and political lives by helping them acquire the skills and attitudes they need for democratic and social participation. Constructivism holds that learners in a learning context construct their knowledge and meaning on their prior experiences. As Candy (1991) states, constructivism is the manifestation that knowledge cannot be taught, it is rather constructed by learners themselves as knowledge is something that is built up by learners. Udosen (2014) also advocates that autonomy is in parallel

with constructivism since it also encourages and promotes self-directed learning. Little (1991) is another researcher who discusses the connection between autonomous learning and early descriptions of constructivism. These ideas are rooted in and developed from the importance of prior knowledge, and the relatedness of this prior knowledge with newly learned ones in discovery learning (Ausubel, 1968) and a social constructivist view of learning (Bruner, 1986; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978; as cited in Kristmanson et al., 2013).

Rousseau (as cited in Tok, 2011) suggests an education system in which learners develop autonomously by themselves, rather than educated by a formal system or others. According to him, teachers need to be supportive, and learners need to be responsible for their own actions. Rousseau's ideas constitute a base for learner autonomy (Tok, 2011). Tok (2011) further states that Dewey, Kilpatrick, Rogers and Freire all contributed the idea of learner autonomy and its theoretical basement in the field of language teaching.

Autonomy and learner-centeredness are in harmony with learners' right of making decisions for the issues about their learning (Cotteral, 1995). These two terms are also consistent with the educational view of language teaching which is to develop the capacity and ability of learners' to face and cope with problems particularly independent of the instructor, while proceeding on their own (Widdowson, 1996). Benson (2006: 31) notes that for learners to "play active, participatory roles in a democratic society", encouraging an active approach to learning and providing them to act independently is crucial.

2.2.2. Psychological Background to Learner Autonomy

When autonomy is handled with a psychological point of view, Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) can be included as in child development, the aim of developmental learning is autonomy and ZPD can lead to independent problem solving. Moreover, in social psychology, Deci (1995) states that people's sense of well-being depends on their senses of competence, relatedness and autonomy. Another point stated by Little (2004: 1) is that promoting learner autonomy is "a matter of making explicit what might otherwise remain unconscious in the contexts of formal learning."

Research suggests that individual success in a variety of domains is supported by a personal sense of autonomy. Happiness of a learner and the level of satisfaction a learner has for his/her learning relies at least in part on a sense of control and positive explanatory style for events in his/her own life (O'Donnell et al., 2013). Lyubomirsky (1998) and his colleagues have explored that there is a bidirectional relationship between happiness and positive outcomes and both emerge out of positive events but also aid in leading to them. This means that as learners feel the pleasure of achievement and get happy as a result, it gets more possible that this positiveness will trigger other achievements. Thus, it can be inferred from here that, if learners are given the chance to be achievers and get joy from it, it is more possible that they will feel autonomy in their achievement and will be better for further actions of autonomy. Lyubomirsky and Tucker (1998) identify that happy and unhappy students have experienced the same events, but have looked upon these experiences differently- happy and thus more autonomous students are more likely to draw pleasure and life-lessons from negative events and results than unhappy students.

2.2.3. Pedagogical Background to Learner Autonomy

In autonomy supportive classes, teachers can benefit from constructive teaching as it enables learners to actively participate in learning processes. Learner centeredness and autonomy are substantial as individualized help may not be provided to students all the time (Cotteral, 1995). She further goes on saying that helping learners think about the different aspects of learning and put more effort and time on specific language activities than they otherwise would both encourage and inspire them. Besides, with this emphasis on learner choice, self-efficacy and self-confidence of learners are nurtured and their intrinsic motivation is fostered resulting in more long-lasting self-directed learning. As teachers share power with their students, a typical classroom turns out to be a learning community.

Pedagogical aspects of learner autonomy lie in the works of Dewey (1916), Tharp and Gallimore (1988), Barnes (1976) and Vygotsky (1986). Dewey (1916) mentions the importance of independent learners in his *Democracy and Education* and Little (1995) states that this title is no accident for autonomous learning. He further goes on that in Tharp and Gallimore (1988), we get away from "recitation scripts" to a more sound, autonomy supportive processes. On the other hand, in

Barnes (1976), action knowledge and school knowledge is compared and the relation between is explained.

Experiential learning is learning by doing and it is associated with learning experiences based on personal experiences outside classroom settings (Fleming and Walter, 2004). According to Dewey (1916), learners recognize a problem, try to solve it by developing an idea for it, work out the solution, check consequences, and confirm or change their knowledge on the issue (as cited in Fleming and Walter, 2004). Fleming and Walter (2004) go on saying that according to Dewey and Freire, learner autonomy is the key to self-actualizing and these learners are seen to be capable of transforming the society they live in.

2.3. Different Approaches to Promote Learner Autonomy

2.3.1. Resource-based Approaches

In resource-based approaches, independent study with learning resources are crucial and it is provided by enabling learners with opportunities to exercise autonomy over the planning of learning, the selection of learning materials, and the assessment of it. In resource-based approaches, learners are encouraged to develop autonomy either by the resources they have reached by themselves or by the ones their teachers have provided them. That's why learner choice is central to autonomy in this approach. Learners can learn through experimentation and discovery in this approach (Benson, 2001) and it is another contribution of this approach to learner autonomy.

Self-access centres are good examples of this approach to learner autonomy as they provide learners with various learning materials. With the help of self-access centres, learners have the chance of doing self-study with a variety of sources like audios, videos, computer workstations, software, and a variety of some printed materials. Learners can identify their needs, set learning objectives, plan their study, chose materials and activities to do, study by themselves with their own paces, and assess their own progress (Sheerin,1997). Since learners are provided with a lot of diverse opportunities to direct their own learning, a resource-based approach is influential in the development of learner autonomy. In this approach, however, although learners are provided with the opportunity to have control over their learning and to do self-study as they wish in self-access rooms,

they may not have a lot of opportunities to participate in a collaborative process of learning with their peers and teacher (Benson, 2001).

2.3.2. Technology-based Approaches

Technology-based approaches focus on technologies used to access resources in the promotion of learner autonomy. Learners are supported with learning opportunities like computer assisted language learning (CALL) and the internet so that they can make use of technology in their learning. Videos and clips produced by students, interactive videos, electronic environments for writing, advising via e-mails, and computer simulations are included in technology-based approaches. Technology-based approaches are similar to other resource-based approaches in that it also enhances learner autonomy by allowing them to practice independence with a variety of resources (Benson, 2001). Among all technology based resources, the use of internet and CALL are the most preferred ones (Yıldırım, 2014).

2.3.3. Learner-based Approaches

Unlike resource-based and technology-based approaches to learner autonomy, the focus of learner-based approach is on enabling opportunities for greater learner control. The focus of learner-based approaches is directly on the psychological and behavioural changes that will allow learners to take charge their own learning and improve themselves as learners (Benson, 2001).

In learner-based approaches, language learning strategies are emphasised. As Cohen (1998) asserts, direct guidance in learning strategies is useful for ensuring learner autonomy. As a result of this, learners are provided with strategy-based instruction and are trained in language learning strategies and techniques. This provides them with explicit experiences that will help them find the best way to learn.

2.3.4. Classroom-based Approaches

In classroom-based approaches to learner autonomy, learners are provided with opportunities which will help them make their own decisions for their own learning in a supportive and collaborative environment. The main emphasis in this approach is on the involvement of learners in the planning and assessment of the classroom learning (Benson, 2001).

Yıldırım (2012) and Asim (2013) claim that teachers who want to promote learner autonomy in their classrooms are suggested to create an autonomous learning environment by giving small responsibilities to their students and increasing the responsibility level gradually in time as there may be some students who are not quite ready for a sudden change in such a responsibility shift. Asim (2013) further suggests that teachers may involve their students more into decision processes such as allowing them to set some of the objectives, to choose some materials and to assess the course. Teachers function as guides and facilitators of learning rather than the purveyors of knowledge. As a result of having control over their learning, students can develop autonomy by exercising independence and as a result of this freedom of choice; they may be more willing to accept more responsibility at an earlier stage of a course (Benson, 2001).

2.3.5. Curriculum-based Approaches

In curriculum-based approaches to autonomy, it is desired to expand learner autonomy over the management of learning and the curriculum as a whole. The principle of learner involvement is formalized in the form of process syllabus with the idea that learners should be involved in planning of learning. In process syllabus, learners are expected to participate in the decisions related with the content and procedures of learning together with their teachers and peers (Benson, 2001).

Kristmanson et al. (2013) notes that the consideration of learners' general comments on how curriculum and instruction should be is crucial in promotion of learner autonomy and the syllabus designed accordingly should be connected to their personal interests and real life situations. Nunan (1999) claims that there needs to be mutual understanding between learners and teachers in the design of curriculum to foster learner autonomy. In process syllabus, learners are natural part of decision-making processes and they have the possibility to focus on the content by making decisions on what they are going to learn and how. When learners are actively involved in planning, their learning can be more focused and purposeful as well resulting in more effective learning and autonomy.

Dam (1995) states that in curriculum-based approaches, defining course content, selection and use of materials, position of desks and seating of students, discipline

matters, homework tasks, time, place and pace of the lessons, methodology and types of activities, and assessment are included. Brown (1995) adds to this idea by stating that learners can be involved in the curriculum design by allowing them to share their ideas on learning approaches, attitudes towards learning, learning styles, strategies used in learning, activities of learning, interaction patterns, degree of control over their learning, ways for and nature of effective learning.

2.3.6. Teacher-based Approaches

In teacher-based approaches to learner autonomy, the professional development of teachers is emphasised. Teachers are no longer passers of knowledge, but rather their identities have evolved into being facilitators, helpers, coordinators, counsellors, consultants, advisers, and resource people. Camilleri (1997) supports this view by saying that teachers are more of a manager, a resource person and a counsellor in promotion of learner autonomy.

With the help of needs analysis in both learning and language, short and long objective setting, work planning, selection of materials and organization of interactions; teachers can provide learners with help in planning and carrying out their learning autonomously by themselves and in collaboration with others. Moreover, teachers help learners assess their learning and acquire new skills and knowledge by raising their awareness of language and learning, and by providing learner training to help them identify their learning styles and strategies (Benson, 2001; Little; 2004).

As Deci & Ryan (1987) note, teachers need to provide an “autonomy supportive” learning context for students to develop learner autonomy. A controlling learning environment hinders the capacity of learners to develop learner autonomy, and thus, must be prevented. As a result, teacher-based approaches are as important as other approaches and even more important since teachers are the building blocks of teaching and learning processes in the classroom (Yıldırım, 2014). Little (2004: 2) claims that learner autonomy is seriously important and closely related with teacher autonomy and perceives it as “the mirror image” of learner autonomy. Therefore, involving students actively in learning process largely depends on the teacher’s ability to handle the roles in the classroom (Nunan, 1997).

2.4. Teacher and Learner Roles in Autonomous Learning

2.4.1. Teacher Roles

In order to promote autonomy, teachers need to put a good deal of effort in the job. When learner autonomy is mentioned, it is generally thought like it is all about ‘the learner’; however, without a teacher facilitating the process, nothing is ever enough to promote learner autonomy. Therefore, in share of responsibility, it is essential for teachers to be active in the process as well. It is claimed by Cotterall (1995) that in order to promote learner autonomy, perceptions of learners related to learner autonomy should be investigated, and learning settings should be arranged subsequently. In a similar vein, teachers’ perceptions are also essential as their thoughts will be reflected in their teaching process and students will be affected by them to a certain degree.

Yıldırım (2012) and Asim (2013) claim that teachers who want to promote learner autonomy in their classrooms are suggested to create an autonomous learning environment by giving small responsibilities to their students and increasing the responsibility level gradually in time as there may be some students who are not quite ready for a sudden change in such a responsibility shift. The researchers further suggest that teachers may involve their students more into decision processes such as allowing them to set some of the objectives, to choose some materials or to assess the course. They need to see themselves as guides and facilitators of learning rather than the purveyors of knowledge.

In order to promote learner autonomy, teachers may identify the variables in their classrooms by conducting some simple surveys, making classroom discussions, using need analysis and then they may identify specific points and set a course accordingly. What is substantial for teachers is to be able to decide where to start for change in promoting learner autonomy. Teachers need to provide an “autonomy supportive” learning context for students to develop learner autonomy since a controlling learning environment hinders the capacity of learners to develop it (Deci & Ryan, 1987).

Teachers who are supportive of autonomy need to raise learners’ sense of control over their learning processes and should not undermine the identity of learners, their capacities and possibly their motivation levels (Lamb, 2011). Demirel and

Mirici (2002) state that even an autonomous learner may not be in total control of his/her learning, and teachers need to implement their teaching according to the needs of learners both inside and outside the classroom which is, at the end, expected to result in active involvement of students in language learning process. Teachers, though, sometimes may fall in the trap of achieving good examination results, and this, in turn, may lead to an increase in their teacher control and eventually loss of learner autonomy. Teachers need to keep this variable in mind, and would not be overwhelmed by the burden of some examinations for students to pass, as, if they do not have autonomy and learn by internalizing the process, it will not be any help for examinations either.

Another point to be mentioned is that, not all learners may be ready for self-managing and self-regulating their own learning which requires teachers to offer opportunities to help them develop some necessary strategies and metacognitive processes. Such kind of training on 'learning how to learn' can be developed through a sound dialogue between learners and the teacher. Moreover, even when everything goes well, some external threats may arise from financial constraints, policy changes or from some other reasons. When such threads arise, teachers are required to find ways of protecting their learners from a possible effect, and to engage and nurture their identities as learners (Lamb, 2011). A possible increase in teacher control may result in further distraction in motivation and autonomy levels of learners, and thus need be prevented.

Pedagogies for autonomy necessitate teachers to question their roles in teaching context, what their assumptions originally are, and what probable constraints and dilemmas need to be faced both in pre and in-service teacher education (Vieira, 2009). Dam (1995) further states that a smooth move from teacher-centeredness to learner centeredness is required for fostering learner autonomy in the classroom. Teachers need to present a variety of choices to their students to choose from so that they can feel more in control of their own learning. As what students have in their mind may not be consistent with what the teacher has in mind, they need to compromise to make the most of learning context in the classroom, and most of the job is the teacher's as expected. As Mirici et al. (2013) indicates, in this process, teachers need to be sure of themselves in their teaching

abilities, as self-doubts hold may be detrimental to their teaching abilities in promotion of learner autonomy.

A teacher in support of learner autonomy needs to be intellectually motivated and professionally committed in his/ her profession to help his/ her students inquire and reflect on what they have learnt. Teacher commitment is substantial as in order for learners to develop autonomy, teacher support and facilitation are crucial. However, in a classroom context in which teacher transmits knowledge, and dominates the classroom, it gets increasingly difficult. Since learner autonomy does not mean that teacher is out of the business, it even puts more demand on the teacher to provide learners with appropriate skills for learner autonomy. Autonomy is not a product to be reached once and for all, but rather, it is a dynamic process (Candy, 1991), so it needs time and patience to develop it in learners. That's why teachers are recommended not to be discouraged after a few tries. Furthermore, individuals may differ greatly in their learning habits, needs, levels of motivation, and interests, and as a result, they may develop varying degrees of autonomy naturally (Udosen, 2014).

As Little (1991) indicates, since learners have considerable experience of institutionalized learning, they may show strong resistance to the idea of autonomy; however, teachers need to be persistent and decisive, and would not be discouraged by some first trials in search of developing learner autonomy. According to Benson (2001), in order to develop learner autonomy, students need to be given opportunities to make decisions about their own learning in a collaborative and supportive learning environment. However, as Kristmanson et al. (2013) state well-meaning efforts to develop learner autonomy may result in unanticipated and unintended results like in the study of Inozu (2011) in Turkey, in which it was reported that the teacher's efforts to promote learner autonomy in his learners were a kind of failure and disappointment for both parts. Likewise, students may get nervous and stressed with an unfamiliar increase in their responsibility and independence level; however, teachers need to be ready for this kind of reaction as it is not an easy endeavour to change certain habits of learning and it will surely take time and effort to develop autonomy in learners. In order to provide this kind of help to learners, dedicated and targeted instructional time on the development of 'learning how to learn', metacognitive strategies such as

evaluation and monitoring and coping skills for times when an unexpected situation comes up need to be taught (Kristmanson et al., 2013).

As Kelly (cited in Kristmanson et al., 2013) argues, the difference between planned curriculum and received curriculum should be paid attention to and teachers should not be just interested in delivering the planned curriculum but also check what is actually received by learners. This idea is proven in the study of Kristmanson et al. (2013), in which learners' general comments focus on how curriculum and instruction should be connected to their personal interests and real life situations. Teachers' rush to catch up with the planned curriculum may hinder the development of learner autonomy because of increased teacher domination with the concern to keep up with the curriculum. Teachers need to be relieved and not to be stressed by administrations of schools. They may further use authentic texts to create real-life situations and enable relatedness for students to connect their classroom learning with real life.

If teachers differentiate the learning context and add more enjoyable and different activities for the same subjects learned before, it can be more motivating and autonomy supportive for learners. Kohonen (2012) stresses the meaningful and experiential learning are the focal points for teachers who intend to build learner autonomy. Kristmanson et al. (2013) also state that to enable learners to value self-assessment and also to teach them how to self- assess themselves are necessary for autonomous development of learners. They further state that it is important to explore and learn digital means more, and it is especially important for being able to reach the digital native students of this age.

According to Spratt et al. (2002), teachers need to build their teaching activities on the ones that learners have already engaged in, rather than the ones that will require them to change their attitudes and behaviours; however, always having students in the same way they have been accustomed to will not widen their perceptive and will cause them to insist on their ill-habits if they have any. Moreover, this kind of attitude that will bring nothing new to the classroom may bore some students as they will probably perceive these activities the same and all over again. However, Spratt et al. (2002) are not totally wrong as when moving from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness, these kinds of familiar activities will help students have a supportive environment in which there is

nothing new or threatening to them. Another point is that, Nunan (1997) focuses on five steps to promote learner autonomy which are 'raising awareness' of learners, 'involving' them in selecting their goals, having them 'intervene' in to modify their goals according to the rising needs of their programme, enabling them to 'create' their own learning materials and lastly 'transcendence' which means enabling learners to go beyond their roles as learners and participate in the learning process as teachers and share their experiences with other learners.

Since learners' beliefs about themselves and their learning may be based on invalid assessments, to help them know their underlying beliefs can be of help to prepare them for learner autonomy. Since learner confidence goes hand in hand with academic achievement and is a characteristic of autonomous learners, teachers need to create a learning environment that considers affective sides of learning. Teachers further need to support and facilitate learners even when they encounter such experiences that will cause them to lose confidence and enthusiasm. Since learning a language is a long way, there will certainly be times learners need this kind of support. Moreover, learners' previous experiences may hinder their further achievement as they are reflected in the beliefs of learners, and inhibit their confidence leading them to draw back from taking initiatives and even to give up learning the language altogether. Teachers, that's why, need to detect these myths that learners have for themselves and remedy them.

Benson (2010) indicates in his study that teachers complain from mandated English curriculum, the pressures put by examination system, the culture of schools, high workload and their students in their struggle to promote learner autonomy. However, as cited in Benson (2010), Breen (2007) recommends that teachers will either perceive themselves as teachers of language unconnected to wider social, cultural and political processes and further contribute to marginalization of their profession or they will accept responsibility of their role and confront the possibilities for betterment of the intercultural work they do. That's why, it is suggested to act against possible constraints however hindering they may be, and to work towards developing learner autonomy with a consideration of the process and cultural, psychological, sociological and pedagogical factors. Benson (2010) maintains that teachers are required to acquire a degree of freedom from these constraints which they may confront frequently, in order to do

their work effectively and in a more autonomous way because, he continues, more professional capacity is parallel to the idea of promoting learner autonomy.

Gipps (2002) notes that sharing learning goals and learning criteria with learners gives them experience in self-assessment and helps them be more self-regulated and autonomous learners (as cited in Willis, 2011). Willis (2011) states that AfL (assessment for learning) practices help learners form an autonomous identity for themselves and provide them a feeling of belonging to classroom community in which they practice. Since AfL means the evaluative practices conducted in everyday classroom settings to enable deeper insight of learning processes, it is suggested that it can be used to enhance learner autonomy by teachers (Willis, 2011). It includes formal checks for comprehension of learners and peer and self-assessments, and these kinds of assessment help learners reflect on what they have done and learned further promoting learner autonomy. Chan (2003: 49) concludes the process of support by teachers that teachers who want their students to be autonomous “have to learn ‘let go’” after they have created an autonomy supportive environment for learners, and wait for the results constantly assessing the process.

2.4.2. Learner Roles

Kenny (1993) points out that in order for education to take place, autonomy has to be allowed to function. He further states that where autonomy is not provided and ignored, learners have no say and no being in education which, in this case, makes education just a conditioning procedure and some kind of imposition of a dominant opinion. He concludes that education needs to enable learners with autonomy allowing them to interpret the world and to have the possibility to change it autonomously. From this point of view, it can be concluded that after they go through the process of education, learners are expected to come out of it as autonomous, life-long learners who know how responsible they are for carrying on learning for a lifetime. For this aim, learners need to assume responsibility for and to take charge of their own learning by searching for the ways to develop themselves. Little (1995) states that in their struggle for learner autonomy, learners first need to recognize their responsibility for their learning. Then, he further goes on, they exercise this responsibility with their involvement in all aspects of learning from planning, implementing to assessing. Dam (1995) states that in order for

learners to develop learner autonomy, they need to put a never-ending effort to comprehend the why, the what and the how of their learning processes.

According to Cotterall (1995) self-monitoring behaviour is one of the characteristics of autonomous students and achievers. She further states that autonomous learners possibly share a general understanding of the language learning process and a clear and specific understanding of the role of the feedback. These learners seek feedback not only from their teachers but also from other sources in their reach as well to be able to have a clearer insight on their learning processes. Furthermore, Cotterall (1995) states that these learners are willing to set goals and to take risks which are both crucial in language learning.

Ho and Crookall (1995) state that learners who want to develop autonomy need time management skills and they need to have the capacity to cope with stress and other negative affective factors that may arise and interfere with learning. They further note that, these learners should learn to be self-motivated and self-disciplined. Chan (2001) reports in her study that, autonomous learners are highly motivated, goal oriented, well organized, hard-working, initiative, enthusiastic about learning, willing to ask questions, active, flexible and in favour of taking every opportunity to learn and improve. Lastly, Benson (2001) expresses that one of the important features of an autonomous learner is the ability to work collaboratively and individually and supporting this further with computer-based techniques.

2.5. Learner Autonomy and Language Learning Strategies

Learners need to be equipped with training on learning strategies to be supported in their development of autonomy. Cohen (1998) claims that direct guidance in learning strategies may prove to be useful for ensuring learner autonomy. Learners bring their own individual characteristics, attributions, experiences, perceptions on both themselves and learning to learning context. All these factors may in turn reflect how they perceive learning and what kind of strategies they apply to each learning situation either consciously or unconsciously. Learners use a variety of strategies to make sense of the world they experience (Williams and Burden, 1997). What teachers with autonomy in mind need to ensure is to help

learners be aware of themselves as learners, understand their circumstances and act accordingly with assessing all the process at the end to start afresh.

Knowles (1975) states that for learners to be life-long learners who carry on their learning throughout their lives and to be self-directed in this way is one of the main aims of education. Language learner strategies (LLS), thus, play an increasingly important part in an autonomous classroom environment. For learners to be more autonomous, efficient use of strategies is a requirement. LLS have the potential to enhance proficiency, independent learning and self-regulation of learners. What learners do rather than what the language is has been a central issue in LLS. While LLS are an important part of learning, they are not a common feature of classroom teaching (Beckman, 2002) either because teachers are not aware of these strategies and how they can be implemented in classrooms or either because they find it hard to find time with fixed syllabi to be applied. Some EFL Instructors claim that class time is never enough for such 'additional instruction' like strategy teaching (personal conversation) seeing strategy instruction as something to be taught separately while it is just the contrary.

LLSs have been studied nearly for the last 30 years now (Cohen and Macaro, 2007). Since the study of Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975), learner strategy research has gained momentum in applied linguistics enquiry. The first major improvement in the field came when researchers tried to discover what more successful learners did. More recent work, however, has focused on more specific examples of strategic deployment of certain tasks and skills in the context. Basic research has targeted how strategies are developed as complex cognitive skills. LLS have been described as behaviour patterns, specific actions and some specific techniques deployed by learners to improve their learning (Scarcella and Oxford, 1992). As researchers agree that the use of strategies positively affects learning results, there is still lack of agreement on what exactly constitutes a learner strategy. While this lack of consensus still exists, it is also acknowledged that learner strategy is a multidimensional and active, a still-evolving-construct. Researchers have similar ideas on that the effective use of strategies can increase learner performance in language learning (Cohen, 2007). It is also a much debated issue if the use of strategies is conscious or not and if yes to what extent it is so (Kirsch, 2012).

LLS research focuses on the decision-making processes of learners and behaviours involving these decisions to maximize learning results. In order to understand LLS better, it is suggested to understand the context in which the behaviour takes place. It is particularly important to understand the dimensions within strategy employment as learners' strategic behaviour has the capacity to improve their learning processes and to result in ultimate attainment. A strategy, therefore, can be counted as a sort of activity which learners deploy in response to problems when and where they arise. These types of problems may be confronted within the discourse, social context or in learners' thoughts or in all of them (Grenfell and Macaro, 2007).

Teaching of strategies can be as problematic as teaching of other skills as they still need to be learnt and used. Learning strategies are also difficult to observe which adds to its problematic nature. Strategies are also accepted to be personal in nature, as one strategy can be deployed differently by different learners in the same context. Moreover, they are just as prone as other aspects of language to some factors like level of competence, motivation levels of learners, how autonomous they are, their genders and cognitive styles. While teaching strategies, instructors have to keep every variable in their mind to achieve a good level of success on strategy training. Failure in language classrooms can be avoided by taking the differences in cognitive processing of learners into account. In this way, success can be ensured in classrooms with greater degrees of differentiation and with involving autonomy (Reiss, 1981). It is concluded by Alvermann and Phelps (1983) that achievers not only use more strategies but they also deploy more sophisticated strategies when compared to underachievers. It is also concluded that motivated and autonomous learners are more self-regulated, thus more successful in adopting strategies particularly the ones involving planning, evaluation and monitoring (Jones, Palinscar, Ogle and Carr, 1987).

The broad claims made by researchers in field are summarized by Grenfell and Macaro (2007) as follows: The strategies, which are defined as a construct and accepted to be described in practical terms and used by learners, are accessible and can be documented. Strategies are important because they are thought to be deployed by achievers. Some learner types are thought to be more likely to use strategies and to use them more successfully than other types of learners. Lastly,

strategies can be taught to learners, which is expected to result in more strategic behaviour of learners.

As for teaching of learner strategies, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) summarise some points. They suggest helping learners identify and realise strategies that they already deploy, then introducing a new strategy and a reason why to use that. Subsequently, there comes the practising of the strategy with scaffolding on the part of the teacher with systematic reduce to encourage autonomous use. Finally students are helped to assess their overall success. Teachers can also help learners transfer acquired strategies to different situations and contexts. Autonomy should be gradually transferred to learners in the teaching of strategies as final aim is to have self-directed students regulating and assessing their own strategy use.

Williams and Burden (1997) assert that for effective teaching of strategies, teachers need to be good mediators together with other titles such as advisors, facilitators, consultants, co-communicators, partners and problem-solving partners to their students. They further claim that teachers' attitudes towards the value of learner strategies is vital as they will underline everything teachers do and will also inform learners about the value of strategies through the eyes of their teachers. Teachers' point of view affects how the curriculum is delivered too; therefore, teachers' practices and perception on learner strategy are very important in the process. They are required to be sensitive to the ways their learners learn and their attitudes towards their learning experiences of strategies. Their feedback is also very crucial and needs to be taken into account for a more effective strategy use in the context. As practical experience combined with theory maximizes learning, it is also important to model some strategies for learners to acquire them better.

Strategies are accepted to be particularly important in an autonomous class as they help learners achieve more autonomously by themselves. If learners know how to use strategies, and have the strategic behaviour, they are expected to achieve more as autonomous learners.

As told earlier, the classification of strategies has been problematic since the early days of the field. There is still no consensus on what a strategy exactly is and how it can be classified with certain terms; however, Rubin's (1981, 1987) classification

has been largely acknowledged and successors have mainly traced this way and further developed it (Oxford, 1990). Here, in order to give a general overview on specific strategies, this categorisation will be followed, after a more specific focus on what strategy-based instruction is.

2.5.1. Strategy-based Instruction

In the previous section, it has been explained what strategy instruction is and how teachers need to train their students in using strategies. Here, a more focused view on SBI has been taken over. In the early 1970s, language learners were realized that they were not just passive receivers of knowledge, but rather they actively constructed knowledge with meaningful experiences. While at the first hand, it was just the identification of some specific structures, later, in order to maximize learners' potential and to contribute to their autonomy more, it went on with the training of strategies (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2011).

Rubin et al. (as cited in Cohen and Macaro, 2007) have identified four core components of SBI model which are awareness raising, presentation and modelling, providing multiple practice opportunities, evaluating the effectiveness of strategies and transferring them into new learning tasks. In order for strategies to be taught successfully, some researchers stress the importance of context-specific teacher training for SBI (Chamot and Rubin, 1994). Thus, firstly, to equip teachers with appropriate skills for strategies to be taught effectively can be viewed as an important part of SBI.

As for a more specific definition, strategy-based instruction (SBI) is an approach which focuses on the teaching of strategies incorporating it with the actual language curriculum. Strategy training is the most cited area for proof on the effectiveness of learner autonomy (Nguyen and Gu, 2013). Learner-based approaches help learners be equipped with specific skills and strategies which enable them to catch up with learning opportunities they encounter. Some of the studies conducted in this vein focus on improving students' metacognition and self-regulation skills while some other focus on comprehensive training packages, metacognitive management of learning and analysis of tasks (Nguyen and Gu, 2013).

Nguyen and Gu (2013) conclude from their study that after strategy training, there were improvements in the self-regulation of their students. As for learner autonomy, features of strategies helped learners be more self-directed to take control of their learning. The students, they further explain, were found to improve their ability to self-regulate for a writing task. They claim that self-regulation can be taught to students for learner autonomy. Goh and Taib (2006) also found a positive relationship between metacognition instruction and increased learning achievement, while Butler (1997) (as cited in Nguyen and Gu, 2013) confirmed in his study that learners' patterns of attribution, self-monitoring and perception on their self-efficacy improved with assisted strategy instruction.

Learner strategy training seems to be effective to foster successful language learning when it is carried out over lengthy periods of time and with a more focus on metacognition (Macaro, 2006). According to Kirsch (2012), the aim of strategy instruction is learner autonomy. She asserts that metacognitive knowledge and the effective use of metacognitive strategies are required for learner autonomy. When it is handled so, teachers' role is added up to, and in order to promote their learners' overall learning, they need to teach both metacognitive and cognitive strategies alongside social and affective strategies for learners to handle some aspects of language learning. Research into learner autonomy has proven that learning contexts which give learners control over their learning encourage self-assessment and reflection on acquired knowledge (Dam, 1995). Carrell (1998) points out that successful use and instruction of strategies are context-dependent; as a result of this, effective SBI happens in a context in which strategies are taught and used. Now, the types of strategies will be looked upon.

2.5.2. Cognitive Strategies

It is known from cognitive psychology that learners are not merely passive receivers of knowledge; rather they construct the knowledge themselves through various complex processes onwards. Cognitive strategies are mental processes to obtain, store, retrieve and use information with the final aim of learning. These strategies are believed to have a direct impact on language learning. Oxford (1990) asserts that cognitive strategies are mental and they help learners to make sense of their learning experiences. According to Oxford (1990) some cognitive

strategies are practising, receiving and sending messages, analysing and reasoning and creating structure for input and output.

Wenden (1991) defines cognitive strategies as mental steps and operations learners deploy to internalize both linguistic and social content. When confronted with a learning task, learners make use of different resources at their reach and deploy them in different ways to do tasks (Williams and Burden, 1997). Cognitive strategies are partly as a result of the impetus for people to think, to learn and to solve problems they encounter every day in learning environments. According to Williams and Burden (1997), this impetus has arisen mainly from information-processing models of learning.

Since learners make use of their existing knowledge, experiences and perceptions in the process of learning, their learned behaviours are also very important in the use of strategies. In order for cognitive strategies to be deployed effectively, however, a higher degree of strategies at meta level is needed.

2.5.3. Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies can be defined as bird's eye view, as they require an awareness of all strategies and one's own self. According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), metacognitive strategies involve processes like planning, prioritising, setting goals and self-management. Oxford (1990) further examines metacognitive strategies as centring, learning, arranging, planning and evaluating one's own learning.

Wenden and Rubin (1987) believe that one of the ultimate goals of learner strategies is to provide learners with an autonomous character in order for them to have appropriate skills and strategies to learn what they need to learn in a self-directed way. Oxford (1990) further discusses that metacognitive strategies help learners regulate their own learning. Metacognitive strategies are one category of other strategies that help learners to achieve this goal. Metacognition which underlies metacognitive strategies is seen essential to learning and it includes knowledge of the self of the learner.

Quicke (1994) claims that there is no distinction between cognition and emotion. He observes education as the development of whole persons who are metacognitively aware, self-directed and autonomous learners. In a similar vein, it

can be concluded that metacognitive awareness is a requirement in learning to regulate learning. The regulatory skills which are needed to regulate learning are also accepted as a part of metacognition which, as a result, makes metacognitive strategies especially important in terms of learner autonomy.

Learners employing metacognitive strategies have the ability to manage and regulate strategies consciously at their disposal for their ultimate purposes (Williams and Burden, 1997). Metacognitive strategies indicate an awareness of one's own learning process from beginning to the end. This is particularly important as autonomous learners need to lead the process of learning from beginning to the end with continual assessment of every stage consciously. Learners need to use right strategy at the right moment and assess whether it is successful or not. Seeing that effective use of strategies is promoted by metacognitive awareness, it gets more important for learners to use metacognitive strategies for the overall success of all strategies used. Self-regulation is a frequently mentioned concept in metacognitive strategies. It involves the development of learning strategies and metacognition with the aim of enhancing the process and the outcome of learning (Lamb, 2006).

2.5.4. Social and Affective Strategies

Learning a language is more different in nature than learning other subjects because of its characteristics which include social and communicative nature in itself. While learning a language, learners also learn how to communicate with people using that language, and this, in turn, requires not just cognitive and metacognitive skills, but social and affective skills as well. As Rubin (1975) puts it, social and affective strategies result in an indirect effect to learning while other two types of strategies may have a more direct effect in learning. However, this indirectness does not mean that social and affective strategies should be neglected, on the contrary; they should be focused more on to enable learners with the appropriate means to use language better in specific contexts.

According to Oxford (1990), aim of learning strategies is the development of communicative competence. She further claims that learners need to develop communicative competence both to initiate conversations and to construct their inner language system. As for affective and social strategies, Oxford (1990)

explains that affective strategies are concerned with learners' affective requirements such as confidence, self-efficacy, while social strategies ensure learners with an increased interaction in the target language.

Social and affective strategies are particularly important as it is now known that there is a strong link between cognition and emotions. Gardner and MacIntyre (1992) support that affective factors are probably more powerful in affecting strategy use compared to aptitude and intelligence. They further claim that even the use of cognitive strategies is very much affected by affective conditions. Illeris (2002) similarly claims that there is a continuous learning interaction between cognition, emotion and social context. They are also used by learners to overcome the difficulties they encounter which stem from the lack of knowledge of the target language when they communicate. Some of the specific strategies in this category are initiating conversations in the target language, watching foreign films and reading books in the foreign language, clarification requests and cooperation with peers. Oxford (1990) further explains some of social and affective strategies as lowering one's anxiety, encouraging oneself, taking one's emotional temperature, asking questions, co-operating and empathising with others.

2.6. Some Concepts in relation to Learner Autonomy

2.6.1. Culture and Learner Autonomy

It has been supported for long that autonomy is in close relation with culture. Cameron (1990) claims that educational background and culture are in relation with each other and they contribute to learners' beliefs about the roles they think they should play. Every culture has its norms and learning is a culturally contextualized activity which is shaped by the society in which learning takes place. For this reason, no learning and classroom setting can be thought apart from culture as it leaves its fingerprint and shapes society. Little (1995) supports that learners are not just inborns, yet they are shaped by the developmental and experiential learning resulting in individual cognitive styles which are culturally determined. So, learners cannot be thought separately from the culture they are raised in, and when it comes to autonomy, it is still the same.

According to Yıldırım (2012), learners of a particular culture may not be as ready for learner autonomy as learners of another culture. He further states that the

cultural and educational settings in which the instruction takes place influence how teachers and learners individualize the process in terms of learner autonomy which results in the perception of autonomy both in the eyes of learners and teachers. How parts perceive the process is particularly important as perceptions result in practical outcomes in the long run. Holliday (2003) and Littlewood (1999) similarly claim that learner autonomy can be interpreted differently by different cultures and educational settings which adds to the problem of subjectivity of the concept. Since every educational setting has its characteristics and dynamics in itself, the way how learners and teachers perceive autonomy may change accordingly. In order to promote autonomy, for this reason, it is essential to understand the culture and background of learners and teachers.

Ho and Crookall (1995) also support the view that learner autonomy is exercised within the context of specific cultures no matter how universally desirable and beneficial an objective it is. For this reason, they support the view that the culturally-constructed nature of classroom settings should be taken into account from choosing the skills and knowledge to be taught and developed to selecting procedures and methods used to help learners develop autonomy. In a similar vein, Al Asmari (2013) identifies that lessons and instructions should be designed according to the levels of learners and their aptitude and interests should be taken into account in doing this. This is particularly important as including learners in the context of learning is always related with the culture of the society, students and the classroom. Without taking these variables into account, an effective learning environment may not be created. It is now known for long that catching students' attention is vital for including them in the process and culture plays active role in this. Teachers who want to develop and sustain autonomy in their students need to keep culture as an important variable in their classes.

In the literature, there is a differentiation between Western and Eastern cultures mainly referring to the first as more capable for autonomy while referring to the second as more prone to passivity without much capability for developing autonomy. Some researchers like Halley (1999) support that learner autonomy and self-directed learners are Western concepts and are not suited to Eastern cultures. However, O'Donnell et al. (2013) suggests that autonomy is not a Western or individualistic view of the World, yet it is in harmony with the values of

collectivistic and interdependent cultures. Holliday (2003) supports this view by noting that everybody can be autonomous in their way, and there is no one way to be autonomous. If it is accepted that autonomy takes different forms for different individuals, thus cultures, and even different for the same learner in different context of learning, it is also required to be accepted that the manifestations of autonomy will vary according to cultural context (Benson, 2001).

Holiday (2003: 118) emphasizes 'social autonomy' approach and further states that teachers can prevent 'culturism' in autonomy by not beginning their autonomy promotion in their classrooms with a certain description of autonomy from a Western point of view and not assuming that it is a Western notion; by distancing themselves a little bit away from native-speakerism of TESOL professionalism and try to search for students' own worlds and what they bring with them to learning settings; and lastly, by assuming that autonomy is a universal concept and everybody in every culture is capable of developing learner autonomy.

Van Leeuwen (2007) similarly asserts that capabilities, language and behaviours that are related with the role of autonomous learner are situated in the culture and are comprehended within that specific culture (as cited in Willis, 2011). In some cultures, it seems natural for students to think that the teachers are in charge of the classroom. However, this is not the case naturally, as learning is mostly individual although it takes place in a collaborative environment. As Sakai et al. (2010)'s study proves, students who feel responsible for their own learning also feel responsibility for both their past and future learning as well.

2.6.2. Motivation and Learner Autonomy

Like autonomy, motivation is also a concept which changes over time, depends on the context in which it is performed and is socially mediated (Murray, 2011). Dickinson (1995) states that learner autonomy and learners' active involvement as a result of it increases motivation to learn and consequently, enables a more effective learning. According to Little (2002), learner autonomy naturally solves the problem of learner motivation. This idea is formed because autonomous learners get intrinsically motivated when they take on responsibility for their own learning. It is seen like a cycle in which motivation brings success and in turn success brings motivation which all these promote autonomy in language learning.

Karababa et al. (2010) advocate that autonomous learners are motivated and reflective which makes their learning more effective and efficient. Little (2002) further goes on that this motivational characteristic of autonomous learners enables them to carry out their knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom settings to outside the classroom. This transfer and application of learned skills in classroom settings to outside, in 'real life' situations is what is actually desired in language teaching.

Gao (2010) notes that autonomous learners can maintain their language learning with high motivation and they know what works for learning and what strategies can help them achieve their objectives. Motivated students are also more willing and aware of their progress enabling them to assess their evaluation better. Learner autonomy certainly requires this kind of assessment on the part of the learner. A learner who is active in all phases of learning a language is autonomously conditioned and this kind of act necessitates a certain degree of motivation by nature.

Dörnyei (1998) who is a prominent figure in the study of motivation includes the promotion of learner autonomy as its seventh commandment. Van Lier (2007), who supports that autonomy and motivation are the two sides of the same coin claims that agency should be put at the centre of the learning process. He further proceeds that learners need to work cooperatively to construct projects and to shape their paths of learning by themselves step by step. Here, it can be inferred that, as stated before, autonomy is not individualism but rather a collective procedure for learners to create their own meaning together with others.

Ushioda (2011) recommends that the motivation and identity of people improve in co-constructed processes when the context of learning fosters autonomy in the form of choice, social participation and negotiation. Autonomy and motivation are closely related to a strong L2 self which constitutes an aim to be reached for teachers. Lamb (2011) extends this idea by saying that learners' identity as individuals are very important, since it is closely related to their motivation to learn. However, their identity is challenged when teacher control increases and learner autonomy decreases subsequently. Lamb (2011) has further stated teacher control may be increased as a result of examinations and external pressures put. These all cause loss of motivation in learners and harms autonomy. So, for learners to

develop intrinsic motivation, they need to have control over what they do, and they need to have the opportunity to relate it with the other aspects of their lives (Lamb, 2011). This relatedness is especially important as it is central to motivation.

As Ustunoglu's study (2009) finds, some students may perceive themselves as motivated, yet they may not participate in activities outside the classroom nor may they be willing for this. It indicates that they lack the training to match their motivation. The value or attractiveness of the learning activity for learners is another thing that promotes motivation, so raising learner interest on learner activities can be of help to teachers in promotion of motivation (Porto, 2007).

Deci et al. (1991) note that students who are highly motivated and autonomous are able to get more autonomy support from their teachers while less motivated and less autonomous students elicit more controlling behaviours from their teachers. It can be inferred from here that in order for teachers to give more autonomy support to their less motivated and less autonomous students, there needs to be some further study because rather than giving more support for students who are already autonomous, other less autonomous students need to receive support from their teachers and this needs be provided in classrooms for autonomy promotion.

Since internally motivated learners are known to perform deep information processing, they are expected to be more autonomous in their actions when compared to their externally motivated peers. As cited in Madjar et al. (2013) providing challenging and relevant tasks, giving constructive feedback, providing chances for choice in what and how they learn and showing genuine affection together with strong collaboration are said to lead more self-controlling and internal motivation (Assor and Kaplan, 2001; Black and Deci, 2000; Reeve, 2006). On the other hand, as Chan (2003) states, reliance on teacher domination, didactic methods of teaching, stress on discipline and appropriate behaviour and external examinations have diminishing effects in terms of motivation on learner autonomy, and thus, it can be concluded that they must be prevented in an autonomy supportive classroom.

2.7. Studies related to Perception and Practices on Learner Autonomy

2.7.1. Studies Abroad

There are lots of qualitative, quantitative and mixed method studies conducted on the perception of both learners and teachers abroad and in Turkey. In this section, studies conducted abroad are touched upon. In one of them, Yıldırım (2012), studied with four 20 to 22 year-old male Indian students who were studying civil or computer engineering at a university in the USA. A qualitative study was conducted by interviewing with the participants in 2006. As for the analysis of the data, three main categories were identified which were the aspects of language learning that the teacher had more responsibility, the aspects of language learning that the student had more responsibility and the aspects of language learning that the teacher and students shared responsibility.

Results of Yıldırım's study (2012) revealed that students generally considered the teacher as the main figure in language classroom. They further stated that the ideal teacher they had in their mind was everything in the class who knew everything, told what to do, where they were wrong and what they could do for that. Certainly such teacher-dependency is far from creating an autonomous learning environment for these students; however, it is vital to learn what learners' perceptions are to enable them to direct their views more on autonomy. That these students are higher education students makes the situation even more complex as it means until then, through all those educational steps, they were either not encouraged to be autonomous or they were not able to do so; in both cases which results in lack of autonomy.

These students further stated that correcting grammar mistakes, ensuring accuracy, planning the course, setting the objective of the course, deciding on the course content, activities and evaluating the course were the issues teachers had more responsibility on than students themselves. On the other hand, they further acknowledged that deciding on what to learn outside the classroom and evaluating what had been learned were the areas that they were more responsible than the teacher. Lastly, the areas of language learning that both teacher and students shared responsibility were stated by students as increasing students' interests to language learning and making sure students improved in language learning

process. In terms of what teachers could do to raise interest in their students, they answered that the teacher should provide them with interesting, enjoyable and meaningful ways of language learning.

From this study, Yıldırım (2012) concludes that for teachers who want to promote learner autonomy in their students, these results may indicate that some of their students may not be quite ready for a sudden responsibility change if they have not practiced it until then and because they think the teacher has the absolute responsibility on areas from planning learning to assessing it. He suggests that to create autonomous learning environments, teachers may think of a gradual shift of responsibility to students rather than a rapid change. He adds that by giving small responsibilities at first and then increasing this level of responsibility slowly in time will be better for students who are not accustomed to autonomous learning. He further recommends that teachers may also involve their students more in teaching and learning process by allowing them to set some objectives, to choose some of the materials and to evaluate the course. He indicates that past learning habits of learners may still influence them in their further studies, so sometimes it may take time to change these established habits which requires autonomy supporting teachers to be a little bit more patient sometimes.

Shahsavari (2014) conducted a study with the same instrument adopted from Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) as in this study, yet she included learner views as well in order to make a comparison between learners' and teachers' perception. The results found in this study indicated that all teachers and learners agreed that learner autonomy enhanced language learning, and learner autonomy had a positive effect on being an achiever. Moreover, almost all teacher participants, she reports, agreed that learner autonomy was more desirable than it was feasible, yet an interesting point is that, learners perceived themselves more positively on the feasibility of learner autonomy than teachers themselves. The reason for this difference, the researcher stated, was as a result of the information gathered from interviews later on, and was because teachers and learners perceived learner autonomy differently. However, she did not define in her study what these differences in perception were.

In Shahsavari's study (2014), teachers also stated that learners did not take responsibility for their learning and did not act autonomously because of the fact

that they thought their teachers were the main figure in classrooms and the main role in learning was theirs. If teachers tried to hand over some of the responsibilities in the classroom, she went on, learners thought that those teachers were not active, well experienced teachers and that's why they were trying to give their responsibilities to learners. Here, it can be seen that, classroom culture and dynamics in the society play a crucial role in perceptions of both teachers and learners. The last point in the same study was that, some teachers stated that they were not allowed to be creative in their teaching, and that's why, in order not to have any problems with the administration, they followed the rules. As stated before in this study, if teacher autonomy is not provided, there is little room for learner autonomy to be developed, and Shahsavar's study (2014) also proves this observation.

In her study Camilleri (1999) investigated 328 teachers' views on learner autonomy and carried out the study with teachers from Malta, The Netherlands, Belorussia, Poland, Estonia and Slovenia. The questionnaire she applied consisted of 13 items and teachers' view on in what areas and to what extent learners should be involved in decisions was asked. Her study revealed that teachers were willing to change and to develop practice for learner autonomy; they supported involving learner autonomy in material selection, areas of classroom management, learning strategies and styles; however, they were reluctant to involve learners in defining aims and in methodological decisions; they found it hard to encourage and to develop learner autonomy and to provide more learner choice because of constraints they were confronted from higher authorities.

Another study is Chan's (2003) in which she searched teachers' perspectives on learner autonomy in Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Results of her study indicate that teachers felt that main responsibility for methodological decisions were theirs, they were quite positive about learner autonomy as a teaching goal and students' right to make decisions for their own learning. On the other hand, however, they stated that they were restricted by curriculum constraints and time management problems to catch up with the curriculum and that's why, they did not provide learners with opportunities to develop decision-making skills and to develop autonomously. Another interesting point in Chan's study (2003) is that,

teachers who perceived their students as less capable felt more responsibility and gave less autonomy support increasing their controlling behaviours.

And lastly, Al Asmari (2013) conducted a study at Taif University English Language Center to find out teachers' practices and prospects of learner autonomy in their classrooms. The sample group in the study consisted of 60 teachers teaching English to students at university level. It is indicated in this study that it is important to provide students with learner training and to make it an integral part of teaching to develop autonomy in learners.

2.7.2. Studies in Turkey

There are some specific studies carried in Turkey on learner autonomy with both learner and teacher dimensions studied. In one of them, Karababa et al. (2010) conducted a study with a group of adult learners who were learning Turkish as a foreign language at a language school. 159 learners who studied Turkish during the period of November-December 2009 constituted the study group. There are some results worth attention for this study one of which is that 30% of the students stated that they had no idea what studying independently of the teacher was. Another interesting point is that students responded the expression of "expecting the teacher's evaluation" with a high percentage of "yes" an item which demonstrated how teacher-dependent the group of students were. Students in this study also stated that they would not want to be evaluated by their peers but by their teachers instead. Researchers, then, conclude from these findings that their students were not autonomous, especially in self-assessment and peer-assessment. Finally, they verify the idea that the reason why students left the responsibility of organizing, monitoring and assessing their learning to teacher was because they were not familiar with autonomy and had not been encouraged to be autonomous by then.

Balçıkkanlı (2010) also studied views and beliefs of 112 student EFL teachers at a university in Turkey and interviewed with 20 of them in focus groups. The results of his study suggest that student teachers thought positively for learner autonomy, they were positive about involving students in decisions about classroom activities while they were less positive about involving them in decisions about when or where lessons should be done.

Ürün et al. (2014) conducted another study to identify the practices of EFL high school teachers to promote learner autonomy and it was revealed in the study that teachers were strongly motivated to foster learner autonomy through some activities such as activity-based practices, material-based practices, student-centred practices and objective-based practices. The results further indicated that there were some problems in the promotion of learner autonomy which stemmed from motivation levels of students, lack of facilities in language learning settings and relations of teachers and the administration.

In her study, Yıldırım (2014) applied the same instrument applied in this study from Borg and Al Busaidi (2012) to 64 EFL Instructors at School of Foreign Languages in one of Turkish Universities. She found out in her study that the instructors had positive dispositions and different perspectives on learner autonomy. They supported involving their learners in the learning process and they believed that their learners should take the responsibility of their own learning. They stated that they generally promoted learner autonomy with their learners; however, they were negative about their learners' efforts on the development of autonomy.

In another study, Özdere (2005) conducted a study with 72 EFL Instructors in 6 different public Turkish universities. Results of the study revealed that participating instructors were neutral to slightly positive towards learner autonomy and as for the implementation of learner autonomy; they considered some areas of teaching and learning as more applicable than others. The results of the study also indicate that depending upon the facilities they were provided in their universities and the opportunities for authentic language use in learning settings, the attitudes of the instructors towards learner autonomy changed.

2.8. Conclusion

In this chapter the literature on learner autonomy in language education were reviewed. Origins of learner autonomy, misconceptions related to learner autonomy and characteristics of autonomous learner were studied in the first part. Then, historical and theoretical backgrounds to learner autonomy were studied. After different approaches to learner autonomy were reviewed, roles of teachers and learners in learner autonomy were examined. Language learning strategies and culture and motivation in relation to learner autonomy were reviewed

subsequently. This chapter was completed after the studies related to learner autonomy were reviewed.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study was conducted to investigate the perception and practices of EFL Instructors on learner autonomy. The data for the study were collected from nine geographically diverse, demographically similar public universities in Turkey. This particular group of sample was targeted because EFL Instructors' perception and practices in all different geographical regions needed to be searched for in order to gain a deeper and better insight of the issue. As for the collection of the data, both a questionnaire and interviews were used as data collection instruments.

Mixed methods approach was adopted for the study to better understand what teachers' perception and practices on learner autonomy were and how they could be investigated more. The rationale for such a research design was to provide a deeper comprehension for and to triangulate quantitative data with qualitative data collected. Kagan (1992) indicates that, in questionnaire responses, teachers' unconscious beliefs may not be expressed and their responses to short answer questionnaires may be influenced by social desirability factor. To eliminate these problems, and to have a deeper understanding on teachers' beliefs, mixed methods approach in which qualitative and quantitative data support each other was used in the study.

In this study, the following research questions were studied:

1. What are the perceptions of EFL Instructors on learner autonomy at Ankara, Amasya Sakarya, Uluda , Erzincan, Gaziantep, Gazi, Mehmet Akif Ersoy and U ak Universities in Turkey?
2. To what extent, according to the EFL Instructors, does learner autonomy contribute to L2 learning?
3. How desirable and feasible do EFL Instructors feel it is to promote learner autonomy?
4. To what extent do EFL Instructors feel their learners are autonomous?

5. To what extent do EFL Instructors say they actually promote learner autonomy?

3.2. Setting

The study was conducted at School of Foreign Languages of Ankara, Amasya Sakarya, Uluda , Erzincan, Gaziantep, Gazi, Mehmet Akif Ersoy and U ak Universities in Turkey in the second term of 2014-2015 academic year. Ankara and Gazi Universities are located in Ankara, the capital city of Turkey. Since there are more students in this city and accordingly more EFL Instructors, two universities were included in the study for Central Anatolia. Amasya University is in Amasya and was included for Black Sea Region, Sakarya University and Uluda Universities were included for Marmara Region with the same reason for the universities in Central Anatolia, and with more than one university, it was aimed to reach a wider group of EFL Instructors in Marmara as it is the most populated region of Turkey. The cities are located in Sakarya and Bursa respectively. Erzincan University was included in the study for Eastern Anatolia Region, and it is in Erzincan. Gaziantep University which is in Gaziantep was included in the study for South-eastern Anatolia. Mehmet Akif Ersoy University is located in Burdur, and was included in the study for Mediterranean Region, and lastly U ak University is in U ak and was included in the study for Aegean Region.

3.3. Participants

At nine universities, a total of 96 EFL Instructors who were working at the School of Foreign Languages completed the questionnaire and 17 of them were interviewed in follow-up interviews. Out of 96 EFL Instructors, 3 participants were from Erzincan University, 11 participants were from Gaziantep University, 2 participants were from Amasya University, 8 participants were from U ak University, 53 participants were from Ankara University, 5 participants were from Uluda University, 2 participants were from Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, 1 participant was from Sakarya University and 11 participants were from Gazi University.

Some other data about the participants are as in the following (Tables 3.1.- 3.4.).

Table 3.1: Genders of the EFL Instructors who Participated in the Study

<i>Gender</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Male</i>	34	35.4
<i>Female</i>	62	64.6
<i>Total</i>	96	100.0

Among 96 EFL Instructors who participated in the study, 34 EFL Instructors were male and 62 EFL Instructors were female.

Table 3.2: Years of Teaching Experience of the EFL Instructors who Participated in the Study

	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>0-4 years</i>	13	13.5
<i>5-9 years</i>	26	27.1
<i>10-14 years</i>	19	19.8
<i>15-19 years</i>	17	17.7
<i>20-24 years</i>	14	14.6
<i>25+ years</i>	7	7.3
<i>Total</i>	96	100

The participants varied in their years of teaching experience. 13 of the EFL Instructors had a teaching experience between 0-4 years, 26 of them had 5-9 years of experience, 19 of them had 10-14 years of experience, 17 of them had 15-19 years of experience, 14 of them had 20-24 years of experience, and 7 of them had more than 25 years of experience. With a percentage of 27.1, EFL Instructors with 5-9 years of experience constituted the biggest group in terms of teaching experience while EFL Instructors with 25+ years of experience constituted the smallest group in the study.

Table 3.3: Years of Teaching Experience of the EFL Instructors who Participated in the Study at Their Current Institutions

	<i>f</i>	%
<i>0-4 years</i>	30	31.3
<i>5-9 years</i>	23	24.0
<i>10-14 years</i>	17	17.7
<i>15-19 years</i>	13	13.5
<i>20-24 years</i>	7	7.3
<i>25+ years</i>	6	6.3
<i>Total</i>	96	100

When EFL Instructors were asked for how many years of teaching experience they had at their current institutions, 30 of them stated that they were teaching at the same institution for 0-4 years, 23 of them for 5-9 years, 17 of them for 10-14 years, 13 of them for 15-19 years, 7 of them for 20-24 years and 6 of them stated that they were teaching at the same institution for more than 25 years. EFL Instructors who had a teaching experience of 0-4 years at their current institutions were the highest with 30 out of 96.

Table 3.4: The Academic Background of the EFL Instructors who Participated in the Study

	<i>f</i>	%
<i>Diploma</i>	10	10.4
<i>Bachelor's</i>	35	36.5
<i>Master's</i>	39	40.6
<i>Doctorate</i>	11	11.5
<i>Other</i>	1	1.0
<i>Total</i>	96	100

As for the academic background, 10 of the participants had a Diploma degree, 35 of them had Bachelor's degree, 39 of them had Master's degree, 11 of them had Doctorate degree and 1 of them had other degrees.

3.4. Instruments

As stated by Dörnyei (2007), questionnaires can be applied economically, and relatively easily, can reach a wider range and number of participants in geographically diverse areas, and can be analysed more quickly. However, for a deeper understanding of the issues handled, some qualitative insight is also needed and with this thought in mind, mixed methods approach was adopted in this study. In mixed methods research a fuller understanding of the research problem is achieved and one set of findings is verified against the other (Sandelowski, 2003).

In this study, for this reason, the instrument implemented from the research conducted by Borg & Al-Busaidi (2012) was used. They investigated beliefs and practices of 61 EFL teachers at a large university language centre in Oman via questionnaire and follow-up interviews in their study. Since the aim of this study was also to investigate teachers' perception and practices on learner autonomy, their instrument was seen appropriate for the use in this study and was implemented accordingly. The researchers were personally contacted via e-mail and asked for permission for the implementation of the instruments.

3.4.1. English Language Teachers' Beliefs about Learner Autonomy Questionnaire

The questionnaire implemented from Borg & Al Busaidi (2012) had five major sections (see Appendix 1). Section 1 consisted of 37 Likert-scale items addressing 10 constructs which were technical perspectives on learner autonomy, psychological perspectives on learner autonomy, social perspectives on learner autonomy, political perspectives on learner autonomy, the role of the teacher in learner autonomy, the relevance of learner autonomy to diverse cultural contexts, age and learner autonomy, proficiency and learner autonomy, the implications of learner autonomy for teaching methodology and the relationship of learner autonomy to effective language learning (Borg& Al Busaidi, 2012). Table 3.5

shows the distribution of questionnaire items and statements in reference to the constructs (Yıldırım, 2014).

Table 3.5: Statements and Constructs from the Questionnaire Used

<i>Questionnaire Statement Number</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>Group</i>
31	Out-of-class tasks which require learners to use the internet to promote learner autonomy.	Technical perspectives on learner autonomy [4]
2	Independent study in the library is an activity which develops learner autonomy.	In these statements, learning on one's own and the technical ability to be able to do so were focused on.
21	Learner autonomy is promoted by independent work in a self-access centre.	
6	Autonomy can develop most effectively through learning outside the classroom.	
29	Learning how to learn is key to developing learner autonomy.	Psychological perspectives on learner autonomy [5]
32	The ability to monitor one's learning is central to learner autonomy.	The internal psychological capacity to regulate one's own learning and developing attitudes and beliefs which help learners to take the responsibility of their learning were focused.
37	To become autonomous, learners need to develop the ability to evaluate their own learning.	
11	Confident language learners are more likely to develop autonomy than those who lack confidence.	
33	Motivated language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than learners who are not motivated.	
30	Learning to work alone is central to the development of learner autonomy.	Social perspectives on learner autonomy[5]
19	Learner autonomy is promoted by activities that encourage learners to work together.	Socially mediated learning, skills and strategies needed for effective and collaborative learning were focused in these statements.
16	Learner autonomy is promoted through activities which give learners opportunities to learn from each other.	
3	Learner autonomy is promoted through regular opportunities for learners to complete tasks alone.	
25	Co-operative group work activities support the development of learner autonomy.	

22	Learner autonomy is promoted when learners are free to decide how their learning will be assessed.	Political perspectives on learner autonomy [5] The power to control one's learning experiences, the exercise of choice in learning were focused in these statements.
7	Involving learners in decisions about what to learn promotes learner autonomy.	
14	Learner autonomy is promoted when learners have some choice in the kinds of activities they do.	
4	Autonomy means that learners can make choices about how they learn	
27	Learner autonomy is promoted when learners can choose their own learning materials.	
8	Learner autonomy means learning without a teacher.	The role of the teacher in promoting learner autonomy [4]
18	Learner autonomy cannot develop without the help of the teacher	
35	The teacher has an important role to play in supporting learner autonomy.	
24	Learner autonomy requires the learner to be totally independent of the teacher.	
13	Learner autonomy can be achieved by learners of all cultural backgrounds.	The cultural universality of learner autonomy [2]
23	Learner autonomy is a concept which is not suited to non-Western learners.	
1	Language learners of all ages can develop learner autonomy.	Age and learner autonomy [3]
20	Learner autonomy is only possible with adult learners.	
10	It is possible to promote learner autonomy with both young language learners and with adults.	
34	The proficiency of a language learner does not affect their ability to develop autonomy.	Proficiency and learner autonomy [3]
26	Promoting autonomy is easier with beginning language learners than with more proficient learners.	
9	It is harder to promote learner autonomy with proficient language learners than it is with beginners.	
15	Learner autonomy cannot be promoted in teacher- centred classrooms.	Learner-centeredness and learner autonomy [3]
17	Learner autonomy implies a rejection of traditional teacher-led ways of teaching.	

28	Learner-centred classrooms provide ideal conditions for developing learner autonomy.	
5	Individuals who lack autonomy are not likely to be effective language learners.	The benefits of learner autonomy to language learning [3]
12	Learner autonomy allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would.	
36	Learner autonomy has a positive effect on success as a language learner.	

In the 2nd section of the questionnaire, teachers' views on the desirability and feasibility of student involvement in decision-making and learning to learn skills in students were focused on. Section 3 was based on teachers' beliefs about how autonomous they perceived their learners were and to what extent they thought they promoted learner autonomy in their teaching. In the 4th Section of the questionnaire, demographic information of teachers was gathered. In section 5, teachers were asked if they would volunteer to take part in the second phase of the study. Finally, 17 interviews were conducted with the teachers who volunteered to participate.

3.4.2. Interviews

Out of 96 EFL Instructors, 20 of them volunteered to do an interview. However, 1 of them did not include his/her contact information, and could not be reached while the other 2 instructors did not respond to 3 notification emails sent by the researcher to do an interview. Finally, there left 17 EFL Instructors who volunteered to do an interview, and they were personally contacted. Out of 17 instructors interviewed, 10 were from Ankara University, 2 were from Gazi University, 2 were from Gaziantep University, 2 were from Erzincan University and 1 was from U ak University. 10 Instructors were interviewed face to face while 7 instructors were interviewed on the telephone with their permission. The interviews were done in Turkish, and later they were translated to English by the researcher. With instructors' permission, all interviews were audio-recorded. Pseudonyms which were chosen by the researcher were used to protect the confidentiality of the participants, and anonymity was guaranteed in this way. It took about a month to do all interviews with the instructors.

Qualitative thematic analysis (Newby, 2010) was used to categorize the information gathered from interviews. In this process, the data was read carefully, crucial factors and issues were identified, and lastly, the information found was classified into broader categories. In answering the research questions of the study, interviews enabled the confirmation and clarification of the preliminary findings. As a result, interviews provided insight on what teachers' perception and practices actually were on learner autonomy, and they enabled the researcher to verify the findings in the quantitative analysis.

3.5. Data Collection Procedures

In the present study, the data were collected through a web-based version of the questionnaire (Borg & Al Busaidi, 2012) developed in Google Docs and through a semi-structured interview with instructors who responded the questionnaire and volunteered to do an interview. Quantitative data were collected through Likert-type scale. Before the questionnaire was administered, the participants were informed about the purpose and the rationale of the study, and all were guaranteed that the results would be confidential, and would not be used for any other purposes.

The web-based version of the questionnaire in the study was sent to 533 EFL Instructors working at School of Foreign Languages at Ankara, Amasya, Gazi, Gaziantep, Erzincan, Uludağ, Uşak, Sakarya and Mehmet Akif Ersoy Universities on 26 February 2015. At the time of the study, there were 12 EFL Instructors at Erzincan University, and 3 of them participated in the study with a response rate of 25%. There were 90 EFL Instructors at Gaziantep University, and 11 of them participated in the study with 12.2% response rate. There were 10 EFL Instructors at Amasya University and 2 of them returned answers with a 20% response rate. At Uşak University there were 15 EFL Instructors and 8 of them participated in the study which made the response rate 53.3% for this university. At Ankara University there were 115 instructors 53 of whom participated in the study with a rate of 46.08%. At Uludağ University, there were 109 EFL Instructors and only 5 of them participated in the study with a rate of 4.59%. At Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, there were 6 EFL Instructors and 2 of them volunteered to participate with a rate of 33.3%. At Sakarya University, there were 42 EFL Instructors and only 1 of them participated in the study with 2.38% response rate, and lastly, there were 134 EFL

Instructors at Gazi University and 11 of them participated in the study with a rate of 8.1%.

EFL Instructors were asked to respond within a week. After 10 days however, the respond rate was not at expected level, so a second notification was sent. After second notification was sent, teachers were given an additional week; however, there were still few instructors responded to the questionnaire, thus, a third and final notification was sent to the instructors. The questionnaire was closed after one and half month with 96 responses which was considered enough to proceed in the research since the aim of this study was not to look at the variables and make a comparison between participating universities, but rather, it was to have a broad view of what kind of perception and practices EFL Instructors in Turkey held.

Out of 96 EFL Instructors, 20 of them volunteered to do an interview. However, 1 of them did not include his/her contact information, and could not be reached while the other 2 instructors did not respond to 3 notification emails sent by the researcher to do an interview. Finally, there left 17 EFL Instructors who volunteered to do an interview, and they were personally contacted. Out of 17, 10 participants were from Ankara University, 2 were from Gazi University, 2 were from Gaziantep University, 2 were from Erzincan University and 1 was from U ak University. 10 Instructors were interviewed face to face while 7 instructors were interviewed on the telephone with their permission. The interviewees were informed about the scope and purpose of the study prior to the interviews by the researcher. The interviews were done in Turkish, and they were later translated to English by the researcher. With instructors' permission, all interviews were audio-recorded. Pseudonyms which were chosen by the researcher were used to protect the confidentiality of the participants, and anonymity was guaranteed in this way. While doing the interviews, careful notes were taken and studied with the transcriptions of audio recordings later on. Each interview took approximately 20 minutes, and it took about a month to do all interviews with the instructors. This section presented detailed information in relation to how the data for this study were gathered. The next section summarizes how the gathered data were analysed.

3.6. Data Analysis

A mixed methods approach was adopted in this study. Therefore, both quantitative data, from the questionnaires, and qualitative data from the interviews were gathered in the data collection procedure of the study. The closed questionnaire data were analysed statistically by using the Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS 15.0). A numerical value was given to each answer in the questionnaire to calculate the frequencies, percentages, and means in the analysis of the data. “Strongly disagree” stood for one point, “disagree” stood for two points, “unsure” stood for three points, “agree” stood for four points, and “strongly agree” stood for five points. Both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures were used to examine the data and to draw conclusions from.

The open questionnaire responses and the data gathered from interviews were categorised with qualitative thematic analysis (Newby, 2010). In this process the data were read carefully, some key issues were identified, and these key issues were organized in a set of broader categories. In conducting interviews, the questions in the questionnaire enabled an initial structure under which some specific answers could be then categorised. In order for intercoder reliability to be provided, together with the supervisor, an independent coder evaluated the interview data with the researcher and the coding of content with the same coding scheme was agreed on by the researchers and the same conclusion was reached for the study (Tinsley and Weiss, 2000).

Since mixed methods approach was adopted in this study, a comparison of the questionnaire and the interview data was also done to illustrate quantitative findings with qualitative findings. This led to further insight to understand why EFL Instructors responded the questionnaire in the way they did, and what their underlying thoughts were.

3.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, the participants of the study, instruments used in the study, data collection procedures and analysis were presented. The data obtained from the data collection instruments, and analysis of them will be presented and discussed under each research question in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter findings obtained from the questionnaires and the interviews are presented and discussed under the five research questions. They will be introduced in the order of the distribution of the questionnaire sections and interview questions presented in the introduction part of this study.

4.1. Findings and Discussion for Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of EFL Instructors on learner autonomy in some Turkish Universities?

In the 1st section of the questionnaire, 37 Likert-scale items addressing 10 constructs were employed to find out teachers' overall perceptions of learner autonomy in the study. Table 4.1 presents the results regarding technical perspectives on learner autonomy. Table 4.2 presents the results regarding psychological perspectives on learner autonomy. Table 4.3 indicates the results regarding social perspectives on learner autonomy. Table 4.4 explains the results regarding political perspectives on learner autonomy. Table 4.5 displays the results regarding the role of the teacher in promoting learner autonomy. Table 4.6 shows the results regarding the cultural universality of learner autonomy. The findings related to age and learner autonomy is presented on the Table 4.7. Table 4.8 demonstrates the results regarding proficiency and learner autonomy. Table 4.9 represents the results regarding learner-centeredness and learner autonomy, and lastly, table 4.10 demonstrates the results regarding the benefits of learner autonomy to language learning.

4.1.1. Findings Regarding Technical Perspectives of Learner Autonomy

With items 2, 6, 21, 31; technical perspectives of learner autonomy were explored. Learning on one's own and developing the technical ability to do so in terms of learner autonomy were focused on. Table 4.1 displays the percentages, frequencies, means and standard deviations of instructors' beliefs about technical perspectives on learner autonomy.

Table 4.1: Technical Perspectives on Learner Autonomy

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>		<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Unsure</i>		<i>Agree</i>		<i>Strongly Agree</i>		\bar{X}	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
2. Independent study in the library is an activity which develops learner autonomy.	0	0	7	7.3	11	11.5	40	41.7	38	39.6	4.14	0.890
6. Autonomy can develop most effectively through learning outside the classroom.	0	0	6	6.3	28	29.2	46	47.9	16	16.7	3.75	0.808
21. Learner autonomy is promoted by independent work in a self-access centre.	1	1.0	7	7.3	30	31.3	42	43.8	16	16.7	3.68	0.877
31. Out-of-class tasks which require learners to use the internet promote learner autonomy.	0	0	4	4.2	11	11.5	54	56.3	27	28.1	4.08	0.749

When the responses given to item 2 "independent study in the library is an activity which develops learner autonomy" was examined, it was seen that most of the instructors (N=38) reported their strong agreement while 41.7% (N=40) instructors agreed with the statement. Nearly half of the instructors agreed on item 6 "autonomy can develop most effectively through learning outside the classroom". As for item 21 "learner autonomy is promoted by independent work in a self-access centre", while 1 of them reported his/her disagreement, 42 of participants agreed with the statement. However, 7 instructors disagreed with this statement while 1 of them strongly disagreed. This result indicates that 8.3% of the instructors were not of the opinion that independent work was promoted in self-access centres on the contrary to the studies in the literature. As for item 31, most of the instructors (N=54) stated that using the internet for out-of-class tasks could promote learner autonomy.

It can be concluded from the responses that the majority of the instructors believed that autonomy could be developed outside the classroom by independent study in a library and by independent work in a self-access centre although 8.3% of the instructors disagreed with the second one. Learner autonomy, they believed, could be developed through learning outside the classroom and with out-of-class tasks. In the interviews done, some instructors further supported that self-access centres were good to promote learner autonomy. Two of the interviewees stated that:

Simge: “I believe self-access centres are very important for promoting learner autonomy. Each school needs to have a self-access centre and to provide needed resources to students.”

Ecem agreed with this idea and noted that: “Self access centres and libraries are important for independent study and as a result, to promote learner autonomy.”

These statements indicated that instructors were in support of self-access centres and libraries for independent studies of students. They noted that these facilities were important and needed to be provided in schools for students to benefit from in their development of autonomy.

4.1.2. Findings Regarding Psychological Perspectives on Learner Autonomy

In items 11, 29, 32, 33, and 37, responses of the instructors on the psychological perspectives on learner autonomy were collected. With these statements, the ‘internal psychological capacity to self-direct one’s own learning and the development of the attitudes and beliefs which allow learners to take more responsibility for their own learning’ were focused on. Table 4.2 shows the percentages, frequencies, means and standard deviations of instructors’ opinions about psychological perspectives on learner autonomy.

Table 4.2: Psychological Perspectives on Learner Autonomy

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Unsure		Agree		Strongly Agree		\bar{X}	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
11. Confident language learners are more likely to develop autonomy than those who lack” confidence	0	0	4	4.2	5	5.2	48	50.0	39	40.6	4.27	0.747
29. Learning how to learn is key to developing learner autonomy.	0	0	2	2.1	3	3.1	29	30.2	62	64.6	4.57	0.661
32. The ability to monitor one’s learning is central to learner autonomy.	0	0	6	6.3	16	16.7	42	43.8	32	33.3	4.04	0.870
33. Motivated language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than learners who are not motivated.	0	0	2	2.1	8	8.3	27	28.1	59	61.5	4.49	0.740
37. To become autonomous, learners need to develop the ability to evaluate their own learning.	0	0	0	0	13	13.5	44	45.8	39	40.6	4.27	0.688

From the results shown in Table 4.2, for the item 11, it is possible to say that the majority of the instructors thought confident learners were more likely to develop autonomy than those who lacked confidence (N=48 agreed, N=39 strongly agreed). As for item 33, they similarly thought that motivated learners were more likely to develop learner autonomy than learners who were not motivated (89.6% agreed). This was also a statement an interviewee strongly indicated:

Arzu: *"I think motivation is the most important thing for autonomy. If a learner is motivated, it is more possible that she will develop autonomy."*

The majority of instructors stated their strong agreement (N=62) on item 29 "Learning how to learn is key to developing learner autonomy". As for item 32 "The ability to monitor one's learning is central to learner autonomy", instructors mostly agreed with the statement (N=42). However, there were 16 instructors who were unsure and 6 instructors who disagreed with the statement. These results are not in line with the related literature as the ability to monitor one's learning is fundamental in learner autonomy. For the item 37 "To become autonomous, learners need to develop the ability to evaluate their own learning", majority of the instructors (N=44) agreed while 13 of them indicated that they were unsure about the statement.

As a result of the responses, it can be concluded that a great majority of the instructors thought that confident and motivated language learners could develop autonomy more easily than learners who were not confident and motivated that much. Moreover, while some of the instructors believed that, to become autonomous, learners needed to monitor and to evaluate their own learning and they needed to learn how to learn, some others stated that they were unsure with these statements which indicated that instructors were not sure for students' monitoring and evaluating their learning as they were sure for the effects of confidence and motivation on learner autonomy.

4.1.3. Findings Regarding Social Perspectives on Learner Autonomy

The items in this section were asked to find out instructors' opinions for the items regarding social perspectives on learner autonomy. Socially mediated learning and improvement of the learners in terms of the skills and strategies needed for

effective learning and participation in pair and group works were focused on in these statements.

Table 4.3: Social Perspectives on Learner Autonomy

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Unsure		Agree		Strongly Agree		\bar{X}	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
3. Learner autonomy is promoted through regular opportunities for learners to complete tasks alone.	1	1.0	3	3.1	14	14.6	49	51.0	29	30.2	4.06	0.818
16. Learner autonomy is promoted through activities which give learners opportunities to learn from each other.	1	1.0	0	0	13	13.5	44	45.8	38	39.6	4.24	0.722
19. Learner autonomy is promoted by activities that encourage learners to work together.	0	0	4	4.2	12	12.5	58	60.4	22	22.9	4.02	0.725
25. Co-operative group work activities support the development of learner autonomy.	0	0	1	1.0	11	11.5	53	55.2	31	32.3	4.19	0.670
30. Learning to work alone is central to the development of learner autonomy.	2	2.1	14	14.6	28	29.2	42	43.8	10	10.4	3.46	0.939

As it is indicated in the data, the majority of the instructors (N=49) expressed that promoting learner autonomy was enhanced with regular opportunities given to learners to complete tasks alone (item 3). Some of the interviewed instructors also indicated that they would give learners some tasks to provide them with opportunities to study alone in the promotion of autonomy:

Umay: *“Throughout the term, I give small tasks to students that they can do by themselves.”*

Dilek: *“We can give them tasks that may lead them to do some research.”*

According to these instructors, giving regular opportunities to students such as small tasks with which they could find the chance to study by themselves enhanced learner autonomy, and they stated that they regularly used small tasks in their teaching practices for this purpose.

As for item 30, most of the instructors (N=42) stated that it was necessary for learners to learn studying alone in the development of learner autonomy. Yet, it should also be recognized that some of the instructors (N=28) stated that they

were unsure for this statement. Moreover, a total of 16 instructors also disagreed with this statement. This indicates that instructors had differing views on the centrality of learning to work alone to the development of learner autonomy. While there were instructors who stated their suspicion, the responses given to the items 16, 19, 25 also indicated that a great majority of the instructors shared the idea of collaborative work in pairs or groups helped them in the development of learner autonomy (N=44, N=58, N=53 respectively). Therefore, it can be concluded from the findings that, according to the instructors, learning to work alone was as important as learning from each other for the development of learner autonomy. This finding is also in line with the literature, as autonomy is thought to be best developed in a collaborative environment but not on one's own.

4.1.4. Findings Regarding Political Perspectives on Learner Autonomy

In this section, the statements which focused on the power to control one's learning and situations included in this learning were explored. Since choice is central to autonomy, what teachers thought on developing the skills to exercise choice in their learners was questioned. The items that included political perspectives on learner autonomy were 4, 7, 14, 22, and 27.

Table 4.4: Political Perspectives on Learner Autonomy

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Unsure		Agree		Strongly Agree		\bar{X}	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
4. Autonomy means that learners can make choices about how they learn.	0	0	2	2.1	6	6.3	38	39.6	50	52.1	4.42	0.706
7. Involving learners in decisions about what to learn promotes learner autonomy.	0	0	4	4.2	12	12.5	47	49	33	34.4	4.14	0.790
14. Learner autonomy is promoted when learners have some choice in the kinds of activities they do.	0	0	1	1.0	9	9.4	51	53.1	35	36.5	4.25	0.665
22. Learner autonomy is promoted when learners are free to decide how their learning will be assessed.	1	1.0	16	16.7	27	28.1	41	42.7	11	11.5	3.47	0.940
27. Learner autonomy is promoted when learners can choose their own learning materials.	0	0	8	8.3	27	28.1	45	46.9	16	16.7	3.72	0.842

Responses to the items 4 and 14 revealed that instructors (N=88, N=86 respectively) believed learners needed to be involved in decision making processes in their learning at classroom settings and they needed to be given some choices to choose from on what to learn and how to learn in the development of the learner autonomy. In item 7, which represented the learner involvement in decisions, majority of instructors agreed (N=47) with the statement; however, there were some instructors (N=12) who were unsure about this statement. It was also found that the number of the instructors who agreed with the items 4, 7 and 14 fell for the items 22 and 27. For item 22 "Learner autonomy is promoted when learners are free to decide how their learning will be assessed ", most of the instructors (N=41) stated their agreement; however 16 of them disagreed with the statement and 27 of instructors stated that they were unsure. It can be concluded from these results that, although instructors wanted to include learners in decision-making processes, they did not find it favourable to let them be free to decide how they would be assessed. In the interviews conducted, no one of the instructors indicated that how to do the assessment could be agreed upon with students. In a similar vein, for item 27 " Learner autonomy is promoted when learners can choose their own learning materials", most of the instructors (N=45) indicated their agreement; however 27 of them stated that they were unsure, and some instructors (N=8) stated that they disagreed with this statement.

It can be concluded from teachers' perception on political perspectives on learner autonomy that although instructors thought and agreed that involving learners in decisions and providing them with choices in learning settings were crucial; they were either not sure or in disagreement with the idea that learners should be involved in decisions for material development and assessment. From the interviews done with the instructors, it was indicated that some instructors thought their students were not capable of making decisions on their learning, and thus must be helped. For example, Onur stated that *"My students are not autonomous. They just attend classes to pass them. They are not intrinsically motivated and they do not care about it either, so I do not think that they are that capable of making decisions for their learning either."* Either it is the result of teachers' perception of their students' capability, or students' capability is the result of

teachers' perception is a controversial issue; however, in order for students to feel themselves as capable of making choices regarding their learning, teachers need to trust on their students' abilities and skills, and need to reflect this in their teaching practices.

In another interview, one of the interviewees, Ümit, said: *“Although everybody claims that they want to have learner-centred classes, and they want to put the learner at the centre, I do not know if it is related to culture or what, but they do not want to draw themselves back.”* If teachers do not stand back, and let students be free to decide on their learning and make choices regarding it, it may not be possible to involve students in decisions and to provide them with chances for how their learning will be assessed and what kind of learning materials can be chosen. Moreover, without giving them such opportunity, teachers may not know how capable and able their students are in their choices for their learning. That's why; students must be given opportunities, and supported in the process.

In conclusion, the instructors thought that it was necessary to provide learners with opportunities in decision-making processes and these chances for choice could help them develop learner autonomy. However, although they thought that considering their choices in some of the activities was preferable, they did not prefer involving them much in the assessment and in the choice of learning materials.

4.1.5. Findings Regarding the Role of the Teacher in Promoting Learner Autonomy

By means of the items 8, 18, 24, and 35, teachers' perceptions on the role of the teacher in promoting learner autonomy were explored. In these items, it was aimed to find out what the instructors' beliefs about the role of the teacher were in the development of autonomy by questioning their concept of teacher roles.

Table 4.5: The Role of the Teacher in Promoting Learner Autonomy

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Unsure		Agree		Strongly Agree		\bar{X}	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
8. Learner autonomy means learning without a teacher.	22	22.9	31	32.3	24	25	13	13.5	6	6.3	2.48	1.170
18. Learner autonomy cannot develop without the help of the teacher.	5	5.2	31	32.3	29	30.2	27	28.1	4	4.2	2.94	0.993
24. Learner autonomy requires the learner to be totally independent of the teacher.	21	21.9	47	49.0	19	19.8	6	6.3	3	3.1	2.20	0.958
35. The teacher has an important role to play in supporting learner autonomy.	0	0	1	1.0	9	9.4	53	55.2	33	34.4	4.23	0.657

Nearly half of the instructors reported that they either strongly disagreed (N=22) or disagreed (N=31) with the item 8 "Learner autonomy means learning without a teacher". Moreover, 24 of instructors noted that they were unsure about the statement. It can be concluded from these findings that, teachers' perception of teacher support in the development of autonomy was in line with the related literature. Teachers expressed that they believed without teachers, learner autonomy could not be promoted. This was also indicated by some instructors in the interviews:

Emir: *"The responsibility is ours in developing learner autonomy. A classroom setting which nurtures autonomy should be created."*

Perihan: *"I think, at least 50% of students have never looked at the issue of autonomy in our classrooms. That's why teachers need to train them explicitly on learner autonomy."*

According to the instructors, in the development of autonomy, the main responsibility is teachers' and it is their responsibility to create a learning setting which helps learners be autonomous by firstly making them aware of the notion of autonomy, and then training them explicitly to be autonomous.

The number of the instructors (N=31) who stated disagreement with item 18 "Learner autonomy cannot develop without the help of the teacher" was close to

the number of instructors (N=29) who were unsure. This result indicates that teachers had varying beliefs on the development of autonomy with or without a teacher. While most of the instructors (N=47) disagreed that learners needed to be totally independent of the teacher to develop learner autonomy, 19 of them were unsure about that. The responses for item 35 indicated that a great number of the instructors (N=53) believed that teachers had an important role in the development of learner autonomy.

The results revealed that although there were some disagreements, the majority of instructors believed that in the development of autonomy, teachers had responsibility, and learner autonomy could not be promoted without the help of teachers. In the literature, it is also indicated that although learners certainly need some independency, the idea that total independence of the teacher can lead to autonomy is not supported.

4.1.6. Findings Regarding the Cultural Universality of Learner Autonomy

With items 13 and 23, the opinions of the instructors about cultural universality of learner autonomy were targeted. In table 4.6, the frequencies and the percentages of the responses to the items are displayed.

Table 4.6: The Cultural Universality of Learner Autonomy

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>		<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Unsure</i>		<i>Agree</i>		<i>Strongly Agree</i>		\bar{X}	SD
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>		
13. Learner autonomy can be achieved by learners of all cultural backgrounds.	4	4.2	12	12.5	26	27.1	35	36.5	19	19.8	3.55	1.075
23. Learner autonomy is a concept which is not suited to non-Western learners.	35	36.5	29	30.2	18	18.8	13	13.5	1	1.0	2.13	1.088

As it is indicated in the data, the majority of the instructors (N=35) agreed that learner autonomy could be achieved by the learners of all cultural backgrounds.

However, some of the instructors (N=12) disagreed and 26 of the instructors indicated that they were unsure about the statement. For item 23, while some of the instructors (N=35) stated their strong disagreement on the statement "Learner autonomy is a concept which is not suited to non-Western learners" and 29 of them also disagreed with the item, 18 instructors stated that they were unsure about the statement. 13 instructors agreed with the statement which warrants attention as well. Results from both the quantitative and qualitative data indicate that teachers believed that learner autonomy could be developed by any learner; however, they held the belief that their students in Turkey were not culturally ready for autonomy promotion that much. This was also reflected in the interviews conducted. Some of the statements in the interviews were:

Ay e: *"When developing autonomy, we learn and teach depending on recitations. Cultural factors are also effective in this."*

Ekrem: *"Life quality, income level, culture, all are related in achievement of language learning."*

Ebru: *"If I talk generally for all learners I teach to, unfortunately they are not autonomous because we have some deficiencies in our educational system. Culture is another reason. The education that family provides, their prior experiences... All are effective in this."*

The results show that although most of the instructors believed that autonomy could be developed with any learner, and autonomy was not a concept which was suited to Western culture, they were nevertheless in the belief that the culture in Turkey was a hindrance for the development of learner autonomy. They also stated in the interviews as shown above that in learning and teaching, culture was an effective factor, and together with the culture, educational system, students' prior experiences, even the quality of lives of students were all influential in the development of learner autonomy. Instructors generally hold the belief that Turkish culture was not suitable for the promotion of learner autonomy and one of them, Hasan, even stated that Turkish students *"are not simply coded for it"* which showed how strong beliefs some instructors held for learner autonomy in relation to culture.

4.1.7. Findings Regarding Age and Learner Autonomy

Instructors were asked their views on age and learner autonomy in question items 1, 10 and 20. The items in this section were employed to find out what teachers' perceptions were on the relationship between age and learner autonomy.

Table 4.7: Age and Learner Autonomy

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Unsure		Agree		Strongly Agree		\bar{X}	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1. Language learners of all ages can develop learner autonomy.	0	0	10	10.4	24	25.0	36	37.5	26	27.1	3.81	0.955
10. It is possible to promote learner autonomy with both young language learners and with adults.	2	2.1	2	2.1	15	15.6	49	51.0	28	29.2	4.03	0.852
20. Learner autonomy is only possible with adult learners.	35	36.5	43	44.8	15	15.6	3	3.1	0	0	1.85	0.794

As for the item 1, 10 of the instructors disagreed, and 24 of them were unsure while 36 instructors agreed and 26 of them strongly agreed with the idea that the language learners of all ages could develop learner autonomy. The results for item 10 show that although 64.6% of the instructors agreed that learners of all ages could develop learner autonomy, 25% of them were unsure, and 10.4% disagreed with the statement indicating that teachers had differing views on learner autonomy and age. In the interviews conducted, one of instructors expressed that:

Simge: *"I believe that as students get older, their motivation for learning is lessened, but younger learners are not like that, so it is easier to promote learner autonomy with them."*

According to Simge, age, motivation and autonomy were bounded to each other, and she believed that motivation was lessened by age which further triggered the lessening of autonomy as a result. This was an interesting point as autonomy was viewed to be decreased with the increase of age and decrease of motivation respectively. In another interview, one of the instructors stated that:

Hasan: *“We need to provide learner autonomy in all educational steps. Learners need to normalize the idea of autonomy. After a certain age, it gets harder to develop autonomy, because habits resist change.”*

Hasan, who believed the importance of the promotion of learner autonomy in all ages, indicated that when it came to learner autonomy, the sooner was the better for students to normalize the idea of autonomy. He focused on habits further expressing that they were hard to change after some time, so in order not to handle with resisting habits in the development of autonomy, students needed to be provided autonomy support from early ages on.

Unlike the statements made by the interviewees, for the item 10 "it is possible to promote learner autonomy with both young language learners and with adults", only 2 of the instructors strongly disagreed and 2 of them disagreed with the idea. While 15 of them were unsure, 49 of the instructors agreed and 28 of them strongly agreed with this statement. Regarding the item 20, "Learner autonomy is only possible with adult learners." 35 of the instructors strongly disagreed, a vast number of them (N=43) of them disagreed, 15 instructors were unsure and only 3 instructor agreed with this statement.

As can be drawn from the data, although most of the instructors indicated that there was no age limit for promoting learner autonomy, some of them also believed that it got more difficult to foster autonomy with age in reference to habits.

4.1.8. Findings Regarding Proficiency and Learner Autonomy

In this section, there were three items which included statements about proficiency and learner autonomy. The items were employed to find out the instructors' beliefs on the relation between proficiency and autonomy.

Table 4.8: Proficiency and Learner Autonomy

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Unsure		Agree		Strongly Agree		\bar{X}	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
9. It is harder to promote learner autonomy with proficient language learners than it is with beginners.	15	15.6	32	33.3	38	39.6	6	6.3	5	5.2	2.52	1.005
26. Promoting autonomy is easier with beginning language learners than with more proficient learners.	11	11.5	25	26.0	40	41.7	16	16.7	4	4.2	2.76	1.003
34. The proficiency of a language learner does not affect their ability to develop autonomy.	6	6.3	21	21.9	30	31.3	26	27.1	13	13.5	3.20	1.120

As it can be drawn from the data, the majority of the instructors stated their disagreement (N=15 strongly disagreed, N=32 disagreed) with item 9 "It is harder to promote learner autonomy with proficient language learners than it is with beginners". While 6 of the instructors stated their agreement, 5 instructors strongly agreed. What was significant in the data was that a vast number of instructors (N=38) stated that they were unsure about the statement. The number of the participants (N=40) who were unsure on item 26 "Promoting autonomy is easier with beginning language learners than with more proficient learners" was also high which indicated that teachers did not have a clear opinion for the relation between the proficiency and learner autonomy. The responses for the item 34 also reflected that instructors (N=30) were unsure if the proficiency of a language learner affected the ability to develop autonomy or not. However, in the interviews conducted, instructors had more concrete views on the relation of proficiency and learner autonomy. One of the interviewees, Ekrem, stated that "*Proficiency level of learners is important, as it decreases, autonomy decreases too.*" From this statement, it can be concluded that although some teachers stated that they were unsure if proficiency level and autonomy development were connected, some teachers like Ekrem also thought that proficiency level was a strong indicator of learner autonomy.

As the results indicated, most of the instructors stated that they were not sure about the relationship between proficiency and learner autonomy while in the interviews conducted, some of them stated that they saw a certain connection

between proficient learners and their autonomy levels. Instructors' expression on their unsureness about proficiency and autonomy might have stemmed from the desire not to state a wrong statement if they did not have a clear idea on the issue.

4.1.9. Findings Regarding Learner-centeredness and Learner Autonomy

The ideas of the instructors on the connection between learner autonomy and learner-centeredness were investigated with the items 15, 17, 28. In the table 4.9 the frequencies and the percentages of the participants' responses are illustrated.

Table 4.9: Learner-centeredness and Learner Autonomy

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Unsure		Agree		Strongly Agree		\bar{X}	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
15. Learner autonomy cannot be promoted in teacher-centred classrooms.	3	3.1	19	19.8	21	21.9	20	20.8	33	34.4	3.64	1.232
17. Learner autonomy implies a rejection of traditional teacher-led ways of teaching.	5	5.2	15	15.6	30	31.3	27	28.1	19	19.8	3.42	1.130
28. Learner-centred classrooms provide ideal conditions for developing learner autonomy.	0	0	2	2.1	16	16.7	38	39.6	40	41.7	4.21	0.794

In table 4.9, it was revealed for the item 17 that 30 of the instructors were unsure if learner autonomy implied a rejection of traditional teacher-led ways of teaching or not; however some instructors (N=27) agreed that learner autonomy implied a rejection of traditional teacher-led ways of teaching while 19 of the instructors strongly agreed with this idea. 33 of the instructors expressed their strong agreement with item 15 "learner autonomy cannot be promoted in teacher-centered classrooms" and 19 of the instructors indicated that they strongly agreed with the item 17 "learner autonomy implies a rejection of traditional teacher-led ways of teaching". The number of the participants who were unsure about the items 15 and 17 was 21 and 30 respectively. Moreover, it is also clearly illustrated in the item 28 "learner-centered classrooms provide ideal conditions for developing learner autonomy" that a large number of the participants (N=40) expressed their strong agreement while 38 of them agreed with the item too.

As it can be concluded from the responses, instructors shared the idea that the ideal classrooms for the development of autonomy were the learner-centered ones. However there were also some instructors who disagreed with this (N=22) and who were unsure about this (N=21) which indicated that 44.8% of the instructors did not agree that learner autonomy cannot be promoted in a teacher-centered classroom. On the contrary to this result, participants agreed that in learner-centered classrooms, ideal conditions were created for learner autonomy. From these results, it can be concluded that while teachers believed learner-centeredness was central to learner autonomy, they were not of the idea that learner autonomy could be improved without teacher-centered classrooms contradicting in their beliefs.

4.1.10. Findings Regarding the Benefits of Learner Autonomy to Language Learning

With the items in this section, it was attempted to reveal the perceptions of instructors on the benefits of learner autonomy to language learning. In the following table 4.10, descriptive statistics of this dimension are displayed.

Table 4.10: The Benefits of Learner Autonomy to Language Learning

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Unsure		Agree		Strongly Agree		\bar{X}	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
5. Individuals who lack autonomy are not likely to be effective language learners.	2	2.1	12	12.5	30	31.3	24	25.0	28	29.2	3.67	1.092
12. Learner autonomy allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would.	1	1.0	1	1.0	16	16.7	45	46.9	33	34.4	4.13	0.798
36. Learner autonomy has a positive effect on success as a language learner.	0	0	1	1.0	8	8.3	29	30.2	58	60.4	4.50	0.696

As it is indicated in the table 4.10, 28 of the instructors stated their strong agreement with the item 5 "Individuals who lack autonomy are not likely to be effective language learners". While 30 of them were unsure about the statement and only 2 of them strongly disagreed. In contrast to this result in the questionnaire, in the interviews some of the instructors stated that they believed learner autonomy positively contributed to language learning:

Ebru: *"I believe that there is a direct relationship between learner autonomy and language learning."*

Perihan: *"If a learner is learning language, learner autonomy is directly related to its success. We cannot say that non-autonomous learners cannot learn a language but I am sure that the effectiveness of it will decrease."*

While Hasan further stated that *"being an autonomous learner is easiness for language learning."* Some interviewees like Ecem also stated that although learner autonomy meant learning language more effectively, the role of the teachers should not be underestimated either:

Ecem: *"There is certainly a relationship between language learning and learner autonomy, but the role of the teacher cannot be undermined."*

As for item 12 "Learner autonomy allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would", only a small number of instructors (N=1) showed their disagreement. On the other hand, a great majority of the instructors (N=45) expressed their agreement and 16 of them indicated that they were unsure. Furthermore, a great number of the instructors (N=58) strongly agreed with the statement "learner autonomy has a positive effect on success as a language learner" which was also item 36. In the interviews conducted, there were parallel results with the quantitative data as shown above.

In conclusion, it can be inferred from the responses that although there were some instructors (N=30) who were unsure of the effectiveness of learner autonomy on language learning, most of the instructors were of the same opinion that learner autonomy contributed greatly to effective language learning. Thus, it can be concluded from the statement of instructors that by developing learner autonomy, it is highly possible to have achievers in language learning.

4.2. Findings and Discussion for Research Question 2: To what extent, according to the EFL Instructors, does learner autonomy contribute to L2 learning?

The responses to the questionnaire revealed that 90.6% of the participants agreed that learner autonomy had a positive effect on success as a language learner, while 81.3% agreed that learner autonomy allowed language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would have. It can be concluded from these

results of the questionnaire that instructors held strong positive views about the contribution of learner autonomy to language learning.

In order to acquire more specific ideas, the interviewed instructors were asked to elaborate on the positive views they held for autonomous learners in language learning. Emerging themes in the responses of the instructors are listed below:

- Autonomous learners are more efficient learners:

Instructors strongly agreed that autonomous learners were learning more effectively with the help of some of their strengths as autonomous learners. Ay e stated one of these strengths as 'independence' and further noted that:

Ay e: *"Autonomous learners learn more effectively because they are independent."*

On the other hand, learner autonomy is seen to be one of salient elements of how a good language learner should be. It is perceived that if a learner should be a good and effective language learner, she/he needs to be autonomous as well. Simge illustrated this by saying that: *"When we ask how a good language learner should be, learner autonomy is certainly one of the elements."*

- Autonomous learners are more self-aware:

Most of the instructors agreed and elaborated their ideas on self-awareness as a feature of autonomous learners. They noted that autonomous learners are aware of themselves as learners, they observe their improvement, they are self-conscious and know what they are capable of and what they are not capable of in their learning and how they can better improve themselves on these; they know their strengths and weaknesses and further challenge them, and lastly it was stated by instructors that they should know what kind of a learning setting they desire, what they need to learn and how, and they should be able to ask and answer questions on these which Hasan also stated in the interview: *Learners need to be asked what kind of a learning setting they desire, what they think they need to learn, in what way they want to learn. If a learner can answer these questions, it means she/he is autonomous."*

In one of the interviews, Ay e stated similarly that: *"They try to learn with an awareness of themselves as a learner. They observe their own improvement."*

Ecem emphasised self-consciousness and noted: *“Autonomous learners are conscious; they know what they are capable of and what they are not.”* Instructors strongly emphasized that autonomous learners need to be aware of their strengths and weakness to better or remedy them. Below are some of the statement instructors provided on this issue:

Derya: *“Autonomous learners know what their negative and positive features are in their learning of a language. So, they can find solutions for their weaknesses and improve better.”*

Sevgi: *“They look for powering their strengths, while they remedy their weak points. They look for betterment of themselves.”*

Tu e: *“They are aware of their weaknesses and strengths. They know their learning styles.”*

- Autonomous learners are more motivated:

In the study, it was revealed that autonomy and motivation was strongly interrelated. Instructors observed that autonomous learners are motivated, and this further cultivates their autonomy, which vice versa is also the case. The relationship between autonomy and motivation, thus, is observed to be seen as bidirectional by most of the instructors in the study. One of the instructors illustrated this as the following:

Ebru: *“Autonomous learners are responsible, motivated, self-regulated. The more autonomous a learner is, the more motivated she is, and this affects learners’ language learning abilities.”*

Since the relation in which autonomy affects motivation or motivation affects autonomy is not still apparent, it was also indicated by one of the instructors:

Perihan: *“Autonomous learners are conscious, motivated, and zealous. However, that students who are autonomous get motivated or those who are motivated become autonomous is a contradictory issue in the field.”*

- Autonomous learners are more self-confident:

Instructors mostly stated in the interviews conducted that autonomous learners are more self-confident and self-reliant in their learning. They gave reasons for what they thought in that particular way by noting that autonomous learners do not

expect everything from their teachers, they are more liable to pair and group works, they are responsible learners, and with the confidence they have for their learning, they make more decisions about it. Emir and Ekrem illustrated above given expressions with their statements:

Emir: *“Autonomous learners are self-confident. They do not expect everything from the teacher, they are liable to group activities, and they are more responsible learners.”*

Ekrem: *“They are more self-confident. We can say that they can make decisions on their own about their learning.”*

- Autonomous learners are life-long learners and critical thinkers:

Another theme found out in the study was that autonomous learners were accepted to be critical thinkers and life-long learners. Instructors perceived autonomous learners as life-long learners who keep their learning through their lives, not just in school contexts. They further emphasized that autonomous learners are critical-thinkers and learn critically without learning everything as it is. They search for information and are curious for learning more on a particular issue. Ümit emphasized this point as: *“It means life-long learning. An autonomous learner keeps that window open in her mind. They learn by doing.”*

As for critical thinking, instructors state that learners should not be expectant of teachers for information only, and chase after their learning critically. Autonomous learners, they state, need to be in constant chase of facts, and if there arises any need, even criticize their teachers too in a learning setting. Onur exemplified this further: *“Learners should not believe what teacher says is always true. They need to be critical thinkers. It is ok that we do not teach them something wrong, but they need to think critically all the time. I think that autonomous learners are critical thinkers”*

- Autonomous learners are good researchers:

Being a good researcher was another attribution made by instructors for autonomous learners. Most of them stated that, students who have autonomy are also curious for more in their learning, and they try to widen their views by searching more and learning more as a result. Arzu was one of the instructors who

supported this view and stated that: “They are good researchers, they like studying by themselves, and that’s why, they learn more effectively and permanently.”

Simge further supported the view stated by Arzu and noted that “autonomous learners look for conferences, symposiums, trainings; they do research on an issue they are interested in, they check their learning, and they are open to criticism.” The last point Simge emphasized is particularly important as good researchers and critical thinkers were also seen to be more open to criticism which is also a feature of an autonomous learner.

4.3. Findings and Discussion for Research Question 3: How desirable and feasible do EFL Instructors feel it is to promote learner autonomy?

Table 4.11: Desirability of Student Involvement in Decision-making

<i>Items</i>	<i>Undesirable</i>		<i>Slightly Desirable</i>		<i>Quite Desirable</i>		<i>Very Desirable</i>		\bar{X}	<i>SD</i>
	<i>Learners are involved in decisions about:</i>									
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>		
1. The objectives of a course	5	5.2	23	24.0	47	49.0	21	21.9	2.88	0.811
2. The materials used	4	4.2	15	15.6	47	49.0	30	31.3	3.07	0.798
3. The kinds of tasks and activities they do	2	2.1	12	12.5	46	47.9	36	37.5	3.21	0.739
4. The topics discussed	1	1.0	16	16.7	41	42.7	38	39.6	3.21	0.753
5. How learning is assessed	9	9.4	35	36.5	34	35.4	18	18.8	2.64	0.896
6. The teaching methods used	6	6.3	24	25.0	44	45.8	22	22.9	2.85	0.846
7. Classroom management	14	14.6	25	26.0	35	36.5	22	22.9	2.68	0.989

Table 4.12: Feasibility of Student Involvement in Decision-making

<i>Learners decisions about:</i>	<i>Items are involved in</i>	<i>Unfeasible</i>		<i>Slightly Feasible</i>		<i>Quite Feasible</i>		<i>Very Feasible</i>		<i>— X</i>	<i>SD</i>
		<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>		
		1. The objectives of a course	27	28.1	31	32.3	30	31.3	8		
2. The materials used	17	17.7	37	38.5	32	33.3	10	10.4	2.36	0.896	
3. The kinds of tasks and activities they do	6	6.3	32	33.3	39	40.6	19	19.8	2.74	0.849	
4. The topics discussed	6	6.3	24	25.0	46	47.9	20	20.8	2.83	0.829	
5. How learning is assessed	36	37.5	31	32.3	21	21.9	8	8.3	2.01	0.968	
6. The teaching methods used	24	25.0	31	32.3	31	32.3	10	10.4	2.28	0.959	
7. Classroom management	27	28.1	29	30.2	27	28.1	13	13.5	2.27	1.021	

By means of the second section of the questionnaire, the instructors' responses to the question how desirable and feasible they felt it was to promote learner autonomy were explored. This section comprised two issues the first of which was teachers' views on the desirability of involving learners in decision-making while the second of which was teachers' views on the feasibility of involving learners in decision-making. The responses of the instructors were illustrated in tables 4.11 and 4.12.

It can be concluded from the responses that instructors were generally more positive about the desirability of student involvement than they were about its feasibility. However, decisions on 'how learning is assessed' were not found to be desirable by instructors. Student involvement in decision making was seen to be most feasible in topics discussed and the kind of tasks and activities students did, and it was seen least feasible in relation to 'how learning is assessed', the objectives of the course and the classroom management. On the other hand, student involvement in decision making was seen to be most desirable in relation to materials used, topics discussed and activities, and it was seen the least desirable in relation to objectives, the assessment of the course, and classroom management.

Table 4.13: Desirability of Learning to Learn Skills in Students

Items	Undesirable		Slightly Desirable		Quite Desirable		Very Desirable		\bar{X}	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Learners have the ability to:										
1. Identify their own needs	0	0	14	14.6	33	34.4	49	51.0	3.36	0.727
2. Identify their own strengths	0	0	11	11.5	31	32.3	54	56.3	3.45	0.694
3. Identify their own weaknesses	2	2.1	10	10.4	28	29.2	56	58.3	3.44	0.765
4. Monitor their progress	1	1.0	9	9.4	30	31.3	56	58.3	3.47	0.710
5. Evaluate their own learning	2	2.1	14	14.6	26	27.1	54	56.3	3.38	0.811
6. Learn co-operatively	0	0	12	12.5	25	26.0	59	61.5	3.39	0.711
7. Learn independently	2	2.1	7	7.3	28	29.2	59	61.5	3.50	0.7325

Table 4.14: Feasibility of Learning to Learn Skills in Students

Items	Unfeasible		Slightly Feasible		Quite Feasible		Very Feasible		\bar{X}	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Learners have the ability to:										
1. Identify their own needs	9	9.4	30	31.3	36	37.5	21	21.9	2.72	0.914
2. Identify their own strengths	6	6.3	33	34.4	35	36.5	22	22.9	2.76	0.880
3. Identify their own weaknesses	6	6.3	35	36.5	32	33.3	23	24.0	2.75	0.894
4. Monitor their progress	11	11.5	29	30.2	38	39.6	18	18.8	2.66	0.916
5. Evaluate their own learning	10	10.4	27	28.5	37	38.5	12	12.5	2.53	0.845
6. Learn co-operatively	4	4.2	24	25.0	44	45.8	24	25.0	2.92	0.816
7. Learn independently	6	6.3	29	30.2	34	35.4	27	28.1	2.85	0.906

In the second part of the section teachers were asked how desirable and feasible they felt it was for their students to develop a range of abilities that were

commonly accepted as indicators of learner autonomy. In tables 4.13 and 4.14 the results for this comparison were indicated. As it was in the previous part, desirability of learning to learn skills in students was consistently higher than its feasibility, and in all cases the differences between the two ratings were statistically significant. In contrast to the previous set of items, though, all items apart from “identifying their own weaknesses, monitoring their progress, evaluating their own learning, and learning independently” listed here were considered desirable for learners by a large percentage of instructors. On the other hand, the skills “learning co-operatively and independently” were perceived as the most feasible skills in learners. The skills which were seen as the least feasible in learners were “evaluating their own learning” and “monitoring their progress.”

The instructors’ opinions on the desirability and feasibility of student involvement in decision-making process and learning to learn skills in students were asked further in the interviews. Instructors were also asked to give some examples about why they thought in the specific way they did about the feasibility and desirability of different aspects. Some of their responses were presented below:

Some instructors stated that how teachers themselves were taught when they were students was really decisive in how they teach now. However, although teachers were taught in specific ways before, they stated that they needed to improve themselves, and should not repeat the same mistakes made. Ay e further exemplified this by stating that: *“A teacher teaches in the way she/he has been taught to. Our teachers have not improved themselves. I believe that that’s why we perceive it more desirable than feasible. In order for this to be remedied, she recommends that “Language is always evolving and it is a requirement to catch up with the developing world. Teachers may also follow some recent articles on the issue, and there are some speaking clubs, learners may be suggested to attend one. The last point Ay e touched upon was the culture as an important factor in the desirability and feasibility of learner autonomy and she stated that “When developing autonomy, we learn and teach depending on recitations. Cultural factors are also effective in this.”*

Turkish culture and some certain modes of teaching like much dependence on recitations were indicated much by the instructors for unfeasibility of autonomy promotion in Turkey. However, there were some instructors who were positive for

the development of learner autonomy in Turkish culture as well like Ebru: *"If it is desirable, then we should make it feasible too. However, in order to achieve this, teachers need to be autonomous too."* She stated in order for the development of autonomy, teachers need to be autonomous as well to be able promote it in their students.

Other problems stated by instructors for desirability and feasibility of learner autonomy in classroom settings were mostly curriculum-based together with some other factors such as a fixed syllabus, the educational system in Turkey and externally applied examinations. Emir explained his ideas similarly:

Emir: *"As teachers we all want our learners to be autonomous, however, because of the curriculum, a fixed syllabus, the educational system, the way we train our students, and external examinations prevent us. There is a certain date for examinations, and sometimes because of lack of time, we may not involve our learners in decision-making processes. The standardization of education is also a reason in that."*

The lack of time, and as a result of it, the urgent need to catch up with the curriculum have been particular points nearly every participant has touched upon. Another point in the feasibility and desirability of learner autonomy was that although some instructors thought that students could be included in decision-making activities or in the selections of certain tasks, or even define the classroom rules; they were not in favour of letting students decide on course objectives, books or the curriculum. Simge asserted her idea on that:

Simge: *"I believe that students should not take part in the process of designing the course, or in deciding on course objectives, course books or curriculum because instructors and curriculum designers are trained in this and they are more knowledgeable and experienced in that. However, I think that students can be involved in daily decision making processes at classrooms, for example, they can choose the kinds of tasks or they can define the classroom rules."*

It can be understood from the statements of Simge that, course book and curriculum design are accepted to be a more professional study and should be

done with trained experts on the issue, that's why it was not favoured to include students in this stage, the instructors indicated.

Some instructors, on the other hand, stated that if students were included much more in decision-making processes, learning setting might be more joyful for them making it more productive as well. This will affect their motivational level too as it is stated. As Derya says: *"If we include learners in what we are going to do in the classroom, this can make learning more fun and it can motivate them..."* Nevertheless, she goes on saying that *"...however you have to catch with the program and you do not have that much time to include learners in every decision taken."* So, once again time constraints for catching up with the fixed programmes constitute a problem for promoting learner autonomy in the eyes of instructors.

Some other interviewees, Perihan, for example stated that *"90% of our students are 17-22 years old, we do not have any information on their prior experiences in primary, secondary or high schools. When they are younger, it is more feasible to promote it. It is easier to promote learner autonomy more with learners who are conscious of it. Although it is desirable, I do not find it feasible."* Here, the instructor bounded the lack of feasibility of learner autonomy to a couple of reasons first of which is the lack of background information of students. It is inferred from here that, instructors would be more content if they had some more prior knowledge of their students and experiences. The instructor stated that the sooner was the better in the promotion of autonomy. She was also in favour that conscious learners were more able to promote autonomy, which has been a statement provided by previous participants in the study as well.

While some instructors also believed that they involved their learners in learning process so that they could be motivated more and actively take part in the language learning process, Sevgi asserted that she did not give any opportunities for the settlement of objective course, as they were well defined by curriculum definers beforehand. She stated that, nevertheless, she let her students choose some activities in the classes and encourage them for self and peer assessment: *"I strongly believe that the more students are involved in the learning process, the more they will be motivated to learn. In this way, they can actively take part in language learning process. I give my students opportunities to participate in decision making process; however, the objectives of the course*

are identified well in advance by curriculum designers. Nevertheless, I sometimes let them choose tasks or activities that we are going to use in the classes. Furthermore, I encourage them for self-assessment or peer evaluation."

The last points made by the instructors on the feasibility of learning to learn skills were the lack of self-access centres, as Umay indicated: *"There should be self-access centres because learners may be autonomous but they may not be selective in search of knowledge."* Some others also stated that high workload of teachers made them have to spare less time on autonomy promotion. Hasan exemplified further: *"Since teachers have a high workload, they may find it unfeasible to involve learners in decision-making process."*

Lack of classroom facilities which makes it hard to create and autonomy supportive classroom setting, not including students in syllabus design, and general passive characteristics of students when learning a foreign language were also pointed by instructors for the desirability and feasibility of learner autonomy. Arzu similarly summarized these ideas in the interview done: *"I believe that lots of things are just in dreams. Our physical facilities are not suitable for this. Not even one student is ever included in syllabus design. I have tried to promote it by myself, but could not succeed. There was not any support from the institution. Besides, our learners do not desire to join in the decision-making process, they like being passive, it is easier for them."*

Two points made by Arzu on lack of support from her administration on her promotion of autonomy in her classroom settings, and students' insist on passivity for their learning are particularly important points that should be reflected on. From these results, it is apparent that school administrations should also be informed of the gravity of learner autonomy and certain support should be received from them while a more general study on student passivity and reaction towards taking further responsibilities for their learning should be searched on.

And lastly, most of the teachers agreed that there was a gap between theory and practice which resembled the desirability and feasibility issues in learner autonomy. However, as Ekrem stated: *As teachers, we always argue the difference between theory and practice, yet I believe that there are always alternatives. The classroom setting is ours and our students'. To create an*

autonomy supportive classroom is in our hands, and we should involve students as much as we can in the decisions taken.” However challenging it may be perceived, learner autonomy should be made as feasible as it is desirable, and from the interviews conducted and the questionnaire applied, instructors can be claimed to have shown such a tendency so far.

By looking at the responses of the instructors, it can be concluded that a great majority of them shared the same idea of not allowing the students to be involved in decision making process for course objectives, materials and curriculum. They also found it unfeasible to involve learners in the decision taken because of some reasons like workload, curriculum and examinations. They either stated that there were no time for it, or students were not proficient enough to decide on these subjects. They stated that to decide on these subjects by taking learners’ needs and levels into consideration were in the responsibility of instructors. Moreover, some of them also thought that involving learners into the decision-making process helped them be more motivated and responsible. They generally preferred students to be involved in choosing the tasks and the activities that were used in the classrooms as it was indicated in the results of the questionnaire.

4.4. Findings and Discussion for Research Question 4: To what extent do teachers feel their learners are autonomous?

Table 4.15: Students Have a Fair Degree of Learner Autonomy

	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	6	6.3
<i>Disagree</i>	29	30.2
<i>Unsure</i>	27	28.1
<i>Agree</i>	25	26.0
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	9	9.4
<i>Total</i>	96	100.0

In the questionnaire teachers were asked about the extent to which they felt their students were autonomous and in the open-ended part of this question in the questionnaire they were asked to comment on why they felt in the way they did. In order to understand the variables more, in the interviews, they were asked to describe an autonomous language learner. As table 4.15 demonstrates, the responses of the instructors were divided into three nearly equal parts. 25 of the instructors thought their students were autonomous, while 27 of them were unsure about this. In contrast, almost the same number (N=29) of instructors thought the opposite and stated that they did not agree that their students had a fair degree of learner autonomy.

These findings suggested that the instructors had different expectations of what autonomous learners were capable of. It was also evident in the open-ended part of the question. As noted above, 35.4 percent of the instructors thought their students had a fair degree of autonomy.

When open-ended parts of the questionnaire were analysed, it was tried to understand why instructors particularly taught that their students had a fair degree of autonomy. Some instructors explained that their students were autonomous because they encouraged them to do so by guiding and facilitating them in the process. A Female participant number 13 indicated in the open-ended part of the questionnaire that: *“Some students have fair degree of learner autonomy but most of them have good degree. I try to help and guide the ones who don’t know how to study and learn alone.”* Showing them how to study, and helping them in learning to learn skills were emphasized here.

Another reason why instructors felt that their students were autonomous was that they taught to adult learners, and they perceived adult learners as more autonomous in their learning. They thought that adult learners were more self-aware and knew what kind of learners they were. This was also an idea supported by a male participant number 5: *“I teach university students and they mostly know what kind of learners they are. Of course, some of them have problems about this, but if they are motivated, it is not a big deal.”*

Instructors also felt that their students were autonomous when they had a certain kind of relationship with them which nurtures their students’ learning by chatting

about their learning experiences and their independent study outside the classroom settings. A female participant number 80 supported this by stating that: *“I observe them work on their own and ask me questions about the methods to use. We also occasionally chat about their independent study outside the class. I feel like they are quite autonomous.”*

The responses indicated that the reasons of the instructors why they thought their students were autonomous were various. Teachers believed that learners' awareness of their weaknesses, strengths, and their own learning, their motivation, collaborative decisions taken on which methods to use, their independent study skills were some of the reasons which showed that their students' had a fair degree of autonomy.

However, the results in table 4.15 also indicated that 36.5 percent of the instructors did not feel their learners had a fair degree of autonomy. The examples they provided why they thought in the particular way they did were various. Some of the themes emerged from the open-ended part of the questionnaire on why instructors felt their students did not have a fair degree of autonomy are given below:

- Traditional teacher-centred classrooms and Teacher Domination

Instructors stated that one of the biggest obstacles on the way to promote learner autonomy was teacher-centred classrooms in which learner-centeredness was ignored to a great extent. A female participant number 8 stated that students *“are used to teacher dominated classrooms”* making it more difficult to do the responsibility shift from teacher to student in classrooms. Since neither some instructors desire a change nor do some learners demand so, it goes on in the same cycle in classrooms. Another instructor (male participant number 2) illustrated that *“They most of the time expect teachers to do everything in the classroom or outside. They are quite passive whatever you do. My students are at the age of 19-21 but they are really tired of life. Some of them try to do something, but most of the time only for small work. When it comes to projects, they give up from the beginning. As a teacher, you have to force them.”*

There were also some instructors whatever the case were for them who tried to promote learner autonomy, but they also complained of some problems they

faced: *“Maybe it is because of the learner profile. No matter how much I try hard to encourage their self-monitoring their own progress in language learning; only few can achieve this. So I feel what I do is by imposing them to monitor their own learning. I also try to change the way they learn in general sense. Turkish students are culturally taught in teacher-cantered approach as we all know, so it is not easy to do reverse. However, it is definitely worth it.”* (female participant number 30)

From the statements of the instructors, it is apparent that they try every way at their reaches although generally the result they expect at first is not the same they get later on. Some instructors however, were more negative on the issue and stated that *“Turkish students with a strictly traditional teacher-cantered learning background fail totally in learner autonomy! I think it applies to conscious adult learners mostly who are mature enough to be responsible for their own learning. So, I am of the opinion that (foreign) language must be taught only after potential learners feel the need to learn.”* (female participant number 84) According to this participant, learner autonomy is subjected to fail totally even in autonomy supportive classrooms and autonomy can just be developed with adult learners, or there would even be no need for that since they would come the learning setting as autonomous learners already. However, teaching is not such a profession we find everything so ready in. This statement proves that in order for autonomy to be promoted in classrooms, teachers’ perceptions on what autonomy is and how it can possibly be promoted should be focused on, and teachers should be informed and trained more on the issue. Since, a teacher who does not favour autonomy would not promote it in her classroom either.

- Spoon Feeding as a metaphor recurring in the study

This was a term basically which should have been stated in the previous group; however, it was such a recursive term in both questionnaire and interviews that, to place a separate part for it would be more appropriate. In all 17 interviews conducted, ‘spoon feeding’ was stated by all instructors several times. They complained from their students and as for their not taking responsibility for their learning, they referred to this term and blamed their learners for not taking responsibility and waiting everything from the teacher. One of the instructors, for example, stated that *“I think our students used to be exposed to spoon-feed kind of teaching (instant learning I name) throughout their education life. Therefore they*

cannot easily be adapted to autonomous learning which is very crucial for their academic study and their professional life." (female participant number 54) Another instructor also agreed with this statement and added that *"Turkish students at university are used to being spoon-fed. So, it takes a lot of time and effort to have autonomy in learning..."* From these statements, it can be inferred that in classroom settings our students should be given more chance to stand for themselves, and encouraged even if they cannot find the courage to do so. Instructors need to play a variety of roles in this long way of autonomy promotion.

- Passive, noncritical students

When instructors were further asked why they did not feel their students were autonomous, they emphasized that their students do not know how to make decisions about their learning in or out of the classroom. Female participant number 11 asserted that *"My students do not have a fair degree of learner autonomy. They do not know how to make decisions about their own learning English outside the classroom context."* When other instructors were asked why they tended to think in this particular way, Male participant number 15 explained that *"I feel so, because they always tend to passivize themselves as learners. For example, whenever they talk about their English learning history, they talk about teachers, materials, socio-economic difficulties etc. They ignore themselves at the very beginning. They don't think they can make the difference needed."* This point was especially significant as for students to take responsibility of their learning, it is vital for them to take an active role in their learning journey without putting blame not on other factors but on themselves and their classroom settings. Another instructor also stated that (female number 67) *"They are not aware of the activities that they can do by themselves or with the help of the teacher. Also they don't judge themselves."* With false judgements and prejudices they have for both themselves and the language they learn, it gets more difficult to create an effective learning environment. This is further explained by:

Male participant number 19: *"In the first place, students generally have a kind of prejudice to learn English and feel like they will never achieve it at all. Due to this lack of self-confidence it is not meaningful for them to have English.* Another false judgement made by students are illustrated by:

Female participant number 25: *“In their lives outside the class (though they are not aware of the concept “learner autonomy”), perhaps the most common belief among our students in our context is that they can improve themselves by only watching films and series with subtitles. However, this is just a pearl in the ocean. What they believe mostly is that in order for them to learn English, they need to be in an English speaking country. As a result there is -unfortunately- a concern in their beliefs towards language learning.”*

When all these are summed up, lack of motivation, self-awareness, self-confidence, independence; too much dependence on teachers, no desire for taking responsibility, unawareness of their weaknesses, strengths and their own learning, their prior educational experiences, time management problems and curricular constraints were also some of the reason which instructors felt contributed to lack of autonomy in their students.

As a last step, in the interviews conducted, the instructors were asked the key characteristics of an autonomous language learner. Their answers varied as they were in the examples:

“Autonomous learners are independent, self-aware; they observe their own improvement (Ay e), have the ability to control their own learning, do research, read extra books, ask questions, creates new ideas, are critical-thinkers (Simge), are responsible, self-regulated, cooperative, curious (Ebru), they are self-reliant, they do not expect everything from teachers, they are liable to group activities (Emir), are good researchers, they study by themselves (Derya), they are self-confident (Ekrem) conscious, motivated and zealous (Ecem); they know what they need to learn, and in what way they want to learn (Hasan), they are aware of their strengths and weakness, they know how to learn (Perihan), they are learners for life (Arzu) and they are critical thinkers, they search the things they are constantly curious for (Ümit).”

It was revealed in the responses of the instructors that autonomous learners were perceived to be independent learners who had control over their learning. They were supposed to know how to study and when to study. Instructors further indicated that autonomous learners were generally motivated, thus they were

generally ready to learn. As a result of these characteristic features, in the learning process, they were observed to monitor and evaluate their own learning.

4.5. Findings and Discussion for Research Question 5: To what extent do teachers say they actually promote learner autonomy?

Table 4.16: Developing Learner Autonomy

	<i>f</i>	%
<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	1	1.0
<i>Disagree</i>	3	3.1
<i>Unsure</i>	14	14.6
<i>Agree</i>	55	57.3
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	23	24.0
<i>Total</i>	96	100.0

Instructors were asked about the extent to which they felt they promoted learner autonomy in their teaching. Instructors who felt they promoted learner autonomy were also asked to state the kind of strategies they used to do so in the open-ended part of the questionnaire. As table 4.16 demonstrates, more than 80% of the instructors felt that they provided their students with opportunities to develop autonomy in their teaching, while 14.6% of them were unsure and only 3.1% disagreed with the statement.

In open-ended part of the questionnaire and interviews, the instructors commented on how they promoted learner autonomy or if not why they could not do so. Some examples from instructors who stated that they could not develop learner autonomy in their classroom settings were shown under the emerging themes as follows:

- Traditional Turkish Educational System

Instructors were generally of the opinion that one of their biggest obstacles in their promotion of learner autonomy was the educational system in the country which requires learners to take some external examinations and pass from one

educational cycle to another without much interpreting the process or the value of knowledge at the time. Female participant number 6 stated that *“I really want to give opportunities; however it is not always realistic in Turkey’s education system when class sizes are also considered.”* Here, one of the reasons related to system is based on classroom size. According to this instructor then, the less students classrooms have, the more autonomy supportive environment can be achieved. Another female participant number 51 expressed her ideas that *“I try to promote autonomy as much as I can as they need to be autonomous not only as learners but also as individuals; however, I do not have the chance to “focus on” autonomy as the requirements of the teaching system at our school are always in the way. Having to keep up with the programme is my main obstacle!”* Throughout the study, time constraints have always come out because of the curriculum, fixed syllabi or programmes, but again, here an instructor states that catching up with the heavy programme is her priority rather than promoting autonomy. However, as stated before, autonomy support is not something to allocate additional or extra time; on the contrary, instructors can embed it in their normal teaching programmes.

One last statement on this issue from the instructors was from Male participant number 45, and he stated that *“I would really want to provide learners with autonomy but it is impossible for me to do that in Turkey. First, students of Turkish background are conditioned to be spoon-fed by the teacher. It is really difficult to end this vicious cycle. Second, we have too many hours of classes... Even if I want to apply some communicative activities inside class that is also impossible because there is no time to prepare and produce some new activities which will encourage students to like and appreciate English language... Students only care about passing their courses and some teachers also only care about teaching their hour and leaving the classroom right away...”* Turkish students’ background, their learning habits which are defined by lots of teachers as ‘spoon-feeding’, heavy workload of teachers and the number of classrooms they have, lack of time for preparing activities that will encourage learners to be more autonomous were all stated as the reasons so as to why autonomy promotion was not supported in Turkish educational context in School of Foreign Languages.

- Student boredom for long years of learning English

Turkish students start learning English from very early years, and go on learning through the educational steps. Students who are studying at the School of Foreign Languages have already been learning English for 10-12 years, and when they still find themselves not achieving in that, they lose their hope and boredom comes out. Female participant number 19 illustrated this point: *“I try to show them some methods how they can improve themselves, and I tell them to realize their own learning method but it is really difficult to persuade them. Most of them do not like learning English because they have been learning English for almost 12 years. However, their level is still Elementary and they still can’t speak English.”*

- Lack of teacher autonomy

As Little (1995) puts it, teacher autonomy is the mirror image of learner autonomy, and without autonomous teachers, it gets increasingly difficult to promote learner autonomy in students both because there would be no role-model to show them how, and both because if teachers are not autonomous, they may not know how to promote it either. Male participant number 22 stated that: *“Learner autonomy is a very important issue for the ongoing education of learners. However, teachers, first of all, have to be aware of the concept “autonomy”.* Male participant number 36 went on saying that: *“I would be wrong if I say I am giving every bit of chance to prove their autonomy. I think it is because of the fact that they would lose their concentration. In the classroom it is as if I am trying to put the students under control.”* Female participant number 54 concluded by stating that: *“As I was also trained in a traditional way just like my students, I could not promote autonomy in my classes as much as I desire.”* Teacher education steps in once again, and shows how important teacher training is in the development of autonomy. However, just training on autonomy may not even prove enough as raising awareness of instructors also carries utmost importance as can be seen from the following statement from female participant number 79 who said: *“I am not sure that it will work if I try to develop autonomy.”* If the instructor does not believe and try to promote autonomy in the classroom setting, then who will is a good question to be asked to ourselves.

On the other hand, some examples from instructors who stated that they could develop learner autonomy in their classroom settings and how they did it were asked both in the open-ended part of the questionnaire and in the interviews too.

The analysis done suggested that there were four broad strategies through which teachers felt they encouraged autonomy. They are listed as follows with an illustrative teacher quotation for each:

- Encouraging learners to be engaged in autonomous behaviours

Instructors stated that when they wanted to develop autonomy in their students, they generally try to engage them autonomous behaviours by giving them some responsibilities and having them take initiatives in their learning. Male participant number 5 stated how he did this as: *“I try to promote my students’ autonomy in my classes because I want them to be independent learners. To promote learner autonomy, I encourage them to (a) do project work, (b) do self-study either at home or in the library beyond the classroom context.”*

- Getting learners to realize their own strengths and weaknesses

Since learner awareness carries utmost importance in development of learner autonomy, instructors also stated that they tried to raise awareness of their students by helping them realize what their strengths and weaknesses are. Female participant number 13 noted that: *“Each person learns in a different way so it is necessary to make them aware of their strengths and weaknesses about language learning.”* One of the interviewees, Ay e, supported this view and said: *“Some surveys and can do statements; learning diaries are helpful for students to be aware of themselves to be more autonomous.”*

- Presenting out of class activities which promote learner autonomy

Autonomy is not just developed in classrooms, and since it is an ongoing process, out-of-class activities to promote it also carry importance in the development of autonomy. Instructors shared some their views on how they tried to promote autonomy outside the classroom too. Female participant number 10 stated that: *“I assign them with projects to present in front of the class to share the findings. I let them choose the topic they want to speak or write.”* While Male participant number 40 gave some more ideas: *“I generally make them keep a kind of diary outside the class on which they write anything they love, hate or experience in English. It may be even a song, an aphorism or saying of a famous person...etc. I also form groups in social media to improve their English (English only zone groups). What I try to do at all is to create a kind of awareness in my students to get the idea that*

they can do things to learn this language outside the class and look at things from a different perspective.”

- Talking to students about the value of autonomy

Before engaging learners in any autonomous behaviour, one of the first things that can be done is to make learners aware about the value of autonomy and what it means basically. Why students are expected to be autonomous, what they will gain from being autonomous, how they are expected to be autonomous need all be told to and shared with students for them to value autonomy to further to be able to practice it. Female participant number 25 shared how she did that in her classroom: *“The first thing I do for my students is that I always try to build self-confidence to learn the language. In our context they generally have bad experiences from primary school till present time. Therefore changing their attitudes is of vital importance for me. That’s why I try to explain the importance of autonomy at the outset of the classes.”*

Responses from the open-ended part of the questionnaire and the interviews indicated that there were many different strategies that instructors employed to promote learner autonomy. Making learners aware of themselves with their strengths and weaknesses and talking to them about the value and importance of autonomy, setting out of class activities which promote autonomy, involving them in teaching and learning process by asking their choices, encouraging them to engage in autonomous behaviours by leading them to use libraries and self-access centres in the school after the class hours, using autonomy supportive activities in classrooms were strategies that they used to promote learner autonomy in their classrooms. When overall results were investigated, both the percentage of instructors who felt they promoted learner autonomy in their teaching and the variety of examples they provided for how they tried to do so demonstrated that the instructors had favourable impressions on learner autonomy and they tried hard to promote it to have high-achieving language learners.

4.6. EFL Instructors Overall Attitudes towards Learner Autonomy

When all data analysis is considered, some salient findings have emerged from the findings. Firstly, it is apparent from the study that, EFL Instructors were

positively disposed to the concept of learner autonomy. Although instructors stated their strong agreement with psychological and political orientations as the most supported ones, social dimension of autonomy was not highlighted as much as the previous two in the study. Another finding was that while instructors gave more examples on immediate advantages of learner autonomy, in the long run, what learners benefit from autonomy was less argued.

Instructors' beliefs on what learner autonomy was in line with the related literature. The most recurring themes were self-awareness, responsibility, life-long learning, taking initiatives, learning by on one's own, learner-centeredness, independent learning, learning how to learn, consciousness, carrying on learning outside the classroom, and thinking independently.

Psychological orientations to learner autonomy were the most supported dimension in instructors' responses in questionnaire. Instructors put great emphasis on 'learning to learn' skills together with motivation, self-regulation, and curiosity for learning. From the comments of the instructors, it can be concluded that learner autonomy was perceived to be a set of skills and abilities learners employed to learn more effectively and independently.

There was a considerable gap between learners' beliefs about the desirability and feasibility of involving learners in a range of decisions about their learning. Particularly, for assessment and material selection, instructors did not perceive the two as much feasible as they perceived them desirable. In a similar vein, there was also a significant gap between the desirability and feasibility of learning to learn skills in students. Instructors did not find these skills as feasible as they found them desirable. Instructors also indicated in the interviews that they formed their ideas on learner autonomy through attending workshops, experiences as an EFL Instructor, teacher training, post graduate studies, reading articles, the internet, and observation.

Instructors had differing ideas about the extent to which their learners were autonomous. Such views showed difference in reference to what instructors perceived as autonomous behaviours. Instructors generally associated autonomy with independence, self-awareness, responsibility, motivation, self-regulation, cooperativeness, and little expectation from the teacher.

The majority of learners asserted that they supported autonomy in their teaching. Encouraging learners to engage in autonomous behaviours, getting them to think about their learning experiences, setting some out of class activities that promote their autonomy and informing learners of the value and importance of learner autonomy were their descriptions of how they promoted learner autonomy.

In their expressions, instructors also indicated some of factors that limited them in promotion of learner autonomy. These were fixed syllabus, the educational system, the way students were trained, external examinations, prior experiences, learners' own prevention for autonomy, lack of motivation, high workload, lack of good physical facilities, lack of support from the institution or other instructors, unwillingness in responsibility share with students, students' perception of English as a lesson not a way of life, and lack of teacher autonomy.

4.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, the results of the qualitative and quantitative analysis were presented together for each research question. Findings regarding what learner autonomy meant to EFL Instructors in some Turkish universities were discussed with sub-headings which were technical, psychological, social, political perspectives on learner autonomy; the role of the teacher in promoting learner autonomy, the cultural universality of learner autonomy, age and learner autonomy, proficiency and learner autonomy, learner-centeredness and learner autonomy, and lastly, the benefits of learner autonomy to language learning. Then, to what extent the EFL Instructors thought learner autonomy contributed to L2 learning was discussed in the light of qualitative and quantitative data. As for the third research question, how desirable and feasible EFL Instructors felt it was to promote learner autonomy was further discussed. After the findings which showed to what extent teachers felt their learners were autonomous were discussed, this part was concluded with the discussion of EFL Instructors' overall attitudes toward learner autonomy. In chapter five, the summary of the study, the conclusion of the study, pedagogical implications of the study, suggestions for further studies, and the limitations of the study will be presented.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The results of the study were presented and findings were discussed in the previous chapter. In this chapter, the summary of the study, pedagogical implications of the study and suggestions based on the significant findings of the study for further research, and limitations of the study will be presented.

5.1. The Summary of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate what learner autonomy meant to EFL Instructors who worked at School of Foreign Languages at Ankara, Amasya, Erzincan, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, U ak, Gazi, Gaziantep, Uluda and Sakarya Universities and what their practices with their students were to develop learner autonomy. The study aimed to reveal different perceptions of instructors on learner autonomy through their classroom practices. The study also aimed to find out what underlying reasons were effective in the perception of instructors on learner autonomy. In order to reach these objectives, the following research questions were asked:

1. What are the perceptions of EFL Instructors on learner autonomy at Ankara, Amasya Sakarya, Uluda , Erzincan, Gaziantep, Gazi, Mehmet Akif Ersoy and U ak Universities in Turkey?
2. To what extent, according to the EFL Instructors, does learner autonomy contribute to L2 learning?
3. How desirable and feasible do EFL Instrcutors feel it is to promote learner autonomy?
4. To what extent do EFL Instructors feel their learners are autonomous?
5. To what extent do EFL Instructors say they actually promote learner autonomy?

Participants of the study were 96 EFL Instructors. 3 participants were from Erzincan University, 11 participants were from Gaziantep University, 2 participants were from Amasya University, 8 participants were from U ak University, 53

participants were from Ankara University, 5 participants were from Uluda University, 2 participants were from Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, 1 participant was from Sakarya University and 11 participants were from Gazi University, and they were all working at School of Foreign Languages at their institutions. The data of the study were collected by means of “English Language Teacher’ Beliefs about Learner Autonomy” questionnaire which was developed by Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012). The qualitative data were also collected through the interviews conducted with 17 instructors 10 of whom were from Ankara University, 2 of whom were from Gazi University, 2 of whom were from Gaziantep University, 2 of whom were from Erzincan University and 1 of whom was from U ak University. In order to find out the perceptions of instructors in relation to learner autonomy, quantitative data of the study were analysed by calculating descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages and means for each question in the questionnaire. As for the qualitative data of the study, responses were categorized in terms of research questions and used for studying them in collaboration with the quantitative data in the discussion of the results of the study.

5.2. The Conclusion of the Study

In the previous summary part of the study, research questions of the study were provided. In this section, main findings of the study will be summarized in respect to these questions studied.

In the first research question, EFL Instructors’ perception on learner autonomy was researched from different perspectives. For technical perspectives on learner autonomy, learning on one’s own and developing the technical ability to do so in terms of learner autonomy were focused on. It was found out from the responses of the instructors that the majority of the instructors believed that autonomy could be developed outside the classroom by independent study in a library and by independent work in a self-access centre and with out-of-class tasks.

After technical perspectives, psychological perspectives on learner autonomy were studied. In this section the ‘internal psychological capacity to self-direct one’s own learning and the development of the attitudes and beliefs which allow learners to take more responsibility for their own learning’ were focused on. A great majority of the instructors thought that confident and motivated language learners

could develop autonomy more easily than learners who were not confident and motivated that much.

Socially mediated learning and improvement of the learners in terms of the skills and strategies needed for effective learning and participation in pair and group works were also studied for social perspectives of learner autonomy. Majority of the instructors stated that learning to work alone was as important as learning from each other for the development of learner autonomy. This finding was also in line with the literature, as autonomy is thought to be best developed in a collaborative environment but not on one's own.

For political perspectives on learner autonomy, the power to control one's learning and situations included in this learning were explored. When results were analysed, instructors were found to think that it was necessary to provide learners with opportunities in decision-making processes and these chances for choice could help them develop learner autonomy. However, although they thought that considering their choices in some of the activities was preferable, they did not prefer involving them much in the assessment and in the choice of learning materials.

When the role of the teacher in promoting learner autonomy was studied, although there were some disagreements, the results revealed that the majority of instructors believed that in the development of autonomy, teachers had responsibility, and learner autonomy could not be promoted without the help of teachers. In the literature, it is also indicated that although learners certainly need some independency, the idea that total independence of the teacher can lead to autonomy is not supported.

When studying the cultural universality of learner autonomy, the opinions of the instructors were targeted. The results show that although most of the instructors believed that autonomy could be developed with any learner, and autonomy was not a concept which was suited to Western culture, they were nevertheless in the belief that the culture in Turkey was a hindrance for the development of learner autonomy. Instructors generally hold the belief that Turkish culture was not suitable for the promotion of learner autonomy and one of them, Hasan, even stated that Turkish students *"are not simply coded for it"* which showed how

strong beliefs some instructors held for learner autonomy in relation to Turkish culture.

In regard to perspectives on age and learner autonomy, although most of the instructors indicated that there was no age limit for promoting learner autonomy, some of them also believed that it got more difficult to foster autonomy with age in reference to habits. As for proficiency and learner autonomy, most of the instructors stated that they were not sure about the relationship between proficiency and learner autonomy while in the interviews conducted, some of them stated that they saw a certain connection between proficient learners and their autonomy levels.

The connection between learner autonomy and learner-centeredness were also investigated, and instructors shared the idea that the ideal classrooms for the development of autonomy were the learner-centred ones. It can be concluded that while teachers believed learner-centeredness was central to learner autonomy, they were not of the idea that learner autonomy could be improved without teacher-centred classrooms contradicting in their beliefs.

When the benefits of learner autonomy to language learning are handled, it can be inferred from the responses that most of the instructors were of the same opinion that learner autonomy contributed greatly to effective language learning. Thus, it can be concluded from the statement of instructors that by developing learner autonomy, it is highly possible to have achievers in language learning classrooms.

As for the second research question, instructors were asked to what extent they thought learner autonomy contributed to L2 learning. The responses to the questionnaire revealed that 90.6% of the participants agreed that learner autonomy had a positive effect on success as a language learner, while 81.3% agreed that learner autonomy allowed language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would have. It can be concluded from these results of the questionnaire that instructors held strong positive views about the contribution of learner autonomy to language learning. Emerging themes from the responses of the instructors were;

- Autonomous learners are more efficient learners

- Autonomous learners are more self-aware
- Autonomous learners are more motivated
- Autonomous learners are more self-confident
- Autonomous learners are life-long learners and critical thinkers
- Autonomous learners are good researchers

For the third research question, how desirable and feasible EFL Instructors felt it was to promote learner autonomy was investigated. In this first section student involvement in decision making was studied. From the responses, it was concluded that instructors were generally more positive about the desirability of student involvement than they were about its feasibility. However, decisions on 'how learning is assessed' were not found to be desirable by instructors. Student involvement in decision making was seen to be most feasible in topics discussed and the kind of tasks and activities students did, and it was seen least feasible in relation to 'how learning is assessed', the objectives of the course and the classroom management. On the other hand, student involvement in decision making was seen to be most desirable in relation to materials used, topics discussed and activities, and it was seen the least desirable in relation to objectives, the assessment of the course, and classroom management.

In the second section of the same research question, learning to learn skills in students were investigated. By looking at the responses of the instructors, it can be concluded that a great majority of them shared the same idea of not allowing the students to be involved in decision making process for course objectives, materials and curriculum. They also found it unfeasible to involve learners in the decision taken because of some reasons like workload, curriculum and examinations. They either stated that there were no time for it, or students were not proficient enough to decide on these subjects. They stated that to decide on these subjects by taking learners' needs and levels into consideration were in the responsibility of instructors. Moreover, some of them also thought that involving learners into the decision-making process helped them be more motivated and responsible. They generally preferred students to be involved in choosing the tasks and the activities that were used in the classrooms as it was indicated in the results of the questionnaire.

In the 4th research question, teachers were asked to what extent they felt their learners were autonomous. 35.4 percent of the instructors thought their students had a fair degree of autonomy while 36.5 percent of the instructors did not feel their learners had a fair degree of autonomy. Some of the themes emerged when instructors were asked why they felt their students did not have a fair degree of autonomy. They were:

- Traditional teacher-centred classrooms and Teacher Domination
- Spoon Feeding as a metaphor recurring in the study
- Passive, noncritical students

On the other hand, as the last research question when instructors were asked to what extent they said they actually promoted learner autonomy, more than 80% of the instructors felt that they provided their students with opportunities to develop autonomy in their teaching, while 14.6% of them were unsure and only 3.1% disagreed with the statement. For instructors who stated that they could not develop learner autonomy, emerging reasons were given below:

- Traditional Turkish Educational System
- Student boredom for long years of learning English
- Lack of teacher autonomy

On the other hand, some examples from instructors who stated that they could develop learner autonomy in their classroom settings and how they did it were asked too, and how they succeeded so were given below:

- Encouraging learners to be engaged in autonomous behaviours
- Getting learners to realize their own strengths and weaknesses
- Presenting out of class activities which promote learner autonomy
- Talking to students about the value of autonomy

5.3. Pedagogical Implications of the Study

With the insights acquired from this study, some pedagogical implications will be presented in this part. As learners in Lamb (2011)'s study indicated, in order to provide learner autonomy and lessen teacher control, other 'piling more and more work' on students before they have learned last things should be prevented.

Students need to study at their own paces either individually or in groups, and they need to have a choice in what they do. Their chances of studying more effectively and learning better are enhanced when they are allowed to know the purpose of everything going on in the classroom context. By this way, they will understand the purpose of the specific tasks, their ability to how to handle them and how to evaluate them on the basis of authenticity and personal relevance.

Another point is that students are fully responsible for their progress and they have the capacity to take control of their learning. Teachers need to keep this variable in mind, and further support them in their struggle to learn English. Without necessary support and trust in their capacities and abilities to take control of their own learning, it would not be likely to expect them to succeed in this. Besides, what teachers have in mind is reflected by every means in the classroom which means what teachers think of learners' capacity is apparent to them, thus it either enhances their development of learner autonomy, or further diminishes it.

Discussing how to regulate students' learning in the class is also another way to promote learner autonomy. Since most of the teachers work with a fixed syllabi and they certainly need to assess learners for what has been enabled to them, examinations are inescapable; however, as indicated in the study, the pressure put on the students to be prepared for the examination unfortunately distracts not only them but also their teachers as well and this unfortunately causes students to perceive the language like a lesson to study, rather than a subject to be learned both in the classroom and outside the classroom. This pressure of examination can be lessened by teachers to have students think that they are more in control of the process. What's more, it can be pointed by this way that it is not the product but the process of learning which is of value.

Lamb (2011) recommends some good solutions for how to help learners be more autonomous. He suggests engaging learners' identities as independent and autonomous learners by creating learning environments in which learners are in control of their own learning; being ready for the times when not all students are ready for learner autonomy and providing learning training appropriately for these learners.

As Sakai et al. (2010) recommend teachers firstly need to understand current wishes of their learners' for learner autonomy and their readiness for it, and what

they can implement in their classrooms to correspond with their students' needs to promote their learner autonomy. Since teachers' assumptions may be inconsistent with what students' real perceptions are, two sides need to reach a common idea first.

Since students have a more clear focus once they have set their own goal, they need to be allowed to fulfil this purpose. As some students may prefer specific types of classroom activities, teachers need to be in close relationship with their students and work collaboratively with them. As Cotterall (2000) also suggests, learners need to be encouraged to set personal goals, monitor and reflect on their performance throughout the learning process, and modify what they have learnt in the classroom as reflection is what makes classes in which learner autonomy is promoted distinctive. Thanasoulas also (2000) suggests activities, which were also employed by some instructors in this study, such as keeping learning diaries and evaluation sheets for reflection. Both ways enable learners to reflect on their learning process and enable them to decide whether it has been as fruitful as expected until then. Teachers also need to provide learners with choice to make them feel that they are actually in control and have them participate actively in the process in spite of the constraints they stated in the study because in a teacher-centred class, individual differences of learners may easily be missed out. That's why, teachers need to provide a more learner-centred classroom and to create a learning environment in which decision-making of learners is encouraged. What is desired is that teachers find involvement of learners in decision-making processes in the way they find it desirable. For this purpose, teachers need to spare from class time to raise awareness in their learners of what is going on in the classroom.

As Udosen (2014) indicated in her study, a relevant curriculum in which learners are at the centre promotes their ability to develop learner autonomy and provides them with the means to construct meaning and learning skills, attitudes and values that will help them be active in the solution of their real-life problems. These learners, then, are autonomous, active participants of knowledge rather than passive conformists, which is a very crucial point for democratic citizenship as indicated in CEFR too. However, as she further asserts, curriculum instruction is as good as teachers who deliver the curriculum, that's why the effectiveness in the delivery of a curriculum equals to the capacity and ability of the teachers delivering it. For this reason, teachers' perception and practices are central to learner autonomy.

As Little (1991) puts it, autonomy is the psychological relation of the learners to the process and learning. This relatedness is an important part of learner autonomy and for this reason, in a classroom setting; learners need to be supported to create a meaning, a relatedness of newly learned things with past and future learnings. To create this relatedness, teachers need to include learners in decision-making processes, and by this way, learners are helped with personally relevant learning experiences which will help them internalize the process of learning. If learners are denied of this opportunity of choosing, we will result in denying their intellectual identity together with their social and personal benefits that come together with that identity (Heron, 2003). Moreover, choice increases intrinsic motivation and helps learners be more self-regulated.

As expressed by some instructors in the study, learning diaries can be kept for a forum of ideas where learners will have the chance to assess themselves through a combination of introspection and discovery (Porto, 2007). Diary writing is facilitating students as it provides conditions in which learners can learn from their experiences.

It was also indicated in the study that, some instructors were doubtful about the share of responsibility in their classrooms. The power shift from teacher-centred classes to learner-centred classes may create concern among teachers for losing the control of their classrooms; however, learners who are given more control on their learning will be more effective in their learning which, in turn, helps teachers in their teaching more.

In the study Porto (2007) conducted, she reported that students valued classroom activities when they were offered choice about the pace of their study; however, they were very critical when they felt hurried with the activities she presented no choice for pace. It can be concluded from here that students desire to have a say not just in the type of activities but also for the time allocated for those activities as well. Curriculum and time constraints were issues that were strongly indicated by instructors for their failure to develop autonomy. However, in their struggle to catch up with the curriculum, teachers need to “achieve a balance between a dynamic and a fast class” as it is indicated here (Porto, 2007: 689).

Teachers are also expected to be in a continuous assessment of what their students' needs and interests are, how adequate their instruction for that particular

class and how they can cope with unexpected, emerging needs of learners. Porto (2007) particularly suggests being tolerant, having no stereotyped views about learning and teaching, having good relationships with students and doing whatever one can do to promote autonomy and critical reflection in learning.

Teacher autonomy and teaching skills were other points that emerged in the interviews. Little (2004) stresses that teachers need to be able to exploit their professional skills in an autonomous way in all their teaching, and he goes on with that the nature of the pedagogical dialogue between the teacher and learners will always be the defining factor in promoting learner autonomy.

Since human nature is dialogic and first language acquisition depends on social interaction, it is vital to scaffold this dialogue in teaching languages too. According to Little (2004), the teacher who wants to promote learner autonomy in his/her classroom speaks in the target language in the classroom and tries everything to make the meaning comprehensible; helps learners by scaffolding them and helps them to scaffold each other's utterances; involves learners in language activities that let them produce language a little bit ahead of their current level, and lastly; engages learners in regular assessment of their progress in learning language both as individuals and as a class in the target language like in all other activities.

European Language Portfolio can be used as a means of developing an autonomy culture in learning settings which were once dominated by traditional teaching. Because the reflective processes that ELP provides and promotes are dialogic and parts of it are closely related to self and social identity roles (Little, 2004; Riley, 2003)

Another issue that is crucial is that, the extent to which learners develop autonomy and a host of skills and knowledge that are necessary for developing autonomy depend on both learner's and teacher's views of their relationship and roles (Ho and Crookall, 1995). That's why; both sides need to know what their roles are in developing autonomy and how they can achieve this in a shared setting. As instructors in the study also emphasised, students need to know that not just teachers are responsible for learners' learning, but learners have a big share in taking initiatives and responsibility for learning too. By this way, some possible problems that may be created in the learning process may be prevented beforehand. It is also crucial that individuals' emotions, personal beliefs, and

talents are also taken into consideration (Sarigöz, 2008) as a requirement of learner-centeredness in the classrooms.

Ho and Crookall (1995) suggests teachers who are overwhelmed by the constraints they face in the promotion of autonomy that they need to consider the obstacles that may possibly hinder the development of autonomy in their classes, but should not let them impede their struggle on the way to develop autonomy. Like the teaching of languages, developing autonomy is not a one-day-job and certainly requires a lot of time and effort. With this consciousness, teachers need to keep their motivation high, and believe in both their students and themselves.

Cotterall's (1999) five principles for language course design may help teachers to design their teaching to promote learner autonomy and help them share responsibility with their students. These steps are that learners' goals are reflected in language, tasks and strategies; course tasks are linked to a more simplified model of language learning process; real world communicative tasks are used as course tasks to bring authenticity in classroom; discussion and practice are incorporated in the course with strategies known to foster task performance; and lastly, reflection on learning is promoted in the course. There are some specific suggestions by other researchers for particular applications in classrooms too. Alagözlü (2014), for example, suggests that web concordances are helpful in the promotion of learner autonomy.

Asmari (2013) states that promoting teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy may prove to be difficult, therefore teachers need preparation and support on their way to develop autonomy in their learners. He suggests in-service teacher training programmes in which teachers can share their experiences, perceptions and practical ideas on learner autonomy may prove to be effective for this aim. For curriculum questions and how learner autonomy can be implemented in institutions where curriculum is defined beforehand and where there is fixed syllabus, Asmari (2013) also suggests that teachers can promote learner autonomy with the curriculum by integrating the principles of learner autonomy in learning goals, learning process, tasks, learner strategies and reflection on learning.

In developing learner autonomy, mutual trust between learners and the teacher is crucial. A classroom setting which is cooperative and which takes learners' affective filters into account is a must for students to feel themselves secure, and

trust their teacher to take initiative in developing learner autonomy. Besides, students who do not feel threatened in their classrooms will feel more courage in their attempt to share the responsibility of learning. As Erten and Burden (2014) suggest, support and encouragement can be provided learners to help them change negative and unhelpful attributions they have of themselves while at the same time developing their skills and learning strategies contribute to their improvement as well.

Chwo (2011) states that eLearning also helps learners acquire autonomous skill learning on an individual basis. She goes on that when provided with instruction on how to use an eLearning program, autonomous learning has been nurtured and further improved. So, with the help of instruction on how to use eLearning programs and self-access centres, learners can be helped to employ them effectively resulting in better achievement and autonomy. Ürün et al. (2014) suggests in-service training programs for teachers to help them with teaching of learning strategies and technology use in classrooms.

Benson (2010) notes that teachers need to adopt a more autonomous and self-critical approach towards the things that may come up as wider structural constraints on learner autonomy by mediating these constraints with their own agencies. Here, the importance of teacher autonomy for learner autonomy is stressed once again. As Little (1995) points out if teacher education encourages teachers to be autonomous, they will be more likely to promote autonomy in their classrooms. That's why he recommends that teacher education must be in the same line with how learner autonomy is promoted in classrooms. He further advocates that aims and learning targets, course content, the ways of how this content is delivered, materials selected and assessment of these need to be all negotiated with future teachers leading to a pedagogical process where students teachers learn from their teachers, and teachers learn from their student teachers too.

5.4. Suggestions for Further Studies

The present study was conducted with the instructors working at Ankara, Gazi, Erzincan, U ak, Uluda , Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Sakarya, Gaziantep and Amasya Universities School of Foreign Languages. A further study can also be conducted at other universities of Turkey to gain a deeper insight. Different variables of

instructors such as gender, age, and years of experience can be taken into account in autonomy supportive behaviours of teachers.

Furthermore, a further study like Shahsavari's (2014) can be conducted with the learners to determine their opinions towards the promotion of learner autonomy in the same settings in Turkey. In this way, the opinions of teachers and students can be compared and what kind of differences exist in the perceptions of the two groups can be addressed. Moreover, teachers themselves can experience self-assessment as autonomous learners in order to be better implement learner autonomy strategies for their students in their classes. For this purpose, a self-observation form can be supplied for the teachers and the assessment of the teachers may be standardised (Mirici, 2006). Administrators can also be included in the study, as their perceptions are crucial in support they provide to instructors too.

This study focused on what EFL instructors' perception and practices for learner autonomy were. However, in the study, instructors were depended upon their expressions for their practices. A further study can be employed to observe the practices of teachers to promote learner autonomy in their classroom applications. With a comparison of their perception and actual practices, beneficial insights for the promotion of learner autonomy can be acquired.

Moreover, as an empirical phase of the original study (Borg & Al Busaidi, 2012), professional development workshops or in-service training for the teachers on learner autonomy can be arranged in reference to local research findings, thus addressing the needs of instructors more.

5.5. Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the data collected from 96 EFL instructors working at School of Foreign Languages at Ankara, Amasya, Erzincan, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, U ak, Uluda , Gazi, Gaziantep, Sakarya Universities. For this reason, it can be acknowledged that the study was conducted with a small number of instructors making it hard to generalize the findings for different groups of instructors in other educational settings in Turkey.

Another limitation was that instructors' classroom practices were not observed, thus their reports of whether they promoted learner autonomy and how they promoted it were relied on as they were the only sources.

The response rate to the questionnaire was not as high as it was hoped for. Although instructors were sent notifications for three times, it was just possible to collect 96 responses in about two months; however, since the participation was voluntary, instructors were not insisted more than that. Nevertheless, the aim of the study was not to compare the results collected from the universities but to have a general view on what instructors' perception and practices were on learner autonomy, so it did not constitute a problem in the development of the study.

5.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, the summary of the study, pedagogical implications of the study, suggestions for further studies and limitations of the study were presented. In the summary of the study, in line of the research questions, the development of the study from beginning to the end was summarized; in pedagogical implications, some suggestions for teaching practices to promote learner autonomy were provided; in suggestions for further study, recommendations for other possible studies in the field were made; and in the limitations of the study, the factors that limited the study were discussed.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

ETİK KURUL ZARFI MUAFİYETİ FORMU

Form: 40

Tez Çalışması Etik Kurul İzin Muafiyeti Formu

28 / 05 / 2015

Hacettepe Üniversitesi
Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü
Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı Başkanlığı'na

Tez Başlığı / Konusu: EFL Instructors' Perception and Practices on Learner Autonomy in Some Turkish Universities

Yukarıda başlığı/konusu gösterilen tez çalışmam:

1. İnsan ve hayvan üzerinde deney niteliği taşımamaktadır,
2. Biyolojik materyal (kan, idrar vb. biyolojik sıvılar ve numuneler) kullanılmasını gerektirmemektedir.
3. Beden bütünlüğüne müdahale içermemektedir.
4. Gözlemsel ve betimsel araştırma (anket, ölçek/skala çalışmaları, dosya taramaları, veri kaynakları taraması, sistem-model geliştirme çalışmaları) niteliğinde değildir.

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Etik Kurullar ve Komisyonlarının Yönergelerini inceledim ve bunlara göre tez çalışmamın yürütülebilmesi için herhangi bir Etik Kuruldan izin alınmasına gerek olmadığını; aksi durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

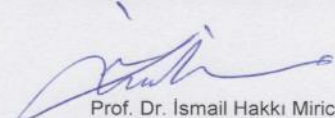

Gizem Doğan
(Öğrencinin Adı Soyadı, İmzası)

Öğrenci Bilgileri

Adı Soyadı	Gizem Doğan
Öğrenci No	N10123997
Anabilim Dalı	Yabancı Diller Eğitimi
Programı	İngiliz Dili Eğitimi
Statüsü	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yüksek Lisans <input type="checkbox"/> Doktora <input type="checkbox"/> Bütünleşik Dr.

Danışman Görüşü ve Onayı

Çalışma, herhangi biçimde özel haklar ve sorumluluklar, bireysel özel bilgiler, kişisel hak ihlali sayılacak bir konu ile ilgili unsurlar yer içermediğinden ve çalışmanın verileri etik açıdan bir sakınca doğuracak özellikte olmadığından etik kurul izini alınmasına gerek duyulmamıştır.


Prof. Dr. İsmail Hakkı Mirici
(İmza)
(Danışmanın Ünvanı, Adı ve Soyadı)

APPENDIX 2

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1: Learner Autonomy

Please give your opinion about the statements below by ticking ONE answer for each. The statements are not just about your current job and in answering you should consider your experience as a language teacher more generally.

		Strongly disagree	disagree	unsure	agree	strongly agree
1	Language learners of all ages can develop learner autonomy.					
2	Independent study in the library is an activity which develops learner autonomy.					
3	Learner autonomy is promoted through regular opportunities for learners to complete tasks alone.					
4	Autonomy means that learners can make choices about how they learn.					
5	Individuals who lack autonomy are not likely to be effective language learners.					
6	Autonomy can develop most effectively through learning outside the classroom.					
7	Involving learners in decisions about what to learn promotes learner autonomy.					
8	Learner autonomy means learning without a teacher.					
9	It is harder to promote learner autonomy with proficient language learners than it is with beginners.					
10	It is possible to promote learner autonomy with both young language learners and with adults.					
11	Confident language learners are more likely to develop autonomy than those who lack confidence.					
12	Learner autonomy allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would.					
13	Learner autonomy can be achieved by learners of all cultural backgrounds.					

14	Learner autonomy is promoted when learners have some choice in the kinds of activities they do.					
15	Learner autonomy cannot be promoted in teacher-centred classrooms.					
16	Learner autonomy is promoted through activities which give learners opportunities to learn from each other.					
17	Learner autonomy implies a rejection of traditional teacher-led ways of teaching.					
18	Learner autonomy cannot develop without the help of the teacher.					
19	Learner autonomy is promoted by activities that encourage learners to work together.					
20	Learner autonomy is only possible with adult learners.					
21	Learner autonomy is promoted by independent work in a self-access centre.					
22	Learner autonomy is promoted when learners are free to decide how their learning will be assessed.					
23	Learner autonomy is a concept which is not suited to non-Western learners.					
24	Learner autonomy requires the learner to be totally independent of the teacher.					
25	Co-operative group work activities support the development of learner autonomy.					
26	Promoting autonomy is easier with beginning language learners than with more proficient learners.					
27	Learner autonomy is promoted when learners can choose their own learning materials.					
28	Learner-centred classrooms provide ideal conditions for developing learner autonomy.					
29	Learning how to learn is key to developing learner autonomy.					
30	Learning to work alone is central to the development of learner autonomy.					
31	Out-of-class tasks which require learners to use the internet promote learner autonomy.					
32	The ability to monitor one's learning is central to learner autonomy.					
33	Motivated language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than learners who are not motivated.					
34	The proficiency of a language learner does not affect their ability to develop autonomy.					
35	The teacher has an important role to play in supporting learner autonomy.					

36	Learner autonomy has a positive effect on success as a language learner.					
37	To become autonomous, learners need to develop the ability to evaluate their own learning.					

Section 2: Desirability and Feasibility of Learner Autonomy

Below there are two sets of statements. The first gives examples of decisions LEARNERS might be involved in; the second lists abilities that learners might have. For each statement:

- First say how desirable (i.e. ideally), you feel it is.
- Then say how feasible (i.e. realistically achievable) you think it is for *the learners you currently teach most often*.

You should tick TWO boxes for each statement – one for desirability and one for feasibility.

		Desirability				Feasibility			
		Undesirable	Slightly desirable	Quite desirable	Very desirable	Unfeasible	Slightly feasible	Quite feasible	Very feasible
	Learners are involved in decisions about:								
1	The objectives of a course								
2	The materials used								
3	The kinds of tasks and activities they do								
4	The topics discussed								
5	How learning is assessed								
6	The teaching methods used								
7	Classroom management								
	Learners have the ability to:								
1	Identify their own needs								
2	Identify their own strengths								
3	Identify their own weaknesses								
4	Monitor their progress								
5	Evaluate their own learning								
6	Learn co-operatively								
7	Learn independently								

Section 3: Your Learners and Your Teaching

This section contains two open-ended questions. These are an important part of the questionnaire and give you the opportunity to comment more specifically on your work at The School of Foreign Languages.

- To what extent do you agree with the following statement?
Choose ONE answer:

In general, the students I teach English most often to at The School of Foreign Languages at my current university have a fair degree of learner autonomy.

Strongly disagree		Disagree		Unsure		Agree		Strongly agree	
-------------------	--	----------	--	--------	--	-------	--	----------------	--

Please comment on why you feel the way you do about your students' general degree of autonomy:

2. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? Choose ONE answer:

In general, in teaching English at The School of Foreign Languages at my current university, I give my students opportunities to develop learner autonomy.

Strongly disagree		Disagree		Unsure		Agree		Strongly agree	
-------------------	--	----------	--	--------	--	-------	--	----------------	--

Please comment. You may want to explain why and how you promote autonomy, if you do, or to explain why developing learner autonomy is not an issue you focus on in your work:

Section 4: About Yourself

Please tell us about your background.

3. Years of experience as an English language teacher (Tick ONE):

0-4		5-9		10-14		15-19		20-24		25+	
-----	--	-----	--	-------	--	-------	--	-------	--	-----	--

4. Years of experience as an English language teacher at your current institution. (Tick ONE):

0-4		5-9		10-14		15-19		20-24		25+	
-----	--	-----	--	-------	--	-------	--	-------	--	-----	--

5. Highest qualification (Tick ONE):

Certificate		Diploma		Bachelor's		Master's		Doctorate		Other	
-------------	--	---------	--	------------	--	----------	--	-----------	--	-------	--

6. Nationality:

7. Gender (Tick ONE):

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
------	--------------------------	--------	--------------------------

Section 5: Further Participation

6. In the next stage of the study we would like to talk to individual teachers to learn more about their views on learner autonomy. Would you be interested in discussing this issue further with us?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

If you answered YES to question 1 above, please write your name and phone number here.

Name	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number	<input type="text"/>

APPENDIX 3

SAMPLE INTERVIEW

1. What 'autonomy' means to you? In a few words, how would you sum up your views on what learner autonomy is?

Learner autonomy means learner awareness of the learning process, it is to know what one's strengths and weakness are and how one can learn.

2. What do you think the key characteristics of an autonomous language learner are?

As I stated, approaching learning in a self-conscious way, being motivated in this, and desiring to learn are the most prominent characteristics of autonomous learners. Anyway, when learner wants to learn and gets motivated, she can express herself better; can understand the learning process better, and since she wants to improve herself in the process, I believe that she will be more successful.

3. Can you tell me a little more about how you see the relationship between learner autonomy and language learning?

I certainly believe that there is a relationship between learner autonomy and language learning. Yet, the role of the teacher cannot be underestimated in this. If the learner is conscious of the learning process and knows how she can improve herself better, I believe that she can develop learner autonomy with the support of the teacher. If the learner is not aware of her learning, and if she has some weak points, and goes on in the same way in spite of all these, it gets harder for her to learn the language.

4. How have you come to develop the views you hold today about learner autonomy and its value?

Learning experiences I had when I was a student, and after I started teaching, sample classes I have observed for the last five years, learning styles of the learners or the dynamics in the classes give an idea on that.

5. In terms of decision-making, you were quite positive both about the desirability, but not that much on feasibility of learner involvement. To what extent are learners actually involved in such decisions?

For this issue, I believe that the biggest reason why it is not as feasible as it is desirable is lack of motivation. If I need to express my feelings for the institution I work at, students experience the lack of motivation most because they think that the school is far from the centre, they will spend a whole year just for learning English at School of Foreign Languages, and they think that they will not need English in the future. When they look at learning in a negative way, they do not want to do or learn anything, and as a result, they cannot develop learner autonomy. I believe that the most significant reason is this in its unfeasibility. Teachers can try to motivate their learners; however, how much they can succeed in this is doubtful for me. It requires practice. We cannot know if we do not try.

6. Do you think that the students at your school are autonomous? Why do you feel in the way you do? What kind of particular factors promote or hinder the development of autonomy at your school?

If I speak for my classes, in only one of them I feel relaxed when I have classes because most of them criticize, listen attentively, and follow the process. However, in other two classes, with the reason that spring has also come, they are distracted, they do not want to learn. I sometimes find myself speaking to myself in the class. Sometimes just three or four students participate the lesson in those two classes. I do not know how it can be handled, but, in the first hand, I suppose that we should change the way we think. We need to investigate if it is directly related with the teacher or learners or if there are some other external factors. I believe


that the our educational system and culture are also effective in this. I believe that the fact that prep schools are ignored by learners is an important reason. Some think that here is a one year off for them, most of them do not attend classes with the aim of learning English.

7. What role, if any, do you feel the teacher has in promoting learner autonomy?

Learners need to follow their learning processes. In order to enable this, maybe we can have students prepare a report that they can evaluate themselves. Learners can keep a learning diary at certain times in which they will keep their progress so that they can refer back to it later on. Our writing folder practices may be counted for such a practice. We inform our learners of the ways how they can learn better and be successful, but maybe, we can apply a survey about the learning styles of the learners at the beginning of the term too so that we can help learners be aware of themselves. There may be some other practices upon the feedback received from learners.

APPENDIX 4

OR J NALL K RAPORU



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ÖZGEÇM

Kişisel Bilgiler

<i>Adı Soyadı</i>	Gizem DOĞAN
<i>Doğum Yeri</i>	Alanya
<i>Doğum Tarihi</i>	11.11.1988

Eğitim Durumu

<i>Lise</i>	Alanya Yabancı Dil Ağırlıklı Lise, Alanya	2006
<i>Lisans</i>	Gazi Üniversitesi, Gazi Eğitim Fakültesi, İngilizce Öğretmenliği, Ankara	2010
<i>Yüksek Lisans</i>	Hacettepe Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Yabancı Diller Eğitimi, Ankara	2015
<i>Yabancı Dil</i>	İngilizce Almanca (A1)	

Deneyimi

<i>Çalıştığı Kurumlar</i>	Ankara Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli Üniversitesi	2014- 2010-2014
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İletişim

<i>e-Posta Adresi</i>	gizemakilli@gmail.com
	dogang@ankara.edu.tr
<i>Jüri Tarihi</i>	28.05.2015