



T.C.

YEDİTEPE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

MASTER'S PROGRAM IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

LEARNER AUTONOMY PERCEPTIONS OF EFLTEACHERS

NUR ZORKAYA

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APPROVAL



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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'Z' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

EFL: English as Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

L2: Second Language

LA: Learner Autonomy

SDLL: Self Directed Language Learning

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

ÖZET

Bu çalışma Yeditepe ve İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitelerinde çalışan 72 İngilizce öğretmeninin katılımıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmanın amacı İngilizce öğretmenlerinin öğrenen özerkliği algılarını araştırmaya yöneliktir. Bu amaçla, 6 adet araştırma sorusu, yarı yapılandırılmış mülakat soruları yardımıyla nitel ve anket sorularıyla toplanan nicel veriler aracılığıyla yanıtlanmıştır. Çalışmanın nicel sonuçları, hazırlık programlarında görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin öğrenen özerkliği algılarının genel olarak pozitif anlamda yüksek olduğunu saptamıştır. Bu öğretmenlerin öğrenen özerkliği algıları üstünde yaş faktörünün anlamlı bir etkisi olmadığı ortaya koyulmuştur. Bunun yanı sıra, öğretmenlerin deneyim sürelerinin öğrenen özerkliği algısında etkisi saptanmış ve 1-5 ile 5-10 yıl deneyim süresi bulunan öğretmenlerin algılarının, 10-15, 15-20 ile 20 ve üzeri deneyim süresi olan öğretmenlerden daha yüksek olduğu ortaya koyulmuştur. Çalışmanın nitel kısmında ise öğretmenler öğrenen özerkliğini tanımlarken, bireysellik, farkındalık, kabiliyet, sorumluluk, öğrenci hedef ve amaçları, güçlü ve zayıf yönleri ile aktif katılım ifadelerini kullanmışlardır. Türk öğrencilerin öğrenen özerkliğini geliştirmede yaşanan problem ve engeller sorulduğunda, eğitim sistemi, öğretmen merkezli eğitim yaklaşımları, öğrencilerin kendilerini yönlendirme alışkanlıklarının bulunmaması, kişisel amaçlarının olmaması ve dış kaynaklara bağımlı olma ifadeleri ile karşılaşılmıştır. Öğretmenlerin en önemli rolleri ise yardımcı/rehber, kolaylaştıran, kaynak, motivasyon sağlayıcı, gözlemci, ara bulucu ve lider şeklinde tanımlanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğrenen Özerkliği, İngilizce Hazırlık Programları, Algı

ABSTRACT

The thesis was conducted with 72 EFL teachers working at English preparatory programs at Yeditepe University and Istanbul Bilgi University. The aim of the thesis was to investigate learner autonomy perceptions of EFL teachers. With that aim, 6 research questions were answered with the collated quantitative data from the questionnaires and qualitative data from semi-structured interviews. The results of the quantitative part of the thesis showed that, EFL teachers working at English preparatory programs have a positive attitude towards the development of autonomy in general. There was no scientifically significant effect of age on the levels of LA perceptions of EFL teachers. LA perception levels of teachers who have 1-5 and 5-10 years of experience were above the levels of teachers who have 10-15, 15-20, 20 and over years of experience. Qualitative part of the thesis stated that, teachers define LA with words such as individuality, awareness, ability, responsibility, aims and goals of the students, strengths and weaknesses and active participation. As for the problems and hindrances for the development of learner autonomy, participating teachers mentioned education system, teacher-centric approaches, students' not being accustomed to guiding themselves, lack of personal aims and dependence to outside sources. The most important roles of the teachers were helper/guide, facilitator, resource, motivator, monitor, moderator and leader.

Key Words: Learner Autonomy, English Preparatory Programs, Perceptions

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to present background of the study, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study and definitions of terms.

1.1. Background of the Study

Learner-centered education and communicative language teaching approaches have led the way for learner autonomy. Communicative language teaching/learning is a process where students learn a language by engaging in language tasks. Communicative language teaching (CLT) involves classroom activities which let students interact and use language for communicative purposes (Littlewood, 2014, p.350). Therefore, the students need to develop necessary skills and strategies to carry out language tasks which take the learners to production level. Attention is given to communication rather than grammar. Grammar is taught in order to introduce some rules which learners utilize to communicate. Functions of the language and interaction are two very important components of CLT.

Also, Richards (2006, p.2) defines CLT as being composed of “a set of principles about the goals of language teaching”. In his perspective these principles composing CLT can be listed as the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the types of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom.

Richards (2006, p. 3) states that communicative competence requires the following aspects;

- Knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions
- Knowing how to vary our use of language according to the setting and the participants (e.g., knowing when to use formal and informal speech or when to use language appropriately for written as opposed to spoken communication)
- Knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts (e.g., narratives, reports, interviews, conversations)
- Knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge (e.g., through using different kinds of communication strategies)

These aspects are naturally acquired and put in use in the native language. When learning a new language, one should be aware of these aspects and possess the knowledge of target language. Instead of memorizing rules and structures of target languages, students are called upon to notice and make use of concepts of the language. Also, Doğan (2015, p.1) draws attention on the need that “knowing how to learn has become increasingly important”. As well as learning the language for communicative purposes, students develop skills and strategies to learn the language in and out of the classroom. While doing that, teachers play crucial role as the guide.

From the teachers' perspective, Richards (2006, p.24 – 25) identifies key components of the paradigm shift in learning and teaching as follows:

1. Focusing greater attention on the role of learners rather than the external stimuli learners are receiving from their environment. Thus, the center of attention shifts from the teacher to the student. This shift is generally known as the move from teacher-centered instruction to learner-centered instruction.

2. Focusing greater attention on the learning process rather than the products that learners produce. This shift is known as the move from product-oriented to process-oriented instruction.
3. Focusing greater attention on the social nature of learning rather than on students as separate, decontextualized individuals
4. Focusing greater attention on diversity among learners and viewing this difference not as impediments to learning but as resources to be recognized, catered to, and appreciated. This shift is known as the study of individual differences.
5. In research and theory-building, focusing greater attention on the views of those internal to the classroom rather than solely valuing the views of those who come from outside to study classrooms, investigate and evaluate what goes on there, and engage in theorizing about it. This shift is associated with such innovations as qualitative research, which highlights the subjective and affective, the participants' insider views, and the uniqueness of each context.
6. Along with this emphasis on context comes the idea of connecting the school with the world beyond as means of promoting holistic learning.
7. Helping students to understand the purpose of learning and develop their own purpose.
8. A whole-to-part orientation instead of a part-to-whole approach. This involves such approaches as beginning with meaningful whole text and then helping students understand the various features that enable texts to function, e.g., the choice of words and the text's organizational structure.
9. An emphasis on the importance of meaning rather than drills and other forms of rote learning.

10. A view of learning as a lifelong process rather than something done to prepare students for an exam.

Key components of the paradigm shift emphasize the need for change in the classroom environment. Learner roles became more important for the sake of learner-centered education. Learning started to be seen as a process in language learning. As the attention shifted to the learner-centered education, the needs and differences of the learners has started to appear as the most common issues in educational context. In addition, qualitative research gained importance to enhance classroom environments based on the needs of those classes. To be aware of one's own goals and purposes was also the key in order to develop purpose for learning. Contextualized learning was believed to be a useful way which allows students to get the meaning of the language and deduce the features of the language. In that way, meaning was focused rather than memorizing the structures of the language. Learning was considered as a bigger purpose, namely it was regarded that students should give importance to their learning for the long term.

1.2. Significance of the Study

Learning English as a second language has been a popular issue for many years in our country. Although plenty of class hours and resources have been spent, students have been complaining about their failure and the insufficient duration of English language education (Çelebi, 2006, p.286). On the other side, teachers' choice of methods and approaches may differ while teaching English. Even some of them may apply out-of-date methods while teaching. As a result, inconsistency affects success and attitude towards English language learning. This issue will be dealt in the section 2.7.

Learner autonomy (LA) is one of the most frequently referred concepts foreign language education. It aims to contribute students' language learning and improve the sense of responsibility in students by the control of teachers. In scope of LA, teachers include students in decision making processes on the objectives, materials, topics, evaluation, inside and outside class tasks of the lesson. They must also emphasize the importance of taking responsibility to create a sense of autonomy in learners. Learner autonomy is mistakenly thought to be “achieved by certain learners” (Little, 1991, p.4). In fact, encouragement of the teachers should not be denied in the process. Once a learner is autonomous on a particular topic, it does not necessarily mean that they can be autonomous in every single aspect of a new learning area.

Ultimate goals of developing learner autonomy are as mentioned above. However, one of the main questions of the thesis is whether teachers teaching different skills and levels apply these methods to develop LA effectively.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the present thesis is to identify how English language teachers perceive learner autonomy in their classes. The thesis aims to focus on whether the students possess necessary skills to develop learner autonomy and whether the teachers work on developing learner autonomy in their students.

One of the most important aims of this thesis is to contribute to related literature by presenting which strategies teachers use to develop learner autonomy in their students just as Eren (2015). Enlightening future studies in language education together with generating useful data to provide information for education programs are also aimed in the thesis.

1.4. Research Questions

The thesis aims to find answers to the following research questions;

1. What is the level of learner autonomy perceptions of EFL teachers working at university preparatory programs?
2. Is there a significant effect of teachers' age on learner autonomy perceptions of EFL teachers?
3. Is there a significant effect of years of experience on learner autonomy perceptions of EFL teachers?
4. What are the commonalities among EFL teachers' definitions on 'learner autonomy'?
5. Which are the most common problems in the development of learner autonomy in Turkish students?
6. What are the most important roles of EFL teachers while teaching?

1.5. Overview of Methodology

1.5.1. Participants

The present thesis is conducted with native and non-native English language teachers working in English Preparatory Programs in Istanbul. Teachers who took part in the questionnaire and interview teach English to university preparatory school students whose ages vary between 18-20, so the participants teach English to adult learners; therefore, the answers collated through questionnaires and interviews refer to adult language teaching.

1.5.2. Setting

The data is collected from the teachers teaching at Istanbul Bilgi University and Yeditepe University. All participants are actively teaching English to students sharing the same academic aims.

1.5.3. Data Collection Instruments

Written data is collected through a five point Likert scale questionnaire. The questionnaire was formerly applied by Camilleri (1999) in his research. In addition, Eren (2015) used the questionnaire and applied it to English language teachers working at a middle school in Turkey.

In addition to the questionnaires, a structured interview is also conducted with 12 teachers. Interview questions are taken from Swatevacharkul (2008).

1.5.4. Data Analysis

The data obtained through the questionnaires is analyzed in SPSS. Interviews are transcribed and categorized under the related research questions.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

Learner autonomy is “a capacity- for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action”.

English as a foreign language refers to the use or study of English language in a non-native English-speaking country.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

The thesis aims to investigate learner autonomy perceptions of English language teachers. The thesis does not include any questionnaire by students. For that reason, learner autonomy perceptions of students are not investigated in this thesis. It is only restricted with teachers’ views. A further study investigating the perspectives of the learners on autonomy is recommended to shed light on the insights of learner autonomy from the students’ perspective.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

As denoted by Howatt & Smith (2014), a shift from ‘the Scientific Period’ to ‘Communicative Period’ was expected. Methods and approaches such as ‘Situational Approach, Oral Method and the Audio-lingual Method’ were only allowing language learners to drill specific structures and rules for functional language use. Aims and procedures implemented during the Scientific Period (1920-70) were based on psychology and linguistics. Starting with the choice of vocabulary, grammar structures were followed by ‘drills’ and ‘practice’ for habit formation from a Behavioristic perspective. “Formation of correct habits” was accepted as good teaching. It was believed that actions and behaviors stay permanent as they are repeated. Therefore, drilling, memorizing and repetition in teaching were favored. However, repetition and memorizing only allowed mechanical use of language. Therefore, a change from ‘the Scientific Period’ to ‘the Communicative Era’ was necessary. As a result, within the emergence of ‘communicative approach’ and ‘learner-centered education’, learner autonomy and its implementations have gained increasing attention as a new concept in foreign language education.

Spada (2007, p.272) defines CLT as “a meaning-based, learner-centered approach to L2 teaching”. Emphasis is not on the form of the language as it had been in traditional approaches such as ‘Grammar Translation Method’ or ‘Direct Method’. She claims that in CLT, accuracy is not as important as fluency. Naturally, use of correct form while producing the language is necessary to convey the message across. Spada (2007, p.273) highlights the importance of “knowing a language includes more

than a knowledge of the rules of grammar (i.e. linguistic competence) but also a knowledge of the rules of language use (i.e. communicative competence)". Moreover, language is seen as a tool to communicate. As long as learners improve their skills and strategies to communicate, forms of the language will follow.

In a teacher-centered curriculum, 'aims, objectives, materials and methodology' are planned before implemented in the classroom (Nunan, 1986). Nunan (1986, p.32) states that rather than focusing on students' needs and interests "the use of objectives is justified on the grounds of rationality and efficiency". Besides, in traditional curriculum, "teachers focus on how to pass over school knowledge to learners in the best way" (Dam, 2010, p.42). However, passing this knowledge does not necessarily mean students will acquire and internalize it. To make it possible, learning must take place. Therefore, "the learner needs to add to the activity as well as to gain from it". (Dam, 2010, p.42) In a learner-centered curriculum, as Nunan (1986, p.30) claims "the consultation, decision making and planning are informal and take place during the course of program delivery" allowing students to have a say in what they are automatically entitled to learn.

Nunan (1986, p.30) states that "it is impossible to teach learners everything they need to know in class". Teachers plan and organize their lessons considering the time limit and other limitations put by their institution or governmental education system. Little (1991, p.7) also claims that "the teacher is in charge of learning, usually on behalf of some higher agency - school, educational authority, examining board, government department". Since teachers cannot make decisions freely, sustaining a learner-centered classroom may not be always possible.

As Chan (2001, p.505) states, "we have to help students to find ways of doing their own learning" and to do that, we always seek ways to further develop our

teaching skills and put great effort to enhance our teaching environment. To accomplish that, teachers play different roles such as transmitter, guide, motivator, leader and so forth. While teachers have to possess these qualifications, learners cannot stand idle and expect their knowledge to expand in a magical way. According to Ewing (1950, p.133), “children are considered as individuals” and “each following his own pattern of growth and maturation”. Provided that the maturation of the learners is a continuum which can go on progressively, each learner may be at any point on that continuum to reach the ultimate goal of producing language. While some learners are struggling to comprehend new stimuli, others may be on the practicing stage by taking initiatives based on their existing knowledge. In contrast to former methods and approaches in language teaching, students are not expected to repeat and memorize certain rules and structures. As reflected by Nunan (1986, p.30), language teachers must consider their learners as organisms that must possess “the skills needed to continue learning a language autonomously”. For this reason, language teachers need to be resourceful to provide their students with the necessary strategies to continue and take control over their own learning. Instead of stocking language structures and expecting students to put them together to produce language and ultimately communicate, teachers need to direct and in a way manipulate their learners to fulfill their potentials.

From the learner’s perspective, it might be unrealistic to consider students as lesson-planners or language teaching experts. Nunan (1986, p.32) claims that “rationality and efficiency” have an important ground in traditional curriculum. However, the students know their drive and interest which make learning entertaining and attractive for them. As it was mentioned above about the limits and constraints by curriculum and government policies, it is also not feasible for teachers to address to

each of their students' needs at the same time while trying to keep up with the weekly plans and objectives of the lessons. For this reason, teachers should play an instrumental role to assist their students. As a result, the students can find out ways of their learning and set themselves individual aims depending on their deficiencies and needs (Nunan,1986, p.30). Since learners have conventional opinions on being a learner and how to learn a language, they may not seem to take a step ahead and take control unless they are taught to do so. Namely, learners believe that the teacher is in the classroom to provide knowledge and they can learn by simply existing/sitting in the classroom. They have the assumption that textbooks and the materials are the only resources to study and they can depend on them. As learner autonomy has evolved from the idea of Student-directed Language Learning (SDLL), the expectation is to see more learner-centered and learner autonomous behaviors in the learning environment.

It was believed that learner autonomy is the outcome of SDLL process. Indeed, one cannot say which of these concepts comes first. Instead, it can be claimed that SDLL and LA are correlated. Salvia (2000, p.97) asserts that “a ‘self-access approach’ has a much broader sense, implying the whole learning institution working towards promoting learner autonomy”. This suggests that SDLL may also refer to learning the language outside the classroom by students individually. On the other hand, learner autonomy can be seen as a pre-requisition of language learning in and out of the classroom. That means learners need to have already developed the necessary study habits, skills and strategies to take control over their learning during classroom instruction. In that way, they can add on the content of the lesson, have a say in the classroom, take part actively in the lesson and be able to evaluate themselves.

According to Wenden (2002, p.38), traditional classroom environment was not suitable for SDLL. In order to sustain autonomous language learner, learners should be in a position where they make decisions about “planning, monitoring and evaluating of their learning”. Wenden (2002, p.29) supports the idea that self-directed language learning is difficult to have in a school environment since the objectives and materials of language lessons are pre-determined. Even the teachers cannot be autonomous while planning and making the lesson; therefore, one cannot expect a common area of interest for every member in a classroom. As a result, the idea of SDLL was not practical for educational purposes at schools.

To shift from the traditional classroom, teachers had to change their perspectives and find ways to adapt to a learner-centered classroom. Similarly, Nunan (1986, p.32) supports the idea that objectives in a learner-centered curriculum can be utilized in a way that will provide language classrooms with some benefits.

These benefits can be listed as follows:

- I. Learners come to have a more realistic idea of what can be achieved in a given course;
- II. Learning comes to be seen as the gradual accretion of achievable goals;
- III. Students develop greater sensitivity to their role as language learners and their rather vague notions of what it is to be a learner become much sharper;
- IV. Self-evaluation becomes more feasible;
- V. Classroom activities can be seen to relate to learners real-life needs;
- VI. Skills development can be seen as a gradual, rather than an all-or-nothing process.

In Nunan's (1986, p.30) perspective, as long as the students are engaged in the learning process by partially setting objectives and self-evaluation; learner-centered curriculum provides them with an environment where learners can and might act autonomously. The teachers should act as a facilitator to gear their students' needs into objectives. For instance, a class of English language learners needs to understand a lecture in English. That being the need of students, the teacher must provide the students with necessary language strategies and skills to understand the topic, main idea and details of a lecture. Aims set for English lessons impose a crucial role for learner autonomy. They help students to develop necessary skills and strategies to teach themselves, find the best way for learning, have a say on the curriculum design, and encourage them self-evaluate themselves. In that way, it is possible to sustain learner autonomy.

2.2. Definition of Learner Autonomy

Being a relatively new concept, learner autonomy (LA) has become at the center of attention and criticism for decades. Various definitions have been made and so many misconceptions have been the result of years of research and reviews on LA. As Chan (2001, p.505) states "literature has different definitions for LA in different contexts", but in the present thesis, the definition of learner autonomy is specific to its own context.

As the present thesis deals with LA perceptions of EFL teachers teaching at English Preparatory Programs, setting the definition of LA in adult education context is more reliable. Little (2007, p.15) asserts that "the concept of LA was mostly associated with adult education and self-access learning systems". As stated in the

previous section, while SDLL and self-access learning are being associated to individual learning without the existence of an teachers, LA refers to students being autonomous in the classroom environment.

One of the earliest definitions on autonomy in language education belongs to Henri Holec who claims that “autonomy is the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” and “a potential capacity to act in a given situation” (1981, p.31). Being aware of one’s needs and being able to express and direct their learning in line with their needs are expected from autonomous learners. Holec (1981, p.31) argues that in order to be autonomous, learners may or may not need the help from the teacher. Even though students need help from their teachers, they should be able to inform the teacher. In that way, teachers manage to shape their lessons and adjust to their students’ tune.

Taking responsibility and autonomy are consequently linked by other scholars as well. For example, Little (1995, p.175) states that “the basis of learner autonomy is that the learner accepts responsibility for his or her learning”. By accepting that responsibility, they are to take care and engage in their learning more actively. Therefore, the success becomes inevitable as learning requires active participation and awareness. Similarly, Little (1995, p.175) states that “successful learners have always been autonomous”. Since autonomous learners are able to relate their learnings to their previous experiences in learning, it is easier for them to progress along their educational life.

For the present thesis, LA is considered more as a process rather than a product. As learning is continuous, LA also needs to improve progressively. Encountering various challenges throughout their learning, autonomous learners should find out ways by using strategies to achieve their goals. The process can be tracked from how

much one has achieved. Although there are no concrete signs of LA that we can rely on, it is more of a realization of one's learning. Chan (2001, p.506) believes that "the learner could be functioning at any point on this learning continuum when he/she chooses to take part in class or work alone on the path to learner autonomy".

Dam (2010, p.43) argues that educational curriculum is restrained with guidelines and objectives because learners are not able to select among learning objectives freely. Instead, they are supposed to follow their lessons plans and relate to their own needs. Curriculum at schools follows a pattern which is shaped by the teachers and curriculum developers. For this reason, the development of autonomy has to move from a dependent routine to independent one. Therefore, it is rational to believe that students shift "from a totally teacher-directed teaching environment to a possible learner-directed learning environment".

Littlewood (1999, p.73) claims that LA happens when "involving students' capacity to use their learning independently of their teachers". Similarly, Little (1991, p.4) claims that "autonomy is a capacity - for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action". It can be observed that Holec (1981), Littlewood (1999) and Little (1991) have reached a consensus on the definition of autonomy. It can be concluded from their definitions that autonomy is a state of capacity that learners might utilize to learn on their own. Considering Littlewood (1999) and Little's (1991) definitions, learners' will and individual efforts are of importance while developing autonomy. Since it is expected from students to make decisions independent from their teachers, they need to rely on their own capacity and individual goals to pursue their language learning. Even so, the question of how students can make sure if they are making the right decisions on their own learning can come to our minds. At that point, teachers are supposed to tailor their students

with necessary strategies and consciousness to help them figure out their ways of learning and achieving their own goals. In addition, Little (1995, p. 176) defines autonomy as taking responsibility to learn by emphasizing that “Learners who accept responsibility for their learning are more likely to achieve their learning targets”. He claims that this initiation requires a positive attitude towards learning. In this regard, the whole process of autonomy needs to be conscious so that the learner can reflect on his or her learning.

To sum up, independent action, taking responsibility, decision-making, and reflection are attributes one needs to have or develop in order to be autonomous in learning. These attributes are continuous and achievable at any point along the learning path of each learner. As LA refers to individual capacity and responsibility, each individual is responsible from making their own decisions to take control over their own learning. In order to do that, they need to develop a positive attitude towards learning. The present thesis focuses on the development of LA in classroom environment. Thus, developing LA does not only mean studying outside the classroom for personal achievement, but it also refers to developing personal styles and strategies to carry on academic studies and reach success during class instruction.

2.3. Misconceptions on Learner Autonomy

Once definitions about words and concepts in literature are made, it is inevitable to encounter misconceptions. Concepts and definitions must be taken into account in their own contexts. This section of the thesis aims to focus on the misconceptions about LA in education.

According to Little (1991, p.4), self-instruction is not synonymous with autonomy which is one of the most confusing issues in the literature. He claims that,

in general, “autonomy” stands for a “measure of independence from the control of others”. What is understood from ‘measure of independence’ is that existence of others is still there. Autonomy is all about how much students succeed on their own and how much they are dependent on others. Based on Little’s perspective, in self-instruction, learners choose to learn without the help of a teacher. On the other hand, in LA, “acceptance of responsibility for the learning may be done with or without the help of a teacher” (Holec, 1981). Therefore, existence and help of the teacher is not denied in autonomy. It is the learner’s decision whether to get help from the teacher or not.

That issue brings out the second misconception which is the belief that “autonomous learners make the teacher redundant” (Little, 1991, p.3). Once a student learns autonomously, it does not necessarily mean that he or she does not need any help from the teacher. Indeed, students might need their teachers in order to develop necessary skills and strategies to learn. In other words, they also need to learn how to learn so that they can continue their learning once their teachers are not around. The aim of developing LA is not to eliminate the teacher; in fact, to learn, teachers are the integral part of education. The point of developing LA is to be more engaged with the lessons and to be able to interact with the language with higher awareness so that the learning is permanent. In addition, LA will last in students’ lives in order to take advantage of it throughout their lives.

As the third misconception, LA is mostly confused with the term ‘self-directed learning’. In self-directed language learning (SDLL), decisions about what to learn, how to learn, the pace of learning and evaluation are made by the learner and under the control of the learner; in other words, the self (Holec, 1996, p.89). SDLL does not necessarily refer to classroom instruction. Anyone who wishes to learn can realize

self-directed learning at any point in their lives. It is not necessary to be entitled to any institution or taking courses. As a result, LA refers to developing strategies and taking responsibility to pursue learning, achieve certain objectives and goals to attain skills and qualifications.

The final misconception on LA derived after the foundation of Centre de Recherches et d'Applications en Langages (CRAPEL). The concept of autonomy appeared in language education for the first time with efforts of Yves Chalon. In CRAPEL, self-access centers were founded and these centers provided areas for learners' self-study. Back then, concepts of self-directed learning and self-access studying were linked to autonomy (Benson, 2011, p.11). Benson believes that self-access centers provide environment for learners to get involved in their own learning. It was expected from learners to develop LA as an outcome of this self-studying process. These self-access centers did not aim to create an environment where education takes place as a pedagogical concern. They were rather places where students were able to access materials and information needed for their own learning. Benson (2011, p.11) states that self-access centers and self-directed learning might even inhibit the development of autonomy. Therefore, the relationship between 'self-access language learning' and 'LA' is a commonly confused issue and should be treated very carefully.

2.4. Characteristics of Autonomous Learners

Autonomous learners do not have certain characteristics that we can easily identify. Instead, we must take LA as an entity that everybody possesses. As it is claimed previously, LA is a state of taking one's responsibility for their own learning, how much and when one takes advantage of LA is a decision made by the learner.

Little (1991, p.4) also claims that “the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning”.

Dickinson (1993, p.330) believes that autonomous learners;

‘identify what is being taught’

‘are aware of the teacher’s objectives’

‘can select and implement appropriate learning strategies’

‘can monitor their own use of learning strategies’

‘able to identify strategies that are not working for them’

Similarly, Little (1991) states that every time learners encounter new knowledge, they need to reorganize and find their own ways to adjust it according to their existing knowledge. To do that, it is inevitable for learners to make use of learning strategies. One cannot guarantee LA to be permanent. According to Little (1991, p.4), a student being autonomous in language learning does not guarantee that the student will be autonomous in another area; therefore, developing autonomy requires developing necessary skills along with the area of learning. As argued by Little (1995, p.177), all learners are naturally and cognitively hard-wired to learn and acquire languages to communicate. However, learning styles vary for each individual. At that point, the teacher is responsible of directing his or her students to complete a language task successfully.

As human beings, we are able to make our own choice and decide on how and what we wish to learn; that is why, each human being has their own inclinations towards academic disciplines. Holec (1981) claims that “every learner determines his own objectives and contents by making choices based on personal criteria”. To give an example, a student who wonders about writing a formal letter in the target

language will probably pay more attention on the related language structures and vocabulary. As that student finds commonalities between his or her own interests and the lesson, the objective is more realistic and useful for him or her.

As stated by Gremmo and Riley (1995), self-directed learning was initially utilized for adult language learners. At the beginning, it was believed that self-directed learning was not suitable for younger learners because it requires some learning skills such as decision making, organization, planning and so forth. However, studies conducted by Dam (2010, p.44) show that teachers can make use of “learning to learn” method. In his research with a group of 15-year-old students who are learning English, he asked students to plan a lesson in the way that they would like to have. However, he asked them to do it “within the possibilities and constraints given - the available materials, the outlined possible activities, and the curricular demands” (2010, p.43). As students felt responsible for planning the lesson, they subsequently had to make their own choices. They took part actively in the lesson planning and involved in the process. As their ideas were taken seriously, they felt more responsible for completing the task successfully.

Finally, it is an undeniable fact that students in Turkish education system are accustomed to a teacher-centered education. As stated by Benson (2012, p.12), learners having experienced a teacher-centered education “need to be psychologically prepared for more learner-centered modes of learning”. This issue will be dealt with in section 2.7. in detail.

2.5. Fostering Autonomy

This part of the thesis aims to gather information for a better understanding of how language teachers can foster LA. Simply, the teachers undertake the role of

consultant and in that way, they let their students make their own decisions rather than passively being dictated what to do.

Dam (2010) believes that once the learners make their own choice, they feel more responsible to realize the task. Moreover, seeing that they also have a say in the learning process, learners feel more confident. When teachers give their students 'motives' to take on a task, they feel more responsible for realizing the task successfully. In order to complete the task, they make their own decisions and strategize. Dam (2010, p.43) asserts that "being allowed to make choices and to have a say in one's own learning process supports self-esteem". He also emphasizes that at schools and language courses, it is not possible for learners to choose freely the learning objectives. However, the role of the teacher is crucial here because they can "make curricular guidelines known to the learners" (Dam, 2010, p.43). In that way, learners become aware of what they are supposed to learn since classroom objectives become known and the learners can organize their styles and strategies to learn.

As the thesis deals with LA in institutional context, it is more reliable to take learners in the classroom into consideration. As stated by Dam (2010, p.41), the content of the lesson is restricted to different aspects such as level, age and pedagogical concerns which the institution has. In that case, the aim is to develop LA in "a learner-directed environment" rather than a traditional classroom which does not allow personal needs and differences to thrive and enhance the learning environment.

On the other hand, it is not always possible to accept every language learner as successful learner. Chan (2001, p.506) states that "an autonomous learner needs to have or be able to develop the capacity to initiate and control". In order to foster autonomy, language teachers should be encouraging the students to take control over given tasks. To do that, classroom activities must be planned beforehand by teachers.

On the contrary to a teacher-centered classroom, teachers in a learner-centered classroom should focus on learning rather than teaching itself. This view is supported by Dam (2010, p.44) who claims that in a teacher-centered classroom “teachers focus on how best to pass over school knowledge to learners”. However, that is not the case in a learner-centered classroom where we expect students to become more autonomous. Therefore, Dam (2010, p.44) asserts that in a learner-centered classroom, teachers should focus on more “how to engage learners in developing their action knowledge best by activating their existing knowledge”.

Little (2007, p. 24-25) introduced “three interacting principles” to foster LA; namely, “learner involvement, learner reflection and target language use”. He claims that getting attention of the students on the content, planning and evaluation of the lesson allow them to “share responsibility”. He also emphasizes that this should be a constant process starting from the beginning of the course and lasting until the end. As the students will be familiar with learning points, materials, activities and the agenda of the lesson, autonomy will be automatized. The principle of learner reflection refers to thinking about all the acts during the learner involvement principles. For instance, while deciding on an activity, students think about several things such as why they choose that activity, what outcomes can be gained from the activity, how this activity can help them improve their language skills. This reflection process can also be between the teacher and students in situations in which the teacher explains the objectives and aims of the activity or the task to give a better insight to the learners. Finally, as stated by Little (2007, p.25), gradual interaction is necessary for the principle of target language use. Little (2007, p.25) suggests that “by working in small groups, learners can engage in intensive interactive use of the target language”. In that way students are able to see their individual production in

target language. As they communicate with their peers and get positive feedback such as being understood, completing the task successfully, they will feel the sense of achievement. Progressively, these students will get comfortable with the target language and tend to use it more and more.

2.6. Role of the Teachers in Learner Autonomy

Little (2007, p.26) views LA as “the product of an interactive process”. In his perspective, once the language teachers let their students take control over ‘the process and content of their learning gradually, that will enable LA to take place. Moreover, students are expected to interact when they have the chance to communicate and use the target language. As they make their own decisions while communicating, the strategies they choose and language they use are based on their personal preferences. Since they have a motive to interact, they also feel responsible to achieve success in communication. Also, Dam (2010, p.43-44) denotes that teachers should be concerned about the way they support their students in the classroom. In a learner-centered classroom, teachers need to focus on students’ learning process rather than their own teaching itself. In that way, they manage to keep the students engaged in learning. Unfortunately, most of the time, teachers are concerned about the accuracy of the language produced. That kind of approach is more related to a teacher-centered and traditional classroom where accurate production of language structures is expected. On the contrary, engaging students in learning via a learner-centered classroom refers to creating opportunities for students to improve themselves by experimenting the language structure and use. Therefore, teachers should respect students’ space for growth while considering that individual in the classroom can be at any point of readiness.

Gremmo and Riley (1995, p.159) claim that as autonomy has evolved in theory and practice, also a new role to the teachers has come to exist. It is the role of 'counsellor'. They describe counsellor as helper, tutor and advisor. In this regard, resources in the classroom are mostly dependent on teachers. They need to take care of the organization of materials used in language lessons. According to Gremmo and Riley (1995, p.159), teachers need to make materials known to the students so that they have a chance to be familiar with them and be able to categorize them. To do that, appropriate use of information technologies can be considered. Gremmo and Riley (1995, p.160) suggest that with the assistance of the computer, it becomes easier to catalogue and retrieve materials. In that way, materials become more learner-friendly and students are able to choose among them depending on their needs.

According to Dam (2010, p.43), the teachers must introduce what is expected from the students by the curriculum. In that way, each student will be able to set their own objectives in line with these demands. Firstly, when the students see what is expected from them, they become more aware of task or lesson aims. Secondly, they manage to reflect on the expected outcome by questioning the value of the aimed learning point; if it is useful for them and how to use it in the target language. To sum up, there are objectives for every student to accomplish and a demand by the lesson aims itself. Students seek ways to mediate between their own needs and the expectation from the lesson. Successful mediation between these two requires good language skills and strategies. Consequently, autonomous learners are better at managing this situation than the ones being more dependent on the teacher. Since the teachers direct and give instructions on how to accomplish a task, students who struggle tend to be dependent on the instructions given by the teacher. Thus, they

cannot strategize and find their own ways to complete a task and that is more likely to turn into a habit for teacher-dependent students. Every time they encounter a new task, these students tend to listen to the teacher without trying to understand the aim of the task and how to make use of the language in the given situation.

By promoting LA, crucially, the aim is to make learners good language users. Efforts mutually put forward by teachers and students can contribute well to the learning process. In Little's (2007) perspective, it is essential for learners to show effort to communicate and to make production either by speaking or writing. Therefore, it is crucial that the teachers undertake a role to create an interactive environment for students to challenge themselves. Since communication entitles learners to produce, they need to put effort to communicate. Ultimately, learners will need to apply strategies to communicate that will enable them to become autonomous language speakers and learners by automatizing in time.

2.7. English Language Teaching in Turkish Education System

In 1997, the Turkish Ministry of Education implemented a reform in the education system (Haznedar, 2004, p.15). This reform was about 'eight-year continuous education' and it included primary and secondary school education altogether. Starting English language education in the 4th grade was also included in the legislation. Yet, in private schools, the beginning of English language learning was different. Most of the private K12 schools included English lessons in their preschool curriculum while students in state schools started their English language education in the 4th year of their schooling. Therefore, private school students had the chance to study English starting in pre-school years which put the private school students in a privileged position. While students in state schools started learning

English language later than private school students did, English language education in the 4th grade could not compensate for 4 - 5 years of language education in between.

As examined by Haznedar (2004, p.21), the old language program included a teacher-centered approach and the teachers were expected to introduce the grammar structures along with pictures and drawings. After that, they needed to reinforce and make practices on mechanical exercises such as sentence completion, rewrite, re-ordering, matching and so forth. That kind of approach and technique lacked the communicative aspects of language learning. Students were able to make grammatically accurate sentences; however, it was challenging for them to make associations between the structure and use in context. The lessons did not encourage student interaction since the theoretical background of the old language program was based on a teacher-centered approach. The teacher was the authority and the lessons were directed by the teachers' opinions. As a result, the students were not able to make their own explanations and have a say in the classroom. As the expectations were to be directed by the teachers, it was not a surprise that the students have got accustomed to not question the lessons, topics and materials of the lessons.

At the beginning of 2012-2013 academic year, the new education system was introduced. In the new system, students were able to start schooling at the age of 5. The education system was called "4+4+4" which means primary, secondary/middle and high school education last for four years instead of the former 'continuous 8 year education' system (Yaman, 2018, p.163). English language education was decided to begin in the 2nd grade. Consequently, students had the chance to begin their English language education around the age of 6. As stated by Yaman (2018, p.163), the curriculum was redesigned in line with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) principles. A communication-based and action-

oriented approach was the theoretical framework for the new curriculum of English language education. Following that, some problems were observed such as teachers' not reflecting their true potential and depending on the textbooks, continuing a teacher-centered education and neglecting students' individual differences and styles by the report released by TEPAV and British Council on 'Türkiye'deki Devlet Okullarında İngilizce Dilinin Öğretimine İlişkin Ulusal İhtiyaç Analizi' (TEPAV, 2014).

Yaman (2018, p.165) agrees with the idea that LA has gained importance in Turkish Education system recently which allows students to sustain their learning in and outside the classroom. Therefore, he states that the teachers need to guide their students into LA. Firstly, he talks about "teachers' qualities" on the issue of teaching English in Turkey. He points out a few aspects to consider on teachers' qualities. He asks whether Turkish teachers who are non-native speakers of English can teach it effectively or not? It is emphasized that there are advantages and disadvantages of being a non-native English teacher. They know about the students' profile in the country better and have experience and knowledge in Turkish education system. Therefore, Yaman (2018, p.166) believes once the teachers make the best use of these advantages they have, many problems in English language teaching will be solved. Secondly, he suggests that the curriculum of English Language Teaching (ELT) departments of the universities should be revised and enhanced by giving more attention to practicum studies. He asserts that class observation and practicum are done in a sloppy way and for the sake of procedural requirement. Yaman (2018, p.167) states that practicum should become more prevalent and pervasive. To do that, professors at the related department should be more attentive and not allow the students who avoid from successful completion of departmental studies. He also

states that the teachers should drop their conformist attitudes and quit traditional ways of teaching. As the Ministry of Education has initiated a communication-based and action-oriented approach with the new regulation in 2012-2013, teachers must keep up with the requirements of up-to-date system. Having a well-organized lesson plan and a well-designed textbook does not necessarily mean that the system works well unless the teachers are as qualified as to realize the requirements of that system.

2.8. Previous Studies

2.8.1. Studies conducted Abroad

Several studies were carried out abroad to investigate teachers' views on LA. In of these studies, Camilleri (1999) carried out a study with young teachers to explore their views on LA. In the study, participants were chosen from foreign language teaching graduates, twenty-nine of whom were teaching in primary and five were teaching in secondary school. In addition, these teachers took part in a course on LA during their pre-service education. All participants were the graduates of University of Malta. The teachers were responsible from teaching various subjects at school such as Maths, Maltese, English, and Science. Data collection tool was a questionnaire on LA perceptions and the study reported the results of 34 questionnaires collected. The results indicated that teachers mostly agreed to encourage students in order to find out their learning styles. Moreover, teachers claimed that students must be involved in deciding the pace of the lesson and they should be making their own explanations for the classroom tasks. Some teachers in the study believed that LA is difficult to sustain in primary schools, since students are not accepted as mature enough to make decisions about their own learning. Furthermore, most of the teachers disagree that the students should be involved in decisions on "seating arrangement, selection of

textbooks, annual assessment, the choice of the time and place of the lessons, keeping records and matters of discipline”. (1999, p.15) As the study did not have any qualitative data such as interviews, the reasons behind their disagreement and agreement cannot be detected.

In another study, Alonazi (2017) carried out a research with 60 EFL teachers working at a secondary school in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The study explored the use of different roles of language teachers in classrooms to promote LA. The data was collected through a questionnaire which consisted of three sections and focused on different aspects such as the role of the teacher while developing autonomy, constraints on developing autonomy and ways which teachers find helpful to develop LA. The teachers in the study implemented different roles of a teacher such as ‘facilitator, counselor, resource and manager’. Teachers reported to have difficulties while implementing the roles. These difficulties were reported to derive from students’ “lack of independent learning skills, rules and regulations applied in schools and teachers’ lack of the basic strategies to encourage autonomous learning”. The students did not have the necessary skills to cope with their learning, regulations at school restricted the actions of the teachers and the teachers did not possess the basic strategies to promote LA.

Borg and Alshumaimeri (2017) carried out a questionnaire study in Saudi Arabia on teachers’ beliefs and practices on LA. 359 teachers working at university preparatory schools took part in the study. The results collected from the teachers showed a consistent concern for ‘independence and control’ in the beliefs of LA. Independence was not only related to individual work. Teachers supported the idea that either students’ working alone or in a group may contribute to their LA. It follows that even when the teachers’ control is ‘absent and limited’, LA can be

developed. To do that, learners are involved in decision-making during learning tasks. Another issue was on how much teachers believe their students already have LA. 29% of the teachers who participated in the study reported to feel that their students have 'a fair degree of LA'. They reported that completion of homework and successful completion of a task in and out of the classroom were reported as indicators of being autonomous learners. In short, teachers who took part in the study related performance of the learners to LA. Borg and Alshumaimeri emphasize that since teachers who took part in this study are mostly expatriates, they are accustomed to a learner-centered education program. However, in the study, it is concluded that these Saudi students come from a teacher-centered background. Therefore, expectations of these expatriate teachers might have been high and therefore it mismatches with the reality in the context of Saudi students.

There are also studies that investigate LA in students. For example, Salehi (2015) aimed to identify the relationship between LA and the use of speaking strategies among 50 students in pre-intermediate and intermediate language classes. The participants answered a questionnaire and reported the strategies they used while speaking. According to the results, participants with low speaking grades had problems while finding the appropriate speaking strategies. On the other hand, participants with high speaking grades were able to make use of speaking strategies to cope with speaking problems. In the questionnaire, students were asked to report speaking strategies they use while coping with speaking problems and choose the appropriate item on the questionnaire by considering how autonomous they are while using these strategies. In the study, a positive correlation was found among reported degree of autonomy, using speaking strategies and grades of the students. Students

who apply speaking strategies reported themselves as autonomous in the questionnaire. And there was also a correlation with the speaking grades because the students who reported themselves autonomous had higher speaking grades.

Chaouch (2016) conducted a study to find out the effect of LA and self-esteem on high school students' English achievement. 135 Moroccan high school students took part in the study by taking a questionnaire. It was found that there was weak relationship between age and LA, age and self-esteem; gender and LA, gender and self-esteem. In the study, 11% of the students were having additional English lessons. According to the data, there was no relationship between LA and having additional English lessons. In addition, there was a positive correlation between autonomy and success. The students who have high grades were found to be autonomous. The study concludes that as the students take more responsibility in their own learning, their levels of achievement increases. Moreover, there is no effect of age, gender and additional English lessons on the relationship between autonomy and achievement. As there is no correlation between having self-esteem and LA in achievement, efforts of the students play an important role in their academic achievement.

2.8.2. Studies conducted in Turkey

There are also studies that investigate the concept of LA in Turkish context. In one of the first studies, Özdere (2005) carried out a study in state-supported provincial universities in Turkey. His participants consisted of 72 EFL teachers. Participants were English language teachers at Afyonkarahisar Kocatepe University, Akdeniz University, Balıkesir University, Muğla University, Niğde University, and Zonguldak Karaelmas University. Özdere used Camilleri's (1997) questionnaire to gather his data. He made a semi-structured interview with 9 pre-made questions to

make his data more reliable. In the study, teachers mostly agreed that students need to figure out their own learning strategies, make their own explanations and contribute to their self-assessment. Most of the teachers indicated in the questionnaire that students should not choose their own learning materials. No further information was given for the reason of the teachers' choice in the interviews. Since the teachers claimed that they develop the curriculum based on needs analysis from previous academic year, they were neutral about involving students into decision-making on “content and objectives of the course, teaching focus and methodology” (Özdere, 2005, p.110). Similarly, in the interviews, they emphasized that students depend on their teachers and students do not have enough motivation. According to the participants, the reasons for low motivation are lack of necessary skills to study English, lack of enthusiasm to learn English or just simply studying English to pass their exams.

In another study, Tursun (2010) explored the concept of LA with 676 students and 60 teachers. The participants were students and teachers from 15 different Anatolian High Schools. The students were studying in grade 9 and 11. Tursun used two different questionnaires: one for teachers and one for students to collect the data. The results of teachers' questionnaire indicated that choosing materials, identifying appropriate activities, deciding on the following topic in the lessons, deciding on the objectives of English lessons and determining strengths and weaknesses of students are responsibilities of the teachers. Deciding on what to learn outside the classroom was considered as the duty of both teachers and students according to students' questionnaire results. Conversely, the teachers believed that this was the students' responsibility. The results on the students' questionnaire showed that students are ready to share the responsibility with their teachers while selecting materials,

activities and topics to be used in and outside the classroom, deciding on length of the activities and what to learn.

Yıldırım (2014) sought to 'identify EFL instructors' beliefs and practices on LA'. 67 EFL instructors in Gazi University Preparatory School participated in the study. The data were collected through a questionnaire and semi-structured interview. Instructors believed that confident and motivated students are more inclined to develop LA. They supported the idea that students can have a say on the decisions about activities in and outside of the classroom. The study also puts forward the issue of language proficiency while developing LA since 33 instructors out of 64 do not believe that proficient learners develop LA better. 17 of them were unsure about the issue, while 14 of them agreed on the importance of language proficiency. According to the data, nearly half of the participants disagreed with the item stating, "It is harder to promote LA with proficient language learners than it is with beginners", whereas, the other half of the participants were unsure, or they agreed with the item. The final result drawn from the study was that regardless of their proficiency level, students can develop LA.

Doğan (2015) focused on 'EFL instructors' perception and practices on LA in some Turkish universities. Doğan conducted her study with 96 EFL instructors. She applied a questionnaire which consists of 37 questions on a five point Likert-scale. A semi-structured interview was followed with 17 interviewees. She categorized the items on the questionnaire as technical, psychological, social, political perspectives, role of the teachers, cultural universality, age, proficiency, learner-centeredness and benefits of LA. Instructors believed that self-study in the library, learning outside the classroom, self-motivation, using learning strategies, self-evaluation promote LA. They mostly agreed that students learn better when they study together and learn from

each other. Instructors in the study mostly disagreed and were unsure that LA requires learners to be independent and can learn without the help of the teacher. It is believed that the teachers are responsible for creating the ideal environment to develop LA. In addition, it is strongly agreed that LA can be promoted in all ages. However, some instructors believe that as the students get older, they resist developing new strategies and styles because of their habits resulting in underdevelopment of LA.

Finally, Eren (2015) aimed to investigate 'secondary school English teachers' views on developing LA of students. He collected data through questionnaire. He carried out his study with 415 middle school English teachers. Male teachers in the study believed that the choice of learning tasks and text books, taking students' opinion on seating arrangement, determining short-term aims and objectives of the lessons promote LA. Young and less-experienced teachers showed positive attitude towards students' participation in the pace of the lesson, pair and group works, deciding on the materials, activities and organization of the classroom, self-explanation of the students in class activities and weekly/annually self-evaluation.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

The aim of this thesis is to investigate LA perceptions of EFL teachers teaching English at English preparatory programs of the universities in Turkey. This chapter includes six main sections which are setting, participants, data collection tools, research design, procedures and data analysis. Detailed information is provided in the following sections for the method of present thesis.

3.1. Setting

The data were collected from the teachers teaching at İstanbul Bilgi University, Yeditepe University and 3 individuals who wished to contribute to this thesis. Three other participants work for İstanbul Medipol University, Bahçeşehir University and Marmara University. The data collection took part in the academic year of 2018-2019.

İstanbul Bilgi University Preparatory Program is a member of Laureate International Network. The network provides many opportunities to member universities such as international network of campus and online-based university experiences. In addition, İstanbul Bilgi University Preparatory Program encourages its students to engage in English language learning by providing facilities such as Computer Supported Language Learning Centers (CALL Centers) and Writing and Learning Centers. The preparatory program teaches English throughout an academic year with five levels of proficiency. After taking a placement test in English, students are placed to level-appropriate classrooms. The English preparation academic year lasts for five terms including the summer term with each term lasting for two months. The levels of the program include Starters, Elementary, Lower-intermediate,

Intermediate and Upper-intermediate. Each level has its own exit objectives. Once the students reach the end of the level, they take an Achievement Test (AT) to pass to the upper level. After finishing Upper-intermediate level, they are qualified to continue their education at the faculty. Classrooms consist of approximately 17-20 students. Materials used during the academic year consist of textbooks, exercises prepared by task-groups and teachers, tests and exams prepared by testing office. Also, students are able to access online materials on the student website. In Level 1, students only have maincourse and listening&speaking lessons. From level 2 to level 5, they have reading&writing, coursebook, listening&speaking lessons. Level 1 and Level 2 students have English instructions for 20 hours a week. Level 3,4 and 5 students have 25 hours of English learning.

Yeditepe University is one of the well-known foundation universities in Istanbul. Students, who get a place at the university, take an English proficiency exam before they start their departmental studies. Once the students fail the proficiency test, they are required to study English Preparatory Year. Before starting the preparatory program, students take a placement test to be placed according to their levels of English. The levels consist of level A, level B1 and B2. The English Preparatory Program divides an academic year into three semesters. Each semester lasts for 14-16 weeks. The classrooms consist of 22-23 students. Materials are mostly prepared by the teachers and delivered to students. Textbooks are used as the means of instruction in the classes.

3.2. Participants

The thesis was conducted with 72 EFL teachers actively teaching at English Preparatory Programs in universities. The sample of this research includes 72 EFL teachers, 55 (76,4%) of whom are female and 17 (23,6%) of whom are male. The range of ages is from 24 to 59 years, with a mean of 36,18. Experience of teachers is divided in terms of year category. Distribution of years of experience is as follow, 18 (25%) of 1-5 years, 18 (25%) of 5-10 years, 13 (18,1%) of 10-15 years, 16 (22,2%) of 15-20 years and 7 (9,7%) of over 20 years. Out of 72 participants, 48 of them were from İstanbul Bilgi University, 21 of them were from Yeditepe University, one of them was from Medipol University, one from Marmara University and the last participant from Bahçeşehir University.

Participants who took part in the interviews were volunteer teachers who wished to contribute to present thesis. (see Table 1) Structured interviews were carried out with 15 teachers from İstanbul Bilgi University and Yeditepe University. 4 of the interviewees were native speakers of English language. Therefore, the interviews were held in English with them. The rest of the group was interviewed in Turkish. Later, the voice-recordings were transcribed into English by the researcher.

Table 1

Descriptive Table for Interviewees

Teachers' Code Names	Native / Non-Native	Age	Level of Education	Teaching Experience
T-1 Yiğit	Non-Native	25	B.A. Istanbul Bilgi University – ELT 2016 B.A. Istanbul Bilgi University – International Relations 2017	3 years
T-2 Serant	Non-Native	26	B.A. Beykent University English Lit. – 2015 Pedagogical Formation Marmara University 2017 CELTA 2016	3 years
T-3 Hande	Non-Native	24	B.A. Yıldız Technical University – ELT 2015 M.A. Yıldız Technical University Education Management - 2018	3 years
T-4 Şahin	Native	32	B.A. University Le Icester – Law 2007 CELTA 2010	9 years
T-5 Burcu	Non-Native	26	B.A. University of Bogazici - Western Languages and Literature 2014 CELTA 2016	3 years
T-6 Şule	Non-Native	38	B.A. Marmara University – ELT 2004	15 years
T-7 Pelin	Non-Native	42	B.A. Oberlin College – English Language and Literature 1998 M.A. Cornell University – English Language and Literature 2006 CELTA 2016	13 years
T-8 Fevzi	Non-Native	30	B.A. Boğaziçi University – English Literature 2011 Yıldız Technical University – Pedagogical Formation 2010 CELTA 2011	8 years
T-9 Şirin	Non-Native	34	B.A. Marmara University – ELT 2007	12 years
T-10 Dilara	Non-Native	31	B.A. Çağ University – ELT 2002 M.A. Yeditepe University – ELT 2012	17 years
T-11 İlkyaz	Non-Native	28	B.A. Yeditepe University – ELT 2013	6 years
T-12 Rabia	Non-Native	25	B.A. Yeditepe University - ELT 2016	3 years
T-13 Michael	Native	40	B.A. Texas State University – French Language 2008 TESOL 2009	9 years
T-14 Colin	Native	30	B.A. University of St. Andrews – Business Administration 2012 CELTA 2014	5 years
T-15 Matthew	Native	42	B.A. LLB Legal Philosophy University of Westminster 2001 B.A. LLB Legal Practice, London School of Economics 2003 TEFL 2015	4 years

3.3. Data Collection Tools

In the quantitative part of the thesis, two data collection tools were used. The first one consists of demographic questions. The second tool is Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (see Appendix A). In demographic part, 6 questions were asked to EFL teachers. Demographic information consisted of age, gender, year of graduation and experience. The other questions were about skill/s taught and level/s they teach. In addition, comment boxes below each questionnaire item were optional. Participants were free to leave a comment. These comments are also exploited as qualitative data.

The questionnaire used in the thesis was taken from Camilleri (1999). He conducted the study on LA perceptions of primary and secondary school teachers in Malta. In Turkey, the same questionnaire was also used by Eren (2015). The researcher was contacted via e-mail and asked for permission to use the questionnaire in the present thesis (see Appendix B). The questionnaire was translated into Turkish by Eren (2015) and applied to Turkish teachers who teach English as a second language in secondary schools. The present thesis investigates the perceptions of Turkish teachers teaching English to university preparatory students. Therefore, applying a questionnaire in their first language is more reliable to gain valid data. In addition, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated as 0.92 for the questionnaire by Eren (2015). Multiple items in the questionnaire and the questionnaire in overall were found consistent indicating that the items function well, and the measure is reliable.

The items in the questionnaire deal with different scopes of learning and teaching such as objectives (short-term vs. long-term) , course contents (topics and tasks), selecting materials (textbooks, audio-visual aids/ Audio-visual aids - AVAs ,realia), time, place and pace, methodology (individual / pair / group work, use of materials, type of classroom activities, type of homework activities), learning tasks ,

classroom management (position of desks, seating of students, discipline matters), record-keeping (of work done, of marks gained, attendance), homework tasks (quantity, type, frequency), what is to be learnt from materials (texts, audio-visual aids/AVAs, realia), explanations, learning procedures, self-assessment (weekly, monthly, annually).

In addition to the LA questionnaire, interviews with structured-questions were carried out with 15 participants. Interview questions were taken from Farahi (2015) who conducted a study on teachers' and students' perceptions of LA (See Appendix C). As the present thesis aims to find out the perceptions of EFL teachers on LA, the interview questions from Farahi's study were appropriate. Interview questions aim to elicit teachers' opinions on the definition and importance of LA, problems of the development of LA for Turkish students and roles of the teachers in the classroom. The thesis aims to find out the commonalities among EFL teachers' definitions on LA, the most common problems in the development of LA in Turkish students and the most important roles of EFL teachers while teaching.

3.4. Data Analysis

The thesis was conducted using a mixed-method research approach. In Creswell (2003, p.12) study mixed method approach is defined as “collection of both quantitative and qualitative data sequentially”. It is also stated that researchers prefer this method to “provide the best understanding of a research problem”. To collect the quantitative data, LA questionnaire which includes multiple choice questions on a five-point Likert scale was used. In the questionnaire, participants indicated their preferences from 0 ‘not at all’, 1 ‘little’, 2 ‘partly’, 3 ‘much’ to 4 ‘strongly

agree'. Quantitative data of the thesis was analyzed by using Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS 22.0). Descriptive statistics were used to describe the means and standard deviations of the data. To analyze the research questions, one-way ANOVA test was applied. For significant differences, Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test was also applied to determine the differences among groups.

Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews with 15 teachers. Responses from the teachers were transcribed and most frequently mentioned words and phrases were coded by the researcher. An independent intercoder also read the transcripts and evaluated the data with the researcher to decide on the codes provided. Based on the codes, the present thesis drew results for three research questions on the definition of LA, problems in the development of LA and roles of the teachers.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1. Quantitative Part of the Thesis

In this part of the thesis, data collected through the questionnaires are presented. In addition to questionnaire data, teachers' comments in the boxes provided within the questionnaire are also presented to support the findings. Figures and tables are provided along with interpretation of each research questions.

4.1.1. Research Question 1

First research question of this study was specified as “What is the level of LA perceptions of EFL teachers working at university preparatory schools in general?”

Data was collected from 72 participants, 55 were female and 17 were male teachers. The mean age of the participants was 36.18 with a range between 24-59.

The minimum score of scale can be 0 and maximum score can be 128. The average of scale is 64. According to the 72 EFL teachers, the average level of LA perceptions is 73,58 indicating that EFL teachers who work at university preparatory schools believe learners should be autonomous in foreign language learning (see Table 2).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Learner Autonomy for EFL Teachers

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Total	73,5833	18,79148	72

In the general comment boxes, the teachers reported their beliefs and expectations on LA in general. Most of the teachers who left comments in boxes provided, believe that LA is necessary for learning to become permanent and students to be motivated. Some of the teachers stated that as students become more autonomous, their learning also becomes more permanent and faster. In addition, being a successful language learner was associated with being an autonomous learner by some teachers.

“I believe LA is very important. We can already notice the difference between dependent and autonomous students in the classroom. Along the same amount of time, autonomous learners are able to achieve more”. (T-43)

“As long as the students learn by themselves without needing their teacher, learning process will be permanent and fast”. (T-48)

“In order for students to improve their study skills outside the classroom, to learn different languages, to find out the best learning styles; we need to integrate learner autonomy in our lives along with technology”. (T-71)

In addition to these comments, some teachers presented their concerns about developing LA in different contexts. As institutions have pre-made curriculum and the language program has to go hand-in-hand with the curriculum, learners and even

teachers may not have a say in many areas. Therefore, some teachers stated that developing LA depends on the context of the classroom.

“Most of the students do not decide any of the aspects in this questionnaire. The decision has already been made. Even the teachers may not have a say on the decision-making”. (T-42)

“A lot of these answers depend on the context. For private students, corporate classes, language schools, K12 schools and prep (all of which I’ve taught) I would probably give different answers”. (T-37)

“These answers apply to classroom learning. Private study/lessons would produce totally different answers”. (T-34)

In Camilleri’s study (1999, p.8), degrees of responses in the questionnaire were categorized according to different interpretations made for each scale. He matches the scales to three different interpretations. Replies including not at all ‘0’ and little ‘1’ mean that the participant is resistant to the LA depending on the item he or she replied. Replies including partly ‘2’, mean that the decision on the item can be negotiated between teacher and the learner. As for the interpretation of strong support of LA, much ‘3’ and very much ‘4’ are referred as the reply.

Based on Camilleri’s interpretation table, participant teachers indicate strong support of LA for items 11, 12, 13A, 13B and 13C in the questionnaire (see Table 3). They strongly support that learners should be encouraged on making their own explanations to classroom tasks, to find out learning procedures by themselves, to assess themselves rather than being tested weekly, monthly, and annually.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of LA Perceptions of EFL Teachers on Items 11,12,13A,13B and 13C

The learners should be encouraged to...	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
11 find his or her own explanationsto classroom tasks	72	0	4	3,68	0,577
12 find out learning proceduresby himself orherself	72	0	4	3,71	0,638
13A to assesshimself or herself, rather than betested weekly	72	0	4	3,19	1,121
13B to assesshimself or herself, rather than betested monthly	72	0	4	3,25	0,975
13C to assesshimself or herself, rather than betested annually	72	0	4	3,10	1,212

In addition to quantitative data, in comment boxes, teachersstated their support for encouraging the learners to make their own explanations (item 11). In that way, learners can relate the lesson to themselves and reflect on the learning point by using target language as a communication tool.

“We should allow students to make their own explanations by personalizing the topics”. (T-29)

“When the students make their own explanations, communication improves”. (T-48)

The comments provided for item 12 were on their beliefs about whether learners should be encouraged to find out learning procedures by themselves or not. One of the teacherspointed out the importance of finding out their own learning procedures. He stated that is essential for continuous learning.

“In that way, dependence on the teacher decreases and the learning becomes continuous even when the teacher is not around”. (T-48)

One of the teachers stated their support for encouraging learners to assess themselves rather than being tested weekly, monthly and annually (item 13). He stated that it increases learners' motivation as well.

“Seeing how much one has achieved weekly, monthly and annually motivates the students”.(T-48)

For items 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3B, 3C, 4C, 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D, 6, 7A, 7B, 9B, 10B, 10C; teachers' choices show that these areas require negotiation between teacher and learner (see Table 4). Teachers believe that negotiation between teacher and learner can be done; in establishing the objectives of a course of study for short-term and long-term, in deciding the course topics and tasks, in selecting audio-visual aids and realia, in decisions on the pace of the lesson, in decisions on the individual/pair/group work, use of materials, type of classroom activities, type of homework activities, in decisions on the choice of learning tasks, in decisions on the positions of desks and seating of students, on decisions on the type of homework tasks, in decisions on what is to be learnt from audio-visual materials and realia given by the teacher.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of LA Perceptions of EFL Teachers on Items 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3B, 3C, 4C, 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D, 6, 7A, 7B, 9B, 10B and 10C

The learners should be involved in...	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1A establishing the objectives of a course of study short-term	72	0	4	2,40	0,929
1B establishing the objectives of a course of study long-term	72	0	4	2,57	1,019
2A deciding the course content: topics	72	0	4	2,08	1,058
2B deciding the course content: tasks	72	0	4	2,40	1,016
3B selecting materials: AVAs	72	0	4	2,29	1,080
3C selecting materials: Realia	72	0	4	2,53	1,138
4C decisions on the pace of the lesson	72	0	4	2,53	1,007
5A decisions on the methodology of the lesson: individual/pair/group work	72	0	4	2,65	0,952
5B decisions on the methodology of the lesson: use of materials	72	0	4	2,32	1,072
5C decisions on the methodology of the lesson: type of classroom activities	72	0	4	2,61	0,928
5D decisions on the methodology of the lesson: type of homework activities	72	0	4	2,18	1,039
6 decisions on the choice of learning tasks	72	0	4	2,22	0,996
7A decisions on classroom management: position of desks	72	0	4	2,38	1,131
7B decisions on classroom management: seating of students	72	0	4	2,29	1,067
9B decisions on type of homework tasks	72	0	4	2,06	0,977
10B decisions on what is to be learned from AVAs given by the teacher	72	0	4	2,06	1,047
10C decisions on what is to be learned from Realia given by the teacher	72	0	4	2,24	0,986

Quantitative data also shows that teachers have resistance to learner autonomy to involve learners; in selecting textbook, in decisions on the time and place of the lesson, in decisions on discipline matters, in decisions about keeping the record of work done, of marks gained, attendance, in decisions on the quantity and frequency of the homework tasks and in decisions what is to be learnt from texts given by the teacher (see Table 5).

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of LA Perceptions of EFL Teachers on Items 3A, 4A, 4B, 7C, 8A, 8B, 8C, 9A, 9C and 10A

The learners should be involved in...	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
3A selecting materials: text books	72	0	4	1,42	1,058
4A decisions on the time of the lesson	72	0	4	1,61	1,133
4B decisions on the place of the lesson	72	0	4	1,69	1,206
7C decisions on classroom management: discipline matters	72	0	4	1,75	1,172
8A decisions about record-keeping of work done	72	0	4	1,83	1,374
8B decisions about record-keeping of marks gained	72	0	4	1,65	1,386
8C decisions about record-keeping of attendance	72	0	4	1,32	1,422
9A decisions on quantity of homework tasks	72	0	4	1,94	1,005
9C decisions on frequency of homework tasks	72	0	4	1,83	0,993
10A decisions on what is to be learned from texts given by the teacher	72	0	4	1,79	0,963

4.1.2. Research Question 2

The second research question of this study was specified as “Is there a significant effect of teachers' age on LA perceptions of EFL teachers?”

Subjects were divided into four groups according to age category (Group1: 20 – 30; Group 2: 31 – 40; Group 3: 41 – 50; Group 4: Over 50) (see Table 6). A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to examine the age on LA perceptions of EFL teachers (see Table 7). There was not a statistically significant difference on LA perceptions of EFL teachers from four age groups: $F(3, 68) = 1,718; p = .172$.

Table 6

Result of Descriptive Statistic the Learner Autonomy Perceptions Levels of EFL Teachers in Terms of Age

Age	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
20 - 30	80,9000	11,39206	20
31 - 40	72,1667	23,28102	30
41 - 50	67,8421	16,64753	19
Over 50	75,3333	8,14453	3
Total	73,5833	18,79148	72

Table 7

Result of ANOVA for the Learner Autonomy Perception Levels of EFL Teachers in Terms of Age

Total	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	1766,340	3	588,780	1,718	,172
Within Groups	23305,160	68	342,723		
Total	25071,500	71			

4.1.2.a. Results for Each Item

As a result of one-way ANOVA tests on the effect of age on levels of learner autonomy perceptions for each item, there was no significant difference on LA perception levels of the teachers for each item in the questionnaire except for two items. Marginally significant differences were found for item 11 ($F(3, 68); 2,480, p = ,068$) and item 13B ($F(3, 68); 2,626, p = ,057$). Table 8 provides detailed information for the results of the statistical analysis for each item.

Table 8

Result of ANOVA for the Learner Autonomy Perception Levels of EFL Teachers in Terms of Age for Each Item

The learners should be involved in...	F value	p value
1A establishing the objectives of a course of study short-term	1,474	,229
1B establishing the objectives of a course of study long-term	,802	,497
2A deciding the course content: topics	1,675	,181
2B deciding the course content: tasks	,961	,416
3A selecting materials: text books	,470	,704
3B selecting materials: AVAs	1,152	,335
3C selecting materials: Realia	1,235	,304

4A decisions on the time of the lesson	,823	,486
4B decisions on the place of the lesson	1,977	,126
4C decisions on the pace of the lesson	1,768	,162
5A decisions on themethodologyof the lesson: individual/pair/group work	,673	,572
5B decisions on the methodologyof the lesson: use of materials	2,029	,118
5C decisions on the methodologyof the lesson: type of classroom activities	1,690	,177
5D decisions on the methodologyof the lesson: type of homework activities	1,473	,230
6 decisions on the the choice of learning tasks	,450	,718
7A decisions on classroom management: position of desks	1,364	,261
7B decisions on classroom management: seating of students	,955	,419
7C decisions on classroom management: discipline matters	,266	,849
8A decisions aboutrecord-keeping of work done	,920	,436
8B decisions aboutrecord-keeping of marks gained	,644	,590
8C decisions aboutrecord-keeping of attendance	1,444	,238
9A decisions on quantity of homeworktasks	,528	,664
9B decisions on type of homeworktasks	,858	,467
9C decisions on frequency of homeworktasks	1,587	,201
10A decisions on what is to be learned from texts given by theteacher	1,965	,127
10B decisions on what is to be learned from AVAs given by theteacher	1,728	,169
10C decisions on what is to be learned from Realia given by theteacher	1,490	,225
The learners should be encouraged to...		
11 find his or her own explanationsto classroom tasks	2,480	,068
12 find out learning proceduresby himself orherself	,819	,488
13A to assesshimself or herself, rather than betested weekly	,456	,714
13B to assesshimself or herself, rather than betested monthly	2,626	,0567
13C to assesshimself or herself, rather than betested annually	1,801	,155

4.1.3. Research Question 3

The effect of years of experience on the level of LA perceptions of EFL teachers was investigated in the third research question. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of years of experience on levels of LA perceptions of EFL teachers. Subjects were divided into five groups according to years of experience (Group 1: 1-5 years; Group 2: 5 – 10 years; Group 3: 10 – 15 years; Group 4: 15 – 20 years; Group 5: over 20 years). The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 9 below.

Table 9

Result of Descriptive Statistic the Learner Autonomy Perceptions Levels of EFL Teachers in Terms of Years of Experience

Years of Experience	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1-5 years	84,1111	11,29231	18
5-10years	74,9444	21,99057	18
10- 15 years	65,3077	22,95788	13
15-20 years	66,1875	16,13369	16
Over 20 years	75,2857	10,32334	7
Total	73,5833	18,79148	72

There was a statistically significant difference on learner autonomy perceptions of EFL teachers $F(4, 67); 3,005, p = ,024$ (see Table 10)

Table 10

Result of ANOVA for the Learner Autonomy Perceptions Levels of EFL Teachers in Terms of Years of Experience

Total	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	3814,142	4	953,536	3,005	,024
Within Groups	21257,358	67	317,274		
Total	25071,500	71			

As we obtained a significant effect of years of experience, Tukey HSD was conducted as a Post Hoc test and the results revealed significant differences between Group1: 1 – 5 years and Group 3: 10 – 15 years and Group 4: 15 – 20 years. Participants in Group 1 had a significantly higher score than Group 3 and Group 4. However, no statistically significant differences were obtained between Group1, Group 2 and Group 5 (see Table 11).

Table 11

Result of Tukey HSD Post Hoc for the Learner Autonomy Perceptions levels of EFL Teachers in Terms of Years of Experience

(I) Years of Experience	(J) Years of Experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p
1-5 years	5-10years	9,16667	5,93740	,538
	10- 15 years	18,80342*	6,48321	,039
	15-20 years	17,92361*	6,12013	,036
	over 20 years	8,82540	7,93418	,799
5-10years	1-5 years	-9,16667	5,93740	,538
	10- 15 years	9,63675	6,48321	,575
	15-20 years	8,75694	6,12013	,610
	over 20 years	-,34127	7,93418	1,000
10- 15 years	1-5 years	-18,80342*	6,48321	,039
	5-10years	-9,63675	6,48321	,575
	15-20 years	-,87981	6,65096	1,000
	over 20 years	-9,97802	8,35048	,754
15-20 years	1-5 years	-17,92361*	6,12013	,036
	5-10years	-8,75694	6,12013	,610
	10- 15 years	,87981	6,65096	1,000
	over 20 years	-9,09821	8,07183	,792
over 20 years	1-5 years	-8,82540	7,93418	,799
	5-10years	,34127	7,93418	1,000
	10- 15 years	9,97802	8,35048	,754
	15-20 years	9,09821	8,07183	,792

A statistically significant difference between groups in years of experience on the level of learner autonomy is obtained for item 10 (see Table 12). According to the Post Hoc Test, it can be stated that there is a statistically significant difference between Group1 (1 – 5 years) and Group 3 (10 – 15 years) in terms of the learner to be involved in decisions on what is to be learned from text materials given by the teacher (item 10A). Participants in Group 3 give significantly higher scores than participants in Group 1(see Table 13).

Table 12

Result of ANOVA for the Learner Autonomy Perceptions Levels of EFL Teachers on Being Involved in Decisions on What Is to Be Learned From Texts Materials Given by the Teacher in Terms of Years of Experience

Years of Experience	N	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1-5 years	18	Between Groups	10,533	4	2,633	3,188	,019
5-10years	18	Within Groups	55,342	67	,826		
10-15 years	13	Total	65,875	71			
15-20 years	16						
Over 20 years	7						
Total	72						

Table 13

Result of Post Hoc for the Learner Autonomy Perceptions Levels of EFL Teachers in Terms of Years of Experience for the Learner to Be Involved in Decisions on What Is to Be Learned From Text Materials Given by the Teacher

(I) Years of Experience	(J) Years of Experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p
1-5 years	5-10years	,444	,303	,587
	10- 15 years	1,026*	,331	,023
	15-20 years	,896*	,312	,042
	over 20 years	,476	,405	,765

In addition, there was a statistically significant difference between Group1 (1 – 5 years) and Group 3 (10 – 15 years) in terms of the learner to be involved in decisions on what is to be learned from AVA’s materials given by the teacher (see table 14). The responses of participants in Group 1 are significantly higher than the responses in Group 3 (see Table 15).

Table 14

Result of ANOVA for The Learner Autonomy Perceptions Levels of EFL Teachers on Being Involved in Decisions On What Is to Be Learned From AVA’s Materials Given by the Teacher in Terms of Years of Experience

Years of Experience	N	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1-5 years	18	Between Groups	13,641	4	3,410	3,563	,011
5-10years	18	Within Groups	64,137	67	,957		
10- 15 years	13	Total	77,778	71			
15-20 years	16						
Over 20 years	7						
Total	72						

Table 15

Result of Post Hoc for the Learner Autonomy Perceptions Levels of EFL Teachers in Terms of Years of Experience for the Learner to Be Involved in Decisions on What Is to Be Learned From AVA's Materials Given by the Teacher

(I) Years of Experience	(J) Years of Experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p
1-5 years	5-10years	,722	,326	,187
	10- 15 years	1,261*	,356	,006
	15-20 years	,910	,336	,064
	over 20 years	,579	,436	,674

Lastly, there was a statistically significant difference between Group1 (1 – 5 years) and Group 3 (10 – 15 years) and Group 4 (15 – 20 years) in terms of the learner to be involved in decisions on what is to be learned from Realia materials given by the teacher (see table 16). The responses of Group 1 are significantly lower than Group 3 and significantly lower at marginal level than Group 4 (see Table 17).

Table 16

Result of ANOVA for the Learner Autonomy Perceptions Levels of EFL Teachers on Being Involved in Decisions on What Is to Be Learned From Realia Materials Given by the Teacher in Terms of Years of Experience

Years of Experience	N	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1-5 years	18	Between Groups	10,135	4	2,534	2,885	,029
5-10years	18	Within Groups	58,851	67	,878		
10- 15 years	13	Total	68,986	71			
15-20 years	16						
Over 20 years	7						
Total	72						

Table 17

Result of Post Hoc for The Learner Autonomy Perceptions Levels of EFL Teachers in Terms of Years of Experience for the Learner to Be Involved in Decisions on What Is to Be Learned From Realia Materials Given by the Teacher

(I) Years of Experience	(J) Years of Experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p
1-5 years	5-10years	,778	,312	,105
	10- 15 years	,987*	,341	,040
	15-20 years	,833	,322	,084
	over 20 years	,405	,417	,868

4.2. Qualitative Part of the Thesis

In this part of the thesis, research questions 4, 5 and 6 were answered by qualitative data which were collected through semi-structured interviews. Interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Based on the frequency of samples from the data; codes and categories were formed to be able to analyze perceptions of the teachers.

4.2.1. Research Question 4

First question of the interview was “In brief, how would you define LA?” Interviewees’ own definitions on LA were elicited and coded based on the frequent answers given in sentences, phrases and chunks. Consequently, the following table was formed to present qualitative data for the fourth research question to find out LA definitions of EFL teachers.

According to teachers'comments on the definition of LA; individuality was the most frequently mentioned aspect on definition of learner autonomy. Out of 15 interviewees, 8 of them mentioned about studying and learning on their own.

“knowing how to learn a language on their own”. (T-6)

Ability was another aspect which was mentioned by six interviewees to define LA. They believe that LA is an ability that facilitates learning.

“the ability for the students to take responsibility for their own learning”.
(T-15)

Five of the interviewees mentioned about awareness in their definitions of LA. They pointed out that in order to achieve in their lessons, students need to have awareness, in that way, they can reach their goals and become successful language learners.

“It is sort of the awareness of learning”. (T-10)

Four interviewees pointed that in order to be autonomous, students should have aims and goals in language learning. Teachers stated that when a student knows why they are learning the language and why they need to use it, they know better how to make use of the language. Therefore, these learners are not dependent on their teachers, they already have an aim to learn the language.

“choosing which ways to go about reaching their goals”. (T-7)

Strengths and weaknesses, being responsible, independence and active participation were the least mentioned aspects in defining LA. Three teachers talked about autonomous learners' being aware of their strengths and weaknesses and acting accordingly. Three of them associated responsibility to autonomous learners. While developing LA, three teachers also emphasized the need to be responsible in students' own language learning. Lastly, two of the teachers claimed that active participation in the lesson show that these students are autonomous learners.

“Knowing their strengths and weaknesses and working accordingly”. (T-5)

“learners’ own control and discipline in their own learning and their taking responsibilities in their own learning”. (T-9)

“the students have a say... participate in the lesson more actively”. (T-1)

Table 18

Teachers’ Definition on Learner Autonomy

CODE	FREQUENCY	SAMPLE DATA
Individuality	8	<p><i>“Knowing how to learn a language on their own”.</i> (T-6)</p> <p><i>“taking control of their own learning”.</i> (T-4)</p> <p><i>“have control over their learning”.</i> (T-12)</p>
Ability	6	<p><i>“ability that belongs to a learner”.</i> (T-5)</p> <p><i>“to be able to guide themselves during the tasks in a group or individually”.</i> (T-11)</p> <p><i>“able to read or research on their own and learn a topic”.</i> (T-13)</p> <p><i>“the ability for the students to take responsibility for their own learning”.</i> (T-15)</p> <p><i>“learner autonomy is an ability that all the students must have”.</i> (T-2)</p> <p><i>“being able to work on their strengths and weaknesses accordingly”.</i> (T-10)</p>
Awareness	5	<p><i>“the capacity of the students and their skills to answer the questions by themselves”.</i> (T-11)</p>

		<p><i>“it makes students fully aware of what is going on in their classes”.</i> (T-12)</p> <p><i>“get them be aware of what they need to do for their own learning”.</i> (T-9)</p> <p><i>“It is sort of the awareness of learning”.</i> (T-10)</p> <p><i>“it makes students confident and self-aware about learning English”.</i> (T-2)</p>
Aims and Goals of the Students	4	<p><i>“depend students’ background knowledge or interest to learning English”.</i> (T-2)</p> <p><i>“Learner deciding what their goals are... choosing which ways to go about reaching their goals”.</i> (T-7)</p> <p><i>“Some of them have real goal about learning language, some of them have clear goals”.</i> (T-8)</p> <p><i>“goes beyond what is asked”.</i> (T-14)</p>
Strengths and Weaknesses	3	<p><i>“mostly self-learning and knowing how to learn and being aware of their own strengths and weaknesses”.</i> (T-10)</p> <p><i>“realizing their strengths and weaknesses”.</i> (T-6)</p> <p><i>“Knowing their strengths and weaknesses and working accordingly”.</i> (T-5)</p>
Being responsible	3	<p><i>“learners’ own control and discipline in their own learning and their taking responsibilities in their own learning”.</i> (T-9)</p> <p><i>“giving responsibility to students during their learning process”.</i> (T-</p>

		12)	<i>"I consider it vital the learner to take out responsibility from themselves". (T-15)</i>
Independence	3		<i>"sparing time for your own self-development". (T-8)</i> <i>"students' being independent while they are studying" .(T-6)</i> <i>"self-directed learning by the learner". (T-7)</i>
Active participation	2		<i>"a student takes an active role". (T-14)</i> <i>"the students have a say... participate in the lesson more actively". (T-1)</i>

4.2.2. Research Question 5

Possible problems or hindrances of the development of autonomy in Turkish students were investigated in research question five through the interview. Teachers were asked to identify and define the problems they have encountered in the development of autonomy for their students. Answers of the interviewees were coded and presented below from the most frequent issues mentioned to the least.

According to teachers' responses, some issues in education system were the most frequent problem that hinders the development of LA in Turkish students. Seven of the teachers stated their opinions on the behavioristic approaches and their effect on the LA development. It is believed that habit formation, memorization of structures

and demand in test-based teaching influence LA development in a negative way when students come to preparatory schools with these habits.

“Education in general and the language education mostly include structures that are memorized”. (T-11)

“The system is really dependent on memorization and the teacher is always active and the students all have the role of receiver”. (T-9)

Five of the teachers stated their concerns on teacher-centric approaches. They believe that since the students have been getting English language education through teacher-centric approaches, they are accustomed to being dependent on their teachers in classroom.

“They are used to learning by rote, for exams, facts and figures to repeat and they need that given by a teacher they can't really get that through autonomy”. (T-15)

“They just know how to get ready for tests or for specific exams”. (T-6)

Three teachers mentioned learners are not accustomed to guiding themselves, lack personal aims and are dependent to outside sources. Teachers believe that students need guidance from them to fulfil learning tasks in the classroom. As students lack personal aims, they do not have a goal or aim to use English in accordance with their purposes. Therefore, they need to be directed by the teacher to find a purpose or maintain a task.

“They really need to be given a strong guidance”.(T-15)

“They just don't have a clear picture of why they are learning”. (T-8)

“Students don't want to discover things themselves they want somebody to guide them”. (T-1)

Table 19

Problems and Hindrances in the Development of Learner Autonomy in Turkish Students

Education System

7

“Education in general and the language education mostly include structures that are memorized”. (T-11)

“The system is really dependent on memorization and the teacher is always active and the students all have the role of receiver”. (T-9)

“LA is something that Turkish students lack due to the system they are involved since the beginning of their educational process”. (T-10)

“The system doesn’t allow them to develop certain techniques for learning a language”. (T-6)

“Not having been exposed to such learning styles before in primary school or in high school, students may reject the system”. (T-12)

“Our educational system is very teacher-directed very teacher-centric, so they never learn to question anything they are taught not to question things... “Our education system or the education and the family usually don’t allow learner autonomy”. (T-7)

		<p><i>“If the institution, the educational establishment in Turkey doesn’t encourage student autonomy in preschool up to secondary school or even college it might be a big jump for them, and it might be more difficult”. (T-4)</i></p>
Teacher-centric Approaches	5	<p><i>“The system requires some kind of spoon-feeding and the teachers have to act accordingly...Education system is based on tests”. (T-10)</i></p> <p><i>“They usually focus outcomes so trying new ways of learning English and self-studying English are not interesting for them”. (T-12)</i></p> <p><i>“They just know how to get ready for tests or for specific exams.” (T-6)</i></p> <p><i>“They are used to learning by route, for exams, facts and figures to repeat and they need that given by a teacher they can’t really get that through autonomy”. (T-15)</i></p> <p><i>“They think they should depend on their teachers for everything”. (T-13)</i></p>
Not Being Accustomed to Guiding Themselves	3	<p><i>“Students are not accustomed to be responsible of their own learning process”. (T-12)</i></p> <p><i>“Sometimes it is even very difficult to understand what they ask because they don’t know how to ask a question”. (T-10)</i></p>

		<i>“They are not accustomed to guiding themselves”. (T-11)</i>
<hr/>		
Lack of Personal Aims	3	<i>“They just don’t have a clear picture of why they are learning”. (T-8)</i>
		<i>“A lot of them believe just coming to class is enough to learn a language”. (T-14)</i>
		<i>“They don’t understand why they should read a page by themselves ... They just fill in the blanks they don’t think about why”. (T-13)</i>
<hr/>		
Dependence to Outside Sources	3	<i>“They really need to be given a strong guidance... They prefer to be led to answers than to find them themselves”. (T-15)</i>
		<i>“They don’t have to usually make decisions themselves and this is the same for their academic studies as well”. (T-5)</i>
		<i>“Students don’t want to discover things themselves they want somebody to guide them”. (T-1)</i>

4.2.3. Research Question 6

To answer the last research question of the thesis, we have gained answers from teachers’ views on their most important roles as a teacher. Interviewees’ own

descriptions on important roles of the teachers were elicited and categorized based on the frequent answers given in sentences, phrases and chunks.

In the interviews, teachers mentioned their important roles in the classroom. The answers vary depending on the teachers' own opinions and inclinations. Five teachers defined their roles as guide or helper. Teachers stated that they help their students find out learning tasks and instructions during the lessons. They also claim that students need to feel that the teacher is around to check their understanding in the lessons.

"I try to help them find their own ways of learning by showing them different techniques". (T-6)

Four teachers believe that they act as the facilitator in the language classes. In order to make learning easier, teachers believe that they need to design the lessons in a way that leads learners to complete learning tasks successfully.

"Our main role is to facilitate student's learning by setting and monitoring tasks that allow students to discover and use new language". (T-14)

Three teachers defined their roles as the motivator. These teachers support the idea that learners need to be encouraged to pay attention to the lessons. They emphasize the importance of keeping students active in the classroom and keeping their attention on the task. They believe that learners also need to enjoy the lessons while learning.

"It would be to get the students interested in learning the language and motivating them basically". (T-13)

"To inspire them to enjoy the language so I try to make my lessons fun and interesting to engage the students". (T-15)

Three teachers stated that they are the resource in their lessons. They believe that providing students with the necessary materials and structures is an important role for the teacher. In that way, learners are directed based on their needs.

“To provide the students with the grammatical and technical basis they need for the language”. (T-15)

“Teachers should offer a range of materials for students to select from.” (T-12)

“I am usually the source of all-knowing information”. (T-10)

The other teachers defined their roles as leader, monitor and moderator.

“Teachers need to be able to lead students effectively”. (T-12)

“Teachers need to be there all the time, without intervention but monitoring.” (T-12)

“A moderator and someone who gives feedback”. (T-4)

Table 20

Teachers’ Most Important Roles

CODE	FREQUENCY	SAMPLE DATA
Helper /Guide	5	<p><i>“I am just trying to guide them”. (T-11)</i></p> <p><i>“I am more like a guide in our present classrooms... I would love to be the source of help only”. (T-10)</i></p> <p><i>“I try to help them find their own ways of learning by showing them different techniques”. (T-6)</i></p> <p><i>“I can say a helper, a guide”. (T-9)</i></p> <p><i>“I am there to help them”. (T-1)</i></p>
Facilitator	4	<p><i>“Facilitator”. (T-11)</i></p> <p><i>“I need to make learning easier I guess”. (T-8)</i></p>

“Our main role is to facilitate student’s learning by setting and monitoring tasks that allow students to discover and use new language”. (T-14)

“A facilitator, to direct activities and provide opportunities for practice”. (T-4)

Resource	3	<i>“I am usually the source of all knowing information”. (T-10)</i>
		<i>“To provide the students with the grammatical and technical basis they need for the language”. (T-15)</i>
		<i>“Teachers should offer a range of materials for students to select from”. (T-12)</i>

Motivator	3	<i>“It would be to get the students interested in learning the language and motivating them basically”. (T-13)</i>
		<i>“To inspire them to enjoy the language so I try to make my lessons fun and interesting to engage the students”. (T-15)</i>
		<i>“I kind of see it as motivator really”. (T-7)</i>

Monitor	1	<i>“Teachers need to be there all the time, without intervention but monitoring”. (T-12)</i>
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Moderator	1	<i>“A moderator and someone who gives feedback”. (T-4)</i>
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Leader	1	<i>“Teachers need to be able to lead students effectively ... Teachers still have an important role in designing and leading the whole process”. (T-12)</i>
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CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1. Summary

This part aims to summarize the thesis and provide answers to research questions in brief. The thesis aimed to answer six research questions, three of which were answered through quantitative data and written comments provided within the questionnaire. The rest of the questions were answered through qualitative data which were collected through semi-structured interview questions. The thesis aimed to investigate learner autonomy (LA) perceptions of EFL teachers who work at university preparatory programs in an attempt to answer six research questions.

1. What is the level of LA perceptions of EFL instructors working at university preparatory programs?
2. Is there a significant effect of instructors' age on LA perceptions of EFL teachers?
3. Is there a significant effect of years of experience on LA perceptions of EFL teachers?
4. What are the commonalities among EFL instructors' definitions on 'LA'?
5. Which are the most common problems in the development of LA of Turkish students?
6. What are EFL instructors' most important roles in teaching?

The quantitative data collected through questionnaires shows that EFL teachers who work at university preparatory schools believe that in general, learners should be autonomous in foreign language learning. Participants were also provided with general comment boxes in the questionnaire. The teachers reported their beliefs and expectations on LA in general through comment boxes. Most of the instructors who left comments believe that LA is necessary for learning to become permanent and for students to be motivated. Many instructors reported that developing LA changes depending on the context. For instance, learner profile is different in private lessons, K12 schools and corporate lessons etc. This issue will be dealt with in the conclusion part.

According to results, there is not a statistically significant effect of participants' age on their levels of perception on LA. In contrast, experience has been found as a significant factor on the perception levels of EFL teachers. We can understand that LA perception levels of the teachers do not vary according to age. However, with years of experience we see different levels of LA perception among teachers. Quantitative data proved that teachers who have 1-5 years of experience support LA in English language learning more than other groups of experience. In addition, teachers with 10-15 years of experience believe that learners should be involved in what is to be learned from the materials such as texts, realia and audio-visual materials.

The qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews provided the thesis with some definitions of LA, common problems in the development of LA in Turkish students and the most important roles of the instructors while teaching English language. Interviewees defined LA as an ability and capacity to take control over one's own learning. They stated that while doing that, learners pay attention to

their strengths and weaknesses, are aware of their goals and aims, are motivated and possess some skills and strategies to continue their own learning. As for the problems and hindrances in the development of LA in Turkish students, the interviewees believe that since the education system which present students at preparatory school are exposed to is based on habit formation, memorization and teacher-centered approaches, students are not accustomed to the concept of LA and they are inclined to be dependent on their teachers. Other problems and hindrances in the development of autonomy are referred to as students' not being accustomed to guiding themselves, lack of personal aims and dependence to outside sources. Lastly, participants identified their most important roles as leader, helper, guide, monitor, moderator, resource, facilitator and motivator.

5.2. Conclusions

The research questions that were stated in the previous part of the thesis will be discussed with the help of relevant literature. Consistencies and inconsistencies between the thesis and the literature will be presented with the help of the current findings.

We aimed to investigate LA perception levels of EFL teachers who work in English preparatory programs of universities. Quantitative data showed that the number of teachers supporting the development of LA is above average. Participants who answered the questionnaire also stated their opinions in the general comment boxes. Besides supporting the development of LA, they also stated that the difference between dependent and independent students can be identified easily. That means, independent students are inclined to develop autonomy faster than the dependent ones. One of the teachers also stated that learning becomes permanent when students

learn on their own. As these students have already had the necessary skills and strategies to make use of the language, they seem to have a smaller number of problems while studying on their own. Whereas, dependent students may need confirmation more often and they might even be more comfortable with the existence of the teacher in the classroom. One of the participating teachers in the interviews also stated that, students need to develop LA to be able to continue their learning outside the classroom. Similar to Öztüfekçi (2018, p.48), participants believe that responsibility on deciding what to learn outside the classroom by themselves belongs to the learners. It can be asserted that, once the students start to become autonomous in language learning, they can use their willpower and intellect to decide what to learn without the need for a knowledgeable person. While analyzing the comments for each item in the questionnaire, it was also noticed that some teachers believe the way they develop LA may change depending on the context. Teacher 34 and 37 stated that they would give different answers for private lessons, K12 courses and corporate lessons. Teacher 37 stated that “A lot of these answers depend on the context. For private students, corporate classes, language schools, K12 schools and preparatory school (all of which I’ve taught) I would probably give different answers”. The participant may mean that in private lessons students and teachers can compromise on the topic, materials, place, time and type of assessment mutually because there is no institution that they depend on. In K12 classes, teachers are mostly dependent on the outcomes of achievement tests and expectations from the parents mostly. Also, in corporate lessons, English is taught for a special purpose. Therefore, the content of the lessons has to be shaped based on the target skills and language functions to be learned.

We also interpreted the data for each item on LA perception's questionnaire. According to the results, teachers show strong support for 'finding one's own explanations to classroom tasks', 'students' finding out learning procedures by themselves' and 'students' assessing themselves weekly, monthly and annually rather than being tested'. In the comments, students' making their own explanations to learning tasks is associated to personalization of the topic by one of the teachers. In addition, it is believed to improve the communication during the lessons. In that sense, we can claim that personalization and improvement of the communication help self-regulation which is essential for LA. As stated by Doğan (2015, p.99), self-regulation was also referred as one of the psychological aspects of LA. Doğan asserted that when students learn the language while possessing the skills and strategies with "motivation, self-regulation and curiosity", learning becomes more effective and independent. Teacher 48 claimed that as students get independent while finding out their own explanations for learning tasks; this also helps students to go on with their own learning when the teacher is not around.

In the results, some areas were found to require negotiation between the teachers and learners. In that sense, teachers did not provide strong support or disagreement on the issues. According to their interpretations, these areas include establishing the objectives of a course of study short-term and long-term, deciding the course content: topics and tasks, selecting materials: AVAs and Realia, decisions on the pace of the lesson, decisions on the methodology of the lesson: individual/pair/group work, use of materials, type of classroom activities and type of homework activities, decisions on the choice of learning tasks, decisions on classroom management: position of desks, seating of students, decisions on type of homework tasks, decisions on what is to be learned from AVAs and Realia given by

the teacher. Teacher 29 stated in the comments that “Students are not able to determine objectives and timetable fit in a language lesson. They can be provided with possible options in order to make a choice among them”. From this comment, it can be understood that students may be offered with some options to choose the best for their learning. However, objectives of the course are already planned based on the curriculum of the language program. Teacher 31 emphasized that tests and exams are prioritized for determining the success of the students by claiming “As it is the preparatory school, students essentially need to be prepared for assessment”. It is emphasized that in preparatory schools, each level’s objectives are defined by the level’s expected achievements. Therefore, adjusting objectives by only taking students’ opinions is not feasible. Teacher 48 stated that “Seeing how much one has achieved weekly, monthly and annually motivates the students”. We can conclude that students assessing themselves with the help of classroom activities and tasks can be encouraged. When we look at the literature, in line with Öztüfekçi (2018, p.50), participating teachers stated that the time spent on the activities and decisions on what is to be learned from the materials are not fully students’ responsibilities. Therefore, it can be concluded that objectives, content, materials and methodology of the lesson stand as areas of negotiation. Teachers and students may collaborate and work in these areas to find the best fit for effective learning.

In previous studies, according to Camilleri (1999), teachers disagree that students should make decisions on seating arrangement, selecting the text books, assessing themselves annually, choosing the time and place of the lesson, decisions on record-keeping and discipline matters. As for deciding the materials of the lesson, teacher 48 stated that “Students are not qualified enough to decide on the textbook. Depending on learning styles of the learners, teachers should choose accurate

materials for teaching". It can be concluded that what is to be learned from the materials can be negotiated, but the choice of textbooks, realia and AVAs need to be decided by the knowledgeable person. One of the teachers also stated his belief on the assessment of one's self rather than being tested. Similarly, in the present thesis, teachers showed resistance to involve learners in selecting text books, decisions on the time and place of the lesson, on discipline matters, record-keeping of work done, marks gained and attendance. In addition to these similarities, involving students in the decisions on the quantity and frequency of the homework tasks and decisions on what is to be learned from texts given by the teacher were found to be areas of resistance for EFL teachers in the present thesis. Also, Öztüfekçi (2018, p.47) found that allocated time to the lesson and assessment of students are areas for teachers' decisions mostly.

In the present thesis, no effect of age was found on the level of LA perceptions of EFL teachers. There was a marginally significant difference for two questionnaire items which were dealing with students' finding their own explanations to classroom tasks and assessing themselves rather than being tested monthly. As, no study has been conducted for the age variable in the literature, the present thesis concludes that there is no effect of age on LA perception levels of EFL teachers.

We have also investigated the effect of years of experience on LA perception levels of EFL teachers. Teachers who have 1-5 years of experience (Group 1) have significantly higher scores on the levels of LA perceptions than the other groups in general. As we analyzed the data for each item, teachers who have 10-15 years of experience (Group 3) were found to have higher levels of perception on three areas. Teachers who have 10-15 years of experience support the idea that students should be given more responsibility on the decisions about what is to be learned from the texts,

AVAs and Realia given by the teacher. No significant difference was found for the rest of the items in the questionnaire for different groups of experience. The present thesis provides the literature with findings related to LA perception levels of EFL teachers having different years of experience. Since, no studies were found on the effect of experience in the literature for Turkey's context, the thesis concludes that teachers having 1-5 and 5-10 years of experience have higher scores of LA perceptions and they have a more moderate attitude towards the development of LA. The mean score of teachers having 1-10 years of experience is above the average score of LA perception levels of EFL teachers in general. Teachers who have 10-15, 15-20 and 20 and over years of experience have lower levels of LA perception than the average of EFL teachers in general. Therefore, we can assert that after 10 years, teachers' perceptions on the development of LA face with a point of failure.

The qualitative part of the thesis firstly aimed to provide information on the definition of LA by EFL teachers. In teachers' definitions 'individuality', 'ability' and 'awareness' were the most frequently mentioned aspects of LA. Teachers asserted that the students should know how to learn a language, take control over their own learning and guide themselves for their own learning. To be able to do these, they need to build an awareness to make use of the learning skills and strategies. Similarly, participants in Doğan (2015, p.100) mention that LA is related to "independence, self-awareness, responsibility, motivation, self-regulation, cooperativeness and little expectation from the teacher". Also by definition, Little (1991, p.4) defines LA from its independence aspect. He asserts that the learners should be able to make their decisions independent from their teachers. Therefore, it can be concluded that learners should put effort to take responsibility of their own learning. Learners' deciding on

their goals and aims, knowing about their strengths and weaknesses, being responsible and independent, active participation were less frequently mentioned issues in the present thesis. Some interviewees claimed that when the students set their own goals and aims for learning English, they are able to lead themselves better. Other than learning in the classroom environment, some teachers also claimed their opinions on the importance of independent study for the students. They believe that once the students allocate spare time for their learning outside the classroom, they contribute more to their self-development. Some teachers in Öztüfekçi (2018, p.52) mentioned that students are not able to identify their strengths and weaknesses. In the present thesis, being aware of the strengths and weaknesses was also claimed to be the part of LA. It can be concluded that, learners who are aware of their abilities and capacity in language learning and able to guide themselves in line with their strengths and weaknesses, are autonomous learners.

Problems and hindrances in the development of LA for Turkish students were mostly associated to education system and teacher-centric approaches in language learning by the interviewees. As the teachers believe that Turkish students who currently learn English at university preparatory programs come from a teacher-centric system, they are not accustomed to regulating themselves and discovering by inquisition. Students coming from a teacher-centric education system are more inclined to learning by rote-learning and memorization. Therefore, developing LA seems challenging since students should already possess certain strategies and be aware of their own learning styles. Doğan (2015, p.100) also put forward that students' previous habits in learning together with, fixed curriculum, institution's attitudes, physical conditions of the institutions, students' having lack of motivation, test-based education system are preventing the development of autonomy. In the

present thesis, it was also emphasized that students study to get ready for tests, they memorize certain rules and techniques. Consequently, this leads to underdeveloped study skills and students do not become creative to produce. As it was also mentioned in the literature, memorization and drilling were favored in Scientific Period (Howatt&Smith, 2014). This could only allow mechanical use of the language. Since the needs and expectations for the use of English has changed in Communicative Period, accuracy has been replaced with fluency since fluency was thought to be the priority in language learning and teaching. Spada (2007) also states that language is a tool to convey the message across. As long as communication continues, accuracy is believed to develop along the process. After noticing the need for the application of up-to-date methods and approaches in English language teaching, we can conclude that immediate intervention is demanded on that issue.

When the teachers were asked to define their most important roles in teaching, they mostly mentioned their roles as ‘helper/guide’ and ‘facilitator’. Five of the interviewees mentioned that they see themselves as a source of help which is ready in the classroom for students’ needs. Gremmo and Riley (1995, p.159) also stated that teachers are responsible from the organization of the materials to be used in the classroom in an autonomous classroom and teachers’ role is being changed as a counselor. In that sense, teachers in the interviews also stated their roles as a guide. This shows that some teachers are aware of their roles and act accordingly for the development of autonomy in their classes. The other role defined by the interviewees was facilitator. Four teachers stated their opinions on the role of being a facilitator. They believe learning should be easier for students to process. In that sense, teachers set classroom tasks and activities in the best way to facilitate learning and they see themselves as the person to offer practice for students to engage. Three interviewees

mentioned their most important roles as ‘motivator’ and ‘resource’. They asserted that teachers are the source of information and knowledge which students can exploit from. From that perspective, students are offered a range of options to select from. In addition, some of the teachers believe that students need to enjoy the lessons and sometimes teachers need to take the role of ‘motivator’. Yıldırım (2014, p.45) stated that being an autonomous learner does not necessarily mean that the learner is fully independent from the teachers and the teacher may act as a guide. Özdere (2005, p.41) also suggested that teachers may take various roles to develop learner autonomy. The roles of being a ‘monitor’, ‘moderator’ and ‘leader’ were also mentioned by participants as their roles in the classroom. One of the teachers in the interviews also mentioned the importance of teachers in designing and leading the process of teaching. Still, we need teachers’ sense of organization and leadership in the classroom since methodologies of classroom teaching and expectations from the institutions call us upon doing so.

5.3. Limitations

This thesis was conducted with EFL teachers who work at English preparatory programs at the university. Therefore, participating teachers answered the questionnaires and interview questions based on their classes in the preparatory program. As it was also suggested by the participating teachers, their answers would change according to different contexts such as K12 classes, private lessons or corporate lessons. For this reason, it is important to replicate this study in different contexts to see whether different contexts affect the answers of the teachers.

As learners' perception and opinions were not analyzed in this thesis, we cannot make interpretations about their perspectives. Also, this thesis was conducted with the participating teachers from two universities in İstanbul. Therefore, the results may not be generalized to Turkey context.

5.4. Recommendations for Future Research

As it was also suggested by the present thesis, teachers are also dependent to the administration, curriculum and tests while making decisions about the content of their lessons. For future research, opinions of curriculum developers and administrative staff can be taken. Namely, new data can be brought to the literature to find out whether administration and curriculum developers take the development of LA into consideration while designing the syllabus and content of English courses.

Also, this study can be replicated to contexts of private and corporate lessons to see whether levels of LA perceptions and opinions change or not.

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APPENDICES

A. Approval for Use of Questionnaire

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ ANKET İLE İLGİLİ



nur zorkaya <nurzorkaya1993@hotmail.com>
15.2.2018 (Per) 18:34
Kime: ismaileren7@ayk.gov.tr



Yanıtla | v

Merhaba İsmail Bey,

Ben Yeditepe Üniversitesi'nde İngiliz Dili Eğitimi'nde yüksek lisans tezi yazmaktayım ve kullanmak istediğim anket sizin de yüksek lisans tezinizde kullandığınız George Camilleri'nin anketi. Tez konum, ilk ve ortaokullardaki İngilizce öğretmenlerinin öğrenen özerkliği algıları.

Tezinizde anketi Türkçe'ye çevirip uygulamışsınız. Bulduğunuz Cronbach Alfa sayısı Türkçe olan ankette elde ettiğiniz sayı mı? Ve ayrıca tezinizde kullandığınız haliyle anketi uygulamayı diliyorum. Bunun için izin vermenizi temenni ediyorum.

Cevaplarınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederim.

Saygılarımla
Nur Zorkaya

Re: YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ ANKET İLE İLGİLİ



İsmail Eren <ismaileren7@ayk.gov.tr>
16.2.2018 (Cum) 10:25
Kime: nur zorkaya (nurzorkaya1993@hotmail.com)



Yanıtla | v

16.2.2018 11:01 tarihinde yanıt verdiniz.

Sayın Nur ZORKAYA,

Anketin geliştirilmesine ilişkin bilgileri dahil etmeniz şartıyla, araştırma amacınız doğrultusunda Öğrenen Özerkliği Anketini çalışmalarınızda kullanmak üzere size izin veriyorum. Sağlıklı bir çalışma yapabilmemiz için bazı noktaları vurgulamam gerektiğini düşünüyorum.

1. Benim hazırlamış olduğum anket 1997 yılında George Camilleri yürütücülüğünde gerçekleştirilen bir proje kapsamında ANKET olarak kullanılmış. Ben, Camilleri'den ankete ilişkin geçerlik ve güvenilirlik neviden elinde bilgi olup olmadığını sorduğumda kendi çalışmasının "genel manada öğretmenlerin öğrenen özerkliğini destekleyip desteklemediğini" ve "hangi noktalarda hemfikir olduklarına" ilişkin bir fikir edinmek amacıyla hazırladığını belirtti. Yani ölçek niteliğinde hazırlanmadığı, geçerlik-güvenirlik testleri yapılmadığı ve güvenilirlik katsayı vb. değerlendirmelerin bulunmadığını ifade etti. Ben kendi hazırlamış olduğum anket üzerinde tezimde ifade edilen Cronbach Alfa katsayısına ulaşıttım.

2. http://media.wix.com/ugd/beb9c9_7f7cd68b9bf244ba82a67bc6e5cd6c74.pdf Linkte yer alan tabloda belirtildiği üzere, ölçek üzerinde çalışmak anketten daha kolay ve bilimsel çalışmalar için daha uygun. Ben, kendi tezimde 33 sorunun her birini birer tabloda göstererek tamamlayabilecekken, anket olması nedeniyle 33 sorunun her bir maddesini (96 madde) aynı bir Etkinleşti tabloda göstermem gerekti. Bu da hem gereksiz hem de çalışmamı daha yorucu hale getirdi.

Windows'u etkinleştirmek

3. Bu bağlamda, size tavsiyem çalışmanızı Aytunga OĞUZ'un benim anketimle nerdeyse aynı nitelikte ve ölçek kıstaslarına uygun olarak hazırladığı <http://www.kuyeb.com/pdf/tr/ac725da1808fabd188bf67e97d7ffab2guztr.pdf> çalışmasındaki ölçek üzerinden gerçekleştirmeniz yönünde olacaktır. Böylelikle 96 tane tablo yapıp her bir maddenin alt maddesini incelemek yerine daha derli toplu ve sağlıklı bir çalışma gerçekleştirebilirsiniz.

4. Son olarak, 10.03.2017 tarihinde Merve Çetinkaya (Erciyes Üniversitesi Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim yüksek lisans öğrencisi) tezli yüksek lisans tezinde, 2 başka arkadaşımız da tezsiz yüksek lisans tezlerinde kullanmak üzere izin istemişlerdi. Benzer şekilde İngilizce ve Fen Bilgisi öğretmenlerine uygulayacaklarını ifade etmişlerdi. Bu nedenle, halihazırda bu konu ile ilgili doğrudan yapılmış benim tezim (ortaokul-5/6/7/8), yapılmakta olan bir eğitim programları yüksek lisans tezi ve muhtemelen yapılmış 2 tane tezsiz yüksek lisans bitirme projesi hazırlandığını düşünüyorum. Bu bağlamda, yapmayı planladığınız çalışmanızda farklı bir yaklaşım sergilemenizin çalışmanızın özgünlüğü açısından büyük önem taşıyacağı düşüncesindeyim.

Çalışmanızda başarılar dilerim.
Teşekkürler. İyi çalışmalar.

İsmail EREN
Yüksek Kurum Uzmanı
English Language Teaching, Hacettepe Univ., Ba'09
Translation & Cultural Studies, Gazi Univ., PhD'18



B. Demographic Information Form

KİŞİSEL BİLGİ FORMU

Bu anketin amacı İngilizce öğretmenlerinin, öğrencilerinde öğrenen özerkliğini saptamaya yöneliktir. Cevaplarınız çalışmanın güvenilirlik ve bilimselliği açısından önemlidir. Bu nedenle maddeleri dikkatlice okuyarak ve eksik madde bırakmadan tamamlamanız son derece önemlidir. Verdiğiniz bilgiler ve yanıtlarınız araştırmacı tarafından gizli tutulacaktır. Bu formu doldurarak araştırmaya katılmak için rızanız olduğunu bildirmiş olursunuz. İşbirliğiniz için teşekkür ederim.

Nur Zorkaya

Yanıtınızı kutucuklara onay (√) işareti koyarak ve verilen alanlara kısa cevaplar yazarak belirtebilirsiniz.

Cinsiyet: Kadın Erkek

Yaş:

Mezuniyet senesi:

Deneyim süreniz:

Öğrettiğiniz dersin/derslerin adı:

Öğrettiğiniz seviye/ler:

C. Learner Autonomy Perception Questionnaire

ÖĞRENEN ÖZERKLİĞİ ANKETİ

Seçiminize uygun kutuyu işaretleyiniz.

0Hiç
1Az
2Kısmen
3 Çok
4 Çok Fazla

Dersin kazanımlarının ya da hedeflerinin belirlenmesine öğrencinin katılımı ne kadarsağlanmalıdır?

1A) Kısa süreli

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---

1B) Uzun Süreli

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---

Dersin içeriğinin belirlenmesinde öğrencinin katılımı ne kadarsağlanmalıdır?

Düşünceleriniz:

2A)Başlıkların belirlenmesine

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---

2B)Görevlerin belirlenmesinde

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---

Düşünceleriniz:

Materyallerin seçiminde öğrencinin katılımı ne kadarsağlanmalıdır?

3A) Ders kitabı seçiminde

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---

3B) Görsel-işitsel araçların seçiminde

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---

3C)Realia (Gerçek nesnelere) seçiminde

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---

Düşünceleriniz:

Dersin zamanı, yeri ve temposu konusundaki kararlara öđrencinin katılımı ne kadarsađlanmalıdır?

4A) Zamanı

4B) Yeri

4C) Temposu

0	1	2	3	4
0	1	2	3	4
0	1	2	3	4

Düşünceleriniz:

Dersin işleniş yöntemi konusundaki kararlara öđrencinin katılımı ne kadar sađlanmalıdır?

5A)Bireysel/eşli/grup çalışmalarına

5B)Materyallerin kullanımına

5C) Sınıf içi etkinliklerin çeşitlerine

5D) Ödev etkinliklerine

0	1	2	3	4
0	1	2	3	4
0	1	2	3	4
0	1	2	3	4

Düşünceleriniz:

Öđrenme görevlerinin seçimi hakkındaki kararlara öđrencinin katılımı ne kadar sađlanmalıdır?

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---

Düşünceleriniz:

Sınıf yönetimi ile ilgili kararlara, öđrencinin katılımı ne kadarsađlanmalıdır?

7A) Sıraların pozisyonuna

7B) Öđrencilerin oturma düzenine

7C) Disiplinsorunları

0	1	2	3	4
0	1	2	3	4
0	1	2	3	4

Düşünceleriniz:

Kayıt tutma noktasındaki kararlara öğrencinin katılımı ne kadar sağlanmalıdır?

- 8A) Yapılan ödevlerin kaydına
8B) Alınan notların kaydına
8C) Devamlılık ile ilgili kayıtlara

0	1	2	3	4
0	1	2	3	4
0	1	2	3	4

Düşünceleriniz:

Verilen ev ödevi görevleri hakkındaki kararlara öğrencinin katılımı ne kadar sağlanmalıdır?

- 9A) Nicelik yönündeki kararlara
9B) Çeşidi yönündeki kararlara
9C) Sıklığı yönündeki kararlara

0	1	2	3	4
0	1	2	3	4
0	1	2	3	4

Düşünceleriniz:

Öğretmen tarafından verilecek materyallerden öğrenilecekler ile ilgili kararlara öğrencinin katılımı ne kadar sağlanmalıdır?

- 10A) Metinlere
10B) Görsel-işitsel araçlara
10C) Gerçek nesnelere

0	1	2	3	4
0	1	2	3	4
0	1	2	3	4

Düşünceleriniz:

Sınıf içi aktivitelerde öğrencinin kendi açıklamalarını yapması ne kadar desteklenmelidir?

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---

Düşünceleriniz:

Öğrenme süreçlerini kendi kendine keşfetme noktasında, öğrenci ne kadar desteklenmelidir?

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---

Düşünceleriniz:

Öğrencinin test edilmekten ziyade, kendi kendini değerlendirmesi ne kadar desteklenmelidir?

- 13A)Haftalık olarak
13B) Aylık olarak
13C) Yıllık olarak

0	1	2	3	4
0	1	2	3	4
0	1	2	3	4

Düşünceleriniz:

Anketi doldurduğunuz için teşekkürler.

Öğrenen Özerkliği ile ilgili Genel Düşünceleriniz:

D. Semi-structured Interview Questions

Lütfen soruları cevaplarken şuan öğretilmekte olduğunuz sınıfları göz önünde bulundurunuz.

1. Öğrenen özerkliğini kısaca nasıl tanımlarsınız?
2. Öğrenen özerkliğinin önemli olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Neden? Neden değil?
3. Türk öğrencilerin öğrenen özerkliğini geliştirmede yaşanabilecek muhtemel problem ve engeller size nelerdir?
4. Öğretmen olarak en önemli rolleriniz nelerdir?

Please consider the classroom you are teaching now while answering the following questions.

1. In brief, how would you define “learner autonomy”?
2. Do you consider learner autonomy important? Why? Why not?
3. What are possible problems or hindrances of the development of autonomy of Turkish students?
4. What are your most important roles as a teacher?

E. Interview Transcripts

Şahin Tuncer

Q1: Learner autonomy is or would be students taking control of their own learning and the extent to which they do and in the extent to which teachers and institutions encourage them to do so.

Q2: Sure. It is an essential study skill that students have to progressively develop from preschool to on and upwards to tertiary education where they have to be more independent learners.

Q3: If the institution, the educational establishment in Turkey doesn't encourage student autonomy in preschool up to secondary school or even college it might be a big jump for them and it might be more difficult.

Q4: A facilitator, to direct activities and provide opportunities for practice. A moderator...and someone who gives feedback I suppose it's something that a book can't do and even you could be a friend or even a therapist if the students have their own psychological problems to deal with.

Yigitalp Veyseller

Q1: LA means how can I say it not only the teacher talks in the classroom but also the students have a say. It is a classroom where the students have the chance to take part in where the teacher takes their ideas seriously so that they can participate in the lesson more actively.

Q2: Of course it is important. If the teacher speaks all the time during the lesson, if the teacher doesn't allow the students to decide or for example to give an example how can I say...sometimes the students need to be alone but not exactly like alone the teacher should be there the teacher's presence should be there but when it is necessary the students need to discover something or some things themselves so that they can feel they are doing something not only the teacher asks them to do but they also decide where to do and how to do what.

Q3: I don't wanna generalize but I feel like unfortunately our students don't want to discover things themselves they want somebody to guide them like forever. Spoon-feeding maybe I can say as they are always they have always learnt something like this. The teacher was talking the teacher was giving the instructions the teacher was giving or telling them what to do so they are there ready physically but mentally they

need somebody else's how can I say presence there. They don't want to be alone. They want to be safe maybe I don't know.

because this is what I have seen so far. They don't want to discover things themselves they just want to be taught and they wanna learn. They don't want to explore things themselves.

Q4: To make them feel I am there for them to help. And let them do things themselves at least to teach the idea of it. Because I don't think that something they have seen so far. Letting them work freely in the classroom as long as the teacher is there not like you are doing this all alone whatever it is they need to feel the teacher but the teacher doesn't make them feel she or he is there all the time. Maybe I can say this.

Hande Özsarp

Q1: Learner autonomy is a term in which learners direct their own learning. Learner autonomy involves taking responsibility for learning. Students can select the content and progression of it, and evaluate their learning process.

Q2: Yes, I do. I use different activities and assignments in which students study in an entirely independent way. These assignments and activities include critical thinking and self-awareness. My students select their own materials, topics and evaluate themselves and their friends' progressions. Some of these activities require working in pairs or groups so that they can work creatively with their partners. I believe that they learn better when they direct their own learning. Moreover, they feel more self-confident.

Q3: I believe that Turkish education system does not give much importance to learner autonomy. Therefore, students are not used to learning independently. They need clear instructions and guidance by the teacher. Since they are used to teacher centred curriculum they do not participate actively in the class.

Q4: I need to encourage my students for independent learning and explain them the importance of learner autonomy. I need to prepare the syllabuses that require students to take responsibility of their own learning, manage and evaluate this process.

Burcu Şener

Q1: In terms of the concept or related to my classroom?

Interviewer: In terms of the concept.

Q1: Learner autonomy is the ability that belongs to a learner about learning processes like strengths and weaknesses of this person and maybe it can also be defined as correcting your own mistakes, seeing yourself in the atmosphere of learning in terms of language learning. Strengths and weaknesses and working accordingly. Like having a schedule maybe as well for studying.

Q2: *It is very important. Actually it is one the areas which our students are not so good at. They always expect lots of things from their teachers. They are not able to assess themselves in terms of many areas. And it is one the key factors that affect your academic performance actually.*

Q3: *First of all, because of our education system or the education and the family usually doesn't allow this. Students usually don't know what they expect from life as well. So this also reflects on their academic studies. They don't have to usually make decisions themselves and this is the same for their academic studies as well.*

Q4: *As teachers we should help them develop their learner autonomy. I don't know if we are successful at doing this. Sometimes we overhelp them. We always track their progress more than themselves so they trust us more than they should and they cannot do it themselves.*

Interviewer: *Why do you think we overhelp them?*

Q4: *Because maybe we fear that we will be seen as unsuccessful teachers. That may be one of the motives. We want them to be successful that's why we overhelp them I guess.*

Şule Genç

Q1: *Learner autonomy is students' being independent while they are studying, knowing how to study. Knowing how to learn a language on their own. realizing their strengths and weaknesses and developing their own studying techniques.*

Q2: *Of course it is important. Because learning doesn't only happen in the classroom so outside the classroom students need to do something to improve their English. So when they are alone if they cannot know how to study or how they learn the best then learning will not happen efficiently.*

Q3: *First of all the way students study during their education before university, the system doesn't allow them to develop certain techniques for learning a language. So they just know how to get ready for tests or for specific exams. So when they come to prep they need to find their own ways of learning a language because most of them haven't done that before. That's the biggest problem the system doesn't let them develop their strategies or techniques while learning.*

Q4: *I help them I try to help them find their own ways of learning by showing them different techniques so If I use audio techniques visual techniques or other variety of techniques in class they will easily find out how they learn the best. They can say "Oh I learn better when I write, I learn better when I see things or I learn better vocabulary when I watch something". So if I present them these techniques they will choose their favorite or best technique.*

Pelin Çelebi

Q1: *I would define it as self-directed learning by the learner like the learner deciding what their goals are and maybe even choosing which ways to go about reaching those goals.*

Q2: *Yes. But I am not honestly sure how much I can... how much it can be given to a student. Like how much of it is innate how much of it is inside them or how much of it is designed. I would like to learn more about.*

Q3: *Well, of course. you know we come from our educational system is very teacher-directed very teacher-centric so they don't you know they never learn to question anything they are taught not to question things. I don't think they do much research on their own they are not encouraged to come up with critical thinking skills and stuff like that so I think that might be a big problem for Turkish students.*

Q4: *I kind of see it as motivator really. I feel like I need to motivate them encourage them and you know highlight their achievements try to make sure that they want to keep learning.*

Interviewer: *Why do you feel like you need to motivate them so much in the classroom?*

Q4: *Because I think it is so easy for them to feel discouraged and you know and to give up and I feel like without that motivation. If they don't like the subject basically. I want them to feel comfortable in the classroom and comfortable in the field. And ideally be curious about it. The basic level is comfort and security and I feel like that's important.*

Serant Şenyaylar

Q1: *For me, learner autonomy is an ability that all the students must have but it is very hard for students to get aware of it. It can depend students' background knowledge or interest to learning English but I think, teachers' approach is important, too. It is definitely a very important skill for a student. It surely makes teacher's job easier.*

Q2: *It is very important for both students and teachers. It makes students confident and self-aware about learning English. In addition, it is experimental for students when they are practicing and they can see their mistakes and they can see the way the language works.*

Q3: *They usually focus outcomes so trying new ways of learning English and self-studying English are not interesting for them. The teachers must encourage students to be aware of the skills that they can develop in their social life. In that way, students may encourage themselves to be autonomous.*

Q4: *Not being a strict teacher about teaching English with “borders”. If teachers show the flexibility of English, which can be shown with speaking mostly, students can motivate themselves to improve English independently.*

Colin Craig

Q1: *Learner autonomy occurs when a student takes an active role in his / her own education and goes beyond what is asked of him / her by the teacher. Some examples include keeping a vocabulary journal, writing example sentences, reading books, watching English language TV series, etc.*

Q2: *Learner autonomy is very important. If a student does not feel responsible for their own learning – that they can control how much they learn and improve – they will likely do the minimum that is asked of them and will not improve as much.*

Q3: *I think many of them don't realize that their attitudes and their actions dictate how much they will learn. A lot of them believe just coming to class is enough to learn a language.*

Q4: *As teachers our main role is to facilitate student's learning by setting and monitoring tasks that allow students to discover and use new language.*

Mathew Aiden

Q1: *the ability for the students to take responsibility for their own learning and to act without instruction to forward their own understanding of language.*

Q2: *I consider it vital the learner to take out responsibility for themselves and to be encouraged to do so and the students of my level who do are have stronger autonomy the other ones that do learn a lot quicker and do make quicker progress*

Q3: *In my experience compared to other nationalities. They tend to have less natural autonomy. They prefer to be led to answers than to find them themselves. Of course that's not true for every students. Some of them are really strong in terms of their own responsibilities for learning. But it seems to me a particular issue that they are used to learning by route, for exams, facts and figures to repeat and they need that given by a teacher they can't really get that through autonomy. And once they are asked to do something a little bit outside of their confines? they find it a little bit more difficult to find their own guidance they really need to be given a strong guidance as to which direction to go in order to them to be autonomous afterwards. Not generally strong autonomy in prep.*

Q4: *Firstly to provide the students with the grammatical and technical basis they need for the language. That's the top of my list. Then, I feel that my role in prep especially as a native speaker is to allow the students the space to practice and to have experience of listening of a native speech. To inspire them to enjoy the language so I try to make my lessons fun and interesting to engage the students so that they feel that they like the language and enjoy speaking English rather than it being a terrible chore or terrible burden on them which I know that they often do fail.*

Michael Soul Jackson

Q1: LA is when students are able to read or research on their own and learn a topic.

Q2: Because the teacher cannot cover all the different learning styles and the time allotted in class. Some people are visual

Q3: The biggest problem I've come in contact with is they don't realize they should be autonomous. They think they should depend on their teachers for everything. They don't understand why they should read a page by themselves they want the teacher to stand over them and say read this. If you give them homework to learn something they just fill in the blanks they don't think about why such as how does this fit into what we have done in class.

Q4: It would be to get the students interested in learning the language and motivating them basically. Because you give them a reason to want to continue to learn English language so they will study on their own.

Fevzi İşsever

Q1: as the amount of time a student allocates to study on his own on her own to study. It is more about sparing time for your own self-development. I have never considered LA as something happening in the class it happens out of the class. It is external to the classroom.

Q2: I personally think our interference as a teacher is limited. I somehow also think that learning is to a certain extent resistant to teaching. So students should spend time on their own and should put effort to learn and they should have the motivation. You could design the class so that they have fun while learning. But their intrinsic motivation they should develop themselves.

Q3: Some of them have real goal about learning language, some of them have clear goals. One of my students is interested in a software company which hires employees who have good command in English language learning. Another student is interested in being a pilot and he knows that English is one of the first requirements. So these kind of students don't have problems but students who don't have clear picture about why they are learning something as functional as the examples I gave, they have problems about the aim or the goal why they are learning language. There are some students who are here just to pass preparatory school and go to their department. Their aim is just finishing their own studies. They just don't have a clear picture of why they are learning English language anyway.

Q4: I need to make learning easier I guess. I came to a point where I am not interested whether I am really helping students learn or not. I am really more interested in whether the students leave the classroom with some not happiness but they are pleased or not of that experience of that 50 minutes that's the only thing I care right now. I don't think they learn a lot in the classroom anyway. It is something they do on their own.

Şirin Akpınar

Q1: LA is all about learners' own control and discipline in their own learning and their taking responsibilities in their own learning.

Q2: It is a skill we need to develop by assigning roles and responsibilities to students and get them be aware of what they need to do for their own learning sometimes I believe we should give them free time to improve themselves to be an autonomous learner.

Q3: Actually in their previous learning atmosphere the system is really dependent on memorization and the teacher is always active and the students all have the role of receiver. so these make their job really hard as an autonomous learner. They always wait to get an order. they never think about what can they do and what should they do to learn. They don't know what to ask what to ask.

Q4: I can say a helper, a guide. I also love the role as a maestro. Because each student is different like someone playing a different instrument. At the end they produce a nice song and the teacher is there to help them, guide them and sometimes stays there as a role model but mostly observes their development and observes their process in their own learning.

Dilara Yank

Q1: LA is something that Turkish students lack due to the system they are involved since the beginning of their educational process. I would say LA is mostly self-learning and knowing how to learn and being aware of their own strengths and weaknesses so that being able to work on them accordingly.

Q2: Sure. It lessens the burden on our shoulders as teachers first of all. When students are aware learners in terms of autonomy, it helps us progress and approach them more easily.

Q3: Autonomy is not something we can directly teach students. It is sort of the awareness of learning so they should be guided from the beginning, I mean the primary school times. Sometimes it is even very difficult to understand what they ask because they don't know how to ask a question. Because they are not even aware of the missing point. So it is something that should start from primary school. The system requires some kind of spoon-feeding and the teachers have to act accordingly. Because all the students are preparing for certain exams at some point in their school life. Education system is based on tests. The students are not used to commenting on what they see or consider different perspectives. They are just used to eliminating A,B,C and Ds.

Q4: Well ideally I would love to be the source of help only. Not interfering and some sort of supporting when they need. That makes me feel more comfortable. I am usually the source of all knowing information and stuff so I am more like a guide in our present classrooms. We don't have the ideal teaching environment in general. I am not talking about our institution only, it is a problem that many of the teachers face.

Ilkyaz Koşar

Q1: the capacity of the students and their skills to answer the questions by themselves or to be able to guide themselves during the tasks in a group or individually. The teacher shouldn't influence or effect the students too much so that they can be free to answer the questions by themselves.

Q2: Of course I do. Because they should have the sense of guiding themselves, they should be free they should choose the path that they want to walk through. and they can be creative in this way.

Q3: As they are not used to being autonomous because in Turkey, education in general and the language education mostly include structures that are memorized. So they are used to memorizing everything. They are not accustomed to guiding themselves, being creative or being free in the lessons so they just wait to see some grammar on the board writing them, memorizing them. So it takes time for them to be free and creative in their class with their classmates and teachers. It takes time for them to get used to the communicative part of the class. It is really difficult to change their minds about that system.

Q4: Facilitator. I also learned English as they did in primary school or high school so they are used to learning and teach in a memorizing environment I am just trying to guide them. I am trying not to spoon feed but sometimes I do like a mom. I am trying to guide them give some examples and let them do the other stuff. It is also important to make them feel that they can get help from their friends in the class.

Rabia Bayram

Q1. Learner autonomy to me is giving responsibility to students during their learning process. Learners become autonomous when they have control over their learning. When they are autonomous, they have a say in many aspects of classes, like choosing materials, grading, examinations and absenteeism.

Q2. In my opinion it is highly important since it makes students fully aware of what is going on in their classes. Besides, when students are given a chance to control what they are doing, teachers would be less responsible for passing of failing problems since students would be the ones who designed it in the first place. Students would see the course as a product of their own, and I believe they would respect to it more.

Q3. I do not believe teachers would be efficient in this process to motivate students and control the process. Therefore, students may lack motivation and necessary guidance. Besides, students are not accustomed to be responsible of their own learning process, which may lead to chaos for quite some time. Not having been exposed to such learning styles before in primary school or in high school, students may reject the system. Most teachers believe students are lazy. Students may want to hide behind these kinds of labels.

Q4. Although it sounds like students are the ones who create a course in this system, teacher still have an important role in designing and leading the whole process. Teachers need to make sure students are aware of what they are doing, therefore they need to be knowledgeable about what learner autonomy is. Teachers need to be able to lead students effectively and make sure they value the process. Teachers need to limit the options that students will have. In terms of materials for example, teachers should offer a range of materials for students to select from. Considering absenteeism, teachers should put the limit and hours allowed, then students should be responsible of following their absenteeism, like how many hours they have left. Teachers need to be there all the time, without intervention but monitoring.



F. Consent Form

Dear Instructor,

As a part of my MA studies, I am currently doing my thesis on learner autonomy perceptions of EFL instructors. This interview aims to investigate your beliefs about learner autonomy in language learning and teaching in general. Please express your opinion sincerely when responding to the questions. Your identity and individual responses will be kept confidential and will be used only for research purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Nur Zorkaya
MA student
Institute of Educational Sciences
English Language Teaching Department
University of Yeditepe
nurzorkaya1993@hotmail.com

Consent Form

I have read and understood the purpose of this interview and how my responses will be used. Therefore I agree to participate in this thesis.

Name – Surname: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Nur Zorkaya-LEARNER AUTONOMY PERCEPTIONS OF EFL
TEACHERS -Savunma Sonrası 16.06.2019 *jk*

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