

**EFFECTS OF ONLINE DIFFERENTIATED READING IN READING
COMPREHENSION SKILLS AND LEARNER AUTONOMY OF YOUNG
LEARNERS**

Erhan GÜLŞEN

JUNE 2018

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LEARNERS**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES OF BAÇEŞEHİR UNIVERSITY**

BY

ERHAN GÜLŞEN

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

JUNE 2018

Approval of the Graduate School of Educational Sciences



Assist. Prof. Dr. Enisa MEDE

Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.



Assist. Prof. Dr. Hatime ÇİFTÇİ

Coordinator

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.



Assist. Prof. Dr. Enisa MEDE

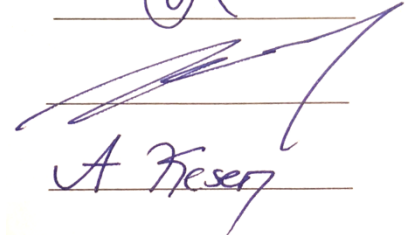
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Assist. Prof. Dr. Enisa MEDE (BAU, ELT)

Prof. Dr. Derin ATAY (BAU, ELT)

Assist. Prof. Dr. Aynur KESEN MUTLU (IMU, ELT)





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.

Name, Last Name: Erhan, Gülşen

Signature :

ABSTRACT

EFFECTS OF ONLINE DIFFERENTIATED READING IN READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS AND LEARNER AUTONOMY OF YOUNG LEARNERS

Gülşen, Erhan

Master's Thesis, Master's Program in English Language Education

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Enisa Mede

June 2018, 180 pages

The major purpose of this study is to gauge the efficacy of online differentiated reading lessons on the reading comprehension skills and learner autonomy of Turkish EFL young learners at a private college in İstanbul, Turkey. The study also attempts to explore the perceptions of the students and the teachers about the implementation of these lessons. The readers used in these lessons were chosen from Razplus (www.raz-plus.com) in accordance with the findings of Questionnaire on Favorite Book Types (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997), which was administered before the implementation. The participants were 72 young EFL learners from three different 5th grade classes and 3 EFL teachers. In this convergent mixed method case study, data were gathered from pre-post-tests of reading comprehension and learner autonomy, semi-structured student interview and the teachers' reflective journals. The obtained results demonstrated that the implementation of online differentiated reading lessons resulted in better reading comprehension skills and improved learner autonomy in reading. The findings also revealed that both the students and teachers considered these lessons to be beneficial for reading comprehension and learner autonomy.

Keywords: Differentiated Instruction, Extensive Reading, Learner Autonomy, EFL, Online Reading

ÖZ

FARKLILAŞTIRILMIŞ, ÇEVİRİMİÇİ OKUMA TEKNİĞİNİN İLKÖĞRETİM ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN OKUMA BECERİLERİNE VE ÖĞRENME ÖZERKLİKLERİNE OLAN ETKİSİ

Gülşen, Erhan

Yüksek Lisans Tezi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Yüksek Lisans Programı

Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Enisa Mede

Haziran 2018, 180 sayfa

Bu çalışmanın amacı farklılaştırılmış, çevrimiçi okuma derslerinin İstanbul, Türkiye'deki özel bir okulda, İngilizce'yi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen Türk ilköğretim öğrencilerinin okuma becerileri ve öğrenme özerklikleri üzerindeki etkisini ölçmektir. Bu araştırmanın bir diğer amacı, öğrencilerin ve öğretmenlerin bu derslere yönelik algılarıyla ilgili bilgi toplamaktır. Derslerde kullanılan kitaplar uygulama başlamadan önce yürütülen En Çok Sevilen Kitap Türleri Anketi'nin (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997) sonuçlarına göre Razplus'tan (www.raz-plus.com). Katılımcılar üç farklı sınıftan gelen, İngilizce'yi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen 72 beşinci sınıf öğrencisinden ve 3 İngilizce öğretmeninden oluşmaktadır. Bu karma yöntemli vaka çalışmasında, veriler ön-son test olarak uygulanan okuma anlama ve öğrenci özerkliği testlerinden, yarı yapılandırılmış öğrenci görüşmelerinden ve öğretmen günlüklerinden toplanmıştır. Sonuçlar farklılaştırılmış, çevrimiçi okuma tekniğinin daha iyi okuma becerisi ve gelişmiş öğrenci özerkliği sağladığını göstermiştir. Ayrıca, öğrencilerin ve öğretmenlerin bu dersleri okuma becerileri ve öğrenci özerkliği için faydalı bulduğu da ortaya çıkmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Farklılaştırılmış Öğretim, Yaygın Okuma, Öğrenci Özerkliği, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce, Çevrimiçi Okuma



To my family, my dearest late father Dr. Necdet Gülşen
and those who always supported me

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Initially, I would like to express my earnest gratitude to my advisor Assist. Prof. Enisa Mede for her fruitful and perpetual guidance throughout the development of this study. I am thankful that she never ceased to equip me with her broad experience during this tough process.

Besides my advisor, I would like to thank my thesis committee: Prof. Derin Atay and Assist. Prof. Aynur Kesen Mutlu for the valuable feedback they provided for this research.

I owe special thanks to my dearest mother Nilgün Gülşen and friends who always supported me with their help and understanding throughout this demanding phase of my life.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The current chapter provides information associated with the theoretical background of the present study on the premises of extensive reading (ER) and intensive reading (IR), differentiated instruction (DI), online reading (OR) and learner autonomy (LA). Initially, the chapter pinpoints the principles of ER and its differences from intensive reading (IR) and then moves on to indicate how reading lessons and DI can be intertwined. Subsequently, it treats of the reason why it is practical to use OR materials for differentiated reading and then clarifies briefly how differentiated reading activities can necessarily bring about LA in an EFL setting. Next, the purpose of the study, its research questions and significance are presented. Finally, the chapter ends with the brief definitions of the key terms used throughout the research.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

1.1.1. Extensive reading and intensive reading. In the field of English language education, the receptive skill of reading has constantly been subject to research and different developments (Brown, 2000; Hornery, Seaton, Tracey, Craven, & Yeung, 2009; Scrivener, 2009), principally because especially in an EFL setting – it is a typical struggle for language teachers to find texts that can be tailored to each individual learner’s needs and interest areas effortlessly and to adapt the instruction in a way that every single one of them can equally benefit from learning opportunities and fruitfully learn how to read and comprehend by themselves (Huang et al., 2015). Gülşen and Mede (2017) attribute his strain and lack of means to conventional reading lessons where the learners have to be exposed to undifferentiated reading activities that do not fully appeal to their comprehension level and reading interest. L2 learners must read their texts as if they were reading in their L1 and they are to be able to perform this receptive skill ‘unconsciously’ with the ultimate aims of comprehending the texts and grasping more lexical and linguistic items (Pulido & Hambrick, 2008).

In an L2 setting where each learner is to perform one of the four main skills whether it is receptive or productive – to such a full potential, adaptability and flexibility are of crucial importance as principles of forming an atmosphere where their proficiency level, needs and interests are to be taken into account (Tomlinson, 2005;

Heacox, 2012; Butt & Kausar, 2010). Correspondingly, for a reading lesson, it means that the learners can each read, comprehend and analyse a text in their own proficiency level and also find the text in question appealing to their own interest areas (Gülşen & Mede, 2017). In other words, each student must be able to perform an individualized extensive reading (ER) activity (Loeser, 2015). ER approach suggests that a student can gain a higher language proficiency only when he or she is not obliged to look up all unfamiliar words or when he or she is familiar with 95-98 percent of the words in the text as Nation (2009a) puts forward and can thus figure out many lexical and linguistic items in the text by reading just for the sake of pleasure (Green & Oxford, 1995; Salameh, 2017). A language learner's such respective knowledge of vocabulary and grammar as well as discourse for an ER text defines the Language Threshold (LT), which can pinpoint his or her own maximum proficiency level in L2 at which ER activities can be performed (Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Jacob et al., 2012). Hence, ER is also defined as an approach where language learners read a variety of materials that they find easy and consequently have the chance to practice their reading skills independently and confidently by considering the teacher as a role model (Bamford & Day, 2004). As opposed to ER, purely intensive reading (IR) lessons – the aforementioned way of teaching reading skills (Gülşen & Mede, 2017) aims to improve accuracy rather than fluency by merely focusing the learners' attention on vocabulary and grammar and engaging them in a detailed, line-by-line analysis of any given text (Mart, 2015). According to Brown (2000), this is a “zoom lens” strategy that calls attention to surface structure details such as discourse markers and linguistic forms for the sake of literal understanding. Led rather than guided by the teacher, thusly, it is a mandatorily in-class activity in which learners have to perform dependent reading tasks through the texts sharing the same content and having fixed proficiency levels in order for them to practice certain grammatical structures over time (Long & Richards, 1987). In contrast, through ER, learners have the chance to choose the materials according to their own interest areas and to perform a free or individualized reading activities outside the classroom as well (Mason & Krashen, 1994; Krashen, 2016).

Consequently, in an undifferentiated reading course, the interest areas of the learners as well as their individual reading paces and proficiency levels are readily unconsidered because the learning and teaching is structured around a single text used

as a source of linguistic forms which are taught explicitly by the teacher, whereas an ER course involves the learners in implicit – or unconscious – learning where they implement their receptive skills independently as a direct result of the granted freedom of choice among materials tailored to their interests and levels (Ellis, 1992; Grabe, 2009; Nation, 2009b).

1.1.2. Intertwining reading with differentiation. Embedding a DI and ER in a curriculum where IR lessons are abundant will require a language teacher to designate the materials or framework the syllabus by taking every individual level into consideration as there cannot be a single level, interest area or a couple of levels or interest areas in an L2 setting (Grabe, 2004; Gülşen & Mede, 2017). Besides, guiding the students to choose texts or assigning an in-class or an outside-the-class reading task for each student in the classroom will stipulate being knowledgeable about their interest areas because students differ with regard to what they are interested in as much as they differ in their levels (Nation, 2009; McBride & Milliner, 2016). Therefore, a language teacher must be able to embrace these individual differences by constructing learning opportunities tailored to interests, needs or proficiency levels (Loeser, 2015). In other words, the instruction must be differentiated for a reading lesson (Tomlinson & Alan, 2000).

Having been used for more than a decade and being an applicable method for an reading course as proven by Gülşen and Mede (2017), differentiated instruction (DI) attempts to appeal to the diverse needs, interests, levels and profiles existent in a language classroom through various ways to structure lessons (Hall et al., 2003). As Tomlinson (1999) put forward, applying DI in a language classroom can make the learning environment flexible by helping the teachers decide proactively and the students achieve individualized, maximum growth (Loeser, 2015). In students' part, this benefit of DI corresponds to the student-driven strategies of ER (McConn, 2016) such as free or individualized reading (Krashen, 2004). So, through differentiation, in a reading activity, students can read a text, as Bamford and Day (2004) puts forward, independently and individually. In teachers' part, DI provides certain methods of addressing to each student in an reading lesson according to their readiness levels, learning profiles and interest (Tomlinson & Eidson, 2003). These methods include differentiating the *content* or the reading material itself along with the objectives in the syllabus, *process* or how the students can comprehend a text by using essential reading

skills and *product* or the means they use to extend their understanding of a reading material (Tomlinson & Dockterman, 2002).

From a different perspective, adapting these three elements for each level, interest or learning profile for the sake of reading courses might be tiresome and demanding for teachers as such a process requires background knowledge on DI, time for research and institutional input (Langa & Yost, 2006). Additionally, even if a language teacher has tried hard to prepare materials that are appealing enough, in this age of technology, especially young learners might not perform well in reading lessons through differentiated hard copies as they look for some visual elements that can raise their attention and motivation for reading or the teacher simply cannot prevent them from losing their interest no matter how tailored each material before them is (McBride & Milliner, 2016; Gülşen & Mede; 2017). And, as Robinson, Maldonado and Whaley (2014) indicated in their study, these all might lead to classroom management problems in a language teacher's part. Thus, ultimately, the reading lesson might be far from providing an individualized learning opportunity just because of the lack of the materials (Day & Bamford, 2002).

1.1.3. Online reading materials. In the age of technology, OR materials are essential for EFL learners and teachers alike since learning through internet is on increase and students – regardless of their ages – regard performing OR activities more appealing and effective as they provide them with different technological aids for keeping reading (Anderson, 2003; Chien, 2015). Likewise, language teachers who aim to perform a reading or ER lesson to a full extent resort to online sources for reading materials to which their students can have full access as well (Chien, 2015; McBride & Milliner, 2016). Some of these sources are M-yon (www.myon.com), Achieve 3000 (www.achieve3000.com) Razplus (www.raz-plus.com) and M-reader (www.mreader.org). The materials in these websites are graded and can be assigned to all of the students in the classroom and they can be read simultaneously on a tablet or smartphone within the classroom or outside the classroom as ER activities. On such websites, the language teacher can track the learners' process smoothly over time and edit or adapt a book or a text according to learner types, interests, proficiency levels and readiness levels.

Among these online resources, Razplus provides multi-level books appealing to various interest areas, which means that some readers in the website are differentiated

for various proficiency levels. Thus, by using Razplus online books, the teachers can therefore free themselves from the burden of differentiating the content or allocating time for seeking appropriate materials for their students' levels and apply DI smoothly in their classrooms by referring to its tenets and blending them with reading strategies as well (Tomlinson, 1999; Robinson et. al, 2014). As for students, through online tasks that can be completed on the go, they can perform individualized reading thoroughly and learn how to be equipped with different strategies to be thoughtful, independent readers in the 21st century (Anderson 2003; Borja et al., 2015).

To sum up the above points, there can be as many levels, interests and learning profiles in a reading lesson as there are students and thus using differentiated materials – or making the text differentiated – for each individual in order that they can perform an individualized and independent reading task confidently both inside and outside the classroom is of essential importance (Langa & Yost, 2006; Chick & Hong, 2012; Bamford & Day, 2004) because, conclusively, each student's learning responsibility and overall comprehension skill will be boosted through differentiated and therefore *autonomous* reading activities – just what DI and reading technically and mutually require as their core principles (Tomlinson, 2008; Nation, 2009; Tomlinson, Moon & Imbeau, 2015). All these differentiated materials might contribute more practically to reader independence, the individualized reading activities themselves and their attractiveness for the students if they are chosen online from Razplus (Gülşen & Mede, 2017).

1.1.4. Autonomous reading and learning. By the words “independent” or “autonomous” in the above paragraph, the concept of placing the learner at the centre of focus is referred. (Holec, 1981; Kenny, 1993; Shujun & Qian, 2006). According to Dickinson (1987), an autonomous learner takes responsibility of his or her own learning and doesn't need any interference or monitoring by the teacher. In a reading lesson where the instruction is being carried out with the aim of addressing to every individual's needs and considering their comprehension levels, the level of autonomy as well as readiness level of each learner can be achieved when they are all fully engaged and motivated enough (Tomlinson, 2000, 2005; Heacox, 2002; Butt & Kausar, 2010; Jacobs et al., 2012). While performing the reading activity receptively and thoughtfully, an autonomous reader or learner participate in the process of learning actively and is able to implement individualized reading and learning strategies with a

view to comprehending (Bamford & Day, 2004; Anderson, 2007; Loeser, 2015). Hence, seamless engagement achieved through differentiated reading instruction opens ways to autonomy, which must be the sole aim of any lesson structured around receptive skills (Benson, 2001; Richards & Rodgers, 2014), because supportive circumstances and contexts for reading are provided for learners within the guidance of the teacher and, ultimately, they gain independence while reading the individualized texts tailored to their own reading levels (Grabe, 2002; Bamford & Day, 2004). In turn, this independence brings about confidence in learners as the studies by Mclean and Rouault (2015) and Suk (2016) suggests because they can learn by the processes and materials they themselves determine, thus contributing to their own reading performance and learning unconsciously or implicitly as ER strategies indicate (Ellis, 1992; Macaskill & Taylor, 2010). And, the literature on learners' attitude demonstrates that there is a positive inclination towards autonomy in the classroom (Cotterall, 1995; Horwitz, 1999), which is a clear indication of the fact that learners' willingness for assuming responsibility for their learning process is heightened when their learning requirements are attended to and met. In the field of FL learning, lots of studies such as Borg and Al Busaidi's (2012) ascribed importance to the central role of LA in a language classroom.

Accordingly, even though there have been efforts to explore and gauge the effects of differentiated reading in an EFL setting in various studies such as the one carried out by Shaunessy Dedrick, Evans, Ferron and Lindo (2015) and to show practical ways of differentiation in others (e.g. Servilio, 2009), the strategies for teaching reading skills to be referred to need to be structured in a DI setting and it might be useful to intertwine the concepts of reading, ER and LA with DI.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In young learners' EFL setting, the receptive skill of reading is largely practiced with no heed to the individual comprehension levels and interests. Such an approach or attitude necessarily renders the whole instruction dull and systematized around the principles of undifferentiated intensive reading, where not every single student can thoroughly practice their reading skills or benefit from the activity to the desired extent (Scrivener, 2009). Some students might get lost among pages as they could not comprehend the text fully just because its level is high for them. Others might find it challenging to engage themselves in reading simply because the topic or genre doesn't

interest them no matter how appropriate the reading level is (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). In this case, the language teacher righteously make a lot of attempts to simplify the content for some learners or activate others' engagement. At one time, s/he feels obliged to turn the individualized reading activity into a whole-class one by getting one above-level student to read the text out for others. At another, s/he may have to interrupt the reading to clarify some paragraphs by simplifying or even translating them for below-level students. Therefore, reading, which must actually be performed autonomously, is transformed into a teacher-guided activity and the learners feel obliged to conform to a common, non-individualized way of learning (Koosha et al., 2016). The sole reasons behind this phenomenon is lack of the same reading texts designed for different levels and lack of time for adapting the materials on part of the language teachers (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006).

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Being able to comprehend a text given in L2 autonomously is of crucial importance in acquiring basic skills while learning an FL. A large number of young EFL learners find it difficult to gain the objectives of a reading lesson and acquire a reasonable level of reading skill just because the texts they read are fully undifferentiated – or extensive and differentiated enough only for some learners in the classroom. That's why; they need a DI setting where they can autonomously focus on texts tailored to their individual proficiency levels and interest areas (Loeser, 2014; Tabiati, 2016).

In the light of these observations and the concise literature review provided, besides aiming to gauge the impact of differentiated reading on 5th grade Turkish EFL learners' comprehension skills and LA, the present study also attempts to investigate the participant teachers' reflection on the implementation of online differentiated reading and students' reflections on differentiated lessons. The differentiated reading materials were chosen from the website www.raz-plus.com according to the results of a Flyers proficiency test and a questionnaire administered to determine the students' levels and interest areas. The study gave the participant young learners the opportunity to partake actively in 10 reading lessons and perform online, autonomous readings of different short books in their fields of interests, which were provided to their individual L2 levels.

1.4 Research Questions

In the light of the above discussion, this study aims to find the answers to these research questions:

- 1) To what extent does the implementation of online differentiated reading affect 5th grade EFL learners' reading comprehension skills?
- 2) How does online differentiated reading influence learner autonomy?
- 3) What are the students' perceptions about online differentiated reading lessons?
- 4) What are the teachers' perceptions about the implementation of online differentiated reading?

1.5 Significance of the Study

One of the four main skills in acquiring a language, reading places language teachers in cases in which students are observed not to be feeling motivated enough to pursue the goals of their lesson or working on their texts independently. All main course books or those used mainly for reading lessons include reading activities which are mostly intensive or extensive enough only for a limited number of students in the same classroom. Therefore, being obliged to use these materials – which may not appeal to individual interests, either – prevents the teachers from dealing with this problem and they cannot come up with any solution as they have to stick with the curriculum and do not have enough time to edit and adapt the texts given. The studies on the effect of DI on reading skills carried out so far mostly provided solutions or ways for language learners to choose their own books of interest and ER hour and access to different hard-copy reading materials (Baumgartner et al., 2003) or came up with methods applicable only locally and techniques of adapting materials with a limited number of material choice (Servilio, 2009, McGeown et al., 2016). Although they suggested reasonable ways for ER activities outside the classroom, to the knowledge of the researcher, no study has offered a way of increasing learners' comprehension skills that could be beneficial both inside and outside the classroom.

From different perspective, considering the fact that learning while reading is an independent activity, one study suggested ways for increasing learner autonomy in EFL reading (Tabiati, 2016) while another one tried to find a correlation between autonomy and increased comprehension skills (Koosha et al., 2016). However, to the

knowledge of the researcher, no study has attempted to intertwine DI with reading for the sake of contributing to LA and improving learner achievement in any of the four main skills so far.

By using online books provided by Razplus in a DI setting, this study aims to show that implementing differentiated reading lessons are effective in improving reading comprehension skills and it can provide L2 learners with an individualized way of doing autonomous, pleasurable reading activities in their own proficiency levels or according to their levels under the guidance of their teachers. Both because it suggests ways of increasing LA in reading and improving comprehension through DI without the burden of material adaptation and because it presents detailed perceptions of the participant teachers and students as to the implementation, institutions and EFL instructors planning to teach differentiated reading can benefit from the findings of this study.

1.6 Definitions

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

DI: Differentiated Instruction

L1: First language. In this study, L1 refers to learners' mother tongue; Turkish.

L2: Second language. In this study, L2 refers to English.

TL: Target language. In this study, target language refers to English.

LA: Learner Autonomy

ER: Extensive Reading

IR: Intensive Reading

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, as cited in Subban, 2006).

MI: Multiple Intelligences (Conti, 2013)

OR: Online Reading

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The present chapter respectively provides a theoretical background of the receptive skill of reading, LA and DI in an L2 setting. It initiates with a historical analysis of how certain approaches have emerged in time to categorize four skills as receptive and productive and moves on to describe the development of these skills in an L2 setting. The chapter then concentrates upon the receptive skill of reading and compares IR and ER. Next, it treats of learner autonomy in detail and subsequently of the need for DI in a corresponding setting – along with its implementation in EFL lessons. Finally, the chapter concludes with the previous studies associated with differentiated reading and LA in EFL reading.

2.2 The Way to Communicativeness and Dual Distinction of Four Main Skills

General and conventional background of theories for L2 teaching and learning has placed considerable importance upon the complex nature of language acquisition by referring to the disciplines, linguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive psychology, sociolinguistics as their threshold matters throughout the last five-six decades (Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006). This linkage with other fields have caused communication to prosper as a critical element in defining the views as to the acquisition of L2 in time, leading the advent of communicative approaches that aim to develop communicative competence in an L2 setting by categorizing four main skills (Mitchell & Myles, 1998).

Concordantly, environmentalist, innatist and interactionist approaches had been respectively in practice since before 1950s (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). To start with, the environmentalist approach based its tenets upon two different disciplines, linguistics and psychology. Initially, the environmentalists were significantly influenced by the view that language was a phenomenon of oral skills solely because people learnt to speak before they learnt how to read and write, even in their L1 (Bloomfield, 1933). According to this structural view based upon linguistics, language was a system of elements and these elements, which were morphemes, phonemes, words and sentences types, were in association with each other according to some

certain structures and rules. And, learning a language meant mastering these structures and rules by making use of those elements orally.

In reference to psychology, environmentalists attempted to define the process of learning in terms of conditioning, stating that learning was a kind of behaviour structured around stimulus-response-reinforcement chains and behaviourist school was originated (Skinner, 1957). Internal mental processes were denied by the behaviourist theory and the role of the environment was attached prominence (Williams & Burden, 1997). According to this theory, learners received their input from other learners in the same environment and they were encouraged to practice more thanks to the reinforcements provided for their correct linguistic behaviours and subsequently their habits were formed (Mitchell & Myles, 1998).

In the following decade, innatist approach explored the creative nature of learning a language after a shift from structural linguistics to generative linguistics, which was inaugurated by Chomsky (1957). According to Chomsky, language is composed of essential meanings or *deep structure* and a certain way in which ideas are communicated or *surface structure* and, thus, it is important to scrutinize how language speakers and writers convert their meanings into statements and how listeners and other readers respond to those statements. And, he defined the former way as *performance* and the latter one as *competence*.

Subsequently, Chomsky (1959) also alleged that children's creativity or *performance* in learning their native language is associated with their acquisition of complicated and abstract linguistic rules or their *competence*. The reason, according to innatist theory, is that humans are innately inclined to learn the language of a community in which they were born thanks to the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) or *universal grammar* naturally existent in their minds (Chomsky, 1959; White, 1989). Chomsky's theory put importance on the output of a language learner more than on anything else, dismissing the functions of a language and learning process. Such disregard led to the supplementary developments in the fields of linguistics and psychology in the following decade (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006).

In the linguistic field, language beyond the structures was examined and so *discourse analysis* or – to put it simply – the study of how sentences are contextually connected and how the form of language is determined by the function of language –

came into play (Schiffrin, 1994; Halliday, 1975). In the field of psychology, mental processes that are active in language learning were examined through *information processing approach* (Schank & Abelson, 1977) with a focus on how people absorb and process information and through *constructivist approach* with a focus on how people understand themselves via their experiences (Piaget, 1974). Besides these cognitive approaches mentioning discourse and language use on the premises of the disciplines of psycholinguistics and cognitive psychology, sociolinguistics also made an instrumental intervention in the field of language acquisition in 1970s (Pearson & Stephens, 1994). Criticizing Chomsky's theory on the grounds that his differentiation between competence and performance doesn't refer to the aspects of language use and their appropriateness in a social setting, Hymes (1972) presented *communicative competence* by embracing both Chomsky's competence and language use on the basis of sociolinguistics, which in turn led to the emergence of interactionist theory. Therefore, social, dynamic and communicative aspects of language acquisition were first blended with reference to language use in social context and communicative approaches were put forward (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006).

All communicative approaches so far have been based upon the founding model by Canale and Swain (1983). According to this model, communicative competence is integrative and composed of *grammatical*, *sociolinguistic*, *strategic* and *discourse competence*. Knowledge of language usage such as vocabulary and sentence structure is regarded as *grammatical competence* and *sociolinguistic competence* involves use of sociocultural rules in different contexts while *strategic competence* refers to the verbal and nonverbal communication techniques. The last one, *discourse competence*, is associated with reaching coherence and cohesion while writing and speaking. Equipped with these four competences, Canale and Swain (1983) suggests, L2 learners can gain communicative competence as if they were in their natural settings. However, neither this theory nor the corresponding ones that were built upon it treated of the four main skills used in L2 learning within a communicative framework (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006).

2.2.1. Development of receptive and productive skills in L2 learning. The model of communicative language ability proposed by Bachman (1987) was the first one to include four skills of language acquisition – listening, reading, writing and speaking – in a communicative L2 setting. This model was composed of three main components, which are language competence, strategic competence and psychomotor skills. Language competence has two components, which are organizational competence and pragmatic competence. The former refers to a learner’s grammatical and textual (discourse related) competence while the latter is concerned with illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence. Illocutionary competence is the skill of using conventional pragmatic functions while sociolinguistic competence shows a learner’s ability to use those functions appropriately in a given context. As for strategic competence and psychomotor skills, the former refers to the ability of a language learner to communicate meaning by making use of the language items stored as products of his or her language competence (Canale & Swain, 1983). And, the latter indicates the receptive or productive skills of a language user along with the medium in which s/he achieves competence. For receptive skills, which are listening and reading, the media are oral and visual while they are aural or visual for productive ones (Bachman, 1987; 1990).

In order that the reader can get a better idea about the current framework in which the proposed ideas are situated, it can also be useful to mention that receptive and productive skills – as psychomotor skills – have been claimed to be influenced by discourse competence as well in the last three decades following Bachman’s (1987; 1990) time (Celce-Murcia, et al., 1995; Alcón, 2002). Different from Bachman’s model, Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1995) devised a more comprehensive outline of communicative competence by delineating pragmatic competence as *actional competence* – which means grasping the purpose of any communication through speech acts – and enlisting the receptive and productive skills within *discourse competence* – which refers to the choice of sentences to perform a shared speech or written text –, ultimately suggesting that such a model is made up of an interrelation between these components along with linguistic, strategic and sociocultural competences. Linguistic competence is associated with use of simple language elements, just like organizational competence in Bachman’s (1990) model whereas strategic competence is linked with the techniques or strategies of how to communicate

or language use, resembling illocutionary competence in the corresponding model. As for sociocultural competence, it is the appropriate transmission of message tailored to any given context, just as Bachman's (1990) sociolinguistic competence suggests (Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006).

In later years, alternatively, Alcón (2002) suggested a model of communicative competence with discourse competence being its core subcompetency – consisting of linguistic, textual and pragmatic elements – and with psychomotor skills and strategic competence being its auxiliary subcompetencies. All aspects of language usage including formulaic speech are incorporated in this model as linguistic elements. Still, the textual and pragmatic components are considered indispensable for forming discourse and understanding it, thus closely resembling actional competence in Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell's (1995) model.

As for receptive and productive skills, or psychomotor skills, Alcón (2002) suggests that they are all influenced by discourse competence and are thus to be in interrelation for using language communicatively. Therefore, different from the above-mentioned models, four main skills are given precise function in his model (Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006). And, as an extension to Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell's (1995) model, Alcón's (2002) strategic competence includes learning strategies – as well as those of communication.

Following Alcón's (2002) model, over the last decade or so, increasing attention has been given to cultural aspect of L2 learning and this recognition has influenced the overall scheme of communicative competence (Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006; Wei, 2011; Farooq, 2015). Conclusively, intercultural communicative competence, which are composed of the skills of an L2 learner that help recognize and interpret the different cultural aspects of a target language, was included in the model of communicative competence and receptive and perceptive skills are now considered to work in correlation with this competence to aid an L2 learner in gaining discourse competence (Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006; Ghanem, 2016; López-Rocha & Vailes, 2017) (see Figure 1).

In sum, the receptive and perceptive skills have been positioned within the discourse competence by all the skill development models proposed over the last two decades, which means all theorists have given importance to four main skills in the

literature. Figure 1 displays a framework of the model proposed by Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006, and still in common use by researchers, theorists and language teachers today (Ishihara & Chiba, 2014; Stude, 2014; Fitriati, 2016; Tuan, 2017). It exhibits the relationship between the four main skills – whether they are separated as receptive and productive or not – and the all the other competences discussed so far.

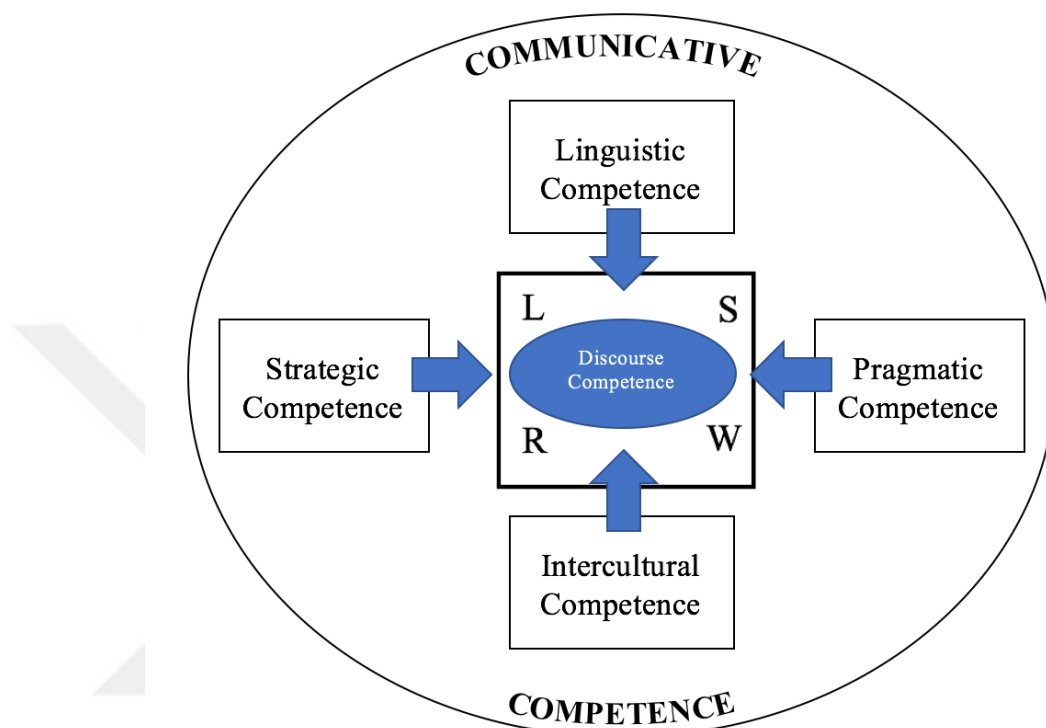


Figure 1. The Framework of Communicative Competence Integrating the Receptive and Productive Skills (the capital letters stand for the four skills: L = Listening; S = Speaking; R= Reading; W = Writing) (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006)

According to this model, the way of achieving flawless communication in any L2 is to be able to receive (interpret) or produce (construct) an oral or written piece of discourse. For this reason, receptive and productive skills are plainly integrated and situated within the centre or the core of language skill development, *discourse competence*.

Although more recognition is increasingly being given to cultural aspects of language learning today, dual distinction of four main skills in L2 learning is still being made in many studies (Ballester & Vallbona, 2016; Lee & Lyster, 2016; Daftari & Tavil, 2017; Rukmini & Saputri, 2017) and those concentrated upon even a single one or a couple of them mention receptiveness or productiveness in one way or another.

Whether it is for the purpose of honing receptive or productive potentials of any given learners, the means of developing any language skill varies widely in accordance with the main and sub aims targeted in the classrooms, the scope of the instruction adopted, the teaching approaches being followed as well as the interest areas, ages and respective levels of the students (Scrivener, 2009; Harmer, 2007). This being the case, a large number of instruction methods and approaches have been proposed or are still being formulated for every single one of the four main skills, regardless of them being attributed to receptive or productive development (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006; Stenius, 2008; Wei, 2017).

In previous and recent literature, listening and reading have been termed as receptive language development where the learners take up reflexive roles as they merely pick up and understand the language input whereas writing and speaking are regarded as productive because the students have more active roles while constructing oral or written products by using the input they receive from listening or reading (Scrivener, 2009; Li, 2017). In other words, textual and verbal language are produced with the support of textual and verbal language again and so thus forming an inseparable connection between the four main skills or receptive and productive skills. To exemplify, a young child needs to listen and read before starting to speak and write in L1 or L2 (Millsom, 2016) (see Figure 2).

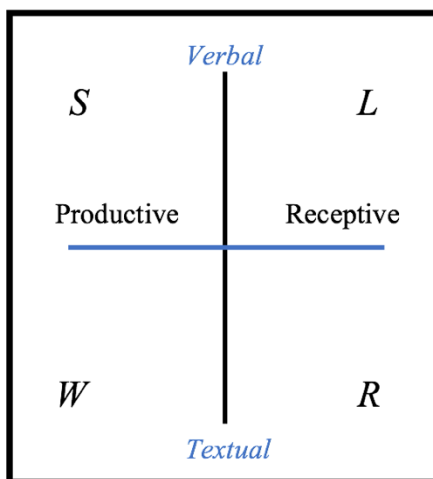


Figure 2. Integration and Correlation of Four Main Skills (Adapted from Millsom, 2016).

As it can be inferred from Figure 2, speaking and listening are on the same line as they help hone verbal skills while writing and reading are on the same line too as they develop textual skills. On the other hand, listening and reading can also be

considered to stand on the same line as well since they help learners receive and perceive the language inputs just as writing and reading can be, as they help refine language production.

2.3 Receptive Skill of Reading

As the scope and the aims of the current study draw their premises from the development of reading skill in a certain setting, it would be contextually appropriate to scrutinize how different approaches have conceived it up to now in technical terms, to detail through which strategies reading skill can be developed by a reader and show which instructions methods and types of reading for L2 classrooms are considered lucrative for reading skill by the current literature. However, it should not be dismissed that reading – as the instruction performed in the present study proves – here in this present research is not thought of as a skill that can be developed independently of the other three skills but rather as a complementary one that can pave the way for integration of four skills.

2.3.1. Recognition of reading as a primary communicative skill. To initiate, the capability of reading fluently in an L2 is currently regarded as an indispensable achievement for academic success and it is of great importance for language learning as no other skill can represent a more independent way of learning (Carrell & Grabe, 2002). However, until ten years ago, the skill of reading was traditionally considered to be an inactive skill, finding no vacancy in EFL literature. For the last one decade, it has been assigned a key status in developing one's overall communicative competence thanks to its recently recognized constructive and interactive disposition (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006). How the skill of reading has come to be recognized as an essential, independent and communicative skill by EFL researchers in time is described briefly below under the headings reserved specifically for each approach:

2.3.1.1. Environmentalist approach. Until the end of 1960s, environmentalists regarded reading as a passive and perceptual process of learning. Readers merely decoded the signs on any given written material or text and were responsible for translating these signs into sounds without any need for them to understand the author's meaning. Thus, reading was purely an abstract task (Pearson & Stephens, 1994).

2.3.1.2. Innatist approach. Innatists challenged the environmentalists by stating that reading could not be a passive skill. Providing the basis for this approach, Chomsky's (as cited in Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006) language theory asserts that each child is born with a predisposition to acquire a language. According to innatists, readers could therefore read more words in context than they did without a context and they made reading errors or *miscues*, as stated by Goodman (as cited in Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006), because they intended to construct meaning out of a written text. Subsequently, Goodman stated that reading is a *psycholinguistic guessing game*, where readers made their guessing on the basis of their background knowledge and the present written text and then confirmed their guessing through comprehension. Goodman also explained that readers made use of three sources of information, which are *graphonic cues* (visual or phonic components), *syntactic cues* (sentence structure) and *semantic cues* (vocabulary knowledge), and they read through these sources naturally. As an innatist, Smith (as cited in Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006) later supported these views by suggesting that reading could not be taught but could be learned through reading. Later, Krashen (1988) confirmed this natural aspect of reading by putting forward that merely voluntary reading led to learning.

2.3.1.3. Interactionist approach. In the late 1970s, interactionists studied comprehension skills by analysing what was happening in readers' memories during a reading task and came up with the idea that specific categories, which are *setting* (character, place and time), *initiating event* (an important event that changes the plot), *internal response* (the goal of reading), *attempt* (to achieve the goal), *consequence* (achieving or not achieving the goal) and *reaction* (outcome regarding *consequence*), were universal in well-structured stories no matter what language they were written in (Stein & Glenn, as cited in Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006). However, non-textual components of any reading act were disregarded here as form was given more importance (Pearson & Stephens, 1994). In response, schema theory was developed (Anderson & Pearson, 1994). According to this theory, readers comprehend a text by referring to their background knowledge and the text orients them towards what they already know. Thus, reading was then considered to be a form of dynamic interaction between the reader and the writer that helps the former activate his or her background knowledge or *schemata* (Grabe, 1988). The theory still holds the ground now with minor changes or contributions made by sociolinguists through a thorough analysis of

the term of *context* (Pearson & Stephens, 1994). According to sociolinguistics, a reader can make meaning out of a reader or text only if s/he interprets it within the social boundaries of a culture in which it has been written.

2.3.1.4. Reading within communicative competence. L2 teaching has been refined through the approaches structured firmly around communicative competence in the last two decades or so (Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006; Ghanem, 2016; López-Rocha & Vailes, 2017). As it can be understood in Figure 1, reading is situated within the discourse competence because it signifies the interpretation of any written text by referring to the other three skills, and the other components of the framework as well. Thus, to be able to interpret and comprehend a text, a reader must know how to use and identify the discourse features such as discourse markers, schemata and coherence (Soler & Flor, 2008). Thus, according to communicative approach, it is in readers' part to decide which other components of the discourse framework must be activated to achieve an overall communicative competence. Linguistic competence refers to the capability of identifying or deciphering the mechanical features of a language fixed at the bottom of any reading process, such as punctuation, grammar and vocabulary knowledge whereas pragmatic competence involves being able to comprehend an author's communicative purpose through syntactic, graphic and linguistic devices within a written text. Intercultural competence in reading refers to the capability of interpreting the readers or texts properly within their sociocultural context with the help of cultural factors like the knowledge of cultural background and dialects while strategic competence involves the ways of dealing with interpretation problems and enhancing the interaction between the reader and writer (Celche-Murshia & Olshtain, 2000).

To sum up, reading used to be considered as a decoding process but now it is recognized as a contextualized, interactive and meaning-making process by the currently-common approaches and studies (Jafari & Ketabi, 2014; Li, 2017). In other words, sociocultural, linguistic and psychological aspects of language learning play an important role in reading process, which has clear implications on how to teach this receptive skill in an FL setting. On the one hand, learners can read the texts as products for different purposes like sociocultural or linguistic ones, thereby accepting different interpretations through meaning making. On the other, they can read for purposes for

improving their sociocultural and pragmatic awareness (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006; Ishiara & Chiba, 2014)

As it can be seen from the above literature analysis, the current trends in EFL and ESL widely place the skill of reading within a communicative and cultural framework, providing implications for how to perform reading in a classroom. This has also influenced the strategies and aims to be chosen during a reading task by the reader although a few grounded methods and verifications for making use of some still keep their validity within the literature. Below section briefly describes how reading aims and strategies have come to be formulated for instruction in EFL setting in the light of the traditionally grounded and current understandings.

2.3.2. Nature of reading, its purposes, aims and strategies as a language skill.

Just as there exist various purposes for reading, there are innumerable cognitive processes and knowledge reserves manipulated by readers of all types – at different ages and from miscellaneous walks of life (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Therefore, it can be arduous and deceptive to identify a single purpose for any reading activity in an L2 setting as different purposes may benefit from the same cognitive processes and knowledge reserves through differing weights. For instance, reading for finding specific information may mostly require scanning and skimming but one may need to refer to the background knowledge to make a connection just as s/he does while reading to learn something from an expository text (Celche-Murshia & Olshtain, 2000).

In light of the above precise review, any reading task as a purposeful activity is likely to involve scanning, skimming or reading for general understanding, reading to learn and integrate, and reading to evaluate critically (Grellet, 1984; Grabe & Stoller, 2002). According to Carver (1992), scanning is a process where a learner reads to identify words, numbers or visual elements while skimming is a process where a learner constructs a gist out of the book or text through semantic and visual processing. As for reading to learn and integrate, it requires forming relations between the sets of new necessary information and background knowledge whereas reading for critical evaluation is aimed at reaching enhanced clarity and comprehension. Specifically, whatever the purpose is, a reader must be ready to integrate many elements of cognitive processes such as syntactic, semantic and morphological and discourse processing with background knowledge bases to reach a communicative end in L2 learning and,

accordingly, – in view of the literature – it is a complex task to try to perceive the nature and development of reading thoroughly (Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Richards & Renandya, 2002). However, if analysed in accordance with the aims to be achieved and strategies to be used by learners in an L2 lesson, this receptive skill's nature can possess a less vague and more tangible outlook for an EFL teacher or researcher.

As a language skill, reading is considered to be receptive because it helps the learner to comprehend the written input in the form of printed words or signs. It involves a relentless process of guessing and an activity of personal exploration rather than an invention (Grellet, 1984; Nunan, 1991; Hornby, 1995). According to Tarigan, (as cited in Randi, 2013), the aim of any reading activity is to grasp the content of a reader to gain new knowledge and there exist six separate, detailed aims for a reading lesson, which are:

- a. *Reading for details or fact:* The learners read for the purpose of getting information or solving a problem presented by the author.
- b. *Reading for main ideas:* The learners read a text so as to deduce the message the author gives or the moral if it is a story.
- c. *Reading for sequence and organization:* The learners read a text or story to understand what happens in different scenes or to provide solutions for a problem in the story.
- d. *Reading for classifying:* The learners read an expository text to group or classify the pieces of information presented by the author.
- e. *Reading for inference:* The learners read a story or an informational text to draw conclusions for making inferences.
- f. *Reading for comparison:* The learners read a story to find similarities or differences between the plot and their lives or life experiences.

According to Pressley et. al, (1992), whatever the aim is, learning how to read is a kind of problem solving activity and good readers are generally “strategic” readers who try to make sense of a text and thus, it is a kind of one’s own ability to guide his or her learning while reading with the purpose of improving L2 for communication. The strategies a reader chooses to use can be considered to be the parts and parcels of any reading instruction or the activity of reading itself, which basically means *comprehending* what is being read or producing meaning (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006). This ability to create meaning or *comprehending* is profoundly contingent upon

background knowledge, word levels and strategies of comprehension (Jafari & Ketabi, 2014; Pressley, 2000). And, according to what Antony (1995, as cited in Grabe, 2009) stated, comprehension is a silent reading with questions following the text or books that help the reader build better understanding. For creating such a meaning out of the texts, different strategies of reading have been pinpointed in the last three decades by different researchers. Some have suggested that strategies can turn into skills when they are automatized while others have put forward that reading skills can transform into strategies when they are used willingly (Paris, et al., 1991; Pressley, 2000; Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006; Randi, 2013). Table 1 below shows the most commonly uttered or referred reading strategies in L2 learning literature:

Table 1

Reading Strategies (adapted from Anderson, 1991; Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006)

<i>Reading Strategies</i>	
<i>Metacognitive Strategies</i>	
<i>Purpose-oriented strategies</i> such as evaluating the quality of a text, reminding oneself about the purpose of the reading, comparing between different texts, etc.	<i>Comprehension-monitoring strategies</i> such as evaluating understanding, summarizing, restating, reviewing, etc.
<i>Learning from reading strategies</i> such as thinking about how to use the text later, making notes, underlining or marking, etc.	
<i>Cognitive Strategies</i>	
<i>Strategies for interaction with the author</i> such as predicting the content, critiquing the author, etc.	<i>Strategies of different ways of reading</i> such as reading carefully; scanning, skimming, reading out loud, etc.
<i>Strategies for unknown vocabulary</i> such as skipping, pronouncing, using other information, translating, analysing the structure, etc.	<i>Strategies for using background knowledge</i> such as thinking about what one knows, making connections, revising prior knowledge, etc.
<i>Affective & Social Strategies</i>	
<i>Choosing what to read, talking with others about the text, encouraging & rewarding oneself</i>	

As it can be seen from the table, reading strategies can be grouped into metacognitive (purpose-oriented strategies, comprehension monitoring strategies, learning from reading strategies), cognitive (strategies for interaction with the author, strategies of different ways of reading, strategies for unknown vocabulary, strategies for using background knowledge) and affective & social strategies. Examples for sub-categories have been chosen from strategies that are used most widely in EFL classes in the setting and context of the present study. Use of these strategies and many others

– those provided by www.raz-plus.com and many other course books or online sources such as Achieve 3000 – have been proven to be able to result in better comprehension and self-confidence in L2 learners (Oxford, 2001; Jafari & Ketabi, 2014; Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Gülşen & Mede, 2017).

With their advantages being momentous, the process of framing and integrating these multiple strategies along with the aforementioned skills within a certain curriculum has produced equally myriad sets of implications for reading instruction over the last three decades (Grabe, 2000; Harmer, 2007; Jafari & Ketabi, 2014; Millsom, 2016). These implications are generally aimed at formulating effective reading practices and highlighting the most effective ways of teaching, curriculum design and material development. The most principal and prevalent ones in the literature predominantly prescribe improving word recognition, facilitating vocabulary learning, activating background knowledge, enhancing comprehension skills, teaching discourse organization, raising strategic readers, developing intrinsic motivation, encouraging ER and promoting content-based teaching through discourse competence (Richards & Renandya, 2002; Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006). Producing an adequately comprehensive list of these implications doesn't necessarily mean that a clichéd or prefabricated curriculum can be effortlessly created for any reading lesson. Learner profiles and needs, institutional expectations, local contexts and teaching goals must be initially considered and a flexible curriculum must be subsequently developed through a wide-ranging analysis of these primary instruction methods (Anderson & Pearson, 1994; Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Thus, appropriateness, relevance, complementariness are important points to be considered before reading instruction starts.

As encouraging extensive reading (ER) stays within the chief remit of the present study's context and purposes in comparison with the others, the current chapter will go on to emphasize on expounding the details of this instructional implication.

2.4 Extensive and Intensive Reading

Underscoring the need for encouraging the learners to do reading tasks from self-selected readers with sufficient amount of familiar lexical and linguistic knowledge, ER conforms to the principles of communicative approach (See Section 2) and to the nature of language learning because it lets the learners to perform their reading

activities as pleasurable tasks tailored to their needs and interest areas (Day & Bamford, 2002). As a reading task, ER mostly involves quick reading of a large number of reading materials or entire books for the purpose of general understanding of the content being read rather than focusing on language usage (Carrell & Carson, 1997). As an ELT implementation, according to Davis (1995), ER is a supplementary and complementary part of an English course where the learners are encouraged to read as many books as they can at their respective levels and are allowed to enjoy the process without time limitations or any pressure of being assessed or tested. Therefore, in an ER lesson, a student competes against only himself or herself, with his or her teacher monitoring the whole class to check how many books are being read in the given time interval. Rather than their quality, the quantity and diversity of the lexical items are important for an ER task inasmuch as the books are selected by the students themselves or they are chosen by the instructor according to their interest areas.

As opposed to IR (intensive reading), where students read short and challenging texts, an ER lesson engages the students in reading tasks where reading is used as a *means* to end. In other words, students read to write a report or summary, to discuss on a matter with their peers or perhaps to make a debate in groups just as communicative approach in L2 learning suggests (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006; Ishiara & Chiba, 2014). In such a lesson, the learners feel more responsibility as they look for books in their own proficiency levels. However, IR lessons are the end themselves. Students read to gain a detailed understanding out of a text, to develop their comprehension skills through different reading strategies, or merely to enhance their grammar and vocabulary knowledge (Aebersold & Field, 1998). Table 2 summarizes the differences between ER and IR lessons:

Table 2

Intensive Versus Extensive Reading (Adapted from Aebersold & Field, 1998; Grabe & Stoller 2002; Waring, 2011)

Intensive Reading		Extensive Reading
Language Analysis	<i>LINGUISTIC FOCUS</i>	Fluency, Skill Development
A common level, usually difficult	<i>MATERIAL LEVEL</i>	Unchallenging, respective levels
Restricted with the lesson hours	<i>READING AMOUNT</i>	Unlimited, as many books as possible
Selected by teacher	<i>MATERIAL SELECTION</i>	Selected by the students (or the teacher to some extent)
The same genre and topic for all students	<i>MATERIAL VARIETY</i>	Different genres and topics available for each area of interest
In-class only	<i>SETTING</i>	In-class, out-of-class
Checked by local questions	<i>COMPREHENSION</i>	Checked by global questions and through book reports, summaries, discussion
Working with the learners on the text and providing maximum guidance (more central)	<i>TEACHER'S ROLE</i>	Defining students' interest areas, mediating and monitoring (less central)

As indicated by the above table, IR aims to improve the learners' linguistic knowledge and local comprehension skills through local or text-specific comprehension check questions structured around one basic question *Do you understand this text?* These questions solely direct the readers' attention to the message given by the particular text and they cannot help them overcome difficulties in their following reading lessons. However, the questions used in an ER activity are global ones that can provide the learners with a life-long support in the activity of reading thanks to general or universal reading skills, such as ordering the paragraphs, analyzing the characters, making predictions, etc. (Waring & Takaki, 2003; Mermelstein, 2015).

As for a reading teacher's role, an IR teacher both controls and is under the control of students' reading activities and directs their attention to linguistic features and local strategies by following the pages or perhaps even lines simultaneously with the whole class. S/he selects the texts from the course books or the resources that all students have at hand. An ER teacher, however, is active when helping the students

determine their interest areas and levels and while monitoring their overall progress. For ER programs, monitoring doesn't necessarily mean assessing the students but rather motivating them throughout the entire process. In addition – and likewise – during the pre/post reading activities, the teacher intervenes in the learners' reading as little as possible or as rarely as s/he can, only when checking how many books they are reading or while acting as a mediator throughout the lesson (Richards & Renandya, 2002; Lee & Hsu, 2009; Waring, 2011).

As far as the setting for a reading activity is concerned, it can be inferred from Table 2 that IR is not as flexible as ER. A student can perform an ER activity without being confined to a four-walled room and any need for aid or supported by a professional or peers. They can read their books at home or even on-the-go. Correspondingly, the amount of the materials they read is limitless and thus they do not have to read every single text in depth or translate them into their own language as they are sometimes required to do in undifferentiated reading lessons. Provided by the teacher after a close analysis of their interest areas and levels or selected by the students themselves from a repository, these materials help L2 learners create a mind-set that sees reading as a pleasurable and mild activity (Aebersold & Field, 1998; Mermelstein, 2015).

As for variety of reading materials, ER lessons provide learners with the chance to become familiar with different genres and different reading purposes as students are not only interested in – for instance – fiction. In this way, they can discover their other interest areas more. However, in IR, the students only read the texts or books determined by the institution or the teacher for a common aim, regardless of their interest areas, let alone their levels (Renandya & Jacobs, 2002).

From another point, although they may seem to have conflicting characteristics and perhaps advantages, IR and ER must be considered complementary for an L2 reading lesson and they serve different purposes. For instance, a language teacher may have to use IR techniques to prepare his or her students for a summative or formative assessment of written end-of-term exams (Carrell & Carson, 1997). While IR produces *skilled* readers, ER produces skilled *readers* (Day & Bamford, 2002). In this study, as one of the aims is to test the efficacy of ER, IR has been eliminated from the curriculum throughout the implementation period.

All the above characteristics of ER considered in comparison to IR, the following six benefits for L2 students can be drawn (Nation, 1997; Krashen, 1993, as cited in Renandya & Jacobs, 2002; Tabiati, 2016):

1. Positive attitude toward reading
2. Increased knowledge of the world
3. Developing a life-long reading habit
4. Improved reading skills
5. Boosted L2 learning in text structure
6. Autonomous and more enjoyable learning

The basis of these benefits can be associated with the theoretical explanation that human brain has got an innate potential for learning a language, as Chomsky's (as cited in Richards & Renandya, 2002) language acquisition device or universal grammar theory states. And, meaningful and comprehensible input provided through ER activities trigger that potential while the learners absorb the language elements thanks to the data they are exposed to in their learning setting (Krashen, 1993, as cited in Renandya & Jacobs, 2002). Teachers or researchers might be satisfied with this explanation made from innatist point of view. However, it is also eligible to consider the interactionist argument that comprehensible input might not suffice itself and the students can enjoy their reading for their lifespan when all the above benefits are taken into account (Renandya, et al., 1999).

As for boosted L2 learning in text structure, ER is of essential importance in building an immense size vocabulary – which includes easily recognized and common words – ample knowledge of general vocabulary items and a cultural view of the target language and the world. These aspects all make the reading process fluid and enjoyable, letting subsequent reading sessions or tasks occur in the same way. Besides, seamless exposure to massive amounts of previous knowledge of syntax and text structure – of which different learners possess myriad amounts according to their proficiency level – is considered to aid the learners in improving a fluent reading skill (Day & Bamford, 2002; Richards & Renandya, 2002).

As students enjoy their reading more, they develop a more positive attitude towards reading simply because they are aware of the fact that they can learn about the language and the topic they are interested in mostly by themselves or *autonomously*

(Bedoya, 2014). It is then easy to conclude that learners exposed to ER can become capable of taking responsibility of their own reading tasks without needing much peer support or any teacher support – whether they are in or out of the classroom. This autonomous aspect of language learning has indeed been believed to increase students' overall language learning in time (Dickinson, 1987). In addition, according to certain studies on autonomy, good readers are those who are able to take effective steps of their own in overcoming problems related to comprehension (Pang et al., 2003). So, who is an autonomous learner or what does it mean to be autonomous in language learning? As one of the objectives of the current research is to find the efficacy of differentiated reading lessons in LA, the related term will be discussed with its aspects in language learning further in the following section.

2.5 Learner Autonomy in L2 Learning

Although there is a general agreement on the importance of autonomy in language learning, there is not one common definition of the term. The definitions in the literature can be grouped in five categories as (Benson & Voller, 1997):

- 1) **Situations**, where learners learn on their own
- 2) Using certain **skills** preferred by the learners themselves
- 3) An innate **capacity** to teach oneself but one that is blunted in the institutions
- 4) A learner **responsibility**
- 5) A learner's **right** in determining the direction of learning process

It can be deduced that each common definition is a separate understanding of autonomous learning. However, each one of them summarizes one important aspect of LA in language learning. Thus, autonomy is a situation where preferred skills are performed through a capacity of inclination or willingness under one's own responsibility and with his or her awareness of the right to direct the whole process (Rezalou, 2014). For language learning approaches, it is actually a prerequisite on the path of achieving L2 learning successfully (Bayat, 2011). According to Benson (2001, p.8), LA is “the capacity to take charge of one's own learning”. An autonomous learner feels the responsibility of learning, which can be observed in all stages of L2 learning, according to Holec (1985). In the first stage, a language learner pinpoints his or her objectives and formulates ways to achieve these. However, these objectives should not be oriented towards attaining a communicative competence of a native speaker but

towards meeting the L2 learning needs to achieve a communicative competence (see section 2.2.1.), of which the learner should be readily aware. In the second stage, the learner prepares the content for learning by gathering the materials and grouping them according to his or her learning objectives. And, in the next stage, by choosing the learning methods and techniques, the learner evaluates his or her learning activities. In this way, an autonomous learner plans his or her learning schedule and uses his or her after-school time to this advantage. In the following stage, s/he determines the learning pace and his or her preferences for activities by monitoring the learning process. In the final stage, the autonomous L2 learner evaluates the outcomes by setting self-assessment criteria. This evaluation and determination of objectives continue throughout the whole learning process and are subject to change in accordance with the requirements and needs (Bayat, 2011; Bedoya, 2014). Overall, these four stages extend the abstract term “taking responsibility” and form the basis for the notion of LA (Holec, 1985). Below figure summarizes these four stages as metacognitive aspect of learner autonomy:

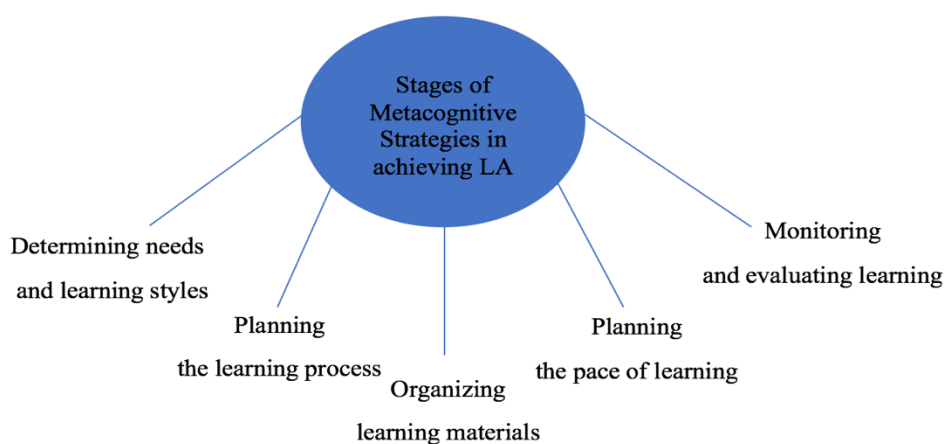


Figure 3. Stages of Metacognitive Strategies in Autonomous Learning (Adapted from Oxford, 2001, Bayat, 2011)

As the above figure depicts, achieving LA requires metacognitive knowledge because LA, as a term, is a concept of capacity that can be activated only through inclination as well as commitment and this capacity involves being conscious of oneself as a learner, the learning context, the subject and the process of learning itself (Sinclair, 2008). This metacognitive strategy use while working autonomously and the skill of reading have been found to be strictly intertwined in the relevant literature (Çetinkaya & Erktin, 2002) and according to Grabe and Stoller (2002), good readers

are those who plan their own strategies of reading, monitor their processes and evaluate themselves. For these purposes, the student participants of the present study were allowed to carry out the all stages themselves.

According to Benson and Voller (1997), there are three main approaches of LA for language learning, which are political, technical and psychological autonomy. Technical autonomy refers to learning an L2 outside a school without a need for a teacher while psychological autonomy deals with the capacity of a learner to take control of his or her learning process. And, political autonomy means controlling the content and learning processes. All these autonomous learning concepts involve the learning theory, *constructivism*, which states that learning occurs through construction as the human brain seeks to associate new knowledge with the previous knowledge. In this case, each learner constructs his or her knowledge in a different and unique way while performing LA (Slavin, 2010).

The metacognitive stages indicated in Figure 3 represent all three approaches of autonomous learning besides supporting the notion of constructivism. And, as the present study scrutinizes the LA of participants who took control of the content and their learning process by choosing materials for in-class and out-of-class reading, it is concerned with all of these three aspects. According to these aspects, a learner has the chance to choose what and how to learn or, within the present context, to read (Benson, 2001). When considered from this point of view, autonomy is a natural potential involving learner behaviour, attitudes and personality besides being contingent upon the concept of self-direction, which is defined as an individual's capability of leading learning efficiently. These perceptible behaviours and attitudes emerge when a learner controls his or her own learning process – or makes use of the metacognitive stages – from the start to the end, rendering the concept of LA measurable and usable in the field of educational research (Bedoya, 2014).

In this era of technology, this emergent learning can be developed in a less challenging way as the learners can read, write, speak and listen in different virtual environments where autonomy is fostered mostly because they can select the materials and means relatively easily (Siemens, 2006). For language teaching and learning, such student and context centred environments can offer new and free learning methods rooted in the interrelation of meta-cognitive capacities associated with LA and innovative learning ways. This freedom has caused some confusion with the concept

of individualization. However, individualization is not associated with LA as the latter means taking the responsibility of learning not isolating the learning process (Rezalou, 2014).

2.5.1. Factors influencing LA in L2 learning. In L2 learning, the state or level of LA is exposed to changes by the factors achievement, age, gender and language learning experience (Benson, 2001; Bedoya, 2014; Rezalou, 2014). This section will briefly analyse how each of these factors influence LA of a learner according to the reviewed literature.

2.5.1.1. Achievement. In L2 learning, self-assessment or assessment is reflected by achievement. Monitoring and evaluating one's own L2 progress enhances the overall language proficiency (Wang, 2004). Besides, a student's metacognitive awareness of the overall learning process, cognitive control and evaluation and self-regulation over learning can improve self-efficacy that fosters overall language proficiency and motivation in learning (Zhang, 2007). In addition, independent personality or a certain amount of autonomy are indeed required for being a successful L2 learner (Grenfell & Harris, 1999).

2.5.1.2. Age. The key terms for LA are capacity, responsibility and confidence, which should be instilled in a learner during childhood (Mishan, 2004). Thus, parental awareness is of significant importance for LA development. According to Benson (2001), every learner is born as self-directed towards a language, just as the innatists stated. He suggests that a learner's first L2 learning experience years and their autonomy are correlated – the earlier they start learning an L2, the more autonomous they become afterwards. Thus, emergent lifelong learning or autonomous learning must be started at an early age in one's lifespan (Yu, 2006). According to a study by Thanasoulas (2000), assigning reading tasks for elementary students at an early age rather than after they spend a certain time at their school can boost their autonomy in language learning.

2.5.1.3. Gender. As for gender, there are three different opinions in the literature. Firstly, girls can have more control over their learning and are conscious of more learning strategies (Grenfell & Harris, 1999). The second one asserts that females are more into interaction with other while learning whereas males are more independent (Bynum & Kotchick, 2006). And, the last one suggests that gender doesn't have any

role in determining the state or level of autonomy. Some other studies have shown that females are more parent-motivated while males are self-motivated (Sheridan & Steele-Dadzie, 2005). So, it can be concluded that gender can have various effects on LA and different variables can produce different results in any study.

2.5.1.4. Language learning experience. The more experience a learner is, the more aware s/he is of the learning environment and situation. Long-term active participation in language tasks or in a culture where L2 is spoken increases the use of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies in L2 learning. In short, the more experienced a learner is, the more autonomous s/he is. Self-directed learners seek for educational experiences and the ways to enhance individual learning (Vickers & Ene, 2006; Leahy, 2008). Other-directedness in schools have been reported to affect LA negatively for L2 development by different studies (Faye & Sharpe, 2008; Yildirim, 2008).

2.5.2. Factors promoting autonomy in EFL reading. In addition to the above factors differing the level of autonomy in overall language learning, the process of acquiring one particular skill in L2 learning is affected by various other factors in terms of how they are facilitated through LA (Benson 2001; Bedoya, 2014). According to a recent study on the relation between reading and autonomy (Tabiati, 2016), autonomous readers are successful and responsible readers because they can learn through reading independently. The researcher found in the study that there are internal and external factors contributing to LA in reading (see Table 3).

Table 3

Factors Promoting LA in L2 Reading (Adapted from Tabiati, 2016)

	<i>Internal Factors</i>	<i>External Factors</i>
<i>The capacity to make decisions to read:</i>	a. Knowledge of importance of EFL reading and importance to make improvement, b. Motivation to emulate a well-known person, to be good readers, and the best.	a. Parents, b. Siblings, c. Reading lecturers, d. Environment with abundant reading materials, e. Environment with necessities to read f. Technology
<i>The capacity to control EFL reading:</i>	a. Knowledge of the topics of the reading materials and reasons of reading, b. Skills to self-assess reading abilities and to identify the importance of reading materials.	a. Parents, b. Siblings, c. Reading lecturers, d. Environment where time is unlimited, e. Environment with abundant reading materials.
<i>Taking responsibility in EFL reading:</i>	Motivation to submit good assignments and to know the reading results.	a. School, b. Parents, c. Environment with abundant reading materials.
<i>Self-efficacy in reading:</i>	a. Confidence in overcoming problems, b. Motivation to please parents and to win competition among peers.	a. Parents, b. Peers, c. Technology, d. Government.

As can be seen from the above table, internal factors include cognitive skills like making decisions, problem-solving and paying attention as well as meta-cognitive skills related to how learning occurs – capacity to control EFL learning and taking responsibility – as discussed in the beginning of the present section (Meyer et. al, 2008). Besides, it can be concluded that they are also influenced by affective factors such as feelings, relationships and motivation (Tabiati, 2016). These factors are likely to be exposed to change in accordance with the learning environment, the level of the students, the setting of the institution in relation to the external factors stated.

2.5.3. Interrelation between learner autonomy and reading. In short, LA requires a student to go through different stages of metacognitive, cognitive and affective processes for developing his or her L2 consciously and under his or her control. And, some factors differentiate the level of autonomy for each student as they may vary in age, gender, L2 learning experience and achievement. And, when it comes to the skill of reading, myriad factors like engagement and willingness come into play along with the respective or personal ones (Benson, 2001; Tabiati, 2016).

Although there are not any studies on the effects of reading lessons on LA or correlation between them in the relevant literature, it can be concluded that reading lessons are likely to perfectly promote LA and LA in turn can boost the performance in differentiated reading activities (Renandya & Jacobs, 2002; Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006; Bedoya, 2014). The premises for this interrelation can be constructed by the fact that a student performing a reading activity can carry out (autonomous) metacognitive strategies as s/he is allowed to be responsible for choosing readers according to his or her personal interest and language level and for detecting the process of his or her learning in or outside the classroom with minimum support from the language teacher (Benson, 2001; Tabiati, 2016). If Table 2 is compared with Figure 3 and Table 3, this relation can be easily proven by such points as *knowledge of the topics of the reading materials* (see Table 3), *different genres and topics available for different interests* (see Table 2) and *determining needs and learning styles* (see Figure 3). Likewise, LA in turn can enhance reading skills and help develop positive attitude towards reading – as one of the benefits of LA in reading is to motivate the learner to be better in the task (Benson, 2001; Tabiati, 2016). One of the purposes of the present study is to prove this interrelation (see page 8). However, is it easy to implement reading in an L2 learning setting in its pure form for the sake of improving LA? Does it require any complementary instruction methods? The next section will answer these questions.

2.5.4. An alternate approach for reading lessons and activating LA. Whether this interrelation between differentiated reading and LA is considered or dismissed, with autonomy's emergence in an EFL reader being contingent upon such various factors as language learning experience, age, achievement and knowledge of the topic of reading materials and motivation and with the success of the reading lessons' being reliant on flawlessly addressing to the different interest areas as well as pinpointing

and heeding disparate EFL levels, it has always been a challenge for language teachers aiming to perform effective reading lessons to find the best instruction (Vickers & Ene, 2006; Meyer et. al, 2008; Waring, 2011; Bedoya, 2014; Mermelstein, 2015). If the students are motivated enough, they can choose what to read and continue their learning progress on their own accord. However, the students with less motivation may make it hard for the EFL teacher to find books that will appeal most to their interest areas or help them hooked on reading for a sufficiently long time. Unfortunately, the kind of materials that those students like reading (like comics or ghost stories) is hard to find or even if they are found, it will be hard to adapt them to different levels (Worthy, Moorman & Turner, 1999, as cited in Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2006). Purely because of this, many teachers have still resorted to undifferentiated IR as a stand-alone reading activity in their classrooms (Day & Bamford, 2002; Mikami, 2017). As a possibly efficient solution to these obstacles before differentiated reading and achieving LA, the skill of reading can be embedded in EFL curricula through the use of online sources and by resorting to an alternate approach: differentiated instruction (DI), which will be discussed in the following section by referring to the literature (Tomlinson, 2000; Bedoya, 2014).

2.6 Differentiated Instruction

Appreciating the way each individual learns along with their interest and socio-cultural background, differentiated instruction (DI) is an instructional philosophy which is grounded upon the tenet that each learner has got a respective learning map and dismisses the traditional instruction – which is constructed around “one size fits all” curriculum – as inadequate (Loeser, 2015). Hence, such an instruction affords varied lanes of teaching for language teachers to attain their teaching goals, which in turn – inevitably – helps the learners to proceed to the highest level possible in their L2 (Tomlinson, 2005). Actually, it would not be untoward to say that differentiating the instruction is an act performed out of necessity inasmuch as educators are to approach the role of teaching considering that learners possess different minds and intelligent levels (Lunsford & Treadwell, 2017). And, at least for once in their teaching career, each teacher has surely felt this necessity and the urge to adapt their instruction in order that it can appeal to every single learner in their classroom(s), bearing various aspects like readiness levels and learning preferences in mind (Butt & Kausar, 2010). Indeed, with the personal learning capacity, motivation and individual learner

preferences having been recognized since the late 1980s, it has been a common issue of awareness among educators and teachers alike to differentiate the instruction. (Hart, 1996; Tomlinson, 1999; Loeser, 2015; Gülşen & Mede, 2016).

As for mechanics and dynamics of a classroom – regardless of the course or lesson being given – DI, being such a common approach, is purposely – and mainly – intended to create a challenging atmosphere where learners can engage with each other and develop instrumental/functional activities in which they go through cognitive processes by wielding their main language skills. It also provides flexibility in terms of materials along with the way of teaching and learning outcomes and presents varied activities for each individual by creating an atmosphere that is facilitated by the teacher according to learner responses (Tomlinson, 2001; Heacox, 2002). These benefits of DI are all achieved by following some certain principles, of which the most common and effective ones are:

- proactiveness,
- being clear about content,
- respectful tasks,
- continual assessment,
- community,
- adaptability & flexibility (Tomlinson 2001; 2008).

A teacher must be proactive so that s/he is able to anticipate the unexpected classroom situations and adapt the learning environment accordingly. Besides, full understanding of the teaching content along with its concepts and facts is required so that the learners can understand it clearly (Heacox, 2002). And, learners are to combine their background knowledge with their skills through respectful tasks so that they can gain self-respect and boost their self-confidence. Plus, while performing these tasks, the collaborative activities should be higher in number because this helps learners to form a sense of community thanks to the interactions they make with their above or below level peers (Kearsley, 2005). Such a cooperative learning atmosphere can be formed through simple instructions to divide the learners into heterogeneous groups so that they can work with peers having different needs and levels. So, all group members benefit from each other by sharing a common fate (Campbell, 2009; Jesus, 2012). This tenet is based upon Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), a concept

coined by Lev Vygotsky, which briefly refers to the level a learner performs a task with the guidance of an above-level peer (Vygotsky, 1978, as cited in Verenikina, 2008; Borja et al., 2015).

2.6.1. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and differentiated instruction.

According to Vygotsky (1978, as cited in Subban, 2006), individuals learn through interaction with others. If they interact with peers or adults who are more adept and knowledgeable in a field, their cognitive skills flourish better. In collaboration with stronger peers, these individuals reach ZPD, which refers to the space between a learner's capability of achieving a task under the guidance of a more adept peer and his or her capability of achieving the same task alone following that peer support (Lawrence-Brown, 2004; Subban, 2006). A person reaches this ZPD and consequently independent (autonomous learning) or LA only when s/he is first supported by an expert, teacher or a stronger student (Riddle & Dabbagh, 1999; Benson, 2001; Kearsley, 2005; Bedoya, 2014). Thus, a learner is most likely to achieve ZPD through DI because it applies and suits an environment where peers with varying and higher levels exist – with the teacher being the expert or mediator for peer-to-peer interactions (Tomlinson, 1995, 2001; Heacox, 2002).

Lastly, the tenet, adaptability and flexibility comprises the fundamental component of differentiation. The learners vary in needs and proficiency level in time, so a teacher is to create means to adapt the materials and learning setting with the sole aim of flexing the process of learning for each individual (Chick & Hong, 2012).

2.6.2. Identifying components for differentiated instruction. The components to be differentiated have been identified by Tomlinson (1999) as content (materials, teaching principles, skills), process (teaching style, group tasks, unfixed groups, group discussions) and product (final assessments that can provide the learners with different ways for expression, tasks with varying levels and different evaluation methods). These three key components are differentiated to assess learners' readiness levels, interest levels and learning profiles (Langa & Yost, 2006).

2.6.2.1. Content. By content, the “input” of the unit – acts, generalizations, skills, principles, attitudes, concepts, ideas, information or facts – is referred to. In other words, it is what the students are supposed to have acquired or learned at the end of the lesson. Content can be differentiated with the most relevant and essential

components of the unit – or the important learning (Tomlinson, 1999) – being considered and varied to address to different needs, interests and profiles within the EFL classroom. For instance, if some students have difficulty developing a certain reading skill, the teacher may support them with more instruction, language models and practices (Berger, 1991). As for those who are faster at acquiring that skill, they can be provided with more challenging or perhaps more complex tasks. It is also possible to vary the content by providing an array of texts in different levels or in different formats like authentic or adapted, online or printed (Thiesen, 2002). Thus, the content of instruction addresses the same unit with the all students but the stages of complexity are adjusted according to diverse learning needs, profiles or levels.

It is also possible to differentiate the content by allowing the students to choose the content they would like to work on or make meaning out of themselves. For instance, a wide array of readers can be provided for them to choose among for their reading lessons. This freedom of choosing their lesson content helps them to develop LA and they acquire responsibility and accountability for their learning in turn because they must manage their time and select their way of learning (process) themselves (Benson, 2001; Thiesen, 2002; Hall et. al., 2003; Tabiati, 2016).

For the content of differentiated EFL lessons, instructional goals and objectives are of essential significance because different tasks must be aligned through a close study of them. Goals are assessed through tests or standardized measures that are frequently carried out. As for objectives, they must be written in a sequence that help create a continuous range of skills building tasks (Tomlinson, 2001; Hall et. al., 2003).

2.6.2.2. Process. Process refers to how EFL students make meanings out of the content or the input or it signifies the *how* of teaching (Theisen, 2002). The process can be modified through the application of adaptable grouping strategies, like interest grouping, ability grouping or grouping according to learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2001). In this way, students are expected to interact with each other while they develop the knowledge of new content. For instance, a whole-class introductory debate may precede a group work or pair work discussion. As a complementary element of DI, grouping must be dynamic, which means the students should not always collaborate with the same peer or group members in each lesson (Hall et. al., 2003; Langa & Yost, 2006; Gülşen & Mede, 2016). And, according to the tenets of DI, the members of any student group must be composed of those who vary in their proficiency levels, interest

areas and readiness because, as ZPD suggests, such a diverse and complementary interaction will help develop their cognitive skills better (Lawrence-Brown, 2004).

It is also possible to differentiate the process by adapting the complexity or concreteness of the tasks so as to expose the students to stages of critical and creative thinking (Thiesen, 2002; Subban 2006). For those who are more into productive or creative tasks, for instance, might be asked to write their own lyrics after a lesson mainly concentrated on music and for those who are more into critical tasks can make comments on a certain piece of music by referring to their feelings (Berger, 1991; Chick & Hong, 2012).

2.6.2.3. Product. A product refers to the output of the unit in the way that the students have exhibited their understanding of the content (Tomlinson, 2001; Thiesen, 2002). For providing a menu of choices for varying needs, interest and abilities that exist in the classrooms, pre-and on-going assessments play important roles to differentiate the product functionally and successfully. A well-structured product reflects respective understandings within a language classroom through alternative procedures of differentiation based upon challenge, variety and choice (Hall et. al., 2003; Preszler, 2006). Possibilities for differentiating products include role-plays, papers, essays, news broadcasts, varied homework assignments, videos, posters and research papers. These items are all the reflection of the students' interests and profiles (Flowerday & Bryant, 2004).

In addition to all these three components, Tomlinson (1999; 2001) states that learning environment is the fourth one to differentiate. This environment is the “weather” of the classroom where there is tone and constant operation. Rules, lighting, procedures and processes all have an impact on the students' mood and therefore must be differentiated as well.

In more recent studies (Tomlinson, 2014; Tomlinson, et al., 2015), skills of independence in language learning or achieving LA are also listed among the components that should be differentiated as students vary a lot in accordance with their capabilities of working independently and personal traits.

2.6.3. Identifying student traits for differentiated instruction. In a classroom where DI is implemented, there is not only one way to complete a lesson for any given topic or content. A differentiated lesson plan is not prepared for each student; rather,

it is tiered by heeding the readiness, interests and learning profiles of the classroom. For the lessons to go smoothly, pre-assessments are of significant importance as they supply the teacher with knowledge concerning the readiness of the students along with their background and the interests. According to the results of the pre-assessments, the students are sometimes grouped with their readiness levels considered while, at other times, they cooperate with peers possessing common interests (Preszler, 2006; Koeze, 2007; Jokar & Hasabi, 2014). Thus, for a differentiated classroom, content, process and product are varied through different techniques for the mere reason and anticipation of responding to differences in readiness, interests and learning profiles or, rather, of engaging every single learner thoroughly (Hall, et al., 2003).

2.6.3.1. Readiness. According to Tomlinson (1999), readiness refers to the entry point of a learner in relation to an understanding or a skill and it can be determined through pre-assessment. And according to the results of the assessments, the lessons are planned according to the levels following an achievement spectrum. A language teacher can differentiate readiness by creating tasks at different levels of difficulty and familiarity. The basic skills and understandings remain the same for all students but the complexity and abstractness differ (Thiesen, 2002; Koeze, 2007). To exemplify, for a reading lesson organized in accordance with readiness levels, the students are grouped in a way that they will perceive the reading task suitable to their current levels. Keeping the theme or the story the same, the teacher can supply the same reader for the student groups but with an appropriate level for each one. However, before all, a pre-assessment is required to pinpoint the readiness levels. They can be determined through tasks or tests that can evaluate their exposure to L2 and experience in that language (Preszler, 2006).

2.6.3.2. Interests. A differentiated lesson plan structured around students' interests give them the chance to decide how to learn by linking content with ideas and concepts and it is crucial for enhancing motivation and LA (Tomlinson, et al., 2015). With their interests being considered, the students can be grouped in accordance with their learning styles, choices or they can work independently. After the tasks, they have respective choices of displaying their knowledge of the input. Thus, content, process and product can all be differentiated according to students' diverse interests. To accomplish this, the teacher can design questionnaires, charts or interest maps (Thiesen, 2002; Koeze, 2007). For instance, for a reading lesson differentiated

according to interests in the classroom, the teacher can allow the students to work on readers written on topics they would like to learn more about. After reading, they may write a report of the book or an extension according to what they already know on the content.

2.6.3.3. Learning profile. For considering the learning profiles in a classroom, students' innate strengths or Multiple Intelligences (MI) (Gardner, 1998 as cited in Thiesen, 2002) must be taken into account along with their cultural background, learning styles and external factors such as access to learning sources. Pinpointing the learning profiles and learning styles of the students can allow a language teacher to know how each student learns in their respective and most effective way (Tomlinson, 2001; Koeze, 2007). As for MI Theory, it helps bring innate strengths and achievement points to light within the language classroom.

2.6.3.3.1. Multiple Intelligence Theory. With its premises based upon the notion that human beings have more complex set of skills than the one shown by the results of traditional tests of measurement, MI theory was developed by Howard Gardner in 1983 as a way to explain how human mind works and many educational theories and language learning theories have been developed under the influence of its principles since then (Tomlinson, 2001; Conti, 2013). MI is important for educators because each learner has a different style and profile of learning and it necessitates designing an instruction method for each style. In addition, it considers both the capability of learning and applying new content in various respective ways. Originally seven key intelligences were defined by Gardner:

- Linguistic
- Logical-mathematical
- Musical
- Bodily-kinesthetic
- Spatial
- Interpersonal
- Intrapersonal

Being within the remit of the present study, linguistic intelligence refers to language use through creative and critical thinking and the ability to use words and language. If a student has a higher level of this intelligence, s/he may succeed in writing and teaching. Logical-mathematical intelligence is related with carrying out mathematical operations while the following three is associated with the arts. A musical intelligence is good at recognizing sound and a bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence is good at solving problems through body movements and hands-on techniques while a spatial one is good at visualizing. As for interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences, they refer to relationships with others and oneself. Those with interpersonal intelligence are good at understanding other people's feelings, emotions etc. while intrapersonal intelligence refers to understanding oneself thoroughly, as a philosopher does (Moran, et al., 2006).

Gardner added two more intelligences in 2000, which are naturalistic and existentialist. The former refers to the those who possess high sensitivity to the natural world while the latter is related to understanding of universal questions (Gardner, 2000).

According to Gardner (as cited in Conti, 2013), MI theory is not a way of categorizing people but rather a way of disaggregating people and show how they differ. Supporters of this theory assert that each human being has a certain degree of each MI and thus interaction plays a rudimentary role in completing different tasks successfully. Therefore, a wide range of techniques of learning and assessment methods must be designed for successful and efficient learning. By understanding this diversity within a classroom, a teacher can formulate ways to adapt the instruction to the students' preferred ways of learning (Koeze, 2007).

In a language classroom, a large number of variables make up learning profiles, including the desire to work alone or interact with peers, learning while listening, developing a learning style through outlines, using musical rhythms for oral practices, use of background knowledge on mathematics or science to activate the schemata. The sole reason behind this is that all MIs mentioned above are most likely to exist in an L2 learning environment. Hence, a teacher must differentiate the content, process and product to align the lesson with each MI by creating competitive, independent or cooperative learning settings (Thiesen, 2002; Sabet & Kiaee, 2016). For instance, for a reading lesson, the teacher can allow the students to read wherever they like in the

classroom, at their desks or on the floor, or ask them to work independently or with their peers on their tablets or hard copies provided. This signifies the differentiation of process. As for content and product, s/he may provide them with readers that include tasks appropriate for their learning styles. Some student may need to talk about the topic before reading, whereas others may want to make their own meaning out of the story or text (Preszler, 2006; Jokar & Hasabi, 2014).

2.6.4. Identifying assessment types for differentiated instruction. In differentiated classrooms, assessment never halts and it cannot be separated from instruction. If assessments become complementary and usual parts of the learning process, students can concentrate on learning objectives more, thereby setting their own goals, managing their time, sharing their feedback with their peers and making reflections on their tasks. The result is likely to be learners who have control and independence over their learning besides having more motivation as they know working hard leads to success. In contemporary classrooms, three types of assessment are necessary for robust learning, which are pre-assessment, formative assessment and summative assessment (Tomlinson, 2014).

2.6.4.1. Pre-assessment. As discussed in the previous section, the students' needs, learner profiles, learning styles, needs and strengths must be determined before differentiation initiates. A teacher can perform a pre-assessment process both through written materials such as tests, questionnaires, writing prompts and graphic organizers and through observations and whole-class discussions. The goal of the teacher is to get information to choose the best materials and techniques that can be tailored for each student trait. Pre-assessments are a kind of formative assessment administered before a unit starts. The teacher can also explain the purpose of this assessment to build confidence and rapport (O'Meara, 2010).

2.6.4.2. Formative assessment. In addition to administering pre-assessment to know more about his or her learners, it is also essential to track the learning process of the students throughout the instruction or implementation. This provides the teacher with clues on how to instruct or produce new methods to build on the current instruction. As there are multiple factors influencing the students' learning process – as stated in the previous section – it is important to conduct regular assessments in a language classroom. Through formative assessments, the teacher can observe the

learning environment and can get information about the learners' states and the learning processes (O'Meara, 2010, p.89-90).

A large number of ways of conducting formative assessment exist. Among them are whole-class discussions, student journals, portfolios, homework assignments and questionnaires, which are rarely graded, and the teacher's main goal for formative assessment is to let the students work independently, take responsibility for his or her own learning and achieve the lesson objectives on their own accord. And, ultimately, the teacher gets a clear picture of the learning process and how each student is performing (Black & William, 2009; Bedoya, 2014).

2.6.4.3. Summative assessment. A formal way of recording what student have learned at the end of a course or at the ends of different phases of a learning process as well as how efficiently they have completed the learning objectives, summative assessment is conducted a number of times during an implementation or course through various means (Lawrence & Brown, 2004; Jesus, 2012). Summative assessment doesn't mean assessing the students differently according to different learning objectives. Each language learner is supposed to arrive at the same point but through different means and display what they have learned in different ways. In DI, summative assessment provides some students with the chance to express their feelings through drawings as they can perform critical thinking more efficiently in this way while others have the chance to listen to some texts instead of reading them as they can understand the main idea better in this way. Summative assessments are typically graded and used for giving feedback on how to continue learning (O'Meara, 2010; Tomlinson, et al., 2015).

In short, a language teacher is to differentiate the components of instruction - content, process and product – by considering the learner traits and designing respectful due to the fact that any learning environment is composed of a wide variety of learner profiles. And, while assessing the overall learning process, preliminary, formative and summative steps must be taken in sequence and in a way that will complement the whole instruction (Butt & Kausar, 2010; Chick & Hong, 2012; Tomlinson, 2014, Borja et al., 2015).

2.7 Literature on the Impact of Online Differentiated Reading on Reading Comprehension Skills and Learner Autonomy

In the relevant literature, there has not so far been any study measuring to what extent and exploring how differentiated reading lessons can improve L2 young learners' overall comprehension skills and help them achieve LA in their learning process. The studies focusing on reading measure and explore its effectiveness and efficiency either on undergraduate students' overall language proficiency or reading comprehension and other specific language skills without differentiating the instruction (Davoudi et. al, 2016; Suk, 2016; Mc Lean & Rouault, 2017). Likewise, those measuring and exploring the efficacy of OR neither establish any correlation with LA nor suggest differentiating the instruction (Rahayu & Februariyanti, 2015; Bedoya, 2014; Mc Bride & Milliner, 2016).

As for the studies aiming to explore and measure the efficacy of reading skill in the emergence of LA in EFL learners, they do not recommend tiering the instruction for reading lessons, just trying to establish a relationship between reading, reading comprehension and LA (Zarei & Gahremani, 2010; Bayat, 2011; Bedoya, 2014; Koosha et al., 2016; Tabiati, 2016).

As far as DI and ER are concerned, there is only one study trying to gauge the efficacy of both terms within a young learners' context but it doesn't try to measure their impact on the reading comprehension or LA either. The study by Gülşen and Mede (2016) gauges and explores the efficacy of differentiated ER in EFL learners' reading motivation only. Other studies (Firmender et al., 2013; Little et al., 2014; Pilten, 2016) have recommended DI for reading comprehension lessons or measured the efficacy of differentiated reading in overall school achievement or evaluated the teachers' perception on differentiated reading instruction.

Hence, among the studies mentioned, Gülşen and Mede's (2016) study fits the scope of the present study most. However, it is also important to mention the results of a couple of studies in each category as this study can be considered an extension to them. Thus, after the relevant study was described, the methods and results of the other studies will be mentioned.

In their mixed method case study, "Efficacy of Multi-Level Extensive Reading in Young Learners' Reading Motivation", Gülşen and Mede (2016) aim to investigate

the impact of OR lessons implemented through the multi-level books provided by www.raz-plus.com on 24 EFL young learners' motivation and comprehension skills. The data collected from a questionnaire of motivation and semi-structured interviews with the students show that there is a positive relationship between learner motivation and differentiated reading lessons and that participants reading comprehension has boosted after the implementation.

2.7.1. Studies on extensive reading and online extensive reading. The studies on ER or online ER in the literature have mostly attempted to measure their efficacy on overall language proficiency and reading comprehension. For instance, the experimental research by Mc Lean and Rouault (2017) has taken its data from two treatment groups, with the experimental one being exposed to ER lessons and the control one being exposed to grammar translation on reading. The instruments used were only timed-reading passages with comprehension questions provided by a hard-copy course book. The answers given by the participants were analysed periodically by the researcher. At the end of the study, the experimental group (n=23) has been reported to have improved their reading rate and comprehension considerably relative to the other group and the results imply that more time should be allocated for ER lessons for EFL classrooms.

Correspondingly, the quasi experimental research by Suk (2016) gathered its data from two control (n=88) and two experimental groups (n=83) and attempted to investigate the impact of ER on reading comprehension, reading rate and vocabulary acquisition of undergraduate students. The researcher adapted two passages from a hard-copy course book through scanning and editing and analysed the dependent variables descriptively in different periods. The results have revealed that ER has a positive effect on reading comprehension, reading rates and vocabulary acquisition of learners.

Trying to reach the similar results, the research by Davoudi, Zolfagharkhani and Rezaei (2015) aims to explore the effects of ER on overall language proficiency of EFL learners. 106 university students were allocated into one control and two experimental groups according to the results of Preliminary English Test (PET) they had previously taken. For the ten sessions of the treatment, one experimental group received authentic reading texts and the other received simplified ones. After the treatment, all three groups received a post-test (PET) and some students were

interviewed. The results of the t-tests showed that there were not significant differences between two experimental groups but they both performed much better than the control group. And, the interview results confirmed the students' positive attitude towards ER.

As for online ER, the qualitative study by Mc Bride and Milliner (2016) aims to suggest online additive ER lessons by using M-reader tool through the perceptions of the students who made use of the online tool for a piloting study at a private university. By analysing the students' reflections, the authors draw the conclusion that online ER activities are useful, time-saving and practical both for students and teachers as the content can be edited, accessed and modified according to students' needs and interests any time.

2.7.2. Studies on the efficacy of reading in learner autonomy. As mentioned above, the studies measuring the efficacy of reading in LA have not referred to ER so far in the literature. The case study by Bedoya (2014), for instance, attempts to gauge and investigate how university students manifest LA in virtual reading lessons. For analysis, the researcher made use of an autonomy questionnaire, the ideas and perceptions of the students in an online forum and structured interviews with them. The results of the study have shown that the students performed more independently and confidently near the end of the implementation. In addition, other factors such as course design and teacher roles have been reported to be effective in achieving LA. Referring to the results of the study, the researcher suggests designing online courses of reading for autonomy development in students.

Another study, by Tabiati (2016), which implements a qualitative method, attempts to explore the internal and external factors influencing LA development in EFL reading. Analysing the perceptions of EFL learners and composed of two stages, the research selected the relevant topics in its first stage and answered the research questions in the other. The results of the study have shown that there are 14 internal and 14 external factors leading to LA and they all emerge naturally beginning from the childhood without the individual being conscious of developing them.

The quantitative study by Koosha, Abdollahi and Karimi (2016) aims to find a relationship between reading comprehension, self-esteem and autonomy. The researchers tested 121 undergraduate students with different proficiency levels of

English through a questionnaire measuring self-esteem and autonomy and the reading section of Preliminary English Test (PET). The results of the study have shown that there is a significant correlation between reading comprehension and LA as well as that LA can help predict reading comprehension of EFL learners.

Similarly, the quantitative study by Bayat (2011), tries to investigate the relationship between reading comprehension and autonomy perception through the descriptive analyses of an autonomy perception scale and reading comprehension test administered to 560 university students without any process of treatment. In the end, a considerable relationship between level of LA and reading comprehension achievement was found by the researcher and recommendations were made to provide the students with the chance to read autonomously.

2.7.3. Studies on differentiated L2 and L1 reading. In the literature, a few studies have explored the effects of DI on reading lessons or skills or examined the need for DI in reading lessons, but they have neither referred to the need for ER in DI nor analysed LA during these reading lessons. In addition, none of these studies were performed in a young learners' setting. To exemplify, Pilten (2016) explores the practicability of DI in reading lessons in Turkish primary schools by analysing the perceptions of participant teachers (n=17) who took seminars on how to implement DI and sat in examinations to design lesson plans according to DI as part of the study. The findings of the phenomenological research reveal that the teachers currently cannot implement DI and conform to the basic principles of the phenomenon and they all think that it is difficult to implement DI in the relevant context although they find it very practical and beneficial.

Another study, which is experimental, by Little, Mc Coach and Reis (2014), aims to gauge the impact of differentiated reading lessons on 2150 middle school students' overall EFL reading achievement. The pre-test and post-test on reading comprehension and fluency were gathered through Hierarchical Linear Modelling (HLM). The intervention was conducted according to the lesson plans designed by the researchers and The Schoolwide Enrichment Model – Reading Framework (SEM-R). During the intervention, students had freedom to choose the books they find interesting in their own level. The results indicated that experimental group outperformed the control group on reading fluency but they had similar results on reading comprehension.

Likewise, the study by Firmender, Reis and Sweeny (2013), attempted to examine the range of reading comprehension and fluency of 1149 students in five different elementary schools through a reading comprehension test and a standardized assessment test of overall reading fluency. The results of the study have shown that there is a wide range of reading achievement and reading fluency in populations of students and there is a need for teachers to differentiate the content to help students develop better reading skills.

As for the studies concentrating on differentiated L1 reading, Förster, Kawohl and Souvignier (2018) investigated the short-and-long term effects of a learning progress assessment (LPA) which the participant teachers used to track the participant students' (n=28) progress in differentiated reading by heeding their individual needs on fluency and reading. Conducted in a third-grade classroom at an elementary school, the findings of the quantitative study showed that the students in the treatment group had a higher level of fluency in reading after the two-year implementation period.

A similar quasi-experimental study by Shaunessy-Dedrick, Evans, Ferron and Lindo (2015) examined the impact of differentiated reading on fourth grade students' reading comprehension and attitude towards reading. Implementing Schoolwide Enrichment Model Reading (SEM-R) in its treatment group for 1 academic year, the purely quantitative study conducted reading comprehension post-test and a reading attitude survey. The findings demonstrated no significant difference in reading attitude but significantly higher scores in reading comprehension were achieved by the experimental group.

Dunphy (2010) also aimed to determine the effect of differentiated reading on student reading achievement quantitatively, in addition to behaviour and engagement. Testing 75 eight-grade participants, who were divided equally in three proficiency levels, the study was conducted in a school trying to re-establish yearly progress targets. The findings of the reading post-test exhibited average to above average achievement results along with positive behaviour and adequate engagement. It was also suggested by the researcher that traditional classroom instruction might not be enough to develop critical reading skills and language acquisition.

2.8 Conclusion

As stated in the previous parts of this study, reading plays an important role in developing the other three skills within the integrated scheme of communicative competence. It is essential for language learners to perform seamless reading activities to develop skills such as vocabulary acquisition, universal reading comprehension strategies, creativity and critical thinking, which all help perform productive skills of speaking and writing. In an attempt to divide the integrated skills, two distinctions were made as receptive and productive. In the literature, reading skills falls into the receptive branch of this distinction along with listening because a learner makes use of visual and aural media along with cognitive, metacognitive and affective strategies and a wide range of skills – consciously or unconsciously – to comprehend a written material. Reading is thus a respective activity as an individual explores everything on his or her own and decides himself or herself on which strategies or skills to be used for varied reading purposes without needing any intervention.

For the skill of reading, different approaches have come up with different implications for its instruction in an EFL classroom and for performing it as an activity within or outside the classroom. At first, reading was considered to be a merely abstract task by environmentalists (Pearson & Stephens, 1994). Later, it was alleged by innatists that reading has got a natural aspect just like language acquisition (Krashen, 1988). Next, schemata theory (or the theory of activating background knowledge to increase the interaction between the reader and writer) was developed by interactionists in a response to the absence of theoretical background for non-textual aspects of reading (Anderson & Pearson, 1994). And, finally, reading has been situated in discourse competence as it develops in coordination with other three skills. According to communicative competence approach, readers should themselves decide which other components of the framework to use in order to ease the process of reading (Celche-Murshia & Olshtain, 2000). Thus, reading is now seen as a contextualized, meaning-making and interactive process.

In response, many different types of skills and strategies have been developed to make the reading activity more individual and assisting, such as reading for gist, predicting the content and summarizing after reading or to combine it with the other three skills (Grabe, 2004). And, this has led to the distinction of different types of reading activities as ER and IR. In comparison to IR, ER aims to provide the learners

with the opportunity to perform limitless, pleasurable reading activities in their own levels and with their interest areas being considered (Day & Bamford, 2002). As for undifferentiated IR lessons, they cannot provide the students with the chance to select their own readers as the teacher selects a universal resource for them. Besides, the students can do their reading tasks only in the classrooms and they cannot read in their own level and by choosing a genre or topic appealing to them (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Thus, ER makes the reading process more personal for EFL learners, which is in conformity with the principles of communicative approach. In addition, it produces different benefits in part of the learners, such as improved reading skills and autonomous learning, better attitude towards learning (Tabiati, 2016).

Thus, can reading and autonomous learning be intertwined and can ER really lead to better comprehension skills? The present study tries to answer these two questions. Although it is undeniable to admit that no effective allegations regarding any EFL instruction can be made or questions can be answered before the relevant instruction can be put into practice, it might not be wrong to deduce that ER and LA are closely related although no study has been made on this correlation in the literature so far (Waring, 2011). As the principles of communicative approach and the objectives and achievements of ER show, reading can be a personal activity, with the reader having a command on how s/he can learn and designing his or her own responsibilities. Requiring the stages of metacognitive strategies like planning, organizing and evaluating, achieving LA is dependent upon developing responsibility, using innate skills of organization and making the learning process personal (Oxford, 2001; Mermelstein, 2015).

Considering both ER or the skill of reading and LA, according to the literature, these three phenomena are contingent upon individualistic factors and components such as needs, motivation, proficiency level, gender, learning experience, parents, technology (Grenfell & Harris, 1999; Waring & Takaki, 2003; Tabiati, 2016). Thus, for an EFL teacher, it is demanding to consider all these factors before preparing a lesson structured around the premises of ER as it will mean adapting the content of the lesson, minding how each student learns and tiering what the students produce or achieve according to every single individualistic factor in the classroom. It is possible that one student might would like to read a tale while another would like to read an expository text. And, all these texts must be adapted to any proficiency level in the

classroom to provide an efficient ER opportunity. And, the same process applies for helping the students achieve LA because one student might not gain autonomy in the same way another does for particular reasons.

Just as the few studies existing in literature confirms, DI must initiate here because the teacher must differentiate the content, process and product according to student needs, learning profiles and readiness levels (Firmender et al., 2013; Gülşen & Mede, 2016; Pilten, 2016). Basically, as there is a wide range of proficiency levels, interests and readiness levels in any EFL reading classroom, ER lessons must be provided if the students' reading habit is to be flourished (Mc Lean & Rouault, 2017) and reading lessons must be differentiated to meet the needs and appeal to interests (Gülşen & Mede, 2016). However, in the context of the present study, it has always been problematic to differentiate the context as access to differentiated reading materials is limited or even non-existent. Even if a teacher aims to differentiate the reading lessons, it will be an arduous, time-wasting and perhaps impossible process, for instance, to differentiate the *content* of the same book for different levels, the *process* to appeal to different readiness levels and the *product* for self-evaluation (Tomlinson, 2005; Pilten, 2016).

In this age of advanced technology, online repositories of multi-level (differentiated) readers such as Razplus (www.raz-plus.com) can aid EFL teachers in saving time and performing unmitigated ER lessons as the content is readily differentiated into different levels and the learners can choose to read tens of books of various genres tailored to their respective levels.

Despite the fact that there are several studies carried out on ER, OR, online ER reading, LA and differentiated reading, none of them attempts to suggest differentiating the instruction for better comprehension in reading lessons and testing the efficacy of differentiated reading lessons in achieving LA although there are a lot of indications concerning these two terms' intertwining. For this reason, the present study aimed to fill in this gap in the literature by investigating the efficacy of differentiated online reading in young learners' LA and their reading comprehension skills at a private school in Turkey.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Besides providing an outline on the research methods structured around the aims of measuring comprehension skills and LA as well as exploring teacher and student reflections following the implementation of differentiated reading classes, the current chapter specifies the setting and participants of the present study along with the procedures carried out, reliability and validity, and finally, limitations. The procedures include types of sampling, data collection instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis. The above-mentioned goals of this thesis can be formulated into the below research questions:

- 1) To what extent does the implementation of online differentiated reading affect 5th grade EFL learners' reading comprehension skills?
- 2) How does online differentiated reading influence learner autonomy?
- 3) What are the perceptions of the students about online differentiated reading lessons?
- 4) What are the perceptions of the teachers about the implementation of online differentiated reading?

This study scrutinizes these subjects through the data gathered from the tests and scales taken by the participant young learners who have been exposed to differentiated online reading lessons and from the perceptions of these students and of their teachers who have implemented the lessons. With a view to providing appropriate and precise responses to its questions, this thesis involves 72 young learners, who are currently 5th graders, and three EFL teachers at a private secondary school in Istanbul, Turkey and includes a qualitative analysis of student focused interviews and teacher journals in order to form a solid student and teacher based views on applying differentiated reading in and outside the classrooms.

3.1 Philosophical Paradigm

In literal sense, *paradigm* defines the outline or framework of a scientific school, discipline or study by referring to the philosophical and theoretical aspects of the generalizations, experiments and laws performed to achieve a systematic end or

result. Originally, it was defined by Kuhn (1962) as a process to construct a scientific study on philosophical premises with a view to describing the found data properly and conveniently in theoretical terms. In later periods, the very same term was defined as a common and broad concept or idea suggested by researchers with parallel academic background upon how the archetypes of superior models of thinking and researchers should be (Kuhn, 1977). This common concept or *research paradigm* is composed of shared assumptions, beliefs and values that a certain number of researchers or investigators base their worldview on while meditating on a subject (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Among the most widely implemented research paradigms that have been used by investigators so far are quantitative and qualitative research methods. *Quantitative* methodology bases its reliance upon descriptive or calculable data while *qualitative* methodology is centered around personal thoughts or interpretations of the participants and/or contexts in which participants and activities or cases are naturally situated. Conventionally, educational and social researchers have used either merely quantitative or qualitative method but contemporary studies make use of a mixed methodology in a way that quantitative and qualitative findings can complement and support each other (Robert, 2011; Ary et al., 2013).

A mixed methodology aims to gather data through both quantitative and qualitative means to provide a more vigorous and reliable data set without limitations (Robert, 2011). In fact, the independent inadequacy of either method requires a researcher to consider such an aim because a purely quantitative study might not let him understand the setting of the observation area properly while a merely qualitative one might be far from helping generalize the findings in a wider scope. Thus, blending two methods for an educational or social study can provide ways of addressing the dynamics of the research environment and forming generalizable theories for corresponding or prospective studies (Ary et. al, 2013).

Moreover, there are four groups of mixed method research strategies, which are convergent, explanatory, exploratory and embedded design (Creswell, 2012). Convergent research strategy carries out analysis for quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously without assigning any prioritization to either. As for explanatory design, the collection and analysis of quantitative data precedes qualitative ones. In exploratory design, quantitative data is analyzed first and the qualitative data is used to endorse it. Finally, qualitative or quantitative set data is given primary importance

in embedded design and the other set is investigated in the light of the primary research design.

Applying a convergent mixed method design, this study gathered quantitative data to generalize the impact of differentiated reading lessons on comprehension skills and LA descriptively and present qualitative data to form a more robust frame of the setting through the interpretations of the student and teacher participants regarding the implementation. Independent analyses were conducted for two strands of data and they were given equivalent precedence. In this way, triangulated findings were collected to receive detailed information with regard to research questions. Specifically, three 5th-grade classes were chosen and three EFL teachers implemented the lessons for 10 lesson hours for 5 weeks. The classes were chosen non-randomly according to convenience purposes and since the implementation was designed as a specific case of cause-effect to illustrate a more general principle through descriptive results of pre-post-tests and the interpretations of real people on real events, the study was based on the premises of a case study design.

3.2 Research Design

A mixed method approach was used in this case study as shown in Figure 4. The quantitative part of the study is composed of a 4-skill placement test that was applied before the implementation to determine the English proficiency level of the participants, a 8-question Likert scale questionnaire on favorite book types to select the multi-level books that appeal to the participants most from www.razplus.com, a 20-question reading comprehension pre-test, a 20-question reading comprehension post-test and a 25-question Likert- scale learner autonomy questionnaire taken as a pre-test and post-test by the student participants. As for qualitative data, they are composed of the reflective journals of the participant teachers and semi-structured interviews made between the researcher and 15 students chosen randomly among the participants. The following figure shows the visual research design of the present case study:

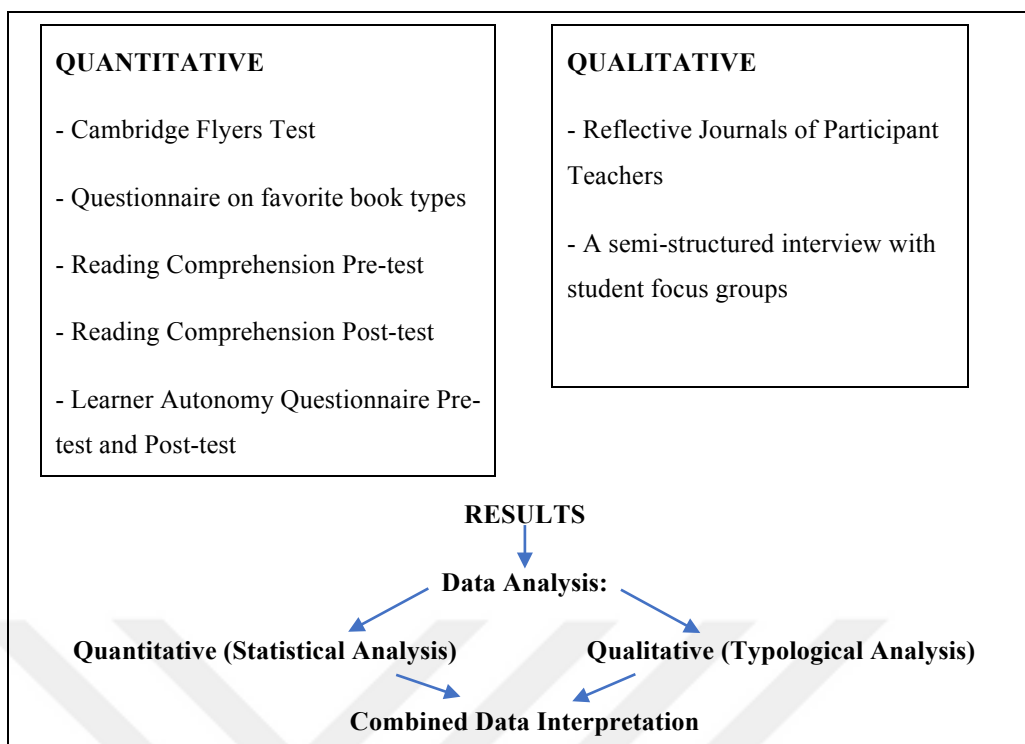


Figure 4. Visual model of the research design.

As the implementation of differentiated online reading lessons in 3 fifth-grade classrooms was designed as a specific instance in action to illustrate more general grounds in a real context and its effect was gauged and explored with no reference to a control group, the present study can be described as a case study with a mixed methodology. So as to determine the current English proficiency levels of the participant students, a four-skill placement test was conducted in 3 classes simultaneously at the very beginning of the study. To find out whether the implementation had increased reading comprehension and LA of 72 participants, two sets of pre-post-test were performed at the beginning and at the end of the five-week teaching intervention. Finally, to complement the findings from quantitative tests and questionnaires, reflective journals of the teachers along with the answers provided by the participant students for the questions in the semi-structured interview were analyzed qualitatively.

3.3 Setting and Participants

This thesis was conducted at a private secondary school in Turkey, İstanbul, which was one of the biggest campuses of a nation-wide institution. The relevant

campus was founded in the year 2014 and it has got more than 1500 students at the moment, with their grades ranging from 1 to 8 according to Turkish education system. Although the school's primary educational purpose is to prepare the students for the nationwide examination MYS (ELPS – Examination of Local Placement System) for higher education, students from all grades are exposed to specific learning and FL programs, each of which vary widely both in terms of the materials and the approaches used. Each academic year at school, according to the regulations enacted by Ministry of National Education (MNE), is composed of two terms, each one lasting for 18 weeks. In addition to the official curriculum prepared by MNE, the private institution offers and uses special FL curricula and materials for English lessons with extra lesson hours in each of its campuses spread around Turkey. Along with English, the students also receive FL education in Spanish, French and German.

The EFL program which the 5th graders of the school – that's the participants of the present study – are exposed to is a four-skill integrated Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) curriculum with 17 lesson hours along with a curriculum of communicative skills (CS) with 4 lesson hours each week. There are 5 classes of 5th graders with 24 students at the school in which this study was carried out and each class has got two teachers: one Turkish EFL teacher for the CLIL lessons and one native English teacher for CS lessons. In CLIL lessons, the students use a 3-pack course book specially prepared by the institution itself and they learn English through a top-down process, by referring to their previous knowledge in Maths, Science, Social Sciences and Geography. At the beginning of the term, the level of the first pack was A1 + and the students used the pack till the end of November, 2017, for two and a half months. At the time of the study, the students were using A2 levelled second pack, which they are still using at the moment. And, they are going to start using the A2 + levelled third pack three months before the academic year finishes.

As for CS lessons, they focus on four main skills too. Two different course books are being used in these lessons: *Write Right 1* is for developing process writing and reading skills, *Reading Street 3.1* is for developing reading, speaking and listening skills. Two hours are allocated for each book every week. Students mainly concentrate on their communicative skill of speaking in CS lessons through discussions and warm-up activities before reading and writing tasks. These books have been chosen by the

headquarters as their content and stated objectives conform to the requirements of communicative language learning.

The assessment mainly used to test the students' progress is summative assessment although the teachers may themselves apply formative assessments from time to time. 5th graders take one online exam, two written exams for their CLIL and CS lessons and three written exams for the topics stipulated by MNE curriculum. All four skills are tested in each exam and at the end of the year the students take Key English Test (KEY) prepared by Cambridge University to be certified for their English proficiency levels.

To revert more to the scope of the present study in the relevant setting, the reading lessons of the curricula are only intensive and undifferentiated, requiring the students to work on lexical and structural items they are not familiar with. And, their reading comprehension skills are assessed only through local comprehension check questions, both in CLIL and CS lessons. Although the context in CLIL lesson is mostly familiar as it is structured around the subjects of science, social science, mathematics and geography, the students have difficulty comprehending the texts and answering the questions related to them. And, in CS lessons, the texts they are reading are long and undifferentiated, for which reason they cannot simply perform individualized, but rather teacher-guided reading activities. Besides, there is not any fixed amount of lesson hours allocated for reading lessons. In each unit of the CLIL course books, the students read 4-5 reading texts and they read 1-2 texts in CS lessons every week.

As for the participants of this study, the students are young learners studying at a private college in Istanbul, Turkey. Their common English proficiency level at the time of the study was A1+, although they each vary in their learning profiles, the talent they have for acquiring a FL and their interest areas a lot. Their common level was determined after a central examination they sat in two months before the academic year 2017-2018 started and they were assigned to the classes homogenously according to their English levels and achievements in other subjects and skills, such as sports and music. To be able to move on to the next grade, they are all supposed to pass their examinations in all subjects and receive the KEY certificate at the end of the year. Their ages vary between 10-11. Three intact classes were chosen due to their accessibility to the researcher, who was actually teaching English to one of these classes.

3.3.1. Demographic information about participant students. The present case study included a group of 72 young learners who were fifth graders at a private college. Their level of English varied between A1, A1+ and A2. The distribution of female (46%) and male (54%) participants were almost equal and their ages ranged between 9 (6%), 10 (28%), 11(65%) and 12 (1%) as shown in Table 4:

Table 4

Distribution of participants regarding their age and gender

	<u>Overall</u>	
Gender	n	%
Female	33	46
Male	39	54
Total	72	100
Age		
9	4	6
10	20	28
11	47	65
12	1	1

3.3.2. Online EFL reading frequency among participant students. Before the implementation was carried out, data were gathered about participants' online EFL reading frequency (see Appendix A). The results indicated that most of the participants (42%) spent 1-2 hours a week reading online in English while others (32%) spent between 3-10 hours a week. And, only remaining 19 students (26%) never read extra online materials in English outside school as shown in Table 5. Therefore, it meant that most of the participants were familiar with reading online EFL materials to a certain extent, so the present study could be implemented within this group.

Table 5

Online EFL Reading Frequency among the Participants

Online EFL Reading Frequency	n	%
Never	19	26
1-2 hours a week	30	42
3-4 hours a week	12	17
5-6 hours a week	7	10
7-8 hours a week	0	0
9-10 hours a week	4	6

3.3.3. Information about participant teachers. As for the three teacher participants, all of them have been working for the same institution for at least 2 years. The researcher himself has been teaching English to fifth graders in the same campus for three years while the other teachers came from other campuses at the beginning of the year for personal reasons related to convenience. They are all certified English teachers with minimum 5 years of experience in Turkish primary and secondary education system. As Table 6 indicates, each teacher has the pedagogical certificate required to teach in an MNE regulated private school while one of them, the researcher himself, has a bachelor degree in a different field, an additional teaching certificate CELTA and is taking his MA degree at a private university in Turkey. As for their ages, they differ between 27 and 40. With regards to their cultural background, they are all Turkish teachers and received their education in their own country.

Table 6
Details of the Participant Teachers

Participant Number	Teaching Experience in EFL context (years)	Qualifications
T1 (researcher) (of 5A)	7	BA in Translation and Interpreting Studies + CELTA + MA in English Language Teaching
T2 (of 5B)	15	BA in English Language Teaching
T3 (of 5C)	5	BA in English Language Teaching

3.4 Procedures

This part of the study respectively presents a detailed account of data collection instruments, in which quantitative and qualitative tools are analysed; data collection procedures, in which sources of data, types of sampling, implementation and instruction are presented. Then, the chapter concludes with reliability and validity of the study and its limitations.

3.4.1. Data collection instruments. The data necessary to reach the findings of this study was gathered through both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative instruments are reading comprehension pre/post tests and a learner autonomy questionnaire. And, the qualitative ones are reflective journals gathered from the participant teachers in which they answered a common open-ended question and a semi structure interview performed with student focus groups where students' responses to several open-ended questions were collected.

3.4.1.1. Reading comprehension pre-test and post-test. To measure the impact of differentiated online reading on students' reading comprehension skills, two different reading comprehension tests were conducted before and after the lessons (see Appendices B and C). Both tests were prepared by the researcher himself and the short reading texts were taken and adapted from the main course book Blaze 2 (Evans & Dooley, 2016), which had been used by the 5th graders in the same institution during the previous academic year, 2016 fall and 2017 spring semesters. Although the reading texts of the tests differ, they both test the same reading comprehension skills, which are gist reading (skimming), scanning and detailed reading (Scrivener, 2009). In addition, they conclude with a productive skill section in which the students are asked to practice their writing skills by using the information in the texts.

Table 7

Analysis of the Questions in Reading Comprehension Pre-Post-tests

Parts	Skills Tested	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
		Number of Questions	Question Type	Number of Questions	Question Type
1	Gist Reading	1	Multiple Choice	1	Multiple Choice
2	Scan Reading	3	Labelling	5	Labelling
3	Detailed Reading	5	Paragraph Ordering	5	Paragraph Ordering
4	Detailed Reading	7	True-False	5	Multiple Choice
5	Summarizing	4	Writing	4	Sentence Ordering

As for the questions of the tests, both have 20 in total, each one possessing 1-point score. Thus, the maximum overall score each student can get from a reading comprehension test is 20. To conduct a comparative analysis between the results of the pre-test and post-test after the implementation, students' overall scores were calculated and used without any reference to the individual scores of the 5 parts in the tests.

As seen from Table 7, each question is included in one of the five parts of the test, with their types ranging from multiple-choice to numbering, and each part of the tests was allocated a function to assess a particular reading comprehension skill. The questions belonging to the two tests are almost the same, differing only in detailed reading and writing parts. While the pre-test asks the students to decide whether the given sentences are true or false in the detailed reading part, the post-test has got multiple-choice questions in the same part. Likewise, the writing part of the pre-test is designed to get the students to write a short paragraph by using the dates given in chronological order while the same part in post-test asks the students to put the given sentences in order according to the plot line of the story in the text. Besides, the scan reading and detailed reading parts of one test – part 2 and 4, respectively – differ from those of the other in the number of questions. The scan reading part of the post-test has

got 5 questions whereas the corresponding part in the pre-test has got 3 questions. As for the detailed reading parts, the pre-test has got 7 questions there while the post-test has got 5.

Before the tests were used as a pre-test and post-test, they were piloted in another 24-student class of 5th graders to check whether the level is suitable for the relevant students. Consequently, the data gathered out of the piloting phase was again analysed through SPSS and the Cronbach's alpha value was found to be .812 and .813 for the pre-test and post-test respectively, indicating that the tests are statistically reliable (Ary et al., 2013).

3.4.1.2. Learner autonomy questionnaire. To measure the influence of the implementation conducted on LA, a questionnaire was taken by the participant students before and after the lessons as a pre-test and post-test (see Appendix D). The questionnaire, which was taken from a study by Bedoya (2014), aimed to pinpoint the indications of autonomy such as student behaviours and attributes within an EFL setting. It was adapted from its original version with minor changes because the study by Bedoya tested the effect of virtual English classes concentrated upon four main skills on learners' overall L2 LA. The changes were generally made to give the questionnaire a more specific aspect for reading lessons. For instance, the words 'studying' and 'the course' were correspondingly substituted with the words 'reading' for item 1 and 'my reading lessons' for item 3, just as the expressions 'reading in English', 'I am reading', 'reading tasks and assignments', 'the reading lessons', 'in and out of the school' and 'while reading' were respectively put in the places of 'working on the course' in item 7, 'I take the course' in item 10, 'the course' in items 14 and 15, 'online' in item 16 and 'during the course' in item 23. Likewise, the word 'reading', the expressions 'from reading' and 'while reading' were added to the items 2, 4, 5, 9 and 17 respectively. As the original questionnaire was designed for virtual EFL lessons on a forum where the students could give their suggestions related to the lesson, the word 'forum' in item 12 was replaced with the expression 'while reading' and the item 'I have given suggestions for improving the course' was omitted to appropriate the adapted questionnaire for the implementation of the present study.

With its items translated into the students' L1 too to prevent any misunderstanding as their current L2 level at the time of the study might not be high enough, the questionnaire is structured upon a 4-point Likert Scale. Its answers range

from Always (4) to Never (1). As there are 25 questions in the questionnaire, the maximum score is 100 and overall results of pre-test and post-test were analysed for descriptive purposes.

3.4.1.3. Semi-structured student interview. The method of interviewing enables a researcher to gain an in-depth view of the experiences of the participants in a study and of the meaning they make out of these experiences through conversations. In other words, it helps take the participants' stories into consideration because they are of worth along with the descriptive data (Seidman, 2006). Interviews aim to procure information regarding the interpretation of the interviewees and divulge the things, meanings or intangible aspects a researcher is unable to observe or measure through descriptive means (Stake, 2010). As for semi-structured group interviews – as opposed to structured interviews, which use a strict questionnaire, survey or poll that lists the questions to be asked – they gather data through a given agenda or open-ended questions, which can provide more in-depth analyses of personal interpretations (Cohen et al., 2007). For achieving triangulation, the qualitative method of interviewing acts as a complementary element by providing answers for the same research question a quantitative tool serves to answer (Ary et al., 2013). To achieve the above-mentioned aims, the researcher of the present study made an interview with 15 of the participant students by using 9 interview questions after the implementation to see whether qualitative methods would yield the same results that quantitative ones did and create triangulation by increasing the validity (see Appendix E) (Creswell, 2012).

The questions in the interview were taken and adapted from the study by Bedoya (2014) in accordance with the context and scope of the current research. The adaptations made to the original versions of the questions were minimal. For instance, the word 'virtual' in question 3 was substituted with OR and, similarly, 'reading in English online' was put in place of 'learning English in the virtual modality' in question 9. During the interview, the researcher raised the questions in Turkish as well and let the students use their L1 as their L2 level might not be enough for interpreting the questions. Notes from the students' sentences were jotted down during the interview for later analysis.

3.4.1.4. Reflective journals written by the participant teachers. Through a reflective essay, a researcher can learn about what the participants think about or how

they interpret a certain case or experience by referring to their feelings, views and overall understanding of the relevant topic (Dewey, 1993). For the current study, teacher participants’ – including those of the researcher as he was one of the participant teachers – views and perceptions were gathered through reflective journals that they kept after each lesson (see Appendix F). Throughout the implementation, teachers reflected upon their students’ reading comprehension skills and autonomy during the reading lessons by referring to the observations they made while the students were reading their books.

The table below illustrates a scheme of procedures carried out to provide answers for the research questions of the present study:

Table 8

Overview of Research Questions and Procedures Followed

Research Questions	Data Collection Procedures	Data Analysis
To what extent does the implementation of online differentiated reading affect 5 th grade EFL learners’ reading comprehension skills?	Reading Comprehension Pre-Post-Test	Descriptive Statistics
How does online differentiated reading influence learner autonomy?	Learner Autonomy Pre-Post-Test	Descriptive Statistics
What are the perceptions of the students about online differentiated reading lessons?	Semi-Structured Student Interview	Content Analysis
What are the perceptions of the teachers about the implementation of online differentiated reading?	Reflective Journals	Content Analysis

3.4.2. Data collection procedures. This part of the study presents types of sampling and data collection instruments.

3.4.2.1. Sources of data. In this part of the study, types of sampling, data collection instruments, implementation, data collection procedures, reliability and validity of the study and finally limitations are discussed.

3.4.2.2. Types of sampling. Through sampling, a researcher has the chance to work on a small, simplified portion of the population rather than entire of it (Cohen et al., 2007, p.119; Ary et al., 2013, p.149). Sampling procedures can be divided into two types, which are probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability

sampling means selecting the sample in a random way among a population, which indicates that each individual in a population has the same percentage of probability of being chosen. In contrast, non-probability sampling refers to the selection of samples for a particular purpose and it has three different types, which are convenience, judgment/purposive and quota sampling. (Cohen et al., 2007; Ary et al., 2013).

In the present thesis, convenience sampling type of non-probability sampling was employed due to the convenience of being able to access the student and teacher participants in the workplace where the researcher is working as an EFL teacher.

3.4.2.3. Implementation. To attain the purposes of the present case study, a mixed method research design was adopted. Before the study was conducted to its full extent, as pre-assessments for achieving DI by considering the readiness levels of the students (Tomlinson, 2014), Cambridge Flyers sample test was conducted to determine the learners' English proficiency levels and Questionnaire on Favourite Book Types, which was adapted from a study by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997), was applied to determine the types of books the students were mostly interested (see Appendices G and I). The sample test was taken from a book designed for the students who would like to take Cambridge Flyers test. Below are given more details about the test and questionnaire along with how they were conducted and analysed.

3.4.2.3.1. Cambridge flyers sample test. In this study, a six-paper Cambridge Flyers Sample Test was used to assess the students' current level of FL proficiency at the time of the research. Although a Cambridge Flyers test is generally conducted at the end of 4th grade or just before 5th grade starts in Turkish EFL context, the researcher decided to apply it because a great majority of the student participants hadn't taken such an exam the year before yet and all of them had just completed the first semester of the 5th grade at the time of the implementation of the present study. Thus, it wouldn't have been an accurate assessment to get the participants to take an exam appropriate for a 5th grader.

The particular Flyers sample test conducted in the study was taken from a test book prepared by Mitchell and Malkogianni (2014) and conformed to the test format specified by Cambridge University for Cambridge Young Learners English Tests that were applied till the beginning of 2018 (see Table 9). Composed of three parts which

are published on separate papers, Flyers exam tests four main skills in 16 parts with 100 questions. The parts differ in accordance with the skill tested but the questions types are generally multiple-choice, gap-filling, matching and sentence completion. Although the sequence varies a lot in the actual Flyers examination, the exam used in this study tested Listening, Reading and Writing and Speaking skills respectively. The listening part consists of 5 parts with each one having 5 questions. In the first part, the students match the names with the people they see in a picture and in the second part they write a missing item (word or number) in each gap. In the third part, a conversation between two people is given and the students try to match the people mentioned with the pictures of places or objects. In the fourth part, five short conversations are given and the students listen to the people and try to answer the questions by choosing one of the three pictures given in boxes. And, lastly, in the fourth part, they have to colour a picture and draw some objects on it according to the information in the conversation they listen.

As for reading and writing section, it contains seven individual parts. In the first part, the knowledge of vocabulary is tested through a definition and word matching activity. The second part concentrates on a picture analysis and the students try to decide whether the five sentences given are true according to what they see while the third part gets the students to practice reading and understanding a dialogue through a dialogue completion activity. In the fourth part, the students try to fill in the gaps in a text with one of the missing items inside a box given below the text and, in the fifth part, they read a story and complete five sentences according to what they read. Finally, the sixth part has got a text with missing parts which the students have to fill with one of the three choices given while they have to fill in the gaps of a diary or letter excerpt with their own words in the seventh part.

The first two papers lasted for one and half English lesson hours, about 60-65 minutes and the speaking section of the Flyers sample test was applied on the same day. In Flyers examinations, speaking section includes four parts. In part one of the section, the students compare the details of two almost identical pictures and talk about the differences they see. In the second part, the student and the examiner each take two similar pictures. Each one of them has information about one of the other pictures. First, the examiner asks questions about one picture and the student answers, and then they switch their roles. In the third part, five pictures are given to the student and the

examiner talks about the first picture. Then, the student talks about the others to make a story. And, in the final part, the examiner asks the student some personal questions about his or her hobbies, nationality, favorite sport, etc.

Table 9

Details of the Sections in Cambridge Flyers Examination

		Students practice	Questions	Score	Time Allowed
Listening Section	Part 1:	<i>Listening for names and descriptions.</i>	5	5	about 25 minutes
	Part 2:	<i>Listening for spelling and other information.</i>	5	5	
	Part 3:	<i>Listening for names, words and detailed information.</i>	5	5	
	Part 4:	<i>Listening for specific information.</i>	5	5	
	Part 5:	<i>Listening for words, colours and specific information.</i>	5	5	
Reading and Writing Section	Part 1:	<i>Reading definitions and matching to words.</i>	10	10	40 minutes
	Part 2:	<i>Reading sentences about a picture.</i>	7	7	
	Part 3:	<i>Reading and completing a conversation.</i>	5	5	
	Part 4:	<i>Reading for specific information and gist.</i>	6	6	
	Part 5:	<i>Reading a story and completing sentences.</i>	7	7	
	Part 6:	<i>Reading and understanding a factual text.</i>	10	10	
	Part 7:	<i>Reading and understanding a short text.</i>	5	5	
Speaking Section	Part 1:	<i>Talking About Differences between pictures.</i>	5	5	7-9 minutes
	Part 2:	<i>Answering questions with short answers.</i>	10	10	
	Part 3:	<i>Understanding the beginning of story and then continuing it.</i>	4	4	
	Part 4:	<i>Understanding and responding to personal questions.</i>	6	6	
Total Score				100	

As seen from Table 9, the maximum score a fifth grader can achieve in the sample test conducted in this study is 100 and each question has been assigned 1 score point. The grading system of actual Cambridge Flyers Examination is not based on numerical scoring. After 3-4 months, the students see their results on a certificate which are indicated in the form of shields ranging in number from 1 to 5 according to the achievement level. For determining each participant student's FL proficiency level with the aim of reaching scores that could later be used to ascertain the individual book levels on www.raz-plus.com, the researcher employed another method of assessment by allocating a total score for each part of the exam and calculating the personal score of each student through a simple mathematical operation of addition.

The sample test was piloted in another class of 5th graders, which was composed of 24 students, to ensure that its level is appropriate for the participants. The data collected out of the pilot study was descriptively analysed through SPSS and the related Cronbach's alpha value was indicated to be .813, which suggest that the test is reliable enough in statistical terms. After the piloting process and its analyses were completed, the sample test was administered to three classes simultaneously and the examination lasted for approximately 65 minutes. And, the results were calculated through an overall analysis of all the parts in the test. Subsequently, according to the total scores the students received from the test, book levels ranging from H to P were assigned to each student (see Appendix H). Finally, the list was shared on class basis with the participant teachers, who hung it on the board of their classrooms 5A, 5B and 5C in order that the students could learn about their reading grades for in-class differentiated reading and differentiated ER activities at home.

3.4.2.3.2. Questionnaire on favourite book types. To assign the types of the books that would appeal to the student participants' interest most and help them do pleasurable, ER activities in their own interest areas, a questionnaire on favourite book types was conducted in three classes after the sample test (see Appendix I). It was adapted from Motivation for Reading Questionnaire by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997). The researcher applied it to conform to the principle of DI, which is related to differentiating the interests of learners (Koeze, 2007). Established upon a Likert scale with its points ranging from 4 (A lot like you) to 1 (Very different from you), the questionnaire includes 8 items, each of which was chosen meticulously by the researcher among other items of the original questionnaire to find those that would

help him choose the most apposite books. As seen from Table 10, each of the items aim to measure the popularity of one of the genres of certain multi-level books on www.raz-plus.com among the students in the present study. These genres were predefined before the study was conducted through close analyses of the online books multi-levelled between H and P – the levels which were proven to be appropriate for the 5th graders within the same context by Gülşen and Mede (2017). As for the items, their translated versions into the students’ L1 were also given between brackets and in italics in case some below-level students might have difficulty understanding the sentences in L2 and the participant teachers explained the items thoroughly before the students started selecting the numbers in addition to monitoring them during the process to prevent any misunderstanding.

One of the items in the original questionnaire were adapted so that it could follow an ascending order in terms of positive value like all the others. The negative word ‘no’ was omitted from the original sentence “Complicated stories are no fun to read,” in item 3 so that it could gain an affirmative polarity.

Table 10

Items in Favorite Book Types Questionnaire and Book Genres Referred to

Items	The Book Types (Genres) referred to	Examples from www.raz-plus.com
Items 1, 3	Unrealistic Fiction	Little Red Riding Hood, Grounded to Earth, (multi-levelled)
Items 2, 4	Realistic Fiction	The Loser, Rapunzel (multi-levelled)
Items 5, 6	Life Stories (narrative nonfiction)	Abigail Adams, William Shakespeare (multi-levelled)
Items 7, 8	Expository Texts (Informational)	Soccer, Ships and Boats (multi-levelled)

Since there are four different multi-levelled book types or genres on www.raz-plus.com, as it can be seen from the table above, the relevant tool was structured in a way that the overall result of the questionnaire could help the researcher and participant teachers to refer to only these genres while assigning the books to the students. For each genre, 2 items were chosen from the original questionnaire. On the relevant website, there exist at least 5 different multi-levelled books for the above-mentioned book types. And, the items of the questionnaire were analysed in detail in order for the the teachers to assign the book genres that appealed to the students' interest areas most (see Appendix J). According to the results, 10 books were chosen as shown on table 11. The most favourite genre among the students was realistic fiction, which was followed by unrealistic fiction and informational texts. So, they were assigned books with related genres for most the 10 lessons. One or two books were added for the other genres as well.

Subsequently, after the Cambridge Flyers sample test and Favourite Book Types Questionnaire were conducted, permissions were taken from the Head of Foreign Languages Department and the Director of Communications of Globed Turkey, the official distributor of Razplus. The study was conducted with 72 students in three different classes at the beginning of the second term of 2017-2018 academic year for 5 weeks. The lessons were not started in the last week of the first term because there would be a two-week winter holiday interval just afterwards. During the winter holiday, the participant teachers were provided with the background knowledge on DI and LA as hard copies, which were actually the literature review chapter of the present study. When the second semester started, all the teachers convened to discuss about the theoretical background for five hours in the first week and the researcher shared his practical suggestions regarding the upcoming differentiated reading lessons.

Before the implementation was started, data were collected about the participant students' demographics and online EFL reading frequency or how often they read news, information, instruction manuals or instructions for games etc. online in English. Later, the reading comprehension pre-test and the learner autonomy questionnaire pre-test were administered to three classes on the same day. On the following day, the students were taught how to read and listen to multi-levelled e-books on Razplus and their reading levels – which had been identified according to the results of the four-skill sample test – were shared on a list hung on the classrooms' boards. For

differentiated in-class reading lessons, the participant students were informed that they were going to have two lessons of OR for the following five weeks. For ER activities, the researcher announced on the same day to all three classrooms that a reading competition was going to be held for five weeks and reading certificates were going to be given to the first three students who received the most stars in their Razkids applications on their tablets. The rules of the competition were explained in detail and the students' questions were answered.

Before the very first lesson in the first week, lesson plans for each lesson were shared with the teachers. And, after each differentiated lesson, by writing reflective journal papers, the teachers shared their experience on the implementation of differentiated reading lessons with the researcher, who also wrote his reflections after his lessons. Thus, in total, each teacher wrote 10 journal papers till the end of the study. After a five-week instruction period, the students took the post tests of LA and reading comprehension, and they were all analysed together with – and in contrast to – pre-tests in three days, subsequent to which a group of students was taken for a semi-structured interview performed to gather their views upon the 5-week implementation of online differentiated reading lessons and ER activities. The following table exhibits a chronologically ordered sequence of the overall study:

Table 11

Overall Study in Chronological Order

Activity	Date
Reading Comprehension pre-post-tests were prepared and proofread	18-22.12.2017
Flyers Sample Test was chosen and proofread	25-29.12.2017
Pilot Study of Flyers Sample Test was conducted	02.01.2018
Pilot Studies of Reading Comprehension pre-post-tests were conducted	03.01.2018
Results of the piloted tests were analysed	04-09.01.2018
Participants Students took Flyers Sample Test	11.01.2018
Results of Flyers Sample Test were analysed and the students' reading levels were determined (Winter Break)	19.01 – 04.02.2018

Table 11

Overall Study in Chronological Order

The researcher organized a meeting with the other teachers to talk about the theoretical background and to share the lesson plans	05.02.2018
Permissions were taken from Head of Foreign Languages Department and the Director of Communications of Globed Turkey to gather data	06.02.2018
WEEK 1 Differentiated Reading Lessons 2 hours in total	05 – 09.02.2018
Pre-tests and Questionnaire on Favourite Book Types were applied	06.02.2018
Results of Questionnaire on Favourite Book Types were analysed and the lesson plan were shared along with the students' levels	06 - 07.02.2018
Introducing Differentiated online ER on Razplus and Announcement of the reading competition	07.02.2018
Students read <i>Sam's Fourth of July</i> and <i>Dr. King's Memorial</i> Reflective journal papers were collected	08 – 09. 02.2018
WEEK 2 Differentiated Reading Lessons 2 hours in total Students read <i>The Empty Pot</i> and <i>Abigail Adams</i> Reflective journal papers were collected	12-16.02.2018
WEEK 3 Differentiated Reading Lessons 2 hours in total Students read <i>The Leap Year Birthday</i> and <i>Blizzards</i> Reflective journal papers were collected	19-23.02.2018
WEEK 4 Differentiated Reading Lessons 2 hours in total Students read <i>The Wild Swans</i> and <i>Brainstorm Bear</i> Reflective journal papers were collected	26.02 – 02.03.2018
WEEK 5 Differentiated Reading Lessons 2 hours in total Students read <i>Loser</i> and <i>Spelling Bee</i> Reflective journal papers were collected	05 – 09.03.2018
The implementation of the study	05.02 – 09.03.2018
Post-tests and semi-structured interview were applied	12 – 16.03.2018

In addition, during the implementation the researcher observed the other teachers' reading lessons and took down notes to share with them so that differentiated reading lessons could be applied properly and in harmony. The other teachers also

observed the researcher's differentiated reading lessons when they did not have any conflicting lessons hours, at least once a week. The teachers gave differentiated reading lessons not simultaneously but at different lesson hours – in order that they could observe each other.

For ER activities, the teachers checked their Razplus accounts to follow the students' progresses everyday throughout the implementation. They posted comments and feedback on the students' answers to reading comprehension questions and writing activities. They awarded the students' achievements with bonus stars as well. The students who were following the ER activities regularly and properly – by reading, listening, recording their voices and giving full answers to the reading questions – were awarded 50-100 stars each day of the implementation.

3.4.2.4. Instruction. The reading lessons in three different classes of 5th graders were implemented through the integration of 10 different multi-level books provided by Razplus (www.razplus.com). The form of reading instruction supplied during all differentiated lessons was predominantly explicit, especially in the warm-up, pre-reading and after reading sessions where the learners were supposed to focus on such instructional practices as use of graphic organizers and strategy training (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Even though it was previously assumed by such researchers as Julie (1999, as cited in Grabe, 2009) and Byrne (1996, as cited in Grabe & Stoller, 2002) that reading was a language skill requiring a natural process of development just like speaking and listening and, thus, that no intervention by the teacher was required to the extent that the whole instruction can be considered implicit, it has been understood in time that exposure to explicit teaching of reading abilities would have benefitted some learners more (Presley et al., 1992; Richards & Renandya, 2002; Millsom, 2016). Surely enough, this doesn't require dismissing implicit instruction as redundant for reading lessons due to the fact that a learner is able to acquire new strings of words, language forms or a new piece of knowledge by automatizing them with the help of the context during a reading activity (Gass & Selinker, 2008; Nation, 1997; Richards & Renandya, 2002). Hence, instructing the participant students explicitly before or after they read their short books and also letting them explore the know-hows of the activity of reading implicitly during while reading sessions could fit the present study's scope, which is concentrated on achieving the advantages of differentiated reading and LA (Tomlinson, 2001; Tabiati, 2016). Thus, no vocabulary teaching sessions were

included in the lesson plans. The students were asked to learn unfamiliar words while reading by doing research on their online dictionaries or the internet sources to help them achieve LA. For differentiated pre-reading, warm-up and after reading activities, explicit instruction was used by the teachers

The curriculum for each of the 10 differentiated reading lessons were designated by considering the tenets of DI and principles of achieving LA. Before the implementation started, the researcher teacher prepared the plans thoroughly to make sure that the content was substantial enough for the participant teachers and students to perform differentiated reading as suggested by Tomlinson (1999) and Thiesen (2002). The detailed account of each differentiated reading lesson was given below:

3.4.2.4.1. Lesson 1. The students started differentiated reading lessons by reading a book in their most favourite genre, which was realistic fiction. The book *Sam's Fourth of July* was read by the students in this lesson. It was provided in levels H, K and N.

Before assigning the book to the students' accounts, the teacher started the lesson by showing some pictures of fireworks on the internet to activate the schemata and asked the questions "When do you see fireworks? Why do people throw fireworks?" to the students. The students were allowed to do this activity in one of the following ways:

- Discussing the questions in pairs or groups for 3-5 minutes by drawing pictures of fireworks and explaining how they looked like to each other,
- Writing ideas about the events shown in the pictures hung by the teacher on different walls of the classroom in groups or pairs. The group who wrote the most ideas in 4 minutes became the winner.

The first activity above was given for learners with linguistic, interpersonal and spatial intelligences while the second one was provided for those with bodily-kinaesthetic intelligences (Conti, 2013). Similar activities were provided in the warm-up session of each differentiated reading lesson. So, learning profile and interest were taken into account to differentiate content and process because the students worked on different ways and with different interaction patterns (Tomlinson, et al., 2015). In addition, such respectful tasks before the main task in each lesson helped the readers combine their background knowledge with the current

activity. In addition, they formed a *sense of community* – another benefit of DI - by changing their peers and using different interaction patterns for different activities (Kearsley, 2005). In another aspect, in warm-up and pre-reading sessions of all ten lessons, the researcher teacher provided the students with the chance to work autonomously because they could control their EFL reading by building knowledge of the topic, thus using one of the internal factors (see Table 3).

After the warm-up session, the teacher explained that *Fourth of July* was an important day in USA and asked the students to do some research on the internet themselves about the date for 5 minutes. They either prepared a small poster on their notebooks about the date or wrote a short paragraph in pairs or groups. After 5 minutes, in a whole class discussion, the teacher gathered the ideas and gave feedback. Similarly, in all pre-reading sessions, the researcher teacher aimed to differentiate the learning process by heeding interests and learning profiles and thus giving them options for activities and interactions (Tomlinson, 1999; 2001). Besides, he asked the teachers not to support the students while they were getting familiarized with the content in pre-reading sessions so as to boost their autonomy. The aim was to help the students to take their own responsibility and use their own capacities to teach themselves (Benson & Voller, 1997).

Then, the teacher rearranged the student groups according to their reading levels. Each student sat with a student who would read the book in the same level. This seating plan was applied for while-reading sessions throughout the implementation. In all the ten differentiated online reading lessons, the students read the assigned books, answered the comprehension check and writing questions individually or collaboratively on their tablets. The aim was to differentiate the process by considering grouping and choices strategies (Tomlinson, 2001; Koeze, 2007). Hence, the students were also given the chance to achieve LA both by completing the metacognitive stages and using external factors as they organized the learning strategies themselves –without the teacher intervening – only by getting support from the peers (Oxford, 2001; Tabiati, 2016).

Next, the teacher told the students that they were going to retell the story after reading and gave them some options for preparing for retelling to heed different learner interests and readiness levels (Loeser, 2015). They included taking down

notes, drawing pictures, copying and pasting sentences from the book on tablet and taking screenshots.

After the books were assigned, the students started reading their books and answering the questions. As this was the first lesson of the implementation, the teacher told the students that they should go over their wrong answers if they had more than 2 mistakes, otherwise they could not complete their reading tasks. S/he also told them that they could use the internet sources for unknown vocabulary, answer the questions at the beginning of the book before or after they read, work on reading comprehension questions at the end with their desk peers or themselves. These flexible learning steps were applied in all the following lessons by the students. The teachers were also asked to remind them of these choices from time to time. So, to take responsibility of their own learning, the students were given the chance to perform the below metacognitive stages in achieving learner autonomy while reading. (Oxford, 2001; Bedoya, 2014).

- Determining learning styles (Each has a chance to learn about the vocabulary and content in their own way - through peer collaboration or doing research),
- Planning the learning process (They can answer the questions while reading the book or after reading it. They can start reading it again to rectify their mistakes.),
- Planning the pace of learning (They can read their books quickly and check their guesses),
- Monitoring and evaluating learning (They reread their books to check their mistakes).

The students were free to choose their own way of taking responsibility throughout the implementation. The teacher did not confine them to only one way here – s/he even asked them to formulate their own ways. The sole reason behind this was that different factors such as achievement and language learning experience influenced the emergence of LA (Benson, 2014). In other words, the students could make use of their capacity to make decisions to read, control their reading, take responsibility and achieve self-efficacy in reading by using internal and external factors (Tabiati, 2016). It can also be concluded that the interests of the students were taken into consideration for the sake of increasing LA and thus the process of learning was differentiated

(Koeze, 2007). All the while-reading activities in the following lessons were prepared in the light of these principles as well.

After they finished reading their books, the teacher handed out the differentiated materials to each student pair. The first material was on the reading skill of *sequencing*. The level H students put some pictures in correct order to retell a story while level K and N students cut out some sentences and put them in correct order by adding the given sequence words such as next, first etc. However, the level N worksheet had more sentences than level K.

The second material was on the sentence components, *subject* and *predicate*. The students tried to find and circle them in the given sentences. The level H worksheet had five sentences while level K and N worksheets respectively had eight and ten sentences. As for the third material, it was on *-ay* digraph or compound words. The level H and K students worked on *-ay* digraph while level N students worked on compound words. Differentiation of content, process, students' readiness and learner profiles were taken into consideration again here because each peer could take a worksheet prepared according to their respective proficiency levels (Tomlinson, 2001; 2008). In addition, it can be concluded that adaptability and flexibility of the materials – another tenet of DI – in accordance with the student trait, readiness, was taken into consideration for material design along with the process (Tomlinson, 1999; Chick & Hong, 2012).

While reading their books, the students also worked autonomously, by getting support from their peers. They were told by the teacher that they could use their online dictionaries for any difficulty they would have. Thus, the teacher gave the students the chance to overcome their problems on their own, one of the factors in achieving LA (Waring, 2009).

As for post-reading activities of the implementation, the seating plan was changed in a way that there were students with different levels at each desk to boost the opportunity of collaboration and differentiate the process more (Chick & Hong, 2012). However, for each lesson, each student worked with a different partner or group members, depending on the type of the activity. As a result, each student had the advantage to work with a partner who had higher or lower levels than theirs. And, such an interaction complied with Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Subban, 2006).

Stronger students learned by helping weaker ones while weaker ones helped getting support from stronger ones.

In this lesson, for instance, the teacher asked the students to work in pairs to retell the story. There were two options for this activity:

- Role-playing (for kinesthetic learners),
- Preparing posters or videos (for linguistic and spatial learners) (Conti, 2013)

These options were given here to ensure that the last component of DI, *product*, is differentiated properly (Thiesen, 2002). The end products of the students were actually the reflection of their interests and profiles. These post-reading activities in the lessons were applied as formative assessments, to get information about what students have learned and to determine their learning processes during the implementation (Tomlinson, et al. 2015).

The student pairs presented their products after 10 minutes. They could present it in the classroom, before their classmates, or at break times, before their teachers and other students from the same school. This was to differentiate another component, which is *environment* (Tomlinson, 2001). Depending on the genre and topic of the book, the researcher attempted to differentiate this component in the following lessons as well.

After each lesson, the researcher reminded the teachers of checking their Razplus accounts to give feedback to the students' interest. And, the students were reminded to read books in the relevant genre at home by answering the questions and recording their voices while reading on their tablets.

Pre-reading, while reading and post-reading sessions of the following nine lessons included the same ways for differentiating the content, process and product on the basis of different learner profiles, student readiness and interests. Also, the same procedures were applied to get the students to perform autonomous reading lessons by embracing the internal and external factors. The purpose behind this similarity was to achieve conformity and unity in terms of teaching practices and theoretical principles. However, activities varied in terms of type, sequence and learning objectives as each book had a different genre.

3.4.2.4.2. *Lesson 2.* The students read a narrative non-fiction, *Dr. King's Memorial*, in this lesson. It was the only narrative non-fiction the students read during the implementation because this book type was among the least favorite ones according to the results of Favorite Book Types Questionnaire.

After making sure that there were students with different proficiency levels at each desk, the teacher started the lesson by showing the cover of the book and explaining that it showed a memorial. Then, s/he handed out empty sheets of paper to each student pair and asked them to find more memorials on the internet and write them on papers with their countries and who they were erected for. This activity was for students with linguistic intelligences. As an alternative for spatial and visual learners, the teacher also asked the students to draw a memorial of a very famous dead person and write one sentence about this person under their drawings. For students with interpersonal intelligences, the teachers told the whole class that they could gather some ideas about why memorials were built by standing up and taking down notes while asking their friends. These activities did not take more than 8 minutes for each pair or individual student. Here, the researcher's aim was clearly to heed the learner profiles while activating the students' schemata for the upcoming reading lesson. It was also evident that the researcher attempted to boost learner autonomy and peer collaboration for applying the tenet of DI, raising sense of community, as explained in Lesson 1.

Following the warm-up activities, the teacher asked the students to think about the theme, genre and topic of the book and the famous person mentioned in it. The students did the activity in pairs and groups in one of the two ways indicated below:

- Drawing a four-column table and writing *theme, genre, topic and the famous person* under the columns,
- Writing the answers on the 4 papers hung on different walls of the classroom. The papers had the words, *theme, genre, topic and the famous person* respectively,

When the students completed the activity in 5-8 minutes, the teacher told them that they would check each other's ideas after they finished reading the book.

Subsequently, the teacher rearranged the seating by making sure that there would be students with the same reading levels at each desk. The books were assigned to each

student and they started reading their books by devising their own learning ways, in reference to the options given by the teacher in the first lesson, or spontaneously. The teachers were asked to remind the students of these reading steps for this and upcoming reading lessons. The researcher obviously attempted to make sure that autonomous learning was going on and metacognitive stages were properly and perpetually completed (Oxford, 2001). Next, the differentiated materials were handed out. On the first material, there was a What I know, What I want to know and What I learned (KWL) chart. The level H students were asked to write 1 sentence under each title while level K and N students were respectively asked to write 2 and 3 sentences. On the second material for level H and K, there were some sentences written in *past tense* and the students were asked to underline the *past tense* verb forms and then write one sentence with each verb. As for level N, there were six verbs in *present tense* form and the students were asked to change them into *past* forms first and then write one sentence with each.

For the post-reading session, the teacher rearranged the desks and told the students to use their KWL charts in pairs to talk about what they learned from the book.

Three different options were provided for the differentiation of product and for considering learning profiles and student interests here:

- The students could prepare a speech to present at break-times,
- They could draw a mind-map of information related to Dr. King,
- They could prepare a small poster on Dr. King's life on the classroom board

Following the second lesson of each week, that's lessons 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10, the researcher teacher convened with the other teachers to discuss the outcomes of the lessons and propose suggestions. And, T2 and T3 were observed by T1 while T1 was observed by T2 and T3 during these lessons. Thus, they discussed on their notes as well. The teacher was reminded that they should not intervene for instructions a lot while the students were reading or doing the tasks and worksheets if the students didn't have great difficulties. The purpose was to ensure that the students were taking responsibility and learning autonomously.

3.4.2.4.3. *Lesson 3.* The students read a book in the second most favourite genre, fiction. The name of the book was *The Empty Pot*. It was provided in levels H, K and N.

In the warm-up session, after making sure that each desk had student pairs with different reading levels, the teacher tried to elicit the word *honesty* from the students by telling true or false sentences about the classroom or students and letting them compare his or her examples. Later, to differentiate the process further by heeding different learner profiles, the students were asked to think about an event in the past where they became honest and write it as a paragraph or as a dialogue for role-playing. As another option, the teacher opened some cartoon squares on the smartboard where the main idea was being honest and asked them to extend the story. The students were allowed to write no more than 25 words in this session and all the three exercises were presented as options for different learner intelligences. The students who prepared a dialogue presented it to their friends after 5-8 minutes.

In the pre-reading session, the teacher opened the cover of the book on the smartboard and asked the students to think about its genre and the topic either by talking with their friends or drawing their ideas on their tablets by making short sentences. Thus, the researcher aimed to consider learning profiles for differentiation in this step as well. The students discussed for five minutes and were told that they would check their answers after reading the book.

The teacher then rearranged the desks so that there would be students with the same levels (H, K, N) at each one and assigned the books to the students. They were told that they could start reading their books in one of the three ways presented in the first lesson for the differentiation of process and emergence of autonomous learning. The differentiated materials handed out to each student pair included the activities of character analysis, *past-tense/present-tense* verbs and the suffix *-ed*. The level H worksheet on character analysis gave three examples for personality adjectives to describe the main character, which were *honest*, *caring* and *brave*. The level K worksheet only gave the word *honest* while the level N worksheet didn't have any, which meant that the student had to give their own examples for personality adjectives. Next, all the students were to write an example of a scene from the book where the protagonist displayed those traits.

As for the materials on *past-tense/present-tense* verbs, the students were to categorize each given word according to their forms, *present or past*. The level H worksheet had 10 words while level K and N had 14 and 18 respectively. While doing the material on suffix - *ed*, the students were first asked to add this suffix to the words given and then fill in the given sentences with them. The Level H worksheet had the words, *love, ask, talk, laugh, raise* while the level K worksheet had the words *finish, wash, smile, jump, pass, wipe* and *plant* and the level N worksheet had *love, laugh, raise, need, plant, unite* and *want*. The teacher researcher aimed to differentiate the content and heed the learner trait, readiness here.

As post-reading activities, to differentiate the product, the students were given three options to write a different ending to the story. To differentiate the process and consider learning profiles along with choices strategies and flexible group strategies (Tomlinson 1999; 2001), the teacher rearranged the seats for this activity so that the students could work with friends in different levels. The students worked either in pairs or in groups for this activity. The options were as follows:

- Preparing an ending by drawing pictures and creating cartoons on tablets,
- Drawing each scene of the ending on a white A4 and putting them on display on the whiteboard,
- Writing a dialogue related to a different ending to role-play it before classmates.

After the post-reading session, the teacher asked the students to check their ideas regarding the genre of the book at the beginning of the lessons and gave feedback for answers in a whole class discussion.

3.4.2.4.4. Lesson 4. In the fourth lesson, the students read the book *Abigail Adams*. The genre was non-fiction. Although it was not among the genres favoured most by the students according to the results of Favourite Book Types Questionnaire, the teacher researcher added it to the curriculum to heed the learning profiles and interests of the minority who liked it. The book was provided in H, K and N levels.

After making sure that the students were heterogeneously seated, the teacher opened or placed a picture of Atatürk on the board and asked the students what they knew about him and why he was important for Turkey. Two options were provided here:

- Writing notes together with peers or individually in paragraphs to make a presentation,
- Creating drawings about Atatürk and writing notes about them.

The students took down notes in 2-3 minutes and shared them with the whole class later. Then, the teacher opened or placed a picture of Abigail Adams and asked them to do a short research on the internet about his birth, death, nationality and important achievements in life. The teacher wrote these words on the board. To differentiate the process by considering the student interests and learning profiles, the students were allowed to perform this activity in one of the two different ways:

- The teacher hung empty A4 papers around the classroom by writing one of the words birth, death, nationality and important achievements on each one of them. The students stood up and did some their research on their tablets to fill in the papers,
- The teacher provided a video link of a short life story of Abigail Adams and the students listened to it to write the information.

The students completed the pre-reading task in 8-10 minutes and then the teacher tried to elicit the word *biography* through a class discussion.

After the students were seated homogeneously, the teacher assigned the books and gave the differentiated materials to each pair. They worked on What I Know, What I Want to Know, What I learned, What I Still Want to Know (KWLS) chart and common and proper nouns in this lesson. The same KWLS charts were given to all students. On the second worksheet, the students analysed and categorized the words given as proper and common. The level H students analysed 6 words while those with level K and N analysed 8 and 10 words respectively.

For the post-reading activity, the teacher asked the students to prepare a chronological, panoramic biography of Abigail Adams in five pictures. The learners were allowed to work individually, in pairs or in groups here. They could prepare their biographies either in an application on their tablets by finding photos on the internet or put the photos given by the teacher in chronological order on one of the walls of the classroom. Thus, different learning profiles, readiness levels and interests of the learners were considered here along with grouping and choices strategies to differentiate the product. Also, working with peers as an external factor and taking

responsibility as an internal factor of LA were considered here again (Tabiati, 2016). As the students were allowed to determine their own learning style, it can be concluded that they could also perform one of the metacognitive stages in achieving LA (see Figure 3).

3.4.2.4.5. *Lesson 5.* The book, *The Leap Year Birthday*, was read by the students in levels H, K and N in this lesson. The genre was realistic fiction, one of the students' favourite ones.

The teacher started the lesson by asking the students to learn their friends' birthdates. The students were allowed to do this warm up activity in one of the three different ways:

- Taking the classroom roster from the teacher and walking around the classroom by asking friends,
- Recording findings on tablets by drawing tables or writing the dates in English by looking at the table of birthdates from the school's website.

After the students had collected the information in 8-10 minutes at the latest, the teacher wrote *February 29* on the board and asked whether anyone was born on that date. If there were one or more students having been born on this date, the teacher asked him or her whether s/he could celebrate his or her birthday on the same date every year. If not, the teacher asked whether they could see this date on calendar every year. Students gave their answers in a whole class discussion and the teacher tried to elicit or teach the phrase leap year.

Next, for further differentiation of the activities, teacher asked the whole class, *What problems would you have if your birthday was on February 29?* In 4-5 minutes, the students either discussed the question with their friends or drew their ideas on a clean sheet of A4 paper or their notebooks to describe it to the whole class later. The teacher then gathered some ideas afterwards without giving any feedback and asked the students to compare their ideas with the story after they finished reading the book. So, after every student was matched with a pair who had the same reading level, the book was assigned. The students started reading the books together or on their own and then answered the comprehension check and writing questions as they did in every lesson.

The differentiated materials given with the book included exercises on describing the protagonist's traits and actions, *th* digraph and using alphabetical order to organize words. In the first activity, the level H students tried to write a specific example from the story for each of the given 3 sentences describing the protagonist. The level K students gave examples for 1 given sentence and then wrote 2 sentences with one adjective to describe the character by giving specific examples for each. On level N worksheet, no sentence was given and the students wrote 3 sentences with one adjective by giving examples from the story. In the second activity, the students matched words with the picture and circled *th* digraphs in each. In the third activity, the students put some words in alphabetical order and then wrote one paragraph using them. Only the number of the words differed for each level in each activity.

As a post reading activity, the teacher asked the students to wish happy birthday to Leroy, the main character in the story as a writing or speaking activity:

- Writing a letter or email to him in 25-30 words,
- Recording a video of celebration for him on tablets.

The teacher also gave some examples for points to ask about in their writings or speeches, like the place and time of the birthday party and the food and drink they were going to bring. The teacher collected the writings and received the videos as emails for feedback.

3.4.2.4.6. *Lesson 6.* The students read the book *Blizzards* in levels I, L and O. From this lesson onward, the students started to read books in their next levels as well since the second half of the implementation was starting. The book's genre was non-fiction/informational, the third most favourite one among the students.

At the beginning of the lesson, after making sure that the desk seating plan was heterogeneous, the teacher opened a video or sound of a blizzard on the smartboard and asked the students to describe it. S/he tried to elicit the words related to blizzard without telling or describing it beforehand. Next, in the differentiated warm-up session, the students were allowed to do one of the three activities below:

- Describing and drawing something about their feelings by listening to the same video or file on their tablets,
- Preparing a role-play with a pair about getting caught in a snow storm

- Searching some information on the internet about snow storms (where, how, when they occur, etc.).

The teacher researcher aimed to differentiate the process here by taking learning profiles, choices strategies and interests into account to help the students build background. After the students worked for 5-8 minutes, the students let some of them to present their works and received the digital ones via email and taught the word Blizzard by presenting its form, meaning and pronunciation in 2-3 minutes.

In the pre-reading session, the teacher got the students to work on the table of contents page of the book to get them familiarize with the topic more. The teacher printed out the relevant page and cut it in four pieces so that the kinaesthetic students could match them on one of the walls of the classroom to make one sentence about the content of the book. S/he sent a screenshot of the page to others and asked them to write a short sentence describing what the book was about and send it to his or her email address. The students were allowed to work in pairs or groups here for 5 minutes here.

After the teacher listened to 4-5 ideas from the students, the book was assigned and the related differentiated materials were handed out to homogeneously seated student pairs at each desk. The materials included the activities on author's purpose, using introductory words in sentences and antonyms. For describing author's purpose, I level students categorized the 9 given excerpts from the text as 'to inform', 'to entertain' and 'to persuade'. The other students tried to find excerpts from the text for each category themselves. For the second activity, the students tried to put commas after each introductory word at the beginning of the given sentences. Each level had different numbers on their worksheets ranging from 6-10. And, the sentences' lengths differed for each level.

After the students finished reading their books, answering the comprehension check and writing questions in their applications and completed their activities on the materials, the teacher described the post-reading activities after changing the desk seating plan into heterogeneous state in a way that each student would not work with the same pair they worked with at the beginning. The activities were as follows:

- Preparing a presentation on blizzards on tablets in groups or pairs,

- Making a map on blizzards like the one on page 10 on the whiteboard in groups or pairs,
- Preparing a speech on blizzards to present publicly at break time in groups or pairs.

The teacher gave students 10 minutes to prepare their works. They had to explain everything in maximum 25 words by drawing pictures in pencil, or on tablets, if necessary, but without using any photos as the time was limited.

3.4.2.4.7. *Lesson 7.* The book *The Wild Swans* was read in levels I, L and O in the seventh lesson. It was a fairy tale and fiction.

In the warm-up session, the teacher tried to build background knowledge by getting the students to think about the features of a fairy tale. To consider different learning profiles, interests and readiness levels, the students were allowed to do one of the activities below in heterogeneous pairs or groups:

- Filling in the three A4 papers hung around the classroom with the titles characters, text features and examples for fairy tales by walking around,
- Drawing a picture about one of their favourite tales and describing the genre there,
- Writing a paragraph about the genre on a paper or on an application on their tablets.

The students were allowed to use their tablets to do research for any of the given tasks. After 8-10 minutes, the teacher chose one or two pairs or groups to present their work. S/he tried to elicit the words, *make-believe*, *talking animals* and *good versus evil*.

Later, the teacher opened the cover of the book on the smartboard and asked the students to work in pairs to describe what the tale was about by studying the colours of the painting and the theme in it. Some students were allowed to write five questions about the tale (such as where it takes place, what happens, who or what are the characters, etc.) and walk around the classroom to gather information about it from 5 of their classmates. Others discussed their ideas at their desks. And, some students were allowed to write one sentence about the topic. Next, the teacher gathered some ideas in a whole-class discussion.

After the students were matched homogeneously according to their reading levels, the teacher assigned the book and handed out the differentiated materials. On the first worksheet, there was an activity on drawing conclusions about characters. Some evidence regarding an event or scene was given from the text and the students wrote their ideas about the personalities of the characters. Level I worksheet had two excerpts while level L and O both had four but the sentence length and complexity differed in each level. On the second worksheet was an activity on common and proper nouns used in the story and the students were to categorize them. The number of words increased as the level got higher. And, the last worksheet included an activity on antonyms and synonyms. The students found one synonym and one antonym for each adjective given either from their online dictionaries or the reader. Each level had the same number of words but their unfamiliarity increased with the level. Level I worksheet had the words *brave, lazy, angry, friendly, young, funny* and *weak* while level L worksheet had *hairy, icky, thin, smelly, evil, yummy* and *cold*. And, the words *smooth, shiny, huge, loud, beautiful, wet* and *patient* were studied by level O students.

In the post-reading session, to differentiate the product, the student pairs or groups were allowed to summarize the tale in one of the three different ways, which were:

- Writing a summary of the tale in a short paragraph (in maximum 30 words) by using the sequence words (either on tablets or notebooks),
- Putting the pictures of the story given by the teacher in order on the whiteboard and writing one sentence for each to make a summary using sequence words.

3.4.2.4.8. *Lesson 8*. The students read the book *Brainstorm Bear* in levels H, K and N. The genre was realistic fiction.

In the warm-up session, the teacher wrote the sentence "Brainstorm bear has a problem" on the board and gave each student one empty sheet of paper. S/he asked them to draw what came to their minds when they heard this sentence. They had to finish their drawings in 40 seconds in black pencil. When they were done, the teacher asked the students to swap their paper with their friends' and explain to each other what they saw on their friends' papers and share their opinions. As a substitute for this activity, the teacher hung 4 empty papers on four corners of the classroom and divided the students into groups of 4-6. S/he gave each group one board marker and asked

them to stand up and write what came to their minds when they see the words on each paper (The words were brainstorm, bear, problem and solution). The papers stayed where they hung till the end of the lesson. At the end of the lesson, the teacher asked the students whether their ideas were true according to the story.

In the pre-reading session, the teacher first told the students that they were going to read a story about a family who found a bear in a tree in their backyard and then asked the question *How would you get the bear out of the tree?* The students answered the question in one of the ways:

- Working in pairs or groups and brainstorming to answer the question in speeches,
- Drawing a solution method on a paper by visualizing and writing one sentence about it.

The students discussed for 2-3 minutes and then the teacher asked them to share their ideas to the whole class in a debate setting. Before while-reading session, the teacher explained that good readers stopped now and then while they were reading to retell what had happened so far in the story. It was also pointed out by the teacher that stopping to retell the events of the story helped readers understand and remember what they were reading. The students were then reminded that they all would retell the story with their partners after they finished reading. Three ways for preparing for retelling while reading were presented to the students, which were:

- Taking down notes
- Drawing pictures,
- Taking screenshots from the digital book.

After the students were homogeneously seated at desks, while-reading session started and the teacher handed out the differentiated materials. The first worksheet was on finding solutions to the main problem in the story. The students first wrote the problem and then provided three possible solutions for it. Then, after they read the book, they wrote the solution given in the story. For level H students, the problem was already given. The level K and N students had to write the problem themselves. The second worksheet included an activity on quotation marks. The students put quotation marks in the given direct speech examples. Each level had 7 sentences but the sentence groups differed in complexity. The higher the level was, the more complex the

sentences were. The third worksheet was on using the *-ing* suffix. The students put the suffix to the end of six given verbs first and then they filled in the given sentences with them. The level H worksheet had the words *brainstorm, climb, lead, draw, play, eat* while level K worksheet had the words *lead, disappear, go, gather, climb* and *eat*. And, the other level had *sketch, scurry, fill, set, laugh* and *lead*.

In the post-reading session, after rearranging the peers heterogeneously, the teacher asked the students to work groups to retell the story. There were three options for this activity:

- Designing a role-play with dialogues,
- Preparing a poster on an A4 paper or tablet,
- Preparing a video with screenshots of the pictures from the book.

After 8-10 minutes, the students presented their works in the classroom before their students in the following lessons or at break times before their teachers and friends.

3.4.2.4.9. Lesson 9. In this lesson, the students read the book *The Loser*, whose genre was realistic fiction. The book was provided in levels I, L and O.

In the warm-up session, after making sure that the students were seated heterogeneously, the teacher asked the students to close their eyes and think of a time when they lost something, if and how they found it and how they felt when it was recovered. The students worked themselves or with their peers to think of the best event to present their ideas in the following ways:

- Role-playing the event with the partner,
- Drawing the scenes in pencil and creating a cartoon,
- Writing a short paragraph about what happened in no more than 20 words.

After 3-5 minutes, the teacher chose some students and asked them to present their works.

Next, in the pre-reading session, the teacher opened the front and back cover of the book on the smartboard and asked the students about their ideas on the genre, characters, setting and plot. The students worked in groups or pairs for this activity in one of the following ways:

- Discussing with peers and writing down sentences,

- Gathering information from the classmates by walking around and putting the ideas together to present
- Filling in the papers hung by the teacher on the walls of the classroom in groups or pairs.

After the students finished their tasks in 5-8 minutes, the teacher told them that they would check their answers after reading. In the warm-up and pre-reading sessions, the process was differentiated according to learning profiles or student intelligences, student readiness and interests again. Flexible grouping and choices strategies were considered as well.

Next, after the teacher got the students to sit together with a peer reading in the same level, the books were assigned and differentiated materials were handed out. The first worksheet included an activity on character analysis. The level I worksheet gave three examples of adjectives for describing the main character and the students were to find excerpts from the book as evidence. The level L and O worksheets didn't give any examples of adjectives and the students were to describe the character themselves by finding evidence from the text. The second worksheet included an activity on contractions. The students were to find the contractions and circle them in the sentences given. Different levels had a different number of sentences and their complexity differed. The activity on the last worksheet was on using the conjunctions *when* and *while*. The level I students filled in the blanks of 6 given sentences with the conjunctions while level L and O students completed the second halves of the sentences with their own ideas. The sentences in level L and O worksheets differed in length although they were the same in number.

In the post-reading session, the teacher asked the students to think about what they would do if they were Jae, the main character in the book, and organize their tasks in one of the three ways below in pairs or groups:

- Preparing a short video by interviewing their friends about their ideas,
- Drawing pictures about their ideas and solutions,
- Designing a role-play with dialogues.

The teacher supported the students who wanted to prepare an interview by giving some examples such as *Would you look for it in your house?* etc. S/he asked

those students who prepared videos to send them as email attachments and told the other groups or pairs to present their works at break-times.

3.4.2.4.10. *Lesson 10.* In the last lesson, the students read the book *The Spelling Bee* in levels I, L and O. The genre was realistic fiction.

In the warm-up session, the teacher let the students play a spelling bee game in groups of 4 or in pairs and s/he played with some high-level students himself or herself. The words to be used in the game were reflected by the teacher on the smart board. They were *chemistry, physical education, history, mathematics, social sciences, republic of Turkey, Chichen Itza, comprehension, respectful, silence, break time, onomatopoeia, lackadaisical, legitimate, catastrophe, blizzard, liquid, repetition, condensation, evaporation, precipitation.* The game lasted for 5-8 minutes and then the students were asked to share how they felt during the game. They presented their feelings in one of the two ways in pairs or individually:

- Talking about the game with their peers and recording it as a video,
- Drawing a face or smiley regarding their feeling and explaining how they felt in one sentence.

In the pre-reading session, the teacher showed 3 paragraphs from the first 8 pages of the book on the smart board and asked the students to choose one of them to read and predict what would happen next in the story by giving evidence. The paragraphs differed in length but they were taken from the same page and mixed order. The teacher also handed out some hard copies to some students. The students worked in pairs or groups and made their predictions in one of the three ways below in 4 minutes:

- Continuing the story in a short paragraph (no more than 25 words),
- Drawing a picture of the rest of the story as cartoon by adding speech bubbles,
- Standing up and predicting the rest of the story by drawing the characters on the whiteboard as talking stickmen.

The teacher opened his or her count-down timer for this activity and stopped it when the time was up. The best projects were chosen by the teacher while the students were reading their books. And, before they started reading, the teacher told them to check their predictions once they completed their reading activities.

After the student pairs were seated homogeneously in accordance with their levels, the teacher assigned the book and handed out the worksheets. The level I students analyzed the two main characters' personality, appearance and manners in the first worksheet while the level L and O students analyzed the characters' words, action and thoughts. They wrote their own answers under the headings. The last worksheet included an activity on the use of consonants *th* and *t*. The students categorized the given words in two groups. The higher the level of the worksheet was, the more the words to classify were. Some of the words given were *thumb, thaw, testing, thick, throne, thunder, Thursday*.

In the post-reading session, the students prepared an advertisement for the book in pairs or groups. They were allowed to prepare it on colored cartons provided by the teacher on one of the walls of the classrooms, as a 30- sec video or as a billboard poster on their tablets. The digital tasks were sent as emails to the teacher while the hard-copy ones were collected to give feedback later.

As it can be seen above, for bottom-up processes in reading, the plans included activities concentrated on recognition of vowels, consonants, consonant digraphs and segment syllables, making simple sentences, use of past tense verbs and suffix *-ing*, use of proper nouns, recognition of certain punctuation and quotation marks, use of synonyms and antonyms and identifying alliterative sounds. As for top-down processes, the activities of activating the schemata through background knowledge with the help of the tasks like analysing the cover of the book and the title, drawing a mind map, guessing the meaning of a word, identifying a similar text, use of KWL charts and giving examples for similar texts or stories were embedded. In addition, just as it was suggested by Brown (2000) as well as by Richards and Renandya (2002), the differentiated reading techniques were readily subdivided into before reading, while reading and after reading phases and they all prioritized the evaluative practices such as modelling and transferring (retelling) as well as the sequence of SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) techniques (Robinson, 1946 as cited in Brown, 2000) and reading strategies such as skimming and setting a purpose.

3.4.3. Data analysis procedures. For this study, both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered and analysed. As far as the quantitative ones are concerned, in addition to a Cambridge Flyers sample test and a questionnaire on favourite book types, a Likert-scale learner autonomy questionnaire and two different

reading comprehension tests were conducted as pre-post-tests. The results of the sample test and the questionnaire on favourite book types were analysed on tables without any need for detailed analysis procedures since they were just intended to determine the book levels and genres prior to the instruction. However, for pre-post-tests, gathered data was statistically analysed according to sample size because they had been devised as tools for finding answers for the first two research questions. As the sample size was more than 30 and the data were found to be normally distributed, parametric tests were conducted. To analyse pre-post reading comprehension tests and pre-post learner autonomy questionnaire, dependent sample t-tests were performed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 23. In this way, reading comprehension skills and learner autonomy of the participants before and after the implementation were compared. The level of significance for the statistical analyses was set at .05.

In addition, in order to complement the quantitative data, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured student interviews and reflective journals kept by the teachers. The data were analysed on the basis of content analysis (Mertler & Charles, 2005). Initially, domains were determined in the light of the research questions by means of open coding. Subsequently, main themes were pinpointed under the domains as regards the implementation of differentiated online reading.

To diagnose the degree of inter-rater reliability, themes were analysed by two experts in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) and the interrater reliability was found to be .90, which signified a close agreement on main themes (Creswell, 2012).

3.4.4. Reliability and validity. To construct reliance on the findings of a study, reliability and validity are of uttermost importance for a researcher (Ary et al., 2010). Validity is defined by Creswell (2012, p. 159) as “the development of sound evidence to demonstrate that the test interpretation of (scores about the concept or construct that the test is assumed to measure) matches its proposed use”. As for reliability, it shows whether these scores from tools are stable and consistent.

According to Mertler and Charles (2005), there are two sides of experimental validity, which are internal and external validity. Internal validity indicates validity level of the conclusions drawn as to the cause and effect relationships between

dependent and independent variables (Creswell, 2012, p. 303). Alternatively, a study has an internal validity when the observed effects are the direct results of the independent variables rather than unanticipated variables. Internal validity of a study is risked unless such factors as history, testing, maturation, selection bias and unstable instrumentation are considered (Mertler & Charles, 2005). The following measures were taken to subside the effects of such threats in this study:

Initially, history effect was obviated through the simultaneous implementation of the pre-post-tests in three different classes. As for testing effect, it is defined as the interference of a post-test results by those of a pre-test (Jha, 2014). However, chance of such interference was fat in this study because there was a 6-week interval between the applications of pre-tests and post-tests. Besides, although their levels are the same, reading comprehension pre-test and post-test were completely different from each other as they were testing the students' reading comprehension level before and after the instruction, unlike Likert-scale LA questionnaire pre-post-tests that can be answered according to any instruction or implementation as long as there is a certain amount of time interval between them. Besides, due to the fact that the participant students were all aged between 10-11 and they all had similar socio-economic background, risk of maturation was minimal in this study. Selection bias, which is defined by Jha (2014) as "the inclusion of high ability students in the experimental group and average ability students in the control group" is another threat to internal validity. Since there were control groups in this study and the institution composed the 5th grade classrooms of almost equal number of students with different levels, age and gender, this threat was readily eliminated. Finally, to prevent the risk of unstable instrumentation effect, all three teachers taught the reading lessons by conforming to the same lesson plan under the guidance of the researcher of the study.

As for external validity, it refers to the extent to which the results of any study can be generalized for other cases and other people (Brewer, 2000; Robson, 2002). Because of convenience sampling, the results of the present study are limited in terms of external validity. Nevertheless, the findings can be generalized for the populations possessing the same characteristics as those described in the methodology part.

As far as reliability is concerned, "the effect of error on the consistency of scores" was considered (Ary et al., 2010, p.237). Random errors are principally what lead to reliability problems in different contexts and the factors causing them are "the

individual being measured, the administration of the measuring instrument, and the instrument” (p. 237). Since the instruments or tools of the present study were conducted and scored by the same researcher, it can be concluded that administration of the measuring instrument did not cause any error. The scoring for all tests conducted in the present study were also objective and accurate as there was only one correct answer for each question. As for the errors that could have been caused by the instruments of the present study, none did exist because the pre-post-tests were long and comprehensive enough for the age of the participants, which indicates that the statement “brevity of a test is a major source of unreliability” (p. 237) was taken into consideration. The learner autonomy questionnaire, which was used in a previous study by Bedoya (2014), and the reading comprehension pre-post-tests, which were prepared by the researcher himself, included 25 and 20 questions respectively. And, the Cambridge Flyers sample test, which was taken from a course book, was composed of 100 questions as it tested all four language skills of the participants. Two pilot studies were conducted before the actual study to check the reliabilities of reading comprehension pre-post-tests and Cambridge Flyers sample test. Respectively, Cronbach’s Alpha values of the tests were .820, .812 and .813, high enough numbers for proving the reliability of the tests. As regards the qualitative part, in addition to the open-ended questions asked during student interviews, reflective journal papers of the teachers were also collected.

3.5 Limitations

Even though the present research has achieved its objectives, some limitations as to its implementation should be taken into consideration. First of all, as a case study, it was conducted in three different classes without any control group and therefore the results could not be compared and contrasted with those of a group who did not take the instruction. In this way, the independent variable could have been isolated and the impact of the reading lessons could have been scrutinized from one more perspective. The researcher could not find any classroom for a possible control group due to institutional and curriculum related restrictions at the time. Secondly, the number of the participants was not large enough (n=72). With larger populations and a control group, the study could have achieved a higher external validity. In addition, due to time constraints, the study lasted for 5 weeks with two reading lessons performed in each. Spreading the study over a larger period of time would surely have provided

more comprehensive results. Besides, the instruction was performed only with 5th grade students who are learning English at a private college. Working on students from different grades in state schools or on those learning other languages would have increased the external validity of the present study. Lastly, as the students answered different comprehension check questions while they were reading the books, it was difficult for the teachers to provide comprehensive feedback for their wrong answers simultaneously. They had to write their feedback after the lessons and the students had to read them when they next opened the application on their tablets. And, unfortunately, it was hard for them to remember their wrong answers.



Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the current study which aims to investigate the effects of differentiated reading via Razplus (www.raz-plus.com) online books on reading comprehension skills and learning autonomy of EFL young learners at a private college in Turkey along with the perceptions of participant students and teachers about it. In the following section, the findings of the reading comprehension pre-post-test and the learner autonomy pre-post-test, the semi-structured student interview and the teachers' reflective journals are provided respectively.

4.2 Findings about the Effect of Online Differentiated Reading Lessons on 5th Grade EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension Skills

In this section, the means, the standard deviations and the gain scores of reading comprehension pre-post-tests are displayed on Table 12 to indicate the effects of the implementation on the development of reading comprehension skills of the participants. The gain score, which means the difference between pre- and post-test scores, was 3.26. The results showed that reading comprehension performance of the participants of the present study has improved following the differentiated online reading lessons.

Table 12

Means, Standard Deviations of the Reading Comprehension Pre- and Post-Test and Gain Scores

	M	N	SD	SEM
Pre-test	11.88	72	2.74	.32
Post-test	15.14	72	2.45	.04
Gain Scores	3.26	72	.29	.28

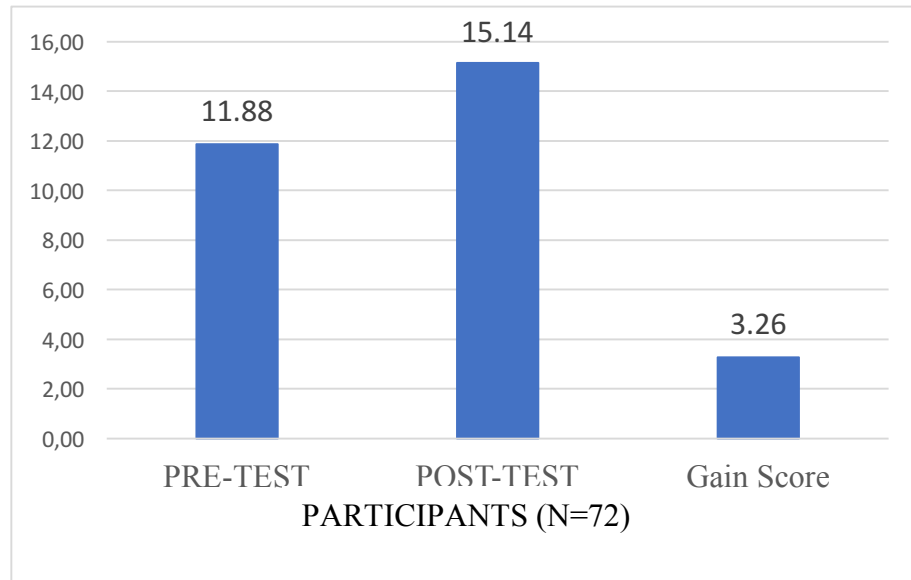


Figure 5. Comparison of reading comprehension pre-test, post-test and gain score

To determine the statistical significance of the gain score of the pre- and post-test, a dependent, paired two sample for mean t-test was carried out by using SPSS statistical package version 23. The independent variable in the present study was differentiated reading lessons implemented through online books provided by Razplus (www.raz-plus.com). The following table reports the comparative results of reading comprehension pre-test and post-test:

Table 13

The Comparative Results of Dependent, Paired Two Sample for Means T-test

	F	Sig.	<i>t</i>	df	p
Average of differences between the scores of reading comprehension pre-test and post-test	1.26	.20	14.10	71	.01

*p<.05

As it can be seen from Table 13, here was a significant difference between the results of pre- and post- tests in terms of the gain score ($p<.05$). The result of the reading comprehension post-test ($M=15.14$, $SD=2.45$) was statistically higher than that of the pre-test ($M=11.88$, $SD=2.74$); $t(72) = 14.10$, $p=.01$). Hence, it can be concluded that differentiated reading lessons implemented in the present study resulted

in a significant improvement in the development of the participants' reading comprehension skills.

4.3 Findings about the Influence of Online Differentiated Reading Lessons on Learner Autonomy

To display the impact of the implementation of online differentiated reading lessons on the participants' LA, this section provides the means, standard deviations and gain scores of pre- and post- tests of the learner autonomy scale on Table 14. The gain score between the pre- and post- test was indicated as 5.68. The comparative results of LA pre-post-test revealed that the participants gained more autonomy over their learning after the implementation.

Table 14

Means, Standard Deviations of the Learner Autonomy Scale Pre- and Post-Test and Gain Scores

	M	N	SD	SEM
Pre-test	75.44	72	8.30	.98
Post-test	81.12	72	8.53	1.00
Gain Scores	5.68	72	.23	.02

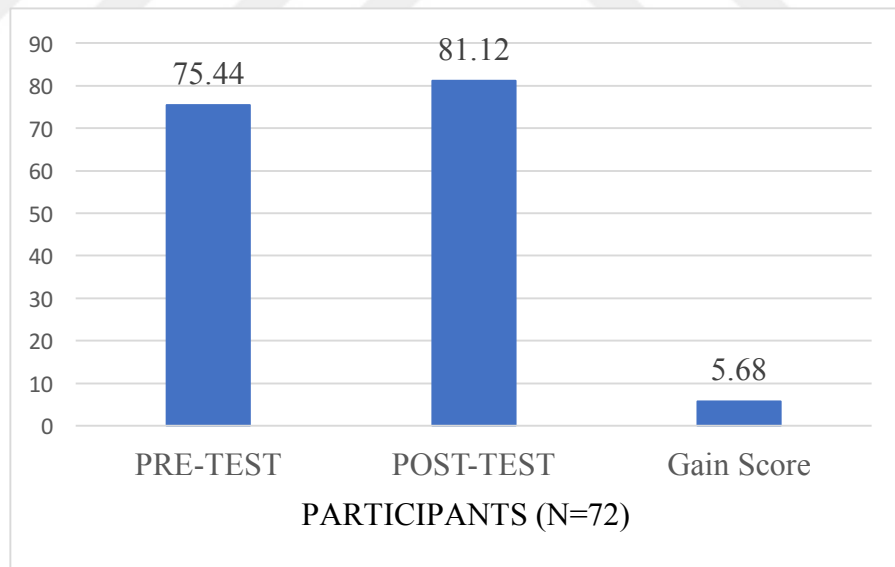


Figure 6. Comparison of Learner Autonomy Scale pre-test, post-test and gain score

The statistical significance of the gain score between pre- and post-test of LA scale was measured through a dependent, paired two sample for mean t-test as well. This test, which was conducted before and after the implementation as reading

comprehension tests were, composed the second dependent variable of the present study. The table below displays the comparative results of learner autonomy pre-test and post-test:

Table 15

The Comparative Results of Dependent, Paired Two Sample for Means T-test

	F	Sig.	t	df	p
Average of differences between the scores of learner autonomy pre-test and post-test	1.00	.13	8.06	71	.01

*p<.05

From Table 15, it can be understood that a significant difference was found between the results of LA pre- and post- tests as far as the gain score is concerned ($p<.05$). Participants' LA was statistically higher after the implementation ($M=81.12$, $SD=8.53$) than it was before the implementation ($M=75.44$, $SD=8.30$; $t(72) =8.06$, $p=.01$). In other words, differentiated reading lessons helped the participants to develop their LA to a considerable extent.

4.4 Findings of the Students' Perceptions of Online Differentiated Reading Lessons

In an attempt to collect information regarding the perceptions of the students about differentiated reading lessons, a semi-structured student interview was performed. In this section, the findings of the interview are described under six main categories, which are:

- Improved L2 learning and reading skills,
- Positive experiences towards reading lessons and reading itself,
- Cooperation with peers and peer choice,
- The Role of teacher support,
- Differences between the implementation and curricular reading lessons,
- Autonomous reading and its benefits.

4.4.1. Improved L2 learning and reading skills. The findings of the semi-structured student interview indicated that students' L2 learning and reading skills had improved after the implementation of differentiated reading lessons because they could

read more thoughtfully and faster due to increased vocabulary knowledge and better command of L2. Below are some excerpts in support of this finding:

[...] It's improved my reading skills and my reading habit has developed. My English has improved. (S1, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

[...] I think I am reading more slowly now because I have started to read more carefully with my vocabulary knowledge having improved. (S2, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

[...] I can feel the following changes: I can read much faster. You know, when you become proficient at a skill, you feel it is getting more intricate. That is how I feel now. (S4, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

[...] I do not stop reading when I see unfamiliar words. I try to understand the "soul" of the book. (S8, Interview Data, 15.03.2018)

[...] When I read and listen to a book online, I can understand the listening tracks better in my exams. (S8, Interview Data, 15.03.2018)

In accordance with the findings from student interview, differentiated reading lessons improved their reading skills both in terms of fluency and comprehension. In addition, it was a convenient way for them to improve their vocabulary knowledge along with other skills and in turn their overall L2 proficiency. It can be concluded that differentiated reading was a practical way of supporting EFL students in improving their reading comprehension skills as well as their English.

4.4.2. Positive experiences towards reading lessons and reading itself.

According to the findings of the interview, student had much more positive experiences towards their reading lessons and reading activities after being exposed to differentiated reading lessons because they found reading activities more interesting and educative and less challenging. This finding of the study can be supported by the below comments:

[...] I can read more books because I do not find reading challenging anymore. (S3, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

[...] When I like a book on Razplus, I do more research on its topic on the internet. Then, I buy extra books to learn more. (S5, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

[...] I find reading more entertaining now. I think reading lessons should continue in this way. We should work on our own. (S6, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

[...] These books were more fluent. So, I could read faster and enjoyed all the activities. Reading books in our own level and reading our favourite genres were fantastic. (S9, Interview Data, 15.03.2018)

Briefly, students' statements demonstrated that reading lessons were actually the reading lessons which they were looking forward to participating in and which could encourage them to read more. In addition, they supported the students in considering reading as a pleasurable activity thanks to which they could learn more about the topics they were interested in. Therefore, to draw a conclusion, EFL students could stop dismissing reading as a dull activity after the reading lessons adapted to their respective L2 levels.

4.4.3. Cooperation with peers and peer choice. The analysis of the student interview showed that it was mostly practical and beneficial to work with friends on some reading activities. In this way, the students could help each other comprehend the same book and manage time better. In addition, according to some students' reflections, it was more beneficial to work with a more intimate partner and so they should choose their peers. The below excerpts from the data prove these findings:

[...] When I worked with my partners, I felt I could achieve more because my friend knew something I do not know or vice versa. We could share what we know with each other. (S3, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

[...] I think we were fantastic. We worked with team spirit. We read the books together even though the levels were different. (S4, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

[...] When you work with a partner who is not close to you, you may lose interest in reading. We should be able to choose our partners. (S5, Interview Data, 15.03.2018)

[...] We sometimes shared the activities to finish them on time. I would really like to work with my partners while reading in future. (S9, Interview Data, 15.03.2018)

In brief, the findings revealed that collaboration with peers was a benefit both because they supported each other in time management and because they could build mutual confidence. However, not all students could work with any friend in the classroom. Thus, it is easy to deduce that working with peers was a practical way of facilitating learning in differentiated reading lessons and choosing a favourite partner could be a plus.

4.4.4. The Role of teacher support. From the findings of the student interview, data as to whether the teacher intervention was necessary or not, or how much and when the teachers supported or had to support the students during reading lessons could also be gathered. Despite the student reflection that teacher support and intervention were necessary for clarifying some instructions, it was also stated that reading did not need any control by the teacher. The following statements can support this finding:

[...] When we did not understand the instructions, we asked for clarifications from the teacher. (S2, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

[...] I sometimes requested my teacher to explain the instructions. But, most of the time, I did everything myself. (S9, Interview data, 15.03.2018)

[...] I think we needed our teacher for some instructions. But, I did not ask the meanings of unknown words. I looked them up in dictionaries. (S6, Interview Data, 15.03.2018)

[...] We performed much better in those lessons because no teacher intervened in our reading activities. (S1, Interview Data 14.03.2018)

[...] No, we did not need our teacher's help. But, we sometimes had to ask for some clarifications. (S15, Interview Data, 15.03.2018).

[...] When our teacher controls us, we feel that we can learn more. However, as such an activity is boring, we do not want to read. In those lessons, I feel like reading. I look forward to these lessons. I can control my reading pace. (S3, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

As it can be understood from the above statements by the participant students, the presence of an EFL teacher was only necessary for clarification of the tasks in reading lessons because they thought and felt it was more beneficial for them to do their readings on their own accord. To sum, minimal teacher intervention or support made the students feel they could achieve more and want to read more during the implementation.

4.4.5. Differences between the implementation and curricular reading lessons.

Findings concerning the differences between differentiated online reading and curricular reading lessons showed that the students could work more and learn how to read on their own in differentiated reading lessons in comparison to regular reading lessons. Additionally, it was also found that curricular reading lessons were more challenging and less attractive and beneficial. These findings can be supported by the comments below:

[...] When everybody reads the same book as a whole class, I may lose the line we're at and fall behind. But, when we work on our own, we can refer to our dictionaries. We can work ourselves. (S9, Interview Data, 15.03.2018)

[...] Reading online at school, I think, is more beneficial for us than other reading courses because we can control our reading pace and teach ourselves how to read. (S1, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

[...] In our normal lessons, I just sit. But, in online lessons, I work more as I feel I have to. (S4, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

[...] I think Razplus is more natural way of reading. We do hardly any reading in our lessons. (S6, Interview Data, 15.03.2018)

In short, differentiated reading lessons helped the students perform a more self-controlled reading activity where they could enjoy their individual tasks through more interesting and easier materials. Besides, as opposed to regular reading lessons, they could be provided with a more convenient learning setting where they observed how reading should actually be done.

4.4.6. Autonomous reading and its benefits. As for the findings of autonomous reading and its benefits, the students' reflections revealed the ways they worked

independently while reading and how beneficial and enjoyable this independence was for them. According to the comments by the students, working on their own increased their reading and learning skills. The following excerpts can support this finding:

[...] I can read however I like, without any intervention. I can pause my reading and continue from where I wanted to stop. (S3, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

[...] You asked us to work independently and I enjoyed it. (S4; Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

[...] Near the end of the course, I have acquired the ability to look some words up on my own and do research on the internet for topics and vocabulary (S15, Interview Data, 15.03.2018)

[...] We read the entire book on our own and we have to draw our own paths. This is what comprehension is. (S12, Interview Data, 15.03.2018)

[...] Online books help us do research on our own. We can access to information easily. (S6, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

[...] While reading online, we control what we do. We determine what we do. I feel more self-confident. (S10, Interview Data, 15.03.2018)

To sum up, reading and learning in their respective ways helped the students improve their reading and researching skills in addition to encouraging them to work more. Indeed, they enjoyed working autonomously because this helped them gain confidence, and responsibility over how they should proceed. They liked the process of reading freely.

4.5 Findings of the Teachers' Reflections about the Implementation of Online Differentiated Reading Lessons

In an attempt to gather data about the perceptions of the teachers, the reflective journals kept by them were analysed. The findings were categorized under six main themes, which were;

- Improved reading skills over time,
- Engagement and interest in activities,
- Minimal teacher intervention,

- Peer collaboration,
- Observations of autonomous learning
- Problems observed.

4.5.1. Improved reading skills over time. Based on the reflections of the teachers, the findings revealed that the participant students' reading skills improved as the implementation proceeded. By the end, they had been much more successful at comprehending the texts. The following statements could support this finding:

[...] As the time goes by, the students' reading levels are gaining pace and speed. They can follow the lines and instructions flawlessly without me supporting them as much as I did in the beginning. (T1, Journal Data, 23.02.2018)

[...] They did their reading tasks with exceptional ease. (T2, Journal Data, 23.02.2018)

[...] For author's purpose part, I made a tat bit of explanation and they could give the answer themselves. As far as I could observe, they have been able to improve their reading pace. (T3, Journal Data, 23.02.2018)

As it can be understood from the above comments, the teachers were satisfied with the way the reading lessons were going on as their students' reading efficiency were increasing. They were not having difficulties as they had been at the beginning of the implementation. Therefore, it can be concluded that differentiated reading lessons had a positive effect on the students' reading fluency and comprehension skills over time.

4.5.2. Engagement and interest in activities. The findings from the reflective journals indicated that students were very engaged and interested in activities during differentiated reading lessons. The teachers specifically reported that they observed the students did not lose interest and concentration during the reading activities. This finding can be supported by the following comments:

[...] The students were eager to start the lessons and they were totally concentrated. They tried to answer the questions accurately after the reading (T1, Journal Data, 09.02.2018)

[...] They were extremely silent while they were doing their individual reading activities. (T2, Journal Data, 16.02.2018)

[...] Students could engage in the lesson well because the topic and the title were interesting and familiar to them. (T3, 09.03.2018)

To wrap up, the teachers observed that the students were engaged throughout the lessons because they found differentiated reading quite enjoyable. Besides, the familiarity and attractiveness of the genres and topics facilitated their comprehension and supported them in using different reading skills.

4.5.3. Minimal teacher intervention. As for the findings regarding minimal teacher intervention, reflections revealed that the teachers had to intervene in the lessons only when the students needed clarifications for some instructions. The teachers stated that they were not actively teaching but the students were learning themselves. The following excerpts can support this finding.

[...] I was totally free and the students were learning themselves. I took my time and relaxed, watching the kids enjoying their reading. (T1, Journal Data, 16.02.2018)

[...] I was not teaching, I was simply monitoring. I did not even help them. I just gave feedback. They focused on their readings without my help. They worked independently. They did not want me to give clarifications. (T3, Journal Data, 23.02.2018)

[...] They never asked me anything about the paragraphs or the vocabulary items in the story. However, for while-reading activity, I had to explain the word “infer”. (T2, Journal Data, 02.03.2018)

To sum up, based on the teachers’ reflections, it can be concluded that differentiated reading lessons required relatively less teacher support because the students were inclined to complete the reading and related exercises on their own. Besides, teacher’s role was mostly to monitor this learning process and to give clarifications and feedback solely when needed.

4.5.4. Peer collaboration. In accordance with the findings of the reflective journals, peer collaboration was a favourable activity among the students and the

teachers found it encouraging for reading activities and beneficial for improving reading skills. Below statements can support this finding:

[...] They had a lot fun working in groups to discuss about the life Abigail Adams. (T2, Journal Data, 16.02.2018)

[...] Working with peers made them feel more secure and self-confident especially when it came to grammar and punctuation questions. (T1, 23.02.2018)

[...] Working in groups helped the students read faster and comprehend the text more on their own. (T2, Journal Data, 02.03.2018)

[...] They enjoyed working, cooperating and sharing ideas with their mates. (T3, Journal Data, 09.03.2018)

In short, the data from reflective journals demonstrated that cooperation with peers in differentiated reading lessons provided the students with the opportunity to learn to enjoy achieving through combined effort. In addition, it offered the students more control over their tasks directly because they felt more confident.

4.5.5. Observations of autonomous learning. According to the findings from the reflective journals by the teachers, the students were observed to be performing autonomous learning in various instances during differentiated reading lessons. The findings suggested that this type of learning could develop their learning and reading skills and improve their responsibility. The following statements can support this finding:

[...] They were doing almost everything themselves. They can control their answers and give feedback to their friends. (T1, Journal Data, 23.02.2018)

[...] Most of the students did not know the meaning of the word “Blizzard”. They learnt it themselves, by doing some research on the internet before starting reading. They then could explain the term by giving examples. (T3, Journal Data, 23.02.2018)

[...] For the activities in which there were not any unfamiliar words, they were able to work themselves, arranging their steps themselves and referring to their friends help. [T2, Journal Data, 02.03.2018)

Overall, the reflections by the teachers indicated that differentiated reading lessons provided the students with the opportunity to design their learning steps or find alternatives to their respective learning methods on their own. Besides, it can also be inferred that such an autonomous learning setting could give EFL students the opportunity to learn in individually flexible ways.

4.5.6. Problems observed. The analysis of the reflective journals by the teacher demonstrated that differentiated online reading lessons posed some problems regarding student motivation and internet connectivity. In the first lessons, some students found it hard to concentrate because it was the first time they were having an online reading lesson. In some weeks, one of the teachers could not establish the internet connection, which affected student engagement badly. Following quotations support these findings:

[...] There was one student who lagged behind. He was one of the above-level students. I need to talk to him before our lesson next week. I tried hard to encourage him and helped him a lot. (T1, Journal Data, 09.02.2018)

[...] In our first lesson, I observed that some students had a lot of difficulty understanding the instructions. (T3, Journal Data, 09.02.2018)

[...] Students reading in H level required more help. (T3, Journal Data, 16.02.2018)

[...] We had a big problem, internet connection. Near the end of the lesson, it was lost and some students lagged behind and they could not complete their activities. One of them could not even touch the activities. (T1, Journal Data, 16.02.2018)

[...] When the internet connection was unfortunately lost, they had to reengage themselves in their activities. (T1, Journal Data, 23.02.2018)

Briefly, in light of the reflections by the teachers, some problems as to student motivation rose in the very first week of the implementation and technical troubles as to internet connections were observed from time to time during the implementation. However, the teachers were mostly satisfied with online differentiated reading lessons as they stated that they had recorded improvement in overall reading skills thanks in part to seamless engagement and interest in differentiated activities. As it was also commented by all three teachers, the consequent joy in reading was at its peak while

the students were in cooperation with each other. As a matter of fact, the continuous engagement in reading and the efficient peer collaboration required almost no teacher intervention. In accordance with teacher observations, the students worked autonomously most of the time, attempting to provide answers to their questions by designating their own learning paths or counselling their peers.



Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusions

5.1 Discussion of Findings for Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to gauge the impact of online differentiated online reading lessons conducted by using Razplus (www.raz-plus.com) readers on the reading comprehension skill and LA of 5th grade EFL learners. In addition, the present study attempted to explore the participant students' perceptions of online differentiated reading lessons and the participant teachers' reflections about the implementation of these lessons. The quantitative data of the study were gathered with the instruments of reading comprehension pre-post-test and LA pre-post-test while its qualitative data were collected through the analyses of a semi-structured student interview and reflective teacher journals. In the following section, the findings of the study will be thoroughly discussed in relevance with each research question.

5.1.1. Discussion of the findings of RQ 1: To what extent does the implementation of online differentiated reading affect 5th grade EFL learners' reading comprehension skills? The purpose of the first research question was to measure the effect of online differentiated reading lessons on reading comprehension skills of 5th grade EFL learners. The quantitative results indicated that there was a significant difference between the gain scores of reading comprehension pre-test and post-test. In other words, the implementation of online differentiated reading lessons had a quite positive impact on the participant students' reading comprehension skills.

The improvement in the participants' reading comprehension skills after they were exposed to online differentiated reading lessons may be attributed to unchallenging, differentiated reading activities. This argument conforms to the findings of the studies (Waring & Takaki, 2003; Waring, 2009; Mclean & Rouault, 2017), which have shown that differentiated reading can help the students overcome their difficulties in reading over time and gain a life-long aid in this skill. Indeed, differentiated online reading can provide the students with the opportunity to enjoy their reading without making rigorous effort for comprehension because they learn how to grasp the message in a text with relative ease (Carrell & Carson, 1997; Day & Bamford, 2002). In a similar vein, Suk (2016) found differentiated reading had a positive effect on the reading comprehension, reading rate and vocabulary acquisition

of 83 undergraduate students after simplifying different passages from hard-copy course books, which were read by the participants during a 15-week implementation period. Differentiating the content for reading in accordance with each L2 level in this way, or making the reading activity individual for each learner, can boost individual reading comprehension, as the results of the research by Firmender, Reis and Sweeny (2013) indicated. Using a reading comprehension test and a test of overall reading fluency, the study has shown that 1149 participants from five different elementary schools had a better reading achievement results after their readers had been differentiated according to different L2 levels. Alternatively, providing a collection of texts in different levels can similarly help adjust the stages of complexity according to diverse learning levels and provide the students with better achievement in reading and higher *readiness* levels (Tomlinson, 2001; Thiesen, 2012). The experimental study by Little, Mc Coach and Reis (2014) allowed its participants to choose books in their own levels from SEM-R collection to achieve its aim of measuring the impact of differentiated reading on 2150 middle school students' reading comprehension skills. The students performed differentiated reading for a 10-week period and the results showed that their reading achievement had improved. Thus, when blended with DI, reading can also provide the language teacher with the opportunity of complying with the tenet of DI, *adaptability and flexibility of the content*, just as Chick and Hong (2012) stated in their paper. And, for students' part, differentiated reading and ER can thus be considered a respectful task because they could increase their comprehension skills by referring to their own levels (Heacox, 2002; Tomlinson, 2008)

Another reason why online differentiated reading lessons and ER had a positive impact on the reading comprehension skills of the learners might be due to the fact that they read books in their favourite genres, in accordance with the information from the favourite book questionnaire, and developed a positive attitude towards reading. In this aspect, the results of the present study are in accordance with those of the studies (Jokar & Hasabi, 2014; Gülşen & Mede, 2016), which demonstrated that providing students with reading lessons differentiated in accordance with their *interest* areas had a considerable effect on their reading comprehension skills. As a matter of fact, a differentiated reading lesson planned by heeding the students' interests can also help form positive attitude towards reading in turn, which was found by the research of (Koeze, 2017). The study tested the impact of DI on overall language proficiency of

160 4th and 5th grade elementary school students by referring to the development of each language skill. The results of the study showed that differentiation strategies based on interest and choice was of importance in reading achievement and positive attitude. Just as Tomlinson (2000; 2001) states, a teacher can help each learner achieve their aims best by determining their interest areas. And, the learners could have a better attitude towards reading in differentiated reading lessons when they were free to choose among their favourite genres, as Renandya and Jacobs (2002) suggested. This aspect of reading and DI is in line with the *affective and social strategies of reading* described in the literature by Grabe and Stoller (2002), which defines the freedom of choosing what to read.

In addition, differentiated reading lessons were successful because they provided the students with unlimited access to online reading materials on www.raz-plus.com. Indeed, unlimited amount and variety of reading materials was one of the defining features of the implementation of the present study, so the students could improve their reading whenever and wherever they liked as Mc Bride and Milliner (2016) suggested. This finding was echoed in the study conducted by Mc Lean and Rouault (2017) in which the experimental group ($n=23$) was exposed to five different library sources of unlimited hard-copy readers to choose from. The participants took pre- and post-reading comprehension tests and the results indicated that those who performed differentiated reading over an academic year maintained their reading comprehension achievement rate above 70%. Similarly, Mermelstein (2015) allowed 211 participants of the study to choose among 600 books in their own levels whenever they wanted to read, outside the school or during SSR (Sustained Silent Reading) activity in the classroom. The study suggested that unlimited access to readers helped increase EFL students' reading achievement over time. Hence, it can be concluded from the findings that the more unlimited the students' access to materials is for ER, the better their comprehension skills are (Waring & Takaki, 2003).

Last but not least, as it is noted by Subban (2006), peer collaboration is beneficial for improving skills in L2 learning. In this study, the students had a chance to interact with each other and form fruitful collaborations because DI necessitates a sense of *community* or a cooperating learning atmosphere where below level students work with above level ones heterogeneously or where students with the same readiness levels collaborate homogeneously (Kearsley, 2005; Tomlinson, 2008) – rather than

consulting their teacher because differentiated reading lessons give a teacher a less central role (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). This combined effort could have facilitated the students' comprehension during the differentiated reading lessons because peers could have benefited from their activities by guiding each other (Jesus, 2012). So, it is important to note that peer collaboration may have created an atmosphere where students can engage with each other according to their *readiness* levels or *interests* thanks to the *community* principle of DI (Lawtence-Brown, 2004).

5.1.2. Discussion of the findings of RQ 2: How does online differentiated reading influence learner autonomy? The purpose of the second research question was to measure the impact of online differentiated reading lessons on participant students' LA. In order to gather data about their autonomy, Learner Autonomy Questionnaire was administered before and after the implementation as a pre- and post-test. A comparative analysis of the gain scores of pre-post-tests indicated a significance increase in students' LA after differentiated reading lessons, which can be associated with the enjoyable nature of ER (Nation, 1997). As the learners read more in their favourite genres, they enjoyed their reading more since they could increase their world knowledge and take effective steps in dealing with problems of comprehension by themselves, willingly (Dickinson, 1987). In other words, the more they enjoyed learning from reading, the more responsible they became eager to be (Benson & Voller, 1997). This finding was in conformity with the results of the study by Bedoya (2014). The researcher made use of an autonomy questionnaire to gauge how 35 undergraduate students from different departments manifested their LA during online reading lessons. The results showed that the students became more independent, responsible and confident by the end of the implementation as their motivation and engagement increased in time.

The increase in the learners' LA can also be attributed to the use of metacognitive strategies for achieving LA during reading (Oxford, 2001). Learning autonomously is a metacognitive process as it requires capacity and commitment (Sinclair, 2008). The participants could use their capacity by choosing and organizing their reading materials according to their reading purposes. And, they could show their commitment by designing and evaluating their respective learning techniques. These steps all conformed to the metacognitive stages for LA suggested by Holec (1985). Using all these stages meant achieving political, technical and psychological autonomy, as stated

by Benson and Voller (1997). Controlling the content and designing learning were, respectively, political and psychological processes while ER was a technical one as it facilitated learning outside school or without a teacher (Slavin, 2010). This finding was in line with the study conducted by Bayat (2011), which attempted to explore the relationship between the use of metacognitive stages for achieving LA and reading comprehension through an autonomy scale and a reading test. The results showed that participants who performed these stages while reading attained much better LA and higher results in reading tests. So, it can also be concluded that a thorough manifestation of LA can lead to better reading skills or improved reading comprehension skills suggest high levels of LA. Another study carried out by Koosha, Abdollahi and Karimi (2016) found parallel results as well. 121 EFL learners took autonomy and reading tests without any implementation and the results indicated a significant relationship between two tests. Conclusively, it can be inferred that after differentiated reading lessons, the participants' LA improved because, according to the results of RQ 1, their reading comprehension skills developed or vice versa.

In addition, applying DI approach could be another reason why the participants achieved high LA levels because autonomy in L2 learning is prone to changes by such factors as achievement and language learning experience of the learners (Benson, 2011). Thus, taking the *learner profiles* into consideration for differentiation might have contributed to the manifestation of autonomy in differentiated reading lessons because learning profiles can include respective learning styles, experience in L2 and different learner intelligences such as spatial and musical (Tomlinson, 2001; Conti, 2013). In other words, providing the students with a wide range of book choice for different intelligences and allowing them to perform their ER activities on their own designated ways may have increased the LA levels significantly and the reading comprehension in turn as the results of the research (Bedoya, 2014; Mc Coach and Reis, 2014) suggested.

5.1.3. Discussion of RQ 3: What are the students' perceptions about online differentiated reading lessons? The thorough content analysis of reflections shared by the 15 students who took part in the semi-structured interview obviously showed that a great majority of the students held the view that online differentiated reading lessons were beneficial for various reasons. Initially, as students reported, ER was a practical way of being a skilled *reader* because increasing vocabulary knowledge and

exposure to meaningful input helped them read more fluently and purposefully (Day & Bamford, 1998). In other words, using books in their own levels was what rendered reading comprehensible and L2 learning achievable just as Tomlinson (2005) suggested. In addition, – and correspondingly – they found the activity of reading enjoyable since they felt they were learning with comparative ease (Richards & Renandya, 2002). And, this achievement was reportedly attained in large part thanks to the decreasing roles of their teachers in guiding them, which gave them the opportunity to perform silent, autonomous reading. The teachers intervened only when clarifications were needed, which indicates the less central, mediating role of teaching in differentiated reading lessons as suggested by Waring (2009). And, the students took their own responsibility for learning words and concepts, drawing paths and arranging pace through various means, which shows they went through the stages of LA achievement stated by Holec (1985). Thus, as students stated, they also gained self-confidence in overcoming problems while reading and they were consequently more motivated. It is easy to infer here that the students became more knowledgeable of the importance of EFL reading and obtained self-efficacy by achieving their self-determined purposes. This finding was in line with the results of the qualitative study by Tabiati (2016), which pinpointed the internal and external factors contributing to LA in EFL reading after analysing student reflections about reading lessons. By taking responsibility, controlling their learning, making decisions and achieving self-efficacy, the participants in the present study used internal factors. And, by cooperating with their peers and using a technological environment with abundant reading materials, they benefitted from external factors.

As students emphasized, consulting peers while reading autonomously helped their reading skills flourish more quickly. Hence, it can be concluded that reaching ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development, Borja et al., 2015) in an autonomous learning setting helped form a sense of *community*, one of the benefits of DI as stated by Kearsley (2005) and Tomlinson (2008). In other words, peer collaboration could appear in this study as a factor contributing to both autonomy and differentiated learning, just as the relevant literature (Heacox, 2002; Benson, 2001; Bedoya, 2014; Tabiati, 2016) suggested. However, the students also mentioned that it would be much better for them to work with a favourable partner because social intimacy was also

important. This can be attributed to the use of *affective and social strategies* in EFL reading suggested by Grabe and Stoller (2002).

Interestingly, differences between differentiated and undifferentiated reading were also referred to while the students were comparing the implementation with curricular reading lessons. Online reading and ER were considered to be a more natural and fluent way of reading because there was no limitation in terms of differentiated materials and setting just as Waring (2009) states while he mentioned the benefits of ER. Performing ER through technological means with limitless materials could increase LA because, as Tabiati (2016) suggested, it promoted self-efficacy and decision making. And, similarly, using abundant differentiated materials contributed to self-control in EFL reading as well as increasing individual fluency levels, just as a differentiated reading lesson should do (Grabe and Stoller, 2002).

In short, these findings are in accordance with the results from reading comprehension and learner autonomy pre-post-tests as they all signify an improvement in reading skills and autonomy. The students qualitatively confirmed the quantitative findings by referring to the considerable development in their reading and L2 skills thanks to the independent learning setting provided by differentiated reading.

5.1.4. Discussion of RQ 4: What are the teachers' perceptions about the implementation of online differentiated reading? Most of the findings acquired through the content analysis of the teachers' reflective journals were in parallel with the findings from the students' reflections. To start with, according to teacher observations, the students' reading comprehension skills had improved by the end of the implementation. This was associated with increased vocabulary and experience in EFL reading in time. In turn, the students were encouraged to read more thanks to achievements of DI principles stated by Tomlinson (2008) and benefits of ER suggested by Lee and Hsu (2009). Similarly, minimum level of teacher intervention and assuming the role of monitoring, which were mentioned in the reflective journals, were in tune with the statements of the students which referred to a decrease in teachers' support. One difference was that the teachers were supporting them relatively more at the beginning of the implementation period. Correspondingly, the teacher wrote in their reflections that they led to an autonomous reading setting by merely mediating during the lessons. The shared instances when the students achieved LA were those when the teachers admitted assuming less central roles just as Waring and

Takaki (2003) stated. And, according to the observations, the students assumed responsibility, controlled their learning processes and made their decisions unconsciously, which showed they made use of internal factors promoting LA found by Tabiati (2016).

As for peer collaboration, interaction was reported to have boosted students' motivation and helped improve their comprehension as sharing ideas could bring out mutual learning benefits – as proposed by Campbell (2009). Working with peers might have increased the students' engagement because they gained self-confidence through peer support, which led to self-efficacy, just as Tabiati's (2016) external factors suggested.

Unlike the findings from students' reflections, teachers' reflections treated of continuous engagement and interest, which was related to *material variety* in differentiated reading lessons as stated by Aebersold and Field (1998) and differentiation of content for student traits as stated by Loeser (2015). In other words, students were successfully engaged in reading because they had been choosing and reading their favourite genres in their own L2 levels. And, this created a setting where they could perform fluent reading just as an ER activity should provide (Day & Bamford, 2002). And, in parallel with the student reflections, as the online source Razplus, (www.raz-plus.com) is ample when it comes to differentiated materials, boosted engagement could have promoted LA since the existence of abundant reading materials is another positive factor for autonomy (Tabiati, 2016; Meyer et. al, 2016). This finding was echoed in the results of the mixed method study by Gülşen and Mede (2016), in which the students' reflections showed high engagement in differentiated reading lessons.

In addition, problems were more apparent for the teachers' part during the online differentiated reading lessons. As one of the teachers stated, troubles related to internet connection were imminent as well as challenging in the lessons as they were in the studies by Bedoya (2014) and Mc Bride and Milliner (2016). The lessons in these studies were equally dependent on the internet and the teachers similarly had to come up with ways to resume the lessons. Besides, according to T1' reflections, one student found it hard to concentrate at the beginning because he was not so familiar with reading English online, even though he was much better near the end. Therefore, it is noteworthy to stress that teachers should have alternative solutions for technical

problems in online reading lessons and be ready to support some students more at the beginning.

In short, in spite of some negligible problems, the teachers were as satisfied with online differentiated reading lessons as the students were and most of their observations and views were in harmony with the students' perceptions. In accordance with the qualitative results, all participants were in high favour of the implementation because it gave an opportunity for improving reading skills and learning autonomously. This finding strongly supported the significantly high results of the pre-post-tests conducted to gauge reading comprehension and LA.

5.2 Practical Implications

The present study is likely to offer several practical implications for researchers, practitioners and material/course designers. Initially, the findings revealed that online differentiated reading lessons could significantly improve the learners' reading comprehension skills and develop their LA. Additionally, the gathered results elucidated both the perceptions of the 5th grade Turkish EFL learners exposed to online differentiated reading and the reflections of their teachers on its implementation. Learners and teachers stressed the importance of the implementation in gaining better reading and language skills and achieving LA in reading. They also pointed out that less teacher intervention and more peer collaboration in reading tasks led to positive experience and more engagement. Therefore, it would be worth integrating online differentiated reading lessons into EFL curricula to assist with the development of language and reading skills as well as the achievement of LA in L2 reading. Consequently, learners could be encouraged to perform more fluent and enjoyable reading activities in their own levels both inside and outside the classroom. Besides, they would be knowledgeable about some certain strategies required for developing their reading and L2 skills autonomously.

However, it should be kept in mind that some young learners might not be familiar with reading EFL texts online and they might find it hard to engage themselves in reading in the first place. Therefore, piloting and collecting student feedback regarding online EFL experience might be of practical use before adopting such an implementation in EFL classroom. In addition, reliable and constant internet connection should be established and provided throughout the lessons in the school.

Otherwise, any problems regarding connection loss may cause hindrance in learning and student engagement.

Overall, the findings of the present study are of significant importance for the implementation of any reading lessons where students are expected to read pleurably and without difficulty while achieving their LA at the same time.

5.3 Conclusions

The present case study significantly contributes to the literature by investigating the impact of online differentiated reading lessons on reading comprehension skills and LA of 5th grade Turkish EFL learners. The results revealed that the participants had both improved their skills and achieved LA in reading after the implementation. Besides, it was demonstrated that the students had positive perceptions regarding online differentiated reading because they could achieve their aims in their respective L2 levels and on their own more effortlessly. And, according to the teachers' reflective journals, the students were more engaged and had considerably better reading skills over time thanks both to the DI provided and to the autonomous learning setting formed.

Briefly, the findings of the present study illustrated that integrating online differentiated reading lessons for teaching and learning reading could be regarded as an efficient way of instruction to support the development of reading comprehension skills and enhance the achievement of LA in EFL classrooms.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Research

The current study can put forward some certain recommendations for further research. Initially, having been designed on the premises of a case study, it was conducted without any reference to a group who did not receive the implementation. Thus, it can be replicated by carrying out a comparative analysis of data gathered from an experimental and a control group. In addition, the number of the participants (n=72) was not high enough and their proficiency levels were the same. Using a larger sample with different proficiency levels could also be recommended for future studies.

In this study, the students answered online multiple-choice questions after they performed their ER on their tablets. And, after the lessons, the teachers gave feedback regarding the answers on the online platform provided by Razplus (www.razplus.com)

[plus.com](http://www.raz-plus.com)). For future research, 5-10-minute time can be allocated for teachers just after the students finish reading in order for them to give in-class feedback.

Additionally, this study was conducted for five weeks with two online differentiated reading lessons implemented in each. Hence, it was impossible for the researcher to apply a retention test. For prospective studies, a retention test can be performed one month after a longer period so as to be able to gauge the impact of the implementation on the retention of the participants.

Finally, the participants of the present study used readers only from a specific online source, Razplus (www.raz-plus.com). Other multi-level book sources can be amalgamated into online differentiated reading lessons to provide the students with a wider range of choices for genres. Besides, a control group performing ER or differentiated reading on hard-copy books can be included to compare the effectiveness of online differentiated reading on reading comprehension skills and LA of language learners.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH QUESTIONS USED FOR COLLECTING DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ABOUT STUDENT PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR ONLINE EFL READING FREQUENCY

Kişisel Bilgiler

1) Adınız Soyadınız:

2) Yaşınız:

3) Cinsiyetiniz: Kız__ Erkek__

4) Mezun olduğunuz ilkokul:

5) Ne kadar zamandır İngilizce öğreniyorsunuz?

0-6 ay__ 6-12 ay__ 1-2 yıl__ 2-4 yıl__ 4 yıldan fazla__

6) İngilizce dışında başka yabancı dil biliyor musunuz? Evet__ Hayır__

Evet ise hangi seviyede?

Başlangıç__ Orta__ İleri__

7) Tablet üzerinden çevrimiçi İngilizce dergi, makale, kullanım kılavuzu, oyun kılavuzu ve benzeri kaynaklar okuyor musunuz (okuldan sonra, ödevleriniz dışında)? Evet__ Hayır__

Evet ise ne kadar sıklıkla?

Haftada 1-2 saat__

Haftada 3-4 saat__

Haftada 5-6 saat__

Haftada 7-8 saat__

Haftada 9-10 saat__

B. READING COMPREHENSION PRE-TEST

Reading Comprehension Test 1

1) Read the paragraphs of the text in part 3 and choose the best title.

- a) Lincoln's achievements in life
- b) Life of a Democratic Leader
- c) The Tragic Moments in Lincoln's Life

2) Read the paragraphs quickly once more and write what happened in the below years.

- a) 1815: _____
- b) 1826: _____
- c) Near the end of April in 1865: _____

3) Now read the paragraphs carefully and put them in correct order.

- 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____ 4) _____ 5) _____

A) On April, 1865, he and his wife were at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. . John Wilkes Booth, one of the actors, shot the president. Lincoln died nine hours later. On 21 April a train carrying his body left Washington DC, and travelled through 180 cities before it reached Illinois. They buried him on 4 May.

B) Abraham Lincoln was a leader and a man who wanted the people of his country to work together as one. His historic words echo through the years to remind us of what democracy really is!

C) By the time he was 17 he knew he wanted to be a lawyer. At the age of 21, he moved to Illinois. He managed to become a lawyer in 1836. In 1842 he married Mary Todd. The couple had four sons. In March 1861 Lincoln became the 16th President of the United States.

D) Abraham Lincoln was born in Kentucky, USA in 1809. His family was very poor. He used to work in the fields and help with chores. In the evenings, he used to sit by the fireplace and study. When he was tired of doing arithmetic, he used to write poems. Abe first went to school when he was 6 years old. He used to walk four miles to school. He taught himself how to read and write.

E) Five weeks later the Civil War began. It was a fight between the north and the south about slavery. Lincoln wanted to stop slavery in the US. He also wanted the US to remain one nation. "A house divided against itself cannot stand," he used to say. He achieved both of his goals.

4) Read the sentences about the text and write T (True) or F (False).

- a) He was born in Washington DC. _____
- b) He came from a poor family. _____
- c) He became a lawyer. _____
- d) He had three sons. _____
- e) He became president during the civil war. _____
- f) He died in the war. _____
- g) He helped end slavery. _____

5) Read the text again and complete the chart below in your own sentences by referring to Abraham Lincoln's life.

1809: _____

1830: _____

1836: _____

14 April, 1865: _____

C. READING COMPREHENSION POST-TEST

Reading Comprehension Test 2

1) Read the paragraphs of the text in part C and choose the best title.

- a) How the Sun Came to Be
- b) The Lives of People Before the Sun
- c) Scientists' Views on the Sun

2) Read the paragraphs quickly once more and write what or whom the below words refer to.

- a) her (paragraph A, line 2): _____
- b) them (paragraph B, line 3): _____
- c) it: (paragraph C, line 4): _____
- d) red giant (paragraph E, line 2): _____
- e) its (paragraph E, line 3): _____

3) Now read the paragraphs carefully and put them in correct order.

- 2) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____ 4) _____ 5) _____

A) She walked for a long time until she felt very tired. She was hungry and cold and she had lots of scratches on her body. Then, **her** ancestors' spirits took pity on her and gently lifted her up into the sky forever. The woman slept peacefully. When she woke up, she found food. She lit a campfire in the sky and was happy to be warm and safe.

B) So, she did. Then, at the end of the day, she let her fire die down while her people built their own campfires. The woman saw that her people were extremely happy so she decided to build her fire every morning to keep **them** warm. The people called this wonderful light of heat and light the Sun.

C) The woman looked down on her tribe and saw that they were terribly worried about her. She also saw that they were quite tired and cold because they often travelled far from their campfires to find food. "I'll make a big campfire," the woman thought. "**It**'ll be so big that it will warm all the people while they look for food.

D) Early in the history, before the sun shone in the sky, the world was very cold. People only had camp fires to keep them warm. In one tribe, there was a young woman. The elders of the tribe did not allow her to marry the man she loved, so she quietly left her home and went to a dry area full of rocks.

E) Our sun is getting bigger and brighter and scientists think that it will continue to grow until it becomes a **'red giant'**! Eventually, the Sun will burn **its** hydrogen and become smaller and smaller. It will turn into a 'white dwarf' and then it will disappear. But how did the sun appear? The Aboriginal people in Australia have their own story about the creation of the Sun.

4) Read the text again and choose the best answer (A, B or C).

- 1) After the ancestors' spirits brought her up into the sky, the woman
 - a) woke up.
 - b) fell asleep.
 - c) ate something.
- 2) The woman left her tribe because
 - a) she did not want to marry anyone.
 - b) she could not marry the man she wanted.
 - c) the elders wanted her to marry someone.
- 3) The woman felt sorry for her people because
 - a) there was not enough food to eat
 - b) they had to look for food in the cold.
 - c) she left without saying goodbye.
- 4) In the evening, the woman,
 - a) allowed her fire to go out.
 - b) added more fuel to her life.
 - c) helped her people to build their fires.
- 5) Scientist think the sun will become smaller because
 - a) it is still getting bigger
 - b) its hydrogen will finish
 - c) it will change its colour

5) Read the text again and think about what the young woman did in the story. Then write the sentences in the box in the correct places.

She started lighting her fire every day to make her people happy and warm forever.

After walking for a while, tired and injured, she was lifted up in the sky by her ancestors' spirits and she lit a campfire to get warm there.

A young woman from a tribe left her people as she could not marry her lover and reached a desert-like place.

She saw that her people was tired, hungry and cold too and decided to make a huge campfire to help them.

1) First, _____

2) Then, _____

3) Next, _____

4) Finally, _____

D. LEARNER AUTONOMY QUESTIONNAIRE

Adapted from Bedoya (2014)

Dear 5th graders;

In this questionnaire, you will answer some questions related to your role in reading lessons or while doing reading assignments.

Check the level of frequency for each activity.

	Always (Her zaman)	Sometimes (Bazen)	Seldom (Ara Sıra)	Never (Hiçbir Zaman)
1) I plan the time for reading in this course. (<i>Bu derste okuma aktivitelerinde zaman planlaması yapıyorum.</i>)				
2) I submit reading assignments on time. (<i>Okuma ödevlerini zamanında teslim ediyorum.</i>)				
3) I self-assess my performance in my reading lessons. (<i>Okuma derslerimde performansımı kendim değerlendirebiliyorum.</i>)				
4) I reflect on what I learn from reading. (<i>Okuduğum kitaplardan, metinlerden öğrendiklerimi yorumlayabiliyorum.</i>)				
5) I interact with my classmates while reading. (<i>Okuma yaparken sınıf arkadaşlarımla etkileşimli çalışıyorum.</i>)				
6) I am interested in the teacher's feedback. (<i>Öğretmenimin geri bildirimlerini, değerlendirmelerini merak ederim.</i>)				
7) I spend enough time reading in English during the week. (<i>Hafta boyu İngilizce okuma yapmaya yeterince zaman ayırıyorum.</i>)				
8) I read in English on my own (additional to the course). (<i>-Derslere ek olarak – tek başıma İngilizce okuma yapıyorum.</i>)				
9) I am able to work alone while reading. (<i>Okuma yaparken tek başıma çalışabiliyorum.</i>)				
10) I manage my time while I am reading. (<i>Okurken zamanımı yönetiyorum.</i>)				
11) I ask the tutor when I need clarification. (<i>Açıklamaya ihtiyaç duyduğumda öğretmenimden yardım alıyorum.</i>)				
12) I express my opinions in the lessons. (<i>Derslerde fikirlerimi açıklıyorum.</i>)				

	Always (Her zaman)	Sometimes (Bazen)	Seldom (Ara Sıra)	Never (Hiçbir Zaman)
13) I think I can achieve my objectives in this course. (Bu derste hedeflerime ulaşabileceğimi düşünüyorum.)				
14) I think I am committed to reading tasks and assignments. (Okuma aktivitelerine ve ödevlerine kendimi adadığımı düşünüyorum.)				
15) I have a good opinion of the reading lessons. (Okuma dersleri hakkında olumlu düşünüyorum.)				
16) I like to study English in and out of my school. (Okulda ve okul dışında İngilizce çalışmak isterim.)				
17) I need the teacher's support to learn while reading. (Okuma yaparken öğretmenin desteğine ihtiyaç duyarım.)				
18) I need a classmate's help to do the activities. (Okuma aktivitelerini yapabilmek için bir sınıf arkadaşımın desteğine ihtiyaç duyarım.)				
19) What I have learned in this course has been useful. (Bu derste öğrendiklerim çok işime yaradı.)				
20) I understand assignments easily. (Verilen ödevleri kolay anlıyorum.)				
21) I search information on the Internet for learning. (Öğrenirken, okurken internette araştırma yapıyorum.)				
22) I can control my emotions related to learning. (Öğrenmeyle ilgili duygularımı kontrol edebiliyorum.)				
23) I feel confident about my performance while reading. (Okuma yaparken performansuma güvenirim.)				
24) I identify my learning difficulties. (Öğrenme güçlüklerimi belirleyebiliyorum.)				
25) I can control my attention when I am reading. (Okuma yaparken dikkatimi toplayabiliyorum.)				

E. SEMI-STRUCTURED STUDENT INTERVIEW

This appendix shows the questions used in the semi-structure interview for the students.

About the course:

1. What can you say about this reading course?
2. What was your goal in this course?

About autonomy:

3. Learning in a online reading course requires time management. How do you rate yourself related to this?
4. It also implies independent work. It means going beyond the activities proposed in the course. How was your performance concerning this?
5. It is assumed that an autonomous student does not need the teacher's supervision to work during the course. How did you see yourself and the group regarding this?
6. An autonomous student communicates and cooperates with others for learning. How was your performance in this aspect?
7. How was your performance comparing the first weeks and the last weeks of the course?
8. To what extent was the course beneficial for you?
9. What do you think about reading in English online? Compare your regular reading lessons with online reading lessons.

**F. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTIVE JOURNALS TO BE WRITTEN BY
PARTICIPANT TEACHERS**

1- Reflect on your observations regarding the effects of online multi-level reading lessons on your students' overall reading skills.

2- Reflect on your observations regarding the effects of multi-level reading lessons on your students' learning autonomy.

3- Reflect on what you have observed while your students are reading their online books.

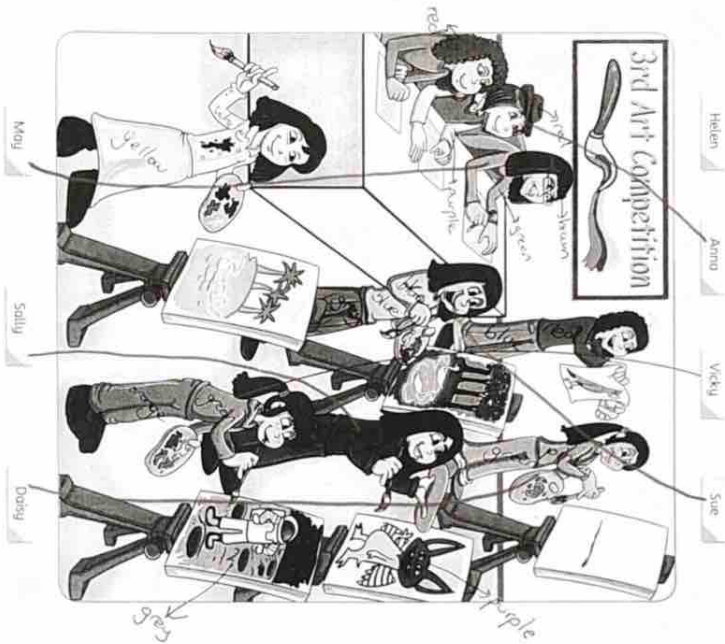
G. CAMBRIDGE FLYERS SAMPLE TEST

Test 5

Listening

Part 1

Listen and draw lines. There is one example.



Part 2

Listen and write. There is one example.

Test 5 • Listening

Name of restaurant

Best Cook

1 Address

15

Street

2 Jake went with

3 What was missing?

4 How was the food?

5 What was the waiter like?

Part 3

What did each person in Tom's family find in the forest? Listen and write a letter in each box. There is one example.



Tom

F



Mrs Swan



Mr Swan



Jack



Kim



Mary



A



B



C



D



E



F



G



H

Part 5 • Listening

Part 4

Listen and tick (✓) the box. There is one example.

What did Mary see in her dream?



1 Which pet does Mary have?



2 What is missing from the envelope?



3 How far is the circus from Mary's house?



4 What happened to Aunt Lucy?

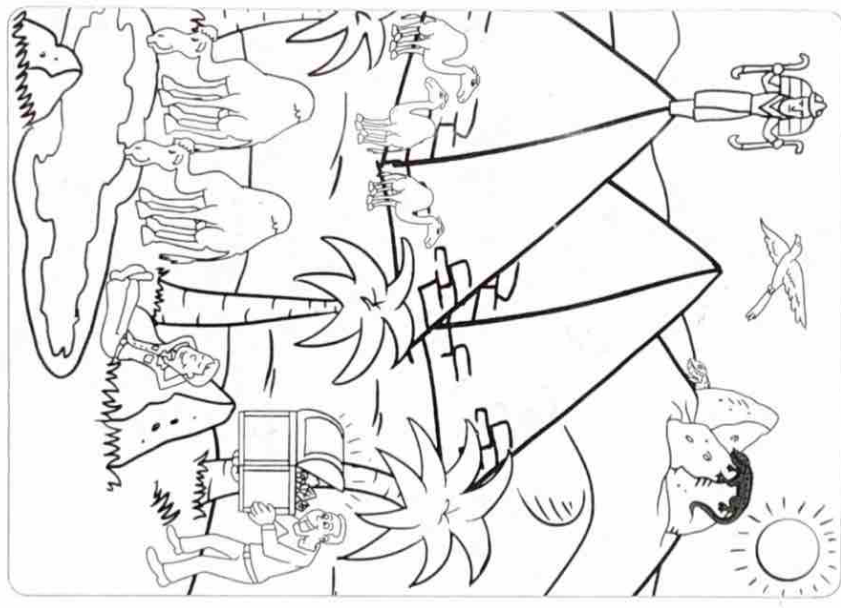


5 What does Mary want to put on her bread?



Part 5 • Listening

Part 5 Listen and colour and draw and write. There is one example.



Reading and Writing

Part 1 Look and read. Choose the correct words and write them on the lines. There is one example.

- lights an insect pockets a spoon a plate jam butter

If you put food in it, it stays cold and fresh.

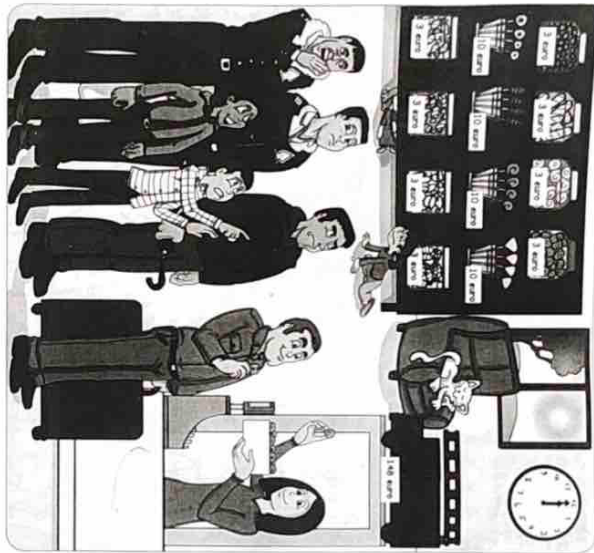
a fridge

- 1 You put food on it. _____
- 2 The doctor gives it to people when they are ill. _____
- 3 A woman is married to this man. _____
- 4 A building with high walls where kings and queens used to live. _____
- 5 You make it with fruit and sugar. It's sweet and you can put it on bread and have it for breakfast. _____
- 6 It lives in the sea. It has eight long arms and people in some countries eat it. _____
- 7 It's made of paper and you can read the news in it. _____
- 8 It's soft and yellow and you can eat it on bread or put it in food. _____
- 9 It's very small and usually has wings and can fly. _____
- 10 You use it to eat food, especially soups. _____

- medicine a husband an octopus a chemist's a castle
 a factory a fridge a newspaper

Part 2

Look and read. Write yes or no.



Examples

The chocolate fire engine is very cheap.
The girl has lost her doll.

no
yes

Questions

- 1 It's midnight.
- 2 The boy in the striped shirt wants to buy the chocolate fire engine.
- 3 The woman in the shop is very friendly.
- 4 There isn't any chocolate on the shelves.
- 5 One of the boys is whispering.
- 6 The cat is sleeping in the corner of the shop.
- 7 There are two pockets on the woman's dress.

part 3

Betty is talking to her brother, Robert. What does Robert say?

Read the conversation and choose the best answer. Write a letter (A-H) for each answer.

You do not need to use all the letters.

Example

Betty: Where are you going?

Robert: E

Questions

1 Betty: How you seen the weather outside?

Robert: _____

2 Betty: Well, it's not like that now. There are a lot of clouds in the sky.

Robert: _____

3 Betty: I think so. You should take an umbrella with you.

Robert: _____

4 Betty: You could invite Henry here.

Robert: _____

5 Betty: What time will you tell him to come?

Robert: _____



- A Oh, no. I hate the rain. I can't go to the park now.
- B At 7 o'clock.
- C Oh, in the morning it was sunny.
- D I don't like foggy weather.
- E I'm going to meet Henry at the park. (Example)
- F That's a great idea! I'll call him now.
- G I haven't called him yet.
- H Is it going to rain?

Part 4

Read the story. Choose a word from the box. Write the correct word next to numbers 1-5. There is one example.



It was Saturday and Tina was _____ waiting _____ for her grandparents to come over for dinner. Her mother was in the kitchen cooking all morning. Tina wanted to do something, too, so her mum said: 'Make a chocolate cake! Grandpa loves chocolate. (1) _____?' That's a great idea! said Tina. 'Do you need any help or can you do it alone? I know you are very good at cooking.' Tina was sure that she could do it. She put (2) _____ in a bowl and mixed it all up. All she had to do now was wait for the cake to be ready. She called a friend to talk about something. They were talking for an hour when, suddenly, she (3) _____ something. It was coming from the kitchen. When she opened the kitchen door, there was smoke everywhere. Tina started shouting, 'Help, Mum! I (4) _____ the cake! Quickly!' The (5) _____ was coming out of the window and when her mother saw it, she ran inside because she thought the house was on fire. She found Tina looking at a black cake on the kitchen table and she started laughing. 'Ha, ha! Oh, dear! I was just going to call the fire station for help.'

- | | | | | |
|----------|--------|---------|------------|--------|
| example | agreed | burnt | everything | and |
| worried | smoke | someone | smell | enough |
| remember | smoke | someone | smell | enough |

(6) Now choose the best name for the story.

- Tick one box.
- The worst cake ever
 - How Tina burnt the kitchen
 - A terrible smell

Part 5

Look at the picture and read the story. Write some words to complete the sentences about the story. You can use 1, 2, 3 or 4 words.

The world's best sister!



On Friday evening, Mary was looking after her younger brother Jack. Their parents weren't at home, because they were visiting their grandfather at the hospital. The problem was that Jack was very naughty, so it wasn't easy for Mary to be at home alone with him. At 9 o'clock it was bedtime for Jack, but he didn't want to go to his room so Mary let him play for another hour. At 10 o'clock Jack was still very awake. Then Mary sat with him on the sofa and started reading him a story. She was very tired and so a few minutes later, she was asleep. 'Excellent!' Jack thought. 'Now I can do anything I want!' He ran into the kitchen, opened the fridge and took out the ice cream. He ate and ate until there wasn't only more ice cream in the bowl. Then he had some water and went to bed.

At eleven Jack wasn't feeling very well. He had a terrible stomach ache so he called Mary, who was sleeping on the sofa, for help. 'My stomach hurts because I've eaten a bowl of ice cream,' Jack told her. 'Oh, no Jack! That's why you have a stomach ache. Don't worry. Everything is going to be OK. Go to your room and lie down. I'll bring you some tea.'

Their parents came back at midnight and found both of them sleeping. In the morning Jack told his sister, 'Mary, you're the best sister in the world. Thank you for looking after me. I'm sorry I wasn't a good boy.'

Examples

Mary's parents were at the hospital on Friday evening.
It was difficult for Mary to look after her brother because he was very naughty.

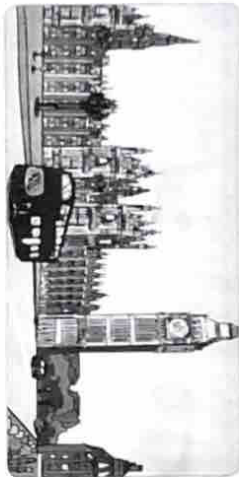
Questions

- 1 Jack had to go to bed at _____.
- 2 Mary _____ a few minutes after she started reading Jack a story.
- 3 Jack ran to the kitchen and took the _____ out.
- 4 He called Mary for help because he had _____.
- 5 Mary sent him to bed and went to the kitchen to bring him _____ tea.
- 6 _____ the children's parents came back from the hospital.
- 7 The next day, Jack thanked _____ for everything.

Part 6

Read the text. Choose the right words and write them on the lines.

London



Example

London is one of _____ the _____ most famous cities in the world. It is really two cities: the City of London _____ the City of Westminster. Westminster is very famous because the Queen and her family live _____ in Buckingham Palace. Another London favourite is the River Thames, _____ is over 300 kilometres long and flows through different towns and cities like Oxford, Reading, Windsor and London. With more _____ 100 theatres and lots of beautiful parks, London is the place to go on holiday. Also, _____ you like art, you should visit some of London's many museums, like the British Museum or the Tate Gallery.

- 1 _____ Remember: in England, people drive _____ the left, so be careful when crossing these streets! To see the city you can use buses and trains, or just take a taxi. It shouldn't be too difficult. London _____ more than 21,000 of them! People call them 'black cabs' but there are taxis in 12 different colours! _____ London there are people from all over the world, so you will hear many different languages on the street.
- 2 _____ Anyone who's been there says that London is a _____ interesting city, like no other in the world. So, what are you waiting for? If you haven't _____ travelled to London, do it now!

Example

1 _____ or _____ on _____ the
2 _____ that _____ where _____ but
3 _____ which _____ what _____ them
4 _____ from _____ over _____ who
5 _____ will _____ if _____ go
6 _____ in _____ up _____ ten
7 _____ have _____ has _____ feel
8 _____ all _____ do _____ to _____
9 _____ but _____ many _____ very
10 _____ already _____ still _____ just

Part 7

Read the letter and write the missing words. Write one word on each line.



Dear Mrs North,

I _____ have _____ read about 'Environment Day' in your magazine and I'm sending this letter to tell you that I _____ love to help clean Springfield River. You ask people to send some ideas about getting people to help. So, here's my idea: I think you _____ start with students. At school, we have learnt _____ things about the environment and we know _____ that a _____ of animals, plants and flowers are in danger. Many students, like me, want to do something about it _____ don't know how. You can also tell students to bring a friend, or help in other ways.

Think about it.
Thank you,
Mary

Example

1

2

3

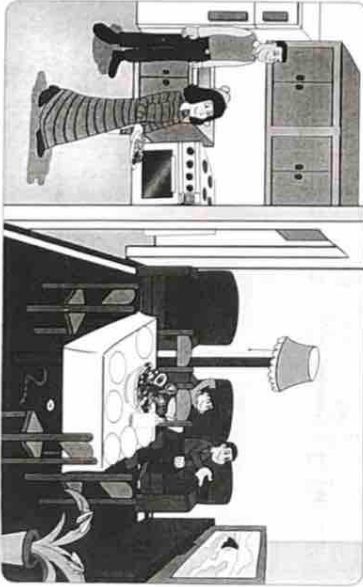
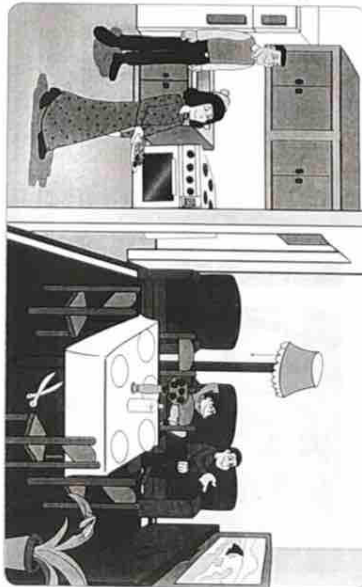
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5

Speaking

Part 1

Find the differences.



**H. STUDENTS' CAMBRIDGE FLYERS SAMPLE TEST RESULTS AND
THE RELEVANT BOOK LEVELS**

	Listening Scores	Reading and Writing Scores	Speaking Scores	Total Scores	Book Levels	Class
Student 1	8	10	15	33	H, I	5C
Student 2	12	10	14	36	H, I	5A
Student 3	11	15	12	38	H, I	5A
Student 4	6	14	18	38	H, I	5B
Student 5	16	10	15	41	H, I	5C
Student 6	11	17	14	42	H, I	5C
Student 7	7	19	17	43	H, I	5B
Student 8	8	20	15	43	H, I	5C
Student 9	6	20	18	44	H, I	5B
Student 10	13	15	16	44	H, I	5C
Student 11	15	13	17	45	H, I	5A
Student 12	11	17	18	46	H, I	5A
Student 13	11	18	20	49	H, I (J)	5B
Student 14	13	17	20	50	H, I (J)	5B
Student 15	15	17	19	51	H, I (J)	5A
Student 16	14	20	18	52	H, I (J)	5B
Student 17	10	22	20	52	H, I (J)	5B
Student 18	15	17	22	54	H, I (J)	5A
Student 19	20	13	21	54	H, I (J)	5A
Student 20	11	23	20	54	H, I (J)	5C
Student 21	16	20	18	54	H, I (J)	5C
Student 22	17	15	23	55	H, I (J)	5A
Student 23	13	26	16	55	H, I (J)	5C
Student 24	15	18	23	56	H, I (J)	5A
Student 25	14	26	17	57	K, L	5B
Student 26	11	27	21	59	K, L	5B
Student 27	22	16	22	60	K, L	5A
Student 28	15	29	17	61	K, L	5B
Student 29	19	25	20	64	K, L	5B
Student 30	21	24	20	65	K, L	5A
Student 31	14	31	20	65	K, L	5B
Student 32	21	23	22	66	K, L	5A
Student 33	21	23	22	66	K, L	5A
Student 34	16	32	18	66	K, L	5B
Student 35	19	29	19	67	K, L	5B
Student 36	23	23	24	70	K, L	5A
Student 37	21	32	19	72	K, L, (M)	5C

Student 38	18	29	25	72	K, L, (M)	5C
Student 39	21	27	25	73	K, L, (M)	5A
Student 40	17	37	20	74	K, L, (M)	5B
Student 41	22	29	25	76	K, L, (M)	5A
Student 42	24	27	25	76	K, L, (M)	5A
Student 43	20	32	24	76	K, L, (M)	5B
Student 44	18	36	22	76	K, L, (M)	5B
Student 45	21	32	25	78	K, L, (M)	5A
Student 46	22	34	22	78	K, L, (M)	5C
Student 47	21	34	25	80	K, L, (M)	5A
Student 48	21	34	25	80	K, L, (M)	5C
Student 49	24	32	25	81	N, O	5A
Student 50	20	37	25	82	N, O	5B
Student 51	24	35	23	82	N, O	5C
Student 52	25	33	25	83	N, O	5A
Student 53	25	33	25	83	N, O	5A
Student 54	24	37	23	84	N, O	5C
Student 55	22	38	25	85	N, O	5B
Student 56	22	38	25	85	N, O	5B
Student 57	20	40	25	85	N, O	5B
Student 58	22	38	25	85	N, O	5B
Student 59	25	35	25	85	N, O	5C
Student 60	25	38	23	86	N, O	5C
Student 61	25	37	25	87	N, O, (P)	5A
Student 62	24	38	25	87	N, O, (P)	5B
Student 63	24	39	25	88	N, O, (P)	5C
Student 64	25	38	25	88	N, O, (P)	5C
Student 65	20	44	25	89	N, O, (P)	5A
Student 66	25	40	25	90	N, O, (P)	5C
Student 67	24	41	25	90	N, O, (P)	5C
Student 68	25	40	25	90	N, O, (P)	5C
Student 69	25	40	25	90	N, O, (P)	5C
Student 70	25	42	25	92	N, O, (P)	5C
Student 71	25	44	25	94	N, O, (P)	5C
Student 72	23	47	25	95	N, O, (P)	5B

I. QUESTIONNAIRE ON FAVOURITE BOOK TYPES

Directions: Please indicate the preference of reading different types of books presented in the following sentences. We would like you to answer this questionnaire by giving marks from 1 to 4. Thank you for your help.

Very different from you (Hiç beni anlatmıyor)	A little different from you (Pek beni anlatmıyor)	A little like you (Beni anlatıyor)	A lot like you (Tam beni anlatıyor)
Circle 1	Circle 2	Circle 3	Circle 4

1. I read stories about fantasy and make-believe. (Fantastik ve kurgu hikayeleri okurum.)	1	2	3	4
2. I read a lot of adventure stories. (Çok macera kitabı/öyküsü okurum.)	1	2	3	4
3. Complicated stories are fun to read. (Karmaşık kurgusu olan hikayeler bana eğlenceli gelir.)	1	2	3	4
4. I like mysteries. (Gizem dolu hikayeleri severim.)	1	2	3	4
5. I do not like it when there are too many people in the story. (Hikayede çok fazla insan olması hoşuma gitmez.)	1	2	3	4
6. I enjoy reading books about people in different countries. (Farklı ülkelerdeki insanlar hakkında kitaplar okumak hoşuma gider.)	1	2	3	4
7. I read about my hobbies to learn more about them. (Hobilerim hakkında daha fazla bilgi sahibi olmak için okumalar yaparım.)	1	2	3	4
8. I read to learn new information about topics that interest me. (İlgimi çeken konular hakkında yeni birşeyler öğrenmek için okuma yaparım.)	1	2	3	4

Adapted from Wigfield & Guthrie (1997)

J. THE RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE ON FAVOURITE BOOK TYPES

	n	%
Item 1: I read stories about fantasy and make-believe		
A lot like you	23	31,9
A little like you	29	40,3
A little different from you	15	20,8
Very different from you	5	6,9
Item 2: I read a lot of adventure stories		
A lot like you	30	41,7
A little like you	23	31,9
A little different from you	13	18,1
Very different from you	6	8,3
Item 3: Complicated stories are fun to read		
A lot like you	15	20,8
A little like you	18	25,0
A little different from you	27	37,5
Very different from you	12	16,7
Item 4: I like mysteries		
A lot like you	45	62,5
A little like you	19	26,4
A little different from you	5	6,9
Very different from you	3	4,2
Item 5: I don't like it when there are too many people in the story		
A lot like you	16	22,2
A little like you	13	18,1
A little different from you	27	37,5
Very different from you	16	22,2
Item 6: I enjoy reading books about people in different countries		
A lot like you	14	19,4
A little like you	22	30,6
A little different from you	23	31,9
Very different from you	13	18,1

Item 7: I read about my hobbies to learn more about them

A lot like you	14	19,4
A little like you	25	34,7
A little different from you	18	25,0
Very different from you	15	20,8

Item 8: I read to learn new information about topics that interest me

A lot like you	30	41,7
A little like you	24	33,3
A little different from you	10	13,9
Very different from you	8	11,1



K. CURRICULUM VITAE

Name & Surname: Erhan Gülşen

Permanent Address: Kayışdağı Mah. Neriman Sok. No: 6 Flat 4 Ataşehir İstanbul

Place and Year of Birth: Adana/1987

Foreign Language: English, German, Spanish

Primary Education: Aydın Yedi Eylül Primary School/1998

Secondary Education: Aydın Efeler Secondary School/2001

Undergraduate: Boğaziçi University/2009

Postgraduate: Bahçeşehir University/2018

Name of Institute: Educational Institute

Name of Master's Program: English Language Teaching

Publications: Gülşen, E., & Mede, E. (2016). Efficacy of multi-level extensive reading in young learners' reading motivation. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET)*, 4(4), 290-315.

Working Life:

Year	Place	Enrollment
2016 -	Bahçeşehir College Çamlıca Campus	English Teacher/Team Leader
2014 - 2015	Turkish Naval Forces	Ensign
2013-2016	Epsilon Publishing	Literary Translator
2011 - 2014	Dilko Language Schools	English Teacher/Department Head
2009 - 2011	YDS Publishing	English Teacher/Curriculum Developer