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**ENGLISH TEACHERS' SELF-PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER  
AUTONOMY IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS:THE  
CASE OF SAKARYA**

**MASTER THESIS**

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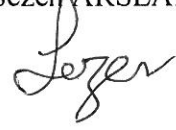
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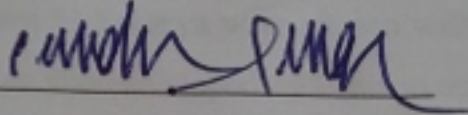
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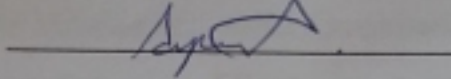
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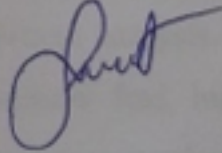
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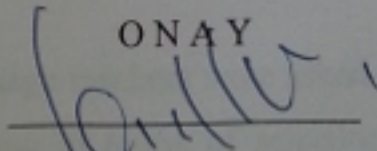
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## ÖZET

### ORTAOKUL VE LİSELERDE ÇALIŞAN İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN ÖĞRETMEN ÖZERKLİĞİNE DAİR ALGILARI: SAKARYA İLİ ÖRNEĞİ

Bu çalışma, Türkiye’de ortaokul ve liselerde çalışan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin öğretmen özerkliğine dair algılarını araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra, merkezi sınavların öğretmenlerin özerklik algılarına olan etkilerini de araştırmaktadır.

Sakarya İli’nin merkez ilçelerinde yer alan ortaokul ve liselerde çalışmakta olan 87 İngilizce öğretmeni araştırma kapsamına alınmıştır. Katılımcılara Pearson ve Hall (1993) tarafından geliştirilen 18 maddelik Öğretmen Özerkliği Ölçeği uygulanmış olup merkezi sınavların öğretmen özerkliğini ölçmek amacıyla araştırmacı tarafından 8 madde daha eklenmiştir. Pilot çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre anket geçerli ve güvenilir bulunmuştur. Nicel veriler, 26 maddeden oluşan Likert ölçek aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Çalışmanın daha kapsamlı bir şekilde anlaşılabilmesi amacıyla, bu çalışmaya katılmaya istekli olan 10 öğretmen ile yarı yapılandırılmış yüz yüze görüşme gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Bu çalışmada karma yöntemli araştırma kullanılmıştır. Nicel verilerin analizi SPSS 18.0 istatistik programı kullanılarak, nitel verilerin analizi ise içerik çözümleme analizi kullanılarak yapılmıştır. Araştırmanın sonuçları, liselerde çalışan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin ortaokulda çalışan İngilizce öğretmenlerinden daha yüksek özerklik algısına sahip olduğunu ve merkezi sınavların ortaokulda çalışan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin üzerinde daha fazla etkisinin bulunduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Çalışmada yer alan istatistiksel veriler yaş ve öğretmenlik deneyimi gibi faktörlerin öğretmenlerin özerklik algıları üzerinde anlamlı bir farklılık oluşturduğunu göstermektedir. Fakat istatistiksel verilere göre, öğretmenlerin cinsiyeti ile öğretmenlerin özerklik algıları arasında anlamlı bir ilişki saptanmamıştır.

İngilizce öğretmenlerine, merkezi sınavların ders içeriği, sınıf yönetimi ve değerlendirme konularında herhangi bir etkisi olup olmadığı sorulmuş ve sonuç olarak merkezi sınavların öğretmenlerin yaratıcı olmalarına ve kendilerine ait öğretim yaklaşımı oluşturmalarına engel olduğu anlaşılmıştır.

## ABSTRACT

### **ENGLISH TEACHERS' SELF-PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER AUTONOMY IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS: THE CASE OF SAKARYA**

This study aimed to explore self-perceptions of teacher autonomy for teachers who teach at middle and high schools in Turkey. Besides, it investigated the impacts of centralized examinations on these self-perceptions of teacher autonomy.

In this study, 87 English language teachers who teach at middle schools and high schools located in central towns of Sakarya were chosen within the context of this study. Teacher Autonomy Scale which was developed by Pearson and Hall (1993) was conveyed and later 8 eight items were added in the questionnaire in order to find out effects of centralized examinations on teacher autonomy. According to pilot study results, the questionnaire was found to be reliable and valid. Quantitative data were obtained through a questionnaire which consisted of 26 Likert-type items. Semi-structured face to face interviews were employed with 10 teachers who were willing to take part in this study in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the study.

Quantitative data were analyzed by means of SPSS 18.0 statistical program and qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis. The results of the study indicated that high school English language teachers had higher self-perceptions of teacher autonomy than middle school English language teachers. The findings also showed that centralized exams had a significant effect on middle school English language teachers. The statistical analysis of data indicated that factors such as age and teaching experience had a significant effect on the self-perceptions of teacher autonomy. However, the analysis provided insignificant results for the gender as a factor influencing the self-perceptions of teacher autonomy.

In addition, English language teachers were asked whether centralized examinations had any effect on their teaching in terms of selection of teaching content, classroom management or assessment. Analysis of the qualitative data showed that centralized

examinations prevented teachers from creativity and that teachers could not ground their teaching approaches according to their own beliefs.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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*To the victory of my ambition...*



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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

In Chapter 1, a brief background, significance, assumptions and limitations of the study will be presented. Finally, at the end of the chapter, organization and summary of the thesis will be given.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Language learning has taken an individual stand with the constructivist view in recent years. That is, language learners take the control of language learning process in which their learning background, experiences, level, age and learning needs are taken into consideration. They construct the learning process based on their self-development.

Learner autonomy can be of vital importance in this constructing process where the responsibility for language learning is held by the learner himself rather than by the teacher, as Holec (1981) views the autonomy as ‘the ability to assume responsibility for one’s own affairs.’ Learners’ taking responsibility is not sufficient; it requires a capacity for critical reflection, decision making and independent action (Little 1995). From this view, it can be understood that autonomous learners are involved actively in language learning process. The learners can decide on the kinds of activities and organize learning according to their self-development level. In language learning, active participation and responsibility for one’s own learning process are essential (Dam 1995).

Putting the learners at the core of learning and making them learning constructors does not necessarily mean that teachers are ignored. On the contrary, fostering learner

autonomy in language learning may be empowered by the teacher as Oxford (1990) indicates: “Although learning strategies are used by the students themselves, teachers play an important role in helping students develop and use strategies in more effective ways.” Littlewood (1996) believes that learners can increase their independent choices as a result of teachers’ manipulating the progression. Teachers may act as a guidance to show ways that best serve for students to apply learning strategies effectively. However, teachers need to be autonomous as well for administering autonomous learning process.

As can be seen, teachers may learn the issue of autonomy from their learners; they can develop themselves in negotiation with the learners. Teachers think about what they do in the classroom and consider whether it is useful or not; they go into a process of self-evaluation. In the end of this evaluation, they can improve their teaching. Asking questions ‘why’, ‘what’ and ‘how’ opens up new horizons for the teachers; they collect data for these questions, which shape teachers’ beliefs and decisions about their teaching. According to their changing beliefs or decisions, teachers may make adaptations and offer new paths for the learners which suit their needs, academic level or language experiences. In other words, a teacher can promote learner autonomy by being autonomous himself, at first.

Vieira (2007) states: “Unless teachers are free to make pedagogical choices that favor learner autonomy; there is no way that pedagogy for autonomy can flourish in schools.” It can be easily understood that teachers are the active participants in constructing their self-development in their professions. Teachers should be involved in a process in which teaching practice is described, questioned and evaluated.

## **1.2 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

This study has the purpose of examining the self-perceptions of English teachers teaching at middle and high schools in Turkey. Also, it aims to explore the underlying factors that have an impact on teachers’ self-perceptions of autonomy. The research questions which will be addressed throughout the study include:

1. What are the overall perceptions of teacher autonomy for middle school and high school English language teachers?



2. Is there any difference in self- perceptions of English teachers teaching in middle schools and high schools in Turkey in terms of teacher autonomy?

3. Do the genders, age and teacher experience demonstrate any difference in terms of self-perceptions regarding teacher autonomy?

4. Do centralized exams have an impact on self-perceptions of teacher autonomy for middle and high school English teachers in Turkey?

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

The issue of autonomy has been brought into the English Language Teaching (ELT) agenda within the views of Constructivism, which is associated with the studies of Halliday (1979) and Piaget (1965). Davis, Maher and Noddings (1990) define it as the following:

“It is assumed that learners have to construct their own language individually and collectively. Each learner has a tool kit of concepts and skills with which he or she must construct knowledge to solve problems presented by the environment. The role of community- other learners and teachers- is to provide the setting, pose the challenges and offer the support that will encourage mathematical construction.”

That is, constructivism emphasizes restructuring the experience and building knowledge. Learners are encouraged for self-directed learning or self-inquiry with the help of teachers. It is obvious that learning, instead of teaching gained importance.

Murphy (2000) and Skrinda (2004) claim that the shift from role of the passive recipient of language knowledge to active constructor is due to constructivism trend. In line with this shift, learner autonomy has gained momentum since constructivist views require creative and active language users who have the capacity of determining the direction and pace of their own learning. Autonomous learners are the ones who can have the responsibility for their own learning (Little 1991). They can monitor and evaluate their progress since they are intrinsically motivated for self-directed learning.

Well, why learner autonomy? Since learners have the capacity for reflective learning, they are more likely to be more focused on their learning personally and effectively. Also, they may get more motivated and overcome the problems confronted in the learning

process. With this positive attitude towards learning, they may be willing to take risks. Looking up for new words and trying them in new contexts can be given as an example for risk-taker language learners.

In short, learner autonomy is required for effective language learning; however teachers may have, undoubtedly, big responsibilities for helping learners to become autonomous. Little (2000) indicates these responsibilities as the following:

“...the development of learner autonomy depends on the development of teacher autonomy. It is unreasonable to expect teachers to foster the growth of autonomy in their learners if they themselves do not know what it is to be an autonomous learner and that in determining the initiatives they take in the classrooms, teachers must be able to exploit their professional skills autonomously, applying to their teaching those same reflective and self-managing process that they apply to their learning.”

As can be understood, teacher autonomy can be considered as a must for learner autonomy and both are interwoven. In addition to Little, Thavenius (1999) indicates:

“Teacher autonomy can be indicated as teachers’ ability and willingness to help learners take responsibility for their own learning. An autonomous teacher is thus a teacher who reflects on her teacher role and who can change it, who can help her learners become autonomous and who is independent enough to let her become independent.”

If a teacher can develop autonomy in his own teaching, he can learn how to develop professionally through critical reflection and he can create learning chances serving not only for his teaching principles but also for his learners’ autonomy. As Dam (1992) explains:

“Learner autonomy is also to be seen as the right of teachers to develop as human beings. Teachers have always said that they learn from their pupils. It is time to be aware of that. It is personal development all the time in negotiation and in combination with learners.”

However, all these will be possible if teachers are autonomous themselves and eager to make some professional developments. Therefore, the first thing to find out is to know whether teachers perceive themselves as autonomous or not. This study is intended to find out if English teachers working at middle and high schools in Turkey perceive themselves as autonomous or not. Perceptions and thoughts of these teachers will be provided in order

to point out whether they feel free while teaching. In addition, positive and negative factors affecting teacher autonomy will be surveyed in this study in order to highlight the reasons why teachers feel autonomous or non-autonomous.

In fact, a great number of studies have been conducted in order to shed light on the issue of teacher autonomy in Turkey; however, studies which deal with teacher autonomy in English teaching context in Turkey are limited. In that aspect, this study will make a crucial contribution to the research area.

The data collected from this study will be helpful for researchers to understand the self-perceptions of teachers about teacher autonomy in Turkey. Besides, this study will provide a clear picture of how these perceptions might differ according to teaching levels.

According to Fretwell and Wheeler (as cited in Akşit 2007), Turkey has the most centralized education system among Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member states. Therefore, it would not be mistaken to consider Teacher Autonomy within this system. This study will show how centralized exams have an impact on self-perceptions of teacher autonomy for English teachers in Turkey. The findings obtained from this study might be utilized for framing the potential problems posed by centralized exams' effects. This could be also a significant study of which data may lead to the practical concerns for generating possible solutions to those problems.

#### **1.4 Assumptions of the study**

This study had the following underlying assumptions:

- The participants took part in the study and shared their opinions sincerely and honestly.
- In order to collect data, two instruments (questionnaire and interview) were employed; this would make contribution to the reliability of the obtained results.
- Since participants teach at different levels, it was assumed that their self-perceptions of teacher autonomy would be different.
- Each teaching level requires different centralized exams, which was expected to have an impact upon self-perceptions of teacher autonomy of the participants.

### **1.5 Limitations of the study**

This study has some limitations since it was conducted with a certain groups of participants. Namely, it was limited to 87 teachers who have been teaching in Sakarya. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized.

However, as this study employs two different instruments (questionnaire and interview), this may be helpful for overcoming the limitations related with data collection tools. That is, using multiple data tools may enable the researcher to reach reliable results.

### **1.6 Organization of the study**

This study includes **five** chapters.

**Chapter One** provides a general look at the study by giving an introduction and background of the study. The research questions are introduced and then, assumptions and limitations of the study are explained.

**Chapter Two** constitutes the theoretical and empirical base of the study.

**Chapter Three** introduces methodological foundation of the study. In addition, information about data collection tools and participants is given.

**Chapter Four** describes findings. They are followed by the discussions which are considered in line with literature.

Finally, **Chapter Five** is a conclusion part which describes conclusions drawn from findings and, also, it provides suggestions for further research.

### **1.7 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, basic literature on teacher autonomy was provided. Besides, purpose and significance of the study were explained. They were followed by assumptions and limitations of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, review of literature which is related to the research study will be presented. Firstly, teacher autonomy will be defined. Secondly, the place of teacher autonomy in teacher education will be discussed. Thirdly, factors which may be influencing teacher autonomy in positive and negative ways will be provided. Finally, information about centralized exams in Turkey will be provided and their influence on teacher autonomy will be discussed within the light of literature review.

#### **2.1 What is Teacher Autonomy?**

In the field of English Language Teaching, the concept of autonomy was first introduced by Allwright in 1990 and developed by Little in 1995 (Benson 2006). Considering the concept of learner autonomy which was firstly introduced by Holec in 1981, it has a relatively short history. Researches, mostly, are concentrated on learner autonomy however, recently, focus has shifted from learner autonomy to teacher autonomy because as Huang (2007) asserts: “With the rise of learner autonomy as an important goal in education, the idea of teacher autonomy came to the point.” It has been realized that ‘to enhance learner autonomy’, it is necessary to develop teacher autonomy.

Vieira (2001) reports: “Our efforts to promote pedagogy for autonomy in school will have any sustainable effects unless we put teachers at center-stage”. It is clearly understood from what she stated that learner autonomy and teacher autonomy cannot be separated.

She maintains:

“The notion of autonomy should refer both to the learner and the teacher, not just to the learner as is often the case. We have perhaps spent too much time thinking about learners and learning processes, and too little time thinking about teachers and teaching processes. Moreover, in the history of autonomy field, teachers have systematically been kept backstage, that is, they have not taken a central role in research and pedagogical development. No wonder then that their interests have been overlooked.”

As she indicated, teacher autonomy has not been studied as deeply as learner autonomy; therefore, it has a short research story.

So far, it has been mentioned that teacher autonomy is needed in the field of ELT. Well, what is teacher autonomy? In fact, teacher autonomy is a concept which has been defined several times by several researchers; however, one of the most popular definitions may be Little’s (1991): “Autonomy is a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making, independent action.” Aoki (2002), also, provides definition along with Little’s perspective: “Teacher autonomy is the capacity, freedom, responsibility to make choices concerning one’s own teaching.” In addition, Benson (2000) claims: “Teacher autonomy is a right to freedom from control.” Considering these three definitions, teacher autonomy includes the concept of freedom to act independently upon teaching matters and being responsible for the decisions which have been taken with a free will.

However, Vieira (2006) disagrees with that view since she believes that “teacher autonomy is not about doing as one wants of being free from external control.” According to her, teacher autonomy is “striving for what you believe and empowering yourself as a teacher.” That is, teacher autonomy is not keeping oneself from the others; instead, it requires collaboration in order to have new ideas regarding teaching.

In parallel with what Vieira thinks, Franklin (1988) believes that alienation is not autonomy. Moreover, Fraser and Sorenson (1992) indicate that “to be isolated in a classroom without collegial interaction or meaningful feedback is not the intended spirit of autonomy.” Through collegial interaction among teachers, they can exchange ideas, share their teaching experiences. This may help teachers to gain new insights about their teaching.

In addition, Smith (2003) puts focus on the concepts such as ‘negotiation’ and ‘collaboration’ between teachers for empowering teacher autonomy. From these perspectives, two different dimensions emerged:

- Teacher autonomy is freedom.
- Teacher autonomy is interaction, negotiation and collaboration.

Combining these two dimensions, Smith (2000) provides the definition of teacher autonomy as ‘the ability to develop appropriate skills, knowledge, attitudes for oneself as a teacher in cooperation with others.’ That is, the importance of cooperation is emphasized. Through cooperation, they can obtain feedback from their colleagues, so teachers can find chances for developing new ideas.

Smith and Erdoğan (2008) enlarge these dimensions by adding new concepts: they consider teacher autonomy in terms of two domains: ‘Domain of teaching’ and ‘Domain of teacher- learner.’ The former one identifies six characteristics which define teacher autonomy:

- a) Self-directed professional action
- b) Capacity for self-directed professional action
- c) Freedom from control over professional action
- d) Self-directed professional development
- e) Capacity for self-directed professional development
- f) Freedom from control over professional development

To sum up these characteristics, it could be easily said that teachers will be autonomous if they have personal responsibility for their own teaching. According to Richards (1998), reflection, self-inquiry, self-monitoring and self-evaluation help teachers to analyze their development and they can understand more about their profession. This understanding may help them to give more meticulous decisions upon how to organize and conduct their teaching. While teaching process, teachers should have freedom. Moomaw (2005) indicates that freedom is not merely limited to classroom; it can include a) school structure and organization, b) disciplinary problems, c) curriculum content, d) academic

standards, e) staffing and f) fiscal policy. Teachers should be free from control exerted by those factors.

Domain of teacher-learning includes teacher-learner autonomy in addition to teacher autonomy. Here, the focus is on teacher-learning. That is, as Smith (2001) explains:

“In the process of attempting to understand and advising students, teachers are likely to be engaged in various investigative activities, asking questions which are themselves useful in raising students’ awareness of learning. And in order to engage students in autonomous and effective reflection on their own learning, teachers need to constantly reflect on their own role in the classroom, monitoring the extent to which they constrain or scaffold students’ thinking and behavior . . . There is a sense, then, in which teachers and students can *learn together* and together.”

There is an interrelationship between learner autonomy and teacher autonomy. Thus, in order to foster learner autonomy, teachers may need to feel autonomy first so that they can implement autonomy for learners. As learners, they should learn how to take responsibility for their own teaching. This could be possible by involving teachers in teacher training programs in order to introduce pedagogy for autonomy.

Like Smith (2001), Iida (2009) has similar views on teacher autonomy and states: “EFL teachers are expected to be a model of successful and autonomous language learners.” That is, to promote teacher autonomy, teachers first need to be autonomous and this may be possible through taking a teacher-learner role. This role can require collaboration with colleagues or even learners in order to understand the process of language learning better since teachers can experience how their learners feel or what their learners find difficult in language learning. Apart from that, Friedman (1999) defines teacher autonomy under three headlines:

- a) *Planning and administering teaching*: The basic responsibility of teachers is to plan and practice teaching activities. Planning and practicing teaching activities may include choosing teaching content, methods and evaluating learners (Öztürk 2011). Level of teacher autonomy can change according to these factors.
- b) *Attending in management process*: Autonomy is not limited to classroom, instead it can involve working conditions in schools or collaboration among students. Attending in management process requires teachers to be active participants in making decisions with



regard to working conditions, relationships among colleagues or solving out the problems related with learner behaviors.

c) *Professional development*: Teachers may be provided with in-service training programs in order to foster teacher autonomy. Also, within school context, the management personals or colleagues can hold seminars in order to enhance motivation and collaboration which are considered as keys for teacher autonomy.

Barfield (2002) expands these three headlines and claims that teacher autonomy includes a) negotiation skills, b) institutional knowledge in order to start to address effectively constraints on teaching/learning, c) willingness to confront institutional barriers in socially appropriate ways to turn constraints into opportunities for change, d) readiness to engage in lifelong learning to the best of an individual's capacity, e) reflection on the teaching process and environment, f) commitment to promoting learner autonomy. Autonomous teachers have a well-established collaboration with colleagues or management personals in education institutions; this will help them to locate the problems and cure them. Also, instead of isolation, collaboration can make teachers feel secure towards problems even if these problems are challenging. What is more, being involved in teacher training programs, they can have a chance to develop teacher autonomy and, consequently, learner autonomy.

When literature is reviewed, teacher autonomy is obviously considered to be related with freedom; however, Nietzsche (as cited in Lamb and Reinders 2008) reports: "The most fearful and fundamental desire in man, his drive for power...is called 'freedom'. That is, freedom can be dangerous or safe according to how it is utilized. Teachers may need to use freedom in a way that they direct and manage teaching or that they make decision between right and wrong.

Actually, teachers can go for isolation in reaction to lacking of autonomy; for example, they can try to be independent or isolated from students or parents and they cannot be interested in educational practices at all (Contreras 1997). However, this would impair autonomy because autonomy does not necessarily mean isolation from colleagues, or parents. Instead, it could be enhanced with the help of collaborating, exchanging ideas or sharing teaching experiences.

Usma (2007) indicates:

“Teacher autonomy does not refer to an absolute state of freedom from constraints. It refers to the responsible exercise of discretion within the limits of school stakeholders’ interest and needs. Theories that define teacher autonomy in opposition to their students or colleagues or determine teachers’ professionalism in terms of their unanimous capacity to decide without considering other school stakeholders may send erroneous messages to the public and justify those imposed standards and practices criticized in this review. Thus, teachers can enrich their insights into teaching.”

Holding freedom does not necessarily mean ‘isolation’ of teachers from other colleagues since that is not autonomy; on the contrary, it is interaction and cooperation with colleagues.

## **2.2 Teacher Autonomy in Teacher Education**

Teacher autonomy is associated with reflective teaching by some researchers. Ashwell et al. (2001) claims that teacher autonomy is based on inquiry. Also, Little (1995) states: “Successful teachers have always been autonomous in the sense of having a strong sense of personal responsibility for their teaching, exercising via continuous reflection.” That is, teachers can develop their professional knowledge of capacity through reflective process because reflection can give teachers chances for making decisions about do’s and don’ts in the classroom.

Thavenius (1999) defines autonomous teachers as the one “who reflects on her teacher role and who can change it, who can help her learners become autonomous and who is independent enough to let her learners become independent.” Also, Vieira (2007) suggests that reflective teaching could be facilitated by autonomy of pedagogy. Reflection can be counted as pillars of autonomy since it can make teachers evaluate and improve themselves. It can be clearly understood that reflection is of vital importance for teacher autonomy and teacher development. Well, what is reflection?

Dewey (1933) defines reflection in a broader sense:

“Active persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and further conclusions to which it leads... it includes a conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of evidence and rationality.”

According to him, reflection is not a passive act of the mind; on the contrary, it is rather active and conscious. Reflection does not occur coincidentally. Human mind makes it on purpose. Also, Dewey (1902) thinks that if reflection does not occur, routine and monotony can create some danger as he suggests:

“Familiarity breeds contempt, but it also breeds something like affection. We get used to the chains we wear and miss them when removed... unpleasant because meaningless activities may get agreeable if long persisted in.”

If this comment is put in an educational context, it could be easily said that reflection provides deeper questioning of teaching and it creates awareness or some realization for new teaching ideas, methods or approaches, creating a barrier towards routines that teachers have embraced.

Jay and Johnson (2002), more specifically, put reflection in educational sense and define it as it follows:

“Compromised of identifying questions and key elements of a matter that has emerged as significant, then taking one’s thought into dialogue with oneself and with others. One evaluates insights gained from that process with reference to 1) additional experience, 2) one’s own values, experiences and beliefs and 3) the longer context within which the questions are raised. Through reflection, one reaches newfound clarity, on which one bases changes in action or disposition. New questions naturally arise, and the process spirals onward.”

Reflection requires questioning what you are dealing with or your inner thoughts about this matter. Then, at this point, one can ask for others’ thoughts or beliefs and get benefit of others’ additional experience about that matter. Therefore, collaboration may be needed while reflecting.

Reflection is summarized under 3 headings by Richards (1991):

- a) The event itself
- b) Recollection of the event
- c) Review and response to the event

The first stage, ‘*the event itself*’, is related with the subject matter such as a lesson. The second stage, in the ‘*recollection of the event*’ part, without making any evaluation or

analysis, identifying and describing the event is performed. The third and final stage is '*review and response to the event*' -as the name suggests- after describing the event, deeper analysis or evaluation of the event starts.

To combine these definitions, one can easily conclude that teachers act as a researcher and put theories that they have learnt into practice in their classrooms with the help of additional experiences they collect from colleagues. Then, they analyze their own experiences; having been given these analyses, they question their current techniques, methods, theories or what they have learned as a result of collaboration with their colleagues; if necessary, they can change and marry new ideas about teaching.

Reflective teaching has been a popular issue for some time in the field of teacher education (Richards & Ho 1998) and as Vieira (2000) states: "Research on teacher education over the last decade reflects a growing focus on reflective teaching." As a matter of fact, it can be seen obviously that there is a need for reflective teaching in order to develop teacher autonomy in teacher education programs.

Considering the context of Turkey, recent English teaching education program was introduced by Higher Education Council in 2006-2007 academic years. According to that program, in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years of education, students study contextualized grammar, listening, pronunciation, phonology; in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years, they have lessons which are mostly, related with teaching profession such as methodology, curriculum design, testing and course book evaluation. In addition, in the 4<sup>th</sup> year, students are obliged to take 'School Experience' in first semester and 'Teaching Practice' in second semester. In School Experience 1, students are expected to observe lessons in their practice schools; however for School Experience 2, they are expected to teach lessons (minimum 12 weeks for a semester). If the content of this program is considered, one can see the following percentages that make up the whole program (Coşkun and Daloğlu 2010):

- ✓ pedagogic competence by 68%
- ✓ linguistic competence by 32%
- ✓ managerial competence by %1

Erozan (2005) conducted a study in which she evaluated the content of foreign language teaching program in Turkey and interviewed with student teachers. She concluded that student teachers felt the need for more classroom practices and micro-teaching activities.

Findings of her study corroborated with the findings of Seferoğlu's (2006) which claimed that student teachers expressed their needs in micro-teaching activities and observation of different teachers at different teaching levels. Likewise, Salli-Copur (2008) found out that student teachers were lack of classroom management, evaluation, linguistics and speaking skills.

Consequently, it would be true to claim that the current teacher education programs are lack of practice opportunities. However, Vieira (1997) summarizes how the education programs should be as in the following:

“The general principles of reflective teacher education are largely based upon an epistemology of practice and can be applied to a pedagogy for autonomy: a) focusing on the individual so that curricula and educational practices should be built from personal needs and theories; b) focusing on development processes-particularly on critical reflection and experimentation-and not only on outcomes, c) inquiring about knowledge and practices in order to develop the abilities to describe-inform-confront-reconstruct personal theories and action, d) integrating theory and practice by valuing the role of experience derived knowledge and e) promoting introspective reflection.”

Therefore, teachers are required to be active in constructing the content of teacher education programs in accordance with their professional needs. In order to perform this construction, they are expected to inquire about classroom practices and evaluate their teaching as Daloğlu (2001) indicates: “Asking why, what and how questions are not only to evaluate certain techniques but also for broader purpose of raising awareness of other teaching issues.” Therefore, teachers can find out new ways for teaching, they can make their own theories. This can be possible by having an understanding and practicing reflective teaching. In this way, a teacher can develop autonomy and place it in his teaching pedagogy.

Moreover, reflection can make teachers act in a more deliberate and intentional way instead of a monotonous way. It may liberate teachers from routines (Larivee 2006). This

point of view corroborates with the idea that reflective approach is a metaphor of liberation. In this way, it would not be mistaken to claim that reflective teaching makes up an important part of teacher autonomy because teacher autonomy is a capacity for ‘making independent action’ (Little 1991). Teachers need to develop this capacity since today’s classrooms have students which come from different ethnicities, different levels of academic development and socio-economic status. Therefore, a teacher is expected to address these needs by making some adaptations (Larivee 2006).

This can be possible if teachers become reflective, consequently, autonomous. Thus developing autonomous teachers may be of vital importance for teacher education programs. Vieira (1999) indicates that student teachers do not need to be equipped with professional knowledge instead they need to perform sufficient teaching practices. Furthermore, she suggests that teacher education programs emphasize teaching practices to foster teacher autonomy.

So, what else can the teacher education programs include for fostering autonomy? Tamai (2003) indicates journal writing as a tool for enhancing teacher autonomy because it provides insights and awareness about how learning occurs and provides firsthand accounts of teaching-learning experiences, enabling teachers to observe current trends in classrooms (Brock, Yu and Wong 1992).

Cole, Raffier, Rogan and Schleicher (1998), also, suggest that teacher education programs should include journal writing practices because journals help teacher candidates to identify classroom variables, question their hypothesis about teaching and, consequently, activate their thinking (Richards and Ho 1998). This point of view seems compatible with what Farris and Fuhler (1998) claim: “Journals are ‘a birth place’ for creative and critical thinking.” Keeping journals can provide chances for teachers to evaluate their teaching experiences on their own and teachers can explore new teaching ways through feedback they have obtained from experiences.

Hacker and Barkhuizen (2008) conducted a course entitled ‘*2<sup>nd</sup> Language Course Design and Teaching Methodology*’ with 20 student teachers during 12 weeks. They collected data about reflective personal theories through personal journal writing. Results showed that student-teachers felt comfortable in producing and sharing teaching theories.

However, Nayan (2005), in her case study, found out that teacher candidates focused more on personal events instead of classroom events, by making no evaluation or analysis of classroom events. They thought that journal writing was challenging and time consuming. Therefore, the scope of journal writing activities is expected to be defined in a crystal clear way for student teachers in order to prevent subjectivity and out-of topic writing.

Some researchers like Bailey, Curtis and Nunan (2001), Freeman (1998), Barlett (1990) suggest that teachers can be more autonomous if they utilize action research. Burns (2009) defines action research as it follows:

“Action research is the combination and interaction of two modes of activity: action and research. The action is located within the ongoing social process of particular societal contexts, whether they may be classrooms, schools or whole organizations and typically involves developments and interventions into those processes to bring about change and improvement. The research is located within the systematic observation and analysis of the developments and changes that eventuate in order to identify the underlying rationale. For the action and to make further changes as required based on findings and outcomes. The driving purpose for the AR process is to bridge the gap between the ideal (the most effective ways of doing things) and the real (the actual ways of doing things) in the social situation.”

While doing action research, teachers are required to name the problem first. Then, they try to propose solutions for that problem by analyzing or evaluating the existing problematic action. Thus, action research provides teachers an investigative stand and it includes observation which makes teacher candidates be aware of the gap between their teaching and learning experienced by students (Liston and Zeichner 1990; Rock and Levin 2002). In addition, with the help of this observation, teacher candidates can identify problems, collect evidence, make an analysis of that evidence and, eventually, draw conclusions to remedy that problem (Falk and Blumenrich 2005).

Allwright (2004) indicates that teachers should focus on ‘*quality of life*’ in language classrooms. That is, each classroom life is unique and has its own characteristics, so teachers need to address this uniqueness. In order to find out the elements making up a classroom life, autonomous teachers search for his classroom needs, interests and

preferences. Teacher autonomy requires teachers to work within the social context of classroom in order to understand and evaluate students' wants and choices.

In order for teachers to participate in action research, teacher training is imperative. Inquiry and research might be incorporated in teacher preparation programs because previous action research studies done by Carr and Kemmis (1986) indicate that candidate teachers may become critical and analytical through action research and their self-confidence is enhanced (Goodnough 2005).

Similarly, action research develops both in-service and pre-service teachers in terms of introducing process of inquiry. It helps them to narrow the gap between theory and practice because they may become more equipped. Also, teachers can self-observe themselves so that they can find out shortcomings of their own teaching.

In addition to journal writing and action research, there are other tools for developing teacher autonomy. '*Use of European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Language Teachers (EPOSTL)*' is one of them (Official website of EPOSTL; [www.epostl2.ecml.at](http://www.epostl2.ecml.at)).

The EPOSTL was developed for the European Centre for modern languages of the council of Europe by a team of teacher educators from five different countries: Austria, Armenia, Norway, Poland, and UK. It aims:

- to harmonize teacher education across Europe
- to promote self-assessment of students
- to help students to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses
- to provide support during teaching practice with mentors

EPOSTL includes 3 sections:

- 1) **Personal Statement:** In this section, student-teachers think about matters which are important for teacher education and express them.
- 2) **Self-assessment:** It includes 193 descriptors for student teachers to assess themselves. The descriptors are grouped within the following categories:
  - *Context*
  - *Methodology*



- *Resources*
- *Lesson planning*
- *Conduction a lesson*
- *Independent Learning*
- *Assessment of learning*

**3) The Dossier:** Its function is to help students to show evidence of ‘can do’ statements. The dossier can include lesson observation, reports, checklists and case studies.

EPOSTL can be seen as a tool for fostering autonomous learning in teacher education. In this way, it is important because if autonomy is not aimed at teacher education, it could be a waste of time to promote learner autonomy (Little 1995).

Balçıkınlı and Çakır (2012) carried out a study in order to find out the perceptions of student teachers regarding the EPOSTL experiences. Findings showed that student teachers found EPOSTL helpful for monitoring their self-development and they thought that EPOSTL improved student teachers’ teaching practices through reflection.

Apart from these, there are other ways to foster teacher autonomy in teacher education programs. Lamb (2000) proposed peer-assessment. With the help of peer assessment teachers can learn from each other through critical judgments about their peers’ teaching. Thus, peer assessment can be considered as a learning instrument. Through this instrument, reflective teaching might be fostered as well.

Sluijsmans (2006) conducted a study in which the student teachers participated. One group of participants was given peer-assessment training and the other was not. The findings showed that the group which was given training was better at evaluating peers and they produced more constructive comments. This was because that group was equipped with a systematic assessment plan in which goals and criteria were clearly set. This study points out that in order to get benefit from peer-assessment, student-teachers need to be given systematic peer-assessment training in teacher training programs.

Teachers can assess their peers in the following dimensions: a) preparation, b) presentation, c) execution/method, d) personal characteristics and e) teacher-student interaction (Brown 2001). Assessment of teachers in those dimensions can be helpful for assessed teachers since they can have a chance for questioning their approaches or teaching ideas generally and, consequently, they can develop professional skills. This can, also, contribute to teacher autonomy to be flourished because it makes teacher collaborate because teacher autonomy has a socially constructed base where teachers can act as learners at sometimes and benefit from experiences or ideas of their peers so that they can understand and work out instructional or behavioral problems occurring in or out of classroom.

Similarly, Joyce & Showers (1982) propose peer-coaching as a tool for developing teaching. Robbins (1991) defines peer-coaching as it follows:

“a confidential process through which two or more professional colleagues work together to reflect on current practices; expand, refine, and build new skills; share ideas; teach one another; conduct classroom research; or solve problems in the workplace.”

Coached teachers can be observed and they can get feedback in return from their coaches. Feedbacks may be helpful for making reflections. In addition, Neubert and Stover (1994) state:

“Studies have shown that peer-coaching is effective in helping teachers to apply new skills and strategies in their classroom to develop a sense of collegiality and professionalism and to assume a reflective stance towards their teaching.”

Through this collegiality and collaboration, coached teachers can get an idea when to use a technic or what will happen if they use that technic. This could provide them with problem solving skills.

Vieira (2000), also, suggests that teaching training programs should attach importance to educational communities where teacher could express their beliefs, assumptions and ideas about teaching. Rubin (as cited in Vieira 2000) claims: “Let others hear your own voice, such is the assumption underlying the need to stop teachers from living in professional quarantine”. Without any community, teachers can feel themselves in

low status and unprotected against pressures of educational or institutional policies; however, within an educational community, they can collaborate so that they can raise their voices and get empowered against these pressures and become self-confident.

Kojima (2008) indicates that collaboration provides autonomous learning and teaching in classes as it gives teachers self-confidence and chances for sharing teaching ideas. By exchanging ideas, teachers can develop new strategies. Considering the common features of peer assessment, peer coaching and presence of educational communities, one can easily see the common nature of them. They all put emphasis on 'collaborative act'.

It is an unquestionable fact that that newly graduated teachers may become like a fish out of water when they start practicing their teaching in real settings, that is, schools. They are required to adjust to new structures. As Vye et al. (2002) states: "Language teaching is the process of exploration." Teachers need to develop the flexibility about how and what to use in terms of exploring teaching approaches. In order to achieve this flexibility, teachers should be well-trained about developing autonomy.

When the teachers are in training process, they can be made to come across some possible problems and as a result of this; they can be encouraged to find solutions to those problems. Cotteral and Crabble (2002) mention the effectiveness of using a problem-solution framework which makes trainee teachers discover solutions to possible problems in class. In order to come up with practical solutions and achieve problem solving skills, teacher candidates may need to teach different classes in different schools. This could be possible if a well-established collaboration existed between schools and universities.

Heath (1995) states:

"When pre-service teachers have more highly structured opportunities working in a setting geared to support their preparation as teachers, they will have a much greater likelihood of becoming truly highly qualified to teach."

Teachers can be provided with rich teaching opportunities in different schools since they are likely to find the chance of observing learners who have different socio-economic backgrounds, language background and behavior patterns. They can find out which method works or does not work in which situation. This will be helpful for teachers to give practical on- the- spot decisions against chaotic situations occurring in class. Therefore,

teachers can develop autonomy; they can determine or create their own teaching path according to their evaluations and reflections in cooperation with other pre-service teachers and teachers at practice schools or mentors at universities.

## **2.3 Factors Affecting Teacher Autonomy**

### **2.3.1 Positive Factors**

As teacher autonomy requires willingness of teachers to take responsibility for their own teaching and make any reflections regarding their teaching activities, it would not be mistaken to claim that motivation may be a source from which teachers can get energy for developing autonomy.

Harmer (2001) defines motivation as some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something. It could be clearly indicated that motivation is a driving force for teachers to develop their teaching. Pearson and Moomaw (2005) discuss motivation's effect on teacher autonomy by handling the concept of motivation within these sub-categories: 'intrinsic motivation' and 'extrinsic motivation.' They indicate that intrinsic factors include a) desire to help students achieve, b) desire to make a difference, c) a sense of accomplishment when they see a student learn and d) other non-tangible concepts whereas extrinsic factors are pay, non-monetary fringe benefits and recognition of performance to motivate teachers.

Some studies (NIE 1981; Nero 1995) show that intrinsic motivation is much more effective for teachers; therefore, intrinsic rewards are suggested for developing autonomy in teachers. This may be due to the fact that intrinsic motivation includes the desire of the teacher himself which may urge him to take the initiative and make a difference in his teaching. Additionally, intrinsic motivators provide 'achievement recognition', 'work responsibility' and 'feedback' for teachers (Herzberg 1959). That is, when a teacher sees his students achieving learning goals, thereby making a difference in their schemas he creates a sense of accomplishment which is likely to give self-confidence, enable him to create new ways of teaching, make adaptations to new situations or make his own decisions according to his evaluation on what he has/has not accomplished. Thus, he can direct himself with the help of feedback s/he has obtained through his own actions.

A teacher's motivation may depend on how satisfied that teacher is. Job satisfaction is likely to influence the teacher's motivation level, indirectly, autonomy level. Perie (1997) defines job satisfaction as it follows: "An overall feeling about one's own job or career in terms of specific facets of the job or career." If the feeling is positive, which means there is job satisfaction, teachers are more likely to perform well and stay committed to their jobs. Perie and Baker (1997) claim that there is a positive correlation between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction. In parallel, Moomaw (2006) indicates that autonomy is a factor for which is consistent with the need for staying satisfied.

Job satisfaction enhances the enthusiasm. If there is dissatisfaction, teachers are likely to be less motivated (Ostroff 1992) and this dissatisfaction can kill the spirit of teaching, causing teacher burnout. According to Hakanen et al. (2006), teacher burnout is correlated negatively with motivation and job satisfaction. In consequence, teachers whose burnout level is high may lack autonomy since the degree of autonomy is indicative of job satisfaction (Franklin, 1988, Pearson and Hall 1993).

In addition to motivation and job satisfaction, self-efficacy may be a positive factor affecting teacher autonomy. This is obvious in Benard's (1995) definition of autonomy:

"Autonomy is having a sense of one's ability, own identity and an ability to act independently and to exert some control over one's own environment, including a sense of task mastery, internal locus of control and self-efficacy."

Self-efficacy can be considered as a helping tool for fostering autonomy since self-efficient teachers are the ones who have strong beliefs and confidence in their abilities. These teachers can cooperate easily with other colleagues and take the initiatives for solving major problems related with learning, teaching or learners' behaviors.

The word 'autonomy' is associated with 'initiative', 'charge' and 'discretion' (Friedman 1999) which may be the tenets of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as 'people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance' (Bandura 1986).

If teachers get disapproval from their institutions, colleagues or parents, this will likely cause teachers to question their effectiveness in ability to teach. Teachers with low self-efficacy can be unmotivated, thus they can avoid tasks and they cannot be good risk-

task takers (Khurshid, Qasmi and Ashraf 2012). When teachers perceive lack of control and have sense of powerlessness, they can get stressed and frustrated easily (Bacharach, Bauer, Conley and 1986), which can result in loss of self-commitment to profession.

On the other hand, if they teach in a setting which enhances their self-efficacy, pressures on them can be reduced and autonomy supportive climate can be created (Leroy, Sarrazin and Trouilloud 2007). Self-efficient teachers are more likely to use creative methods and sufficient teaching methods for classroom management.

Moreover, school climate may have a crucial role in affecting teacher autonomy. School climate can be composed of some variables like school wide policy, collaboration and collegiality between colleagues.

School wide policy can affect teacher autonomy in a positive way if it supports involvement of teachers on school decisions. Firestone and Bader (1992) claim that top down imposition is against developing professional development. Ingersoll and Alsalam (1997) define teacher authority as the degree of individual autonomy exercised by teachers over planning and teaching within classroom.

Montgomery (2011), in her study, finds significant relationship between higher autonomy scores and individual planning and teaching methods since teachers who can make independent decisions are likely to make reasonable educational decisions in their practices (Brown 1980; Glatthorn 1987). Supporting these views, NCES (1997) reports claim: "Involving teachers in school wide policy decisions and giving them some degree of control in their classrooms are associated with high levels of career satisfaction." This satisfaction can enhance their self-efficacy and self-confidence.

However, Zajona and Mitchell (2001) indicate that schools try fostering independence yet they demand dependence. They encourage autonomy but sticks to control. Therefore, the school policy may be of crucial importance in fostering autonomy by involving teachers of that school in educational practices or decisions.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, other variables that affect teacher autonomy are collaboration and collegiality. These two terms are used interchangeably yet it may be better to highlight their difference. Kelchtermans (2006) indicates the difference between

these two terms as in the following: “Whereas collaboration is a descriptive term, referring to cooperative actions; collegiality refers to the quality of the relationship among staff members in school.” These terms have become popular in the 80’s (Kelchtermans 2006) and some researchers like Wildman & Niles (1987) touch upon their relation with teacher autonomy by stating: “Autonomy and collegiality complement each other.” It is obvious that autonomy and collegiality cannot be considered as separate because autonomy cannot be fostered without establishing collegiality. Collegiality may be an opportunity for creating learning experiences through transferring knowledge or ideas between novice and experienced teachers (Clement and Vandenberghe 2000). This could be helpful for novice teachers to better the process of problem solving and decision making.

Smith (2000) views teacher autonomy as the ability to develop teachers in cooperation with others. That is, collaboration and collegiality are necessary items which can provide teachers with support and a common knowledge (Little 1982); thus, teachers can perform better.

Isolation or what Franklin (1988) calls as ‘alienation’ cannot be the spirit of autonomy (Fraser and Sorenson 1992) since they can leave teachers uncertain about decision making (Rosenholtz 1989).

Instead, in a collegial environment, teachers can receive or give feedback or they can gather information and exchange ideas through mutual support, which may be beneficial for making reflections upon teaching practices. Little (1990) views this mutual work ‘as collective conception of autonomy.’

### **2.3.2 Negative Factors Affecting Teacher Autonomy**

Negative factors affecting teacher autonomy can be grouped within two titles:

- a) factors related with working conditions
- b) factors related with educational policies

With regard to working conditions, factors such as *contrived collegiality* (Hargreaver 1994), *lack of time* (Peters 2004), *workload*, *lack of support* (Frodden and Picon 2005), *burnout* and *stress* (Kyriacou 1989) can be listed.

Hargreaves (1994) coined the phrase contrived collegiality which describes involuntary and uncollaborative relationships among teachers. These problematic interrelationships may cause isolation, which can also cause the lack of support among teachers. Consequently, with the decline of support, both shared responsibility and shared workload can decrease.

Heavy workload, in addition, may be counted as a big constraint on teacher autonomy since it can reduce teachers' time for making reflections. Thus, it can affect the quality of instruction and teaching energy. Due to lack of time and, consequently, pressure of work, isolation can be unavoidable.

This kind of pressure can cause job stress. Davis and Wilson (2000) indicate that autonomy is highly dependent on job stress because it can decrease motivation and teachers can feel they have little or no control over their teaching.

As for policy factors, curriculum and centralized testing may be considered as having an effect upon teacher autonomy. Curriculum development in most of the countries follows a top down model in which teacher involvement is confined. In top-down curriculum system, decision is made by the supreme authority in the educational system. As a result of this, teachers may be limited because they cannot choose their own contents or determine their own timing for teaching. Actually, teaching is dynamic and it can sometimes require alternative ways in itself because a teacher may find it difficult to use a general curriculum in each learning situation as every class has its own local requirements, own interests and own needs. Therefore, a top down application may be an impediment for teachers to become autonomous. In order to succeed in being autonomous, a teacher had better be free while he is practicing his/her teaching. Therefore, curriculum developers should involve teachers (Silberstein and Ben-Peretz 1987). Glatthorn (1987) states: "The teacher is the curriculum. They do not neutrally implement the curriculum. They adapt, translate and modify and develop their own." Teachers can be considered as real creators of the curriculum. They can make necessary modifications in the curriculum in order to adapt it according to level of students.

It cannot be questionable that curriculum has a guiding power for teacher yet it may sometimes prevent teachers from creating new and original ideas. In other words, their



critical thinking is restricted (Hood 2011). It would be better if teachers were given a right for examining curriculum materials so that they might choose the appropriate ones according to the student needs.

However, in Turkey, course books have been written, published and distributed by Ministry of Education. All the students use same books across the country. That is, teachers seem to have no discretion to choose or not to choose those course books, which takes teacher autonomy away. Teachers' professional control over the goals and content of the lesson obviously decreases. This kind of standardization across the country can be seen as a weapon pointed at teacher creativity. In this content, as Wolk (2010) claims: "Standardization is the antithesis of personalization". Standardization may highly be obvious in centralized exams which are applied to students. Almost all educational systems examine students' achievement via these centralized exams. These exams tend to be based on the national curriculum. They are called as 'centralized' due to the administration policy of the national government. Centralized exams consist of questions about different school subjects and tend to measure students' performance on those subjects. However, these questions are designed according to the national curriculum which has been designed by the superior authority in the Ministry, as previously noted. Therefore, it can be rather difficult for a teacher to prepare his students for a centralized exam whose content has been prepared without including or involving teachers themselves. Nevertheless, the teacher may find himself obliged to prepare his students for those exams as the school managers sometimes can put pressure on teachers to make their students more successful, which is, in turn, enhancing the institution' prestige. The more students are placed in better schools, the more the institutions enhance their reputation and, in turn, they become the most preferred schools. As a result, the teacher is torn between his own ideology about teaching and the competence among institutions. Flett and Wallace (2005) indicate this situation as 'autonomy dilemma' Teachers are required to become autonomous and foster autonomy in students; on the other hand, teachers are pushed into organizing their teaching according to the content of the test, which is an 'affront to teacher professionalism.' (Kubow and DeBard 2000). This is against teacher professionalism since teachers are obliged to be concerned with testing through a prescribed curriculum and provided materials; they are

left no freedom to make any decisions or adaptations on their teaching. Instead, they are informed about what to teach in a pre-determined way.

Runte (1998) summarizes the impact of centralized testing on teacher professionalism as follows:

“Centralized testing threatens teachers’ professional control in four ways 1) by deskilling the testing portion of the evaluation function, 2) by enforcing a centralized curriculum 3) by removing teacher’s right to evaluate the outcome of their own activity and 4) by introducing new (and possibly inappropriate) measures of teacher productivity.”

Teachers, unfortunately, are forced to evaluate their students in line with centralized exams; that is, they produce or use multiple choice questions which are similar to centralized exam questions, which means teachers are left to use one-dimensional evaluation method.

#### **2.4 Centralized Exams in Turkey**

Unfortunately, Turkey’s educational system suffers from top down curriculum and centralized exam issue. Teacher autonomy may be hindered accordingly. According to Fretwell and Wheeler (as cited in Akşit 2007), Turkey has the most centralized education system among Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member states. This centralized structure is visibly observed in the centralized exams because curriculum development, choice of text books and supplementary materials are chosen according to these exams. This, certainly, may have a limiting effect on teachers’ autonomy for decision making and conveying the decision process. Vorkink (2006) states:

“Compared with Europe and most of the world, Turkey’s public schools have the least autonomy over resources, staff deployment (at the school), and textbook selection, allocation of instructional time and selection of programs offered.”

Certainly, this situation can possibly have an effect on the teachers working at these public schools, both in high schools and middle schools. Teachers can find themselves in situations forcing them to follow a centralized curriculum because centralized exams include questions from this centralized curriculum. As a result of this enforcement, freedom of productivity may be neglected.

Yılmaz and Altinkurt (2011) conducted a study to find out the views of student-teachers on Turkish Education System and 54% of the participants labeled 'centralized exams' as one of the most problematic issues in Turkish education system. They indicate that these exams move students towards an education which puts emphasis on memorizing the knowledge not on analyzing or evaluating the knowledge and, as a result, students become loads of information. Apparently, both teachers and students suffer from the centralized exams.

Students may view the school subjects as a tool for passing standardized exams; if they perform well, they can be placed in successful schools and get a high-quality education. Therefore, parents make their children take private lessons or attend private courses in order to become more successful than their rivals, which turns education into a race.

Students take different exams according to the teaching level: Secondary school students take Achievement Determination Exam (SBS) whereas high school students take Undergraduate Placement Exam (LYS) and University Entrance Exam (YGS).

To start with SBS, it could be said that it has a complicated history because many changes have been made in the format of this exam. In 1997-1998 educational year, the name of Anatolian and Science High Schools Entrance exam was changed as High School Entrance Exam (LGS) and it included 100 multiple choice questions on Turkish, Math, Science and Social Sciences. Then, its name was changed into Secondary Education Student Selection and Placement Exam (OKS) in 2004. Just 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were sitting for this exam covered the curriculum of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades (Official website of Ministry of Education; [www.meb.gov.tr](http://www.meb.gov.tr)).

In 2007, SBS was replaced by OKS. Students take SBS exam at the end of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Also, this year, for the first time, the exam included Foreign Language questions (English, German or French).

In the following table, the distribution and number of the questions are provided: (Official website of Education Technologies; [www.egitek.meb.gov.tr](http://www.egitek.meb.gov.tr))

*Table 2.1 The distribution of the questions*

<b>Grades</b>	<b>Turkish Questions</b>	<b>Math Questions</b>	<b>Science Questions</b>	<b>Social Sciences Questions</b>	<b>Foreign Language Questions</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>(n)</b>	<b>(n)</b>	<b>(n)</b>	<b>(n)</b>	<b>(n)</b>	<b>(n)</b>
<b>6<sup>th</sup> grade</b>	19	16	16	16	13	80
<b>7<sup>th</sup> grade</b>	21	18	18	18	15	90
<b>8<sup>th</sup> grade</b>	23	20	20	20	17	100

In 2010, Ministry of Education reported that these exams which are subject to constant change each year put a lot of stress on students; therefore, SBS was decided to be administered to merely 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, based on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade's curriculum. The distribution and number of the questions remained the same (Official Website of Education Technologies; See: [www.egitek.meb.gov.tr](http://www.egitek.meb.gov.tr)).

It can be concluded that SBS has been administered to just 8<sup>th</sup> grade students since 2010. As can be seen easily, it includes questions on Turkish, Math, Science, Social Sciences and Foreign Languages (English, German or French). It does not cover Music, Art, Physical Education or any other elective courses.

While measuring the performance of students, the following co-efficient rates are utilized:

*Table 2.2 Co-efficient rates of the subjects*

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Co-Efficient</b>
Turkish	4

Math	4
Science	3
Social Science	3
Foreign Language	1

As can be seen from the Table 1.2, the lowest co-efficient belongs to foreign language.

The content of foreign language section of the exam is prepared based on the curriculum of 8<sup>th</sup> grade, which is presented below (English Language Curriculum for Primary Education 2006)

- *Present Continuous Tense*
- *Present Simple Tense*
- *Future Tense (Be going to & Will)*
- *Past Simple*
- *Past Progressive (when & while)*
- *Present Perfect Tense (ever, never, before, just, already, yet, for since)*
- *Conjunctions (why, because, in order to, in case, so that)*
- *Adjectives & Adverbs (with prefixes and suffixes)*
- *Too & Enough*
- *Would rather, had better, prefer*
- *Modals*

Across Turkey, all the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students (if their foreign language is English!) are responsible for this content in SBS.

University entrance exams (LYS and YGS) have a complicated history as well because they have undergone tremendous transitions. They were commonly named as

Student Selection and Placement Exam (OSYS) up until 1999. Then, it changed as Student Selection Exam (OSS). OSS which, in turn, included totally 180 multiple choice questions on Turkish, Math, Psychics, Chemistry, Geography, History and Philosophy. Students were responsible for the questions on their specialization areas. In addition to OSS, Foreign Language Exam (YDS) was administered for students who study foreign languages in high schools. YDS included 100 multiple choice questions and the distribution of the questions were indicated in Table 2.3 (Official website of Student Selection and Placement Center and Council of Higher Education [www.osym.gov.tr](http://www.osym.gov.tr); [www.yok.gov.tr](http://www.yok.gov.tr) )

*Table 2.3 Distribution of the questions according to content areas*

<b>Content Area</b>	<b>Number of the Questions (n)</b>
Translation	15
Vocabulary-Grammar	25
Reading Comprehension	60

In 2005, OSS exam changed and covered the knowledge which is not on the students' areas of specialization. The content of YDS remained the same at the time.

In 2010, the examination system changed; OSS exam was divided into two separate exams: YGS and LYS. YGS exam includes 160 multiple choice questions on Social Sciences, Sciences, Turkish and Math. This exam is for all the high school students irrespective of their specialization areas.

As for LYS, it is divided into 5 groups: LYS-1 for Math, LYS-2 for Sciences and LYS-3 for Turkish Literature and Geography, LYS-4 for Social Sciences and, finally, LYS-5 for Foreign Languages (English, German or French). Students take those exams according to their specialization areas. Consequently, YDS exam changed into LYS-5 and the number of the questions was reduced. Since that time, LYS-5 included 80 questions and the distribution of the questions are presented below (Student Selection and Placement Center; [www.osym.gov.tr](http://www.osym.gov.tr) ):

*Table 2.4 Distribution of the questions according to content areas*

<b>Content Area</b>	<b>Number of the Questions (n)</b>
Translation	20
Vocabulary-Grammar	12
Reading Comprehension	48

Finally, it would not be mistaken to claim that centralized exams for both secondary school students and high school students have undergone lots of changes for a decade. As a result, not only students but also teachers may be negatively affected from these rapid changes.

### **2.5 Centralized Exams in Turkey and Its Implications on Teacher Autonomy**

In Turkey, examination system constitutes an important part in education system. The execution of these exams differs according to by whom they are conducted. Are they designed and carried out by individual teachers? Or, are they conducted by an entity external to schools? (Woessman 2002) In Turkey, SBS exam is designed and administered by Ministry of Education whereas YGS and LYS exams are designed and executed by Student Selection and Placement Center (OSYM). With these exams, students' achievement in different school subjects is measured and according to test results, they are placed in high schools (with SBS) and universities (YGS and LYS). The better the students perform in the exams, the better schools they attend. At this point, the teacher is given a responsibility to make the students perform well in those exams and attend high quality schools. Teachers may feel the pressure upon themselves because schools that do well in the exams are sometimes rewarded and those that do worse may be warned by education authorities. (Roth, Assor, Kanat-Maymon and Kaplan 2007) Therefore, the teachers are required to do their best to teach according to the content of the exams. In other words, they compete against other teachers and other students in other schools. In this competing process, teachers are deliberately forced to teach tested content. The activities, the design

of the course and timing are planned according to the syllabuses of SBS or YGS-LYS exams. Ryan and Brown (2005) summarize:

“Teachers are being encouraged or required to reallocate time away from core subjects not tested on state examinations and to eliminate or curtail special projects, experiments, library research, extensive writing or oral assignments.”

In parallel, Wright (2009) indicates that students are taught to find out testing clues instead of cognitive skills. This may likely to cause ‘curriculum narrowing’ (Donnelly and Sadler 2009) which means teachers eliminate the content which will not be tested and they act in a more controlling way towards their students.

Therefore, the issue of teacher autonomy may become questionable since the teacher given a pre-determined exam curriculum to be followed. This top-down administrative pressure is likely to make teachers teach in a controlling way, which is against their values and views. They may be torn between their pedagogical knowledge and requirement of education policy.

Şimşek (2006) points out that within Turkey’s national education system, the teacher may be perceived as a being who is obliged to execute education programs which are given by Board of Education. In addition, he believed that this kind of understanding was possibly stemmed from ‘factory-type education’, which means an education system that is designed by education authorities and that perceives the teacher as a ‘worker’ working in that education factory. In this system, teachers are at the core of government intervention (Luke 2004). They tend to make decisions according to the curriculum established by the government. This, consequently, may cause increased stress and reduction in self-efficacy in teachers.

In Turkey, teachers, mostly, design ‘test-worthy’ activities (Margheim 2001) such as multiple choice questions and according to Education Reform Initiative (ERG 2010) reports, it is found out that teaching is conveyed through these multiple choice questions and the students merely focus on test-solving skills. In other words, teachers teach to test.

Furthermore, since text books are distributed as free of charge for students and they are obligatory for teachers to use, (teachers are not allowed to use any text book apart from these obligatory text books) this may be perceived as a big threat to teacher autonomy.



Teachers cannot determine even the main material of the course. However, Ministry of Education claim that free distribution of text books provides equality of opportunity since each student has access to the same book across the country, thereby making a standard curriculum for the exams.

All in all, it would not be mistaken to claim that Turkey has a centralized education system and teachers are taught to deliver what curriculum prescribes for the sake of exams. The way forward for making English language teachers autonomous practitioners is impeded by the constraints of the centralized exams.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the methodology applied in this study is explained. First of all, objectives and research questions are stated and design of the research is presented. Secondly, information about pilot study which was used to measure reliability and validity of data collection tools is provided. Thirdly, and finally, main study is introduced with settings, participants and data collection instruments.

#### 3.1 Objectives and Research Questions

This study has the purpose of finding out whether self-perceptions of teacher autonomy differ according to teaching levels. Also, it explores the factors that have relevance to self-perceptions of autonomy. The following research questions are considered in this study:

**Research Question 1:** What are the overall perceptions of teacher autonomy for middle school and high school English language teachers?

**Research Question 2:** Is there any difference in self-perceptions of English teachers teaching in middle schools and high schools in Turkey in terms of teacher autonomy?

**Research Question 3:** Do the genders, age and teacher experience demonstrate any difference in terms of self-perceptions regarding teacher autonomy?

**Research Question 4:** Do centralized exams have an impact on self-perceptions of teacher autonomy for middle and high school English teachers in Turkey?

### 3.2 Developing Questionnaire

In this pilot study, Teacher Autonomy Scale (TAS) was employed as a data collection instrument. TAS was developed by Pearson and Hall (1993) and it was comprised of 18 questions within one section entitled ‘Teaching Information.’ TAS was a 4-point likert scale, designed as ‘*Definitely True*’, ‘*More or Less True*’, ‘*More or Less False*’ and ‘*Definitely False*’. However, as the researcher thought that there could be some respondents who feel neutral about the questions addressed to himself in the questionnaire and in order to enable respondents to choose one option that best aligns with their view, four-point likert scale was enhanced up to 5- point likert scale. The format of this likert scale took the form including ‘*Strongly Agree*’, ‘*Agree*’, ‘*Neutral*’, ‘*Disagree*’, and ‘*Strongly Disagree*.’ Thus, it was considered to allow participants to choose among five degrees of feeling and thought.

As the research questions have revealed, the independent variables of this study are ‘*age*’, ‘*experience*’ and ‘*teaching level*’, four items questioning the information about age, experience and teaching level of the participants were added. Participants, firstly, were required to answer these items before answering the questions in ‘Teaching Information’ section. Thus, data would be analyzed according to the information they provided in the beginning of the questionnaire and it would be easier to find out whether these independent variables have a significant impact on self-perceptions of teacher autonomy or not.

In addition, since this research, also, aims at finding out the impacts of centralized exams on self-perceptions of teacher autonomy for teachers teaching in middle and high schools, the researcher added 6 questions for this purpose. These questions were as in the following:

**Item Number 4:** *I apply tests which can prepare my students for the centralized exams.*

**Item Number 8:** *The central exams have an impact on my scheduling of time.*

**Item Number 10:** *I define my own teaching procedures according to the centralized exams.*

**Item Number 16:** *Centralized exams determine my way of teaching.*

**Item Number 19:** *The materials I use in the classroom are up to the centralized exams.*

**Item Number 21:** *I organize my activities in the light of centralized exams.*

**Item Number 23:** *The content and skills I teach is determined by the curriculum of centralized exams.*

**Item Number 26:** *Centralized exams mainly impact my motivation level in classroom management. (e.g., setting classroom rules, resolving student behaviors, usage of reinforcements)*

### 3.3 Piloting the Questionnaire

Baker (1994) states that pilot studies are the pre-testing or trying out of a research instrument. By means of a pilot study, the researcher can measure the internal validity and reliability of data instrument tools. For instance, if participants have found some questions ambiguous or unclear, those questions can be revised and re-worded. In actual fact, although conducting pilot studies seems time-consuming, they could be time-savers since pilot studies can anticipate some possible problems. This could provide researcher a chance to address these problems before conducting the study. Also, the researcher sometimes may need to revise, change or write new hypotheses in the light of pilot study.

Therefore, in order to detect possible problems regarding data collection tools, a pilot study was carried out. Information about participants who took place in this pilot study was summarized in Table 3.1 below:

*Table 3.1 Information about participants*

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b><u>Gender</u></b>		
Male	13	46.4
Female	15	53.6
Total	28	100

<b><u>Age</u></b>		
22-27	11	39.28
28-33	4	14.29
34-39	5	17.85
40-45	4	14.29
46 and above	4	14.29
Total	28	100
<b><u>Experience</u></b>		
1-5 years	12	42.85
6-11 years	1	3.57
12-18 years	7	25
19-24 years	4	14.29
25 years-above	4	14.29
Total	28	100
<b><u>Teaching Level</u></b>		
Secondary School	15	53.6
High School	13	46.4
Total	28	100

The pilot study was carried out in two weeks, starting on March 1, 2013 and finishing on March 15, 2013.

This pilot study was conducted for testing the reliability of the questionnaires and interview. To analyze the reliability of the items in the questionnaire in Teaching Information Part, Cronbach Alpha value was computed. Cronbach Alpha is an index of reliability of a multiple-item scale (Hatcher 1994). It ranges between '0' and '1'. Values which are 0.7 and above can be considered as acceptable. As the following table points out, the questionnaire has the sufficient reliability value.

*Table 3.2 Reliability value of the pilot study*

Questionnaire	Cronbach Alpha's Value
Teaching Information	.840

As a result, it could be easily said that data collection tools were designed appropriately for the main study since they have a good degree of consistency, practicality and reliability.

### **3.4 Main Study**

#### **3.4.1 Setting**

The study was carried out in Sakarya, a city which is located in the North-East part of Marmara Region. As the city is located in the arteries of commerce between Ankara and Istanbul, the city can be considered as an industrial city. Thus, population of the city has been on increase.

This study took place in Adapazarı, Serdivan and Erenler which are the central towns in Sakarya. In order to carry out the study, permission from the Ministry of National Education District Office which was located in the Town of Adapazarı was acquired (See Appendix C). Totally 28 schools which include Anatolian High Schools, High Schools, Vocational High Schools and Middle Schools across these towns were visited in order to carry out the study.

#### **3.4.2 Participants**

The study was conducted with teachers teaching at middle and high schools in Sakarya. Firstly, the data of all middle and high schools located in three towns (Adapazarı, Erenler, Serdivan) where the research would take place were identified through Ministry of National Education's websites ([www.sakarya.meb.gov.tr](http://www.sakarya.meb.gov.tr)). This was necessary for specifying the number of teachers. Totally, 87 teachers participated in this study. However, in terms of teaching levels, almost equal numbers of teachers were distributed to each group. The distribution of the sampling group in terms of teaching level is provided below:

*Table 3.3 Distribution of the participants according to teaching levels*

<b>Teaching Level</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Middle School	43	49.4
High School	44	50.6
Total	87	100

Of 87 teachers who participated in the study, 43 of them were middle school English language teachers while 44 of them were high school English language teachers. The number of both groups is almost equal due to the fact that the main purpose of this study is to find out whether self-perceptions of teacher autonomy may differ in teaching levels. Therefore, in order to collect significant data, the number of each group was rendered almost equal on purpose.

Participant teachers' ages ranged between 22 and 51. Table 3.4 shows the frequency of teachers in age groups.

*Table 3.4 Distribution of participants according to age*

<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
22-27	33	37.9
28-33	21	24.1
34-39	14	16.1
40-45	12	13.8
46-above	7	8.00
Total	28	100

Table 3.4 shows that the majority of teachers whose ages ranged between 22 and 27 (38 %). This was followed by the teachers who were aged between 28 and 33 with a percentage of 24. Teachers who were 46 and above were the minority group with 8%.

As for the gender of the participants, Table 3.5 summarized this information as follows:

*Table 3.5 Distribution of participants according to gender*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	38	43.7
Female	49	56.3
Total	87	100

Table 3.5 shows that 38 out of 87 were male teachers whereas 49 teachers were female. It is obvious that female teachers are more than male ones. In actual fact, it is not surprising because generally females prefer ELT departments in Turkey.

With regard to years of experience, Table 3.6 provides the necessary information about participants in that matter:

*Table 3.6 Distribution of participants according to years of experience*

<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1-5	36	41.4
6-11	17	19.5
12-18	16	18.4
19-24	11	12.6
25-above	7	8.00
Total	87	100



According to Table 3.6, nearly half of the teachers (41%) have teaching experience between 1 and 5 years. As the years of experience increase, the percentage decreases. In fact, this is not very surprising because the years of experience are compatible with the distribution of age groups (See Table 3.4).

### **3.4.3 Instruments**

In order to convey this study, two types of research instruments were used: a questionnaire (See Appendix A) and face-to-face semi-structured interview (See Appendix B).

#### **a) Questionnaire**

The questionnaire-Teacher Autonomy Scale- which was used in the study was originally developed by Pearson and Hall (1993) and it consisted of 18 questions. In addition, it was a 4-point Likert Scale which had 'Definitely True', 'More or Less True', 'More or Less False' and 'Definitely False'. The format of these points was modified as 'Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'Neutral', 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree'. The researcher thought that increasing the number of points could enable participants to choose the best option they found appropriate for themselves. Also, in its original form, there was no option for indecisive participants such as 'neutral'. Participants were obliged to choose either 'More or Less True' or 'More or Less False', which could have led to unreliable results. It was thought that adding 'Neutral' option would overcome this problem.

As pointed before, TAS originally had 18 questions; however in order to investigate the effect of centralized exams on teacher autonomy, 6 questions were added as already mentioned in this study.

In addition to that, since this study aims at investigating the constructs such as gender, age, teaching level and years of experience, participants were required to fill in the blanks regarding that information in the beginning of the questionnaire.

### **b) Semi-Structured Interview**

The researcher thought that applying a semi-structured interview could provide a data richness in this study. Interview questions were prepared by taking questionnaire questions into consideration. It included six questions and the questions were as follows:

- 1) How do you think that centralized exams can affect what you teach in class?
- 2) Do you think that you can create your own teaching approach or are there any other factors that prevent you from creativity?
- 3) Do you think that you feel free while selecting language materials or activities?
- 4) How do you think that centralized exams can affect your classroom management by considering in terms of autonomy? Do you think it has an impact on your way of setting class rules, behavior standards or disciplining students?
- 5) Do you think that centralized exams have an impact on your assessment and evaluation tools by considering your own perceptions of autonomy?
- 6) Do you believe that being an autonomous teacher leads you to the effective use of time?

Of 87 participants, 5 middle school English language teachers and 5 high school English language teachers were selected. Interviews were held in teachers' room with those teachers. In each interview, the researcher, firstly, introduced herself and provided necessary information about the purpose of the research. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed by the researcher.

#### **3.4.4 Data Collection**

In this study, as data collection tools, quantitative (the questionnaire) and qualitative (semi-structured interview) tools were used. Before using these tools, necessary permission from Ministry of Education District Office was taken. Then, totally 28 middle and high schools were visited and teachers were informed about the purpose of the study. In order to avoid any problem related with reliability and validity, teachers who were voluntary to fill the questionnaire were contacted in person. After administering questionnaires, semi-structured interviews were used. 5 middle school English language teachers and 5 high

school English language teachers who were willing to participate in the interview were chosen. Firstly, each teacher was informed about the goal of the interview and interviews were held during break time. All interviews were recorded; they lasted between 10-15 minutes. At the end of each interview, the resulting data were transcribed was done by the researcher herself.

### 3.4.5 Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed by the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 18.0). Frequencies, percentages, mean and reliability values were measured via their program. First, information about participants (gender, age, teaching level and years of experience) was gathered through conveying Descriptive Statistics (frequency and means).

Secondly, mean values were collected through quantitative data and while interpreting these mean values boundaries of each response in the 5-point Likert scales from 1 to 5 were calculated by dividing the serial width 4 by the number of responses 5 and found to be 0.8. Depending on this calculation, the accepted boundaries for each response are represented below:

1	= 1 + 0.8	=1, 8
2	=1, 8 + 0.8	=2, 6
3	=2, 6 + 0.8	= <b><u>3, 4</u></b>
4	=3, 4+ 0.8	=4, 2
5	=4, 2+ 0.8	=5

A score of 3, 4 and above was taken as the indicator of moderate self-perceptions of autonomy whereas 4, 2 and above high ones. Any score below 3, 4 was taken as an indicator of low autonomy perceptions.

Thirdly, three types of test were used in this study. Independent Sample T test, One Way ANOVA and Kruskal Wallis. Independent Samples T-test was utilized when the number of independent samples of a factor was two. In this study, this test was run to

compare the perceptions of teacher autonomy across the variables ‘gender’ and ‘teaching level’.

As for One Way ANOVA, it was used when the independent samples of a factor were more than two. In this study, this test was utilized in order to compare the perceptions of teacher autonomy across the variable of ‘years of experience’.

Finally, Kruskal Wallis which was a non-parametric equivalent of ANOVA was used in order to understand the correlation between ‘age’ and perceptions of teacher autonomy.

#### **3.4.6 Interview Data Analysis**

Qualitative data were collected through interview questions. Having recorded each interview, the researcher transcribed the recorded data which were later checked by another English language teacher. Qualitative data were analyzed through obtaining frequencies and percentages of key issues mentioned by interviewees. These key themes were grouped into the appropriate categories. These categories may provide the researcher with a convenient way to analyze the results.

#### **3.4.7 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, methodological foundation of the study was provided. Firstly, the objectives and methodology for pilot study were presented. Secondly, research design and data collection tools were explained. Thirdly and finally, the general methodological foundation for the main study was followed.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This study aimed to highlight whether there is any difference between self-perceptions of English language teachers in middle schools and high schools. Also, this study surveyed the impact of centralized exams, gender, age, teaching level and years of experience upon self-perceptions of teacher autonomy.

In this chapter, the data gathered through questionnaire and interview were analyzed and discussed. Firstly, demographic information about participants was given. This information includes age, gender, teaching level and years of experience. Secondly, section dealt with the research questions and discussed the findings obtained through data collection tools.

#### **4.1 Demographic Features of Participants**

87 English language teachers participated in this study. This number included not only middle school English language teachers but also high school English language teachers who were teaching in three towns of Sakarya which are respectively Adapazarı, Erenler and Serdivan.

As it was pointed out before in this study, participants were requested to fill in the information gaps regarding their age, gender, teaching level and years of experience in the questionnaire. These were the variables whose impacts upon self-perceptions of teacher autonomy were researched.

In the second chapter, the researcher gave general information about the gender, age and years of experience of both middle school and high school English language teachers.

In this chapter, since the main aim of this study is to find out whether there is any difference between middle school and high school English language teachers in terms of perceptions regarding teacher autonomy, it may be better to present gender, age and experience information of middle school and high school English language teachers separately.

Firstly, gender information of middle school English language teachers are presented in Table 4.1 below:

*Table 4.1 Gender information of middle school English language teachers*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	12	27.9
Female	31	73.1
Total	43	100

Table 4.1 shows that of 43 teachers, 12 teachers were male whereas 31 of them were female. In fact, it should not be considered as surprising because as pointed out before females have a more tendency towards studying English Language Teaching than males do.

As for the age information of middle school English language teachers, Table 4.2 provides the necessary information as in the below:

*Table 4.2 Age information of middle school English language teachers*

<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
22-27	20	46.5
28-33	10	23.3
34-39	5	11.6
40-45	4	9.3

46-above	4	9.3
Total	43	100

With a percentage of 46, it would not be mistaken to claim that nearly half of the middle school teachers' age ranged between 22 and 27 years old. This percentage was followed by 23%, which shows that roughly quarter of them were in 28-33 age group. While the participants whose ages ranged between 34 and 39 years old were 5, the participants who were aged between 40 and 45 and who were 46 or more than 46 years old were just 4.

Thirdly information regarding to years of experience was shown in Table 4.3

*Table 4.3 Teaching experience information of middle school English language teachers*

<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1-5	21	48.8
6-11	11	25.6
12-18	4	9.3
19-24	3	7.0
25-above	4	9.3
Total	43	100

The majority of the middle school English language teachers had between one to five years of experience (49%). With 26%, this was followed by the group who had between 6 and 11 years of experience. It was easily seen that both the groups who had between 12 and 18 years of experience and who had 25 and more than 25 years of experience had the same percentage (9%). Merely, 3 middle school teachers were included in '19-24' years of experience group.

As evident in the Table 4.3, the participants had more or less similar distribution across the age. This may indicate a parallelism between age and years of experience.

When it comes to participant high school English language teachers, Table 4.4 provides information about gender distribution:

*Table 4.4 Gender information of high school English language teachers*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	26	59.1
Female	18	40.9
Total	44	100

As can be seen from the Table, 26 out of 44 were male whereas there were 18 female teachers. Unlike middle school teachers, percentage of female teachers is less than male teachers.

Regarding age distribution, Table 4.5 presents the following information:

*Table 4.5 Age information of high school English language teachers*

<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
22-27	13	29.5
28-33	9	20.5
34-39	11	25
40-45	8	18.2
46-above	3	6.8
Total	44	100

29% of the participants' age was ranged between 22 and 27 years old. The quarter of was included in 34-39 age group. This percentage was followed by '28-33' age group which consists of 20% of the participants. Unlike the case of middle school English



teachers, there were less high school English teachers who were between 40 to 45 years old. Finally, the teachers who were 46 or more than 46 consist of almost 7% of the whole.

Finally, Table 4.6 provides information about high school English language teachers' years of experience:

*Table 4.6 Information about years of experiences of high school English language teachers*

<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1-5	15	34.1
6-11	8	18.2
12-18	10	22.7
19-24	8	18.2
25-above	3	6.8

The majority of the participants had between 1 and 5 years of experience. 23 % of the participants had between 12 and 18 years of experience. While the percentages of the 6-11 and 19-24 group were the same, the participants who had 25 or more than 25 years of teaching experience merely made up almost 7% of the total number.

**4.2 Research Question 1:** What are the overall perceptions of teacher autonomy for middle school and high school English language teachers?

A detailed analysis was done through obtaining means from the scale and each item's mean value was shown in the table below:

*Table 4.7 Descriptive statistics of the items 8, 9 and 24 in the questionnaire*

<b>No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>)</b>	<b>SD</b>
9	The scheduling of use of time in my classroom is under my control.	4.00	.751

24	I have little say over the scheduling of use of time in my classroom.	3.15	.724
8	The central exams have an impact on my scheduling of time.	2.86	.902

As the items in the table points out, they seem to be related with time management in teaching. The mean value of item 9 ( $\bar{x}$ :4.00) is close to 4, 2 which may indicate higher perceptions of autonomy in time management however when the mean value of item 24 ( $\bar{x}$ :3.15) is considered, it could be seen that it is close to average ( $\bar{x}$ :3.4) as well. These two findings may be attributed to teachers' uncertainty about whether they have control over scheduling of time or not. Therefore, it would be sensible to claim that teachers do not have a full control over time management while teaching however they can be considered as having discretion in this matter. Similarly, the mean value of item 8 ( $\bar{x}$ :2.86) supports the idea that teachers' use of time is under control to some extent and centralized testing has not a big effect on their planning of time.

The fact that they are not fully autonomous could be because of overload curriculum. That is, teachers may need to make effective use of the time; thus, sometimes need to be off their schedule in order to study all the units indicated in course book syllabus. Due to rushing to finish the subject, teachers may not focus on the needs of their students and they tend to neglect minor subjects. Corput (2012) conveyed a study with elementary school teachers and found out that teachers eliminated content area lesson of the day since those areas were not tested and validated in mandated exams. Thus, they felt they were constricted in what they were supposed to teach; they could not go beyond it.

Galton and Fogelman (1998) reported that teachers felt stress because of pressure to get through the curriculum. Increasing pressure to do more in a limited time may cause some negative impacts in time management. Galton, MacBeath, Page and Steward (2002) conveyed a study with 267 teachers. 212 out of 267 indicated that lack of time was a severe problem for their teaching. Lack of time could be seen as a main impediment to teachers' ability to convey their teaching freely and due to time constraints teachers may not have a

chance to employ effective learning strategies; instead, they may be forced to finish the syllabus.

*Table 4.8 Descriptive statistics of items 2, 18, 19 and 21 in the questionnaire*

No	Item	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	SD
2	The selection of student-learning activities in my class is under my control.	3.85	.686
19	The materials I use in the classroom are up to centralized exams.	3.38	1.04
21	I organize my activities in the light of centralized exams.	3.22	.848
18	The materials I use in my class are chosen for the most part by myself.	2.95	.528

It would not be mistaken to say that these three items are related with teachers' choice of activities or materials. The mean value of item 2 ( $\bar{x}$ :3. 85) clearly shows that teachers have moderate perceptions of autonomy in selecting student-learning activities in class. However, when we have a close look at mean value of item 19 ( $\bar{x}$ :3. 38), it can be seen that teachers averagely seem to be affected by centralized exams. On average, teachers indicate that their use and selection of materials may be affected by centralized exams. Also, the mean value of item 18 ( $\bar{x}$ :2. 95) seems to support the idea that teachers are not free while selecting materials. In addition, mean value of item 21 ( $\bar{x}$ :3. 22) is close to the average, which can suggest that there is an undeniable effect of centralized exams on material choice.

As for the items which can be considered to be related with what is being taught in the classroom, the following table presents the necessary information:

*Table 4.9 Descriptive statistics of items 7, 15, 23 and 25 in the questionnaire*

<b>No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>)</b>	<b>SD</b>
7	I have little say about the content and skills that are used for teaching.	3.75	.651
23	The content and skills I teach is determined by the curriculum of centralized exams.	3.34	.886
15	What I teach in my class is determined for the most part by myself.	3.22	.766
25	The content and skills taught in my class are those I select.	3.16	.547

When the mean value of item 7 ( $\bar{x}$ :3.75) is considered, it can be understood easily that teachers have little discretion for determining or choosing teaching content. Likewise, mean values of item 15 ( $\bar{x}$ :3.22) and 25 ( $\bar{x}$ :3.16) seems to be supporting the idea that teachers have little discretion while selecting what they teach. As for the mean value of item 23 ( $\bar{x}$ :3.34) which is close to the average, it could be said that teachers express that teaching content is determined according to centralized exams.

As it can be seen from table 4.8 and 4.9, teachers have similar perceptions of autonomy in determining teaching materials and teaching content. It would not be mistaken to claim that having autonomy in determining teaching content and in designing materials or activities are interrelated with each other because generally teachers may select or organize materials and activities according to teaching content. Allwright (1990) suggests that materials should be resources for ideas and activities for instruction. Namely, materials can contribute to what is being taught; yet it cannot determine teaching content since they are just tools for instruction.

Ideally, teachers should be able to choose the best materials for his/her learners or they should be able to make any adaptations according to learners' needs. In this case, teachers may need to be involved in reflective teaching through which they can evaluate

materials or reconsider these materials' practicality. However, in Turkey, English language teachers especially who teach in state schools may not be provided with any chance for making reflections about materials since course books have been given to teachers and students by Ministry of National Education and they have been obliged to use them. Free course book project was put into practice in 2003-2004 educational year for elementary and middle schools (*National Education Journal*, Issue: 165, Ankara 2005). After, in 2006-2007 educational year, this project involved high schools as well (Directorate of Support Services in National Education Ministry). Since those days, schools which are regulated by Ministry of National Education have been obliged to use those course books. Any other course book is not allowed by Ministry of Education. This is clearly indicated in Ministry of National Education's Course Books and Teaching Materials Regulations as in the following:

“It is not allowed for teachers to have students get any course book or any other material which is not defined by Ministry of National Education.” (Article No. 41 in Regulations of Course Books and Instructional Tools 2009). That is, teachers are obliged to use these course books; consequently, they are expected to teach the syllabus which these course books prescribe.

Since a decade, this policy has influenced not only the course books but also the curriculum since course books have content which teachers are expected to follow. Thomas (2012) summarizes this situation as follows:

“There is a contradictory implication here in the suggestion that teachers are perfectly capable of determining everything about how to teach, but they are entirely incapable of using their discretion to judge what to teach as these two processes are separate.”

Teachers are not free to choose teaching content and teaching materials. Instead, they are considered as technicians who can implement what has been done by the government (Schirmer 1994). However, if teachers go beyond the outline drawn by teaching program and course books, they are inspected by the school managers and inspectors (Öztürk 2009). However, Mustafa and Cullingford (2008) indicate that teaching which is dependent upon one material (often course books) can limit teacher autonomy.

In addition, Öztürk (2011) claims that if teachers teach in a way that s/he is dependent on course books he cannot reflect his own experiences, decisions and preferences on teaching. It may not be realistic to expect teachers to become autonomous in Turkey where teachers cannot go beyond the borders of curriculum and, they cannot determine what to teach. Therefore, it is not surprising in this study that teachers express that they cannot determine what they teach and that they cannot choose their materials. Consequently, it cannot be expected for teachers to enjoy autonomy.

Actually, Ministry of National Education determines the course books since it may aim to standardize the content and to test each student on the same content across Turkey. Nevertheless, it may create an impediment for teachers to use their discretion upon specifying the content or materials. Smith (2001) conveyed a study in order to find out the effects of testing on teacher autonomy and pointed out that teachers feared losing autonomy. Teachers are obliged to use the standard course books in order to serve student in the most effective way, that is, providing a high test performance. Therefore, teachers may be torn between doing what they believe is right and what they know is tested. This may result in frustration and lack of freedom for teachers.

*Table 4.10 Descriptive statistics of items 4 and 20 in the questionnaire*

No	Item	Mean	SD
4	I apply tests which can prepare my students for the centralized exams.	3.18	.892
20	The evaluation and assessment activities are selected by others.	2.87	.500

As for the items 4 ( $\bar{x}$ :3, 18) and 20 ( $\bar{x}$ :2, 87), it can be seen that they are about assessment and evaluation. Considering their mean values, one can easily say that teachers have higher perceptions of autonomy in using or selecting assessment tools compared to selection of material or teaching content. However, if the mean value of item 4 ( $\bar{x}$ :3, 18) is considered, it could be easily seen that there is a perceived effect of centralized exams on assessment because the mean value is closer to the average. That is, it may be reasonable to claim that there may exist a teach-to-test situation. In other words,

teachers firstly teach information and then test that information. However, this could limit teachers with merely ‘test-curriculum’. Ochoa (2007) conducted a study with 18 teachers in Los Angeles and found out that testing could diminish teachers’ professional autonomy because it could limit chances for being involved in critical pedagogy. They may just prepare their students for the assessment instead of developing skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking and team-building. However, instead, teachers focus on surface knowledge in teach-to-test process (Berry 2008). In actual fact, they may feel obliged for doing so since materials and teaching content are designed in a way that can serve for centralized exam system. In this system, it may be reasonable to say that teachers are pressured because administration demands higher test scores. To achieve this, teachers are expected to teach what is covered in standardized exams (Martinez 2004). Therefore, they may need to use assessment tools which include sample questions, namely, multiple choice tests.

*Table 4.11 Descriptive statistics of items 12, 17 and 26 in the questionnaire*

<b>No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>)</b>	<b>SD</b>
26	Centralized exams mainly impact my motivation level in classroom management. (E.g. setting classroom rules, resolving student behaviors, usage of reinforcements.)	3.02	.779
17	I have little control over how classroom space is used.	2.70	.619
12	I have only limited latitude in how major problems are resolved.	2.66	.624

Finally, item 26 ( $\bar{x}$ :3.02) 17 ( $\bar{x}$ :2.70) and 12 ( $\bar{x}$ :2.66) can be handled within the concept of classroom management; the teachers in the study have relatively higher perceptions of autonomy in managing classroom such as solving out problems or designing the classroom. It would be acceptable to say that participant teachers may perceive themselves self-efficient in classroom management. Schunk (1990) indicates that higher efficacy could help teachers in dealing with classroom situations. When teachers have higher efficacy, they will likely to maintain classroom discipline and cope with disruptive behavior of students. Similarly, Brouwers and Tomic (1998) find out that there is a direct

relationship between successful classroom management and high self-efficacy. Teachers who are self-efficient can make effective use of physical structure in the classroom as well in order to create a well-established and productive learning environment.

When we consider the mean value of item 26 ( $\bar{x}$ :3.02), it could be easily seen that it is relatively higher than the mean values of items 17 ( $\bar{x}$ :2.70) and 12 ( $\bar{x}$ :2.66). It would not be mistaken to claim that centralized exams have a perceived effect on teachers in the issue of classroom management. It may be because of the fact that teachers are torn between what should be taught according to tests and what is important for students to learn and eventually they can waste so much energy and time while experiencing this tension (Boardman & Woodruff 2004; Vandenberghe & Huberman 1999). Also, in order to increase students' scores in centralized exams and make his/her school top among other schools, teachers can be so indulged in preparing, administering and evaluating tests. This would be a waste of time and energy for teachers; therefore, teachers cannot have sufficient time for sustaining a good classroom management or implementing new strategies related to management. That is, standardized testing may cause burnout (Friedman and Farber 1992).

*Table 4.12 Descriptive statistics of items 1, 5,6,10, 11, 13, 14 and 22 in the questionnaire*

No	Item	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	SD
6	In my teaching, I use my own guidelines and procedures.	3.59	.686
1	I am free to be creative in my teaching approach.	3.57	.650
14	I follow my own guidelines on instruction.	3.53	.636
22	I select the teaching methods and strategies I use with my students.	3.44	.626
11	My teaching focuses on those goals and objectives I select myself.	3.37	.627
5	My job does not allow for much discretion on my part.	3.19	.703
10	I define my own teaching procedures according to centralized exams.	3.04	.729



13	I seldom use alternative procedures in my teaching.	3.00	.688
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In addition, items 6 ( $\bar{x}$ :3.59), 1 ( $\bar{x}$ :3.57), 14 ( $\bar{x}$ :3.53) which can be considered to be related with approaches, techniques or procedures that teachers use clearly show that teachers can create their own approaches or follow their own guidelines while teaching. As can be seen, the mean values are slightly above 3.40; therefore, it would be reasonable to claim that teachers have moderate perceptions of autonomy in creating their own approaches. Similarly, when we have a close look at the mean value of item 22 ( $\bar{x}$ :3.44), and the mean value of item 11 ( $\bar{x}$ :3.37), it could be seen that they are also close to the average. Therefore, it can be inferred that teachers can base their teaching upon their own teaching approaches. However, the mean values show ‘a moderate level’ as none of the mean values is above 4.2. Therefore, it would not be mistaken to indicate that all the teachers have not full autonomy in selecting teaching methods or that they cannot feel totally free while selecting the appropriate approach or method. Furthermore, when the mean value of item 5 ( $\bar{x}$ :3.19) is considered, it is obviously seen that it is close to the average which may mean that teachers cannot use their full discretion totally. In addition, as the item 10 ( $\bar{x}$ :3.04) and 13 ( $\bar{x}$ :3.00) reveal, teachers can determine teaching procedures regardless of centralized examinations and they use alternative procedures in their teaching. However, to handle the mean values of these items realistically, the mean values do not seem to be very low, which may mean teachers do not perceive themselves as having full control over determining procedures without taking centralized examinations into consideration.

As the mean values reveal, teachers generally have moderate perceptions of autonomy while determining, selecting or using methods, approaches and teaching procedures. The fact that teachers have not high perceptions of autonomy in creating their own instructional approaches or procedures has much to do with centralized examinations. Runte (1998) says:

“The proliferation of centralized examinations erodes teacher autonomy by decreasing teachers’ responsibilities for evaluation, enforcing centralized curriculum, reducing teachers’ control over outcome of their labor and introducing new and inappropriate measures of teacher productivity.”

Teachers may waste huge amounts of time for preparing and administering tests. If the students get lower scores, teachers are likely blamed, which causes constrained teacher professionalism (Nichols and Parsons 2011). Thus, teachers can have some difficulties while creating their own teaching approaches or set their own teaching objectives. Even if they have brilliant objectives in theory, the practice is very different. In such a centralized educational system, teacher beliefs are in conflict with educational practices. Teachers' beliefs or judgments are not valued in today's classroom as Robbins, Gregory & Hemdon (2000) summarize: "Teach, test and hope for the best!" In such a system where instructional practices are shaped around centralized testing, teachers cannot base their teaching on their own objectives or they cannot find enough chance to use alternative methods to the current teaching way because this system is imposed by bureaucratic structures, which may mean there exists a top-down administration.

In addition, overload curriculum may have an impact over teacher autonomy in teaching practices. Teaching practices can be influenced by content of the curriculum. Similarly, Smith (1983) indicates that the interaction between content and curriculum can shape the performance and pedagogical choice of the teachers. If this interaction is geared towards teaching full curriculum in order to ensure a high level of competence, teachers may tend to feel high levels of pressure. Therefore, they may not choose child-centered or constructivist models of teaching practices (Ng and Rao 2008) because they believe that their performance is measured according to how well they convey the full curriculum. This pressure may make them feel 'defeated' or 'powerless' (Perreault 2000). As a result, they realign their educational or instructional priorities and shape their approaches where they can exercise limited judgment.

What is more, Nichols and Parsons (2011) indicate that there is a teacher mistrust situation towards teachers. This may also be a reason why teachers have moderate perceptions of autonomy in creating and implementing their teaching objectives. Teachers have a bad image in the public and they are considered as ones who need strict rules or strict discipline in working environment (Nichols and Parsons 2011). With such an image, it would be reasonable to indicate that teachers have lack of trust, thus they cannot have full autonomy in determining their own instructional goals.

In addition to questionnaire analysis, a detailed analysis was also done through obtaining frequencies and percentages of key issues mentioned by interviewees. In table below, lack of autonomy areas are shown with frequencies and percentages.

*Table 4.13 Lack of autonomy areas which are uttered by interviewees*

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Frequencies (f)</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
Management	5	50
Selecting material	5	50
Selecting teaching content	4	40
Selecting assessment tools/activities	4	40
Determining curriculum	3	30

As can be seen from the table, 4 out of 10 participants indicated that they did not perceive themselves autonomous in determining teaching content. Actually, the frequencies of curriculum and material categories may seem to support that finding. Teachers cannot be autonomous while selecting their teaching content due to the fact that they are obliged to follow standardized course books and curriculum. Since questions in centralized exams include the pattern of curriculum in course books, teachers seem to be dependent on them which means they cannot decide on teaching content. Salmon-Cox (1981) reported that centralized exams impact sequencing of instruction in a negative way. That is, teachers cannot focus on what they would like to teach, instead, they are obliged to teach what the exam requires. Also, they feel obliged to convey their teaching according to pre-determined curriculum and course books which can cause loss of teacher autonomy (Kelly 2004; Pelletier 2002).

In addition, 40% of interviewees claimed that they were not free in selecting assessment tools. Teachers feel the obligation to prepare their students for centralized tests so they are expected to use tests as assessment activities. In parallel to this finding, Smith (1989) found out that teachers were using worksheets having the same question format with mandated tests.

Finally, 4 out of 10 interviewees indicated that they were not autonomous in classroom management. They indicated that there was lack of support between parents and school in order to establish a good discipline. Also, they assumed that school administration did not help and support teachers when it came to disciplinary issues. It could be said that schools put the focus on academic testing and student achievement; however, the need for successful classroom management skills has not on decrease. Thus, collaboration between school and parents is of vital importance to have a classroom order. Yet, schools and parents tend to show strong presence in improving student learning and moderately less on student behavior (Herman and Golan 1993). As a result of this, as teachers are expected to increase students' academic success, they feel pressure which can cause anger and low professional esteem (Fish 1988).

Within the light of interviewees' responses, teachers do not perceive themselves as having full control in selecting teaching content, materials, assessment activities and managing classroom. They claimed that centralized examinations negatively impacted their teaching approaches and they ended up with loss of autonomy.

**4.3 Research Question 2:** Is there any difference in self- perceptions of English teachers teaching in middle schools and high schools in Turkey in terms of teacher autonomy?

To find out whether there is a significant difference between the mean scores of middle school English language teachers and high school English language teachers in terms of self-perceptions of teacher autonomy, Independent Samples T -test was carried out. The following table presents statistical data:

*Table 4.14 Independent samples t-test statistics of self-perceptions of autonomy between middle school English language teachers and high school English language teachers*

Teaching Level	N	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	T	Df	Sig.
Middle School	43	3.3878	.38190	-3.13	69	.003
High School	44	3.6007	.23268			

According to the table 4.13, mean values of middle school English language teachers and high school English language teachers in terms of self-perceptions of teacher autonomy are close to each other however according to the Independent Samples T- test results presented in Table 4.13, the difference in self-perceptions of teacher autonomy between middle school English language teachers and high school English language teachers is statistically significant ( $p = .003$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

The findings of the qualitative data obtained via semi-structured face to face interviews indicated similar results to the findings of quantitative data collected through the questionnaires. Interviewees' responses to the questions (especially to Question 1, 4, and 5; See Appendix B) revealed differences in opinions of middle school English language teachers and high school English language teachers. Interviewees who are teaching at high schools provided answers to 1<sup>st</sup> question (See Appendix B) which investigates the effects of centralized exams upon what they teach in class. The answers point out that centralized exams did not have an effect on what high school teachers teach in class. The following responses given by them shed light on their opinions:

*“Since I am a teacher at a vocational high school, my students will not take LYS-5 exam. Also, YGS exam does not have any English language questions so I cannot say that centralized testing has an influence over my teaching content. I can define my teaching content according to students' level.”* (Interviewee 1)

*“I do not teach according to centralized exams since my students are not in language class I follow the general curriculum in the book.”*

*“Although course books are determined by Ministry of Education, I define what I teach in my class because the content in those course books can sometimes be ahead of my students' language level. Therefore, I try my best to provide a learning environment which enables my students to learn at their own pace and level.”* (Interviewee 3)

However, when we have a look at the responses given by middle school English language teachers, it could be easily seen that all of them predict that centralized exams affect what they teach in classroom. Some of the sample responses given to the 1<sup>st</sup> question by the interviewees as follows:

*“Centralized exams definitely limit me because I should teach according to the content of centralized exam. In fact, I would like to teach different*

*subjects, in other words, I would like to focus on speaking or listening skills but I find myself teaching present perfect tense for the sake of SBS!” (Interviewee 1)*

*“I should teach what I am supposed to teach because of centralized exams. I teach grammar and vocabulary most of the time because grammar and vocabulary constitute a big part of the SBS exam.” (Interviewee 2)*

It is obviously seen that there is a difference between the opinions of middle and high school English language teachers in terms of centralized testings’ effect on what they teach in classroom. This could be because they are expected to prepare their students for the SBS exam which includes English language questions. However, high school English language teachers have not such an attribution because YGS and LYS exams (except for LYS-5) do not have any English language items.

These findings regarding lower autonomy on the part of the middle school English language teachers are consistent with the literature related to the impact of centralized exams on teaching content. A study carried out in 2004 by Centolanza with elementary and secondary teachers serves effectively to support the results of present study. The study reveals that because of centralized testing teachers ignore students’ needs and focus on testing. These teachers also report that they teach what they are obliged to teach.

Similarly, Cawelti (2006) and Meier (2002) point out that teachers cannot make a decision about what is taught and they are supposed to teach what is tested. That is, their mechanism for deciding what to teach is ignored. Also, teachers cannot teach what is not tested because items that are tested considered as important. Also, Fleming (1998) conducted a study with 5 ESL (English a Second Language) instructors. According to the findings of study, all the instructors expressed their desires for a more flexible document which could enable them to build a curriculum.

In addition, Brooks, Libresco and Plonczak (2007) contend that teachers become standard curriculum deliverers with this centralized system. Teachers just teach what centralized exams prescribe. Similarly, Hamp-Lyons (1997) notes that teachers may narrow the curriculum, reduce the emphasis on skills which require higher order thinking such as problem solving and increase the focus on subjects being tested. Therefore, it could

be claimed that little discretion is allowed for teachers to take decisions about what to teach and how to teach.

Fleming (1998) defines teacher autonomy as follows: “Teacher autonomy is commonly used to describe the degree to which teachers make independent curriculum decisions.” Due to centralized exams, teachers are obliged to follow a centralized curriculum. Therefore, they cannot determine the content that is suitable to their learners’ level; instead they focus on that centralized curriculum because getting good scores on centralized exams is possible through that curriculum. Teachers’ mechanism of decision making seems to be swept away with the effect of centralized exams.

On the contrary, in this study, high school English language teachers seem not to be concerned with centralized exams as none of the interviewee teacher indicates that they prepare their students for those exams. Therefore, it would be reasonable to say that high school English teachers are more autonomous in determining teaching content regardless of centralized exams. The related literature also appears to be consistent with this finding. Whitty (2006) indicates that England experiences a ‘golden age’ of autonomy due to the fact that teachers have freedom to decide what to teach in their courses. Similarly, in early 1990s, Finnish municipalities and some schools reacted against centralized curriculum and as a result of these reactions and pressures, decentralization of decision-making developed.

In the absence of standardized curriculum, language teachers in Finland had more autonomy in choosing teaching content (Korpela 2007). That is, teachers may become more autonomous in ‘what to teach’ issue in the presence of decentralization. However, decentralization may not seem possible for middle school English language teachers because they are expected to follow a national curriculum and organize their teaching content based on this curriculum for preparing their students for the centralized exams.

Furthermore, the difference in self-perceptions of teacher autonomy between two teaching levels can be due to difference in years of teaching between two groups. The Table 4.14 presents the information about years of teaching experience in both middle school and high school English teachers groups.

*Table 4.15 Information about years of experience according to teaching levels*

Years of Experience	Frequency (f)		Percentage (%)	
	Middle School	High School	Middle School	High School
1-5	21	15	48.8	34.1
6-11	11	8	25.6	18.2
12-18	4	10	9.3	22.7
19-24	3	8	7.0	18.2
25-above	4	3	9.3	6.8

From these findings, it can be concluded that high school English language teachers have more years of experience than middle school English language teachers. Studies claim that there is a positive correlation between experience and teacher autonomy. Experienced teachers may be less hesitant and more flexible. That is, they can make necessary adaptations in according to local needs of their students or teaching environment. Similarly, Yaşar (2008) suggests that teachers who are experienced are more successful in maintaining control. With the help of higher number of years of experience, teachers can have a good command of self-government. Therefore, in this study, it could be possible for high school English language teachers to have higher perceptions of autonomy because they could perceive themselves as to be efficient in the use of teaching skills or methods with the help of many years of teaching experience.

In addition to years of experience, the difference between self- perceptions of autonomy and teaching levels could be investigated with regard to the factor of gender.

*Table 4.16 Information about gender according to teaching levels*

Gender	Frequency (f)		Percentage (%)	
	Middle School	High School	Middle School	High School
Female	31	18	72.1	40.9
Male	12	26	27.9	59.1



Anderson and Iwanicki (1984) conducted a study and found out that higher level of burnout were present among female teachers. This could be due to fact that female teachers have a tendency to evaluate their performance negatively whereas male teachers tend to evaluate their performance positively (Özdemir 2007). Although the findings of this study and other studies (Pearson and Moomaw 2005; Pearson and Hall 1993) indicate that gender and teacher autonomy may not be correlated each other, there may be some other factors that have an impact on female teachers' perceptions of teacher autonomy. For example, studies suggest that there is a positive correlation between self-efficacy and teacher autonomy (See Ashton and Webb 1986). Namely, higher self-efficacy may mean higher teacher autonomy. (Ashton and Webb 1986; Yogyakarta 2006) Similarly, Bandura (1989) says: "Unless people believe they can produce desired effects by their actions, they have little incentive to act." If this quotation is put in context of classroom management, it could be said that teachers need to have self-confidence and self-efficacy in order to take a decision, try new methods or creating solutions related to management of classroom. Therefore, it could be reasonable to say that teacher autonomy is related to self-efficacy. Self-efficient teachers can easily take decisions on their own and take the initiatives for implementing new techniques or approaches. Therefore, it could be said that female teachers may perceive themselves less efficient, which may affect their perceptions of autonomy as well.

In addition, female teachers can be hindered for growing autonomy because as Tümkaya (1998) points out females are brought up as introvert and dependent on somebody. Similarly, Aslam (2007) conducted a study and found out that women generally started work life very late in contrary to men, which can be the reason why they are impractical in giving independent decisions and less self-governed.

Furthermore, it can be seen obviously from the quotations of interviewee 3 and interviewee 1 that there is not enough support from parents and school administrators.

*"When we want to change the bad behaviors of students, we do not seem any support from school administrators. They always ask us to be patient and tolerant for their bad manners. If these bad manners performed by students*

*who are successful at exams, then the administrators do not allow us to exercise a disciplinary punishment over them.” (Interviewee 3)*

*“Parents are not concerned with their children’s manners at all. All they care about is SBS scores. Therefore, I do not want to struggle for correcting children’s bad manners or habits while their parents do not care for their own children.” (Interviewee 1)*

In related literature, it is noted that support from administrators and parent involvement enhances teacher satisfaction (Skinner 2008). Kreis and Brockopp (1986) claim that job satisfaction is related with perception of autonomy. Likewise, Wilches (2007) points out that higher level sense of autonomy is possible when school administrators engage teachers in decision making process. In addition to Wilches (2007), Ige (2012) suggests that more administrative support is associated with higher levels of teacher autonomy because if a positive relationship between parents and teachers is established, students can be more motivated to show positive behavior (Skaalvik 2010).

A final finding of the semi-structures interviews is the difference between middle school English language teachers and high school English language teachers in terms of the impact of centralized exams on the choice of assessment tools.

Some of the related quotations from interviewees who teach in high school as it follows:

*“I select my assessment tools according to my own objectives. For instance, if I would like to assess listening skills, I select tools that assess listening skills. (Interviewee 5)*

*“Centralized exams do not affect my way of assessing my students. I merely test what I teach in the lessons.” (Interviewee 4)*

All the high school English language interviewees indicate that centralized exams do not have any impact on their choice of assessment tools. That is to say, they can determine their assessment or evaluation activities on their own. It would be reasonable to suppose that they are autonomous in this matter.

Nevertheless, middle school English language teachers seem to be affected by centralized exams on selecting assessment activities. Some of the related quotations from interviewees are as follows:

*“I prepare multiple choice tests because they are representative of the real SBS exam.”* (Interviewee 1)

*“I prefer tests. I think that I can teach test techniques through tests and prepare my students for SBS.”* (Interviewee 4)

*“I would like to prepare exams which include speaking or listening parts however I allocate very little place for them. Mostly, my exams have multiple choice questions because I should prepare my students for SBS.”* (Interviewee 2)

These findings regarding the effect of centralized exams upon assessment activities are consistent with the related literature. A study carried out by Shepard and Dougherty (1991) supports the results of the present study as the findings of that study report that the majority of teachers spend their time by giving practice tests and instructing their students on test-taking strategies. It is obviously seen that this finding seems to be parallel with what interviewee 4 indicates.

Similarly, Vogler (2005) claims that due to centralized testing, teacher centered practices like multiple choice questions are adopted by teachers. Also, Cizek (2005) asserts that testing may not measure higher order skills and as performance measures, multiple choice test questions are used.

Agrey (2004) indicates that performance of a student is assessed through how well they can fill in the blanks or can do multiple choice questions. He further claims that teachers are obliged to cover course material as it would appear on the examination. Likewise, Barker (1997) suggests that English language teachers get stressed because of conflicting demands in students' evaluation.

As a result, given the impacts of centralized testing on teachers, one can easily say that middle school English language teachers have limited autonomy in contrary to high school English language teachers since high school English language teachers do not seem to select or use assessment activities according to centralized testing because, as pointed earlier, the centralized examinations for high schools (except for LYS-5) do not include

any English language item. Thus, high school English language teachers may be more autonomous while assessing their students. This is supported by the comment of Interviewee 5 who claims that he can organize assessment activities according to what they have taught in the lessons.

**4.4 Research Question 3:** Do the genders, age and teacher experience demonstrate any difference in terms of self-perceptions regarding teacher autonomy?

#### 4.5 The Impact of Gender on Self-Perceptions of Autonomy

In order to investigate the impact of gender on perceptions of autonomy, Independent Samples T-test was employed. According to the Independent Samples T-test results presented in table 4.16, the difference in terms of self-perception of autonomy between the mean scores of female and male participants is not statistically different ( $p = .779$ ,  $p > 0.5$ ). However, it is seen that the male teachers have higher perceptions of autonomy ( $\bar{x} : 3.50$ ) when compared to the perceptions of female teachers ( $\bar{x} : 3.48$ ) with a difference of 0.02. Yet, since no significant difference was observed, it can be interpreted that gender of the participants does not have an impact on self-perceptions of autonomy. The results of the test were presented in the table below:

*Table 4.17 The independent samples t-test statistics of self-perceptions of autonomy in relation to gender*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>)</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Male	38	3.5069	.29683	281	85	.779
Female	49	3.4867	.35853			

As the table 4.16 indicates, the significance value is .779 ( $p > 0.05$ ), which means there is not a significant relationship between gender and perceptions of teacher autonomy. The findings regarding the correlation between gender and teacher autonomy are consistent with the literature. A study carried out by Yu-Yong and Ting (2012) with 40 novice English teachers contains a similar result with the current study indicating that perceptions of teacher autonomy do not differ significantly according to gender. Likewise, Perie and

Baker (1997) claim that teacher autonomy is not associated with the sex of teacher. Therefore, it can be concluded that self-perceptions of teacher autonomy shows significant differences according to different factors like experience or age; however, the gender of teachers may not have decisive influence on self-perceptions of autonomy.

#### 4.6 The Impact of Age on Self-Perception of Autonomy

In order to investigate the effect of age upon self-perceptions of autonomy, One - Way ANOVA test was used. According to homogeneity of variance test which was run at the same time with ANOVA, the following results were obtained.

*Table 4.18 Test of homogeneity of variances*

<b>Levene Statistics</b>	<b>df1</b>	<b>df2</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
3,756	4	4	.007

$$p = 0.007 < 0.05$$

The group was not found to be homogenous with a value of 0.007. For this reason, Kruskal Wallis test which is a nonparametric test equivalent of the ANOVA was used in order to understand the significance values. The results of the Kruskal Wallis test was presented in table 4.18 below:

*Table 4.19 The results of the Kruskal Wallis test*

<b>Age Rank</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank (<math>\bar{x}</math>)</b>	<b>Chi.Square Mean</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
22-27	33	39.71	12.719	4	.013
28-33	19	36.34			
34-39	16	49.50			
40-45	12	43.67			
46-above	7	73.00			

According to Kruskal Wallis Test results presented in the table 4.18, the significance value is 0.013 ( $p < 0.05$ ) and it shows that there is a statistically significant difference affecting the self-perceptions of teacher autonomy.

Mean ranks of the participants were provided in Table 4.18. As can be seen from table, the highest mean rank ( $\bar{x} : 73.00$ ) belongs to the participant group whose age is 46 or more than 46. The age group '28-33' has the lowest mean rank. Although there is not a constant increase in mean ranks of the participants, it could be reasonable to claim that self-perceptions of autonomy have a tendency to differ in age. Therefore, it can be concluded that age plays a role in determining how teachers perceive themselves in terms of autonomy.

When we have a look at the literature which deals with the impact of age upon perceptions of teacher autonomy, it could be easily seen that there is a limited literature regarding this issue. Some studies claim that teacher autonomy is associated with working conditions rather than sex and age of the teachers (Perie & Baker 1997; Pearson & Hall 1993; Pearson & Moomaw 2005). On the other hand, some other studies which are in line with the findings of this study note that age and maturity may have an influence on teacher autonomy (Ramos 2006).

As pointed earlier, the findings of this study present that there is a significant correlation between teacher autonomy and age and that the highest rank belongs to the highest age group. This could be due to the fact that younger teachers can be less satisfied than older teachers. A similar study conducted by Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) finds out that younger teachers are not as satisfied as older generation in Tanzania. Teacher satisfaction may contribute to high job performance so that teachers can serve high quality of instruction. Also, increased teacher satisfaction may enhance teachers' commitment to their institution and career. Perie (1997) notes: "The most satisfied teachers worked in a more supportive, safer autonomous environment than the least satisfied teachers." That is, satisfied teachers are the ones who have high levels of motivation and who can take the initiative for giving his/her own decisions about his/her profession or s/he can take risks for trying new methods in order to improve his/her teaching. However, less satisfied and less motivated teachers may have difficulties in adapting herself/himself to the profession

environment. Ingersoll conducted a study in 2001 and found out that there was a correlation between age and turnover and that attrition was higher among beginning teachers. This could be because of burnout that teachers feel. Dworkin (2001) explains that the difference between high expectations and the situation after they start the profession could cause burnout. Thus, it could be concluded that teachers who are younger may experience less satisfaction, less motivation and high levels of burnout. In this study, this could be the reason why younger teachers may perceive themselves as less autonomous.

#### a) The Impact of Experience on Self-Perceptions of Autonomy

In order to find out whether groups are homogeneous or not, Test of Homogeneity of Variances which was run at the same time with One- Way ANOVA was employed. The following table presents the results:

*Table 4.20 Test of homogeneity of variances*

<b>Levene Statistics</b>	<b>df1</b>	<b>df2</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
2,076	4	82	.091

As it is seen from the table, the test of homogeneity of variances shows that the group was found to be homogenous with a value of 0.091 ( $p > 0.05$ ). Below, Table 4.20 provides information about the results of One -Way ANOVA.

*Table 4.21 One-Way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for self-perceptions of middle and high school English language teachers in relation to teaching experience*

<b>TeacherPerceptions</b>		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
	<b>Between Groups</b>	1,431	4	.358		
	<b>Within Groups</b>	8,008	82	.098		
	<b>Total</b>	9,439	86		73	

As it is seen from the table, the test of homogeneity of variances shows that the group was found to be homogenous with a value of 0.091 ( $p > 0.05$ ). Also, there is a significant correlation between teaching experience and perceptions of teacher autonomy ( $p = 0.009 < 0.05$ ). Post Hoc Scheffé test also points out similar relationship between different levels of teaching experience.

*Table 4.22 Post Hoc Scheffé analysis of variance for self-perceptions of middle and high school English language teachers in relation to teaching experience*

Motivation	Years of Experience (I)	Years of Experience (J)	Mean (I-J)	Sig.
	1-5	6-11	.05304	.985
		12-17	-.14835	.687
		18-23	-.08182	.965
		24-above	-.42747	.034
	6-11	1-5	-.05304	.985
		12-17	-.20139	.506
18-23		-.13485	.861	
24-above		-.48051	.022	
12-17	1-5	.14835	.687	
	6-11	.20139	.506	
	18-23	.06653	.991	
	24-above	.27912	.450	
18-23	1-5	.08182	.965	
	6-11	.13485	.861	
	12-17	.06653	.991	
	24-above	.34565	.274	
24-above	1-5	.42747	.034	
	6-11	.48051	.022	
	12-17	.27912	.450	
	18—23	.34565	.274	



As can be pointed out in table, there is a significant correlation between the following groups:

-‘1-5 years of experience’ and ‘24 and more than 24 years of experience’

-‘6-11 years of experience’ and ‘24 and more than 24 years of experience’

That is to say, it could be claimed that the perceptions of teacher autonomy has a tendency to get higher when the years spent in profession increased.

The findings regarding an increase in perceptions of autonomy in parallel with an increase in years of experience is consistent with literature that highlights the importance of teaching experience in teacher autonomy. Sparks (2012) notes that the more teachers have experience, the higher their perceptions of teacher autonomy.

Likewise, Wan LingLing (2011) conveyed a study with English language teachers working at senior high schools in Gansu province in China and found out that experienced teachers were more autonomous less experienced teachers. Experienced teachers may be more autonomous because they may have a tendency to employ strategies which they base on their previous experiences. Furthermore, they can construct their own teaching practices or take decisions about their way of teaching within the light of their previous educational experiences.

As Boyd, Grossman and Lankford (2009) suggest that the more a teacher is experienced, the more s/he could develop autonomy because with the years spent in profession, teachers may develop the capacity to make his/her own decisions and plan his/her teaching according to his/her approach.

In addition, by establishing a connection between their experience and new information, a teacher can develop the ability of making reflection (Lamb and Reinders 1984). Reflective teaching may contribute to growing teacher autonomy as Smyth (1989) found out: “By attaching lived meaning to teaching experience through this reflective process, the individual can become more self-governed, self-regulated and willing to

accept responsibility for decision making.” Namely, teachers can construct the knowledge through experience and employ this knowledge for creating new strategies.

Furthermore, Pearson and Moomaw (2005) reported that experience may avoid stress and demotivation. It could be said that the more a teacher has experience of teaching, the more s/he may become persistent in dealing with demanding situations. According to a study conducted by Hanushkek, Kain and Rivkin (2004), the findings show that teachers who have 2 years or less of teaching experience tend to leave profession. This clearly shows that experience may play a role in teachers’ retention in profession.

To conclude, it might be claimed that teaching experience may play a crucial role in teacher autonomy. As the related literature reveals, teaching experience may provide better outcomes in teaching and teachers can be more effective.

**4.5 Research Question 4:** Do centralized exams have an impact on self-perceptions of teacher autonomy for middle and high school English teachers in Turkey?

In order to investigate whether centralized exams have an impact upon self-perceptions of teacher autonomy for middle and high school English language teachers, a detailed analysis was done through obtaining means from the scale. In the table below, according to teaching levels of the participants, the mean value of each item which seems to be related with centralized exams was provided:

*Table 4.23 Mean of the answers given to TAS according to teaching level (N=87)*

No	Item	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	
		Mid.School	H.School
4	I apply tests which can prepare my students for the centralized exams.	3.47	2.61
8	The central exams have an impact on my scheduling of time.	3.15	2.58
10	I define my own teaching procedures according to the centralized exams.	3.32	2.76
16	Centralized exams determine my way of teaching.	3.47	2.69

19	The materials I use in the classroom are up to the centralized exams.	3.26	2.61
21	I organize my activities in the light of centralized exams.	3.67	2.70
23	The content and skills I teach is determined by the curriculum of centralized exams.	3.66	2.81
26	Centralized exams mainly impact my motivation level in classroom management. (E.g setting classroom rules, resolving student behaviors, usage of reinforcements )	3.25	2.80
	Total mean	3.11	3.73

As can be seen from the table, the mean value of Item 4 is 3.47 for middle school teachers whereas it is 2.61 for high school teachers. This means that middle school teachers seem to have moderate autonomy perceptions on assessment regardless of centralized exams' impact. On the other hand, high school teachers seem to have higher perceptions regarding this impact.

In fact, according to semi-structured interviews, all the interviewees among middle school English language teachers indicated that centralized exams had an impact on their selection of assessment tools. Below, there are some sample responses expressed by middle school English language teachers.

*“I have to employ tests which are in the format of SBS so that I can make my students be familiar with question types.”* (Interviewee 5)

*“I apply multiple choice tests because this system requires it.”* (Interviewee 2)

However, according to responses given by high school English language teachers below, it can be easily seen that centralized exams do not have as much impact as they have on middle school English language teachers.

*“I use tests but it is not for the centralized exams; on the contrary, it is for me because it is practical to administer and grade these tests.”* (Interviewee 3)

*“I do not think that centralized exams have an effect on the way I assess my students because I am not a Math teacher or a Turkish language teacher preparing their students for YGS. I am a teacher teaching English at a vocational high school and my aim is for my students to learn English to*

*express their basic needs or wants. I know that English will not be required in their prospective careers because they will be, most probably, intermediate staff.” (Interviewee 2)*

To conclude, middle school English language teachers seem to have moderate perceptions of autonomy in selecting their assessment tools regardless of centralized exams; however, high school English language teachers may be expected to gain more autonomy in selection of assessment tools. The fact that middle school teachers seem to have moderate perceptions in this issue could be ascribed to the limitations that centralized examinations impose on them. Nichols and Berliner (2005) note that teachers are imposed to prepare and practice tests and that they use past test papers for test preparation. By using these tests as a means of assessment and evaluation, teachers may intend to monitor the performance of their students and get an idea about their prospective scores on real examinations. Also, in order to maximize the scores on these examinations, teachers may utilize tests (Tedick 2005). Thus, it could be easily said that middle school teachers seem to be more impacted by centralized exams on the issue of assessment than high school teachers do due to the fact that middle school teachers may feel impelled to administer tests which include SBS-like items in order to prepare their students for SBS. On the other hand, as for high school teachers, as the interview questions revealed, they do not have such a sense of obligation because they reported that they did not have students who are preparing for centralized examinations which include English language questions.

To conclude, high school English language teachers do not seem to have been impacted by centralized exams in the issue of assessment to contrary of middle school English language teachers since high school teachers do not prepare their students for those exams.

As for the mean value of item 8 ( $\bar{x}$ :3.15), it can be inferred that middle school teachers have high perceptions on scheduling of time. They seem to have been less influenced by the effects of centralized exams however high school teachers reported higher autonomy perceptions when compared to middle school teachers ( $\bar{x}$ :2.58).

The results of the quantitative data presented above are justified by the results of qualitative data. The following answers are provided by middle school English teachers to

the interview question 6 (See Appendix B), which raised the concerns related to autonomy and effective use of time.

*“Yes, I believe that being an autonomous teacher can make me an effective user of time. I think, scheduling of use of time is under my control.”* (Interviewee 2)

*“If you are autonomous enough, this means you can control everything in your teaching, including time. Use of time is under my control in my class.”*(Interviewee 4)

From the results of qualitative and quantitative data, it can be obviously seen that middle school English language teachers reported that they have autonomy in scheduling of time and that they did not indicate centralized exams as an impediment for time management.

However, as the sample responses given to Interview Question 6 (See Appendix B) by both middle and high school English language teachers, it could be understood that teachers in both teaching levels view curriculum as intensive.

*“I believe that having autonomy can contribute to effective use of time however there are so many subjects to be covered in the course books that we have to follow.”* (Interviewee 1, a middle school English language teacher)

*“Before the start of semester, I run an eye over the syllabus of course book. After that, I reach such a conclusion: There are lots of units, there is a lot of grammar and there is a lot of vocabulary. Considering the readiness level of my students, I decide to skip some subjects that my students do not need or that my students cannot comprehend due to their language level. Thus, I do not experience timing problem.”* (Interviewee 2, a high school English language teacher)

Although middle school English language teachers did not mention centralized exams in Interview Question 6 as an impediment to time management, however that the curriculum is intensive can impact middle school English language teachers on time management because they may feel urged to complete all curriculum for preparing their students for SBS. Smith (1989) reports: “Teachers spend 3 to 4 weeks of school time on special test preparation for standard tests.” Likewise, Fish (1989) notes that amount of time teachers spent on practices which they think will maximize tests scores are on increase. Therefore, there may have a reduced time for delivering increased curriculum.

The fact that high school English language teachers perceive themselves as more autonomous in time management can be due to the fact that they turn out to be highly flexible about curriculum. This is obvious from the sample response given to Interview Question 6 (by Interviewee 2 above).

Marsh and Willis (2007) indicate that teachers may choose some points in the curriculum content according to the needs of their specific class. Likewise, according to the report of HM Inspectorate of Education (2007), with the implementation of a flexibility in curriculum within the approach of “Structure and Balance of the Curriculum”, it is reported that teachers have found new ways of tailoring the curriculum according to needs of the students and that teachers have gained chances for creating extra time for deeper study of a topic.

It could be concluded that curriculum flexibility contributes to teachers’ perception of autonomy in the issue of time-management due to the fact that they can make their own decisions about ‘what to teach’ by taking students’ needs into consideration. They can eliminate the subjects that they believe may be unnecessary for students so that they could have enough instruction time for the subjects that they think are beneficial for student knowledge. However, middle school English language teachers may not have the chance of curriculum flexibility since they may not be according to students’ language level pressured in order to prepare their students for SBS. That is why middle school English language teachers may have a higher mean value which may indicate that they view centralized exams as an impediment to their scheduling of instruction time.

Furthermore, if the mean values of items 19 ( $\bar{x}$ :3.26), 21( $\bar{x}$ :3.67) and 23 ( $\bar{x}$ :3.66) are taken together which seem to investigate the impacts of centralized exams on choice of material, activity and teaching content are taken together, it could be concluded that middle school English language teachers have not high autonomy in selecting teaching content, materials or activities due to centralized exams. Similarly, the findings of the qualitative data also support the findings of quantitative data. Below, there are sample responses given by middle school English language teachers to the Interview Question 3 (See Appendix B).

*“Unfortunately, I am not because main material, I mean, course books are chosen by authorities in Ministry of National Education so I have to use*

*those course books and the activities in it. In addition to that, I feel the urge to use SBS practice tests as classroom materials because I am teaching at 8<sup>th</sup> grades and they need more practice.”* (Interviewee 4)

*“I think I am not free since I should use materials which are based on ‘test logic’. I have to use them because I am a teacher at a popular school where students have high socio- economic status. My student’ parents always come to school and ask me which test book they will buy so I feel the need to focus on testing.”* (Interviewee 3)

*“As there are grammar and vocabulary questions in SBS, I select contents which include these items.”* (Interviewee 1)

*“I teach what centralized exam requires.”* (Interviewee 2)

It is obviously seen that middle school teachers may select materials and classroom activities according to the centralized exams. As pointed earlier, in Turkey, course books are centrally determined by Ministry of National Education and it is now allowed for teachers to use any other course books except for the course books determined by Ministry of National Education. Since the teachers have to use those course books, they are directly obliged to follow the curriculum in course books. Additionally, teachers are unable to implement their own curriculum because students, parents and school administrators are concerned with the scores that students have on centralized tests.

A survey conducted by Pedulla in the USA (2003) shows that 80% of teachers spend more time on subjects which are tested. Teachers tend to exclude non-tested subjects. That is, they tend to teach content and use materials designed according to format of centralized tests, resulting teachers’ inability to determine teaching content or materials. Cheng, Watanabe and Curtis (2008) conducted a study in which they reported that the teachers who were preparing their students for IELTS examination used published IELTS preparation texts as a main source in 46% of their class time whereas just 6% of their class time was engaged with materials they created. Also, again in their study, it was also noted that participant teachers reported they focused on test practice rather than language skills. Within the light of these findings, teachers may seem to have lost their discretion making decision over their teaching.

Nevertheless, as for high school English language teachers, it can be seen from the table 4.23 that the items 19, 21, 23 have mean values of 2. 61, 2. 70 and 2. 81 respectively.

It can be inferred that they have higher perceptions when compared to middle school English language teachers. Of all 3 items, it could be seen that the item 23 has the highest mean value ( $\bar{x}$ :2. 81) which may mean that high school English teachers perceived the impact of centralized exams on determination of content and skills. This finding may be attributed to standardized curriculum which is determined centrally by Ministry of Education and it seems to be supported with the sample response given to Interview Question 3.

*“Unfortunately, materials are specified by Ministry of National Education. As for activities, when I examine the different publishers’ course books for searching different types of activities, I always see the same types: fill in the gaps, odd one out etc. As you see, it is a supply and demand issue!”*  
(Interviewee 4)

In line with this quotation, Schirp (2006) says: “The production of tests and materials which should prepare for them has become a lucrative billion business for the publishing companies in the USA.” Similarly, Madaus (1988) states: “It is testing, not the officially stated curriculum that is increasingly determining what is taught, how it is taught, what is learned and how it is learned.” That is to say, centralized exams may have a determining effect on what teachers teach and what kind of activities can be used because the general tendency is centralized exam based learning.

It can be concluded that middle school English language teachers have not self-perceptions as high as high school English language teachers have, which could be attributed to difference in implementation of centralized testing in both teaching levels. Whereas middle school English language teachers may feel the need to adapt their materials or skills, high school English language teachers can enjoy more flexibility in deciding teaching content or materials.

As for the item 26, it has a mean value of 3. 25 for middle school English language teachers and 2. 80 for high school English language teachers. Namely, these teachers have not very low perceptions of autonomy while managing their classrooms, solving problems related to students’ behaviors etc. However, high school English language teachers seem to have higher perceptions.



The results of the interviews support the findings obtained from quantitative data, which is obvious from the sample responses given to Interview Question 4 (See Appendix) below:

*“Centralized testing does not influence my classroom management because I do not use reinforcements for disciplining students according to it. I have a set of behavioral standards in my mind, and my rules are in force in my class.”* (Interviewee 1)

*“Actually, I must admit that my students do not show any concern at all for the centralized exams so how can I organize my management according to it? To me, a successful management is not through exams but through a good communication.”* (Interviewee 2)

As can be seen, high school teachers do not suppose that centralized examinations impact their classroom management. According to them, they can form their behavioral standards and manage their classrooms regardless of centralized exams.

However, when it comes to responses which were provided by English language teachers who teach at middle schools, it was seen that 3 out of 5 interviewees thought that centralized testing had an impact on their management. The sample responses are given below:

*“Sometimes, I think that I have no autonomy at all in this matter. I teach in a successful and a popular school in Sakarya; however, in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, I have very indecent and spoilt students. They are successful. They will, most probably, get good scores and be placed in good high schools however their manners are so bad. I would like to discipline them by implementing a punishment system but school administration does not let me do it. They asked me to be patient because they thought that these students were very successful and brought popularity to school with their good scores in SBS. They said that I must wait a few months up until end of the semester. That is, I feel so alone and limited in classroom management.”* (Interviewee 2)

*“Most of the time, I can tolerate disruptive behaviors of some students since they are successful in centralized tests. I feel regret because I cannot be fair in my class; I know that I should react to their bad manners but I do not because I believe nothing will happen against them.”* (Interviewee 3)

*“I spend huge amounts of time while preparing tests for my students. I feel very exhausted so I think I have not enough time for dealing with problems related with classroom management.”* (Interviewee 5)

Apparently, middle school English language teachers indicated that they tolerated disruptive behaviors of some students for the sake of their success in centralized tests. Actually, this kind of over-tolerance may cause higher level of teacher burnout. Chwalisz, Altmaier and Russell (1992) indicate that higher burnout leads to lower self-efficacy.

According to Bandura (1997), individuals who have low self-efficacy may develop negative feelings due to the fact that they perceive inability while dealing with a challenging task. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) suggest that self-efficiency has an impact upon teachers' persistence in dealing with demanding situations in classroom. Similarly, Skaalvik (1997) places task of disciplining students into the domain of self-efficacy. It can be concluded that centralized exams may cause teacher burnout which, consequently, results in lower self-efficacy. Teachers who lack in self-efficacy may have difficulties in managing classrooms.

Finally, as for item 10 which could aim to investigate whether teachers define their teaching procedures according to centralized exams or not, it is clearly understood that the mean value ( $\bar{x}$  : 3.32) is slightly below the average. Therefore, it would be reasonable to say that middle school English teachers seem to have moderate perceptions of autonomy, which may mean that they have average autonomy in defining their own teaching practices. However, high school English language teachers reported different results with a relatively higher self-perceptions ( $\bar{x}$  : 2.76). Similarly, the mean value of item 16 ( $\bar{x}$  :3.47) supports the idea that middle school English language teachers have moderate perceptions autonomy in determining their way of teaching. To contrary of middle school teachers, the mean values of items 10 and 16 are respectively 2.76 and 2. 69 which may mean that high school teachers reported higher perceptions.

Findings obtained through interviews showed that centralized exams were viewed as a factor that influenced creativity. Below, there is a sample response given to Interview Question 2 by a middle school teacher:

*“I am experiencing difficulties in being creative because there is a central exam issue. As a teacher of English, I would like to focus on teaching four skills of language or I would like to try new methods for teaching; however, I cannot because standard testing limits me.”* (Interviewee 1)

*“In my opinion, I am not creative because I have to teach according to centralized exams. I have to teach the subjects which will be tested in exams.”*(Interviewee 5)

Middle school English language teachers may be under pressure because they may feel obliged to prepare students for centralized examinations. For this reason, they may need to organize their teaching in a way that serves centralized exams effectively. They may choose classroom activities, teaching content, skills, and means of assessment according to centralized testing. In other words, teachers may re-shape their teaching beliefs. Bateson (1994) indicates that teachers start ‘teach to test’ in prescribed curricula. For ‘teach to test’ kind of teaching teachers can re-define their priorities (OECD Education Work Paper 2012) and spend a huge amount of time on discrete items rather than on language skills or authentic knowledge. Narrowing the items to central examinations is likely to increase memorization and decrease critical thinking in students (Anderson 1990). Although teachers may be aware of this fatal effect of examinations, they may keep organizing their assessment according to examinations since they are pressured in order to increase the performance of students. It would be true to say that teachers act as ‘servants’ in this centralized testing system. Thus, their discretion in defining their teaching approach may be impaired.

As for high school English language teachers, the sample responses given to Interview Question 2 could highlight the impact of centralized exams on them:

*“I do not think that in this top-down system, we cannot create our teaching approach. Government imposes us to use a standard teaching approach and we are forced to implement it. For example, they define the curriculum or the course books so is it possible for us to enjoy creativity?”* (Interviewee 1)

*“Creativity is hard to have because we have been teaching in a system where all the course books are pre-determined by education authorities. They determine these books since they want to test the students on the standard curriculum they cram into it. I want these education authorities to come to my class and convey teaching with these all-knowing course books! Maybe, they can develop some empathy!”* (Interviewee 3)

High school English language teachers seem to have reacted against standardized course books which may be considered as indirect effects of centralized exams. River (1981) claims that course books play a major role in defining curriculum. That is, it would

be important to note that course books and curriculum are interchangeably related. As centralized exams are built around a curriculum, it can be concluded that centralized exams are correlated with course books. In Turkey, centralized exams include the content which is covered in the centrally determined course books. Therefore, teachers especially the ones who prepare their students for centralized exams may be obliged to follow the curriculum in these course books, which may pose a barrier in the creativity of teachers.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

The present study focused on the middle school and high school English language teachers' self-perceptions of teacher autonomy. In this chapter, the conclusion of the study is provided and then implications of the study are presented. Finally, suggestions for further research are made.

#### 5.1 Conclusion

The present study employed mixed methods research design in which questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used in order to collect data for the following research questions under investigation:

1. What are the overall perceptions of teacher autonomy for middle school and high school English language teachers?
2. Is there any difference in self- perceptions of English teachers teaching in middle schools and high schools in Turkey in terms of teacher autonomy?
3. Do the gender, age and teacher experience demonstrate any difference in terms of self-perceptions regarding teacher autonomy?
4. Do centralized exams have an impact on self-perceptions of teacher autonomy for middle and high school English teachers in Turkey?

A number of conclusions could be drawn for the data obtained through findings and for the discussion in line with the related literature:

Firstly, in order to find out the overall perceptions of teachers, mean value of each item in the questionnaire is presented. The total mean value for all participants in the

questionnaire is 3, 49. Consequently, grounding on the finding of the study, it is possible to indicate that they may have moderate perceptions caused by the impacts of centralized testing because teachers can narrow the curriculum (Anagnostopoulos 2005), teach according to tested items and when it comes to measuring performance of students, multiple choice questions are utilized (Shephard 1991). They may use this as a kind of assessment because they may desire to increase their students' scores on tests. This can reduce the time for instruction (Smith 1991) and make teachers focus on test preparation. Therefore, it can be interpreted that moderate self-perceptions of teacher autonomy is likely to result from the administration of centralized exams.

Furthermore, the fact that teachers have moderate self-perceptions of teacher autonomy could be due to standardized intensive curriculum. Standardized curriculum could determine the skills and content that teachers focus. (Brown 2008) and their role may be diminished since they follow a pre-determined curriculum.

In scope of the present study, the difference between middle school English language teachers' self-perceptions and high school English language teachers' self-perception was also compared. A statistically significant difference was detected between two teaching levels through Independent Samples T-test. The findings of this study could be attributed to the some differences between middle school English language teachers and high school English language teachers. Firstly, impact of centralized testing seems to be stronger on middle school English language teachers because they prepare their students for SBS. In related literature, there are studies that support the findings of the present study (Berger 1996). Also, the findings of the statistical data were further supported by the results of semi-structured interviews since the middle school interviewees reported negative opinions related to centralized exams.

Also, that teachers have moderate perceptions of teacher autonomy is likely to result from centralized course books. In related literature, the studies highlight the impact of centralized course books upon teaching (Grant 1987). Due to standardized course books, school work may become more technical as teachers cannot exercise their judgment about what teachers must cover regarding to local needs.

What is more, in order to find out whether there is a significant difference between middle and high school English language teachers, Independent Samples T-test was run

and it was found out that there was a statistically difference between two groups. It was pointed out that this difference may result from the participants' some demographic features. That is, two groups differ in age and years of experience. In related literature, it is noted that age and experience may play a major role in the prediction of self-efficacy (See, Britta, Morris and Brassard 2006; Bandura 1977) Self-efficacy teachers can be more autonomous.

Furthermore, teachers indicated that they perceived themselves as autonomous in classroom management. That teachers' perceptions themselves could be due to their high level of self-efficacy (Safran 1989; Guskey 1988; Gordon 2001) or motivation (Fernet 2008; Hakannen 2006)

In addition, an outstanding finding which was revealed through semi-structures was the lack of administrative support for teachers. Related literature shows that administrative support and collaboration with school administration may be crucial in teachers' job satisfaction level (Tickle 2008) and it can enhance teacher autonomy (Apostolakis 2009).

In this study, self-perceptions of teacher autonomy are compared to gender, age and years of teaching experience. According to Independent Samples T-test results, there was no statistically meaningful difference found between gender and teacher autonomy which is also supported by related literature (Pearson and Moomaw 2005; Viira 2010). However, Kruskal Wallis and One-Way ANOVA tests revealed that age and years of experience had a statistically significant impact on self-perceptions of teacher autonomy. These findings are supported by the related literature (See Boyd, Grossmand and Lonkford 2009)

Moreover, in this study, it was found out that middle school English language teachers' self-perceptions seemed to have been affected negatively by centralized exams in the issue of determining teaching content, materials, activities and assessment. As for high school English language teachers, they reported that their creativity and teaching beliefs were negatively affected by the standardized course books which were the products of standardized testing. The related literature noted that centralized exams have a negative impact on teacher autonomy (Yan 2005; Carless 2003; Pandian 2003).

## 5.2 Implications

The present study investigated the self-perceptions that middle school English language teachers and high school English language teachers have with regard to teacher autonomy. The results of the current research have a number of implications for authorities in teacher training field, Ministry of National Education and policy makers.

The results of the study showed that teachers had moderate perceptions of teacher autonomy. Teachers, especially middle school English language teachers, reported that centralized exams had an impact on their perceptions of autonomy because they are obliged to narrow the curriculum into tested items and centralized exams dictate what activities to be used or what skills teachers should focus. Therefore, firstly, Ministry of National Education should provide alternatives for centralized exams and there should be different measures of performance for students. For example, instead of centralized exams, teachers can assess and evaluate their students through written exams, project of performance homework. Thus, teachers can have more discretion in assessing students. To realize this aim, for 2013-2014 educational year, Ministry of National Education in Turkey has been planning to decrease the impact of SBS exam on student evaluation. According to new model, students will be evaluated through their project assignments, homework and grades they receive. In new system, open ended questions will take place instead of multiple choice questions.

Secondly, teachers reported that standardized course books prevented them from creativity. As Grant (1987) points out: "Teachers should be responsible for textbook selection by taking their students' needs into consideration." However, in Turkey, teachers do not select course books; on the contrary, they are obliged to use pre-determined course books by the government. Each student across Turkey is obliged to follow the same course book regardless of the student' language level. Each classroom has different dynamics such as socio-economic status, readiness level or needs. Course books should be selected by taking these dynamics into consideration. Thus, Ministry of National Education and policy makers should enable teachers to use other course books or material that they believe would be beneficial for their students.



Thirdly, teachers indicated that curriculum was too intensive so they said that they had to act hastily in order to complete the curriculum or that they decided to eliminate some units. Policy makers and Ministry of National Education authorities should provide teachers with curriculum flexibility; they may enable teachers to construct their local curriculum. Nevertheless, this could be possible by minimizing the impact of centralized exams because teachers feel obliged to follow a standard curriculum due to standard exams. In the absence of standard examinations, teachers would become autonomous in creating their own local curriculum.

Fourthly, it is found out that experience plays a crucial role in teacher autonomy. At the universities, hours of teaching practicum course can be increased. Teachers can be more effective if they have concrete experience. However, student teachers generally perform their practice in one school throughout a year in Turkey but student teachers can be enabled to teach in different practice schools in order to meet and know students having different socio-economic status and language levels. So, teachers can expand their experience spectrum because s/he can meet with various student profiles.

Fifthly, conferences and seminars could also be organized in order to provide teachers with an environment in which teachers can exchange ideas about teaching or explore new ways of teaching. This could help teachers to raise awareness, make reflections or develop collaborative relationships.

Finally, a positive school environment should be developed by the school administrators. For instance, school administrators can appreciate teachers for their efforts in order to motivate them. Also, they should include teachers' decisions in school policy. This would increase motivation and job satisfaction.

### **5.3 Suggestions for Further Research**

As this study investigated the perceptions of autonomy for middle and high school teachers in Sakarya, a similar study should also be conducted in other cities in Turkey in order to obtain more tangible results.

In addition, as this study was conducted with middle and high school English language teachers working at state schools, a similar study should also be conducted with instructors teaching at ELT departments in Turkey.

Finally, factors such as age, gender, teaching level and years of experience were taken into consideration in this study. The information of education of departments (English Language Teaching, English Language and Literature or Linguistics) could also be used as factors in further studies in order to find out whether the graduated departments have an effect on teacher autonomy or not.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

This questionnaire was designed in order to investigate the self-perceptions of teachers who teach in the towns of Adapazarı, Erenler and Serdivan in Sakarya. Since it is a scientific study, it is of great importance to answer the questions with your deepest sincerity and honesty.

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**TEACHER AUTONOMY SURVEY**

Instructions: Please fill in the blank or mark your choice as appropriate.

Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Total years of teaching experience \_\_\_\_\_

Teaching level  
o Elementary  
o High school



**TEACHING INFORMATION***Please use "x" to choose an answer.*

<b>ITEMS</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
1. I am free to be creative in my teaching approach.					
2. The selection of student-learning activities in my class is under my control.					
3. Standards of behavior in my classroom are set primarily by myself.					
4. I apply tests which can prepare my students for the centralized exams.					
5. My job does not allow for much discretion on my part.					
6. In my teaching, I use my own guidelines and procedures.					

7. I have little say about the content and skills that are used for teaching.					
8. The central exams have an impact on my scheduling of time					
9. The scheduling of use of time in my classroom is under my control.					
10. I define my own teaching procedures according to the centralized exams.					
11. My teaching focuses on those goals and objectives I select myself.					
12. I have only limited latitude in how major problems are resolved					
13. I seldom use alternative procedures in my teaching.					
14. I follow my own guidelines on instruction.					
15. What I teach in my class is determined for the most part by myself.					
16. Centralized exams determine my way of teaching					

17. I have little control over how classroom space is used.					
18. The materials I use in my class are chosen for the most part by myself.					
19. The materials I use in the classroom are up to the centralized exams.					
20. The evaluation and assessment activities are selected by others.					
21. I organize my activities in the light of centralized exams.					
22. I select the teaching methods and strategies I use with my students.					
23. The content and skills I teach is determined by the curriculum of centralized exams					
24. I have little say over the scheduling of use of time in my classroom					
25. The content and skills taught in my class are those I select.					
26. Centralized exams mainly impact my motivation level in classroom management. (E.g setting classroom rules, resolving student behaviors, usage of reinforcements )					

## **APPENDIX B**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

- 1) How do you think that centralized exams can affect what you teach in class?
- 2) Do you think that you can create your own teaching approach or are there any other factors that prevent you from creativity?
- 3) Do you think that you feel free while selecting language materials or activities?
- 4) How do you think that centralized exams can affect your classroom management by considering in terms of autonomy? Do you think it has an impact on your way of setting class rules, behavior standards or disciplining students?
- 5) Do you think that centralized exams have an impact on your assessment and evaluation tools by considering your own perceptions of autonomy?
- 6) Do you believe that being an autonomous teacher leads you to the effective use of time?

T.C.  
SAKARYA VALİLİĞİ  
İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : 81181707/774.02/716971

24/04/2013

Konu: Anket Çalışması

VALİLİK MAKAMINA

Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Yabancı Diller Anabilim Dalı Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi Sezen ARSLAN ŞAKAR'ın "English Teachers Perceptions of Teacher Autonomy in Middle and High School in Turkey" konulu anket uygulamasını İlimizdeki Ekli listede adı geçen okullarda uygulamak istediği, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesinin 03/04/2013 tarih ve 4730 sayılı yazıları ile bildirilmiştir.

"English Teachers Perceptions of Teacher Autonomy in Middle and High School in Turkey" konulu anketin İlimizdeki ekli listede adı geçen okullarda uygulaması, yasal gerekliliğin ilgili Okul Müdürlüklerince yerine getirilmesi kaydıyla Müdürlüğümüzce uygun mütalaa edilmektedir.

Makamlarınızca da uygun görüldüğü takdirde olurlarınıza arz ederim.

Selim Yavuz SANDIKÇI  
İl Milli Eğitim Müdürü

OLUR  
24/04/2013

Recep UZAL  
Vali a.  
Vali Yardımcısı

Güvenli Elektronik İmzalı  
Aslı ile Aynıdır  
24/04/2013

Bu belge, 5070 sayılı Elektronik İmza Kanununun 5 inci maddesi gereğince güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır